WITH HEAVY HEARTS ANNOUNCE ANOTHER EXECUTION IN IRAN. AFTER TWO YEARS' IMPRISONMENT, MOSTLY IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT, AND HAVING BEEN SUBJECTED TO MUCH TORTURE, AIMED AT HIS RECANTATION FAITH, MR. AHMAD KAVIHI WAS EXECUTED ON 26 JANUARY IN ISFAHAN BY FIRING SQUAD. HE WAS IN HIS MID-FIFTIES AND A MERCHANT. NO INFORMATION RECEIVED AS TO ANY TRIAL PRIOR HIS EXECUTION.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
JANUARY 30, 1987
India

‘The Lotus of Bahapur’ is dedicated

More than 3,000 Baha’is from 107 countries gathered December 23-27 in New Delhi, India, for the historic dedication of the magnificent “Lotus of Bahapur,” the Mother Temple of the Indian subcontinent.

The diverse audience included Eskimos, American Indians, North and South Americans, Africans, Europeans, and visitors from small islands in the South Pacific as well as many Indian tribal peoples. Representatives of 35 tribes and races were present as were members of more than 100 National Spiritual Assemblies.

A tent city was erected to accommodate the 4,000 local Baha’is from 22 provinces of India.

Three Hands of the Cause of God attended the event: Amatu’l-Baha Ruhiyyih Khanum, who represented the Universal House of Justice and read a message of welcome on its behalf; H. Collis Featherstone; and William Sears.

The main dedication ceremony, which was held December 24 at the House of Worship, included music by a choir led by Ravi Shankar’s music director, Mr. Shankar, the sitar virtuoso who wrote much of the music for the ceremony, was unable to attend in person as he was undergoing open heart surgery in the U.S.

More than 500 non-Baha’is were present at that event, among whom were the guest of honor, H.K.L. Kapur, the lieutenant governor of New Delhi; ministers of the Indian government; and official representatives of the diplomatic corps including those from the Soviet Union, the United States, and the Vatican.

One of the Baha’i visitors, Mrs. Joan Williams of Kalamazoo, Michigan, was greeted at Indira Gandhi Airport as India’s one millionth tourist. She and her husband, Leonard, were interviewed, given free tours, and housed at a five-star hotel as guests of the Indian government.

The festivities surrounding the dedication began December 23 with an afternoon and early evening program at Indira Gandhi Stadium chaired by Mrs. Shirin Boman and Counsellor Iraj Ayman. After music and devotions, the audience was welcomed by Mr. K. Khemani, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of India. This was followed by a “roll call of nations,” the introduction of the theme song for the dedication, a multi-media presentation, “Building of the Baha’i House of Worship,” addresses by the Temple’s chief architect, Fariborz Sahba, and Amatu’l-Bahá Ruhiyyih Khanum (“The Mashriqu’l-Adhkar—Instrument for Spiritualizing the World”), and a cultural program.

On December 25, also at Indira Gandhi Stadium, two programs were held with the morning session, chaired by Mrs. Shirin Fozdar and Dr. Singara Velu, including addresses by the Hand of the Cause Mr. Sears (“Station of the Universal House of Justice and Its Influence Upon the World”) and Mrs. Javidukht Khadem (“Message from the Late Hand of the Cause of God Zikru’llah Khadem”). That afternoon, program chairman Douglas Martin introduced Counsellor Peter Khan (“Progress of the Faith in the World”), Counsellor Vicente Samaniego (“Progress of the Faith in Asia”) and Counsellor Zena Sorabjee (“Progress of the Faith in India”). After

The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu’l-Baha Ruhiyyih Khanum (right) arrives for the dedication ceremony in December of the Bahá’í House of Worship near New Delhi, India.
music, Ramnik Shah introduced representatives of the masses and tribals of India who addressed the audience, and Kueh Lip Kuang outlined the goals of the Continental Pioneer Committee for Asia.

The following day saw two more sessions at the stadium with the morning program, chaired by Judge James F. Nelson, including addresses by the Hand of the Cause of God Mr. Featherstone ("The Need for Spiritual Values") and Counsellor Bahá'u'lláh ("Sacrifice—The Essence of Bahá'í Service to the Cause"), and the afternoon program, chaired by Bharat Koirala, devoted to the dedication's main theme, an address by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum entitled "The Bahá'í House of Worship: Dedicated to the Unity of God, the Unity of His Prophets, and the Unity of Mankind." and a presentation on "The Role of Youth" by Bahá'í youth of India and Malaysia.

Indira Gandhi Stadium was also the venue for a public meeting December 27 which included a ballet, "Triumph of Peace," by students at the New Era Bahá'í School in Panchgani; an Indian hoop dance by Kevin Locke, a Lakota Sioux from the U.S.; a multi-medial presentation, "The Promise of World Peace," adapted from the statement to the peoples of the world by the Universal House of Justice; Kathak dances by Uma Sharma and her troupe; and the Do'a World Music Ensemble.

More than 500 youngsters attended a children's conference which was held concurrently with the main conference. On December 26, many of the children came to the main stage bearing banners with the names of the countries they represented. Jack Lenz of Canada then led them in singing the theme song, "We Want to Grow Up," which he wrote, and they were then joined on stage by the Hands of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum and Mr. Sears who shared stories of their own teaching experiences.

At the House of Worship on December 24, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum, sharing the stage with 204 red roses, a gift from the Bahá'ís of Iran to honor the recent martyrs in that country, said, "This marble lotus... enfold us all... bidding us unite in peace and welcoming within her doors people of all creeds, all races, all nations and all classes."

Construction of the imposing edifice was completed last year, some nine years after the cornerstone was set in place by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum. Mr. Sahba and his colleagues, challenged time and again by what seemed to be insurmountable obstacles, overcame them all to build what one experienced observer has called "a construction feat that will set standards for centuries." The lotus-shaped, nine-sided building, surrounded by nine pools of clear water, is situated on a hillside at Bahapur, on the outskirts of New Delhi.

It was opened to the public on January 1, at which time more than 10,000 people of all religious backgrounds were drawn to its precincts and streamed up the walkways to visit, pray and meditate.

Above: A large banner welcomes Bahá'ís to New Delhi, India, for the dedication of the seventh House of Worship in the Bahá'í world. Below: Mary Kurrus, a visitor from Evanston, Illinois, deposits her footwear in the 'shoe room' before entering the Temple.
The magnificent 'Lotus of Bahapur,' mother Temple of the Indian subcontinent.

Four days earlier, on December 28, a memorial service was held at the Bahá'í National Center in New Delhi to observe the seventh anniversary of the passing of the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'llah Muhajir, a staunch champion of the Cause in India to whose inspiration and loving guidance Mr. Sahba attributes his decision to accept the position as chief architect of the Temple. The speaker on that occasion was the Hand of the Cause Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiyyih Khanum.

Other special events included a gala evening December 25 at the Ashoka Hotel with a buffet dinner and singers, dancers and other entertainers from East and West; and dawn prayers on December 27 at the House of Worship.

An interior view showing the intricate play of light and shadows inside the Bahá'í House of Worship in India. The lovely nine-sided lotus-shaped Temple was dedicated December 23-27 with more than 8,000 Bahá'ís from around the world present.
One of the several choirs who performed during the dedication ceremonies last December 23-27 for the Bahá'í House of Worship near New Delhi, India, rehearses within the Temple itself. Much of the music for the dedication was written by Indian santour virtuoso Ravi Shankar.

Photographs of the dedication ceremonies are by Robert Allen, Anne Atkinson, Charles Nolley and Beverly Walker.
The crowd begins to arrive for the formal dedication ceremony held December 24 at the Bahá'í House of Worship near New Delhi. More than 8,000 Bahá'ís from 107 countries were among those attending including some 4,000 believers from 22 provinces in India.

Pictured are a few of the many Bahá'ís from all states and territories of India who were accommodated in a well-equipped tent city housing 4,000 which was located near the stadium where the dedication conference for the Bahá'í House of Worship took place.

Below: Looking up toward a balcony and the lower part of one of the nine 'lotus leaves' that together comprise the exterior decoration of the Bahá'í House of Worship near New Delhi, India. More than 10,000 people visited the 'Lotus of Bahapur' when it was opened to the public for the first time on January 1, shortly after the dedication ceremonies that drew some 8,000 Bahá'ís from 107 countries.

Left: An African dance group gives a spontaneous performance near an entrance to Indira Gandhi Stadium.
History

The Faith in India: Chronicle of growth

One of the outstanding features of Indian history, and one which cannot but become apparent even to the casual observer of this record, is the many religious traditions that have left their mark on India’s cultural heritage. Three of the world’s great living religions, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, have at one time or other been focal points in the development of India’s religio-cultural life, and, in modern times, Christianity, though to a lesser extent, has also made contributions to this development. For this reason, India has often been referred to as a melting pot of religious experience. Today, the Bahá’í Faith is in the process of adding another chapter to the history of religions in India. In the following pages we will attempt to trace the development of the Faith in that country, for at present, India harbors within its borders one of the largest Bahá’í communities in the world, and therefore, its history deserves to be told.

India’s earliest contact with the new Movement took place during the time of the Báb. The various histories of the Báb mention several prominent Indian believers within their accounts. Nabil-i-A’zam tells us that one of the Letters of the Living was an Indian who was known by the name Shaykh Sa’íd-i-Hindi. Like the other disciples of the Báb, he was directed by his Master to spread the message of the new Revelation. This command took him not only to various parts of Persia, but also to his homeland of India. However, his work in India was unproductive. As Nabil states, the enterprise “was productive of what might seem a negligible result, its only fruit being the conversion of a certain Siyyid.”

After this, Shaykh Sa’íd-i-Hindi dropped from sight; his ultimate fate remains a mystery.

Another Indian convert during the time of the Báb was a certain blind Siyyid, Jenab-i-Basir, about whose life the Bábí histories are not in complete agreement. Nabil says that this believer was none other than the above-mentioned “Siyyid” converted by Sa’íd-i-Hindi in the town of Mooltan, where, “casting behind him the trappings of leadership, and severing himself from his friends and kinsmen, he arose with a fixed resolve to render his service to the Cause he had embraced.”

The Tárikh-i-Jadid, however, claims that Siyyid Basir, having heard in Bombay of the Báb’s appearance, hastened to Persia and subsequently to Mecca where he met the Báb in person. After this meeting he returned to Persia and began to disseminate the teachings of his new Master. Both histories agree, however, that he became active within the Bábi community, and that he was well-known for his depth of learning and eloquence.

The activities of Jenab-i-Basir were finally brought to the attention of the state authorities, which resulted in his imprisonment and eventual death. The Tárikh-i-Jadid says that after the Mázhírdān upheaval, the Siyyid went to Iraq. Eventually he was arrested by the Prince-Governor in Burújird (in the western Persian province of Luristán) who, “because he was so ready of speech and eloquent in discourse, first ordered his tongue to be cut out, and then put him to death.”

A third convert from India was a dervish mentioned in the Tárikh-i-Jadid. This is most likely the same individual mentioned in Nabil’s account who while in India had seen the Báb in a vision and soon hastened to Persia on foot to find the Mihdí. The dervish met the Báb during his sojourn at Chihriq, where the Báb gave him the title “Qahru’lláh.” The Indian believer, after leaving the Báb’s presence, began to expound his Leader’s doctrines which led eventually to his being arrested by the Governor of Khuy. The new convert, along with several other Bábís, was beaten and paraded through the streets on an ass. If indeed the Indian believer was the same Qahru’lláh mentioned by Nabil, the likeness of the two accounts making it appear to be so, he later, following orders from the Báb, left on foot for India where he was to announce the arrival of the Qá’im. Whether he successfully returned to India is unknown.

The presence of other Indian believers in Persia during the time of the Báb is documented by a monograph on the Bábí insurrection in Mázhírdān which lists four Indians among the 318 Bábís who defended themselves at Fort Shaykh Tabarsi. It is apparent, however, that the activities of Indian converts at this time were for the most part limited to Iran: Shaykh Sa’íd-i-Hindi, upon reaching India, found his efforts there unproductive. Qahru’lláh’s arrival in his homeland remains doubtful, and while it seems apparent from the Tárikh-i-Jadid’s account of Jenab-i-
Basir hearing about the Báb in Bombay that some knowledge of the Báb’s doctrines was current in India, it appears that it was only partial and scattered knowledge. Therefore, it is safe to say that during the lifetime of the Báb, the new Faith was virtually nonexistent in the subcontinent.

The year 1872 is an historical landmark in the history of the Bahá’í Faith in India, for it was in this year that Jamál Effendi arrived in Bombay and began actively to teach the doctrines and principles of the new religion. Since the time of the Báb’s death in 1850, several Bábís had settled in Bombay, largely in association with the Parsi community there, but no active teaching of the Message had taken place. In 1871 Bahá’u’lláh, from His confines in ‘Akka, commissioned one of the many pilgrims who came to visit Him from throughout the Near East to proceed to India and there spread the word of the Cause. This man, a learned scholar of Arabic and Persian, was the above-mentioned Sulaymán Kháñ-i-Tanákabuni Jamál Effendi. Having had the title of Lamia (the brilliant one) conferred upon him by Bahá’u’lláh, Jamál Effendi and his kinsman, Mirzá Husayn, late in the year 1872 boarded a ship in Port Said, Egypt, and set sail for India.

During his stay in Bombay, Jamál Effendi gave a great many talks concerning the claims and principles of the Bahá’í Movement. One such talk was directed toward the head of the Khoja* community in that city, the Aga Khan. However, his discourses, rather than bringing converts to the Bahá’í Faith, aroused the animosity of many religious leaders in Bombay, and consequently, the two teachers, on the advice of their friends, left the city. Although their initial stay in the great port city was cut short, Bombay was later to become a leading Bahá’í community in India.

After leaving Bombay, the two men traveled throughout the subcontinent delivering the message of Bahá’u’lláh to the elite of the country. The Bahá’í Newsletter of India reported that it was Jamál Effendi’s...custom to notify his arrival to the Governor or highest official of the place of the Cause of God in 1946.)

The next 20 years was a period of slow growth and development for the Bahá’í Faith in India. The message of the Movement was spread via the work of devoted converts to the major cities of the subcontinent. Teaching activities were directed from three centers of Bahá’í organization: Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. Many of the programs were presented under the auspices of the Theosophical Society, while others were carried out by individual believers in their own way and by their own means. Slowly, the claims of the Bahá’í Faith began to reach the ears of many of the educated members of Indian society.

During His years of leadership, ‘Abdu’ll-Bahá sent several prominent Bahá’í teachers to India to help promote the Cause. Among them were Aga Mirzá Mahmúd-i-Zarqáni, and Aga Mirzá Mahram. The latter finally set-
The Baha'is were invited to the convention. Siyyid Mustafa Jamal was surprised of members of the various religions of India were versed in the teachings of the religions of India, answered the call for pioneers put out by the Indian community. For several years these two dedicated women presented lectures from one end of the country to the other. Lua Getsinger spoke on various aspects of the Bahá'í Faith at many meetings sponsored by such groups as the Arya Samaj, the Brahma Samaj, and the Theosophical Society. Mrs. Stannard, in addition to her lecture tours, represented the Faith at the All India Theistic Conference of 1913. Both women were also influential in the area of publicity, for they were largely responsible for the publication of Bahá'í articles in several Indian newspapers. For example, in the Sind Gazette of December 24, 1913, an editorial appeared which stated that a rather remarkable visitor to Karachi—far more remarkable than any of the Congress and Conference dignitaries—is Mrs. Stannard, the Bahá'í Missionary. This gifted lady, who has studied all the religions of the world, and all the philosophies, and has come to the conclusion, not that they are all wrong, but that they are all right, has a new gospel to preach—not her own, but that of her Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the head of the Bahá'í religious movement. Other articles appeared in such papers as the New Reformer of Madras, and the Daily Gazette of Karachi.

The popular response that the two Americans received throughout their travels was a sign of things to come, for in future years American believers would continue to play an active role in the teaching campaigns of the Indian community.

The campaign initiated in 1911, although not winning many new believers, was nevertheless of great importance in the development of the Bahá'í community in India, for it marked the first real attempt at a systematic teaching effort characterized by intercommunity coordination. It not only paved the way for future plans, but also gave the Bahá'ís of India their first true feeling of community spirit. Before that time, teaching activities were, for the most part, efforts of individual believers or communities, and rarely was there any real attempt made to organize anything beyond the local level. Thus, the Teaching Council of...
1911 was in many ways the forerunner of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India and Burma.

December 27-29, 1920, is another significant landmark in the history of the Bahá'í Faith in India, for it was on these dates that the first All India Bahá'í Convention was held in Bombay. Representatives of all the major world religions were present, as well as Bahá'í delegates from throughout the country. Although there were no official figures on the number of Bahá'ís residing in India at that time, it was estimated that nearly 175 followers were present at this conference.

Several important resolutions were passed at the conference, from which the following are taken: (1) that funds be collected to build a Bahá'í temple in India; (2) that a school be started in Bombay for the education of Bahá'í children; (3) that a Bahá'í library be established in India; (4) that a publishing society be established to translate Bahá'í literature into the various Indian languages; and (5) that there be a greater expansion of teaching activities and the distribution of literature. It was to these objectives that the Bahá'ís of India now turned.

It is significant that the first All India Bahá'í Convention and the death of 'Abdu'l-Bahá were separated by less than a year. It was as if the Indian community sensed the new course the Faith would take under the guidance of Shoghi Effendi. From this point forward the Cause in India, in accordance with the Guardian's plans for the community, was to become oriented toward executing its teaching plans and activities within the framework of an international administrative structure, the center of which was the Guardian himself.

Between the years 1921 and 1938 the objectives initiated by the first All India Bahá'í Convention were pursued vigorously. Consequently, there were during this period notable accomplishments in all areas of endeavor. The guidance of these projects was entrusted to the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma, which Shoghi Effendi saw fit to create in April 1923. The role he bequeathed to this body is evident from the content of the following message which he sent in November 1925: "I pray that your newly constituted National Spiritual Assembly may grow from strength to strength, may co-ordinate and consolidate the ever-expanding activities of the friends in India and Burma and inaugurate a fresh campaign of Teaching that will redound to the glory and power of the Most Great Name."

The National Spiritual Assembly met periodically in Bombay. Mr. Hashamatu'llah of Karachi was elected India's first National Secretary. Ten years later, in January 1933, this body was incorporated with the government of India.
India.

Organized teaching activities and the distribution of literature were greatly increased during these years. One of the largest teaching events took place at the centenary celebration of the birth of the founder of the Arya Samaj, Dyanand Saraswati. The commemoration was held in Mutra in 1925. It is estimated that nearly two million people attended. The Bahá'ís were granted special camp grounds and were allowed to distribute their literature. During the five-day event, almost 5,000 booklets explaining the principles of the Faith were distributed.

The Guardian constantly encouraged the Bahá'í community of India and Burma to increase its teaching activities. He continually stressed the point that it was part of their duty as Bahá'ís to spread the message of Bahá'u'lláh. For example, in a message to the Bahá'ís of India dated November 25, 1934, he said, "The essential is that all the friends, without any exception whatever, should realise the full measure of the responsibility which Bahá'u'lláh has placed on them for teaching far and wide His Message." The Guardian encouraged the Bahá'ís to utilize these openings as to produce the best results. In an effort to stimulate teaching activity, Shoghi Effendi sent several pio-

neers from various parts of the world to the subcontinent. Among the most well-known of these traveling teachers was Martha Root, who made two tours of India, one in 1930 and the other in 1937-38. A short synopsis of her work shows that she gave public lectures from Karachi to Madras, including major presentations in the colleges and universities of Lahore, Amritsar, Ludhiana, Delhi, Aligarh, Lucknow, Crawnpore, Allahabad, Benares, Patna and Calcutta. She also broadcast radio messages in Mysore and Hyderabad, and met with many of the leading personalities of the country including the poetess Sarojini Naidu. Her work was so impressive that the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma, in a letter to the Bahá'ís of the United States, said of her, "Martha Root has opened the whole of India for us, and it now devolves upon us to so utilize these openings as to produce the best results."

There were many other teachers who also took to the highways and railways of India during these years to help spread the knowledge of the Faith to a greater number of the inhabitants of the subcontinent. Mahfúz'u'lláh Ilmi carried on active propaganda in Delhi and other cities of northern India, while Pritam Singh made several teaching tours of the colleges and universities in that section of the country.

Shirin Fozdar spoke to more than 1,000 people in the town hall of Calcutta, and Keith Ransom-Kehler (later appointed a Hand of the Cause) made a two-month lecture tour that involved talks in most of the major cities of the country. Thus, the teaching work which Shoghi Effendi prescribed as a vital necessity to the maintenance of the Faith in India was consciously and systematically increased.

Advances were also made between the years 1921 and 1938 in the field of publishing. Many Bahá'í books were translated in several Indian languages including Gujrati, Bengali, Sindhi, Hindi and Urdu. J.E. Esslemont's Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era was one of these texts. Shoghi Effendi had personally encouraged the Bahá'ís of India to translate this work. In March 1932 he wrote, "I wish to urge you to take as soon as you possibly can, the necessary and most effective steps to ensure the translation of Dr. Esslemont's book into Urdu and Gujrati." One of the major accomplishments in publishing was the establishment of a monthly Bahá'í magazine, the Kaukib-i-Hind. The magazine was published in Urdu and had more than 200 subscribers. In addition, more than 200 articles appeared in newspapers and magazines throughout the country including many in Telgu-speaking areas. In fact, the Brahmam Samaj of Madras translated more than 2,000 booklets entitled "The Dawn of the New Day" into several Dravidian languages.

Concerning the other goals which the All India Bahá'í Convention of 1920 had set for the Indian community, we can relate the following: a Bahá'í school for children was successfully established in Poona, and in September 1937 the first Indian Bahá'í summer school session was held, to which Bahá'ís from throughout the country came to receive instruction in various aspects of the Faith from history to administration. Although a separate Bahá'í library was not completed, Bahá'í books were presented to a number of major libraries around the country.

The efforts in all areas of endeavor made by the Bahá'í community of India during those years marked a great step forward in terms of increasing the public's knowledge of the Faith. Fur-
thermore, under the guiding hand of Shoghi Effendi and their National Spiritual Assembly, the various Bahá'í communities in India slowly began to function as a unit. The time had come when Shoghi Effendi could truly speak of the “Indian community.” However, even with the inter-community organization that marked this period, the number of new believers to join the Faith was practically nil. During the 18-year period, only three new local Spiritual Assemblies had been added to the list of those already in the country, and not more than 50 new believers had been enlisted.

When Shoghi Effendi initiated the first Seven Year Plan in the U.S. in 1937, the Indian Bahá'í community, meeting in convention in Karachi, suggested to the National Spiritual Assembly that a similar campaign be started in India and Burma. The National Assembly resolved to undertake a Six Year Plan that would commence in 1938; however, it was not until 1940 that any real action was taken, and this was due largely to a lack of funds. It was the Guardian who finally set the process in motion by earmarking money for the creation of a special teaching fund to help finance the plan. He encouraged the Indian and Burmese friends to contribute generously to this fund also.

The Six Year Plan contained several distinguishing characteristics that were not found in previous teaching plans. As we have seen, until this time most of the teaching activities had involved lecture tours in coordination with various reform movements such as the Arya Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj, and the Theosophical Society. In the past there had been little contact with sections of society outside the intellectual circles. The new Plan attempted to change these policies. No longer were only the larger cities visited; instead, efforts were made to hold meetings independent of other groups in smaller cities and towns. More importantly, the emphasis was shifted from teaching tours to having Bahá'ís establish residence throughout the country. Individual Bahá'ís now left their homes and moved to areas where they could address a larger segment of the population. Hence, a conscious effort was made to introduce the movement into new localities and to direct its teaching activities toward different social strata.

Once under way, the new Plan produced immediate results. By 1941 three new local Assemblies had been formed: in Hyderabad, Kotah and Bangalore. Shoghi Effendi, as was his custom, wired the Indian community, congratulating them on their achievements and urging them to continue their efforts. The next year saw three more local Spiritual Assemblies established while Bahá'í groups were formed in Secunderabad, Belgam and Ujjain. Thus, by the time of the 14th annual Bahá'í Convention held in Poona in 1943, eight new Assemblies had been formed. The rigorous teaching efforts of the Indian Bahá'ís continued during the final year of the Plan so that by the end of the Plan in 1944, 16 new Assemblies had been established in the subcontinent.

The achievements of the Six Year Plan encouraged the Bahá'í community of India to launch a second teaching campaign in April 1946. A month before the new Plan's inception, Shoghi Effendi, writing to the National Spiritual Assembly of India from Haifa, remarked, “The believers in India have set an inspiring example to their fellow believers throughout the East, and even to the great mass of their co-religionists in Bahá'u'lláh’s native land, and have abundantly demonstrated to them all, what organized activity, boldly conceived and soundly and energetically conducted can achieve when directed and animated by the ennobling influences and the generative spirit of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.”

Although marred by the disruptive events brought upon the subcontinent by the partition of Pakistan and India in July 1947, the Four Year Plan met with much the same success as had the previous Six Year Plan. By April 1947 another eight local Spiritual Assemblies had been founded and the same number of groups established. In addition, each summer, Bahá'í schools for both adults and children were organized. Due to these encouraging figures, the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma received nearly 600 pounds sterling from National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the Bahá'í world to help finance yet another teaching campaign. Thus, in 1950 India embarked on its third successive teaching plan.

One of the major accomplishments of India's third teaching campaign occurred in the area of translation and publications. The language problem had always been a major roadblock for Bahá'í teachers in India. At this time, the majority of Bahá'í teachers in the country came from Persian back-
grounds or, in the case of overseas teachers, from English-speaking backgrounds, which prevented their direct contact with the masses of Indians who were neither literate nor conversant in either of those two languages. During the third Plan a determined effort was made to bridge the communication gap by translating publications into as many as 15 different languages. As a result, more than 40,000 books and pamphlets were sold and distributed. Also, between 1951-53 eight new local Assemblies were established. Thus, by the end of 1953 there were about 700 Bahá'ís in India.

In October 1953 the fourth and final Intercontinental Teaching Conference, which had been designed to inaugurate the Ten Year Crusade, was convened in New Delhi. The National Spiritual Assembly of India, Pakistan and Burma hosted the gathering. Other participating National Assemblies included the United States, Canada, Central and South America, Persia, Iraq, and Australia and New Zealand. Mason Remey, the Guardian's representative at the conference, delivered Shoghi Effendi's message, which enumerated 41 new territories and islands within the Asia Teaching Mission to be opened to the Faith during the Crusade. In this message the Guardian said of the Asiatic Continent, "The Asiatic continent, the cradle of the principal religions of mankind; the home of so many of the oldest and mightiest civilizations which have flourished on this planet; the crossways of so many kindreds and races; ... such a continent, so privileged among its sister continents and yet so long and so sadly tormented, now stands at the hour of the launching of a world-encompassing Crusade, on the threshold of an era that may recall, in its glory and ultimate repercussions, the great periods of spiritual revival which, from the dawn of recorded history have, at various stages in the revelation of God's purpose for mankind, illuminated the path of the human race." 36

The 450 Bahá'ís at that conference not only outlined strategies for the upcoming Crusade, they also engaged in a program of public relations. A public reception was held in one of Delhi's larger hotels and was attended by more than 1,000 people. Delegates were also sent to meet with government leaders including the president and vice-president of India as well as its prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. When the closing prayer of the final session had been chanted on October 15, 1953, the Indian community once again found itself embarking on a teaching project, one which, by the time of its completion in 1963, would have completely transformed both in-numbers and religious background of its adherents, the composition of the Bahá'í community of India.

The '50s, while not seeing any outstanding numerical increase for the Bahá'í community in India, contained two important events of which we should take note. One was the separation, in 1957 and 1959, of the National Spiritual Assembly of India, Pakistan and Burma into three distinct bodies: Pakistan received an independent National Assembly in 1957 and Burma became a separate entity in 1959. The other, although a rather minor occurrence at the time, proved to be an omen about the future direction the Faith would take in India. It involved a teaching conference in the village of Rampur, near Benares, where several villagers had earlier declared. This was the first village conference to be held in India. Several recommendations came from that event which were important in terms of their future implications. First, it was requested that the National Spiritual Assembly print simple leaflets in Hindi to be distributed in villages near Rampur. Second, it was suggested that study classes in Hindi be established in the village of Rampur;
and finally, it was recommended that city Bahá'ís interact with Rampur vil
gage Bahá'ís in such a way that "they may participate in their religious festi
vals and thus create an atmosphere of friendliness." 3

The modern period of Bahá'í history in India began in 1961. In that year, the
Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'lláh Muhájjir, while making one of his
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The modern period of Bahá'í history in India began in 1961. In that year, the
Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'lláh Muhájjir, while making one of his
frequent trips to the subcontinent, decided that a village conference, similar
to the one that took place in Rampur, should be held in Central India. As a
result, in January of that year a conference was held in the village of Sam
gimanda 38 in the Shajapur district of Madhya Pradesh, in the region tradition
ally known as Malwa. At the end of the conference a great many village
ers were enrolled in the Faith, and word of this occurrence spread to near
by villages. Within the next few years a great tide of villagers declared their
belief in Bahá'u'lláh. In other areas of India, the Bahá'í communities, having
taken note of what had happened in Malwa, began directing their teaching
activities toward village communities. As a result, in the following years, the
numbers of believers and local Spiritual Assemblies in India mushroomed.
A message from the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land to the National
Conventions of the Bahá'í world in April 1962 reflected this increase: "India,
one of the first countries in the world to receive the light of a newly
born Revelation has, during the past year, witnessed a tide of mass conver
sion not only wholly unprecedented in that country but without parallel any
where in the entire world during the last one hundred years of Bahá'í his
tory." 39

In 1961 there were 270 local Assemblies in India; by 1973 the number had
increased to 4,369.

The natural question that arises when one examines these figures is.
"What was the cause of this sudden upsurge?" In many instances the ques
tion is not an easy one to answer. Many of the Indian Bahá'ís claim that the re
cent growth was a sprouting of seeds that had been planted by earlier teach
ers. While this answer may contain some truth, it seems evident that there
were also certain new approaches and concepts introduced into teaching ac

tivities during these years that set them

The members of the first Spiritual As
embly of the Maksi District, Shajapur
(Madhya Pradesh), India, which was
formed in February 1977.
forth; for the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, for the sake of firmly establishing righteousness, I am born from age to age."  

Another innovation which was introduced during this period, and one which may have been partly responsible for the increase of believers in the '60s, was the opening of three teaching institutes, in Indore, Mysore and Gwalior. The main function of the institutes was to familiarize new converts with all aspects of the Faith and also to train circuit teachers. In regard to the latter, courses were given in the techniques of village teaching whereby trainees were instructed in methods of explaining both the basic teachings and institutional structure of the Faith to unschooled rural villagers. For added incentive, examinations were given at the end of the training period. As a result of this new training program, Bahá'í teachers were better equipped to relate the Bahá'í message to the Hindu tradition.

Of course, the efforts of individual Bahá'í teachers during these years cannot be underestimated. The upsurge in enthusiasm that became evident after the first signs of mass conversion in Malwa in 1961 and that became a great flood by the time of the second Intercontinental Conference held in New Delhi in October 1967, where the assemblage of nearly 3,000 Bahá'ís from throughout the world, a great number of whom were new believers from Indian villages in Madhya Prades, seemed to boost the confidence of the Indian Bahá'í community, was a main factor in the sudden spread of the movement. Men and women who before were hesitant to move in rural areas now began to actively teach this segment of the population. The National Spiritual Assembly of India, in a newsletter dispatched in April 1963, spoke of this new dedication: "There is a young man who is going to many parts of the country with his car, leaving behind his young wife and children and aunt to look after his business, just to serve the Cause of God for the love of the beloved Guardian. There are many like him who have left their jobs—whether in business or the medical profession—to move among the people. There are a few young men who have given up their college studies for one year to teach the Faith, saying that the studies could wait but the Crusade of the beloved Guardian would not last forever. These are a few examples of the upsurge of enthusiasm which has made our previous exploits pale."  

Today* there are 4,412 local Spiritual Assemblies in India, and the Universal House of Justice has set a goal of doubling that number within the next five years. The Bahá'í community is no longer unknown in Indian society. Since the time of its inception in India, it has evolved from a handful of believers to an ever-growing national community. It has passed through several stages of development during the course of its history in the subcontinent. Originally, it was composed of a small group of Persian immigrants; it subsequently developed into a small yet internationally linked group of educated elite, and finally into a community characterized by its large number of unschooled rural constituents. Today the Bahá'í Administrative Order in India is involved in a dual process of educating new declarants in the various aspects of Bahá'í life while continuing to spread the message of Bahá'u'lláh. The process is slow and often arduous, but the Bahá'í teachers are dedicated, for they believe in their hearts that in India "not hundreds, not thousands, but literally millions are ready to accept Bahá'u'lláh if you will only tell them He has come to them, for them, in this glorious new age in which we are living."  

NOTES

7. Mirza Husayn, Tárikh-i-Jadíd, p. 244.
15. Sydney Sprague, A Year with the Ba-
35. With the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma became the National Spiritual Assembly of India, Pakistan and Burma.
37. *Baha’i Newsletter of India*, no. 93, March 1958, p. 3.

A view of the Baha’i International Teaching Conference held in October 1953 in New Delhi, India. The Hands of the Cause of God Shu’a’u’llah ‘Ala‘i, John Robarts, Zikrullah Kadem and Horace Holley are, respectively, fourth and fifth from the left in the front row (next to two children); third row center (in gray suit with book in hand); and at the far right in the front row.
Bahá'í co-authors book on life after death

Dr. Christopher Jay Johnson, a Bahá'í who is director of gerontology at Northeast Louisiana University in Monroe, is co-editor of a new book entitled Encounters with Eternity: Religious Views on Death and Life After Death.

The book was introduced in U.S. bookstores in September and has received excellent reviews from, among others, best-selling author Ruth Montgomery, Dr. David Satin of the Harvard Medical School, and the Jewish Civic Press.

Contained in the book, which was published by the Philosophical Library of New York City, are essays on the death-related beliefs of 15 religions including the Bahá'í Faith.

Each was written by a member of that group, among whom are religious scholars and leaders from such places as the Harvard Divinity School, Stanford University, and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The list of participants in the book is diverse, ranging from Assemblies of God through Baptists, Buddhists, Hindus, Mormons and Muslims to Roman Catholics, Seventh-Day Adventists, Unitarians and others.

Dr. Johnson's co-editor is Dr. Marsha McGee, a fellow faculty member who is a Methodist. Dr. McGee initiated a course on death education at NLU in the 1970s and has written and lectured widely on the topics of death and dying.

The Bahá'í chapter was written by Dr. John Hatcher, author of several books who is a professor of English at the University of South Florida in Tampa.

In the book, each essayist writes about the background and main beliefs of his or her faith and describes how it views death and the afterlife. The appendix is set up in a question-and-answer format, and specific questions on such matters as the existence of heaven and hell, reincarnation, and what will happen on Judgment Day are dealt with by each essayist.

"I wanted our authors to tell it exactly like it is," says Dr. Johnson, "and to say it in layman's terms. This is a book for the public, not for academicians, even though a number of academicians probably will adopt it.

"The purpose is not to persuade people to change their religion. It's to get people who are Presbyterian, for instance, to understand what Presbyterians believe. Sometimes, people don't even know what their own religion believes."

Solomon Islands

Bahá'ís in the Solomon Islands were recently given the opportunity to present the Faith at two schools—to an assembly of 450 at a secondary school and to 150 students at a national teachers' college, both in Honiara.

At each, a talk by Roxanne Terrell on peace and the development of unity was followed by a presentation of slides of the Bahá'í Holy Places. Students at the secondary school detained the speaker until a late hour, asking many questions.
Colombia

Counsellor Lauretta King of Alaska (second from left) and four members of the Auxiliary Board of Colombia visited the Arhuaco tribe in Colombia's Sierra Nevada range during the Counsellor's teaching trip last March. In the right foreground are members of the Epyau family of Bahá'ís—Gloria, her son Chichi, and Fernando. Others (left to right) are Ali Mazinani, Oscar Castillo, Habib Rezvani and an unidentified Bahá'í (partially obscured).

Ireland

"The Promise of World Peace" has been published in Irish, the second book to be translated into the Irish language.

Distribution of the statement in Ireland began October 13, 1985, with its presentation to President Patrick J. Hillery, followed by more than 3,000 presentations to national figures including government ministers, members of the Dail and Senate, the attorney-general, an ex-prime minister, 200 top business executives and Ireland's ambassadors overseas.

Perhaps the greatest impact has been felt at the local level. Since many of the dignitaries have received the statement, the Bahá'ís are now turning to "the peoples of the world" to whom it is addressed. Letter drops are being carefully planned, public meetings organized, and the media approached.

National public meetings are planned to take place throughout this year, covering various peace-related topics. The first of them, a conference recognizing International Women's Day, was held last March 8.

Suriname

F. Ramdat Misier (second from left), the president of Suriname, receives a copy of the Universal House of Justice's peace statement from three members of that country's National Spiritual Assembly: Mrs. Lygia Vasilda (left), assistant secretary; Jamshid Ardjomandi, chairman; and Mrs. Akhtar Yazdani, treasurer.

El Salvador

The first formal graduation ceremony for the Centro Educación Bahá'í in Canton las Moras, El Salvador, was held last February with 30 children receiving diplomas.

Twenty-five parents and Bahá'ís from surrounding communities attended. The school was opened in July 1984 by a young Bahá'í, offering classes in basic education for grades 1-4.
Charles F. Wolcott, member of Universal House of Justice, dies at 80 . . . .1
A brief perusal of the spiritual foundations of the annual Bahá'í fast . . . . .3
Could Enterprise, Kansas, be second oldest U.S. Bahá'í community? . . . .6
Australia's 'peace ribbon' has second showing in Japan's 'sister city' . . . .8
Radio Bahá'í-Peru raises new antenna on station's fifth anniversary . . . .9
Around the world: News from Bahá'í communities all over the globe . . . .10
Charles F. Wolcott, a member of the Universal House of Justice since its inception in 1963 and a former secretary of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly, died January 26 at his home in Haifa, Israel.

Mr. Wolcott, who was born September 29, 1906, in Flint, Michigan, was a musician, composer and arranger who played professionally with a number of well-known bands before moving to Hollywood in 1937, and resigned his position as general music director of the MGM Studios in 1959 to assume his duties as secretary of the National Assembly in Wilmette, Illinois.

In 1961 he was elected to the International Bahá’í Council, forerunner of the Universal House of Justice, and served as secretary-general of that interim body for the two years of its existence.

Mr. Wolcott was elected in 1963 to a five-year term on the nine-member Universal House of Justice, and was re-elected at each of the four subsequent International Conventions.

His long and distinguished career in music began when he organized a high school band in Flint, and continued at the University of Michigan where he led a collegiate band known as “Charlie Wolcott and His Wolverines.”

After his graduation in 1927, he joined the Jean Goldkette organization to play and arrange for its various orchestras including the famed Casa Loma band. During this period he worked with many legendary musical figures including Bix Beiderbecke, Frankie Trumbauer, Miff Mole, Joe Venuti and the Dorsey brothers, Tommy and Jimmy.

In 1928 Mr. Wolcott married Harriet Louise Marshall who survives him, as do their two daughters, Mrs. Sheila Joan Banani of Santa Monica, California, and Mrs. Marsha Jean Gilpatrick of San Jose, both of whom are Bahá’ís.

In New York from 1931-37, Mr. Wolcott joined Paul Whiteman as a composer, arranger and conductor, and also worked with Andre Kostelanetz, Johnny Green and others on radio where he arranged music for Al Jolson, Burns and Allen, and others.

It was radio that took him to California, as an arranger for singer Rudy Vallee, and he soon was composing specialty music for such guests as Nelson Eddy, Gladys Swarthout, Don Ameche and Dorothy Lamour on Mr. Vallee’s radio show, the “Chase and Sanborn Hour.”

In 1938 (the same year in which he and Mrs. Wolcott embraced the Faith), Mr. Wolcott joined Walt Disney Studios, and during his 11 years there—the last five as general music director—made several trips to South America, Mexico and Cuba to research music for various Disney films with Latin American backgrounds including “Saludos Amigos” and “The Three Caballeros.”

Among his other films as music director for Disney were the Academy Award-nominated “Song of the South,” “Fancy Free,” and “Make Mine Music.”

Before moving to MGM as assistant music director to his friend Johnny Green, Mr. Wolcott was music consultant to the Ice Capades of 1950 and guest conductor on the “Music from Hollywood” radio program with opera star Rise Stevens.

At MGM he wrote the love themes for “Cat on a Hot Tin Roof” and “The Blackboard Jungle,” and was credited with introducing rock-and-roll...
to the screen in the latter film when he persuaded its producer to use the song “Rock Around the Clock” by Bill Haley and the Comets as part of the background score.

Other songs composed by Mr. Wolcott for films include “The Reluctant Dragon,” “Sooner or Later,” “Two Silhouettes,” and “Llama Serenade.” Southern Music published his “Inca Suite” from “Saludos Amigos” in 1957.

In April 1958 Mr. Wolcott succeeded Mr. Green as general music director at MGM.

He had become a member of the Spiritual Assembly of Los Angeles in 1948, was elected to the U.S. National Assembly in 1953, and served from 1953-56 as chairman of the National Teaching Committee. After the National Assembly elected him to be its secretary in 1959, Mr. Wolcott said goodbye forever to Hollywood and his long career in music.

Mr. Wolcott was buried January 27 in the Bahá’í cemetery in Haifa.

Charles Wolcott greets an old and dear friend, former Counsellor Edna True, during his visit to the U.S. National Convention in 1981.

Australia

A Bahá’í delegation including the Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone (far right), Counsellor Joy Stevenson, and Stanley Bolton, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia, presents a copy of the peace statement to Sir Ninian Stephen (second from right), the Governor-General of Australia, at Government House in Sydney.

2 March 1987/Bahá’í News
Why fast?

Fasting for spiritual reasons is a custom that has been practiced throughout recorded religious history. The specific guidelines for fasting have been defined by the Divine Revelers of religion in accordance with the needs and abilities of the people on whom the ordinance of fasting was binding.

In the Bahá’í Era many previous religious practices have been abrogated, whereas some, such as the law of fasting, have been renewed by the unerring Pen of Bahá’u’lláh. Shoghi Effendi made the following observation on this topic: “Those unwarranted practices, in connection with the sacrament of baptism, of communion, of confession of sins, of asceticism, of priestly dominion, of elaborate ceremonies, of holy war and of polygamy, have one and all been rigidly suppressed by the Pen of Bahá’u’lláh; whilst the rigidity and rigor of certain observances, such as fasting, which are necessary to the devotional life of the individual, have been considerably abated.”

The Bahá’í fast is not for the purpose of physical cleansing of the body, nor is it to be taken lightly as a practice we may observe at our own discretion. It is, rather, fundamentally spiritual in nature, as Bahá’u’lláh has ordained the fast as a spiritual law which is obligatory (binding in law or conscience) on behalf of the believers. Concerning the law of fasting, Bahá’u’lláh Himself declares: “We have commanded you to pray and fast from the beginning of maturity; this is ordained by God, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers...” He further states: “These are, O my God, the days whereon Thou didst enjoin Thy servants to observe the fast. With it Thou didst adorn the preamble of the Book of Thy Laws revealed unto Thy creatures, and didst deck forth the Repositories of Thy commandments in the sight of all who are in Thy heaven and all who are on Thy earth.”

Regarding the vital character and importance of the Divine ordinances and laws, and the necessity for complete obedience to them by the believers, Bahá’u’lláh clearly states: “The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him Who is the Dayspring of His Revelation and the Foundation of His Laws, Who representeth the Godhead in both the Kingdom of His Cause and the world of creation. Who so achieve this duty hath attained unto all good; and who so is deprived thereof, hath gone astray, though he be the author of every righteous deed. It behoveth every one who reacheth this most sublime station, this summit of transcendent glory, to observe every ordinance of Him Who is the Desire of the world. These twin duties are inseparable. Neither is acceptable without the other. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Source of Divine inspiration.”

Other considerations as to why the fast is so important to each one of us may be gleaned from the following statements of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Prayer and fasting is the cause of awakening and mindfulness and conducive to protection and preservation from tests.”

“For this material fast is an outer token of the spiritual fast; it is a symbol of self-restraint, the withholding of oneself from all appetites of the self, taking on the characteristics of the spirit, being carried away by the breathings of heaven and catching fire from the love of God.”

Shoghi Effendi further elaborated on the nature of the fast when he wrote: “It (the period of fasting) is essentially a period of meditation and prayer, of spiritual recuperation, during which the believer must strive to make the necessary readjustments in his inner life, and to refresh and reinvigorate the spiritual forces latent in his soul.”

Understanding that fasting was not a common practice in the western world, the following clarification was written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer: “It is often difficult for us to do things because they are so very different from what we are used to, not because the thing itself is particularly difficult. With you, and indeed most Bahá’ís, who are now, as adults, accepting this glorious Faith, no doubt some of the ordinances, like fasting and daily prayer, are hard to understand and obey at first. But we must always think that these things are given to all men for a thousand years to come. For Bahá’í children who see these things practiced in the home, they will be as natural and necessary a thing as going to church on Sunday was to the more pious generation of Chris-
tians. Bahá'u'lláh would not have given us these things if they would not greatly benefit us, and, like children who are sensible enough to realize their father is wise and does what is good for them, we must accept to obey these ordinances even though at first we may not see any need for them. As we obey them we will gradually come to see in ourselves the benefits they confer.

Enlightening us on the purpose of the fast, Bahá'u'lláh revealed the following in a prayer: "Glory be to Thee, O Lord my God! These are the days whereon Thou hast bidden all men to observe the fast, that through it they may purify their souls and rid themselves of all attachment to anyone but thee, and that out of their hearts may ascend that which will be worthy of the court of Thy majesty and may well be seem the seat of the revelation of Thy oneness." 

The fasting period ends at sunset on March 20 with a Feast called Naw-Rúz. This Feast ends the year and simultaneously begins the Bahá'í new year, coinciding with the spring equinox.

When to fast
Bahá'u'lláh tells us, in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, of a specified time for the fast: "The period of fasting commences with the termination of the Intercalary Days, and ends with the Naw-Rúz Festival." Shoghi Effendi further explained through his secretary: "The fasting period, which lasts nineteen days starting as a rule from the second of March every year and ending on the twentieth day of the same month ..."

Bahá'u'lláh wrote: "Vowing to fast (in a month other than the one prescribed for fasting) is permissible. Vows which profit mankind are however preferable in the sight of God."

This should not, however, be taken to mean that one may skip the fast and do it during some other month of the year, but rather that fasting in general is permissible at other times of the year. Shoghi Effendi clarifies this: "Of course the fast, as you know, can only be kept during the month set aside for that purpose."

How to fast
This is clearly defined by Bahá'u'lláh, again in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas: "Abstain from food and drink, from sunrise to sundown, and beware lest desire deprive you of this grace that is appointed in the Book." Note that Abdu'l-Bahá, after stating that fasting consists of abstinence from food and drink, categorically says that smoking is a form of "drink," in that the Arabic "erb" drink applies equally to smoking.

Bahá'u'lláh further implies in a prayer that we might also, during the fast, arise early enough before sunrise to say prayers: "Thou seest, O God of Mercy, Thou Whose power pervadeth all created things, these servants of Thine, Thy thralls, who, according to the good-pleasure of Thy Will, observe in the daytime the fast prescribed by Thee, who arise, at the earliest dawn of day, to make mention of Thy Name, and to celebrate Thy praise, in the hope of obtaining their share of the goodly things that are treasured up within the treasuries of Thy grace and bounty."

Consistent with this, He further states in another prayer for the fast: "For Thine ardent lovers Thou hast, according to Thy decree, reserved, at each daybreak, the cup of Thy remembrance, O Thou Who art the Ruler of rulers! These are they who have been so inebriated with the wine of Thy manifold wisdom that they forsake their couches in their longing to celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy virtues, and flee from sleep in their eagerness to approach Thy presence and partake of Thy bounty."
Shoghi Effendi comments in regard to “accidental” eating or drinking: “If one eats unconsciously during the fast hours, this is not breaking the fast as it is an accident.”

Who must fast

Who is obligated to fast is clearly defined by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas: “We have commanded you to pray and fast from the beginning of maturity; this is ordained by God, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers.”

Concerning the age of maturity mentioned in the above verse, He further explains in the appendix of that same Book: “The age of maturity is in the fifteenth year; women and men are alike in this respect.”

It is thus clear that all Bahá'ís who are age 15 years or older are bound by the law of fasting, with the following exceptions:

Traveling. If one’s travel exceeds nine hours or travel on foot exceeds two hours, he may break his fast. Also, if one breaks a journey to stay at some place for a period of less than 19 days, he must begin fasting from the day of his arrival.

Effendi tells us: “Travelers are exempt from fasting, but if they want to fast while they are traveling, they are free to do so. You are exempt the whole period of travel, not just the hours you are in a train or car, etc.

Age. Those over age 70 do not have to fast, but according to the Guardian: “If one desires to fast after the age limit is passed, and is strong enough, one is free to do so.”

Illness. Those who are ill do not have to fast. “If during the fast period a person falls ill and is unable to fast, but recovers before the fast period is over, he can start to fast again and continue until the end. Of course the fast, as you know, can only be kept during the month set aside for that purpose.”

Pregnancy or nursing. Women who are pregnant or nursing are exempt from fasting.

Special times. Women in their courses, providing they repeat a specifically revealed verse 95 times a day. (Repeat 95 times a day between one noon and the next: “Glorified be God, the Lord of Splendor and Beauty.”)

Who is obligated to fast is clearly defined by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas: ‘We have commanded you to pray and fast from the beginning of maturity; this is ordained by God, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers.’

Heavy labor. Those who are engaged in heavy labor are exempt, but are advised to show respect for the law of the fast by using discretion and restraint when availing themselves of the exemption.

These exemptions should be observed when appropriate, as they are purposely included, not only for the sake of one’s physical health as with the exemptions for illness, nursing or pregnancy, but also to assure that the fast may be a light to one’s life and not a burden on one’s soul. On the other hand, using the exemptions without due cause may well be unacceptable. Sincere prayer and meditation will assuredly shed light on any personal difficulty with this matter.

Lauded be Thy name, O my God! This is the hour when Thou hast unlocked the doors of Thy bounty before the faces of Thy creatures, and opened wide the portals of Thy tender mercy unto all the dwellers of Thine earth.

Thou hast endowed every hour of these days with a special virtue, inscrutable to all except Thee. Whose knowledge embraceth all created things. Thou hast also, assigned unto every soul a portion of this virtue in accordance with the Tablet of Thy decree and the Scriptures of Thine irrevocable judgment.

Grant, O my Lord, that this fast may become a river of living water and may yield the virtue wherewith Thou hast endowed it.

These are Thy servants, O my Lord, who have entered with Thee in this, the Most Great Prison, who have kept the fast within its walls according to what Thou hast commanded them in the Tablets of Thy decree and the Books of Thy behest. Send down, therefore, upon them what will thoroughly purge them of all that Thou abhorrest, that they may be wholly devoted to Thee, and may detach themselves entirely from all except Thyself.”

“This is the hour, O my Lord, which Thou hast caused to excel every other hour, and hast related to the choicest among Thy creatures. I beseech Thee, O my God, by Thy Self and by them to ordain in the course of this year what shall exalt Thy loved ones.”

“Grant, O my Lord, that the fire of Thy love and the heat produced by the fast enjoined by Thee may inflame them in Thy Cause, and make them to be occupied with Thy praise and with remembrance of Thee.”

NOTES

1. The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 22.
8. Quoted in The Bahá’í Life, p. 16.
15. Ibid., p. 59.
16. Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 299.
20. Ibid., p. 59.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
27. Ibid., p. 252.
28. Ibid., p. 249.
29. Ibid., p. 251.
30. Ibid., p. 262.
Bahá'í history

Enterprise: second oldest in U.S.?

It is fairly common knowledge that Chicago is the first and oldest Bahá'í community in America. And many are aware of the uncertainty as to whether Kenosha, Wisconsin, or New York City has the honor of being next in line. But now there is a distinct possibility that a third city may have preceded them as the second oldest community in this country.

After Ibrahim Kheiralla had given his series of classes on the Faith in Chicago a number of times, he traveled to new cities, most notably Kenosha. But before that he made a side trip that is only now becoming more widely known. Where did he go and what were the results? Was this indeed the second Bahá'í community?

There is some evidence 1 that a student in one of Mr. Kheiralla's Chicago classes was a Miss Josephine Hilty who was in that city to continue her musical training. Eventually, she would perform in Europe and teach at a Kansas college, but that would come later. Her family had connections in Chicago; her uncle had had an exhibit at the Columbian Exposition of 1893, among other things.

Miss Hilty's hometown was Enterprise, Kansas. Her mother, Mrs. Jacob (Barbra) Ehrsam, was a Swiss emigrant who was searching for truth. Mrs. Ehrsam was the wealthiest woman in Enterprise. And the prairie settled by Europeans, she owned and operated with her brother the first store there. By the time her daughter went to Chicago, Mrs. Ehrsam was the wealthiest woman in Enterprise. But material goods and social status did not satisfy the yearning in her soul; she sought out one teacher after another, and when Josephine told her of the teachings of Mr. Kheiralla, she invited him to Enterprise to teach.

Mr. Kheiralla arrived in Enterprise in July 1897 as a guest of the Ehrrsam and held classes in the parlor of their home which attracted considerable notice. An article in the weekly Enterprise paper was headlined: "The Bible Is Not the Truth." 2 The day before, the weekly in Abilene, just down the road, headlined its article "Teaches Strange Things." 3 Both articles appeared at the top of the front page; the Abilene article was reprinted in both major dailies in Topeka (the state capital, 80 miles away). One carried the same headline, while the other announced: "Hoffman's New Religion: The People Found Out What Ails Agricultural College Regent." 4 This was a reference to one of Mrs. Ehrsam's nephews who apparently attended a few of the first classes. His activities in Kansas politics guaranteed ample publicity for Mr. Kheiralla's visit and classes.

Accounts of class size ranged from 22 to 27 students, most of whom were relatives of Mrs. Ehrsam's or other members of "polite society" in the area. The evidence suggests that eight of them—including four family members—accepted the Faith at that time, with one more enrolled later in the year. So it appears that there were at least nine Bahá'ís in Enterprise, Kansas, in 1897.

Today a district, regional or national teaching committee would send someone to help them form an Assembly and begin community activities such as the Nineteen Day Feast. Each member would receive The American Bahá'í which not only has news of Bahá'í activities across the country but also carries catalogs and other information from the Bahá'í Publishing Trust. Bahá'ís from nearby communities, many also having Assemblies, would no doubt visit the friends in Enterprise whose members would be invited to district conventions, summer and winter schools, and other area-wide events.

But that is today, not 1897, 1898 or 1899. Then, the closest Bahá'í community was in Chicago, some 600 miles away, and much more remote than it is via a two-hour plane flight. There were no other Bahá'í communities on the continent. In fact, there were only a handful of isolated Bahá'ís, one in Nebraska, another in South Dakota, with the nearest in Kansas City (where there were two, but one of them moved to Enterprise in 1903), and Josephine, who moved to St. Louis. These others were more alone and isolated than the Bahá'ís in Enterprise.

As for studying, there were only two booklets in all of America on the Faith . . . There was no other source of information in 1897: no books, no magazines, no pamphlets, no cassettes, no movies, no radio stations, no scriptures.

This brief overview of the early history of the Bahá'í Faith in Enterprise, Kansas, was written by Duane L. Herrmann of Berryton, Kansas, a Bahá'í for 17 years who has served on Assemblies in Topeka and Hays, Kansas, and the Kansas District Teaching Committee, has degrees in education and history, and is presently helping the U.S. Bahá'í Publishing Trust in its efforts to produce a Bahá'í encyclopedia.

6 March 1987/Bahá'í News
Germany

Two bouquets of roses from Baha'i who are imprisoned in Iran's three major prisons are displayed at the Baha'i House of Worship in Frankfurt, West Germany, during a memorial service last May for the Baha'i martyrs in Iran.

NOTES
4. Topeka Daily Capital, Topeka, Kansas; July 14, 1897, p. 3.
5. "Supplication Book of Students in Miscellaneous Cities, from 1895 to (blank)," National Baha'i Archives, Wilmette, Illinois.
7. Ibid.
8. Letter dated from internal evidence to be late in 1899 from Barbra Ehrsam to Maud Lampson, in "Lampson papers," National Baha'i Archives.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
12. Contributions ledger, Baha'i Temple Unity, National Baha'i Archives.
‘Peace ribbon’ travels to Ube City

When the Bahá’ís of Ube City, Japan, agreed to make banners for last year’s Australian Peace Expo, they asked the friends in their sister city Bahá’í community of Newcastle, Australia, to do them the favor of reserving about 100 banners after the Expo for Ube so that a “piece of the peace ribbon” could be shown at a mini-Expo in Ube later in the year.

The friends in Newcastle did better than that: in addition to the banners from the Expo, they arranged for participants in Australia’s Peace Expo to send messages of peace on postcards (about 125 of them) for display, and persuaded the city council’s “sister cities” committee to sign a joint proclamation with the Bahá’ís of Newcastle, supporting the Ube City Peace Expo.

Also, a set of nine special banners was made by the residents of Newcastle using designs of school children as a gift to the people of Ube; 700 citizens in Newcastle signed petitions supporting the Ube City event; and once it was learned that Dr. Allan Waters (secretary of the Spiritual Assembly of Newcastle), his wife, Muna, and their two children would be in Ube for five days at the end of September, the Spiritual Assembly of Ube decided to plan the Expo to coincide with their visit.

While plans were being carried out in Ube over the summer, Mr. and Mrs. Michael Higgins, pioneers from the U.S. to Ube, visited Newcastle to pick up the banners and to observe firsthand the exciting work for peace going on in Australia. When interviewed on a television news program about the effect of the sister-city connection, Mrs. Higgins said she thought it was very important since in Japan so little had been done about the International Year of Peace due to the erroneous assumption by many that peace movements are necessarily political. Since the people of Ube trust Australia, she said, and particularly Newcastle, and since they also trust the Bahá’ís, the Peace Expo idea was being well-received.

The Ube City Expo was held September 28-29 at a local community center. Activities included the displays of banners and postcards, discussion groups on overcoming barriers to peace, a public lecture by Counsellor Michitosi Zenimoto and Dr. Waters, and video tape and slide shows.

Bahá’í literature was on display and available; participants were invited to take part in the Million Minutes of Peace Movement; and 1,000 paper cranes representing as many prayers for peace were made to send to Newcastle as a gesture of thanks.

About 150 people attended the Expo, which was publicized in four newspapers and by 1,000 posters and flyers distributed by the Bahá’ís of Ube City. One newspaper article described the mood as one of “a big, happy family with a plea for one world.”

Many thoughtful expressions of appreciation were received. A local artist summed up her impressions with a haiku poem written above a drawing of a field of dandelions: “They really can fly, the seeds of peace, to wide-open sky!”

A piece of Australia’s ‘peace ribbon’ which was displayed last September 28-29 at the Peace Expo in Ube City, Japan, thanks to cooperation between Bahá’ís in the ‘sister cities’ of Ube and Newcastle, Australia.
Pictured is the new antenna of Radio Bahá’í-Lake Titicaca in Puno, Peru. The antenna was erected in November 1986, the same month in which the station observed its fifth anniversary of operation. In the background is Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world and the cradle of the oldest civilization in America. (Photo by Antonio Cabezas)
The world

‘Peace Child’ drama shown in Hawaii

“Peace Child,” an internationally acclaimed musical drama, was produced for the first time in Hawaii last November by the National Spiritual Assembly’s International Year of Peace Committee through an arrangement with the Peace Child Foundation.

The work is a professionally done musical comedy suitable for all ages, with a cast of scores of children and adults.

Former Lt. Gov. Jean King, a longtime friend of the Faith, helped promote the musical in the name of the University of Hawaii’s Peace Institute through correspondence with 185 school principals on Oahu, and by personal contact with major organizations in Honolulu.

A major television news network produced a prime-time feature on the peace drama that included footage of “Peace Child” at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., in an interview with the author, David Woolcombe, and shots of rehearsals at the Bahá’í National Center in Hawaii.

Following its premiere performances on November 14-15, the National Spiritual Assembly of Hawaii reported that “Peace Child” had received generally popular acclaim. Five hundred-thirty school children attended a standing-room-only special performance, and at the nightly performances, attendance averaged more than 800.

The National Assembly says it feels that the power of the spirit unleashed by the musical was “overwhelming.”

The Bahá’í community of Hawaii, which has been winning awards for floats in the annual Aloha Parade for 20 years, took home its 17th award last September, first place in the non-commercial division, for a “World Peace” float covered with 40,000 tropical flowers.

Swaziland

The National Spiritual Assembly of Swaziland has reported a “spiritual revival in Swaziland.” Bahá’ís and non-Bahá’ís, it says, are learning about the Station of Bahá’u’lláh through a “new approach” to teaching.

A new approach arose from a concern on the part of long-deepened Swazi Bahá’ís about the failure to reach new people, unlike the days of the Ten Year Crusade when the Teachings were met with an enthusiastic response.

A new approach was developed which they call “an African approach.” It was noted that three recent funerals of Bahá’ís who had long been firm in the Faith and had served as delegates to National Conventions had included all-night vigils, as is the African custom. On these occasions, three Swazi members of the National Assembly began to teach the assembled friends about Bible prophecies and to relate them to the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh. “It was magic!” the National Assembly’s report says. “The people came alive. They began to understand!”

Recently, the report continues, a request was received from the Gege area, home of two Bahá’ís whose funerals were held last August 16 and 18, asking the friends to concentrate on more all-night vigils to proclaim the Faith and find waiting souls.

“Gege has long been a favorite spot for teaching the Faith . . . “ the report says. “Chief Hlatshwayo has loved the Faith and encouraged his people to study it deeply. He has a large collection of Bahá’í books and wants one day to build a library where all the Bahá’í books will be kept. He is now 83 years old and quite ill. His son, Joseph, recently returned from the Republic of South Africa, has been studying the books and is on fire with the Teachings.”

It was Joseph who asked for an all-night vigil which was held last September 27. Despite cold and rain, four loaded cars traveled almost 100 kilometers to attend.

The National Assembly’s report continues, “The next morning, the Bahá’ís called on Chief Hlatshwayo, who was too frail to attend the meeting, and he was so thrilled to receive the delegation of over 30 people to pay respects to him. He strongly emphasized that we should return and deepen his people in the knowledge of this beautiful Faith.”

Paraguay

The “Mona” music video was shown last October 25 on a popular television show that originates in Asuncion, Paraguay, and is seen all over the country.

Bahá’ís placed an ad in an Asuncion newspaper inviting the public to watch the program.

Nicaragua

The Bahá’ís of Nicaragua have erected the third in a series of billboards in the capital city, Managua, this one with a message for the International Year of Peace.

Beneath the word “peace,” which appears in 19 languages and various scripts including Miskito, a local indigenous language, is the message, “We are working for world peace. The Bahá’í Faith.”
Germany

The National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom has approved the creation of a British Association of Bahá'í Esperantists (Brita Asocio de Bahá'aj-Esperantistoj) to bring together all those in the Bahá'í community who are interested in that international language. The Association aims to organize the work and spread information about the language among the Bahá'ís, and about the Faith among Esperantists.

For the third time in less than a year, "Peace by Peace," the monthly journal of the Peace People movement in Northern Ireland, has carried a substantial article about the Faith among the Peace People, who celebrate their 10th anniversary this year, have friends and supporters in many countries, and their publication is circulated worldwide.

Spain

For the first time in Spain, Bahá'ís have held institutes on the topic of the equality of the sexes.

In Terrassa last September 27-28, the event drew 18 participants of both sexes, while in Cartagena, on October 11-12, 50 adults took part. Counsellor Agnes Ghaznavi was present to observe the discussions.

Thailand

The national Summer School that was held last August in Phattalung Province of South Thailand proved to be a great stimulus to the Bahá'ís in the town of Phattalung.

They are now looking into the acquisition of a local Bahá'í Center, and have recently brought new and active members into the Faith.

One youth who accepted the Faith at the Summer School returned to his home village in Tale Meang and enlisted 16 other youth in the Faith. He has since volunteered to start a second Santitham Children's Library in his village, and his local Assembly is considering acquiring a Bahá'í Center for that purpose.
Panama

A World Peace Day television program was presented last September 20 by the local Spiritual Assembly of Panama City, Panama.

The program, entitled “Religion, Source of Peace,” included participation by a respected rabbi, the spiritual leader of the oldest Jewish congregation in Panama; a Sikh leader; a Muslim spokesman; an Episcopal priest; and Oscar Torres, representing the Bahá’í community of Panama. Each of the panel members drew upon extracts from the sacred writings of his religion.

The moderator was Mrs. Damaris Perez de Gonzalez, who explained the basic teachings of the Bahá’í Faith on the oneness of God, the Prophets, and humankind. She also spoke about progressive revelation, showing that all religions proceed from a divine Source.

An extensive newspaper report of the program, headlined “The Bahá’ís and the World Day of Peace,” which appeared September 21 in La Estrella de Panama, ended by saying, “We feel that this program was truly a model of dignity, of working together for peace and love of humanity. We congratulate all the participants, especially the Bahá’í community of Panama.”

The Muslim participant on the panel sent a letter to the Bahá’ís after the program in which he said, “It was my pleasure to be with you and the Bahá’ís of Panama. If our intentions were pure, it will have a force for the coming years. I am grateful to you and the rest of your co-workers for your project to gain peace. Please say ‘thank-you’ to them. Let us pray that peace may be coming in our life—soon.”

Ivory Coast/Guinea

Two Bahá’í representatives attended a government-sponsored seminar last October 15-18 in Conakry, Guinea.

Participants included members of all ministries of government and representatives of public associations and organizations concerned with helping handicapped persons.

The Bahá’ís participated as members of an international non-governmental organization. Their role in the seminar was appreciated by the other participants and reflected favorably on the Faith.

Bahá’í International Community

Senior staff from overseas offices of the Bahá’í International Community convened last October 31 in New York City for eight days of planning what the Universal House of Justice termed “a new, potent stage in the development of the external affairs of the worldwide Bahá’í community.”

Taking part in the consultation were the Bahá’í International Community’s United Nations representatives in New York and Geneva and members of the Offices of Public Information in New York and Haifa.

Participants in the meetings, which were chaired by Counsellor Wilma Brady, included Dr. Victor de Araujo, Giovanni Ballerio, Gerald Knight, Paul Öjemark and Mary Sawicki of the UN offices; Douglas Martin, Mary Hardy and Hugh Locke of the Offices of Public Information; and representatives of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Canada and the U.S. and their Public Information Offices.

In a message to the gathering, the Universal House of Justice noted that the past three years have seen the establishment of the Office of Public Information, the consolidation of the Executive Committee, the creation of the Social and Economic Development Unit, and the enlargement of the Geneva branch of the BIC by the transfer from New York of the Human Rights unit. These moves, it said, forecast “far-reaching diplomatic and public-relations prospects opening before the Bahá’í world community.”

Republic of Ireland

The “Mona” music video was shown on national television in Ireland last November 10, in a prime time program with a magazine format.

The video was preceded by a brief interview with Patrick Dawson, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, who spoke about the Bahá’í community in Ireland.

Following the video, a summary of the principles of the Faith was presented.

Philippines

Laotian and Vietnamese Bahá’ís are pictured at the Philippine Refugee Processing Center in Morong, Bataan. With them are pioneer John Soderlund (back row, left) and two members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Philippines. More than 200 Indo-Chinese refugees at the Center have become Bahá’ís, and the newly formed community, composed of Laotian, Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees, is translating Bahá’í literature into the Laotian language.
Alaska

Kotzebue, a city of a few thousand on Kotzebue Sound in northwestern Alaska, was host last July 28-August 3 to the Inuit Circumpolar Conference.

The Inuit are Eskimo people, united by language and culture yet separated geographically. The conference brought together Inuit from Canada, Greenland, Alaska and the Soviet Union. The ICC is presently the only international forum for an exchange of information, ideas and problem-solving among the Inuit in these circumpolar countries, and its deliberations include ecological, social, cultural, economic and educational issues.

A feature of last year's gathering was a Native Trade Fair for sharing arts, cultural events, food and entertainment.

The Baha'is of Kotzebue, eager to be of help to the international Inuit community and to present the Faith at this important forum, hosted visitors in their homes and organized their own significant participation.

The local Spiritual Assembly offered an evening program with a speaker on native prophecy and another to introduce the peace statement to the Inuit.

A gift of 800 pens bearing Bahá'í slogans was made to the Inuit delegates. A showing of a Bahá'í video tape proved to be quite popular; a high school principal asked if he might review it for possible use in his school.

Baha'i involvement in the conference was effective, and much individual teaching took place. It was learned that several delegates from other cities and countries had Bahá'í family members. Exposure to the Faith in the context of the Kotzebue conference was a positive experience for these guests.

India

The Bahá'í State Council of Bihar approached All India Radio of Patna and obtained the station's agreement to broadcast the Universal House of Justice's peace statement in daily installments last October 6-24.

Acting on its own initiative, the Forests Department of the government of Madhya Pradesh, India, recommended the Rabbani Bahá'í School in Gwalior as that state's entry for best tree-planting project and candidate for a national award from the central government of India.

Last November 10, the National Spiritual Assembly of India was informed that the Rabbani School had won the "Indira Gandhi Friends of Trees Award—1986" which was presented on November 19.

Malaysia

An interview with Fariburz Sahba, architect of the Bahá'í House of Worship in India, appeared in the October 1986 issue of Her World, an English-language women's magazine in Malaysia.

Under the heading "Creating a Dream," the Temple is described and the architect's philosophy revealed.

Mr. Sahba points out the significance of the lotus symbol in the religions of Buddhism and Hinduism, and as a feature of Muslim architecture of the Mogul period in India, and concludes that the lotus form of the Bahá'í House of Worship "has something to say to everyone."

In Kanowit, East Malaysia, 10 copies of "The Promise of World Peace" were recently presented to local Chinese leaders and Kanowit officials by Auxiliary Board members Tan Hock Siew and Clarence Suai with a Bahá'í delegation from Sibu.

The secretary of the District Council asked for copies of the statement in the Iban language to be given to the people in the Kanowit District.

A youth conference, organized by the youth group of Balai Ringin in Serian, Malaysia, and held last September 27, was attended by 52 students and several friends from surrounding areas.

Topics studied included "After Becoming a Bahá'í," "Bahá'í Marriage," "The Purpose of Our Lives," "Bahá'í History," and "Unity and Harmony."

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New Zealand

The local council in Cambridge, New Zealand, asked the city's Baha'is to organize a multicultural evening to help celebrate its recent centennial. The small Baha'i community coordinated a number of cultural groups to present an evening of "richness, diversity and unity," according to a front-page article in a local newspaper.

The event, held at a primary school, drew an outstanding attendance and was met with requests for more such evenings.

The Bahá'í community of Cambridge is excited about the growing opportunities to present Bahá'í views to the community: "While most communities have been presenting their mayors and council members with the peace message, ours have been asking us for copies!"

"Our mayor . . . convened a meeting recently to establish a peace group. At the meeting, the mayor requested that someone volunteer to be chairman of the resulting peace group, and when no one stepped forward, one of the Bahá'ís was chosen . . .

"It is anticipated that a lot of people apart from peace group members are intending to be at the next forum. As you may have guessed, the Bahá'í principles are getting a major airing at these meetings and are receiving an enthusiastic response."

Cuba

Baha'is in Havana, Cuba, are shown with Sohrab Yazdani (seated in center), an Iranian Baha'i who is pioneering in Argentina, during Mr. Yazdani's recent visit to Cuba.

Sri Lanka

The board of governors of a leading international school in Colombo, Sri Lanka, recently adopted the Bahá'í principle of "unity in diversity" as its new school motto.

After canvassing the students, staff and parents for suggestions, the board finally accepted the suggestion of a Bahá'í pioneer on the staff that this principle was most appropriate for the school, whose students represent more than 30 nationalities.

An upsurge in teaching has taken place in Sri Lanka since last June when the National Spiritual Assembly embarked on a new teaching plan.

In the first three months, 386 people were enrolled, which was twice the number enrolled in the previous three-month period. Seven new local Assemblies were formed and 91 localities opened to the Faith.

The new plan calls for a permanent office for the National Teaching Committee, which is coordinating the work of traveling teachers and dispatching more than 600 letters per month.

Norway

The National Spiritual Assembly of Norway sponsored an "overwhelmingly successful" event last October 23 at the University Hall, Oslo, to celebrate the International Year of Peace.

A full house of more than 500 heard the keynote address, written by Mrs. Coretta Scott King, widow of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and delivered by their son, Dexter King.

The event was held in the same room in which Dr. King received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.
Zaire

The Bahá'ís of the South Central region of Zaire, in cooperation with the University of Lubumbashi, sponsored a public lecture on the peace statement last September 20 which drew a standing-room-only audience in the 500-seat Assembly Hall of the Regional Government of Shaba.

Among those present were the governor's representative; the president of the Regional Assembly; municipal authorities; professors from the university; religious leaders; public administrators; and members of the judiciary, the military, the consular corps, international organizations, and local businesses.

Speakers included the head of the Department of International Relations at Lubumbashi University; Counsellor Wingi Mabuku, representing the Bahá'ís; and Professor Yezi, a prominent expert in international relations who is well-known in city and university circles as a former Catholic priest.

After a masterly speech, which he opened by quoting from the Universal House of Justice's peace statement, Prof. Yezi invited questions.

One inquirer asked whether, as a doctor of canonical law, and an eminent internationalist, the professor could truly conclude that all present systems are powerless to establish peace, and that only the Bahá'í Faith has means adequate to the task. The questioner concluded, "Can we consider your talk as propagandistic?"

Prof. Yezi replied that he had researched many avenues to the establishment of peace and had never been satisfied; but on reading the peace statement, he felt he had found an element that was missing. That was the reason, he said, that he had not hesitated when asked by the Bahá'ís to participate in the lecture but had seized the opportunity to speak.

Canary Islands

The Canary Islands held a National Bahá'í Youth Conference for three days last November. Thirty-five youth and 30 adults participated and were encouraged by the presence of Counsellor Sohrab Youssefian and Auxiliary Board member Taheri.

Trinidad/Tobago

Pictured are many of those who attended a Bahá'í school last July 3-August 31 at the Perso Praesto Youth Camp in central Trinidad. Not in the photo are several of the Bahá'í youth and most of the Bahá'í children who attended the school.

A Bahá'í booth displaying books, pamphlets and posters about the Faith and world peace was part of a 'Family Fair' last May 15-21 in San Fernando, Trinidad, West Indies. The fair, organized by the Ministry of Community Development and Local Government, had as its theme 'Love Peace, Enlightenment,' which gave the Bahá'ís a wonderful opportunity to proclaim the Faith and distribute copies of 'The Promise of World Peace.'

Haiti

The National Spiritual Assembly of Haiti announced last October that the president of the National Council of Government of the Republic of Haiti, Lt. Gen. Henry Namphy, had received the peace statement on September 30.
Peru

A new Bahá’í tutorial school was opened May 24 in Puno, Peru. The opening ceremony included an address by Prof. Gilberto Sanchez, director of the “Instituto Superior Pedagogico de Puno,” a type of teachers’ college.

During his talk Prof. Sanchez offered the support of the Institute for the Bahá’í school.

The tutorial school will be held in two rooms donated by an indigenous Bahá’í in Puno, Ricardo Choque. The rooms will seat up to 30 students.

Desks and chairs were donated by the National Spiritual Assembly of Peru and the local Assembly in Puno in a joint effort.

Programs to be offered include classes in family health, handicrafts, cooking, electricity and math. For the time being, teachers are Bahá’í volunteers, but help has been offered also from non-Bahá’í institutions in Puno.

Central African Republic

Baha’is representing the National Spiritual Assembly of the Central African Republic present the peace statement to the country’s Minister of Public Works and Urban Planning (center). The country’s head of state received a copy of the statement last March.

Ecuador

Last September 24, a delegation of three Bahá’ís from Quito presented a copy of the peace statement to Dr. Blasco Penaherrera Padilla, vice-president of the Republic of Ecuador.

After reading the cover letter from the National Spiritual Assembly, Dr. Padilla spoke of his personal support for the work of the Bahá’í community, especially that of Quito, and thanked the delegation for the statement.

Uganda

As members of a Religious Task Force on Immunization, the Bahá’í community of Uganda helped develop two booklets, under the auspices of UNICEF, called “Immunize and Protect Your Child” and “Immunization for Religious Leaders in Uganda.”

The National Spiritual Assembly of Uganda reports that the government is quite pleased with the involvement of religious groups in promoting the immunization of children.

An immunization center has been set up at the Bahá’í Teaching Institute on the House of Worship grounds on Ki-kaaya Hill in Kampala at which an average of 75 children are immunized every Thursday morning.

Three groups of workers from the Uganda National Expanded Program for Immunization (UNEP) came from the U.S. and Canada to help administer the program. After visiting the Temple, they expressed appreciation for its lovely atmosphere and promised to convey loving greetings from the Ugandan Bahá’ís to the Bahá’ís of Canada and the U.S.
Honduras

More than 1,000 Hondurans attended a cultural program last August 26-28 sponsored by the local Spiritual Assembly of Tegucigalpa. During the program, the peace statement was introduced to some 2,000 public figures.

The program included performances by the University Choir, the Garifuna dance group, the Honduran Folklore dance group and the Tegucigalpa ballet company, original guitar compositions, poetry reading, and a piano recital, followed by the singing of a "hymn of joy." Quotations from the peace statement were read between acts.

A banner was hung over the entrance to the theatre in which the program was held, proclaiming, "Peace is not only possible, but inevitable."

Counselor Farzam Arbáb visited the Bahá'ís of Honduras last October after taking part in the National University of Honduras' annual "Scientific Week," an event that is considered to be the premier gathering of intellectuals in that country.

From October 8-11, Dr. Arbáb participated in a series of activities planned by the National Spiritual Assembly and the local Assembly of Tegucigalpa.

In a presentation on "Development and Peace," Dr. Arbáb spoke to about 100 academic leaders, referring frequently to the peace statement.

Eighty students preparing for higher academic training in the U.S. were addressed by Dr. Arbáb who challenged their concepts of life-goals and stressed the importance of spiritual values.

According to one report of the event, "The atmosphere was electric, and the students crowded around Dr. Arbáb after the discussion, not wanting to let him go."

Brazil

In the town of Foz do Iguaco, Brazil, near the place where the borders of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay meet, a bronze and granite monument was erected by the Bahá'ís of the area and unveiled last September 14 on a lovely plot of land overlooking the common frontier of the three countries.

In the presence of 200 Bahá'ís from eight countries, representatives of local government and other distinguished guests, the monument was unveiled by Hushmand Fatheazam, a member of the Universal House of Justice.

The bronze plate is inscribed with the symbol of the Greatest Name, the symbol of the United Nations International Year of Peace, and contains the words, "The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens.—Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892)."

Brazil's ongoing Amazon Project, ADCAM (Association for Cohesive Development of the Amazon), scored major successes last September.

As a result of two years of hard work and planning, land has been obtained from the government for an agricultural school in the northwestern State of Amazonas, and the deed transferring ownership has been signed. Two Bahá'í pioneer families have settled in the area, one in Iranduba and the other in Manacupuru.

Success is also reported in the operation of the Linda Tanure Orphanage, serving more than 20 children, which has twice been visited by the governor of the State.

Bangladesh

The first Bahá'í press conference in the history of Bangladesh was held last August 29 by the local Spiritual Assembly of Mymensingh.

Twenty-four representatives of national and local newspapers attended the conference, whose topic was the International Year of Peace.

Besides the members of the local Assembly, three Auxiliary Board members took part in the conference. The master of ceremonies began by reading a part of the Tablet of Tarazat having to do with the importance of the press.

When questions were invited, one of the editors, speaking on behalf of the others, said, "We have nothing to say except to appreciate the Bahá'í Faith, and these goals are our hearts' wishes... please say what kind of help we can offer."

By September 3, news of the conference, based on summaries of the speeches given and copies of the peace statement that were handed out, had appeared in three local newspapers with a photograph of the meeting.

Madagascar

The peace statement has been translated into the Malagache language of Madagascar. Some 10,000 copies will soon be printed and a distribution campaign begun in all areas of the country.
“Are you happy?” He would ask. What wouldn’t we give to have been one of the thousands of Americans to meet and hear ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during His historic visit to North America 75 years ago so we could answer, “Yes!” Instead, we have been given the bounty of serving the Cause in the closing years of the 20th century, a century that He said would illumine the whole earth, a century in which humanity would at long last see the first glimmerings of the Dawn of the Most Great Peace. Seventy-five years ago, when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá arrived aboard the steamship Cedric, the American Bahá’í community was small and disorganized. Pockets of believers met here and there to pray and meditate, and knew somehow that they had learned of a great new Messenger of God, but few of them could even so much as outline the history, teachings or principles of their new-found Faith. Then came ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and for the Bahá’ís of America, in the words of Howard Colby Ives, “life has never been quite the same since.”

We take pleasure in devoting this Issue of Bahá’í News to the 75th anniversary of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit to the U.S. and Canada, and during the next nine months we’ll be following His remarkable journey of three-quarters of a century ago across the continent. We also intend to share with you news of the celebrations marking this anniversary, not only in the cities visited by the Master but also in the many other cities, towns, villages and hamlets where the Bahá’ís of today live and teach.

We’d also like to share an excerpt from a Tablet written by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá about the magazine Star of the West, the spiritual forebear of today’s Bahá’í News, World Order magazine, and The American Bahá’í:

“O thou Star of the West! Be thou happy! Be thou happy! Shouldst thou continue to remain firm and eternal, ere long thou shalt become the Star of the East and shalt spread in every country and clime. Thou art the first paper of the Bahá’ís which is organized in the country of America. Although for the present thy subscribers are limited, thy form is small and thy voice weak, yet shouldst thou stand unshakable, become the object of the attention of the friends and the center of the generosity of the leaders of the faith who are firm in the Covenant, in the future thy subscribers will become hosts after hosts like unto waves of the sea; thy volume will increase, thy arena will become vast and spacious and thy voice and fame will be raised and become world-wide—and at last thou shalt become the first paper of the world of humanity. Yet all these depend upon firmness, firmness, firmness!”

Your support and interest can help Bahá’í News live up to those lofty ideals, for today it is indeed read and shared in “every country and clime.” Please share this issue with the friends, show it at the Nineteen Day Feast, and use the enclosed subscription forms. Bahá’í News is not a secret; you may use it in your teaching and deepening, and, while they last, extra copies of this issue can be ordered for only $2 each. We are always excited and happy to receive articles and photographs of events in your community, as the purpose of Bahá’í News is to share the victories and progress of the Cause of God in this Day with the entire Bahá’í world community.

Happy reading!
'Abdu'l-Bahá in America

"His face was light itself," wrote Wendell Phillips Dodge, a reporter for the New York City News Association. Mr. Dodge and other reporters had gone to the steamship Cedric to interview the "Wise Man Out of the East" as the ship carrying Him to America passed the Statue of Liberty, steamed up the North River and docked in the future City of the Covenant.

In his account of their meeting, Mr. Dodge left with us a vivid word-picture of the 67-year-old 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "He is strongly and solidly built, and weighs probably 165 pounds. As he paced the deck, talking with the reporters, he appeared alert and active in every movement, his head thrown back and splendidly poised upon his broad, square shoulders, most of the time. A profusion of iron grey hair bursting out at the sides of the turban and hanging long upon the neck; a large, massive head, full-domed and remarkably wide across the forehead and temples, the forehead rising like a great palisade above the eyes, which were very wide apart, their orbits large and deep, looking out from under massive overhanging brows; strong Roman nose, generous ears, decisive yet kindly mouth and chin; a creamy white complexion, beard same color as his hair, worn full over the face and carefully trimmed at almost full length—this completes an insufficient word picture of this 'Wise Man Out of the East.'" (Star of the West, Vol. 3, No. 3, April 28, 1912)

The reporters asked Him questions about newspapers, liberty, women's suffrage, and at last, "What is a Bahá'i?" 'Abdu'l-Bahá replied, "simply means to love all the world, to love humanity and try to serve it; to work for universal peace and the universal brotherhood." He then gazed in wonder at the "rugged skyline of the lower city formed by the downtown skyscrapers" and remarked, pointing at the towering structures, "These are the minarets of Western World commerce and industry, and seem to stretch these things heavenward in an endeavor to bring about this universal peace for which we are all working, for the good of the nations and mankind in general." 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Servant of God, the Most Great Branch, the Exemplar and Interpreter of His Father's teachings, had arrived in America.

In God Passes By, Shoghi Effendi writes: "It was reserved, however, for the North American continent to witness the most astonishing manifestation of the boundless vitality 'Abdu'l-Bahá exhibited in the course of these journeys. The remarkable progress achieved by the organized community of His followers in the United States and Canada, the marked receptivity of the American public to His message, as well as His consciousness of the high destiny awaiting the people of that continent, fully warranted the expenditure of time and energy which He devoted to this most important phase of His travels."

It was a journey of more than 5,000 miles, from April to December, and carried Him from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast and back. In New York alone He delivered public addresses in, or made formal visits to, no less than 55 different places. He spoke, says the Guardian, to "Peace societies, Christian and Jewish congregations, colleges and universities, welfare and charitable organizations, members of ethical cults, New Thought centers, metaphysical groups, women's clubs, scientific associations, gatherings of Esperantists, Theosophists, Mormons and agnostics, institutions for the advancement of colored people, representatives of the Syrian, the Armenian, the Greek, the Chinese, and Japanese communities." Of all His talks, interviews and meetings in America, Shoghi Effendi lists seven acts that "fully demonstrated the importance He attached to that visit." These seven most important events were: the laying, with His own hands, of the dedication stone of the House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois; the reading of the Tablet of the Branch to an assemblage of His followers in New York; His pilgrimage to the grave of Thornton Chase, the first American Bahá'í; the Unity Feast that He hosted in West Englewood, New Jersey; His participation in an Open Forum at Green Acre in Eliot, Maine; His address to the last session of the newly founded Bahá'í Temple Unity in Chicago; and last but not least, His uniting in wedlock two members of the black and white races, Louis Gregory and Louisa Mathews. These acts, writes the Guardian, "must rank among the outstanding functions associated with His visit to the community of the American believers, functions designed to pave the way for the erection of their central House of Worship, to fortify them against the tests they were soon to endure, to cement their unity, and to bless the beginnings of that Administrative Order which they were soon to initiate and champion."

In the following pages, and in future issues of Bahá'í News during this 75th anniversary year of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to North America, we hope recreate in some small measure the excitement of those times and to provide you with an insight into the history and significance of these seven most important acts.
Within days of the close of the 1909 convention (of Baha'i Temple Unity) a committee of the Executive Board—consisting of Albert Hall, Bernard Jacobsen, and Mountfort Mills—began working on the purchase of the 12 lots for which Corinne True held option. On 17 May the Baha'is purchased that land from Silas Crandall for a reported $32,500. The Chicago Examiner, mixing fact and fiction, reported that

While none of those interested in the movement can give any definite date, it is believed work will be started within the next two months.

The work is to be accompanied by unique ceremonies. Many members of the local cult, it is said, will give up their homes and live on the sacred grounds while the work is going on. With their own hands they will construct the temple, men and women alike carrying brick and mortar.

The temple will be built to symbolize the new man—the perfected man—to justify the perfected world. It will have nine outer walls and nine fountains, each fountain representing a world religion and a world Messiah, all meeting and unifying through the latter day revelation of truth made through triune manifestations of God through the three great Baha'i messengers. The temple will be erected on a triangular plot and will represent the trinity of teachers* who brought to the world the gospel of Bahaism. Since 'Abdu'l-Baha had already indicated that the gardens should be circular, the Executive Board was not pleased with the triangular shape. In an effort to make the plot more circular the Executive Board convinced the village of Wilmette to eliminate roadways running through the property. The board also negotiated with the Sanitary District Board of Chicago, which was building a canal along the western boundary, in order to straighten out that boundary. But a misunderstanding between the Executive Board and the Sanitary Board almost caused the negotiations to fail. When the Sanitary Board did not hear from the Executive Board—because the Executive Board was waiting to hear from the Sanitary Board—the Sanitary Board assumed that the Baha'is were no longer interested in site modifications, and workers were ordered to begin construction of the canal. On the day the digging was to start, a fierce storm broke out that prevented work on the canal for four days. Communications were reestablished during that time, and the land transactions were completed. By April 1910 Honore Jaxon, negotiator for the Executive Board, reported, "As the matter is now agreed upon, by all the parties in interest, our holdings are so consolidated that on our own land we can draw a circle of nearly five hundred feet diameter..."

Payment for the land seemed formidable at first. Although the Chicago House of Spirituality had given a Temple Fund of $3,666.44 to the Baha'i Temple Unity, along with the title to the two lots, the amount in the fund was far short of what was needed, for the contract on the land required the payment of $5,000 every six months, plus interest. Corinne True, as the new financial secretary of the Executive Board, wrote to Helen Goodall that "every effort will need to be made to meet" the payments and that "all must unite in sacrificing." The initial response of the Baha'is was heart-warming: "The Contributions to the Fund came in so fast," Mrs. True recalled, "that I was rushed to death recepting for them." 

During the first year of the Baha'i Temple Unity, several methods for collecting money were devised, including a Widow's Quilt Fund, the use of 3,500 "blessing boxes," and the private sale of Baha'i hymn books. Children in Baha'i Sunday school groups nationwide sent in their offerings—sometimes only a few pennies, but often several dollars. In Washington, D.C., a variety of programs were begun, including one in which Baha'is performed odd jobs for other Baha'is and then contributed their wages. One woman from Greenwich, Connecticut, convinced that the Temple would be completed with unusual swiftness, sent her donation of $19 and wrote, "I hope that I am not too late!" By the end of the year, contributions had been received from 61 cities in 22 states. Although the amount received from North America (Canada, Mexico, the Hawaiian Islands, and the United States) and Europe (England, France, and Germany) totaled $7,638.66, this sum was nearly equaled by gifts totaling $7,092.85 from Baha'is in India, Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Russia, Egypt, and Persia.

These contributions from the East were encouraged by 'Abdu'l-Baha, Who bade the Oriental Baha'is to

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*The Baha'i Faith has only one founder, Baha'u'llah. The Chicago Examiner may be referring to 'Abdu'l-Baha and to the Bab, Prophet-Forerunner of Baha'u'llah, as the two other teachers.

This article about the laying in 1912 of the dedication stone for the Baha'i House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, is reprinted from Bruce W. Whitmore, The Dawning Place: The Building of a Temple, the Forging of the North American Baha'i community, pp. 53-65, copyright © 1984 by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States.
"Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a group of believers from the Chicago area in a se-
cluded grove of trees in Lincoln Park during His six-day visit to Chicago that
began on April 30, 1912.

"strive to gather these funds to be sent to the Occident that it may become
known and evident throughout the universe that the Bahá'ís of the East and
West are as members of one household and the children of the one Lord." In
reference to the particularly large contribu-
tions from Persia, He wrote:

"From the inception of the world
until now there has been no uniting
bond between Persia and Amer-
ica... Now consider what a joy
and bliss have united these two re-
gions in the shortest space of
time!...

"The beloved in the East are
striving with heart and soul to contribute
to the best of their ability, although
the internal conditions of Persia
have, during the last few years, been
exceedingly disturbed. ... There has
been no agriculture, no trade and no
commerce; nay, rather, in all the
provinces there have been political
disputes and quarrels. ... Thus,
they have been wholly occupied with
their own affairs. Notwithstanding
this, they have striven to contribute
to the Mashrak-el-Azkar in Chicago
according to their best ability, and
they will never be found wanting! If
Persia should obtain order, the be-
loved there will make a worthy con-
tribution." 7

Referring to the contributions from
the East, Corinne True wrote to Helen
Goodall, "My soul is thrilled and
thrilled (and) I see the marvellous work
of Union of the whole world being
done by the Mashrak-el-Azkar." 8

During October 1909, when Louise
Waite, an early Bahá'í from Chicago,
visited 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Akka, He said
to her, "You must tell the believers in
the West that they must work equally
hard, with great love and zeal, to show
the East their appreciation." Mrs.
Waite described to 'Abdu'l-Bahá the
many sacrifices being made for the
project all over America. When He
heard about the work of the children,
she recalled, "All would have felt a
thousand times repaid could they have
seen His face so illumined with love
and real joy. Very good! very good!
He said over and over." 9

Another visitor to Akka in 1909, Isab-
ella Brittingham from New York,
asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá if He would visit
America. After 40 years of imprison-
ment in Akka, 'Abdu'l-Bahá regained
His liberty in 1909 as a result of the
Young Turks revolt. Now that He was
no longer a prisoner, the Bahá'ís in
America hoped that He would visit
them. Corinne True recorded that con-
versation later, writing, "'He laughed
very joyously... emphasizing the
first word "If they build the Mashrakel
Azkar."' 8 When Mrs. Brittingham
asked Him again, "His face grew
very serious and a great majesty came
upon it. After a second or two He con-
tinued "If the ground in America is
well prepared so that much work can
be done for the Cause... The build-
ing of the Mashrakel Azkar will pre-
pare that ground."' 8 10

Many requests were sent in the fol-
lowing months, to which 'Abdu'l-Bahá
replied:

If ye are yearning for my meeting,
and if in reality ye are seeking my
visit, ye must close the doors of dif-
ference and open the gates of affec-
tion, love and friendship. Ye must
pulsate as one heart, and throb as
one spirit... .

Verily, verily, I say unto you, were
it not for this difference amongst
you, the inhabitants of America in
all those regions would have, by
now, been attracted to the Kingdom
of God, and would have constituted themselves your helpers and assistants. Is it meet that you sacrifice this most glorious bounty for worthless imaginations? No, by God! Should you reflect for one moment, you shall become enabled to destroy amongst yourselves. Adorn with infinite love and concord the imaginations? No, by God! Should you reflect for one moment, you shall become enabled to destroy amongst yourselves. Adorn with infinite love and concord the imaginations? No, by God! Should you reflect for one moment, you shall become enabled to destroy amongst yourselves. Adorn with infinite love and concord the imaginations? No, by God! Should you reflect for one moment, you shall become enabled to destroy amongst yourselves. Adorn with infinite love and concord the imaginations? No, by God! Should you reflect for one moment, you shall become enabled to destroy amongst yourselves. Adorn with infinite love and concord the imaginations? No, by God! 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he, too, had the disease. The doctors felt that the attack was mild and sent him east to a sanatorium. Nevertheless, his condition deteriorated. In April 1911 Corinne True took him to a sanatorium in Denver, Colorado, where the doctors hoped that he would benefit from the climate. As the summer months passed, Davis seemed to improve, but by the end of the year his condition again worsened. In March 1912 the doctors determined that he had only a few weeks to live. He returned home from the sanatorium shortly before ‘Abdu’l-Bahá arrived in Chicago.

After visiting Davis, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá came downstairs and told Corinne True that her son was a wonderful young man and that He found him much better than expected. She was overjoyed and confident that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence would cause Davis to recover. Hence she joyously accepted ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s invitation to accompany Him to the lectures He was scheduled to give that afternoon. Shortly after they left, Davis died. His final words were that he was happy ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was present to comfort his mother. Only later did Mrs. True realize that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had been referring to Davis’ spiritual rather than physical condition.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Corinne True had driven to Hull House, the civic center founded by scholar and philanthropist Jane Addams in 1889 to provide “the ignorant, inarticulate immigrant tenement-dwellers of Chicago’s congested slum areas” with “a center for a higher civic and social life.” After ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was introduced, He urged the several hundred people there to promote unity among the races:

In the human kingdom itself there are points of contact, properties common to all mankind; likewise, there are points of distinction which separate race from race, individual from individual. If the points of contact, which are the common properties of humanity, overcome the peculiar points of distinction, unity is assured. On the other hand, if the points of differentiation overcome the points of agreement, disunion and weakness result. One of the important questions which affect the unity and the solidarity of mankind is the fellowship and equality of the white and colored races. Between these two races certain points of agreement and points of distinction exist which warrant just mutual consideration. . . .

In fact numerous points of partnership and agreement exist between the two races; whereas the one point of distinction is that of color. Shall this, the least of all distinctions, be allowed to separate you as races and individuals? In physical bodies, in the law of growth, in the sense endowment, intelligence, patriotism, language, citizenship, civilization and religion you are one and the same. A single point of distinction exists—that of racial color. God is not pleased with—neither should any reasonable or intelligent man be willing to recognize—inequality in the races because of this distinction.

Following the talk He spoke on the same subject to the Fourth Annual Convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People at Handel Hall in downtown Chicago.

More than one thousand persons gathered that night to hear ‘Abdu’l-Bahá speak at the closing public session of the Bahá’í Temple Unity Convention in the Masonic Temple’s Drill Hall. After a choir had sung several selections, and Albert Hall, Mountfort Mills, and Lua Getsinger had given talks, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was introduced. “At once, the vast concourse, as one person, arose,” Joseph Hannen recalled, “and in a breathless silence the one awaited by many there for years, entered and proceeded to the platform.”

The theme of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s talk was the building of America’s Temple:

Among the institutes of the Holy Book is that of the foundation of places of worship. That is to say, an edifice or temple is to be built in order that humanity might find a place of meeting, and this is to be conducive to unity and fellowship among them. The real temple is the very Word of God; for to it all humanity must turn, and it is the center of unity for all mankind. It is the collective center, the cause of accord and communion of hearts, the sign of the solidarity of the human race, the source of eternal life. Temples are the symbols of the divine uniting force so that when the people gather there in the House of God they may recall the fact that the law has been revealed for them and that the law is to unite them. They will realize that just as this temple was founded for the unification of mankind, the law
concentration upon the affairs of the company failed to alter his allegiance. Faith and his concurrent decrease of attempt to redirect his ever-expanding transferred him to Los Angeles in an was Thornton Chase. Two and one-half years earlier his company had

dedication ceremony for the World's Columbian Exposition. Nearly 400 Baha'is

francs as a personal gift to the Temple Hotel, 'Abdu'l-Baha presented

song. "

The following day, 1 May, dawned chilly and overcast. Amid the trees at Grosse Point stood a large tent, erected for the dedication by 'Abdu'l-Baha during His trip through America; for Mr. Chase died on 30 September 1912, less than 24 hours before 'Abdu'l-Baha's train would cross into California several months after the dedication in Wilmette. When visiting his gravesite a few weeks after his death, 'Abdu'l-Baha said, as reported by Mirzá Ahmad Sohráb:

"Mr. Chase was of the blessed souls. The best time of his life was spent in the path of God. He had no other aim except the good pleasure of the Lord and no other desire except the attainment to the Kingdom of God. . . . He summoned the people to the religion of God; he suffered them to enter into the Kingdom of God; he wrote books and epistles. . . . In reality he has left behind him certain signs which will never be forgotten throughout the ages and cycles. . . . The traces of this personage will ever shine. This is a personage who will not be forgotten. For the present his worth is not known but in the future it will be inestimably dear. . . ." 24

With the dedication of the Temple site imminent, Thornton Chase's nine-year-long effort was beginning to bear its hard-won fruit. But the Bahá'ís began to wonder if the dedication was going to take place at all when 'Abdu'l-Baha did not arrive at the appointed time. He did not come down from His room at the Plaza Hotel until 10:30 a.m., the time already uncomfortably close to the scheduled beginning of the ceremony at 11. Because several Baha'ís and other people were waiting to see Him in the lobby, He spoke at length before departing. "Mounted in a modern taxicab," He arrived at the dedication site a few minutes before 1 p.m. "after mystifying his followers by unexpected delay," reported the Chicago Daily News. "He had been counted on to arrive two hours before and was 'lost' between the Plaza hotel and this village." 25

The Bahá'ís were even more mystified when the taxicab stopped in the center of the road, where one of the Persians accompanying 'Abdu'l-Baha called for Corinne True. Despite her grief over Davis' death, she had felt duty-bound to be present at the dedication. She stepped forward and was directed to enter the car. The driver then continued north on Sheridan Road and stopped at the bridge over the canal. One account of this event stated that 'Abdu'l-Baha wanted to see the new bridge and canal locks at the end of Wilmette Harbor. Another indicated He wanted to inspect the boundaries of the property. It is more likely that the loving and compassionate 'Abdu'l-Baha wanted a few minutes to comfort His bereaved daughter.

The trees made it difficult to see where the taxicab had gone. Nevertheless, some of the children spotted 'Abdu'l-Baha and Corinne True on the other side of the property and went running toward them. Surrounded by this happy group of youngsters, all of whom He lovingly patted, 'Abdu'l-Baha walked toward the northern side of the tent.

Nearly 300 people took seats inside "in three concentric circles, with a broad open space in the center across which the friends could read the love in each other's eyes. . . ." Around the outside of the seating area stood many more people who could not be accommodated. A committee had been formed to plan a program for the dedication, but it soon realized that 'Abdu'l-Baha "needed no guidance other than that of the Holy Spirit." 26 After walking down one of the nine aisles, 'Abdu'l-Baha stood in the center of the tent and began His address:

"The power which has gathered you here today notwithstanding the cold and windy weather is, indeed, mighty and wonderful. It is the power of God, the divine favor of Bahá'u'lláh which has drawn you together. We praise God that
May 1, 1912: 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses the Bahá'ís who have assembled beneath a large tent in Wilmette, Illinois, to witness the historic dedication of the cornerstone for the Mother Temple of the West.

through His constraining love human souls are assembled and associated in this way.

Thousands of Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs, dawning points of praise and mention of God for all religionists will be built in the East and in the West, but this, being the first one erected in the Occident, has great importance. In the future there will be many here and elsewhere—in Asia, Europe, even in Africa, New Zealand and Australia—but this edifice in Chicago is of especial significance. It has the same importance as the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Ishqábád (Ashkhabad), Caucasus, Russia, the first one built there. In Persia there are many; some are houses which have been utilized for the purpose, others are homes entirely devoted to the divine Cause, and in some places temporary structures have been erected. In all the cities of Persia there are Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs, but the greatest dawning point was founded in Ishqábád. It possesses superlative importance because it was the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár built. All the Bahá'í friends agreed and contributed their utmost assistance and effort... From such a mighty and combined effort a beautiful edifice arose. Notwithstanding their contributions to that building, they have assisted the fund here in Chicago as well. The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Ishqábád is almost completed. It is centrally located, nine avenues leading into it, nine gardens, nine fountains; all the arrangement and construction is according to the principle and proportion of the number nine. It is like a beautiful bouquet. Imagine a very lofty, imposing edifice surrounded completely by gardens of variegated flowers, with nine avenues leading through them, nine fountains and pools of water. Such is its matchless, beautiful design. Now they are building a hospital, a school for orphans, a home for cripples, a hospice and a large dispensary. God willing, when it is fully completed, it will be a paradise.

I hope that the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Chicago will be like this. Endeavor to have the grounds circular in shape. If possible, adjust and exchange the plots in order to make the dimensions and boundaries circular. The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár cannot be triangular in shape. It must be in the form of a circle.

After the talk 'Abdu'l-Bahá, followed by His audience, left the tent and requested that Nettie Tobin's stone be brought to Him. The stone had been lying several feet northwest of the tent and had probably been pointed out to Him by Corinne True earlier. He walked back and forth on the property and, after asking where the center of the land would be, turned to someone who showed Him the approximate point.

As the stone was being carried to where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stood, Irene Holmes of New York stepped forward and handed Him a leather case. Inside was a golden trowel she had hoped would be used for laying a cornerstone within the foundation of the building. 'Abdu'l-Bahá tried to use the trowel to dig a resting place for the dedication.
stone, but it was too dull to cut through the spring grass. He placed the trowel in its case and asked for more practical tools. When it was discovered that plans had not been made to have such tools available, one of the young men ran to a nearby house to borrow an ax. “Like an athlete,” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá took it and “swung it high in the air.” “After several blows,” wrote Louise Waite, He “cut through the resisting turf and reached the earth below.” The scene inspired the Bahá’ís to sing—first the “Benediction” and then “Tell the Wondrous Story,” both written by Mrs. Waite.

In the meantime another young man, Herbert Anderson of Chicago, had run west on Linden Avenue in search of a shovel. He found a work crew on the Northwestern Elevated tracks about four blocks south of Linden Avenue, near Isabella Street, and convinced them to loan him one of their shovels, which he whisked back to the ceremony. As the shovel was handed to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Corinne True reportedly stepped forward and encouraged Him to let a woman participate in the ceremony. Turning to Lua Gettport, which he whisked back to convinced them to loan him one of their shovels, which he whisked back to the ceremony. As the shovel was handed to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Corinne True reportedly stepped forward and encouraged Him to let a woman participate in the ceremony. Turning to Lua Gettport, which he whisked back to

Now that a rather large hole had been dug, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá reached down and scooped up handfuls of dirt, which He shared with several individuals. Then He “consigned the stone to its excavation, on behalf of all the people of the world.” After retrieving the golden trowel, He pushed the earth back around the stone and declared, “The Temple is already built.”

3. Early in 1910 the Executive Board reported that “Harmonious and mutually helpful co-operation has been effected with the village council of the Village of Wilmette and the officers of The Sanitary District of Chicago, as a result of which arrangements have been consummated in an agreement (now in the process of being carried out), whereby the alley running through our tract, and Greenleaf Avenue on its northern boundary, will be vacated; and in return the Unity will convey, and dedicate to public use, land for Sheridan Road through part of our triangular tract formerly lying north of Greenleaf Avenue. This permits a greatly improved line for Sheridan Road, curving in a graceful line to the north and west at our eastern and northern boundary and across the bridge over the Drainage canal. The agreement also contemplates the granting to the Sanitary District Board of some additional width it needs for its abutments, in return for which we acquire a greater width to our tract at points that clear up and straighten our westerly line leaving us a somewhat enlarged tract of symmetrical outline.” (Bahá’í Temples Unity to unidentified ‘Bahá’ís and Friends in the Cause of God,” n.d., author’s personal papers)


5. “Record of the Second Annual Convention of Bahá’í Temple Unity, held April 25 and 26, 1910,” Bahá’í News, 1, no. 4 (17 May 1910), 12; True to Helen Goodall, 29 June 1909, 23 January 1911, Helen S. Goodall Papers, National Bahá’í Archives, Wilmette, Ill.

6. Chase to Albert Windust, 29 April 1908, Star of the West Records, National Bahá’í Archives, Wilmette, Ill. By 1915 contributions had also been received from Ireland, Italy, South Africa, Brazil, New Zealand, Mauritius, and the Isle of Pines.

7. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to “his honor Ameen,” trans. 19 April 1910, quoted in “Record of the Second Annual Convention,” p. 14; ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to “the beloved of God in America” (delegates to the 1910 annual Bahá’í convention), trans. 18 March 1910, quoted in “Record of the Second Annual Convention,” pp. 8-9. (Since authoritative translations of these letters have not yet been made, the letters are to be considered only as historic documents.)

8. True to Goodall, 29 June 1909, Goodall Papers.

9. Louise R. Waite, Words of Abdul-Baha In regard to the Mashrak-el-Azkar in Chicago (n.p., 1909), author’s personal papers. (Because this statement was conveyed verbally, it does not have the authority of a signed letter in an approved translation.)

10. True to Goodall, 2 March 1911, Goodall Papers. (Because this statement was conveyed verbally, it does not have the authority of a signed letter in an approved translation.)


13. True to Goodall, 2 March 1911, 25 February 1910, Goodall Papers.


15. “Program, Bahá’í Temple Unity Convention, April 27 to May 2, 1912,” Star of the West Records; Chicago Daily News, 30 April 1912, 29 April 1912; Mirzá Mahmúd-
16. The report on the land was presented by Bernard Jacobsen, secretary of the Executive Board: “After numerous interviews a price of $17,000 was finally agreed upon. Mr. Conrad originally wanted $65 per foot for this ground and a $7,000 cash and $5,000 per year until paid. We felt that this was more than we could carry, so the proposed plan for the use of the grounds was laid before him and he finally agreed to give us our present terms of $17,000—$3,000 cash, $3,000 per year, at 5 per cent interest until paid. This gave us a saving in interest and a longer term to pay the balance, which was a decided advantage for the Unity.

“Mr. Conrad became so enthused with the object of our institutions that he has since then offered us the use of the $3,000 which we were to pay him in September as a loan for the purchase of other grounds if desired. The spirit of good-will has followed all of our transactions with these people...”

“There is another piece of property owned by Mr. Yost, which lies north and adjacent to the piece we bought from Mr. Conrad and consists of about 140 feet frontage on Sheridan Road. Several meetings have been held with Mr. Yost, but his price is exorbitant at present. Therefore, we have decided to let this matter rest until some future time” (Bernard M. Jacobsen, “Record of the Fourth Annual Convention of Bahai Temple Unity: Chicago, April 27th-May 2d, 1912,” Star of the West, 3, no. 4 (17 May 1912), 32).


22. The “Temple Song” can be found on pages 266-67 in The Dawning Place.

23. See appendix 4.6 in The Dawning Place, “Some Individuals Present at the Initial Ground-Breaking Ceremony, and the Cities They Represented,” 1 May 1912.


17. For additional information about Dr. Zia Bagdadi, see appendix 3.1 in The Dawning Place.

The Master at the Mother Temple of the Temple’s dedication stone. The West, May 1, 1912. At His feet is

Zia Bagdadi, see appendix 3.1 in The Dawning Place.
'Abdu'l-Bahá in America

The 25th anniversary observance

"It was a long, long trip. The more we traveled, the greater seemed the expanse of the sea. The weather was brilliant and fine throughout; there was no storm and no end to the sea."

At last the American Bahá'ís were hearing 'Abdu'l-Bahá's voice, seeing Him there before them. It was the afternoon of April 11, 1912; they had met His ship in the morning, and now they gathered to welcome Him at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Edward B. Kinney, 780 West End Avenue, in New York. They had thronged the rooms, so that many had to stand; and He had begun to address them:

"How are you? Welcome! Welcome!

"After arriving today, although weary with travel, I had the utmost longing and yearning to see you and could not resist this meeting. Now that I have met you all My weariness has vanished, for your meeting is the cause of spiritual happiness."

There were many troubles and vicissitudes but in the thought of meeting you, all these things vanished and were forgotten.

"I am greatly pleased with the city of New York. Its harbor entrance, its piers, buildings and broad avenues are magnificent and beautiful. Truly this is a wonderful city. As New York has made such progress in material civilization, I hope that it may advance spiritually in the Kingdom and Covenant of God so that the friends here may become the cause of illumination of America; that this city may become the city of love, and that the fragrances of God may be spread from this place to all parts of the world. I have come for this. I pray that you may be the manifestations of the love of Bahá'u'lláh; that each one of you may become like a clear lamp of crystal from which the rays of the bounties of the Blessed Perfection may shine forth to all nations and peoples. This is my highest aspiration. . . .

"I am very happy to meet you all here today. Praise be to God that your faces are shining with the love of Bahá'u'lláh! To behold them is the cause of great spiritual happiness. We have arranged to meet you every day at the homes of the friends.

"In the East people were asking me, 'Why do you undertake this long voyage? Your body cannot endure such hardships of travel.' When it is necessary, my body can endure everything. It has withstood 40 years of imprisonment and can still undergo the utmost trials.

"I will see you again. Now I will greet each one of you personally. It is my hope that you will all be happy and that we may meet again and again."

'Abdu'l-Bahá now shook hands with each one, and left for the Hotel Ansonia.

He had been a prisoner most of His life. Born in Tehran, Iran, on May 23, 1844, at the age of eight He was one of that little band of exiles who crossed the Iranian border, going toward Baghda'd. With them He was exiled from prison to prison, and was confined at last in the fortress-city of 'Akka, on August 31, 1868. Forty years passed; then the Sultán, 'Abdu'll-Hamíd, fell; on August 31, 1908, the gates of 'Akka were flung open and 'Abdu'l-Bahá went free. He was 64; He had lived 40 years in a place where the air broke men and killed them, and there was no pain that had not struck at His heart. He was free now, but He could not rest. He saw mankind on the brink of war; He saw the passing of the old world, and He came West, to lay the foundation of the new. In 1911, He brought the teachings of His Father, Bahá'u'lláh, to Europe. Returning to Egypt, He then sailed for the United States, where He traveled and taught from April 11 to December 5, 1912.

His fellow-travelers on the steamship Cedric, of the White Star Line, spoke with Him, inquiring as to His mission. To one, the owner of an American newspaper, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: "I am going to America at the invitation of the Peace Congresses of that place, as the fundamental principles of our Cause are universal peace, the oneness of the world of humanity and the.
equality of the rights of men. As this age is the age of lights and the century of mysteries, this great object is sure to be universally acknowledged and this Cause is certain to encompass the East and the West." A woman, member of the Unitarian faith, asked Him to give her a message for the Unitarians. He answered her: "The most important of all purposes is to diffuse divine love, amity and accord among the people . . . hence tell your Assembly: Rejoice, the standard of the kingdom of heaven is hoisted! Rejoice, the divine springtime has appeared! Rejoice, the Proclaimer of the kingdom has raised His voice!" On April 8 and thereafter greetings and welcome were wireless to the ship by Bahá’í communities from coast to coast. On April 11, crowds of Bahá’ís stood at the pier, waving hats and handkerchiefs, while the Cedric docked. As soon as the gangplank was lowered, newspapermen went aboard to interview ‘Abdu’l-Bahá; they asked the object of His voyage, and He said: "Our object is universal peace and the unity of mankind. . . . I have come to America to see the advocates of universal peace. I hope the Peace Congresses of America will come forward and take the first practical step." They questioned: "How can universal peace be realized?" He said: "Its realization depends upon effecting a change in the ideas of the inhabitants of the world. Today, universal peace is the panacea for all human ills." "What are those ills?" "One of those ills is the restlessness and discontent of the people under the yoke of the war expenditures of the Powers of the world. What the people earn through labor is extorted from them by the governments and spent for war purposes. . . . Thus the burden on men is becoming more and more unbearable." The reporters asked, "May not peace lead to trouble and may not war help progress?" He answered, "No. Today war is the cause of all trouble! If war can be gotten rid of, all these troubles will disappear. . . . However, this cannot be brought into existence except through the education of the people and the development of their thought and ideas."

The docking of the Cedric in New York was the direct fulfillment of the words of a man of Shiráz, who, 68 years before, at the very hour of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s birth, had proclaimed the coming of a great world Teacher. For 62 years now the Báb had lain dead, Persian bullets in His breast. But out of Persia a young nobleman had arisen, and had brought a world Faith. They had seized His jewels and palaces, they had closed Him in an underground pit, and hemmed Him in with guards. They had killed His followers, and not dared to kill Him, and they had exiled Him from one land to another, and the Shah of Persia and the Sultan of Turkey had used all their power to shut back the words that came from His lips. And He, Bahá’u’lláh, had established His Faith. He had revealed new laws, suited to future world civilization, based on that oneness of the human race and that coming of age of mankind, which His advent proclaimed; He had regenerated and brought into harmony the religions of the past; He had provided for agencies to safeguard His new World Order. And whereas before, once the Founder of a Faith had passed away, His followers turned one against another and destroyed the unity that He had created—Bahá’u’lláh with His own hand appointed an Exemplar, an Interpreter, so that Bahá’í is the world over were bound by their devotion to His eldest son, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. "The promise of all ages is now fulfilled," wrote Bahá’u’lláh. "That which had been announced in the holy writ of God, the Beloved, the Most High, is made manifest."

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, standard-bearer of the civilization of the future, set foot in the United States, prototype of the future federation of mankind. In every city, on every train, people crowded close to Him. In New York City alone, during the 79 days He spent there, He made public addresses in, or formal visits to, 55 different places. His rooms were filled with visitors wherever He went, all day long, from early in the morning. Philosophers, scientists, ecclesiastics, social workers, educators, diplomats, were found in His audiences, intently listening to Him, studying His presentation of the Bahá’í teachings as the means of regenerating and unifying humanity. Everywhere in editorial comment and publication of news concerning Him, the daily press was reverent and respectful. He addressed Columbia and Leland Stanford Universities; He attended a conference at Lake Mohonk, visited the open forum at Green Acre in Eloit, Maine, spoke before scientific associations,
socialistic bodies, welfare organiza-
tions. Temples and churches, syna-
gogues, women’s clubs, colleges, meta-
physical groups—willingly opened
their doors to His message. He was
guest of honor in leading mansions
throughout the country, and He visited
as well the homes of the very poor. He
addressed Bowery Mission, in the
slums of New York. He spoke with all
types of men and women; children of
all races clung to Him. And never, in
all His traveling and teaching, did He
accept remuneration, for His service
was given without price.

By the shore of Lake Michigan near
Chicago, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá laid the foun-
dation-stone of a great Temple; the
first world temple, the first sanctuary
for all sorts and conditions of men,
and all races, and all faiths—ever to be
raised in the western hemisphere.

When, in 1937, Bahá’ís throughout
the country commemorated in number-
less gatherings the 25th anniversary of
‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s coming to the United
States, a special meeting was held in
the Temple, marking the arrival of
‘Abdu’l-Bahá in New York, April 11,
1912; on this occasion representatives
of many groups that had been address-
ed by Him during His journey, joined
with the Baha’is to do Him honor.
Among the guest speakers, Mrs. Dor-
othy Bushnell Blumberg, president of
the Chicago branch of the Women’s
International League for Peace, said
in effect that thinking people, as they see
the increase of material comfort and
security, do not wish the achievement
of these ends to be made at the cost of
spiritual values; that a new age of cos-
opolitanism is upon us, whose ultimate
outcome will be a world race and cul-
ture; that those of us who believe in
the oneness of the human race are for-
tunate, and must strive for the enlight-
enment of the many who will resist the
onward march of cosmopolitanism.

Mr. Albert Windust, chairman, then
read from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s address be-
fore the New York Peace Society, in
part as follows: “Today, there is no
greater glory for man than that of ser-
vice in the cause of the ‘Most Great
Peace.’ ...His Holiness Bahá’u’lláh
was imprisoned and subjected to severe
persecutions. Through all these
ordeals He strove day and night to pro-
claim the oneness of humanity and to
promulgate the message of universal
peace. From the prison of ‘Akka He
addressed the kings and rulers of the
earth in lengthy letters summoning
them to international agreement and
explicitly stating that the standard of
the ‘Most Great Peace’ would surely be
upraised in the world.”

Another guest, Mr. A.C. MacNeal,
president of the Chicago branch of the
National Association for the Advance-
ment of Colored People, quoted from
the address given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá
before the fourth annual Conference
of the NAACP: “According to
the words of the Old Testament, God has
said: ‘Let us make man in our image,
after our likeness.’ This indicates
that . . . the perfections of God, the
divine virtues, are reflected or revealed
in the human reality. . . . This is an
evidence that man is the most noble of
God’s creatures. . . . Let us now dis-
cover more specifically how he is the
image and likeness of God, and what is
the standard, or criterion, by which he
can be measured and estimated. This
standard can be no other than the di-
vine virtues which are revealed in
him. . . . If a man possesses wealth,
can we call him an image and likeness
of God? Or is human honor and no-
toriety the criterion of divine nearness?
Can we apply the test of racial color
and say that a man of a certain hue—
white, black, brown, yellow, red—is the
true image of his Creator? We must
conclude that color is not the stan-
dard . . . for color is accidental in
nature. The spirit and intelligence of
man is the essential. . . . Man is not
man simply because of bodily attri-
butes. The character and purity of the
heart is all-important.”

A third speaker, Mr. Brenes-Mesén,
representing the president of the Theo-
osophical Society, conveyed to the Ba-
häuser the following message: “Out of
the Morning of Eternity, where infinite
Wisdom and all-embracing Love
abide, at intervals, when duty weakens
and nations decline, splendidous souls
come to this earth again to grace man-
kind with a new Springtime of faith. . . .They come forth to enkindle
the dormant fires in the souls of men,
to point out once more the guiding star
rising on the horizon of a new human-
ity. Such are the Masters of Wisdom
and Compassion, manifestations of the
omnipotent Love, the Holy Spirit.

“To this saintly lineage do belong
Bahá’u’lláh, the Splendor of God, and
‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Servant of God.
They have brought before the eyes of

Glimpses of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá . . .

“We were taken to the smaller room of the suite, where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá
gave private interviews. There He told Margaret (LeGrange) He had prayed
for her parents (who had passed into the life beyond some months before).
Her eyes filled with tears and overflowed; likewise the in-
terpreter, perhaps at a loss, shook his head at us and said in an
astonishing tone that we should never cry in His presence. It made Him sad. As I looked
up, I saw that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s sadness was for us—not for Himself—for
with hands outstretched to calm and protect us, like a mother bird hovering
over her young in the nest, He exclaimed in laughing, ‘Laughter! Laugh! I shall
never forget that voice, vibrant and powerful beyond any words of mine to
express. In that voice I have come to see the power of heaven to rout all the
negative forces of existence, and in arising to obey that command to find
the eternal joy of life.’” (By Ella C. Quant in The Baha’i World, vol. XII, p.
919)

“‘Abdu’l-Bahá is of medium height, but He holds Himself so superbly,
with such commanding dignity, and carries His head so high and with such
an air of majesty, that He ever gives the impression of great height. His
voice is full and vibrant, each word uttered with marked distinctness and
with that tonal quality which leaves a faint echo, as if it were, or wave vibrat-
ions such as come from a beautifully toned bell. Always when I heard His
voice, I felt its vibrations most deeply. Like His face, His voice expresses
every emotion, from tones that are stern and emphatic to those as tender
and loving as the cooing of a dove.” (by Louise Waite in The Baha’i World,
vol. VI, pp. 625-26)

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men, amidst a divided world, the principles of the Unity of Mankind; and in the midst of so many sects, the salutary doctrine of the common foundation of all forms of religion in the manifestation of the Holy Spirit; and amidst the contentious social and economic conflicts of our epoch they remind us of our obligation to do some fruitful labor in the spirit of service, of the need of voluntary sharing of our wealth with others to foster universal peace and that we may realize the brotherhood of men.

"Knowing and without stint admiring those principles, when 'Abdu'l-Bahá set foot in the United States the Theosophical Society bestowed on Him the gracious hospitality of its platform. He was a Teacher and a brother, He had our heartfelt welcome.

"The achievements of Bahá'ísm in this country, so magnificently embodied in this Bahá'í House of Worship, are proclaiming the satisfaction that so many souls find in the beauty, the truth and transcendence of the teachings flowing from this wellspring of Wisdom.

"In behalf of the Theosophical Society of America, and at the request of its president, I tender to you, with our congratulations, our cordial wishes for the spiritual prosperity of Bahá'ísm, for we are one in our endeavors of spiritualizing the world."

In introducing this speaker, the chairman had remarked that one of the outstanding addresses of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Chicago was that delivered before the Theosophical Society, on which occasion He had said: "In the matrix of the mother, we were the recipients of endowments and blessings of God, yet these were as nothing compared to the powers and graces bestowed upon us after birth into this human world. Likewise if we are born from the matrix of this physical . . . environment into the freedom and loftiness of the life and vision spiritual, we shall consider this mortal existence and its blessings as worthless by comparison."

An extract from the address of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the Plymouth Congregational Church was now read, in part as follows: "In our solar system the center of illumination is the sun itself . . . the one source of the existence and development of all phenomenal things. . . . But if we reflect deeply we will perceive that the great bestower and giver of life is God; the sun is the intermediary of His will and plan. . . . Likewise, in the spiritual realm . . . there must be a center of illumination, and that center is . . . the Word of God . . . the prophet or manifestation of God. . . ."

Following this, guest speaker Mr. Kennicott Brenton, house secretary and resident of Hull-House, representing Mrs. Kenneth F. Rich, resident head of the famous institution founded by Jane Addams—spoke as follows:

"Hull-House is deeply aware of its honor in being invited to join you in honoring your departed leader. In this we recognize an inner significance. Both this wonderful temple and our busy, homely group of classrooms and
workshops are expressions of the same life principle. In yours is a realization of world unity; ours of the common interest uniting neighborhoods and races, ignoring religious and class barriers. Throughout history, the spirit of discord has been able to 'divide and rule.' Man's pattern has made him peculiarly susceptible to factional loyalties. We have seen how love of country and adherence to group loyalties can even lead to self-destruction .... Hull-House and the things which it has done for the betterment of its neighbors were possible only because it became a rallying point for the combined goodwill of widely separated groups and sections. Accomplishment in prevention of child labor, sweatshops, bad housing, was won by a call to unite the good intention of all factions—never by appeal to factionalism or strife.

"Instead of emphasizing man's diversity of interest, Jane Addams said: 'The things which make men alike are finer and better than the things that keep them apart.' ... Rather than hope for justice from some materialistic system, she knew: 'Justice can only be worked out upon this earth by those who will not tolerate a wrong to any member of the household. Why should dissension exist among them? ... There is no doubt that the only cause is ignorance ....'" Mr. McDaniel then spoke on "The Gathering of the Peoples and Nations," ably epitomizing the excerpts from 'Abdu'l-Baha's addresses that had been read throughout the meeting.

This program, which was followed by a reception, closed with the showing of the motion picture of 'Abdu'l-Baha: His arrival by automobile at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Howard MacNutt in Brooklyn, New York; His walking and conversing with Persian interpreters and others, His greeting the children present, His delivery, as He strode back and forth before the large gathering on the grounds, of a message of glad-tidings to all humanity: "Rejoice! ... The divine Gospel has appeared! Rejoice! ... The Great Day has come! Rejoice! ... The glad-tidings and prophecies of the Prophets are fulfilled! Rejoice! ... The Glory of Carmel has shown on the worlds! Rejoice! ... The East and West have joined hands!"

In memory of that other day when 'Abdu'l-Baha had dedicated the Temple site, the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, assembled at the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár for their annual Convention, heard the story of how, exactly 49 years after Bahá'u'lláh, then a captive about to be exiled from Persia, His arrival by automobile at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Howard MacNutt in Brooklyn, New York; His walking and conversing with Persian interpreters and others, His greeting the children present, His delivery, as He strode back and forth before the large gathering on the grounds, of a message of glad-tidings to all humanity: "Rejoice! ... The divine Gospel has appeared! Rejoice! ... The Great Day has come! Rejoice! ... The glad-tidings and prophecies of the Prophets are fulfilled! Rejoice! ... The Glory of Carmel has shown on the worlds! Rejoice! ... The East and West have joined hands!"

The chairman called attention to the fact that 'Abdu'l-Baha's first public address in Chicago was delivered at Hull-House, and quoted from that address: "There is need of a superior power to overcome human prejudices; a power which nothing in the world of mankind can withstand .... That irresistible power is the love of God."

In introducing the next speaker, Mr. Allen B. McDaniel of Washington, D.C., a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, the chairman read from the words of 'Abdu'l-Baha delivered at All-Souls Church: "In Persia, His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh was able to unite people of varying thought, creed and denomination. The inhabitants of that country were Christians, Muhammadans, Jews, Zoroastrians, and a great variety of subdivided forms and beliefs, together with racial distinctions such as Semitic, Arabic, Persian, Turk, and others, but through the power and efficacy of religion, Bahá'u'lláh united these differing peoples, and caused them to consort together in perfect agreement. And now let us consider that the American, British, French, Germans, Turks, Persians, Arabs, are all .... members of the same household. Why should dissension exist among them? ... There is no doubt that the only cause is ignorance ...."" Mr. McDaniel then spoke on "The Gathering of the Peoples and Nations," ably epitomizing the excerpts from 'Abdu'l-Baha's addresses that had been read throughout the meeting.

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During the evening of His arrival in Chicago, 'Abdu'l-Baha addressed an audience of several hundred at the last session of the Bahá'í Temple Unity, speaking in part as follows:

"The real temple is the very Word of God; for to it all humanity must turn and it is the center of unity for all mankind. ... Temples are the symbols of the divine uniting force, so that when people gather here ... they may recall the fact that the law has been revealed for them and that the law is to unite them. ... That is why His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh has commanded that a place of worship be built ... that all religions, races and sects may come together within the universal shelter .... It is the Mashriqu'I-Adhkár (the Dawning-Point of the remembrance of God) ... For thousands of years the human race has been at war. It is enough .... For thousands of years the nations have denied each other, considering each other as infidel and inferior. It is sufficient. ...." And He closed with a prayer for the American nation: "O thou kind Lord! ... Confirm this revered nation to upraise the standard of the oneness of humanity, to promulgate the Most Great Peace, to become thereby most glorious and praiseworthy among all the nations of the world. ...."

The next day, on the windy shores of the lake at Wilmette, they had pitched a tent, large enough for 500 persons, and had made a special entry way to the grounds for the carriage of 'Abdu'l-Baha; but He entered on foot, walking briskly, a long line of Bahá'ís following Him. Within the tent, seats had been placed in three circles, with a broad space at the center, reached by nine aisles. At high noon, 'Abdu'l-Baha advanced to the inner circle and spoke:

"The power which has gathered you here today notwithstanding the cold and windy weather is indeed mighty and wonderful. It is the power of God, the divine favor of Bahá'u'lláh which has drawn you together. ...."

"Thousands of Mashriqu'I-Adhkárs for all religionists will be built in the Orient and Occident, but this being the first one erected in the Occident has great importance. ... It has the same importance as the Mashriqu'I-Adhkár in 'Ishqábád, Caucasus Russia, the first one built there. In Persia there are many; some are houses which have been utilized for the purpose, others are homes entirely devoted to the Divine Cause. ... But the great 'Dawning-Point' has been founded in 'Ishqábád. It possesses superlative importance. ...."

Outside the tent, in the woods and fields along the lake shore, 'Abdu'l-Baha prepared for the breaking of the Temple ground; using first a golden trowel presented by Irene C. Holmes of New York, He then slipped this back..."
'Abdu'l-Bahá had members of every race and nationality present, excavated a place to hold the dedication stone. As each man or woman came forward, his race or nationality was announced: Persia, Syria, Egypt, India, Japan, South Africa, England, France, Germany, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Jews of the world, and the North American Indians, were of those represented; at the end 'Abdu'l-Bahá set the stone in its place, on behalf of all the peoples of the world. And He said, "The Temple is already built."

Now, within the Temple, those who had been present that other day were asked to rise; they numbered 15. One of them, Mrs. Nettie Tobin of Temple was compared to that of a message of inspiration, and Dr. had brought, painfully, from far away devotion to the work of building the mother rearing her child, gave a briefCorinne True of Wilmette, whose of limestone rock to the Temple site, du'I-Baha

or nationality was announced: Persia, Jews of the world, and the North America, England, France, Germany, Hol­

land, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the United States

present, excavated a place

nationality present, excavated a place

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and how this had been chosen by 'Ab­

du'l-Bahá as the dedication stone. Mrs. Corinne True of Wilmette, whose devotion to the work of building the Temple was compared to that of a mother rearing her child, gave a brief

message of inspiration, and Dr. 'Ali­

Kuli Khan, sent by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the United States in 1901 to spread the Bahá'í teachings, spoke of the work still to be accomplished in completing the outer ornamentation of the Temple, and of the plan drawn up by the Guardian of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi, for the realization of this within the first century of the Bahá'í era. This second commemorative gathering, program­chairmen of which were Edna Eastman and Albert Windust, and further participants, Ruth Randall Brown, Nina Matthisen, and Mountfort Mills, was climaxed by the darkening of the audi­torium, after which the motion picture of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was shown. In deep silence, the audience watched as the majestic figure of the Center of the Covenant stood before them; many had never viewed this scene before, while some were still left who could remember His face, His walk, and could hear in memory His ringing

voice.

"It is my purpose," 'Abdu'l-Bahá had said on the day of His arrival in New York, "to set forth in America the fundamental principles of the revelation... of Bahá'u'lláh. It will then become the duty of the Bahá'ís in this country to give these principles unfold­ment and application in the minds, hearts and lives of the people." During the long months of travel, of daily association with hundreds of groups and individuals, He had spared Himself no hardship in order to give to America this fresh revelation of spiritual power, this new Faith, suited to the needs of a new age. Everywhere, at every hour He had taught the principles brought by Bahá'u'lláh: that each must search after truth for himself; that all races are as one; that all religions are fundamentally one, and have as their purpose the establishment of harmony; that religion, "the sole... basis of... an ordered and progressive society," must go hand-in-hand with science; that equal opportunities are to be provided for men and women alike; that extremes of wealth and poverty are to be abolished; that an auxiliary international language is to be adopted; and He had shown that the Bahá'í system provides the agencies for the establishment of permanent and universal peace.

It was a clear, not a beautiful day when they gathered on board the steamship Celtic to take leave of Him. He spoke to each one, distributed to each the flowers that had been brought. Then He addressed them for the last time:

"This is my last meeting with you, for now I am on board the steamship ready to sail away. These are my final words of exhortation. I have repeatedly summoned you to the cause of the unity of the world of humanity, announcing that all mankind are the servants of the same God; that God is the creator of all; He is the provider and life-giver; all are equally beloved by Him and are His servants upon whom His mercy and compassion descend. Therefore you must manifest the greatest kindness and love toward the nations of the world, setting aside fanaticism, abandoning religious, national, and racial prejudice.

"The earth is one nativity, one home, and all mankind are the children of one Father. God has created them and they are the recipients of His compassion. Therefore if anyone offends another, he offends God. It is the wish of our heavenly Father that every heart should rejoice and be filled with happiness; that we should live together with felicity and joy. The obstacle to human happiness is racial or religious prejudice, the competitive struggle for existence and inhumanity toward each other.

"Your eyes have been illumined; your ears are attentive, your hearts knowing. You must be free from prejudice and fanaticism, beholding no dif­
er all His servants as your own family. Human blood is being shed, a world-enkindling fire is astir in the Balkans. Properties are destroyed, possessions pillaged, cities and villages devastated. Direct your whole effort toward the happiness of those who are despondent, bestow food upon the hungry, clothe the needy and glorify the humble. Be a helper to every helpless one, and manifest kindness to your fellow creatures...

Beware lest ye offend any heart, lest ye speak against anyone in his absence, lest ye estrange yourselves from the servants of God. You must consider all His servants as your own family and kindred. Direct your whole effort toward the happiness of those who are despondent, bestow food upon the hungry, clothe the needy and glorify the humble. Be a helper to every helpless one, and manifest kindness to your fellow creatures in order that ye may attain the good pleasure of God. This is conducive to the illumination of the world of humanity and eternal felicity for yourselves. I seek from God everlasting glory in your behalf; therefore this is my prayer and exhortation.

Consider what is happening in the Balkans. Human blood is being shed, properties are destroyed, possessions pillaged, cities and villages devastated. A world-enkindling fire is astir in the Balkans. God has created men to love each other, but instead they kill each other with cruelty and bloodshed. God has created them that they may cooperate and mingle in accord, but instead they ravage, plunder and destroy in the carnage of battle. God has created them to be the cause of mutual felicity and peace, but instead discord, lamentation and anguish rise from the hearts of the innocent and afflicted.

As to you, your efforts must be lofty. Exert yourselves with heart and soul so that perchance through your efforts the light of universal peace may shine and this darkness of estrangement and enmity may be dispelled from amongst men; that all men may become as one family and consort together in love and kindness; that the East may assist the West and the West give help to the East, for all are the inhabitants of one planet, the people of one original nativity and the flocks of one Shepherd.

Consider how the Prophets who have been sent, the great souls who have appeared and the sages who have arisen in the world, have exhorted mankind to unity and love. This has been the essence of their mission and teaching. This has been the goal of their guidance and message. The Prophets, saints, seers and philosophers have sacrificed their lives in order to establish these principles and teachings amongst men. Consider the heedlessness of the world, for notwithstanding the efforts and sufferings of the Prophets of God, the nations and peoples are still engaged in hostility and fighting. Notwithstanding the heavenly commandments to love one another, they are still shedding each other's blood. How heedless and ignorant are the people of the world! How gross the darkness which envelops them! Although they are the children of a compassionate God they continue to live and to act in opposition to His will and good pleasure. God is loving and kind to all men, and yet they show the utmost enmity and hatred toward each other. God is the giver of life to them, and yet they constantly seek to destroy life. God blesses and protects their homes; they ravage, sack and destroy each other's homes. Consider their ignorance and heedlessness!

Your duty is of another kind, for you are informed of the mysteries of God. Your eyes are illumined, your ears are quickened with hearing. You must therefore look toward each other and then toward mankind with the utmost love and kindness. You have no excuse to bring before God if you fail to live according to His command, for you are informed of that which constitutes the good pleasure of God. You have heard His commandments and precepts. You must therefore be kind to all men; you must even treat your enemies as your friends. You must consider your evil-wishers as your well-wishers. Those who are not agreeable toward you must be regarded as those who are congenial and pleasant, so that perchance this darkness of disagreement and conflict may disappear from amongst men and the light of the divine may shine forth; so that the Orient may be illuminated and the Occident filled with fragrance; nay, so that East and West may embrace each other in love and deal with one another in sympathy and affection. Until man reaches this high station, the world of humanity shall not find rest and eternal felicity shall not be attained. But if man lives up to these divine commandments, this world of earth shall be transformed into a world of heaven and this material sphere shall be transformed into a paradise of glory. It is my hope that you may become successful in this high calling, so that like brilliant lamps you may cast light upon the world of humanity and quicken and stir the body of existence like unto a spirit of life. This is eternal glory. This is everlasting felicity. This is immortal life. This is heavenly attainment. This is being created in the image and likeness of God. And unto this I call you, praying to God to strengthen and bless you.

They left the ship and looked up to where 'Abdu'l-Baha stood on the deck. He was smiling very faintly, His eyes tender, thoughtful, somehow full of sorrow. He waved His hand gently toward them. And they knew that they would never fail Him, and still they wept.

Prayer for America

O Thou Kind Lord! This gathering is turning to Thee. These hearts are radiant with Thy love. These minds and spirits are exhilarated by the message of Thy glad-tidings. O God! Let this American democracy become glorious in spiritual degrees even as it has aspired to material degrees, and render this just government victorious. Confirm this revered nation to upraise the standard of the oneness of humanity, to promulgate the Most Great Peace, to become thereby most glorious and praiseworthy among all the nations of the world. O God! This American nation is worthy of Thy favors and is deserving of Thy mercy. Make it precious & near to Thee through Thy bounty and bestowal—

—`Abdu'l-Bahá
On the cover: The Jacobs Wind Turbine atop a ridge overlooking Radio Bahá’í del Lago Titicaca in Chucuito, Peru, in a photograph taken in December 1986. Beginning on page 6, K. Dean Stephens, technical adviser to the Audio-Visual Department of the Universal House of Justice who has been involved in the planning, engineering and construction of every Bahá’í radio station in the world to the present time, presents a report on the ways in which these stations are seeking out and using appropriate alternative energy sources to hold down costs while protecting and enhancing the environment in which they operate.

CONVEY SAD NEWS PAST FEW DAYS MR. SURUSH JABBARI AND MR. ABDU’L-QASIM SHAYIQ WERE EXECUTED IN TEHRAN. EXACT DATE AND MANNER OF THEIR EXECUTION ARE NOT KNOWN AS NO ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE, AND THERE IS NO INDICATION WHETHER OR NOT TRIALS WERE HELD. THEIR BODIES WERE BURIED WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE THEIR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS.


NO OTHER DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
MARCH 12, 1987
To the Baha'is of the world

Dearly-loved Friends,

The launching of the Six Year Plan at Ridvan 1986 coincided with the opening of a new epoch—the fourth—in the organic unfoldment of the Formative Age of our Faith. The administrative institutions of this growing Cause of God had already begun to show signs of an increasing maturity, while at the same time emerging from the protective obscurity of their early days into the larger arena of public notice. These twin processes were signalized by a development of far-reaching consequence to the internal life of the Baha'i community and by an outward activity of a magnitude unprecedented in its entire history.

The former was a devolution of responsibility whereby all national communities, through their National Spiritual Assemblies, in consultation with Counsellors, local Spiritual Assemblies and the generality of believers, were requested to formulate, for the first time, their own objectives for achievement during the new Plan. This expectation of maturity challenging the national communities was matched by their formulation of national plans submitted to the World Centre for coordination into the world-embracing Six Year Plan.

The latter was a united uprising of the entire Baha'i world community to distribute the statement, "The Promise of World Peace," issued in October 1985 to the peoples of the world. Heads of state, large numbers of the members of national governments, diplomats, teachers, trade unionists, leaders of religion, eminent members of the judiciary, the police, legal, medical and other professions, members of local authorities, clubs and associations, and thousands of individuals have been presented with the statement. It is estimated that more than a million copies, in some 70 languages, have so far been distributed. These two activities alone have heavily reinforced the growing strength and maturity of the Baha'i world community and given it a more clearly defined and readily recognizable public image.

Other factors have contributed greatly to the rapid entrance of the Faith onto the world stage. Indeed it appears that every activity of the widespread Army of Life is now observed or commented upon by some section of the public, from the General Assembly of the United Nations to small and even remote local communities.

The steadfastness of the sorely-tried Persian believers continues to be the mainspring of this world-wide attention increasingly being focused upon the Faith. While the brutal executions of heroic martyrs are now less frequent, the harassment and deprivations, vilification and plundering of the long-persecuted community continue—more than 200 are still in prison—giving the representatives of the Baha'i International Community at the United Nations firm grounds for strong and persistent appeals, which have aroused the concern of the General Assembly itself, and resulted in representations to the Iranian government on behalf of the defenseless Baha'is by the Commission on Human Rights, and by many powerful nations including the various governments constituting the European Community.

All this has kept our beloved Faith under international observation, an interest increased not only by the circulation of the peace statement but also by the rapidly expanding activities in the field of economic and social development, ranging from the inauguration and operation of radio stations—of which there are seven now broadcasting—to schools, literacy programs, agricultural assistance and a host of small but valuable undertakings at village level in many parts of the world.

National Baha'i communities have organized and successfully conducted inter-religious conferences, peace seminars,
symposiums on racism and other subjects on which we have a specific contribution to make, often achieving widespread publicity and the interest of highly-placed leaders of society. Bahá’í youth, inspired and uplifted by the vision and idealism of “the new race of men” have, through their many gatherings, attracted large numbers of their comrades and galvanized their own members to direct their lives toward service in the many fields in which a rich harvest awaits the dedicated Bahá’í worker.

Added to this rapidly burgeoning association of our fellow-men with Bahá’í activities, has been one outstanding magnificent achievement, the completion and dedication of the wondrous Bahá’í Temple in New Delhi, which received, within the first 30 days of its dedication to the worship of God, more than 120,000 visitors. This symbol of purity, proclaiming the Oneness of God and His Messengers in that land of myriad diverse religious beliefs, befittingly marks the power and grandeur with which these portentous days in the life of God’s Holy Cause have been ended.

The stage is set for universal, rapid and massive growth of the Cause of God. The immediate and basic challenge is pursuit of the goals of the Six Year Plan, the preliminary stages of which have already been initiated. The all-important teaching work must be imaginatively, persistently and sacrificially continued, ensuring the enrollment of ever larger numbers who will provide the energy, the resources and spiritual force to enable the beloved Cause to worthily play its part in the redemption of mankind. To reinforce this process the international goals of the Plan have been adopted, calling for the undertaking of many hundreds of inter-Assembly assistance projects, the re-formation of the National Spiritual Assembly of Zaire at Ridván 1987 and the establishment, in the course of the Plan, of new National Spiritual Assemblies, of which those of Angola, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Macau have already been approved. During the first year of the Six Year Plan 338 pioneers, guided by the needs set forth in previous Plans, have already arisen and settled in 119 countries. A new appeal is now being prepared, details of which will be announced shortly. The promotion and facilitation of service projects for Bahá’í youth in the emergent countries of the world are now called for. National Spiritual Assemblies are asked to arrange, in consultation with each other and with the assistance of the Continental Boards of Counsellors, the best means of ensuring the effective service of those who respond.

Preparations for the Holy Year 1992, when the 100th anniversary of the Ascension of the Blessed Beauty and the inception of the Covenant will be commemorated, have already begun. It is fitting, then, that the Covenant of Bahá’-u’lláh, which links the past and future with the progressive stages toward the fulfillment of God’s ancient Promise, should be the major theme of the Six Year Plan. Concentration on this theme will enable us all to obtain a deeper appreciation of the meaning and purpose of His Revelation—“A Revelation,” in the words of the Guardian, “hailed as the promise and crowning glory of past ages and centuries, as the consummation of all the Dispensations within the Adamic Cycle, inaugurating an era of at least a thousand years’ duration, and a cycle destined to last no less than five thousand centuries, signaling the end of the Prophetic Era and the beginning of the Era of Fulfillment, unsurpassed alike in the duration of its Author’s ministry and the fecundity and splendor of His mission. . .” The questions that such concentrated study should answer will undoubtedly include the meaning of the Bahá’í Covenant, its origin and what should be our attitude toward it.

Ever present in our contemplation of these profound questions is the magnetic figure of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Centre of the Covenant, the Mystery of God, the perfect Exemplar, Whose unerring interpretation of the Holy Texts and luminous examples of their application to personal conduct shed light on a way of life we must strive diligently to follow. During the course of the Six Year Plan the 75th anniversary of His visit to the West will be observed with befitting celebrations and proclamation activities. Simultaneously, there will be observed the 50th anniversary of the first Seven Year Plan in the Americas, launched in 1937 at the instigation of Shoghi Effendi and which, in setting in motion the systematic execution of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s grand design for the spiritual conquest of the planet, marked the opening of the first epoch of the Divine Plan.

Great and wonderful tasks challenge us as never before. They demand equally great and wonderful sacrifice, dedication and single-minded devotion from every one of us. At present, the Bahá’í International Fund is utterly inadequate to support the tremendous expansion now required in all the multitudinous activities of the Bahá’í world community. The record of the Seven Year Plan, just completed, stands witness to our ability to meet the growing demands of the Cause. The heroism of the beloved friends in Iran, the eager response of 3,694 dedicated pioneers to the call raised for this essential service, the unceasing activity of teachers, administrators, local communities and individual believers throughout the entire organism of the embryonic World Order, have endowed this growing Army of Life with new strengths and capacities. As we stride forward into the future we may be fully assured of His ever-present bounty and the final victory of our efforts to establish His Kingdom in this troubled world.

With loving Bahá’í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice
Ridván 1987
The meeting at Chicago’s Hull House

It was on a warm, springlike day, April 30, 1912, that Hull House in Chicago was all astir. For ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, a great and holy Personage from Palestine was expected. The important visit was planned by Jane Addams, “Mother of Hull House,” or “Chicago’s Most Useful Citizen,” as the people of Chicago lovingly called her.

Seldom has a biographer presented two more significant and inspiring world figures, both working earnestly for the Unity of Mankind and the establishment of Universal Peace than ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Center of the Covenant of the Bahá’í World, and Jane Addams, the President of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom: one Who had been chosen as a Divine Exemplar to humanity, and the other reflecting the spirit of service. How fitting that Hull House—an outstanding example of the application of the great principle of the oneness of mankind—should be the place of meeting.

During a recent interview with Miss Addams, the writer learned that it was in 1844 that the Quaker father of Jane Addams moved to Illinois. A pine-crowned hill is the living memorial of that memorable year of world history. In 1860 a little girl was born at Cedarville, Illinois, in the shadow of those pines. As a child, she was a shy, conscientious, sensitive, idealistic girl. These qualities developed into high moral courage, the unswerving devotion to duty, and the passion of self-sacrifice for others. These characteristics served to make this frail woman elect to pass her life in an unsavory quarter of this great industrial city, Chicago, and to spend there, in behalf of the poor, her inheritance, which would have maintained her in comfortable idleness amid the beautiful things that she loved. Here she has ministered to and educated those in dire need and thus worked indefatigably for the establishment of the unity and amity of mankind.

As the years unfolded, Jane Addams received her A.B. degree at Rockford College, Rockford, Illinois, in 1881. Then she spent two years in Europe, 1883-85, because of imperfect health. In 1888 she studied in Philadelphia, and the next year opened Hull House with the assistance of Miss Ellen Gates Starr, and has ever since been its Head Resident. For three years she served as inspector of streets and alleys on the southwest side of Chicago. She received her LL.D. from the University of Wisconsin in 1904 and in 1910 was honored in the same way by Smith College. Later, she became president of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections. Yale University granted her its A.M. degree in 1910. In 1912 she became vice-president of the National Woman’s Suffrage Association and chairman of the Woman’s Peace Party. In 1915 she was elected delegate to the first Peace Convention at The Hague, and the same year became the founder-president of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, and still remains its active president. She was the delegate to the Peace Conventions at Zurich in 1917, at Vienna in 1921, and at The Hague in 1922. On January 12, 1923, she started on a six-month tour of the world in the interests of world peace. During all these years many books have come from her pen, and she has served on numerous state and national committees having to do with social, philanthropic, industrial and international problems.

Hull House, one of the first American settlements, stands as a dream fulfilled. It was established in 1889, to become a spacious and hospitable home, tolerant in spirit, equipped to care for the pressing physical, mental, social and spiritual needs of a poor, alien, complicated community.

About 50 men and women of various races and creeds and backgrounds form the residential staff, mostly college graduates who pledge themselves to remain for two years. In addition, 150 others come to Hull House each week as teachers, visitors or directors of clubs. About 9,000 persons come to the settlement each week during the winter months, as members of the audiences or classes. Miss Addams explained that the attractions offered include classroom instruction in English, current topics, typing, arts and crafts, music, drawing, folk dancing and nearly all phases of domestic arts. Public lectures and clubs of many kinds supply the needs of men, women and children of all classes, beliefs and shades of color. A circulating library of 2,000 volumes stimulates mental interest. A well-trained, working boys’ band of 62 pieces is a source of great joy, as are the many tournaments and contests, enjoyed especially by the little children of foreign lands. The monthly gymnasium attendance is 3,000, and the 15 showers are kept in constant use. During the year 6,000 paid showers and 12,000 free showers help to keep up the physical, mental and moral standards. The Italian, Jewish and Greek nationalities seem to predominate in the clubs and classes.

In Miss Addams’ high-ceilinged living room, the writer asked her, “What has been one of the central ideas of the activities of Hull House?” Her kindly

This article, "‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s historic meeting with Jane Addams," is reprinted from The Bahá’í World, Volume VI (1934-36). It was written by Ruth J. Moffett.
eyes brightened as she said, “The things which make men alike are finer and better than the things that keep them apart, and these basic likenesses, if they are properly accentuated, easily transcend the less essential differences of race, language, creed and tradition.” After a time she continued with an alert enthusiasm:

“Life at the Settlement discovers above all what has been called the extraordinary pliability of human nature; and it seems impossible to set any bounds to the moral capabilities which might unfold under ideal civic and educational conditions. In order to obtain these conditions, the Settlement recognizes the need of cooperation, both with the radical and conservative elements. Hull House casts aside none of those things which cultivated man has come to consider reasonable and goodly, but it insists that those belong as well to that great body of people who because of toilsome and underpaid labor, are unable to procure them for themselves. Added to this is the profound conviction that the common stock of intellectual enjoyment should not be difficult of access because of the economic position of him who would approach it, that ‘those best interests of civilization’ upon which depend the finer, freer and nobler aspects of living must be incorporated into our common life and have free mobility through all the elements of society, if we would have a true, enduring democracy. The educational activities of a Settlement, as well as its philanthropic, civic and social undertakings, are but differing manifestations of the attempt to socialize true democracy, which is the very existence of Hull House itself. It is thus that peace and unity are established.”

“Do you think,” she was asked, “that the people of the world generally are more peace-minded than before the World War?”

“Oh, yes. The war startled and shocked them into a realization of the need of peace as never before. It has been more discussed and written about and has become the most vital problem before man.”

“What do you consider the greatest forces of the world today working for peace?”

“There are three,” she replied. “First, psychological; second, political; and third, mechanical. First, the psychological includes all the books, newspapers, magazine articles and all the addresses and discussions on the subject, but something more than all of these, the interest and overwhelming desire in the heart for peace. Second, the political, even, has become a force for peace. International instruments to take care of the affairs of all the nations of the world must be created before peace can be maintained. These are only just the beginning, in the League of Nations, the World Court, an International Code of Law and an International Police Force to enforce the law. Many other international instruments of this nature will be required. Third, nothing can stay the progress of the machine age, the invention, the improved methods of intercommunication and intertransportation. This is also a great force, bringing about better understanding in the world which is the basis of peace.

“You ask what I consider to be the greatest need of the world today?” she continued. “I would put it in one word, understanding—understanding between individuals, classes, races, nations. Literature, history and mechanics are bringing it about much more rapidly today. Are not nations simply families living together, learning to adjust just themselves to each other for the best good for the greatest number?

“Yes, you are right,” she said in reply to my next question. “The problems of the world which are caused by wrong mental attitudes are returning to the heart and mind of man and the solution must come through changed mental attitudes.”

Although having spoken on the same platform with Miss Addams many times and dined as her guest, yet during this interview at Hull House, alone in the spacious living room with her, the writer was more than ever impressed with a fine quality of innate courtesy, a sympathetic sensitiveness, a queenly dignity and greatest of all, the keenness of a brilliant intellect expressing a well-balanced and well-ordered mind.

When the author asked her if she had met that distinguished Personage of Palestine Whom Great Britain had knighted as one of the greatest advocates and establishers of World Peace and the Unity of Mankind that the world had known, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, she replied with an emphatic “Yes.” In a low-pitched, well-modulated voice, she spoke of inviting ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to visit Hull House on April 30, 1912, to speak in Bowen Hall, and although the hall seats 750 people, it was far too small to...
hold the crowds that poured in. In streams the rich and poor, the educated and ignorant, the managers of business and the industrial slaves came. Hull House was all astir. So was Halstead Street, that bit of cross-section, seemingly, of all the markets, bazaars, cafes and wayside churches of all the races, nationalities and creeds of the world.

Miss Addams herself, acting as chairman, welcomed ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and graciously presented Him to the audience. Dr. (Zia) Bagdadi, a physician of Chicago, served as His interpreter, having known and loved ‘Abdu’l-Bahá years before in the Holy Land.

To attempt to describe ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is like trying to paint the lily. As He stood before the sea of hungry and upturned faces, His magnetic personality, His radiance, His penetrating potency, the power of His inspiration, the very purity of His life, and the great understanding compassionate love, made an impression upon His listeners that they can never forget.

Because in 1912 racial prejudice and hatred were very intense and because of the outstanding historical work that Miss Addams had achieved, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoke of the races being like many varieties of flowers in one garden, all adding to the fragrance and beauty of the garden. He spoke of the benefits to be derived by all humanity when universal peace and racial amity have spread over the earth. This depends upon the spirit and intelligence of man. The basis for the establishment of world peace and the amity of man cannot be based upon color, but only upon noble qualities. With almost overwhelming power, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá declared, "The standard can be no other than the divine virtues which are revealed in him. Therefore, every man imbued with divine qualities, who reflects heavenly moralities and perfections, who is the expression of ideal and praiseworthy attributes, is verily in the image and likeness of God... a divine station which is not sacrificed by the mere accident of color."

‘Abdu’l-Bahá at the close of the meeting in Hull House went out into the dingy crowded street, mingled with the little children and the underprivileged poor, and gave to them freely from a bagful of coins, with many kindly words of encouragement, sympathy, love and hope, which brightened the eyes, strengthened the courage and uplifted the faith and hope of all who met Him.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá expressed His pleasure at meeting Miss Jane Addams because she was serving mankind. According to His own words, He was chosen by His Father, Bahá’u’lláh (the Glory of God) to be the Servant of humanity, and because Miss Addams has devoted her life unreservedly to others she certainly reflects the beautiful light of servitude.

One of the bounties of the Bahá’í Revelation is that women of heavenly capacities can never more be hindered by the ancient stupid form of male supremacy, but may rise to help in the establishment of the new World Order, and of peace and good will to all mankind.

As the writer said farewell to Miss Addams, who was leaving on an extended trip for her health, she presented her with an autographed copy of her photograph and her book, Twenty Years at Hull House, and spoke again of being deeply impressed with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and with the beauty and spirit emanating from the Bahá’í Temple. She expressed the hope that more people would feel the great need and rise today to help bring amity permanently to the world.

Gazing at the very building in which took place the historic meeting of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Jane Addams, and in which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had so perfectly voiced the note of the Oneness of Mankind, and left His spirit like a benediction hovering over all, one saw people of all races streaming in and out of Hull House, honoring the founder before her departure. With a deeper consciousness of realization, one recognized the fulfillment of those priceless words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: "Today the most important purpose of the Kingdom of God is the promulgation of the cause of Universal Peace and the principle of the Oneness of the World of Mankind. Whosoever rises in the accomplishment of this pre-eminent service, the confirmation of the Holy Spirit will descend upon him."
Using appropriate energy sources

"O ye friends of God! Because, in this most momentous of ages, the Sun of Truth hath risen at the highest point of the spring equinox, and cast its rays on every clime, it shall kindle such tremulous excitement, it shall release such vibrations in the world of being, it shall stimulate such growth and development, it shall stream out with such a glory of light...that this lowly earth will become the Abhá Kingdom, and this nether world the world above." (Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 128)

The purpose of Bahá’í radio is captured in this quotation from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: to radiate the glad-tidings that the Promised One has come, to kindle excitement in the populace, to release vibrations, to stimulate growth and development in the communities it serves.

Since Bahá’í radio stations often are located in rural or Third World environments far from easy access to the technical assistance, telephones, water and power lines that are available to most commercial operations, they are presented with technical challenges distinct in many ways from those encountered by broadcasters in urban and developed locales. Even where available, electrical energy is all too often unstable and erratic in supply. Conventional remedies such as substation connection to high-voltage transmission lines are inordinately expensive, while the budgets of Bahá’í stations are usually quite restrictive. These challenges exist to a greater or lesser extent at every Bahá’í radio complex in the developing world, with solutions constantly being sought and incorporated into their operations.

Alternate energy for Bahá’í radio stations

Panama. Commercial electricity is available but intermittent at the principal Radio Bahá’í transmission site in Boca del Monte, and totally lacking at the remote studio at the Guaymi Indian Cultural Center in Soloy. However, Panama receives more than ample sunlight even during the rainy season, making the station an ideal candidate for solar power.

At the 1 kW radio complex at Boca del Monte, six 30-watt solar panels are mounted on the roof, constantly charging a bank of heavy-duty six-volt batteries in series during daylight hours. One 12-volt tap from the battery bank is wired to a DC studio unit that includes turntables, mixer, microphones and cassette players. Eighteen- and 30-volt taps from the battery banks power a 25-watt standby transmitter which backs the 1 kW unit in the event of power failure. Battery taps are similarly available for emergency and security lighting, fans, and small tools and appliances. During periods of normal mains power, 12-volt lighting and ventilation is used for operations and security, keeping the batteries from overcharging.

The studio at Soloy is in the heart of the Guaymi reserve, a gruelling two-
The following, courtesy of the International Bahá’í Audio-Visual Centre, is an up-to-date listing of existing Bahá’í radio operations:

Radio Bahá’í del Ecuador. Call letters: HCRN1. Frequencies: 1420 kHz medium wave, AM; 3 kW power; transmitter in Cajas; broadcasting 3:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. in Quechua and Spanish; on the air, October 1977. 4990 kHz short wave, AM; 1 kW power; transmitter in Cuicocha; broadcasting 5 to 11 p.m. in Spanish; on the air, July 9, 1979. Address: Radio Bahá’í del Ecuador, Apartado 14, Otavalo, Ecuador (main studios in Otavalo).

Radio Bahá’í del Lago Titicaca, Peru. Call letters: OBX7S. Frequency: 890 kHz medium wave, AM; 1 kW power; transmitter and studios in Chuquis; broadcasting 4:30 to 10:30 a.m. in Aymara, Quechua and Spanish; on the air, July 9, 1982. Address: Radio Bahá’í del Lago Titicaca, Apartado 299, Puno, Peru (with an office in Puno).

Radio Bahá’í de Bolivia. Call letters: CP-220. Frequency: 1010 kHz medium wave, AM; 1 kW power; transmitter and studios in Caracollo; broadcasting 5 to 10 a.m. in Quechua, Spanish and Aymara; on the air, March 30, 1984. Address: Radio Bahá’í de Bolivia, Casilla 1019, Oruro, Bolivia.

WLGI Radio Bahá’í USA. Call letters: WLGI. Frequency: 90.9 mHz, medium wave, FM; 50 kW power; transmitter and studios in Hemingway, South Carolina; broadcasting 12 hours per day in English; on the air, May 23, 1984. Address: WLGI—Radio Bahá’í, Route 2, Box 69, Hemingway, SC 29954, U.S.A.

Radio Bahá’í Panama. Call letters: HOI-417. Frequency: 1300 kHz medium wave, AM, with STL link planned to the Guaymi Cultural Centre in Soloy; 1 kW power; transmitter and main studios in Boca del Monte, Chiriqui Province; broadcasting 5 a.m. to noon and 2 to 7 p.m. in Spanish and Guaymi; on the air, January 1986. Address: Radio Bahá’í de Panama, Apartado 1187, David, Chiriquí, Republic of Panama.

Radio Bahá’í Chile. Call letters: CC-116. Frequency: 1160 kHz medium wave, AM; 1.25 kW power; transmitter and studios in Labranza; broadcasting on a limited schedule in Spanish and Mapuche; on the air, November 12, 1986. Address: Radio Bahá’í de Chile, Casilla 56-D, Temuco, Chile.

Radio Bahá’í Liberia. Call letters: ELRB. Frequency: 990 kHz medium wave, AM; 5 kW (directional signal) power; broadcasting, not yet begun, to be in English. Address: Radio Bahá’í Liberia, ELRB, c/o Bill Frank Enoanyi, manager, Box 0191, Paynesville, Liberia.

Note: The Ecuador short-wave station and the stations in Peru, Bolivia, Panama, and Panama are all licensed for 24-hour-a-day programming.

hour drive into the mountains north of Boca del Monte. A diesel generator normally powers the cultural center complex, but the radio studio, an important on-air element of Radio Bahá’í de Panama, is equipped with a solar-charged battery back-up system as well. The cost of the entire alternate energy package including seven solar panels, a standby transmitter, two DC studios, fans and lighting was remarkably reasonable, amounting to less than $3,000 (excluding shipping and duties). Batteries were purchased locally.

Considering that solar panels have an average life-span of 20 years, the transmitter at least 10, and studio equipment and batteries up to five years, the investment is readily justified: in the lowered annual costs of electricity, in the many services so cheaply and efficiently provided by the system, and in having power available when it is absent from the mains.

Peru. 1 kW Radio Bahá’í del Lago Titicaca has thus far been out of the reach of commercial power, and normally relies on a 7 kW diesel generator for electricity. Around the station are five other buildings including a teaching institute, dormitories, two cottages for staff, and a generator enclosure. All are wired with 12-volt fluorescent lighting fixtures, receiving energy from a bank of 18 batteries charged by a 2 kW wind generator which harnesses the morning and evening air currents that blow across Lake Titicaca.

In the event of generator failure, the battery bank can power a 100-watt standby transmitter for a 6-8 hour broadcast day for a week, or can indefinitely maintain a reduced schedule from the wind charge. When the station is not on the air, the diesel generator is shut down to conserve fuel. Then all power for indoor and security lighting, studio equipment and small tools is supplied by the wind-charged battery bank.

Another example of appropriate technology in action at the station is a unique antenna featuring a grounded, half-size (40-meter) tower with "hot" guy wires. The antenna not only costs a fraction of its conventional 80-meter, base-insulated counterpart, but performs superbly as well in the lake environment, penetrating to communities on the Bolivian far shores of Lake Titicaca with strength and clarity rivaling nearby 5 kW stations.

Bolivia and Ecuador. Bahá’í radio stations in Bolivia and Ecuador have solar water heaters installed, and alternate energy systems are planned for the near future around photovoltaics and battery banks similar to the one in operation in Panama.

Liberia. To date, the most ambitious alternate energy undertaking has just come on line in Africa, at 5 kW Radio Bahá’í Liberia near the capital city, Monrovia. Commercial power exists in the area, but it is intermittent, and off more than on toward the end of the dry season when the hydroelectric reserves run short. On the other hand, the dry season is a period of maximum sunshine in Liberia, making solar energy a logical choice for standby power. On site, 10 solar panels of 36 watts each charge a similar number of heavy-duty batteries connected variously to provide 70 volts DC to a 400-watt emergency transmitter, 12 volts to a DC studio complex, and other lines for lighting and ventilation throughout the facility. At the time of ELRB’s first transmission, on December 5, 1986, a
Liberian government official remarked that the station would probably serve as a model of alternate energy utilization for all of West Africa.

Bahá'í Media Training Centre exploits solar power

"Man makes nature his servant; harnesses the mighty energy of electricity for instance and imprisons it in a small lamp for his uses and convenience. He speaks from the east to the west through a wire. He is able to store and preserve his voice in a phonograph . . . ('Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith, p. 236)

Puerto Rico's Amoz Gibson Training Centre for Bahá'í Media (see Bahá'í News, December 1986) is a showcase of appropriate technology. Solar panel and battery systems provide lighting for every building. The main classroom is ventilated by a ceiling fan connected directly to a solar panel; the darkroom uses an extractor fan that is similarly connected. The result is that more sunshine moves more air, which circulates automatically throughout the building, keeping laboratory and studio equipment dry and safe. Solar-lighted medicine cabinets in dormitory bathrooms provide 12-volt receptacles for shavers and hair dryers. The entire campus uses 12-volt table fans, vacuum cleaners, polishers, and even bug lights on occasion.

Two houses at the Centre provide living quarters for the host and caretaker families. Both are filled with solar energy devices: for lighting, water heating, ventilation, two-way communication, and a bevy of appliances for entertainment and the kitchen. The computer in the school's office is 100 percent isolated from the unstable power mains in the area, running instead from a battery and inverter supply. The refrigerator in the caretakers' cottage is connected both to 115-volt AC mains and the 12-volt solar-charged system, automatically switching to DC in the event that commercial power is reduced or cut off. Lighting and office fans, as well as various power tools in the adjacent electronics laboratory, receive DC power from the same source. Since the installation of alternate energy systems at the Amoz Gibson Centre, the monthly cost of electricity for the whole complex—two family residences, classroom, laboratories, dorms and dining area—has dropped below the former cost for a single dwelling.

Energy-independent village radio

Developed and ready for field testing is a solar-charged, battery-powered radio broadcast station for local community service including a 3- to 5-watt transmitter with a range of 5-10 miles, depending on terrain and frequency. The package comes complete with a 12-volt studio that features two DC servo turntables, two cassette players, table and floor microphones, headsets, and a five-channel mixer. Also included are antenna wire and tuning unit, battery cables, spare parts, and portable cassette recorders for interviewing and gathering news of community interest, music, and folklore indigenous to the area. Village radio's power source is a single solar panel, typically rated between 20 and 40 watts, depending on local weather and desired broadcast schedule.

Radio receivers in the countryside can also be solar-charged. This is especially important in areas where bat-
A brief look at three most recent Bahá’í radio stations in the world

Panama. On January 29, 1986, Radio Bahá’í Panama began broadcasting from Boca del Monte in Panama’s Chiriquí Province, gradually extending its broadcast day to its present 12 hours, 5 a.m. to noon and 2 to 7 p.m. Broadcasts are in Spanish and Guaymi, with plans eventually to link the main transmitter to the Guaymi Cultural Center in Boca de Soloy.

Since the inaugural broadcast, programming has continued to evolve as the staff determines what works best. By June, a six-hour daily schedule listed programs of typical Panamanian music; a children’s program in Spanish; a Bahá’í program with Bahá’í songs, spots and news; several music programs including international music with spots on unity; and programs of instrumental, popular, indigenous and inspirational music from around the world. Over the past several months, the staff has been consulting about the development of programming including children’s programs and social service programs.

By September, when the station began broadcasting 12 hours a day, it appeared that the program “El Mundo y Su Musica,” a program of international music, had become a favorite among the Latin listeners while the international indigenous music program was the Guaymi audience’s choice. Programs on health, agriculture and education were being planned, with contacts made with local experts in these fields. A few mini-dramas had been produced, and agricultural programs from the Developing Countries Farm Radio Network, headquartered in Canada, were being broadcast.

During September, one of the staff members, a well-known Panamanian distance runner, organized a race in honor of Peace Day including T-shirts reading “Radio Bahá’í” and trophies for the winners. The event served to increase the station’s prestige.

One of the most important goals of Radio Bahá’í is to increase the number of staff field trips and remote recording of events and interviews. During 1987 there will be greater collaboration with the Guaymi Cultural Center in Soloy which will also provide the station with programming.

Liberia. The first African Bahá’í radio station successfully broadcast its first test signal on December 5, 1986, with two government ministries represented. The new Bahá’í station opens a remarkable new chapter in Bahá’í broadcasting as the potential listening audience is enormous with more than a million people in the nearby capital city of Monrovia and the listening area and few competing stations.

Chile. Broadcasting began on a limited basis on November 12, 1986, with the station’s official inauguration on December 20. Its opening marks the successful conclusion of five years of hard work by the Bahá’ís in Chile to lay the groundwork for this, the most recent Bahá’í radio station to go on the air. Radio Bahá’í Chile completes a chain of four Bahá’í stations extending along the Andes in South America.

This brief look at the three most recent Bahá’í radio stations is reprinted from the Newsletter of the International Bahá’í Audio-Visual Centre, volume 2, number 2 (January 1987).
Book review

'The Secret of Divine Civilization'


"The happiness and pride of a nation consist in this, that it should shine out like the sun in the high heaven of knowledge" (p. 2). This was 'Abdu'l-Bahá's hope for his native Persia, that it should shine with wisdom as it had in earlier ages. Seeing Persia as it was in 1875, fast in a "drunken sleep," the "object of pity, deplored by all nations" (p. 8), the young 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed The Secret of Divine Civilization to the Shah and people of Persia anonymously, with one purpose, He said, "to promote the general welfare" (p. 6). He called upon all to join Him in this effort:

"We must now highly resolve to arise and lay hold on all those instrumentalities that promote the peace and well-being and happiness, the knowledge, culture and industry, the dignity, value and station, of the entire human race.'

'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasized the need for good government so that a backward nation might become advanced, an ignorant people enlightened, an impoverished country wealthy. He praised the Shah for forming Persia's first parliament "by the grace of God and the spiritual influence of His universal manifestation" (p. 10), but warned that great results cannot be expected from legislatures and parliaments unless the members are qualified. The members of "assemblies of consultation" (p. 17) must, He said, be both right-minded and knowledgeable:

"First, the elected members must be righteous, God-fearing, high-minded, incorruptible. Second, they must be fully cognizant, in every particular of the laws of God, informed as to the highest principles of law, versed in the rules which govern the management of internal affairs and the conduct of foreign relations, skilled in the useful arts of civilization, and content with their lawful emoluments." (p. 17)

And lest we despair of ever finding such members, 'Abdu'l-Bahá assures us that they would not be impossible to find.

As the legislature depends upon learned men (p. 37), 'Abdu'l-Bahá spends the greater part of His book describing the learned man (pp. 33-105). So this book will surely be one of those we shall turn to when it comes to the setting up of Bahá'í universities for the training of future leaders of society—the members of "assemblies of consultation."

In outlining His topic, 'Abdu'l-Bahá turned to one of the authoritative utterances of Muhammad, which states: "As for him who is one of the learned: he must guard himself, defend his faith, oppose his passions and obey the commandments of his Lord." (p. 34)

He then expounded each of the points in turn.

First, to "guard oneself," He said, does not mean to avoid tests, as the prophets and saints have never done so, but to acquire the attributes of spiritual and material perfection (pp. 34-35).

Second, to "defend one's faith," He said, does not mean only to observe its forms but to promote it throughout the world.

Third, in calling upon leaders to "oppose their passions," He pointed to "the supreme desire" of the governments of His day to "conquer and crush one another" (p. 61), so that opposing this passion would be to seek wholeheartedly for peace (p. 64).

Fourth, "obedience to the commandments of the Lord" is the very cause, He said, of "the progress, achievement, and happiness of man." (p. 71)

"It is certain that the greatest of instrumentalities for achieving the advancement and the glory of man, the supreme agency for the enlightenment and the redemption of the world, is love and fellowship and unity among all the members of the human race. Nothing can be effected in the world, not even conceivably, without unity and agreement, and the perfect means for engendering fellowship and union is true religion." (p. 73)

He then showed what great changes took place in western culture as the result of the revelations of Jesus and later Muhammad, and alluded to the new revelation of Bahá'u'lláh by announcing to the people of Persia, "The winds of the true springtide are passing
over you... the dawn star is shining... the sea of might is swelling..." (pp. 104-105)

Returning to the first requirement of the truly learned, that of acquiring the attributes of spiritual and material perfection, we see what high standards 'Abdu'l-Bahá has set. Among the attributes of perfection, He said, are learning and the cultural attainments of the mind; justice and impartiality—regarding humanity as a single individual; arising with complete sincerity and purity of purpose to educate the masses; fearing God; loving God by loving His servants; the exercise of mildness and forbearance and calm; being sincere, amenable, gentle and compassionate; having resolution and courage; trustworthiness and energy, striving and struggle; being generous, loyal, without malice; having zeal and a sense of honor; being high-minded and magnanimous, and having regard for the rights of others. "Whoever is lacking in these excellent human qualities is defective," He said. (pp. 35-40)

Of all these attributes, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gives learning first and foremost. Suppose a member of any consultative body wanted to follow His advice and acquire "learning and the cultural attainments of the mind," what would he need to know? 'Abdu'l-Bahá spelled out a complete curriculum:

"... This eminent station is achieved when the individual combines in himself a thorough knowledge of those complex and transcendental realities pertaining to God, of the fundamental truths of Qur'ánic political and religious law, of the contents of the sacred Scriptures of other faiths, and of those regulations and procedures which would contribute to the progress and civilization of this distinguished country. He should in addition be informed as to the laws and principles, the customs, conditions and manners, and the material and moral virtues characterizing the statecraft of other nations, and should be well versed in all the useful branches of learning of the day, and study the historical records of bygone governments and peoples. For if a learned individual has no knowledge of the sacred Scriptures and the entire field of divine and natural science, of religious jurisprudence and the arts of government and the varied learning of the time and the great events of history, he might prove unequal to an emergency, and this is inconsistent with the necessary qualification of comprehensive knowledge." (pp. 35-36)

But where are we to find the "comprehensively learned individual"? Even 'Abdu'l-Bahá said they were "hard to come by" (p. 37). His solution, until such time as comprehensive education is a fact, is to form a body of scholars, "the various groups of whose membership would each be expert in one of the aforementioned branches of knowledge. This body should have with the greatest energy and vigor deliberate as to all present and future requirements, and bring about equilibrium and order." (p. 37)

By this means can the reforms badly needed in each country be brought about. 'Abdu'l-Bahá listed many of those needed by Persia of His time: a definite procedure for the settlement of disputes so that decisions would not be appealed from one court to another inordinately, a limit to the authority of provincial governors so that they could not hand out death sentences at will, the elimination of bribery, and so on. He urged that Persians not be afraid to try out foreign ideas, even though those ideas might come from people the Persians considered infidels. The important thing, He said, is the results:

"If the country were built up, the roads repaired, the lot of the helpless improved by various means, the poor rehabilitated, the masses set on the path to progress, the revenues of public wealth increased, the scope of education widened, the government properly organized, and the free exercise of the individual's rights, and the security of his person and property, his dignity and good name, assured..." (p. 115)

A glittering culture is not the goal of all this striving and change, for civilization is only the means to an end. The end is human happiness. "The primary purpose, the basic objective," said 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "in laying down powerful laws and setting up great principles and institutions dealing with every aspect of civilization, is human happiness." (p. 60) And what is human happiness? He said, "... Human happiness consists only in drawing closer to the Threshold of Almighty God, and in securing the peace and well-being of every individual member, high and low alike, of the human race..." (p. 60)

And the greatest blessing for an individual is "that he should become the cause of the education, the development, the prosperity and honor of his fellow-creatures." (p. 103)

"The highest righteousness of all is for blessed souls to take hold of the hands of the helpless and deliver them out of their ignorance and abasement and poverty, and with pure motives, and only for the sake of God, to arise and energetically devote themselves to the service of the masses, forgetting their own worldly advantage and working only to serve the general good." (p. 103)

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**Vanuatu**

*Ati George Sokomanu (right), the president of Vanuatu, receives a copy of 'The Promise of World Peace' from Alick Soalo, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Vanuatu.*
Reaching out in Panchgani

International teaching teams spread out all over India to join local Bahá'ís-sponsored projects following the dedication last December of the Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi.

One such team, composed of Bahá'ís from Canada, New Zealand and the United States, joined local Bahá'ís for a 19-day village consolidation project in January sponsored by the Spiritual Assembly of Panchgani, Maharashtra State, which has helped in the election of some 45 village Assemblies.

Panchgani, a lovely hill station not far from Bombay, was built by the British in 1885. The cool, clear 4,000-foot location, nestled in a forest of mango, coral, silver oak, silk-cotton and jacaranda trees above the Krishna River, was chosen as an ideal location to build a school in which to educate the children of British colonial officers from Surat and Bombay.

Today, Panchgani is the site of nine schools including the Bahá'í Faith’s New Era International School, established in 1945 with the blessings of the beloved Guardian. When Ridvan Khannum Mobedzadeh brought 16 students to Panchgani to establish the first international Bahá'í school more than 42 years ago, there were few buildings, teachers or students. Today, the school’s 30-acre campus includes four girls’ and four boys’ dormitories and a large classroom building with science laboratories and a spacious library.

A Bahá'í Academy has also been established at Panchgani; in the future it will evolve into a university. A number of Bahá'í communities exist among the many clean, well-tended agricultural villages one can see in the valleys some 4,000 feet below the hill station. In some of these villages, the entire population is Bahá'í.

Visiting Bahá'ís were invited to join the local believers to wind down the hillside on curving dirt roads in a “Bahá’í Jeep.” At each stop, the Bahá'ís visited the friends and Assemblies in the village, helping with the consolidation of Murati-speaking Bahá'ís. One such teaching team consisted of a Murati-speaking teacher from Panchgani, Govind Kasurde, and his two boys, Prakash and Sandeep; the Jeep driver, Anna Jankar; two Canadians, Riel and Elizabeth Aubichon; two New Zealanders, Ester Pearson and Roger Heathley; and an American, Dorothy Lee Hansen. As the red sun set over the village of Mahanjar, the team arrived to greet their Bahá’í brothers and sisters who had returned to their homes after a day’s work in the fields.

As Riel Aubichon, a Metis Indian from Saskatchewan, began to play the fiddle, more and more friends gathered for prayers and songs, and to see posters and calendar pictures of the magnificent “Lotus of Bahapur” in New Delhi. The villagers expressed great pride and joy on seeing the first photographs of their Bahá’í House of Worship for the subcontinent of India. They listened intently, seated in the twilight on the earthen floor in the front of a local Assembly member’s home, as Govind Kasurde related stories of the great gathering of more than 8,000 Bahá’ís in New Delhi and reiterated some of the Bahá’í teachings.

For many of the villagers, the visit was their first with their brothers and sisters from the West. None had heard Texas, Canadian or bluegrass fiddle music before, and all were especially delighted when, after they had sung Murati songs for their guests, Riel picked up their melodies and played them on his fiddle. Meanwhile, Dorothy Hansen told them through their interpreter of the high praise Bahá’u’lláh had given to the arts, and explained that their music, weaving, basket-making and other crafts held a high status in the Kingdom of God, having been raised in this new age to the station of worship when performed in the spirit of service to humanity.

As night fell, fond farewells were said and the Jeep bounced off through the darkness to the next village, Ghode Parut, which had no electricity, only small oil lamps in each thatch-roofed home. As team members picked their way down the dark, rocky footpath to a cleared earthen courtyard, about 40 children gathered to hear Riel Aubichon play his fiddle in the darkness, broken only by a single light. None of the children had seen a violin before, and as Ester Pearson shined a flashlight on the instrument, they were wide-eyed and attentive. Their teacher, Mrs. Sadhar, a young woman who was trained at the Bahá’í Institute in Panchgani, holds Bahá’í children's classes every day. As she softly called the name of a song or prayer, the children responded in unison, reciting the words from memory. One of their songs, the words of which were translated as “Bahá’u’lláh is so great He can turn a stone into a flower,” referred to the new lotus-shaped Temple in New Delhi.

As the children were told of the high station Bahá’u’lláh has conferred on the work of a teacher, mothers and other adults listened from doorways. The visitors sat in the moonlight on woven mats spread by young boys, and everyone was pleased when Elizabeth Aubichon and Roger Heathley brought out their cameras for picture-taking.

At last it was time to go, and team members climbed aboard the Jeep to head for their next stop, feeling greatly blessed to have had the opportunity to meet some of their Bahá’í family in the villages of India.—Dorothy Hansen

12 May 1987/Bahá’í News
Statistical update

Information supplied by the Department of Statistics at the Bahá'í World Centre.

Worldwide recognition of Bahá'í Holy Days

The Universal House of Justice has clarified that this goal is considered to be achieved when "a government department or office issues a document stating that, on one or more of the Bahá'í Holy Days, Bahá'í employees have the right to be excused from work, and/or Bahá'í students are permitted to absent themselves from school, and/or institutions owned and entirely controlled by Bahá'ís may close on the nine specified days." At present, the following 68 National Assemblies (46 per cent of the total) have attained recognition of Bahá'í Holy Days. In some countries, this has been achieved on a national basis, in others on a state or provincial basis, and in others by local or district school boards or local governments. In most cases the permission applies to school children and/or government employees. In other cases, students or employees have been permitted to absent themselves from school or work without penalty, although there is no official documentation of this right.

AFRICA

Bophuthatswana
Ethiopia
Ghana
Kenya
Liberia
Malawi
Mauritius
Namibia
Seychelles
Swaziland
Tanzania
Uganda
Zambia
Zimbabwe

ASIA

Bangladesh
Hong Kong
India
Korea
Laos
Lebanon
Malaysia
Pakistan
Philippines
Singapore
Taiwan
Thailand

AUSTRALASIA

Australia
Fiji
Hawaii
New Zealand
Papua New Guinea
Samoa
Solomon Islands
Tonga

EUROPE

Denmark
Finland
Germany
Greece
Iceland
Ireland
Luxembourg
Netherlands
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom


AFRICA

Bophuthatswana Jun 84
Ethiopia Mar 73
Ghana Aug 72
Kenya Mar 66
Liberia Dec 71
Malawi Oct 83
Mauritius May 72
Namibia Aug 72
Seychelles Nov 72
Swaziland Mar 73
Tanzania Jan 67
Uganda Sep 73
Zambia Oct 73
Zimbabwe Oct 82

ASIA

Bangladesh Jul 75
Hong Kong Mar 73
India Jun 68
Korea Mar 73
Laos Apr 73
Lebanon Nov 72
Malaysia Aug 69
Pakistan Mar 73
Philippines Jun 70
Singapore Dec 72
Taiwan Apr 73
Thailand May 72

AUSTRALASIA

Australia Aug 57
Fiji Feb 72
Hawaii May 71
New Zealand Jun 59
Papua New Guinea Jun 72
Samoa Apr 73
Solomon Islands Jul 72
Tonga Mar 73

EUROPE

Denmark Feb 74
Finland Oct 66
Germany Apr 73
Greece Jan 68
Iceland Nov 66
Ireland Dec 79
Luxembourg Sep 68
Netherlands Mar 73
Spain Mar 73
Sweden Apr 73
Switzerland Jun 67
United Kingdom Feb 73
Australia’s Governor-General visits

Last October 19, His Excellency Sir Ninian Stephen, the governor-general of Australia, and Lady Stephen attended a service at the Bahá’í House of Worship in Sydney marking the International Year of Peace.

Sir Ninian and his wife were escorted into the House of Worship by the Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone and his wife, Madge. Also present were Counsellor Joy Stephenson and all members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia.

The spiritual atmosphere of the occasion prompted one distinguished guest to write, “I felt that only in heaven would I enjoy such peace and beauty.”

Simultaneously, a special program for some 200 children took place in a marquee on the Temple grounds. After the service, the children formed an honor guard along the walk from the Temple for the governor-general’s party. Sir Ninian and Lady Stephen took 25 minutes to walk the short distance from the House of Worship to their car, stopping to speak to each one of the 200 children.

The service was video taped for the National Spiritual Assembly by a professional crew. Two newspapers, the Sydney Morning Herald and the Manly Daily, sent photographers to the service, which resulted in highly encouraging publicity.

In Geelong, Victoria, a “small but dedicated” group of Bahá’ís presented a varied program last October 24-26 in support of the International Year of Peace.

The event was opened Friday evening by the mayor of Geelong at a “People of the World Concert,” and was closed two evenings later with an interfaith service attended by 400 people from many religious backgrounds.

Some 200 organizations contributed to the success of the exposition which included conferences, ethnic dances and various displays and was hailed as one of Geelong’s most outstanding events ever.

More than 1,000 people took part in a Peace Festival last October 11-12 in Caboolture, Queensland, Australia, which was co-sponsored by Bahá’ís and several national and local organizations.

The wide variety of events included open-air entertainment, an art exhibit on peace, an Aboriginal pavilion with artifacts from an anthropology museum, video presentations of Corroboree and Aboriginal culture, storytellers recounting traditional legends, and craftsmen who demonstrated the making of artifacts.

More than 100 groups were invited to provide displays on aspects of peace.

Luxembourg

Archbishop Jean Hengen of Luxembourg (second from right) is shown as he received a copy of the peace statement ‘The Promise of World Peace’ last May 23 from a delegation of Bahá’ís representing the National Spiritual Assembly of Luxembourg. Pictured with the Archbishop are (left to right) Robert Bontemps, Mrs. Berty Schoos and Faramarz Khabirpour.

Germany

Mainz, West Germany, is the sister city of Haifa, Israel. A celebration of that relationship was sponsored last September 17 by the Bahá’í community of Mainz in the "Haifa Room" of the city hall.

Eighty people gathered to hear Prof. Manfred Harder, a former president of the University of Mainz, outline the history of the Mainz-Haifa partnership, and to see a slide presentation about the Holy Land.
Colombia

A slide program based on the Universal House of Justice’s peace statement has been shown to about 5,000 students and teachers in 17 primary and secondary schools in the Departments of Cesar, Ja Guajira, Valle, Santander and Caldas, Colombia.

The program was conceived as a deepening tool for Baha’is, but its use as a teaching aid was discovered when a group of Baha’is in a teaching campaign decided to present it at a school. It was well-received, and its successful use has continued.

Two Baha’is from the Touba tribe in Argentina were among the 27 students from five countries who attended a session of the Ruhi Institute in Puerto Tejada, Colombia, which began last September 7. The Institute is a tutorial school which trains tutors.

Other countries represented at the September session were Panama, Peru and the United States.

In Bucaramanga, Colombia, a city of a quarter-million people in the eastern Cordillera of the Andes, more than 180 youth came to a public forum last October 4 entitled “Youth Can Move the World... Toward Peace.”

The conference was co-sponsored by the Baha’is of Bucaramanga and the local Scouts organization. The four speakers were drawn from young members of the Red Cross, the Scouts, and the Baha’i community.

The Baha’i speaker, a journalism student, was the only woman on the program, which was chaired by the vice-chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Colombia.

The regional governor sent a cable of greetings, and a local newspaper carried a front-page article about the forum.

Nigeria

On March 3, a delegation of Baha’is met with the Governor’s Commission on Information to present the peace statement to the governor of Lagos State, Nigeria. The presentation was covered on Lagos State television and radio and in the national press.

Tonga

Prince Tupoto’a of Tonga is pictured after receiving a copy of ‘The Promise of World Peace’ from Counsellor Lisi-}

ate Maka and his wife, Mrs. Latu Maka.

Dominica

“The Promise of World Peace” has been influencing literary and musical works of several individuals in Dominica who are not Baha’is.

His Excellency Sir Clarence Seignoret, president of the Commonwealth of Dominica, in a radio message to the nation commemorating the International Day of Peace last September 16, included in his remarks excerpts from the peace statement, although he did not refer to his source.

A college student who wrote a peace song for his UNESCO club after reading a number of articles as background said he was most influenced by the Universal House of Justice’s peace statement, so much so that he awoke in the middle of the night to compose the music and lyrics for his song, “We Need Peace.”

Another man wrote a poem entitled “World Peace” in which the name of the Universal House of Justice is mentioned.

By mid-July of last year, a total of 3,800 copies of the Universal House of Justice’s peace statement had been distributed in Dominica. Recipients included people from nearly every walk of life from police officers, government officials and clergy to doctors, librarians, restaurant owners, union leaders, school teachers and students.

An attractive quarter-page ad in The New Chronicle offered copies of the peace statement to its readers.

On September 14, a Baha’i “peace train” made up of decorated trucks and other vehicles traveled from Roseau through the northern area of the island, stopping in six villages to sing songs of peace and share word of the coming of world peace.

Meanwhile, an art competition on world peace sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly was bringing entries from many schools on the island. A Baha’i spoke as part of a panel debate entitled “Is World Peace Possible?” The debate, which was televised locally, was sponsored by the UNESCO club of Portsmouth.
St. Vincent/Grenadines

Pictured are representatives of various Bahá'í communities who came to the Bahá'í National Centre in Kingstown, St. Vincent, last May to consult on goals of the Six Year Plan. Seated in the middle of the photo is Don Rogers of Canada, the new liaison Counsellor for St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Directly behind him (with glasses) is Auxiliary Board member Lisa Blake of St. Vincent.

Shown in this photograph taken in June 1986 are members of a Bahá'í children's class in Byera, St. Vincent. Standing in the back row are Poram Dean (second from left), a traveling teacher from New Jersey, and Elizabeth Thomas, a pioneer from the United States. With the help of traveling teachers from Alaska, Canada and the U.S., the classes are the most regular children's activity in that country.

Barbados

A Caribbean Peace Conference held last October 25-26 in Christ Church, Barbados, brought together more than 200 representatives from 15 countries to talk about world peace.

The conference was opened by the prime minister of Barbados, the Hon. Errol E. Barrow, who outlined his views on peace which included many Bahá'í concepts.

The Saturday session included a panel discussion on "The Role of Education in the Development of World Peace," moderated by Counsellor Donald Rogers of Canada. Panelists were distinguished citizens of Barbados and of Trinidad and Tobago.

Sunday's program, on "The Role of Men and Women in World Peace," was chaired by Counsellor Alan Smith of St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.

Each session began with prayers by representatives from the Bahá'í, Hindu, Christian and Jewish communities.

On October 27, after the close of the conference, 33 members of National Spiritual Assemblies, the two Counsellors, Auxiliary Board members, and others from 10 countries in the Caribbean area met to consult on the goals of the Six Year Plan.

A series of three recent firesides given by the Bahá'í community of Christ Church, Barbados, featured three non-Bahá'í experts who addressed topics relevant to the Faith: "Alcohol and Drug Dependence," "The Media's Impact on Society," and "Current Economics."

The last was presented by a well-known lecturer on economics who, at the conclusion of his talk, remarked that the 12 key principles of the Faith would provide a firm basis for the resolution of the world's economic problems.

Chile

Final approval was received last November 3 from the Ministry of Telecommunications for Radio Bahá'í in Chile to begin operations.

The station's first test signal was broadcast December 5. The new station is located near Temuco in the heart of the indigenous zone.
Bangladesh

Medical camps were held last July-September at three locations in Bangladesh under the auspices of the National Bahá'í Development Institute.

In Domkona, the local Assembly arranged to offer medical and dental services to 764 persons in one week.

At Malanchi, the area teaching committee made arrangements to publicize a camp at which 221 patients were treated in two days by one Bahá'í physician and four assistants.

In the Jessore area, the radio station in Kulna broadcast a daily announcement for 15 days telling the populace that the Bahá'í community of Bangladesh was organizing a medical camp for patients from all strata, inviting them to come for treatment, and offering deepening classes each evening.

Kiribati

A peace conference attended by 1,000 Bahá'ís and 30 guests was held last October 24-26, the first anniversary of the release of the Universal House of Justice's peace statement, in Bikenibeu, Tarawa, Kiribati.

Among the invited guests were the president of Kiribati, Ieremia Tabai, and lady Tabai; three government ministers; and the headmaster of the country's only government secondary school. They were welcomed with flower garlands and a special dance by the Bahá'ís of Bikenibeu.

The president commended the Bahá'ís for their aims, and said he believes that peace is more than an end to war.

One minister mentioned in his talk Bahá'u'lláh's letters to the kings and rulers of the world and His aim to establish peace on earth. Another, after hearing Bahá'í songs, said he was moved by a verse that spoke of the elimination of prejudices.

The remaining two days of the conference were spent studying the peace statement.

Guyana

The Seven Year Plan goal of the acquisition of a district Hazíratu'l-Quds in West Demerara, Guyana, was won when pioneers contributed their family home and property.

Trinidad/Tobago

The Bahá'ís of Port of Spain, Trinidad, sponsored this booth last October at the Port of Spain Family Fair. Pictured (left to right) are Bahá'ís Anne Marie Ramsahi and Edna Ruth Caver-

St. Lucia

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of St. Lucia was incorporated last October by an act of Parliament that received the assent of the governor-general.
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New spirit in Korea
On the cover: The newly renovated Baha’i Center in Seoul, Korea. The Baha’is of Korea are engaged with renewed efforts in winning the goals of the Six Year Plan. The Center, situated in the central section of the nation’s capital, reflects the new spirit of activity and dedication growing among the Baha’is of Korea.

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Guaymi Cultural Center opens

On February 24-28, the greatest spiritual event in Panama since the dedication in 1972 of the Bahá’í House of Worship took place at the Guaymi Indian village of Boca de Soloy, Chiriqui Province.

As many as 2,500 Guaymi Indians from 32 communities in Panama and visitors from a number of countries including Alaska, Costa Rica, Mexico, the United States and Venezuela gathered that week for the dedication of the Guaymi Cultural Center. Also held in connection with the formal dedication ceremony were a women’s conference, a music and dance festival, a children’s and youth festival, and a Native Council.

The Guaymi Cultural Center facilities consist of the nine-sided Rahmatu’l-lah Muhájir Institute (dedicated in 1979 by the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu’l-Bahá Ruhiyyih Khanum); the multi-purpose classroom, dining hall and dormitory building for about 70 students, officially designated “Jungobere” (Guaymi House) in the Guaymi language and “Centro de Cultura Guaymi” in Spanish; the Bahá’í Radio Station Transmitter Link (STL) building; the caretakers’ cottage (all of these are situated on a windy hilltop above the Soloy River); and the Bahá’í radio station itself, with its 180-foot antenna towering above the town of Boca del Monte. The station broadcasts educational, cultural and spiritual programs in Guaymi and Spanish 12 hours each day to the Guaymies and Latins in three provinces.

Most of the visitors from the cities and foreign countries passed through Boca del Monte in four-wheel drive vehicles en route to Soloy, an hour and a half’s drive up a winding, rocky, dusty road, at times impassable during the rainy season, past grazing white Cebu cows, while many Guaymies walked or rode on horseback up steep mountain trails for one to three days to reach their new Cultural Center.

The preparatory work for the dedication of the Center, including construction, and the radio station, which broadcast the ceremony live on the new STL, was performed largely by the Guaymies with technical help mainly from skilled U.S. and Persian pioneers and communications technicians from the Panamanian government. Many consultative sessions were held by the Guaymi Cultural Center Commission and the Spiritual Assembly of Soloy to develop a program of activities to proclaim and demonstrate the purpose of the Center to offer educational and cultural opportunities in material, human and spiritual aspects to the Guaymi people and other indigenous tribes according to their interests without regard to sex, age or religious belief.

With two exceptions the daily sessions at the dedication were conducted only by the Guaymies or other Indians. The first to speak on inauguration day was a retired black Methodist minister who had spent 37 years working with the Guaymies of Boca del Toro Province on the Atlantic side of Panama. He spoke in Guaymi about his Guaymi-Spanish grammar and dictionary book in which he has standardized and reduced the various spoken Guaymi dialects into one written Guaymi language.

The second exception was a talk by the national sub-director of social communications of the Ministry of Government and Justice, which had ap-

The photographs for this article were taken by Jane Jensen.
proved the licensing of the Bahá’í radio station. Significant also was the participation of four Guaymi chiefs and one Guaymi national legislator, representing all three provinces of the Guaymi areas.

A representative of “Light of the North,” a private enterprise of Bahá’ís from Alaska, and his crew video taped for an eventual one-hour film the varied dedication-related activities in Soloy and Boca del Monte in addition to local “color” background in Panama City and the nearby Panama Canal locks. Among the sights and sounds recorded on film were the well-executed traditional Guaymi dances; the bright twirls of the dancing Kuna partners; the animal and bird imitations of the Choco dance group; the enchanting flute music, twang of the jew’s harp, rattle of the maracas, cheerful colors of the dresses, and delightful dances of the children, their faces painted to resemble raccoons; the superb hoop dances of Kevin Locke, a Lakota Indian from South Dakota; and the enthusiastic drama and musical talent show directed by a Kuna Bahá’í who had pioneered to Venezuela.

At night, under the diesel-powered electric lights, there often were two large simultaneous gatherings flowing into each other—one in the Muhájjír Institute for Bahá’í movies and slide shows, the other in the dining hall of the Cultural Center to view the raw video film footage taken that day.

Also, there were those little signs of the coming of age of the Guaymi people—such as the women holding a conference on marriage and education of children in the Institute while their husbands held their own conference on the same themes in a classroom in the Center.

A Guaymi tutorial school teacher gave a demonstration class in a model thatched-hut tutorial school, nine of which are functioning in the Guaymi area of Chiriquí and one in the Choco area of Darien Province, all in communities in which government schools are not available. During the daily sessions of the dedication, the women and children often translated their own talks from Guaymi into Spanish, and the children often coordinated their own presentations.

There was ample food in the Cultural Center kitchen, cooked on a large commercial gas stove for city and foreign visitors under the direction of the Guaymi caretaker’s wife, and there

Consultation is held during the Native Council for Indians only (February 27) in the Guaymi Cultural Center’s Rah-

Kevin Locke, a Lakota Indian from South Dakota, performs a traditional Sioux hoop dance during dedication ceremonies last February for the Guaymi Cultural Center in Boca de Soloy, Panama.
A young Guaymi girl cuts the ribbon to signal the official opening of the Guaymi Cultural Center in Boca de Soloy, Panama. About 2,500 people including many government dignitaries attended the ceremony which was held on February 28.

were about 28 Guaymi community kitchens set up around the site for the others. Abundant cool, potable water was available on tap, piped from a mountain spring to the kitchen, the shower house, and the enclosed toilets. Most of the Guaymies bathed in the nearby Soloy River, where temporary dressing rooms were erected.

The visiting government officials, interviewed on video tape at the ceremonial ribbon-cutting for the Cultural Center, performed by a little Guaymi girl, were especially impressed by the development of Bahá’í Radio, operated mainly by the Guaymies with some technical help; the orderly and well-scheduled official dedication program; and the love, unity, harmony and spirit of service among the various tribes and races present.

To most of us who were fortunate enough to be there, what was most memorable was the happy glow on the faces of the Guaymies—visible evidence of their self-realization and the ultimate high destiny, promised by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the Tablets of the Divine Plan, that “should these Indians 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.”—Arthur L. Krummel

It’s meal time for visitors from Panama and other countries, mostly non-Indians, in the Guaymi Cultural Center’s dining hall (with kitchen on the left) during the Center’s dedication ceremonies last February.
On June 20, 1912, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá told the friends who had come to see Him in New York City that He was about to leave the city for a few days’ rest in Montclair, New Jersey.

“When I return,” he said, “it is my wish to give a large feast of unity. A place for it has not yet been found. It must be outdoors under the trees, in some location away from the city noise; like a Persian garden. The food will be Persian food. When the place is arranged all will be informed and we will have a general meeting in which hearts will be bound together, spirits blended and a new foundation for unity established. All the friends will come. They will be my guests. They will be as the parts and members of one body. The spirit of life manifest in that body will be one spirit. The foundation of that temple of unity will be one foundation. Each will be a stone in that foundation, solid and interdependent. Each will be as a leaf, blossom or fruit upon one tree. For the sake of fellowship and unity I desire this feast and spiritual gathering. . . .”

The Unity Feast was held Saturday, June 29, at West Englewood, New Jersey. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, already tired from a trip in which He had to change trains four times, arrived at noon and rested for a short while at the home of Roy Wilhelm, a devoted Bahá’í who gave nearly four decades of service to the Cause and was elevated by the Guardian to the rank of a Hand of the Cause of God following his death in 1951.

Later, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá walked to the grove of trees where tables were being laid for the feast. After serving many of the guests with His own hands, He addressed them in these words:

“This is a delightful gathering; you have come here with sincere intentions, and the purpose of all present is the attainment of the virtues of God. The motive is attraction to the divine Kingdom. Since the desire of all is unity and agreement, it is certain that this meeting will be productive of great results. It will be the cause of attracting a new bounty, for we are turning to the Kingdom of Abhá, seeking the infinite bestowals of the Lord. This is a new Day, and this hour is a new Hour in which we have come together. Surely the Sun of Reality with its full effulgence will illumine us, and the darkness of disagreements will disappear. The utmost love and unity will result; the favors of God will encompass us; the pathway of the Kingdom will be made easy. Like candles these souls will become ignited and made radiant through the lights of supreme guidance. Such gatherings as this have no equal or likeness in the world of mankind, where people are drawn together by physical motives or in furtherance of material interests, for this meeting is a prototype of that inner and complete spiritual association in the eternal world of being.

‘True Bahá’í meetings are the mirrors of the Kingdom wherein images of the Supreme Concourse are reflected. In them the lights of the most great guidance are visible. They voice the summons of the heavenly Kingdom and echo the call of the angelic hosts to every listening ear. The efficacy of such meetings as these is permanent throughout the ages. This assembly has a name and significance which will last forever. Hundreds of thousands of meetings shall be held to commemorate
A group photograph of those who were fortunate enough to be with 'Abdu'l-Bahá (at far left) for the first 'feast of unity' in West Englewood (Teaneck), New Jersey.

this occasion, and the very words I speak to you today shall be repeated in them for ages to come. Therefore, be ye rejoiced, for ye are sheltered beneath the providence of God. Be happy and joyous because the bestowals of God are intended for you and the life of the Holy Spirit is breathing upon you.

"Rejoice, for the heavenly table is prepared for you."

"Rejoice, for the angels of heaven are your assistants and helpers.

"Rejoice, for the glance of the Blessed Beauty, Bahá'u'lláh, is directed upon you.

"Rejoice, for Bahá'u'lláh is your Protector.

"Rejoice, for the everlasting glory is destined for you.

"Rejoice, for the eternal life is awaiting you.

"How many blessed souls have longed for this radiant century, their utmost hopes and desires centered upon the happiness and joy of one such day as this. Many the nights they passed sleepless and lamenting until the very morn in longing anticipation of this age, yearning to realize even an hour of this time. God has favored you in this century and has specialized you for the realization of its blessings. Therefore, you must praise and thank God with heart and soul in appreciation of this great opportunity and the attainment of this infinite bestowal—that such doors have been opened before your faces, that such abundance is pouring down from the cloud of mercy and that these refreshing breezes from the paradise of Abhá are resuscitating you. You must become of one heart, one spirit and one susceptibility. May you become as the waves of one sea, stars of the same heaven, fruits adorning the same tree, roses of one garden in order that through you the oneness of humanity may establish its temple in the world of mankind, for you are the ones who are called to uplift the cause of unity among the nations of the earth.

"First, you must become united and agreed among yourselves. You must be exceedingly kind and loving toward each other, willing to forfeit life in the pathway of another's happiness. You must be ready to sacrifice your possessions in another's behalf. The rich among you must show compassion toward the poor, and the well-to-do must look after those in distress. In Persia the friends offer their lives for each other, striving to assist and advance the interests and welfare of all the rest. They live in a perfect state of unity and agreement. Like the Persian friends you must be perfectly agreed and

"Hundreds of thousands of meetings shall be held to commemorate this occasion..."
united to the extent and limit of sacrificing life. Your utmost desire must be to confer happiness upon each other. Each one must be the servant of the others, thoughtful of their comfort and welfare. In the path of God one must forget himself entirely. He must not consider his own pleasure but seek the pleasure of others. He must not desire glory nor gifts of bounty for himself but seek these gifts and blessings for his brothers and sisters. It is my hope that you may become like this, that you may attain to the supreme bestowal and be imbued with such spiritual qualities as to forget yourselves entirely and with heart and soul offer yourselves as sacrifices for the Blessed Perfection. You should have neither will nor desire of your own but seek everything for the beloved of God and live together in complete love and fellowship. May the favors of Bahá'u'lláh surround you from all directions. This is the greatest bestowal and supreme bounty. These are the infinite favors of God."

As night fell, Juliet Thompson recorded in her diary the magic of a summer evening spent with ‘Abdu'l-Bahá:

"Later as we sat at the tables, he anointed us with rose-water. I was not at a table, but sitting on the grass beneath a tree, with one or two believers."

"‘Friends here!' smiled ‘Abdu'l-Bahá. In his voice was a deep and thrilling joy, the union of hearts giving him such rest.

"But the wonderful, the indescribably wonderful time came later. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá went out alone and remained for hours. When he returned it was dark. A few of us were sitting on the porch. Below us on the grass sat the people, that is, those who had lingered. Their white clothes in the dusk were as soft as moth wings. In their hands they held burning tapers, really to keep off the mosquitos! but the effect was of tiny wands tipped with red stars and the incense was like some Eastern temple. It was a fairy-like picture.

"‘Abdu'l-Bahá took a chair in the center of the step, and delicately holding a taper himself, he spoke in words of flame. I can see it all vividly still—and shall through my life—those trembling red stars among the dim white figures on the grass, behind them a wonderful tall tree, luxuriant with rolling outlines, now a great black cloud against the silver stars.'
House of Worship’s impact stunning

The following report from the Bahá’í World Centre was received March 13:

The impact of the newly dedicated House of Worship in New Delhi has far exceeded our brightest hopes since it was opened to public worship January 1.

Each day that has passed has seen several thousand visitors, a record of 20,000 persons having toured the Temple on a single Sunday. As many as a quarter of a million people may already have seen the building.

The demand for literature quickly exhausted the generous supply that had been prepared.

Even more striking is the importance the House of Worship is achieving as an attraction for government delegations visiting New Delhi from abroad. This has been especially true of diplomats from Eastern European countries and from China.

This month, a 50-person delegation from the Soviet Union, led by the deputy Minister of Defense, arranged through their Embassy that the Temple would be the first place visited after they had paid their respects at the memorial to the late prime minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

In addition to the cordiality that has marked them, these diplomatic visits have led to animated and searching discussions of Bahá’í teachings, especially of the principles set forth in the peace statement. A great many of the visitors have asked for literature.

Most gratifying, too, has been the response of the architectural world. The friends will be pleased to know that three of the 10 top architectural publications in the world are carrying major stories: (a) “Architecture” (the journal of the American Institute of Architects) in September; (b) “Building” (one of the two leading publications in the field in Britain) in its most recent issue; and (c) “Progressive Architecture” (the second-ranking journal in the U.S.) in April.

A similar response has come from engineering publications. The current issue of “Concrete Quarterly,” a top British publication in the field, has used the story as its feature article and carries a photograph of the Temple on the cover.

The photographs that are being used by the professional press have been taken, for the most part, from the work of Norman McGrath, one of America’s best-known architectural photographers.

When he saw the first preliminary pictures of the House of Worship last November, Mr. McGrath spontaneously expressed his desire to undertake a study of the building, waiving his $1,000-a-day fee and receiving only his travel expenses.

The resulting photos are stunningly beautiful and have further enhanced professional interest in the Temple as an architectural masterpiece.

In addition, scores of articles illustrated with striking photographs of the Temple have appeared in Indian media. A partial report from a member of the committee in charge of publicity for the dedication points out that the press conference held on December-10 brought together 50 representatives of Hindi, English and other language publications from many parts of India including the Indian edition of the “Reader’s Digest” and the TASS news service of the USSR.

This was the largest press gathering of its kind ever held by Bahá’ís in India, and it generated much of the initial coverage of the Temple’s dedication.

Arthur Ericson, one of America’s leading architects and an influential figure in the architectural community, recently paid an extraordinary tribute to the Temple, saying after a visit to New Delhi that it represents “one of the remarkable achievements of our time, proving that the drive and vision of the spirit can truly achieve miracles.”

As this report was being prepared, the news arrived that two well-known Japanese architectural journals, “Architecture and Urbanism” and “Process: Architecture,” had commissioned articles on the House of Worship.

Plans are under way to assure that the House of Worship also receives appropriate recognition at competitions in a number of major centers.

When the new academic year opens in September, the Office of Public Information at the World Centre will distribute schools of architecture throughout the world video cassettes of a special architectural film on the Temple.

Bahá’í News/June 1987
Development

Shining example in Cradle of Faith

In its message to the Bahá'í world dated October 20, 1983, the Universal House of Justice cited the social and economic progress made by the Bahá'ís of Iran as an example of the efficacy of the Bahá'í teachings in the affairs of the world. The essential aspects of Bahá'í social and economic development are found in the history of the Persian Bahá'í community during the early years of the Faith.

Love and devotion to Bahá'u'lláh motivated the believers to improve their own lives and to serve mankind; cooperative efforts on the local and national levels enabled the Bahá'ís to establish a broad network of schools and other service institutions; and adherence to Bahá'í principles and standards of conduct caused the Bahá'í community to stand out, despite official repression and widespread prejudice against it, as manifestly more progressive than the rest of that society.

The profound and transforming effect of the Cause in the lives of the believers and their communities was an accepted facet of life in Iran. Bahá'u'lláh had proclaimed "that which will serve as the key for unlocking the doors of science, of arts, of knowledge, of well-being, prosperity, and wealth," and his followers, using those "keys," became different from other people. As Bahá'ís, they wanted to educate their children, to uplift themselves, to serve their communities.

In his autobiography, the Hand of the Cause of God 'Ali-Akbar Furútan describes this deliberate transition: "When my mother and grandmother declared their belief in the Cause, they conscientiously began to think in terms of the education of their children and promptly sent me and my brother, who was then nine, to the 'school.'" The distinction achieved by the Bahá'ís was so pervasive that Persian believers take it for granted and others find it hard to comprehend; the Bahá'í child among a group of children playing could be identified by his neatness and his manners; the Bahá'í home in a village stood out because of its orderliness and its light; and the Bahá'í students were usually at the top of their class.

The relentless persecution suffered by the Bahá'ís in Iran over the past eight years is the consummate and tragic proof of this distinction. The fanatical elements in Iranian society, fueled by their envy of the Bahá'ís' prosperity and unable to accept that it is the consequence of putting the Bahá'í teachings into practice, have tried to destroy the Faith and all the evidences of its vitality.

The inner transformation of the community, which is the essence of Bahá'í development, was complemented by activities organized by the National and local Spiritual Assemblies. The Bahá'í schools and the Missaghieh Hospital attained great prestige, and the program of spiritual education for children and adults was comprehensive and effective. In the few areas in which Bahá'ís formed a majority of the population, they were able to carry out many more activities.

The Persian Bahá'í emigrants to Ishqabad in Russian Turkmenistan creat-

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organized educational facilities according to the teachings and laws of Bahá’u’lláh. Encouraged by Bahá’u’lláh Himself and by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, almost 4,000 believers left Iran between 1880 and 1920 to practice their new religion freely in Ishqabad, a fast-growing outpost of the Russian nation. They built a lovely and imposing House of Worship, where community members would gather each morning to listen to dawn prayers.

Four dependencies were built on the grounds of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár: two elementary schools, a medical clinic, and a pilgrim’s hospice. The community also established schools in two nearby communities, Merv and Qah Qahih, and opened two kindergartens in Ishqabad. The Bahá’ís published a magazine and opened a library and public reading room.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá encouraged them to build on this foundation, writing, “Now ye must widen the scope of your endeavours, and draw up plans to establish schools for higher education, so that the City of Love will become the Bahá’í focal centre for sciences and arts.” Since the development of the Bahá’í community of Ishqabad was disrupted by opposition to the Faith in the 1920s, no other community has yet advanced to that same degree.

The schools established by Persian Bahá’ís were the first Bahá’í development activities. At a time when secular education was almost non-existent and religious education was circumscribed and rudimentary, the Bahá’ís in Iran built an educational apparatus that was widespread, open to everyone, and distinguished in every way. The premier Bahá’í school in Iran, the Tábríz School in Tehran, was officially opened in 1899, although it had already been in operation for two years. The Tábríz Girls’ School opened in 1911. The example of the Tábríz School was emulated in the Ta’úid and Mashhádat-i-Bashar School in Káshán, and similar schools in Báfúrúsh and Qazvín. These schools offered six primary and six secondary grade classes, were recognized by the government, and followed the official curriculum when it was introduced in 1925.

Many other Bahá’í communities organized educational facilities according to their ability; some had a staff of teachers and hundreds of students, while in others one or two teachers taught the children of a particular village. Inquiries reveal that more than 40 schools of all sizes were operated at various times by the Bahá’ís of Iran.

Each one of these schools came into being as a response to Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings on education: that “the greatest means” to “the advancement of the world of being” is “education of the child.” That education is “the indispensable foundation of all human excellence” and the source of “honour, prosperity, independence and freedom for a nation.”

Individual Bahá’ís, inspired by the spirit of the Faith, founded the first schools; as local Spiritual Assemblies were formed they took the responsibility for education. Assemblies organized and administered schools, and ascertained that all children were able to attend, whatever their financial resources. Bahá’í funds supported those children whose parents could not pay. Many of the village Bahá’í schools were operated by local Spiritual Assemblies whose members were themselves illiterate; they knew Bahá’u’lláh had made education obligatory, so they asked the Assembly in Tehran to send them a teacher.

The Bahá’í schools achieved a high standard of excellence and gained a reputation, despite the strong prejudice against the Faith in Iran, of being the best schools in the country. Many notable people sent their children to the Tábríz schools, and they trained a generation of leaders in every field. The standard for Bahá’í schools was clearly established by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in an early letter to the Tábríz School: “... it must become evident that it is the first school of Persia and its graduates are the most successful. Otherwise its non-being is better than its being.”

The international cooperation which characterized the schools from their inception was one reason for their success: the teachers who came from the American Bahá’í community introduced modern educational methods. In 1906 the Tábríz Boys’ School was the only one in Tehran where mathematics was studied every day and children were separated into classes according to their ability. The Tábríz Girls’ School had recess and gymnastics classes more than 15 years before government schools allowed physical education for girls. Through the American connection, Bahá’í schools were the first to have laboratory equipment for science classes, and former Tábríz students still remember the excitement of watching educational films—at that time their school was the only one in Iran with a film projector.

The fundamental distinction of the Bahá’í schools, however, lay in the Bahá’í concept of education, which defines moral and spiritual training to be the foundation of all learning. From 1925 all schools in Iran were required to follow a standard curriculum issued by the government, and no mention of the Faith was possible, but the Bahá’í schools were still unique. Former Tábríz students recall the effect of the prayer of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that was chanted every morning while each class stood in line, and the atmosphere of love and trust that pervaded the school. Teachers and students shared a mutual respect and dedication to learning.

The Bahá’í students had been trained from infancy to be well-mannered, obedient and conscientious, and their refinement of character raised the level of their academic education. Members of other religious groups sent their children to the Bahá’í schools because they wanted them to act like the Bahá’í children. The monthly evaluations of each child included not only a report to parents of his progress in academic subjects, but also a report from parents about the child’s behavior at home. A careful effort was made to involve parents in school activities, because in the Bahá’í context, the school is a center for the education of the whole community. The Tábríz Girls’ School held monthly conferences for mothers.
and other women, who had no other opportunity for education, no organized activities, and no life outside the home. At each conference, students presented talks, plays and demonstrations to illustrate a theme, such as the value of subjects learned in the secondary school or modern home management, which would interest and inform the women. These conferences were immensely popular; 300 to 400 people attended each conference when they were started in the early 1920s. Teachers tried to show parents how to apply Bahá'í principles in child-rearing, and, because they were well-educated and dedicated believers, the teachers became models for all the Bahá'ís.

Especially in the villages, the Bahá'í teachers were the hub of Bahá'í community life. They taught Bahá'í classes and adult education as well as the children, and through their example created a momentum for self-improvement and development. The Bahá'í youth of the 1920s and 1930s who left Tehran to teach school in the villages set the example for the Bahá'í youth volunteers of the present; through their love and respect for their host communities, their willingness to sacrifice their modern customs and habits, and their reliance on Bahá'u'lláh, they gained the confidence of the villagers and helped them to realize the progressive qualities that characterized Bahá'í communities in Iran.

The first stage of Bahá'í educational activity in Iran came to an end in 1934 when the government closed all Bahá'í-operated schools because they refused to stay open on Bahá'í Holy Days. The schools in Russian Turkmenistan had been closed by the government four years earlier. Non-formal educational activity continued within the Bahá'í community; thousands of Bahá'í children attended character training classes every week, and national committees were organized to meet the needs of other groups. In 1973 it was announced that the Bahá'ís had achieved a literacy rate of 100 per cent among women under the age of 40, despite the national literacy rate of 15 per cent.

The progress made by women was a remarkable aspect of the Bahá'í community. The Bahá'í teachings created a consciousness and self-image for women that was wholly new. At a time when the woman's world was confined entirely to the home, 'Abdu'l-Bahá instructed the Bahá'í women to direct their minds to science, industry and other subjects that would improve the human condition. He constantly encouraged the Bahá'í communities to establish schools for girls, emphasizing that this was more important than their other efforts. Some of the graduates of these girls' schools became the first generation of professional women in Iranian society, and the example set by Bahá'í women had an impact on the whole society.

The Nawnahalan Society was organized by the Bahá'í community around the turn of the century to encourage savings by children and to provide funds for community development. The original plan, which was curtailed by the restrictions placed on Bahá'í activity, was that projects to benefit the whole community would be funded by...
loans from the accumulated capital. 'Abdu'l-Bahá encouraged the Nawjahal Society and subscribed to it Himself; when it was confiscated a few years ago by the Revolutionary Government, it held the life savings of more than 15,000 Bahá'ís.

The Persian Bahá'í communities also organized health care facilities. 'Abdu'l-Bahá encouraged Dr. Susan Moody, Dr. Sarah Clock, and Elizabeth Stewart, a trained nurse, to settle in Tehran. These noble women, constrained by social conditions from establishing a nursing school as they had hoped, provided primary health care, held classes for mothers, and quietly demonstrated the capacity of women. Both doctors died in Tehran after years of selfless service to the Bahá'ís and the general public.

Before 1910, the Missaghieh Hospital was started in Tehran through the generosity and initiative of one individual. Bahá'ís who were nurses and doctors volunteered to staff the hospital in addition to their regular work; other Bahá'ís helped with administration and other tasks. The hospital grew in size and prestige, and was one of the most respected medical institutions in Tehran when it was shut down by the government in 1979.

The high standard of personal hygiene and its emphasis on education both contributed to the health of the Bahá'í community. In 1930, a number of Bahá'í communities were reported to be establishing modern public baths. Many individual health professionals donated their time and skills to facilities sponsored by the Bahá'í community: one example is the Takur Clinic.

The Persian believers who participated in Bahá'í community life when it was not thoroughly constrained by repression, who taught or attended Bahá'í schools, who saw the distinction achieved by the Iranian Bahá'ís in their society, have a perspective that is quite relevant to the current development activities of Bahá'ís around the world. Their experiences of the Bahá'í teachings in action; in the excellence of the Bahá'í schools; the well-being of Bahá'í villagers; and the success of Bahá'í women can help us understand the statement of the Universal House of Justice that development activities "will ensure a deeper consolidation of the community at all levels." Because the Persian friends accepted Bahá'u'lláh, read His writings, tried to obey His laws, and followed the guidance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian, they achieved a remarkable degree of social and economic progress. The transforming power of the Cause of God gave them a motivation to change their lives, an ability to work together, and a vision of their own capacity.

NOTES
1. Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 96.
2. The Story of My Heart, p. 3.
5. Bahá'í Education: A Compilation, p. 35.
8. Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 299.
10. Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 129.
15. Bahá'í Education: A Compilation, p. 46.
17. The worldwide dispersion of the Iranian Bahá'ís will allow many communities to hear the stories of the earliest Bahá'í development activities. In preparing this article, the author interviewed eight individuals who had taught in or administered Bahá'í schools in Iran.
18. Message to the Bahá'ís of the world, October 20, 1983.

Students at the first Bahá'í school in Ishqabad, Russia, one of four dependencies built on the grounds of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár there. The photograph is from Vol. IV of The Bahá'í World.
World Centre

‘The Promise of World Peace’

The following information is provided by the Department of Statistics.

The following is a list, in alphabetical order, of the 60 languages into which the full text of ‘The Promise of World Peace’ has been translated, published, and copies received at the World Centre. Corresponding to each language group are listed National Spiritual Assemblies, Bahá’í Publishing Trusts (BPT) or other agencies which have published the peace statement.


Chinese (Hong Kong; Malaysia; Taiwan). Croatian (Austria). Danish (Denmark). Dutch (BPT Belgium; BPT Netherlands). English (Australia; Association for Baha'i Studies Canada; Belize; Hong Kong; India; Ireland; Kenya; Lebanon; Lesotho; Malaysia; New Zealand; Pakistan; Philippines; Samoa; South and West Africa; Sri Lanka; Transkei; Trinidad & Tobago; United Kingdom; United States).

Esperanto (Australia; Bahá’í Esperanto-Ligo). Faroese (Faro Islands). French (BPT Belgium; Central African Republic; France; Guadeloupe; Ivory Coast; New Caledonia & the Loyalty Islands; Reunion; Switzerland; Zaire, Central South).

Gaelic, Irish (Ireland). German (BPT Belgium; BPT Germany; Suriname; Switzerland). Gilbertese (Kiribati). Greek (BPT Greece). Gujarati (India). Hebrew (Bahá’í World Centre). Hindi (BPT India).


Maori: New Zealand (New Zealand). Marathi (India). Motu (Papua New Guinea). Norwegian (Norway). Oriya (BPT India). Persian (Australia; Austria; India; Pakistan; United Kingdom; United States).


Sindhi (Pakistan). Sinhalese (Sri Lanka). Spanish (BPT Argentina; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; El Salvador; Honduras; Mexico; Nicaragua; Panama; Peru; Puerto Rico; Spain; Uruguay; Venezuela).


Tswana (Botswana). Turkish (Turkey). Tuvaluan (BPT Fiji Islands). Vietnamese (BPT Australia). Welsh (United Kingdom). Xhosa (Transkei).

12 June 1987/Bahá’í News
For the past few months a team of Baha'is with backgrounds in medicine has treated patients at a medical camp and conducted a course for health workers at Chickhly Village near Panchgani, India. The medical camp, coordinated by Govind Kasurde, was held last September 21 at the Baha'i Centre in Chickhly. One hundred sixty-three patients from Chickhly and 15 nearby villages were seen and treated, while training in health/nutrition education was given to adult literacy workers from 17 villages and 30 adult literacy programs. On November 30, Mr. Kasurde was joined by Drs. Tim and Radha Rost, Dr. H.M. Munje and Mrs. Zylpha Mapp-Robinson to open the health workers course, designed to train workers to treat simple illnesses and injuries, use local medicinal plants and foods to improve health, and to know which cases should be referred to a hospital or doctor. Another goal is to unify the villagers through spiritual, physical and mental health. The first classes were held December 1-14. In these pictures (clockwise from upper left), Dr. Radha Rost shows how to make a cough syrup from eucalyptus leaves; a villager arrives on foot for class; Mrs. Mapp-Robinson (left) and Dr. Radha Rost show off one of their nutritious meals; and Yasmin Raswallah, Mrs. Mapp-Robinson and Ruhiyih Hakim present a puppet show on how to prevent dental caries.
The world

World Religion Day in Guadeloupe

Five widely publicized events were held January 15-23 to celebrate World Religion Day in Guadeloupe.

The principal meeting, held January 18 in Pointe-a-Pitre, included presentations by a Christian, a Hindu, a Muslim and a Bahá'í on “Education for Peace.” A Bahá'í children's choir sang for the more than 100 people present.

Dr. Kamran, a visiting Bahá'í from Belgium, was the featured speaker, and his appearance drew the attention of journalists. Articles with photos appeared in France-Antilles both before and after the event.

News was broadcast daily on local radio stations. RCI, the most popular commercial station in Guadeloupe, interviewed Dr. Kamran twice and broadcast a two-hour call-in show in which Dr. Kamran answered questions about the Faith from listeners.

A well-known radio personality on Radio France Outre-Mer (RFO) gave a 10-minute report one day and broadcast a 40-minute tape of the World Religion Day program on another.

A program broadcast January 29 included the reading of the Bahá'í statement on “Education for Peace,” music, readings from The Hidden Words, and chanting by Mrs. Kamran.

Besides the World Religion Day events, the Kamrans' two-week stay in Guadeloupe included public talks, firesides, speeches to university and secondary school students, audiences with prominent persons, luncheons, and many other meetings with individual Bahá'ís and their friends.

“The Bahá'í Point of View on Apartheid,” an article submitted by the Public Relations Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of Guadeloupe, was published last July by the newspaper France Antilles.

Chile

An especially gratifying appreciation for the peace statement was received by the local Spiritual Assembly of Punta Arenas, Chile, from the rector of the University of Magallanes in Chile's southernmost city.

The rector, Yerko Torrejon Koscina, wished the Bahá'ís “great success in the spreading and materialization of an ideology with such a noble objective...genuine peace among one people called Planet Earth.”

Speaking of the Bahá'ís' visit to his office, and their invitation to him to express an opinion of the statement, he wrote, “I believe that 'The Promise of World Peace' contains a modern concept, both broad and deep, of religion and its relationship to the achievements of mankind. The approach, which is delicate and tolerant, has, however, the realism, clarity, and firmness required of views on peace, if they are to be seriously considered as viable. Even without being a Bahá'í, it is easy to concur in the fundamental ideas on the World Order that is proposed. . . .”

Trinidad/Tobago

Edna Ruth Caverly (standing) of the Bahá'í community of Port of Spain, Trinidad, presents a copy of 'The Promise of World Peace' to Mrs. Ermine Bailey, principal of St. James Government Secondary School in Port of Spain. In the near future, the peace statement will either be delivered to or posted for all the principals of government schools in Trinidad and Tobago.
Germany

Final statistics reflecting the success of the Bahá’í community of Germany during the International Year of Peace were reported last February by the Committee for the Year of Peace of the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany.

During the year, 706 public meetings were held to discuss peace-related issues; they were organized and sponsored by some 86 Bahá’í communities, 60 Bahá’í Groups and 15 national committees.

In addition, 10,788 guests and 8,801 Bahá’ís attended Bahá’í-sponsored peace events at which 16,261 items of information were given out including posters and stickers.

Some 24,098 copies of the Universal House of Justice’s peace statement were distributed throughout the country, while 6,200 pamphlets on peace were presented at or included with invitations to Bahá’í events.

One hundred-seventy reports of Bahá’í-sponsored peace events appeared in newspapers, 14 were broadcast on radio, and in April 1986, a 95-minute program on the Faith was carried on cable television.

At least 61 follow-up activities were planned this year.

India

More than 500 copies of the Universal House of Justice’s peace statement were distributed last August 18-20 during the 11th World Congress of Sociology in New Delhi, India.

Many of the papers presented at the Congress reflected topics dealt with in the peace statement.

The Bahá’í delegate, Nejhat Haghi­gat, called the Congress a “God-sent opportunity to reach delegates” some of whom were from East European countries.

The Christ Church School in Bombay, India, announced in a letter from its principal that, in response to requests from five Bahá’í students and their families, all nine Bahá’í Holy Days would be listed in future as excused absences from school.

Australia

Pictured are members of a teaching team organized last year in Victoria, Australia, in memory of Ashraf Saffar, the mother of Auxiliary Board member Mahvash Master. From left to right are Ms. Master, Steven Johns, Mossy Jones, and Ms. Master’s nephew, Farid Saffar.

Shown during a recent visit by Auxiliary Board member Mahvash Master are members of the Spiritual Assembly of Mornington Island, Australia. Ms. Master met with the Assembly during its election of officers. All of those elected as officers are Aborigines except for one who is a pioneer to the island.

El Salvador

El Mundo, a daily newspaper in the capital city of El Salvador, has published a number of articles about the Faith beginning in October 1985 and continuing through June 1986.

They include the complete text of “The Promise of World Peace,” a half-page interview with Counsellor Hooper Dunbar of the International Teaching Centre, and a series of articles on the peace statement taken from a commentary by Quentin Farrand, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of El Salvador.
Malaysia

After taking part in the dedication of the Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi last December, the Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone, accompanied by his wife, Madge, traveled to Malaysia.

Between December 30 and January 8 he spoke to several communities in the Kuala Lumpur area, in Selangor, and in Negri Sembilan. Mrs. Featherstone also spoke to several communities.

The Hand of the Cause met with Counsellor Chellie Sundram and five members of the National Spiritual Assembly while visiting the capital city, and on another occasion met with 70 members of the Auxiliary Boards and national and state Teaching Committees.

On January 9, a proclamation event was held at the Pure Life Society at which nearly 100 teachers and students were shown a video tape of a special "peace service" held last October at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Sydney, Australia.

After a stop in Singapore, the Featherstones continued to Adelaide and Melbourne where Mr. Featherstone addressed the Australian National Youth Conference.

Correction

In November 1986, Bahá'í News printed two articles about the passing of Counsellor Yan Kee Leong, in one of which he was described as "Malaysia's first Bahá'í," as he was in a headline above one article, in the cable from the National Spiritual Assembly of Malaysia to the Universal House of Justice and in its reply to that Assembly.

It has since been brought to our attention that while Mr. Leong was indeed the first to enroll in the Faith in what was then Malaya (as stated in the article by Shantha Sundram in the Malaysian Bahá'í News, December 1973-July 1974), there were already at that time a number of Bahá'ís in Kuching, Sarawak, which was then known as British Borneo and later became a part of Eastern Malaysia.

On April 21, 1953—some nine months before Mr. Leong was enrolled—those friends had formed the first Spiritual Assembly of Kuching, and the first in any of those areas that would later be joined to form what is now known as Malaysia.

We hope that this explanation clears any misunderstanding about the chronology of Counsellor Leong's enrollment in the Faith, and apologize for the inadvertent factual errors in the articles and headline.

South and West Africa

A Bahá'í newspaper created by the Public Relations Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of South and West Africa has been distributed to 1,000 influential people in the area.

The paper is also being used to present to local officials and others with copies of the peace statement, "The Promise of World Peace."

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Cyprus

Last September, a week-long Bahá'í Summer School in North Cyprus opened in "an adventurous spirit" at a campground and later moved to a hotel some 15 miles from Famagusta. Twenty-three adult Bahá'ís including six from overseas, four youth and 16 children attended.

Also present were Counsellors Ilhan Segzin of Asia and Polin Rafat of Europe who "supplied an abundant source of encouragement and inspiration, and enriched and spiritualized the study sessions," according to a report by the school committee.

A local newspaper's extensive coverage included photographs, Bahá'í quotations, and an interview with Mrs. Rafat.
Dominica

Bahá'ís were invited to take part last September 14 in an ecumenical service at the Roman Catholic church in Portsmouth, Dominica, as part of an observance of the International Day of Peace.

It marked the first time that the Bahá'ís of Dominica had been asked to join the church service of another religion. After talks on peace by a Catholic priest and Methodist minister, a Bahá'í prayer for mankind was read. The audience applauded, after which the moderator commented that this was their way of saying "amen."

Other Bahá'í participation in Peace Day events included that of a Bahá'í singer and guitarist from the United Kingdom who sang peace songs for a festival held by UNESCO clubs.

Guatemala

The new president of Guatemala, Marco Vicinio Cerezo Arevalo, received a copy of the peace statement last September 11 from a delegation of four Bahá'ís representing the National Spiritual Assembly.

The president welcomed the Bahá'ís cordially, expressing his appreciation at receiving the document at such an urgent and appropriate moment in history.

The following day, Prensa Libre, the most widely circulated newspaper in the country, carried an article on the presentation with a photograph of Mr. Arevalo receiving the statement from Mrs. Parisa Nabili, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Two nationally popular radio stations also reported the event.

- Last September, the state television station of Guatemala invited Mrs. Parisa Nabili, a member of that country's National Spiritual Assembly, and Auxiliary Board member Soheil Shahidinijad to give a presentation on peace. In the last 14 months, the Bahá'ís have presented five one-hour programs.

- The Lions Club in Quiche, Guatemala, recently invited a Bahá'í to take part in a symposium on "Peace Is Inevitable," speaking as part of a panel with a Catholic priest and a lawyer.

Three hundred people attended the symposium. The formal presentations were followed by a question-and-answer period during which most of the questions were directed to the Bahá'í speaker.

Bangladesh

Bahá'í women in Bangladesh are competing in a project sponsored by the National Bahá'í Women's Committee to embroider the "Greatest Name" on fabric.

Those which are the most beautifully executed may be sent to Bahá'í communities in other countries for sale to benefit the National Fund. All who are able are being asked to take part in the project; materials are supplied for those who are unable to provide their own.

Haiti

Haitian youth reached eight of the country's nine departments during a recent nine-week teaching campaign involving 47 Bahá'ís. They reached 1,117 people, 376 of whom declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh.

Lesotho

A forum entitled "Is World Peace Possible?" was sponsored last October 24 by the United Nations Information Centre and the National University of Lesotho in Maseru.

Mrs. Lucretia Mancho Warren, listed on the program as a Counsellor of the Bahá'í Faith in Africa, took part on a panel with two academics from the university's departments of political studies and economics and a representative of the UN Secretary-General in Lesotho.

Mrs. Warren's topic was "The Promise of World Peace," while other panelists dealt with the economics of peace and the UN as peacekeeper.

United Kingdom

A Persian Bahá'í youth from Chigwell, Essex, England, has been placed first in the year's A-level examinations at his high school. The young man plans to study medicine at Edinburgh University.

On taking leave of his headmaster, the youth presented him a Peace Pack from the United Nations (the headmaster had already received the peace statement from the local Spiritual Assembly of Epping Forest). He also distributed nine copies of the peace statement among his teachers.
Egypt

Government fines, imprisons 48 Bahá’ís

On May 11, the government of Egypt levied fines against 48 Bahá’ís and sentenced them to the maximum term of three years in prison for allegedly violating a law banning Bahá’i activities in that country.

Nine who reside outside Egypt were convicted in absentia. Two others were found not guilty after recanting their faith.

“The acquittal of those who declared their acceptance of Islam clearly demonstrates that religious beliefs, not alleged activities, were the central issue,” said Dr. Firuz Kazemzadeh, vice-chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States.

The sentences, announced in Cairo by the Abdin Misdemeanor Court, followed the court’s refusal to allow full defense arguments and questioning of witnesses.

The Bahá’ís were released on bail and were expected to appeal the verdict.

Presidential Decree No. 263, signed in 1960 by then-President Gamal Abdel Nasser, ordered the dissolution of all Bahá’í Spiritual Assemblies in Egypt.

At the time, government officials said the order applied only to Bahá’í administrative organizations and their activities, adding that individuals would remain free to practice their religion.

Although they have scrupulously observed the terms of that decree, Egyptian Bahá’ís have been imprisoned on at least six occasions in the past 20 years, solely on charges relating to the practice of their religion.

The most recent arrests were made February 24 in a midnight sweep through several Egyptian cities during which the Bahá’ís’ homes were searched and their Bahá’í books and documents seized.

The Bahá’ís were charged with “holding ideas that run counter to the divinely revealed religions on which the system of government in Egypt is based” and of belonging to an “apostate religion.”

Egypt’s State Security Prosecutor found that those charges do not constitute a crime under the country’s penal code and transferred the case to another court for prosecution under statutes forbidding the use of religion to promote seditious ideas and under the 1960 law prohibiting organized Bahá’í activity.

Charges against the Bahá’ís included gathering in small groups, praying together in private homes, and being in possession of Bahá’í holy writings and prayer books.

Egyptian Bahá’ís, like their counterparts in Iran, have long been the target of attacks by Islamic fundamentalists.

Despite guarantees of religious freedom in the Egyptian Constitution, and despite Egypt’s adoption of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Bahá’ís have been victims of harassment, public slander and periodic arrests over the past 30 years.

In 1960 there were nearly 3,000 Bahá’ís in Egypt; today there are fewer than 500.

“Bahá’ís can hardly be considered a threat to the Egyptian state,” said Dr. Kazemzadeh. “Not only are their numbers insignificant, but as we know, their religion demands that they observe the law scrupulously and not participate in politics.”

Legislation introduced by Islamic fundamentalists in the Egyptian Parliament in 1985 called for fines and harsh punishment for anyone “laying open claim to prophethood,” any group “promoting claims to prophethood,” and any person who knowingly joins such a group.

Although Bahá’ís were not mentioned by name, the language used made it clear that they were the target of the proposed bill.

Bahá’ís are seen as heretics and apostates by Muslims who hold that Muhammad was “the Seal of the Prophets” and that there can be no new Revelation from God after Him. Muslims do not recognize the Faith as a valid religion, but view it as a conspiracy.

Fundamentalists in Egypt have called for the general boycotting of Bahá’ís, the “spilling of the blood of the Bahá’ís,” and the Islamic punishment of death for the Bahá’ís.

The Islamic Center of Cairo’s Al-Azhar Mosque and University, the foremost seat of learning in the Sunni Islamic world, has publicly attacked the Bahá’ís, while other Islamic groups have urged the government to exterminate them.

Since the arrests in February, news of attacks on Bahá’ís has appeared regularly in the Egyptian press including some government-sponsored newspapers. These articles allege heresy, atheism, immorality, espionage and promoting “Zionism.”

Dr. Kazemzadeh called the recent actions in Egypt “alarming,” since “they indicate that the wave of persecution that still affects the Bahá’ís in Iran is now spreading over other Muslim countries, based on the same fanatical arguments and motivated by the same spirit of religious intolerance.

“We are deeply concerned,” he said, “that such actions by Egypt, which is considered a tolerant and forward-looking nation, will send a dangerous signal to other countries in the Islamic world where there are hundreds of thousands of Bahá’ís.”
Achievements of the Seven Year Plan

In its Riḍván 1985 message to the Bahá'ís of the world, the Universal House of Justice stated, "Victory in the Plan is now within sight and at its completion the summation of its achievements may well astonish us all." The following year, the House of Justice noted that "the Seven Year Plan, the manifold achievements of which brought to a close the third epoch of the Formative Age, ran its course through a period of accelerating change in the Bahá'í community and in the world at large. Significant developments took place in this short span of years."

The following synopsis presents the significant achievements of the Seven Year Plan, Rídvan 1979-1986.

World Centre Achievements

1. Completion and Occupation of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice in 1983. Work on this $28 million project commenced in June 1975; it was dedicated on April 29, 1978, during the fourth International Convention; its inauguration took place on June 17, 1982, through the holding of a seminar on the occasion of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf.

2. Approval of the Concept for the Other Buildings on the Arc in early 1986. Designs were prepared by Husayn Amãnat, the architect of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, for the Centre for the Study of the Sacred Texts, which will lie between the International Archives building and the Seat of the House of Justice; the International Teaching Centre; and the International Bahá'í Library.

3. Restoration of the House of 'Abdu'l-Áhad-Pâshá. The restoration of the upper floor of the south wing, that part of the complex where the Holy Family dwelt, was completed in 1983 in time for delegates to the International Convention to visit. Since then, plans have been prepared for the restoration of the north wing which consists of a large room used for community gatherings in the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and a smaller room used by Shoghi Effendi.

4. Bahá'í Cemetery at Ein Gev. The establishment of a new Bahá'í cemetery near the Sea of Galilee, and the re-interment there on October 18, 1985, of the remains of Mírzá Muhammad-Qúli (the faithful half-brother of Bahá'u'lláh) and 11 members of his family, mark an important supplemental achievement in the Holy Land.

5. Extension of the Gardens in the Holy Land. A total of 66,265 square meters of land was acquired during the Plan: 13,150 square meters bordering the driveway from the western gate at Bahji; 50,000 square meters adjacent to and northeast of the Mazra'ih property; and 3,135 square meters at Ein Gev.

6. Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf. A compilation of her own writings and of others about her was published in her memory in July 1982.

7. Expansion of the Membership and Responsibilities of the International Teaching Centre. Through the addition of Counsellors Magdalene Carney, Mas'úd Khamisi, Peter Khan and Isobel Sabri in May 1983, joining the Hands of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum and 'All Akbar Furutan and Counsellors Anneliese Bopp, Hooper Dunbar and 'Azíz Yazdí, its membership was raised to nine. Commencing May 23, 1983, Counsellor members of the Teaching Centre serve a five-year term. Among the functions presently carried out are: exercising full responsibility for the direction and stimulation of the Continental Boards of Counsellors and serving as a liaison between them and the Universal House of Justice; preparing reports and recommendations to the Universal House of Justice for further development of the Bahá'í community; taking responsibility for the protection of the Faith; determining needs for the enrichment of Bahá'í life, and for the continued expansion and diversification of Bahá'í activities within the realms of teaching and consolidation; studying the needs for pioneers and traveling teachers, for literature and audio-visual materials.

8. Expansion of the Bahá'í International Community offices. In the course of the Plan, the Bahá'í International Community considerably broadened its relationship with the United Nations system beyond its headquarters in New York by establishing UN branch headquarters in Geneva and Vienna, and UN regional headquarters, or Regional Economic Commissions, in Africa (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia), Asia (Bangkok, Thailand), and Latin America and the Caribbean (Santiago, Chile). It has also increased its contacts with several of the UN specialized bodies and agencies, including the World Food Council (WFC), the World Health Organization (WHO), the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the International Labor Organization (ILO). Moreover, the Bahá'í International Community participated in sessions of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe and was thereby instrumental in bringing the situation of the Bahá'ís in Iran to the attention of those bodies. It also enjoys a close working relationship with the South Pacific Commission (SPC), an inter-governmental organization promoting the social and economic development of the countries of the Pacific region.
9. International Bahá'í Refugee Office. This office, established in November 1984 in Canada at the request of the Universal House of Justice, is responsible for coordinating efforts to resettle Iranian Bahá'í refugees who have been forced to seek refuge in other countries because of the persecutions of the Iranian government. During the Plan, 38 National Assemblies have been involved in the resettlement of some 3,500 Iranian Bahá'í refugees.

10. Office of Social and Economic Development. This office, established in July 1983, has been given the task of helping the Universal House of Justice to promote and coordinate various activities in the Bahá'í world intended to uplift the social and economic life of peoples.

11. Office of Public Information. Established in May 1985, with its headquarters at the World Centre, as well as a branch in New York City, this office's basic function is to disseminate accurate information on the Faith to government, international and national agencies, leaders of thought, the mass media and the general public. The purpose of these efforts is to foster a favorable climate of understanding among the peoples of the world concerning the aims and achievements of the Bahá'í community as well as to correct misinformation and combat opposition.

World-Wide Achievements

1. Dedication of the Temple in Samoa. In September 1978 a design for the Temple was approved; on January 27, 1979, the foundation stone was laid; construction was carried out by a New Zealand contractor; and the Temple was dedicated on September 1, 1984. Total project cost: $6,500,000.

2. Temple in India. Designs for the Temple were approved prior to the Plan; the foundation stone was laid on October 17, 1977; construction contract was awarded to an Indian company in 1980; construction was completed by June 1986; the Temple was dedicated between December 23-28, 1986. This undertaking has spanned three Plans at a total cost of $10 million.

3. Further Development of the Continental Boards of Counsellors. In November 1980, 63 Continental Counsellors were appointed for a five-year term of service starting on the Day of the Covenant, November 26, 1980. At that time, 13 zones were consolidated into five zones, each of which extends over the entire continental area. The number of Counsellors was increased to 72 in November 1985, and the first world-wide Counsellors' Conference was held in the Holy Land in December 1985. The work of the Continental Counsellors is supported by the activities of 630 Auxiliary Board members who were appointed by the end of the Plan, and by at least 5,000 believers who are serving as assistants to the Auxiliary Board members.

4. Five International Bahá'í Conferences, 1982. Dublin, Ireland, June 27-29: 1,900 from 60 countries attending; Quito, Ecuador, August 6-8: 1,450 from 43 countries attending; Lagos, Nigeria, August 19-22: 1,100 from 90 ethnic groups attending; Canberra, Australia, September 2-5: 2,400 from 45 countries attending; Montreal, Canada, September 2-5: 9,400 from 101 countries attending.

5. Countries Opened to the Faith. By the conclusion of the Plan, Bahá'í communities were established in 166 independent countries and 48 dependent territories or overseas departments.

6. Formation of National Spiritual Assemblies. Twenty-two new National Assemblies, comprising one-sixth of the total number, were formed during this Plan. In addition, it was possible to re-form three National Assemblies: Uganda (1981), Nepal (1982), and Equatorial Guinea (1984). However, in 1981 the National Assembly of Zaire was dissolved for a temporary period; and in 1983 the National Assembly of Iran was dissolved as a result of the persecutions in that country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>No. NSAs Ridván 1979</th>
<th>No. NSAs Ridván 1986</th>
<th>Percent Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORLD</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following National Assemblies were established during the Seven Year Plan (with formation year in parentheses): Transkei (1980); Bermuda (1981); Bophuthatswana (1981); Leeard Islands (1981); Southwest Africa/Namibia (1981); St. Vincent and the Grenadines (1981); Tuvalu (1981); Uganda (1981); Nepal (1982); Dominica (1983); St. Lucia (1983); Andaman and Nicobar Islands (1984); Canary Islands (1984); Cape Verde (1984); Equatorial Guinea (1984); French Guiana (1984); Gabon (1984); Grenada (1984); Martinique (1984); North Yemen (1984); Ciskei (1985); Cook Islands (1985); Mali (1985); Mozambique (1985); Western Caroline Islands (1985).

7. Formation of Local Spiritual Assemblies. During the Plan, in 28 countries, the number of local Assemblies more than doubled, while an additional 39 countries had an increase of at least 50 percent. The formation of 9,230 new local Assemblies, bringing the total to 32,854 worldwide, surpassed the goal of the Plan by 2,004 Assemblies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>No. Assemblies Ridván 1979</th>
<th>No. Assemblies Ridván 1986</th>
<th>Percent Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>4,535</td>
<td>7,258</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>5,424</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>12,473</td>
<td>17,524</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORLD</td>
<td>23,624</td>
<td>32,854</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Localities Opened to the Faith. During this period, in 142 countries or territories, the number of localities opened to the Faith was more than doubled; and in an additional 35 countries, it was increased by at least 50 percent. Over-all, 14,003 new localities were opened to the Cause, surpassing the goal of the Plan by 1,250.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>No. Localities Ridván 1979</th>
<th>No. Localities Ridván 1986</th>
<th>Percent Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>26,508</td>
<td>35,657</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>22,110</td>
<td>26,570</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>49,051</td>
<td>48,730</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
<td>2,586</td>
<td>2,848</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>2,449</td>
<td>2,902</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORLD</td>
<td>102,704</td>
<td>116,707</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Baha'i Population Increase. The total Baha'i population increase for the Plan was approximately 1,118,000, 518,000 of whom are adults. Worldwide, the community is growing at a rate of 4.4 percent per year, with an "enrollment rate" of 2.7 percent. Forty-nine countries exhibited an average annual growth rate of 10 percent or better for the Plan, and in 86 countries the number of adults was increased by at least 30 percent during these seven years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>603,000</td>
<td>969,000</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>665,000</td>
<td>857,000</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>2,264,000</td>
<td>2,807,000</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>84,000</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>19,000</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORLD</td>
<td>3,621,000</td>
<td>4,739,000</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 34 countries the percentage of Baha'is in the general population is greater than one percent; in six of these communities the percentage is greater than five percent: Tuvalu (5.8 percent); Belize (6.0 percent); Tonga (6.3 percent); Western Caroline Islands (7.7 percent); Marshall Islands (11.5 percent); and Kiribati (17.9 percent).

The following 22 national communities, each with at least 500 believers, more than doubled their adult Baha'i population during the Seven Year Plan.

- Australia: 144 percent
- Bangladesh: 182 percent
- Benin: 111 percent
- Brazil: 129 percent
- Cape Verde: 1,567 percent
- Cent. African Rep.: 102 percent
- Chad: 250 percent
- Dominica: 524 percent
- Ghana: 138 percent
- Guinea Bissau: 2,142 percent
- Guyana: 213 percent
- Honduras: 452 percent
- Hong Kong: 111 percent
- Malawi: 153 percent
- St. Lucia: 192 percent
- Sierra Leone: 252 percent
- Singapore: 131 percent
- Sudan: 190 percent
- Suriname: 146 percent
- United Arab Emir: 150 percent
- Vanuatu: 218 percent
- Zimbabwe: 103 percent

10. Diversity of the Baha'i Community. Members of more than 300 ethnic groups which had not previously been represented in the Baha'i community were enrolled during the Plan, bringing the total number of indigenous tribes, races and ethnic groups enrolled in the Faith to more than 2,100.

11. Local Spiritual Assembly Activities. The number of countries with active local Assemblies increased from 134 at the beginning of the Seven Year Plan to 179 by its conclusion. The following table provides an overview of the increase in local activities reported.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Activity</th>
<th>No. LSAs Involved 1980</th>
<th>Percent of Total LSAs 1980</th>
<th>Percent Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feasts, Holy Days</td>
<td>3,149</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Regularly</td>
<td>2,747</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving to Funds</td>
<td>2,472</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Classes</td>
<td>1,731</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Activities</td>
<td>843</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Activities</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension Teaching</td>
<td>1,655</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Teaching</td>
<td>1,460</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Deepening</td>
<td>1,352</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. International Pioneering. Of the pioneers who have settled in foreign posts in response to the goals of the Universal House of Justice for the Seven Year Plan, 3,694 are still in the field: 746 settled in Africa; 980 in the Americas; 671 in Asia; 256 in Australasia; and 1,041 in Europe. These believers have originated from 125 countries and settled in 182 countries. Well over 1,900 of them are of Persian background, with another 900 and 200 being American or Canadian, respectively.

13. Traveling Teaching. Traveling teachers also contributed greatly to the progress of the Cause; more than 10,000 teaching trips were made during the Plan.

14. Border Teaching Projects. By the end of the Plan, 78 Assemblies had initiated the organization of teaching campaigns with other national communities.

15. Teaching Projects and Teaching Conferences. The following table shows the number of teaching projects and teaching conferences and the number of National Assemblies organizing those activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Projects</th>
<th>Teaching Conferences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continent</td>
<td>National Assemblies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORLD</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. Incorporation of National Spiritual Assemblies. Eleven National Assemblies were incorporated during the Seven Year Plan (10 of which were new National Assemblies), for a total of 113. Six were in Africa, three in the Americas, one in Asia, and one in Australasia.

17. Incorporation of Local Spiritual Assemblies. By the end of the Plan, a total of 2,309 local Assemblies had been incorporated in 85 countries.

18. Recognition of Baha'i Marriage. During the Plan, Baha'i marriage was officially recognized in Barbados, Mauritius, Burma and Uganda, bringing the total to 52 countries.

19. Recognition of Baha'i Holy Days. Over the course of the Plan, official recognition of Holy Days was obtained in Bophuthatswana, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Chile and the Republic of Ireland, thus bringing the total to 71 countries.

20. Tax Exemption. A total of 54 countries had achieved this legal status by the end of the Plan, of which 17 were granted tax exemption during this Plan.

21. Financial Self-Sufficiency. The number of financially independent National Assemblies rose from 54 in 1979 to 113, or 76 percent of the total, in 1986. The number of local Assemblies contributing to their National Funds rose from 2,472 in 1980 to 4,596 in 1986.
22. Social and Economic Development Activities. During the Seven Year Plan, the total number of development projects increased from 129 to 1,247, and the number of countries with such projects reached 93 (an increase of 73 countries).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>Number of Languages 1979</th>
<th>Add'l Languages 1986</th>
<th>Percent Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WORLD</strong></td>
<td><strong>651</strong></td>
<td><strong>106</strong></td>
<td><strong>16.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23. Academic Schools. The number of academic schools, operating in eight countries, increased from 10 to 40. An estimated 6,000 students, 85 percent of whom non-Bahá’í, attend these schools. In addition, 34 academic schools were established by individuals as private ventures in 19 countries.

24. Tutorial Schools. The number of Bahá’í-operated tutorial schools grew from 111 in 1979 to 558 by the conclusion of the Seven Year Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>No. of NSAs</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>Est. Enroll.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>3,197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>3,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>15,582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WORLD</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
<td><strong>558</strong></td>
<td><strong>21,984</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25. Literacy and Vocational Training. At least 134 literacy, vocational and other educational programs were established by Bahá’ís during the Seven Year Plan.

26. Community Development Projects. The number of health-related activities increased from two to 78 during the Plan; the number of agricultural activities grew from three to 74, and the number of other community development projects increased from two to 358. These projects are taking place in 57 countries.

27. Radio Stations. Four radio stations became operational during the Seven Year Plan: Peru (1981), Bolivia and the United States (1984), and Panama (1986). Stations in Chile and Liberia were nearing completion by Ridván 1986.

28. Translation of Bahá’í Literature. Of the 757 languages into which Bahá’í literature has been translated, materials have been published or reproduced in at least 520. In 109 languages, at least one book is available.

29. Enrichment of Literature. During the Plan, on the average, 410 literature items were produced during each year. Of the total of 2,872 items for the Plan, 736 are first-time translations, produced by 91 National Assemblies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>No. of NSAs Reporting Publications</th>
<th>Sacred Writings</th>
<th>Other Books</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WORLD</strong></td>
<td><strong>118</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,215</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,432</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


31. Correspondence Courses. During the Seven Year Plan, 219 correspondence courses, in 57 languages, were administered by 88 National Assemblies, of which 38 noted that they initiated their first correspondence course in this period.

32. Audio-Visual Materials. In the course of this Plan, a total of 395 versions of deepening tapes was produced, as well as 68 tapes of Bahá’í scripture, 81 new tapes of Bahá’í music, and 83 printed materials for this purpose.

33. Publication of Bulletins and Newsletters. Some 939 bulletins and newsletters were disseminated locally and nationally in a total of 58 world languages. The following table shows the increase in the number of nationally distributed periodicals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>Periodicals 1979</th>
<th>Periodicals 1986</th>
<th>Percent Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WORLD</strong></td>
<td><strong>246</strong></td>
<td><strong>432</strong></td>
<td><strong>76</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
34. Bahá’í Seasonal Schools. 128 National Assemblies conducted more than 1,880 seasonal (summer or winter) schools, for a sum of 7,650 days, with a combined participation of more than 170,000 Bahá’ís. Eighty of these Assemblies held such schools for the first time during the Seven Year Plan.

35. Bahá’í Institutes. During the Plan, 1,044 institutes were conducted by 99 National Assemblies, more than half of which were for spiritual deepening. Forty-one National Assemblies acquired new permanent institutes, bringing the number to 75 national communities with such facilities.

36. Education of Children. Sixteen National Assemblies report that all of their local Assemblies were providing a Bahá’í education to all children, and in 45 countries there are children’s classes in more than half of the local Assembly areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>NSAs Reporting Children’s Classes-1980</th>
<th>NSAs Reporting Children’s Classes-1986</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORLD</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>Total No. of Classes 1980</th>
<th>Total No. of Classes 1986</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>1,418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>1,361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORLD</td>
<td>1,731</td>
<td>4,295</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There have been 525 institutes for training teachers of children’s classes held in 77 countries, and 20 National Assemblies produced more than 30 different lesson plans. A total of 209 education seminars were held in 47 countries. Also during the Plan, 226 new children’s books were printed, of which 30 are prayer books. Prayers for children are now available in 24 languages.

37. Youth Activities. Youth in 100 countries took part in International Youth Year activities: eight international youth conferences were held, attended by more than 11,200 youth and adults; 49 national/regional conferences were held on all continents; in 30 countries Bahá’í youth extended their services to non-Bahá’í agencies, fostering cordial relations with government authorities and prominent persons and resulting in widespread proclamation of the Faith. During the Plan, 19 periodicals for youth were established. In 125 national communities, more than 378 teaching events were directed specifically toward youth, 1,126 conferences for youth were held, and 231 consolidation activities for them were undertaken.

38. Women’s Activities. The number of national communities with specific activities geared toward the women in their communities doubled, to 116. Concurrently, the number of local Assemblies organizing such activities almost quadrupled, having risen from 418 in 1980 to 1,558 in 1986. There were 434 national and regional women’s conferences, with a combined attendance of 16,500 believers. Specifically planned activities for teaching the Faith to women took place in 101 countries, and 19 periodicals were established especially for women.

39. Family Life. 203 events in 45 countries focused on family life and parenting, and special literature concerning the Bahá’í teachings on family life was published in 26 countries.

40. Acquisition of Bahá’í-Owned Properties. The table below shows the number of properties acquired by 134 national communities during the course of the Plan. Some 118 of these properties were donated to the Cause.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Nat’l Haz-Quds</th>
<th>Nat’l Endowmts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORLD</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>Temple Sites</th>
<th>Local/Dist. Haz-Quds</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORLD</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This increase brings the worldwide number of national Haziratu’l-Quds to 149, national endowments to 170, and sites for future Mashriqu’l-Adhkar 127.

41. Mobile Teaching Institutes. In fulfillment of a goal of the Seven Year Plan, eight audio-visual Mobile Teaching Institutes were acquired, in the Central African Republic, Chad, Malawi, Mauritius, Tanzania, Transkei, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

42. Proclamation in the Media. The following table presents the number of media items on the Faith reported by National Assemblies during the Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TELEVISION</th>
<th>RADIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continent</td>
<td>No. of NSAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORLD</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEWSPAPER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continent</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORLD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
43. Feature Programs. The table provides a tally of televised programs lasting more than 20 minutes, radio programs lasting more than five minutes, and newspaper articles that featured the teachings of the Faith.

### TELEVISION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>No. of NSAs</th>
<th>No. of Items</th>
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</thead>
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<td>8</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORLD</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>119</td>
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### RADIO

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<th>No. of Items</th>
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<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORLD</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>212</td>
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### NEWSPAPER

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<th>No. of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORLD</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

44. Media Volume. The following chart shows the total media coverage of the Faith for each phase of the Seven Year Plan.

### NEWS STORIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>TV</th>
<th>Radio</th>
<th>Newspaper</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First phase</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second phase</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>1,077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third phase</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>1,852</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ADVERTISING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>TV</th>
<th>Radio</th>
<th>Newspaper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First phase</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second phase</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third phase</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FEATURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>TV</th>
<th>Radio</th>
<th>Newspaper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First phase</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second phase</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third phase</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Forty National Assemblies devised and carried out media plans; 23 National Assemblies held a total of 135 media workshops; and 67 National Assemblies established systems for conveying news about the Iranian situation quickly and efficiently to the media in their country.

45. Regular Radio and Television Programs. The number of Bahá'í-oriented radio programs increased all over the world, from 24 in 1979 to 124 by Ridván 1986. Thirty-eight National Assemblies are now producing regular programs, several of them in indigenous languages, for both commercial and public radio. Fourteen National Assemblies now produce 33 weekly television programs.

46. Association for Bahá'í Studies. These Associations, which promote and encourage study of the Faith and seek ways in which to present it in academic circles, have now been established in Australia, Austria (for Germanic-speaking people), Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, India, Ireland (for English-speaking Europe), Nigeria and Switzerland (for French-speaking Europe).

47. Cordial Relations. 108 National Assemblies reported contacts with 11,245 dignitaries on some 900 occasions during the Seven Year Plan. Bahá'í delegations have met directly with 73 heads of state in 44 countries, and 54 heads of government in another 35 countries. All government ministers or all members of the Cabinets of 47 nations have been contacted, and all members of the parliaments of 29 nations have been presented with information about the Faith.

48. “The Promise of World Peace.” By Ridván 1986, this statement had been presented to 167 world leaders. The following table provides the continental distribution of the presentations of the peace statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Indirect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORLD</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This synopsis of the significant achievements of the worldwide Bahá'í community during the Seven Year Plan, 1979-1986, was prepared by Dr. 'Abdu'l-Rabbani, director of the Department of Statistics at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel, where he has been serving since 1981.
On August 3, 1912, while staying at the home of Mrs. Arthur J. Parsons in Dublin, New Hampshire, 'Abdu'l-Bahá reiterated His blessing of the interracial marriage of Louis Gregory and Louisa Mathew.

According to the Guardian of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi, that blessing was one of the seven most significant acts performed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His historic visit to North America. Its significance is best seen in the context of the time, a time when close relations between black men and white women were often considered grounds for lynching the blacks; when theories of the supposed inferiority of the black race and the harmful effects of racial mixing were supported not only by popular "science" but also, in many cases, by the law; and when some 25 states had either declared interracial marriage a criminal offense or did not recognize such unions.

Louise (as she was called by her friends) related part of the story in a letter to Mrs. Parsons: "In this country 'Abdu'l-Bahá first revealed to me symbolically, through a white flower which He told me to give Mr. Gregory & by looking at me in a peculiar way conveyed his meaning to me, that He wished me to marry Mr. Gregory. Curiously enough after this love began to grow in my heart & the desire for the marriage whereas before I only liked Mr. Gregory as a friend."

Louis and Louisa Gregory were married Friday, September 27, 1912, in the parsonage of an Episcopal church in New York City (Bahá'ís in America were not at the time empowered legally to conduct marriage ceremonies) while 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, en route to California. Three days later, Mr. Gregory described the ceremony in some detail in a letter to a friend, Pauline Hannen:

"Some weeks ago, Abdul Baha, who has watched over Louise and me with the tender solicitude of a loving father, sent me a Message directing me to use the utmost judgment in order to avoid criticism in regard to our approaching Marriage. With me ‘the utmost judgment’ was prayer for Divine Guidance, in which Louise heartily joined me. Our prayers have been heard and answered and we are very happy. Every matter connected with the event went off without friction, although some things were quite difficult.

"On last Friday at noon, at the residence of Rev. Everard W. Daniel, just nine persons were present, including the minister and his wife, the bride and..."
groom. After the ceremony of the Church of England was completed, the groom said, 'Verily we are content with the Will of God.' And the bride responded, 'Verily we are satisfied with the Desire of God' (the Bahá’í marriage vows, as they were then translated). Then Mr. MacNutt read the Tablet of Abdul Baha on marriage. Mr. Braithwaite followed, reading a Tablet revealed to the groom three years ago of which the following is an extract: 'I hope that thou mayest become a herald of the Kingdom, become the means by which the white and colored people shall close their eyes to racial differences, and behold the reality of humanity.' Mrs. Botay closed with the Tablet of Bahá’u’lláh, Protection. Then the wedding party repaired to the wedding breakfast. In this small company were represented Christian and Jew, Bahais and non-Bahais, the white and colored races, England and America, and the three Bahai assemblies of New York, Philadelphia and Washington.

"During the ceremony there was a light rainfall. This, Mrs. Nourse says, was a Bahai sign, the Bounty of God. After the ceremony the skies cleared, the sun shone and everything and everybody seemed to be happy. The same afternoon we arrived here (in Atlantic City) on our honeymoon. We find ourselves very harmonious and very happy."

In her biography of Louis Gregory, To Move the World, Gayle Morrison writes: "To the Bahá’ís . . . who eluded the principle of the oneness of mankind with ‘an attitude of apology and distortion,’ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá not only announced the goal of intermarriage but demonstrated it with a fait accompli: the marriage of Louis and Louise Gregory."

The Gregories, she writes, "did not see themselves as a cause, except insofar as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had made an example of them; and, happy as they were to give encouragement to the cause of racial unity, they did not relish the attention their marriage focused upon them. Beyond superficial differences of color and background, they saw themselves simply as fellow believers, as friends who had, through the good offices of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, become loving partners in life."

Louis and Louisa Gregory in their later years at their home near the Green Acre Bahá’í School in Eliot, Maine.

The National Assembly was represented by its secretary, Dr. Robert C. Henderson, and its vice-chairman and director of the Office of External Affairs, Dr. Firuz Kazemzadeh.

The co-chairmen of the House Caucus, Reps. Tom Lantos of California and John Porter of Illinois, both stated in their introductory remarks that in their opinion the plight of the Bahá'í community in Iran is the most egregious violation of religious rights in the world today.

Five other congressmen attended the breakfast: Ben Gilman, Bill Green and Ted Weiss, all of New York state; Jim Leach of Iowa, and Henry Hyde of Illinois.

Also present were aides representing a dozen other congressmen.

Mrs. Marjorie Sonnenfeldt of the public relations firm of Fleishman & Hillard, who had made most of the arrangements for the event, attended the breakfast and the National Assembly's follow-up sessions and meetings.

To publicize the situation of the Bahá'ís in Iran, the National Assembly, two days before the breakfast, had placed an ad in The Washington Post about the three most recent executions of Bahá'ís in that country.

These killings, the National Assembly said in the Post ad, "are not isolated incidents but part of a systematic effort to destroy a religious community."

"The world must not forget the continuing plight of these innocent victims of fanaticism and religious intolerance."

After the briefing, Dr. Henderson, Mrs. Sonnenfeldt, and the Office of External Affairs staff met with Mrs. Annette Lantos, the wife of Congressman Lantos, and other congressional staff to discuss suggestions made at the breakfast and other activities to help publicize the plight of the Bahá'ís in Iran.

Later, the two members of the National Assembly met for more than an hour with Rep. Tom Foley, the House majority leader.

Finally, they conferred with several members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee to explain the concern of the American Bahá'í community for the safety of its co-religionists in Iran.
**Statistical update**

The following information is provided by the Department of Statistics at the World Centre.

**World-wide recognition of the Bahá’í Faith**

In 126 National Spiritual Assembly areas, either at the national level or at a local level in one of the areas under the jurisdiction of the National Spiritual Assembly, Bahá’ís have succeeded in incorporating their National and local Assemblies or obtaining from the authorities certificates recognizing the existence of the Bahá’í community and enabling it to function legally. On the following list, the type of recognition achieved is coded as follows:

- **N**—National Spiritual Assembly incorporation
- **L**—Local Spiritual Assembly incorporation(s)
- **H**—Bahá’í Holy Days recognition
- **M**—Recognition of Bahá’í marriage
- **T**—Tax exemption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Assembly</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>T</th>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
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Statement to UN on human settlements

The United Nations has proclaimed 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH). It is estimated that one-quarter of the world's population lacks adequate shelter and lives in unsanitary and unhealthy conditions. The IYSH is aimed at creating a deeper awareness around the world about this critical situation, and stimulating initiatives to address it. The specific objective of the activities during the year is to improve the shelter and neighborhoods of the poor and disadvantaged, particularly in developing countries, and to lay the basis for a continuation of this effort until the end of the century.

The IYSH is concerned not only with housing but with all the physical and socio-economic factors that determine over-all living conditions—access to land, sanitary and environmental amenities, primary health, community services, employment and education.

While the specific issue of housing is not normally addressed by Bahá'í communities at this time, the IYSH may provide opportunities to share with others Bahá'í principles and examples of universal participation, education, and community development, all of which are essential components of a sustainable process of improving human settlements.

Bahá'í communities might also choose to support the year by commemorating World Habitat Day, which is the first Monday in October.

The Bahá'í International Community has been involved with the settlement issue at the UN for many years, and presented the following statement in April to the Tenth Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Bahá'í International Community wishes to address the basic challenges of human settlements, highlighted by the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements in his address to the ninth session, and reflecting our own perspective and experience in this area.

In his address, the Executive Director emphasized that, as we currently tackle the global problem of inadequate shelter and settlements,

"the issue is not, anymore, one of devising new strategies...the 10 years of work after Vancouver have shown us the practical and implementable ways of turning the aspirations of the people into reality." ¹

He then went on to state that the "agenda for the next 10 years must be to find the necessary capacities to apply...enabling strategies (which) must contain a response to two main challenges: first, how to deal with problems posed by the settlement needs of large numbers of people; and secondly, how to provide for effective autonomy of community-based groups." ²

The first of these challenges requires, as the Executive Director has observed, a recognition of the fact that the fundamental inequalities in society, which are manifested in human settlements, must also be addressed.

The Bahá'í perspective on this matter has been articulated by the international governing council of the Bahá'í Faith as follows:

"The inordinate disparity between rich and poor, a source of acute suffering, keeps the world in a state of instability, virtually on the brink of war. Few societies have dealt effectively with this situation..."

"The solution calls for a combined application of spiritual, moral and practical approaches. A fresh look at the problem is required, entailing consultation with experts from a wide spectrum of disciplines, devoid of economic and ideological polemics, involving the people directly affected in the decisions that must urgently be made..."

"It is an issue that is bound up not only with the necessity for eliminating extremes of wealth and poverty but also with those spiritual verities the understanding of which can produce a new universal attitude. Fostering such an attitude is itself a major part of the solution." ³

As regards the second main challenge, we outlined the general principles for the establishment and promotion of autonomous community-based and participatory groups in our statement to the ninth session of the Commission, copies of which we are making available as a supplement to this statement. Those principles were drawn from our own experience with community development in many countries and cultures. This Bahá'í experience has been generated primarily in local Bahá'í communities and their democratically elected governing bodies, the local spiritual assemblies. Such local Bahá'í assemblies were first formed in the beginning of this century, and their number has increased ever since. Presently, the Bahá'í International Community comprises more than 30,000 local assemblies, as well as some 148 national Bahá'í assemblies,
in most countries.
Bahá'í local assemblies are autonomous in the conduct of their affairs, and operate through a system of commonly accepted consultative principles. This includes regular consultations with the local Bahá'í community as a whole, for the dual purpose of familiarizing all community members with plans and activities, and receiving from them new ideas and recommendations. The assemblies often appoint local committees to whom particular community activities are assigned for planning and action. The assemblies also act as intermediaries between the local community and local authorities and organizations.

In recent years, the role which these organized Bahá'í communities play has been rapidly expanding to include diverse social and economic development activities for the benefit of both the Bahá'í community itself, and the larger local community of which it forms a part. In the increasing involvement in areas such as primary and adult education, activities for women and youth, child care, primary health care, building of local centres and housing improvements, food production, etc., the motivating spirit is one of service, cooperation, human development, and self-reliance.

If this experience of the Bahá'í International Community can contribute in any measure to the work of Habitat in the coming years, as it endeavors to develop "the necessary capacities to apply enabling strategies," we are happy to offer our support and collaboration.

1. Dr. Arcot Ramachandran, Executive Director, UNCHS (Habitat), opening address to the Ninth Session of the Commission on Human Settlements, Turkey, May 5, 1986.
2. Ibid.

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Global Urbanization:
Percentages of urban and rural inhabitants

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The world

Bahá’ís on N. Zealand Women’s Council

New Zealand’s National Bahá’í Committee on Women was recently inducted into that country’s National Council on Women.

At the Council’s annual meeting, the speaker who proposed that the Bahá’ís be admitted spoke appreciatively of her branch’s good relations with the Bahá’í community. Afterward, the proposal was adopted unanimously.

A current project supported by the National Bahá’í Committee on Women is the “Women’s Appointment File.” Bahá’í women are being encouraged by the committee to add their names to a list of women interested in being appointed to serve on one of New Zealand’s 569 statutory boards, commissions and tribunals. Fewer than 10 per cent of those presently serving in the more than 4,000 positions on these public bodies are women. The file now comprises the names of about 1,000 women who would be willing to serve on statutory boards.

The Committee on Women feels that this is an excellent means of demonstrating the talents and diversity of Bahá’í women in New Zealand.

In the heart of the tribal area of Ngati Tuwharetoa, New Zealand, 107 women including members of the country’s National Spiritual Assembly and National Teaching Committee, and immigrant women from the Pacific Islands, gathered last February 6-8 in the Waihi Marae for the first National Women’s Hui (conference).

A report indicated that substantive issues were confronted and that the role of women in the Bahá’í community was demonstrated in an atmosphere of “solidarity, support and love.”

South and West Africa

The distribution of a tabloid-sized newspaper on peace to 1,000 prominent people in South Africa is a part of the National Spiritual Assembly’s energetic follow-up to its presentation of the peace statement which was made last year.

The tabloid, similar to one produced last year, includes news of recent efforts for peace and is mailed with a prayer book printed especially for the purpose, which includes a prayer for peace translated into Afrikaans, Northern Sotho, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu. In addition to the national mailing of 1,000, local Spiritual Assemblies have received copies for local distribution.

The effort has been buoyed by recent nationwide radio and television mention of the Faith in connection with an exhibition of the works of the late Reginald Turvey, a Bahá’í and South African painter whose works have been increasingly admired in recent years.
Peru

The Baha'is of Peru held a Peace Exposition last December 13-14 in Lima entitled "What Can I Do for Peace?"
Free spots were broadcast on local television, and a printing house supplied 1,000 free posters to help publicize the event.

One hundred forty-five banners depicting peace themes were contributed by schools, peace groups, Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, the Red Cross, and local Spiritual Assemblies throughout the country. The banners were joined to a giant ribbon which was hung around a park.

The exposition included performances by folk dancers, singers and a variety of musical groups. There was also an exhibit of peace-oriented literature and a book sales stand staffed by Baha'is.

Thailand

Counsellor Iraj Ayman took part last January 26-27 in a peace forum entitled "An International Round Table Talk on Peace" at Mahidol University in Thailand. The forum was sponsored by the Research Center of Southeast Asian Cultures.

Dr. Ayman spoke about the Faith as part of a panel discussion, "Looking Ahead: Concrete Strategies for Peace." Other panelists were a Buddhist, a Christian, a Muslim and a Sikh.

Twenty distinguished scholars from other countries, including Japan, Australia and the United States contributed to the Round Table Talk.

Kenya

A project launched last February 8 by the Spiritual Assembly of Nairobi, Kenya, aims at the enrollment of large numbers of believers this year. Teams are teaching in universities, colleges, schools and medical centers, while daily fliers are being held in homes and at the Baha'i Center.

Sierra Leone

The National Spiritual Assembly of Sierra Leone recently announced the acquisition of two acres of land in the Bo District. A Baha'i teaching institute will be built on the property.

Italy

Four Baha'is from Bari, Italy, met with the Italian President of UNICEF, Dr. Arnolfo Farina (center), during the International Meeting of UNICEF held last February 1-8 in Bari. Pictured (left to right) are Gianni Mennone, chairman of the Spiritual Assembly of Bari; Muzio Lococo, a Baha'i singer who performed during the conference; Dr. Farina; and Corrado Todrani and Habbib Allenadaf, two of the several Baha'is who volunteered their services to the UNICEF committee during the international gathering.

Several thousand children came from 51 countries to consult in the project. Hungry children around the world.

Hong Kong

On January 15, Asia Television Ltd. featured the Baha'i Faith on its Chinese-language channel in a program called "I Love Hong Kong." The theme of the show is to present news or unusual items of interest to the public.

The Hong Kong Baha'i community's Community Relations Committee has sent press releases to all newspapers, radio and TV stations announcing a visit last December to Hong Kong by Marco Kappenberger, a representative of the Baha'i International Community in Switzerland. As a result, an ATV research writer visited the National Baha'i Center and decided that the Faith would make a good subject for the prime time program.

The National Assembly feels that many Chinese were informed of the Faith through the program, and that the exposure will give added impetus to the teaching work in Hong Kong.

Bavaria

The Bavarian State Ministry for Education and Culture has given permission for Baha'i children to be absent from school on the third Baha'i Holy Day. A circular advising the educational authorities of the new policy was distributed last January.
Malawi

Last December 27-January 3, the Bahá'í community of Malawi hosted a meeting of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa. Seventeen Counsellors from 14 countries came to consult together.

The Counsellors also attended a buffet luncheon at a local hotel with the mayor of Lilongwe and other local government, civic and religious leaders.

They were able to meet with the Bahá'ís of Malawi, attending a Nineteen Day Feast with the Bahá'ís of Lilongwe, a conference for Bahá'í committee members, and a two-hour meeting with the National Spiritual Assembly.

The luncheon with dignitaries was reported in the Daily Times of Malawi, and the Counsellors' visit was reported on local radio.

Pakistan

To celebrate the International Year of Peace, the Spiritual Assembly of Hyderabad, Pakistan, sponsored a symposium on world peace last September 19 at Bahá'í Hall in Hyderabad.

The deputy mayor was chief guest and was joined by about 40 other guests including professors, lecturers, teachers, students, and wives of officials.

Speakers from four religions presented their views on world peace, and the Universal House of Justice's peace statement was distributed to many of those at the meeting.

On a recent visit to Peshawar, Pakistan, Counsellor Sábir Áfáqi helped the local Spiritual Assembly to convey the peace statement to 40 prominent people including nine provincial ministers, the vice-chancellor of the university, and the chief editors of newspapers.

The statement was received by all of them with great respect.

Bahá'ís were responsible for providing free medical attention and health education last July for 410 patients at medical camps in Sultanabad, Bhutta Village, and Muharramdi Colony in Karachi, Pakistan.

This example of service to humanity was repeated last August 5-8 at the Bahá'í Center in Thatta.

Virgin Islands

A Bahá'í educator, Dr. Rodney Clarken of the College of the Virgin Islands, has developed a lesson plan for promoting peace in the classroom which has been sent to almost all of the 1,200 teachers in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The plan was also shared with the Bahá'í National Center in the U.S. which forwarded it to all of the 365 Bahá'í children's classes in the country.
Vanuatu

On February 7, after Cyclone Uma passed over some of the islands of Vanuatu, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake, the following message was received from the World Centre: "Deeply concerned safety friends following storm. Universal House of Justice."

This reply was sent: "Friends Efate Lenakel area safe. Still no confirmed news safety friends Tanna due difficulty communications. All homes and National Centre partially damaged. Centre Erakor destroyed. Lenakel okay. Weather favorable clearing reconstruction work."

Two Bahá’í couples are pictured on the eve of their marriages last January 31 at the Lenakel Bahá’í Center on Tanna Island, Vanuatu. In the front row are the two witnesses, both members of the Spiritual Assembly of Lenakel. In the back row are the two couples: Willy Nouveli and Iami Iolu, and Thomas Ialuaing and Elizabeth Kauia.

Papua New Guinea

Pictured are members of a literacy class in the village of Kora, Western Highlands of Papua New Guinea, which was organized by Knight of Bahá’u’lláh Violet Hoehnke, who is in the back row (fourth from right).

Australia

The works of Effie Baker, an early Bahá’í photographer who was known for her many splendid photographs of Bahá’í sites in Iran and the Holy Land, are included in a new book by Greenhouse Publications, Australian Women Photographers.

Trinidad/Tobago

The Sunday magazine of the Trinidad Guardian for January 18, in a full-page photograph of the opening of the country’s parliament, pictured Bahá’ís Laurence Coward and Dr. Hamid Farabi.

They were participants in an interfaith service the followed the formal opening of parliament, which is the major public event of the year in Trinidad and Tobago. In the photograph, the Bahá’ís are in the front row, next to the new Prime Minister, A.N. Robinson, and his wife, and President and Mrs. Ellis Clarke.

The Bahá’ís were first on the program, followed by representatives of the Christian, Hindu and Muslim communities.

Caroline Islands

The first local Spiritual Assembly of Lelu on Kosrae in the Eastern Caroline Islands was formed in February by joint declaration. Kosrae is one of four principal islands of the Eastern Carolines group which together make up the Federated States of Micronesia.
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Picnics commemorate Master’s visit

On a day that dawned dark and dreary and ended in the dazzling glow of love and unity, more than a thousand Bahá’ís and their guests gathered June 27 at the Wilhelm properties in Teaneck, New Jersey, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Unity picnic hosted there by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during His historic visit to North America in 1912.

The day-long event, one of about 1,500 such picnics held across the country on this momentous occasion at the request of the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears, whose presence greatly blessed this one, seemed doomed at the outset as the heavens opened up, drenching the Teaneck area and causing electricians to refuse to set up equipment at nearby Votee Park, where much of the festivities were to be held.

The steady rain was the only element over which the Wilhelm Council, after months of tireless work and careful planning, had no control. As noon approached and the showers continued, the prospect of holding any kind of celebration appeared dim indeed.

The park was abandoned and a decision was made to set up a stage near the grove of evergreens on the Wilhelm property where the Master had entertained His guests on that long-ago day, saying, “Hundreds of thousands of meetings shall be held to commemorate this occasion, and the very words I speak to you today shall be repeated in them for ages to come.”

As workmen set about building the makeshift stage, whose backdrop was the huge blue-and-white globe used at the Peace Conference last August in San Francisco, and Mr. Sears, Counsellors Wilma Brady and Robert Harris, the members of the National Spiritual Assembly, musicians and other performers, and Bahá’ís from all over the East Coast and elsewhere wondered whether there would be a Souvenir picnic in Teaneck, the sky began to clear and the rain slackened to a drizzle. There was hope after all!

Although the weather remained overcast and the ground rain-soaked, that hope soon became reality as the friends opened picnic lunches, chairs were arranged in the grove, and Counsellor Harris, the master of ceremonies, set about helping the Council members revise the program, which was to have begun at 10 a.m.

It soon became apparent that the decision to move from the park, made under such trying circumstances, was a master stroke. The grove, whose natural beauty and charm evoked memories of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Himself, was the perfect spot in which to have a picnic.

The program got under way shortly after lunch with a number of excellent performers preceding the keynote address by Mr. Sears and the presentation of a plaque to Mayor Bernard E. Brooks of Teaneck for his work in promoting unity among all the people in that city.

Another special guest was state Sen. Matthew Feldman. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s address to the first Unity picnic in 1912 was read by Dr. Robert Henderson, secretary, and Judge Dorothy Nelson, treasurer of the National Spiritual Assembly, which held its regular meeting that weekend in Teaneck.

Most of those in the audience were given roses in memory of the martyrs
in Iran, while many carried colorful balloons emblazoned with the "Diamond Jubilee" logo associated with the 75th anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to North America.

In addition to the speakers, they enjoyed songs by such superlative performers as Susan Lewis, Miguel Corrales, Gordi and Linda Munro, Red Grammer, Van Gilmer, and the New Horizon Choir; and story-telling in mime by the Touchstone Theatre.

Later in the afternoon, as prayers for unity were being read in English, Italian, Spanish, Japanese and Lakota (Sioux), the sun made its first appearance, peeking tentatively from behind the clouds as if to say, "All is well after all."

"This is the one event that will always be associated with 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to America," Mr. Sears said in his keynote address.

He urged the friends at this picnic and, in a tape-recorded message, those at each of the 1,500 others being held across the country, to use the occasion..."
as a time to renew efforts in teaching the Faith.

"We should all decide that we should do something wonderful with our lives," he said. "Just imagine if, all across America, we should arise after these picnics. Imagine what would happen in the years ahead."

At the close of his address, Mr. Sears invited all of the friends to greet him at the Wilhelm cabin, and not to worry about tiring him.

"I came here to be tired," he said. "What finer gift could anyone have than to be tired by the friends?...I don't know how many more Souvenirs we'll have together."

True to his word, Mr. Sears went to the porch of the cabin after the program and remained there for more than two hours exchanging words of love and affection with anyone who wished to see him.

Mayor Brooks, in accepting his plaque from the National Spiritual Assembly, welcomed the Bahá'ís to his "living room," apologizing for its "leaky roof."

"I couldn't think of a better place for you to have this assembly," he told his audience. "In Teaneck we have no majorities and no minorities. We just have people."

In spite of the inclement weather which led to the last-minute rearrangement of the agenda, the members of the National Spiritual Assembly were obviously pleased with the results.

"It was simply marvelous," said Dr. Henderson. "One of the outstanding Bahá'í events in my memory."

"We simply can't say enough about the Council and the hard work and planning that enabled them to overcome every obstacle to make this a truly memorable occasion, one that those who were fortunate enough to attend will remember fondly for many years to come."

Performers at one of the 1,500 other picnics, this one in Gainesville, Florida.

Some of the more than 1,000 spectators at the Unity picnic June 27 in Teaneck, New Jersey, would do almost anything, it seems, to obtain a better view of the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears and the group of outstanding performers who were there to entertain them.

The friends spread their picnic lunches in front of the charming Wilhelm home where 'Abdu'l-Bahá spent the night on June 29, 1912.
"Are you all well and happy? This is a delightful spot; the scenery is beautiful, and an atmosphere of spirituality haloes everything. In the future, God willing, Green Acre shall become a great center, the cause of the unity of the world of humanity, the cause of uniting hearts and binding together the East and the West. This is my hope."
— ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, August 17, 1912

On August 16, 1912, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá traveled to Green Acre in a car brought from there by Alfred Lunt. Green Acre, an estate of nearly 200 acres on the banks of the Piscataqua River in Eliot, Maine, was opened in 1894 by Miss Sarah J. Farmer as a conference center for people of advanced and liberal views. Two years later she became a Bahá’í, and, after going on pilgrimage to ‘Akka, offered the facilities of Green Acre to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Almost within minutes of His arrival at Green Acre, after only a short rest, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoke briefly to a large group who had assembled to meet Him. Later, He visited the sanatorium in nearby Portsmouth where Sarah Farmer, an invalid, was a patient. Although ill and frail, she accompanied Him back to Green Acre.

Five of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s talks at Green Acre are recorded in The Promulgation of Universal Peace (Copyright © 1982 by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States). The following is from August 17 (with notes by Edna McKinney):

"The physical beauty of this place is very wonderful. We hope that a spiritual charm may surround and halo it; then its beauty will be perfect. There is a spiritual atmosphere manifest here particularly at sunset.

"In cities like New York the people are submerged in the sea of materialism. Their sensibilities are attuned to material forces, their perceptions purely physical. The animal energies predominate in their activities; all their thoughts are directed to material things; day and night they are devoted to the attractions of this world, without aspiration beyond the life that is vanishing and mortal. In schools and temples of learning knowledge of the sciences acquired is based upon material observations only; there is no realization of Divinity in their methods and conclusions—all have reference to the world of matter. They are not interested in attaining knowledge of the mysteries of God or understanding the secrets of the heavenly Kingdom; what they acquire is based altogether upon visible and tangible evidences. Beyond these evidences they are without susceptibilities; they have no idea of the world of inner significances and are utterly out of touch with God, considering this an indication of reasonable attitude and philosophical judgment whereof they are self-sufficient and proud.

"As a matter of fact, this supposed excellence is possessed in its superlative degree by the animals. The animals are without knowledge of God; so to speak, they are deniers of Divinity and understand nothing of the Kingdom and its heavenly mysteries. As deniers
On August 17, 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, accompanied by his secretary and others, strolls on the grounds of Green Acre in Eliot, Maine. The Green Acre Center was given to the Faith by its owner and founder, Miss Sarah J. Farmer.

of the Kingdom, they are utterly ignorant of spiritual things and uninformed of the supernatural world. Therefore, if it be a perfection and virtue to be without knowledge of God and His Kingdom, the animals have attained the highest degree of excellence and proficiency. Then the donkey is the greatest scientist and the cow an accomplished naturalist, for they have obtained what they know without schooling and years of laborious study in colleges, trusting implicitly to the evidence of the senses and relying solely upon intuitive virtues. The cow, for instance, is a lover of the visible and a believer in the tangible, contented and happy when pasture is plenty, perfectly serene, a blissful exponent of the transcendental school of philosophy. Such is the status of the material philosophers, who glory in sharing the condition of the cow, imagining themselves in a lofty station. Reflect upon their ignorance and blindness.

"Nay, rather, the virtue of man is this: that he can investigate the ideals of the Kingdom and attain knowledge which is denied the animal in its limitation. The station of man is this: that he has the power to attain those ideals and thereby differentiate and consciously distinguish himself an infinite degree above the kingdoms of existence below him.

"The station of man is great, very great. God has created man after His own image and likeness. He has endowed him with a mighty power which is capable of discovering the mysteries of phenomena. Through its use man is able to arrive at ideal conclusions instead of being restricted to the mere plane of sense impressions. As he possesses sense endowment in common with the animals, it is evident that he is distinguished above them by his conscious power of penetrating abstract realities. He acquires divine wisdom; he searches out the mysteries of creation; he witnesses the radiance of omnipotence; he attains the second birth—that is to say, he is born out of the material world just as he is born of the mother; he attains to everlasting life; he draws nearer to God; his heart is replete with the love of God. This is the foundation of the world of humanity; this is the image and likeness of God; this is the reality of man; otherwise, he is an animal. Verily, God has created the animal in the image and likeness of man, for though man outwardly is human, yet in nature he possesses animal tendencies.

"You must endeavor to understand the mysteries of God, attain the ideal knowledge and arrive at the station of vision, acquiring directly from the Sun of Reality and receiving a destined portion from the ancient bestowal of God."
"Let it be this generation!" was the rallying cry of 1,700 youth from 32 countries who gathered July 9-12 for a Bahá'í International Youth Conference at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario, Canada. Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í youth came to the conference to consult together on ways in which they can work for peace so that world peace is achieved as a result of this generation.

Among those who spoke to the young people were seven members of the Continental Boards of Counsellors: Eloy Anello, Farzam Arbáb, Robert Harris, Lauretta King, Donald Rogers and David Smith from the Americas, and Agnes Ghaznavi from Europe.

Other featured speakers were Jane Faily, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada; Robert Henderson, secretary of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly; Auxiliary Board member Jack Lenz from Canada; and Kevin Locke, a Native American Bahá'í and renowned traveling teacher from South Dakota.

Conference sessions were translated into sign language for the hearing impaired by Chuck Bullock, a Bahá'í from Austin, Texas, and Vicki Meyer, a non-Bahá'í from London, Ontario.

The conference was opened with an address by Dr. George Pedersen, the president of the University of Western Ontario, who commended the youth on their "impressive agenda for peace."

Letters of welcome were received from Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and David Peterson, the premier of Ontario.

A proclamation by the mayor of London, Ontario, Thomas Gosnell, declared July 6-12 "Bahá'í Week" in that city.

The Universal House of Justice, in its message to the conference, said to the youth, "You are called upon to demonstrate to your peers the power of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh through the nobility of your characters, the excellence of your morals, and the vitality of your spiritual discipline."

"Your commitment to the service of mankind should be reflected in your way of life, your pursuit of education, and in the training of your minds in preparation for the challenges which await the expanding Bahá'í community in spirituality, administration, social and economic development, and international relations."

In addition to the speakers and a wide range of entertainment including song, dance and drama, the youth were encouraged in the evenings to take part in group discussions with the Counsellors and other guests.

At the close of each evening session the speakers made themselves available in the dormitories, and as there was no
curfew, these informal sessions continued late into the night.

Also taking place each evening was “Night Beat,” an informal gathering of musicians in the University Center featuring such talented artists as Doug Cameron, James Woodbridge, “4th Epoch” and “New Generation” who performed nightly until 2 a.m.

A special “round table” discussion was held for Bahá’ís and non-Bahá’í representatives of youth groups interested in consulting on ways to work for peace.

Two members of the National Youth Committee of Canada met with members of Canada World Youth, Youth Action for Peace, and other groups, to discuss the need for unity among the peoples and nations of the world.

“Becoming a Spiritual Being—A World Citizen” was the title of a panel discussion chaired by a Bahá’í youth, Mehrdad Baghai.

Panelists were Counsellors Anello and King and two Bahá’í youth, Laurie Torres of Alaska (who was recently a pioneer to Peru) and Owrang Kashef who works at the World Centre in Haifa, Israel.

The speakers urged the youth to consider service overseas as a means of developing their spiritual nature and world-consciousness.

A video tape, “The Global Brain,” by Peter Russell illustrated the evolution of mankind’s collective consciousness, which made a giant leap forward when man entered the Space Age.

Looking back on planet earth from outer space, man was able for the first time to see it as an organic whole: truly one world.

As Counsellor Smith said in his commentary on the video, “We need to be willing to find new ways of looking at things, new ways of thinking, if mankind is to survive.”

The Association for Bahá’í Studies met during the conference to talk about projects for Bahá’í college clubs to initiate in conjunction with the ABS.

The Bahá’í Distribution Service of Canada set up a bookstore to sell various materials including T-shirts, buttons and bags with the conference logo, “Let It Be This Generation!” or, in French, “Que ce soit cette génération!”

Alongside the bookstore were information booths for the Bahá’í World Centre; the National Youth Committees of Canada and the U.S.; Canada World Youth; the Louhelen Bahá’í School; service projects such as the Badi’ Peace March from London to Toronto; and upcoming conferences including those in Manchester, England, and Lafayette, Indiana.

The conference drew media attention from around the world. Jeph Pillet-Fabre, a reporter for the French newspaper Liberation, came to cover the event for his Paris-based paper because, he said, “The French youth need an example to follow such as the youth gathering here to talk about peace.”

Locally, the conference received press coverage in the London Free Press.

Counsellor Eloy Anello (left) has his remarks "signed" for the hearing impaired by Chuck Bullock, a Bahá’í from Austin, Texas.

To the youth gathered at the International Youth Conference in London, Ontario

We extend loving greetings to the participants in this Youth Conference which is convened in a period when the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh is emerging from the dark shadows of obscurity into a position of respect and prominence on the international scene.

In the Cradle of the Faith a fettered Bahá’í community looks expectantly to the believers in the West to perform heroic and sacrificial deeds which will demonstrate anew the resistless might of the Cause of God.

You are called upon to demonstrate to your peers the power of the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh through the nobility of your characters, the excellence of your morals, and the vitality of your spiritual discipline.

Your commitment to the service of mankind should be reflected in your way of life, your pursuit of education, and in the training of your minds in preparation for the challenges which await the expanding Bahá’í community in spirituality, administration, social and economic development, and international relations.

Among the opportunities before you for service to the Faith are a youth year of service, teaching projects undertaken during vacation periods, and dedicated and persevering participation in local community life.

We offer you our heartfelt love, our full confidence, and the assurance of our prayerful remembrance of you at the Sacred Threshold.

Universal House of Justice
July 7, 1987

Bahá’í News/August 1987 7
Above: In the evenings, the beat goes on. Below: And dancing to that beat are many of the young people attending the Youth Conference.

Among the stellar artists who entertained during the main sessions were:

- Canadian recording artist Doug Cameron and his band, "Blue Velvet."
- Canadian singer/guitarist Gordi Munro who recently completed a 20,000-mile teaching trip through the U.S.
- Youth Core, a group of 17 non-Bahá'í youth from Ontario who presented a drama about conflicting ideologies achieving unity.
- Negin Khoshkhesal and Habib Zargarpour, Bahá'í youth from Vancouver who presented a "unity dance" entitled "Romebot and Juliebot."
- Santour player Kiu Haghighi and pianist Rosamond Brenner from Illinois.
- A Canadian dance troupe, "The Atlantic Workshop."
- Non-Bahá'í singer Rosemary Stewart.
- Singer Nancy Ward who accompanied Mr. Cameron during his performance of the song, "Mona with the Children."

Mr. Lenz, who besides being an Auxiliary Board member is a musician and composer for radio, television and films, produced a dramatic presentation on the life of the Báb, "Midsummer Noon," which was performed to commemorate the anniversary of the Martyrdom of the Báb on July 9.

Counsellor Arbáb, who is director of a program in education and rural development in Colombia, spoke twice during the conference. His first talk was titled "Needed—A New Kind of Youth."

There is no doubt, he said, that "the prevailing world order is lamentably defective."

"Yet this day is infused with the Grace of God—and as overwhelmed as you may be by social conflicts and problems of personal transformation, you can choose the 'path of sacrifice' and respond to the sound of the voice that calls you to service from the innermost heart of humanity."

"Face your future!" he told his young audience. "Become involved!"

In this conference, Dr. Faily said, "you will decide how you feel about the issue of world peace."

Humanity, she said, has come to a point of paralysis, unable to move forward due to a "balance of terror" created by the threat of nuclear annihilation.

The task facing today's young people, she said, is that of "ushering mankind into adulthood; unifying the people of the world to prevent the destruction of the earth and protect future generations."

Mr. Locke, a Lakota Bahá'í, spoke on "Native American Prophecies for Peace" and gave a performance of his renowned "hoop dance."

He explained the significance of the dance, in which various colored hoops are formed into a globe, as representing unity in diversity.

Counsellor Harris said it is the task of this generation to "bust the barriers" to world peace identified by the Universal House of Justice in its peace statement: racism, the oppression of women, economic injustice, lack of education, nationalism, and religious
Youth join hands to sing a song of love and unity with Doug Cameron and his band.

Youth can obliterate those barriers, he said, by arising in service to the Cause of God:

"Make the decision to travel and give time to serve the Cause. Convince your parents that you are serious about your commitment—prove you can clean up your own room before you try to save the world!

"And, most important, don't wait—make the decision to go, and go now!"

"Peace: What Does It Take?" was the question put to the youth by Dr. Henderson, who suggested that they start by trying to be an example to the world.

True happiness, he said, "comes from excellence of character, breadth of learning and the ability to solve problems. You have been given the power not only to affect your own lives but all of society. You are the champions of a new day!"

Counsellor Rogers, in his presentation on "The Creative Dynamic of an Ideal Community," used classic painting to illustrate humankind's journey out of darkness.

"However insignificant you feel," he said, "you should nevertheless arise to serve; stand up and generate light or else darkness will prevail."

Counsellor Ghaznavi and a panel of youth discussed "The Power of a Moral Character." The three young panelists were Mark Steiner, Maren Klappt and Ruth Forman.

Ms. Klappt, who spoke in German which was translated into English by Counsellor Ghaznavi said, "Youth can move the world, but first we have to move ourselves."

The music video "Mona with the Children" was shown during Counsellor Smith's closing address which emphasized depth of faith and a firm commitment to the Cause of God.

The youth, filled with spirit and a desire to become the "champions of a new day," arose as one, singing, "Let it be this generation to bring peace; bring it to the world!"
Bahá‘í-organized airlift aids poor

What started as an idea for a modest service project in the minds of two Los Angeles-area Bahá‘ís blossomed recently into one of the most massive humanitarian medical relief airlifts ever undertaken.

Called Project HELP (Hospital Emergency Lift, Philippines), the airlift brought free medical help—in the form of doctors, medicines and medical equipment—from Southern California to the poorest children in the Philippines.

Philippine President Corazon Aquino, saying she was “overwhelmed” by the effort, officially received the airlift’s 15 tons of donated medicines from Bahá‘í project leaders David Langness and Deanne LaRue in a formal reception at Malacanang Palace in Manila.

The Project HELP airlift took 25 physicians and health care professionals to the Philippines, with a special focus on the critical medical needs of children. The all-volunteer group flew from Los Angeles to Manila aboard a China Airlines 747 filled with medicines and medical supplies donated by hospitals in Southern California.

Mr. Langness and Ms. LaRue, who run the communications division of the Hospital Council of Southern California, a non-profit trade association, put together the effort in six months solely from donated labor, supplies and travel accommodations—or, as they said, “on two wings and a prayer.”

“We wanted to do several things with Project HELP,” said Mr. Langness, HCSC’s vice-president of communications.

“First, to raise the world’s awareness of the terrible medical plight of the poor in the Philippines; second, to build a program that could link health efforts and support what had already been done; and third, to really apply the Bahá‘í principles of world unity and social development in our jobs.

“It was a life-changing experience to see it work.”

The large-scale project grew out of a simple request from three Filipino women in Los Angeles who came to the Hospital Council and asked Mr. Langness and Ms. LaRue for a donation of a few grocery bags of badly-needed medicines.

“We wanted to do a little better than that,” Ms. LaRue said with a smile.

Since the peaceful overthrow last year of Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos, and the subsequent flight of capital from the country’s economy, simple medicines such as antibiotics and vaccines have been in critically short supply.

Thousands of people, especially Fili-
pino children, have died as a result of the shortages.

Ms. LaRue, who is HCSC communications director, said, "There is a measles epidemic rampant in the Philippines today, for example, because the money to buy vaccines just isn't there. The health care conditions are terrible. We thought we should do everything possible to help."

Project HELP began to take shape quickly after Ms. LaRue secured the donation of free passenger and cargo space on a China Airlines jet.

The Hospital Council asked its 240 member hospitals to give surplus medicines, supplies and medical equipment to the effort, and those gifts—far more than the 15 tons the airline had allocated—soon filled a donated warehouse.

Mr. Langness and Ms. LaRue then sought the cooperation of Operation California, the Hollywood-based airlift relief charity known for its mercy flights to Cambodia, Ethiopia and other disaster-stricken countries.

While Mr. Langness and Richard Walden, president of Operation California, were on an exploratory fact-finding trip to the Philippines, the "Mendiola massacre" of 18 demonstrators and a coup attempt took place.

Although these political tensions threatened to halt the project, the decision was made to press ahead.

A delegation comprised of 25 physician and hospital administrator volunteers was recruited, and the project was officially kicked off at a press conference by U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar.

The senator, who played a major role in the Philippines' "snap revolution" of February 1986 as the head of a U.S. Congressional team investigating election fraud, said he was "genuinely moved and inspired by such a humanitarian effort."

"Hope comes from persons like yourselves," he said. "Your care can make a very big difference in people's lives."

Also announced at the press conference was a crucial element of the project, a plan to set up a long-term "sister hospital" network between participating U.S. institutions and needy hospitals in the Philippines.

The network was to be implemented as an integral part of Project HELP, said Mr. Langness, and was designed to make the project a lasting effort rather than a token one-shot contribution.

When the Project HELP airlift took off during Intercalary Days late last February amid a flurry of local, national and international media coverage, one other Bahá'í was on board: physician Steve Peterson of Redlands, California, who had volunteered as a
delegate and soon became a symbol of the project's impact when he was featured in a front-page article in the *Los Angeles Times* headlined “Not Like Redlands—Manila Slum Hospital Jars U.S. Doctor.”

The article, complete with a photograph of Dr. Peterson examining a sick child in the Philippines and a disturbing description of health care conditions in a Manila slum hospital, was picked up by the wire services and run in many newspapers across the U.S.

“I would say that this is certainly a graphic illustration of need,” Dr. Peterson said in the *Times* article. “And no, I’ve never seen anything like this before in my life.

“It would seem on the surface that there’s no solution to the problem—but you’ve got to do something. You’ve got to start somewhere.”

Projecteers, warmly received on their arrival in Manila, set to work immediately on an assessment of Philippine health care needs. The group spent most of its time visiting government-operated hospitals in far-flung rural provinces like the islands of Negros and Samar, and in impoverished urban areas such as Manila’s Tondo, one of the world’s largest slums.

“The Tondo was incredible,” said Mr. Langness. “If you can imagine 20,000 to 30,000 squatters, mostly children, living on a constantly burning garbage dump, with no hygiene, no sewers, no social services, you can begin to get a picture of Smoky Mountain, as it’s called.

“No one in the group could have dreamed, in his worst nightmares, of a hell more real than Smoky Mountain. Once you see conditions like that, you can’t help but be affected.

“But the one thing that really inspired me,” he said, “was that in the face of such dire conditions, the children we met radiated such warmth and happiness to us.”

Hospital conditions seen by the delegates were hard for many of them to believe. Visiting one typical regional hospital on the economically depressed island of Negros, they saw many hospital beds with two patients apiece, toured large malnutrition wards, and noted virtually bare pharmacy shelves.

“Filipino doctors and nurses do a great job,” said one delegate, “but you can’t save lives with no resources.”

Another hospital had the luxury of owning an ambulance but had only enough fuel to operate it one day a week.

Still another hospital appalled physician delegates who saw surgery taking place in a hallway because surgical facilities were packed, and saw disposable surgical gloves being washed—not sterilized—and hung up to dry for reuse later.

At every hospital visited during their week-long stay, delegates noted one common denominator: a drastic lack of medicines.

When a patient needed an antibiotic to fight an infection, for instance, it was generally understood that the patient’s family had to find the necessary medication in a pharmacy or buy from the local black market.

At one hospital, visited before the project’s shipment of medicines had cleared customs, the delegates were so moved by the needs of the sick children that an impromptu collection was taken up, which financed a buying trip to a pharmacy.

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The official visit with President Aquino took place on the fourth day after Project HELP’s arrival, and was held in the small palace guest house which she uses as her presidential office.

Delegates also toured the palace itself, infamous as the repository of the materialistic excesses of the Marcos regime such as Mrs. Marcos’ shoe collection. It is now used as a museum—and as a grim reminder of those excesses—and is open to the Filipino people.

President Aquino gave the delegation a warm and gracious reception and praised the group for its spirit of cooperation and international assistance.

“‘As we continue our struggle for democracy,’ she said, ‘we are overwhelmed by the kind of support your group has shown for my government.

“‘On behalf of the Filipino people, I wish to thank you for the medicines you donated and your support for my country.’

Mr. Langness addressed the large reception audience and the President, and then both Bahá’ís presented Mrs. Aquino with a small box of medicines that was symbolic of the larger shipment.

The visit to the Philippines lasted a little more than a week, and all of the 25 delegates expressed a desire to return to continue the work.

“It was a startling, eye-opening, amazing experience,” one of them said.

“One see those (children’s) faces,” said another, “it makes you want to do everything in your power to keep helping.”

As a result of Project HELP, Ms. LaRue and Mr. Langness have been honored by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the Filipino community of Southern California, and the Hospital Council’s board of directors which gave them both “Leadership in Health Affairs” awards, which had been bestowed only once before in the organization’s 65-year history.

“The sense of hope, of new freedom, and the happiness it engenders, infuses the Philippines with a wonderful feeling today,” said Mr. Langness.

“For me, as a Bahá’í, doing this kind of relief work makes for a deep sense of humility in the face of the world’s massive problems, but it’s also a great antidote for cynicism.”

Project HELP, said Ms. LaRue, “taught me that, with a little creativity, just about anyone can apply Bahá’í principles in their work. And that is incredibly fulfilling.”
United Nations

In Bangladesh, volunteers keep faith

United Nations Volunteers (UNVs), under the auspices of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), was created in 1970 by the UN General Assembly to channel volunteers who are professionally qualified men and women into development activities in the Third World.

About 1,000 UN Volunteers from 80 countries are now in the field. Each volunteer assumes his or her assignment solely at the invitation of the host country. As part of the only volunteer-sending organization in the United Nations system, UN Volunteers work as citizens of the world, operating beyond politics and taking their cue from the developing countries' needs.

The average UN Volunteer is a young professional, 25 to 35 years old, with a master's, technical degree or extensive professional experience and several years of experience in his or her area of expertise. More than 75 per cent of UN Volunteers presently in the field are from developing countries, reflecting increased promotion of technical cooperation among developing countries and encouraging the fruitful exchange of talents and ideas.

Volunteers first and foremost, UNVs take up their assignments not for careers or employment but for commitment and service. In accepting a UNV post, each UN Volunteer accepts as well the challenges basic to international development: the need to adapt one's know-how to circumstances, to adopt the host country's development aims as one's own, and to shoulder the job's inherent difficulties and frustrations in order to see some aspect of human existence change for the better.

The following story, reprinted from a UNV newsletter of April-June 1986, is by Thirupukuzhi V. Srinivasan, a UNV medical doctor in Mirzapur, Tangail, Bangladesh:

"It is another cloudy morning, with a forecast of thunderstorms, already most of the rivers brimming over, causing suffering to the people. Thus life in Kumundini begins, with the chirp of exotic birds, melodious Rabindra Sangeet (Tagore songs) in the air, and the hustle and bustle of people going to work.

"UNV doctor Krishna Hort from Australia prepares himself for a journey to a nearby village which will take several hours. First he travels by an overcrowded bus, then he takes a boat to cross one of the innumerable unnamed rivers. He does this regularly to come to the people of the village and educate them in ante-natal care, child care, family planning and primary health care.

"UNV Aye Aye Myint, from Burma, wearing a colorful national attire, rushes to the labor ward to attend to an expectant mother brought on a bullock cart from afar.

"And I, UNV Srinivasan from India, wearing an operation theatre attire, enthusiastically prepare myself for a series of long and gruelling operations. With available minimal equipment and limited precious oxygen, I struggle every day to contribute to a better life for hospital inmates while at the same time pleasing the surgeons with dedicated work.

"My compatriot, UNV Baboo Huddani, is an ophthalmologist. In broken Bengali he greets his patients and does not miss any opportunity of kindling in them a hope of regaining eyesight.

"We are the four United Nations Volunteers working within the project 'Assistance to the Kumundini Hospital'—a hospital situated 44 miles from Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. And what was started 42 years ago as a 20-bed hospital—by a philanthropist named Rana Prasad Saha who did not have even the resources to provide medical care for his own mother—has grown into a famous charitable hospital with a capacity of 750 beds.

"The UNV assistance to Kumundini Hospital began with the arrival of the first UN Volunteer in 1982. He was Dr. Krishna Hort, a pediatrician who served the first two years (December 1982-December 1984) as a UNV in general medicine, followed by a four-year assignment in his specified field, pediatrics. The UNVs is completing the sixth year of service at the hospital. Prior to the UNV assignment he worked as an Australian volunteer. UNV Krishna Hort understands the complexities of a traditional society and rightly thinks that language is an important and effective vehicle to understanding the culture and tradition of a society. The UNV has succeeded in not only picking up the Bengali language but also a Bengali bride.

"In the initial stage of the UNV assignment, Dr. Hort's work did not proceed smoothly, mainly because of his unfamiliarity with Bengali culture. Now, after having mastered the language, he understands the society well. As a doctor with long experience in Bangladesh, UNV Hort feels that in Bangladesh more time and money are spent for curative medicine than for preventive and community medicine.

"Moreover, he strongly suggests measures to improve the status of women in the society. This, he thinks, will lower the high mortality rate among pregnant women and infants. During his UNV assignment, Dr. Hort has seen considerable improvement of services in various clinics of the hospital, but he expresses only cautious optimism about a quick reduction in the infant mortality rate. 'There is a long way to go,' he says."
United States

Artist, sculptor David Villaseñor dies

David Villanueva Villaseñor, an artist and sculptor who perfected the technique of permanent sand painting to help preserve for future generations that unique and important art form of the Navajo Indians, died July 6 in New Mexico after a long illness.

Mr. Villaseñor, a Bahá'í since 1955, was widely known and universally respected as the foremost practitioner of sand painting, which he described as "one of the most beautiful and hallowed rites of the Navajo through which his reverence for all creation is made visual with superb dignity and in which always the Great Spirit is honored."

Until Mr. Villaseñor perfected, with the use of glue and colored sands, the sort of "permanent" sand paintings that could be hung on a wall, such paintings, considered sacred by the Navajo, were created, displayed and destroyed within 12 hours.

Noting as a young man that the ancient art form was dying out, Mr. Villaseñor spent years developing a technique by which to preserve it, and many more years reintroducing the art of sand painting to Native Americans throughout the Southwest and on the West Coast.

He demonstrated his work at colleges and universities, made films for educational television, and lectured on sand painting in the U.S. and other countries.

In 1981, Mr. Villaseñor was featured in a half-hour episode of "American Perspective: Another View," a series of 10 television documentaries that presented positive profiles of Americans of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

The "pallet" used in sand painting, he pointed out, consists of different colored rocks that are ground to the consistency of sand: "Apache tears" (obsidian), moss agate, copper sulfates, malachite, turquoise, azurites, limestone, amethyst and agate.

He combined these elements with extraordinary care and skill to create paintings unmatched in their beauty, design and exquisite detail.

Mr. Villaseñor was born February 25, 1913, near Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. Orphaned at age six by the Mexican Revolution, he came to the U.S. 10 years later with no knowledge of its language or customs and lived near and among the Indians of the Southwest.

While he was with the Navajo, a sand painting was made in his honor. As is the custom, he sat in the middle of it during the ceremony, and was immediately fascinated by the sand.

When it was time for the sand painting to be "read," the medicine man said Mr. Villaseñor would be a great teacher with sand and a great sand painter.

True to that prediction, sand painting and its spiritual symbolism soon became a major force in his life.

It was not for himself that he dedicated years of trial and error to develop the work for which he was to become famous; his main interest was to find a way in which to preserve the holy books of the American Indians.

Mr. Villaseñor saw that the art of sand painting was waning, and realized that the symbols in the sand represented the spiritual teachings of the Indian. His permanent sand paintings became a gift of love to Indian and non-Indian alike.

While engaged in these pursuits he also helped establish the Santa Fe (New Mexico) Native Market, which today is a flourishing center for the sale of handmade Indian jewelry, pottery and sand paintings.

It was there, in the early 1930s, that Ernest Thompson Seton, founder of the Woodcraft Rangers, saw Mr. Villaseñor carving whimsical wooden figures of animals.

The two of them soon began a happy 10-year association at the School of Indian Wisdom where Mr. Villaseñor worked with young boys, teaching them sand painting, whittling, nature crafts, wood carving and Indian symbolism.

In 1942 he enlisted in the Army, was granted U.S. citizenship and assigned for three years to medical art work.

It was during this time that he developed an original method for taking molds of hands, feet, ears and other living tissue, using a material that made a soft mold to give complete details of the area involved including...
pores, follicles, tissue structure, etc., without causing further damage or trauma to the area.

The technique, known as moulage, was used to show progress and change from pre-surgery conditions to post-operative recuperation.

For its development, Mr. Villaseñor was awarded the Army's highest possible non-combatant citation for his "permanent contribution to medical science."

His original work forms part of the permanent exhibit of the Museum of Pathology in Washington, D.C.

In 1948 Mr. Villaseñor married Jean Gimlin who survives him and with whom he co-authored several books including How to Do Nature Painting, Tapestries in Sand, and How to Do Permanent Sand Painting.

As a sculptor, Mr. Villaseñor, after much careful research and study in Mexico, created a full-scale replica of the Aztec calendar.

From the carving a special mold was made from which came two fiber glass castings. The resultant sculptures are 12 feet in diameter and weigh some 600 pounds.

The first is on permanent display at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History; the second stands in La Plaza de la Raza in Lincoln Park, East Los Angeles.

In 1976, after working for 10 years in his spare time, Mr. Villaseñor completed a 10-foot-high figure of the great Cherokee Indian Chief, Sequoyah, fashioned from a Sequoyah redwood tree.

The sculpture was given to the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly which in turn presented it as a gift to the Cherokee Nation at a ceremony in Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

After becoming Bahá'ís in 1955, Mr. and Mrs. Villaseñor devoted considerable time and energy to teaching the Faith, often using Mr. Villaseñor's knowledge of sand painting and Indian art, culture and symbolism to open the door.

Mr. Villaseñor served on Assemblies for many years, was a member of the Spanish Teaching Committee and an assistant to the Auxiliary Board.

Meanwhile, he worked for three years with Lockheed Aircraft's Research and Engineering Division, served as art director for the public television series "Ahora," and took part in the making of several documentary films.

But sand painting remained his first love, and he traveled extensively to lecture about and present demonstrations of his art.

One-man shows of his work were presented at the American Museum of Natural History (New York), the Southwest Indian Museum, the Los Angeles County Museum, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, the Palace of the Legion of Honor (San Francisco), Descanso Gardens (La Canada, California), the California Institute of Technology, and many other places.

Mr. Villaseñor was buried July 8 in the Santa Fe National Cemetery.

Besides his wife, he is survived by a brother, Alonzo, and two sisters, Ernestina and Librada.

Pakistan

Councillor Sábir Áfáqí (in white suit) Baluchi Bahá'ís in Kohmachi, Baluchistan, Pakistan.

is shown during a visit May 12 to new
New Delhi Temple draws large crowds

The Mother Temple of the Indian Sub-continent in New Delhi continues to attract thousands of visitors every month.

In April, a group of devotees who were attending a "mela" at the nearby Temple of Kalkaji chose to offer prayers at the House of Worship. On April 7, the last day of the celebration at the Kalkaji Temple, the Bahá'í Temple received more than 35,000 visitors.

Also in April, the third secretary of the Chinese Embassy, Zhao Li, accompanied by his wife and two colleagues, visited the Temple. Mrs. Zhao was deeply impressed, and said she wished there were such a Temple in China.

Among other visitors were a team of 11 Polish mountain climbers on their way to Nepal to scale Mount Everest. They copied the short obligatory prayer in Polish from Volume XIV of The Bahá'í World and spent an hour asking questions about the Faith.

One young Indian woman from Delhi emerged from the Temple with her face alight and told the Bahá'í guides of a recurring dream she'd had as a young girl about a temple in the shape of a lotus.

Hawaii

Roberta Momi Williams of the Bahá'í community of Honolulu is shown as she read the opening prayer in the Hawaii State Senate at Naw-Rúz 1987. Each year on March 21, the Bahá'ís of Hawaii are invited to say prayers at the opening of the state legislature. This year has been declared the Year of the Hawaiian by the governor of the state; Roberta Williams is of Hawaiian ancestry.

The Delhi Tourism Development Corporation brought its first group of visitors in April, and now brings more visitors almost daily.

Trichur, the cultural capital of the State of Kerala, India, was the target last February of a week-long teaching effort conducted by 23 Bahá'ís.

By the end of the project, which was dedicated to the memory of the late Sri A.P. Kumaran, 200 families had received the Teachings, and 62 new believers had been enrolled.

Three Auxiliary Board members helped with the project, conducting a deepening institute on the first day, during which they spoke about the sacrificial services to the Cause by their late co-worker.

The "Bal Mela" (Bahá'í Children's Fair) has become a popular annual event in the more than 100 Bahá'í tutorial schools in Uttar Pradesh, India.

One hundred twenty-nine such schools including 17 middle schools cover a wide area of the three districts of Etawah, Kanpur (rural) and Farukhabad. There are now more than 8,000 students and 250 teachers in these schools.

The Children's Fair, a day-long program of games, sports and cultural events, has become a tradition after only five years. This year it was necessary to hold several such events to cover the region and make the Fair accessible to all the schools.

Fifty-three schools participated with 1,820 children taking part: 1,131 boys and 689 girls.

In addition, there were 2,732 visitors, some of them students at private government schools. Many of these guests were impressed by the Bahá'í celebration and expressed an interest in attending Bahá'í schools.
Kenya

Counsellor Aziz Yazdi, a member of the International Teaching Centre in Haifa, Israel, and Mrs. Soraya Yazdi paid a brief visit to Kenya in January.

Three hundred Bahá'ís attended a meeting with Mr. Yazdi at Givogi in Kakamega, according to the quarterly News Bulletin of the Auxiliary Board members in Kenya for February 1987. In Kisumu, the home of the Oburas overflowed with the Bahá'ís who came to meet the Yazdis.

In Namawanga, Bungoma, 155 Bahá'ís from 16 communities gathered at the Bahá'í Center where Mr. Yazdi exhorted the group, which included 65 youth, to take up earnestly the question of social and economic development, saying they should improve both their spiritual and material lives.

The Counsellor stopped next at the Nakuru Center to see the dormitory and to hold a prayer session with the friends who had gathered there for a pre-primary school teaching course.

A meeting with the Bahá'í community of Nairobi ended the visit of Mr. and Mrs. Yazdi to their former pioneering home.

Bangladesh

Two Children's Conferences were held recently in Bangladesh. At the National Haziratu'l-Quds in Dhaka on December 27, 30 children attended a conference organized by the National Bahá'í Women's Committee, and on January 3, at the Bahá'í Center in Mymensingh, 52 children came to a conference organized by the Regional Teaching Committee.

The youngsters at both conferences enjoyed singing, dancing, prayers and poetry readings.

Republic of Ireland

A recent talk by a Bahá'í to a women's group in Waterford, Ireland, was so well received that the speaker was invited to prepare an exhibit on the status of women for the Waterford Federation of Women's Organizations. The talk was based on reports from the Bahá'í International Community about activities undertaken by Bahá'ís in support of the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985).

United States

Dr. Robert C. Henderson (left), secretary of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly, presents a copy of 'The Promise of World Peace' to William F. Gibson, chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, during the NAACP's 78th annual convention in New York City. The presentation was made on July 8 to commemorate the 75th anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's address to the NAACP's fourth convention on April 30, 1912. As a part of the presentation to the 3,500 delegates and guests, Dr. Henderson included in his remarks the statements made by 'Abdu'l-Bahá at that earlier event.

Australia

In March, about 100 people of diverse backgrounds attended the dedication of the Toowoomba, Australia, Peace Garden in East Creek Park.

The ceremony was opened by the mayor of Toowoomba and an alderman.

The concept of a peace garden was recommended to the city council by the Spiritual Assembly of Toowoomba, which contributed $3,000 toward the total construction cost of $8,000.

The garden, which is circular to symbolize the unity of races, nations, classes and religions, has nine pathways leading to its center.

Its two bronze plaques were unveiled by city officials who praised the Bahá'ís for their peace initiatives.

The dedication ceremony ended with peace songs and the release of doves.

Nigeria

Twenty women were among the 70 Bahá'ís who met last February at a National Teaching Conference in Lagos, Nigeria, to launch that country's Six Year Plan goals.
The International Year of Peace:
A worldwide survey of Bahá’í activities
A survey of Bahá'í activities during the International Year of Peace...

A portrait of the Malietoa Tanumafili II is unveiled in Western Samoa.
The primary peace activity for Bahá’ís around the world has been the dissemination of “The Promise of World Peace,” a statement addressed to “The Peoples of the World” by the Universal House of Justice, the supreme governing body of the Bahá’í Faith. The peace statement was released October 24, 1985, to coincide with the United Nations proclamation of 1986 as the International Year of Peace. An initial emphasis was on its presentation to government leaders. To date (March 1987), the statement has been presented directly to 55, and indirectly to 107 heads of state for independent countries, directly or indirectly to 32 heads of state for non-independent countries or territories, and to many other authorities and leaders at all levels of society.

The following are some of the major peace activities at national and local levels. Associated with most, if not all, have been formal or informal presentations of the peace statement. Surrounding many of the events has been extensive media coverage which further reinforced the purpose of these activities, that is, encouraging people to think and act in ways which will lead to peace.

(The entries have been organized according to Bahá’í National Spiritual Assembly areas and the denominations and classifications used in this list do not imply on the part of the Bahá’í International Community or its affiliates any judgment on the legal or other status of any territory.)

**ALASKA**

*Peace Garden, Mendenhall Valley*

*This report on ‘Major Bahá’í Activities for the International Year of Peace 1986’ was prepared in March 1987 by the Department of Statistics at the Bahá’í World Centre.*

_Bahá’ís planted a garden at the local university and installed a plaque dedicating the garden to world peace._

**ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS**

*World Peace Through World Religion Symposium, Port Blair, January 19, 1986*

The Symposium, organized by the local Bahá’í community, featured speakers from four major religions and distribution of “The Promise of World Peace” in various languages.

**ARGENTINA**

*Peace statement dissemination*

The Argentinian Bahá’í community has distributed the peace statement to a substantial number of individuals and organizations throughout the country.

**AUSTRALIA**

*Australian Peace Exposition, Bahá’í House of Worship, Sydney, March 28-April 6, 1986*

The 10-day event, which included a dinner for the media, a Bahá’í Studies Conference, a Youth for Peace Conference, a Concert for World Peace given to an audience of 2,500 by Seals and Crofts, ethnic music and dancing, living arts and crafts displays, children’s activities, and conflict resolution workshops, was attended by more than 7,300 people. More than 10,000 “peace banners” representing the work of about 25,000 people from 40 countries and from all areas of Australia were tied together into a six-kilometer Peace Ribbon which extended from the House of Worship to the sea. A key feature of the Exposition was the participation of the public in all its aspects, including the support of civil, humanitarian, and social organizations in the planning and execution of all its activities.

*Tablelands Peace Exposition, Atherton, May 24-25, 1986*

1,500 peace banners, a two-meter...
floral globe, and non-stop entertainment greeted visitors as they came to see exhibits prepared by more than 120 organizations. More than 1,000 people attended an International Concert the first evening which featured a wide range of cultural performances and musical entertainment. Two hundred people took part in an all-day Peace Forum the following day. All events were organized and sponsored by the Bahá'í with the help of friends from the community at large. In an area which has a population of only 8,500, about 4,500 people attended this Exposition.

**Fremantle Festival of Peace, Western Australia, September 6-7, 1986**

Fremantle Mayor John Cattalint opened this free, Bahá'í-organized event which offered the 4,000 people who attended 40 exhibit stalls, 22 workshops, live entertainment, a children's program, an art exhibit and a film festival. The guest speaker was Sen. Joe Valentine. The festival received wide coverage in all media.

**Peace Exposition, Herberton, North Queensland, October 1986**

Harry Rankin, Shire chairman, and Enock Trenby, an Aboriginal descendant of the local Jittabul tribe of “little people,” participated in the program. Although organized by local Bahá'ís, much help was received from the (Shire) council, local business people, and the Quakers. 750 people attended.

**Peace Event, Armidale, New South Wales, October 1986**

Twelve organizations, in addition to the Bahá'ís, participated in a peace event which featured John Lenn from the Australian IYP Secretariat and Dr. Connor from the Medical Association for the Prevention of War. Ten Armidale schools provided children's peace art for display.

**Peace Festival, Caboolture, Queensland, October 11-12, 1986**

More than 1,000 people attended the festival, which was organized by the Bahá'ís in cooperation with other organizations. Exhibits, including an Aboriginal artifacts display, reflected peace and cultural themes.

**IYP Service, Bahá'í House of Worship, Sydney, October 19, 1986**

The Governor-General of Australia, His Excellency Sir Ninian Stephen, reading from Isaiah, took part along with the Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone, in an International Year of Peace service for an audience of 850. About 200 children participated in a simultaneous service in a marquee on the grounds. Following the service, lunch was served to 1,000 people on the lawns of the House of Worship.

**Geelong Peace Expo, October 25-26, 1986**

4,000 people participated, and about 200 organizations and businesses assisted, in the Bahá'í-organized Expo which featured a conference, displays, music, dancing, an interfaith service, and a candlelight vigil.

**Peace Seminar, Brisbane, 130 adults in attendance**

**Baha'is assist the government in distributing IYP kits, Tasmania**

Bahá'ís were asked by the Foreign Affairs Department of Australia's IYP Secretariat to deliver its peace kits to all schools in Tasmania.

**One-week Peace Art Display at popular venue and Peace Seminar, Hobart, Tasmania**

**Bahá'ís provide Peace Bus for a mobile peace display, Tasmania**

**AUSTRIA**

**Peace Festival, Mödling, May 24-25, 1986**

The municipality of Mödling and the local Bahá'í community co-sponsored a Peace Festival attended by about 350 people. The decision for mutual cooperation in holding the festival resulted from an October 1985 meeting at which the Bahá'ís presented the peace statement to the mayor of Mödling.

**International Year of Peace Public Meeting, San Salvador, September 1986**

The program consisted of skits, songs, and a speech on peace and unity. In addition, all 130 people attending were asked to fill out a questionnaire on the program theme, “What Can I Do for Peace?”

**BANGLADESH**

**Peace Gathering, Khulna, March 14, 1986**

The Peace Gathering, organized by the Bahá'ís of Khulna, featured as guest speakers Rezwan Ali, president of the Khulna District Bar Association, and Auxiliary Board member Masoomul-Hoda. 150 people attended.

**Conference on “The Role of Women in Establishing World Peace,” Dhaka, April 1986**

The Minister for Social Welfare and Women’s Affairs, Barrister Rabaya Ebuiyu, was the chief guest at the conference, which was organized by the Bahá’í National Women’s Committee and held at the Shishu Academy.

**BARBADOS**

**Caribbean Regional Peace Conference, October 24-26, 1986**

“World Peace Through World Unity” was the theme of a conference hosted by the Bahá’ís and opened by the Prime Minister. The event attracted people of diverse cultures from 15 countries.

**BELGIUM**

**Extensive dissemination of “The Promise of World Peace”**

By March 1986, the Bahá'ís had distributed 60,000 copies of the peace statement and presented it to all politicians, to lawyers, professors, physicians, clergy, more than 2,000 reporters, and many others.

**Peace Week in Mons, November 22-30, 1986**

Church bells rang for 10 minutes to open Peace Week. A peace exhibit, children’s “Make Peace” drawing contest, tree-planting and a lecture attracted many people. An evening gala was held to close the week.

**BELIZE**

**Peace Exhibit in Belize City, April 14-19, 1986**

An art exhibit based on the peace statement, which included painting, drawing, graphics, sculpture, needlework and stained glass, attracted 300-400 people.

**United Nations Day Panel Discussion and Peace Fair, Belize City, October 24-25, 1986**

Embassies in Belize provided flags to mark the site of the panel discussion, which was titled “Peace: More Than an End to War.” On the second day, a “Peace Through World Unity” fair was held in which many groups participated. Both activities, plus a week-long peace exhibit, were organized by the Bahá'ís.

**BENIN**

**Presenting “The Promise of World Peace” to authorities**

Dissemination of the peace statement to government leaders at all levels was the primary IYP project for the
Bahá'ís. The President, on receiving his copy, requested additional copies for the Vice-President and Cabinet members.

BERMUDA

Bahá'í Winter School has peace theme, February 1986

A guest teacher from the United States focused on peace for the individual, the family and the community. More than 70 adults, youth and children joined in analyzing “The Promise of World Peace.”

BOLIVIA

Distributing “The Promise of World Peace”

The peace statement was widely presented at all levels of government, to the media and to universities as the primary IYP project.

BOTSWANA

Luncheon for peace statement presentations to government ministers

The ministers of External Affairs, Water and Mineral Resources, and Health, together with five permanent secretaries were guests of the Bahá'ís for a luncheon at the Sun Hotel in Gaborone. Copies of the peace statement were presented by a representative of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Botswana.

BRAZIL

Brazilian Society of Physicians for Peace, founded August 6, 1986

The Society, initiated by a group of Bahá'í physicians, aims to serve as a forum for studies and proposals for the attainment of peace. The ceremony for its foundation was attended by 120 doctors, the presidents of the Medical Association and Medical Councils, professors of medical universities, and included the most outstanding authorities in medicine and health in the region.

March for World Peace, Campinas, September 1986

Several peace and humanitarian organizations were represented among the 7,000 who participated in the Peace March, which was organized by the local Bahá'í community with full support of the City Prefectur. The march included 150 children carrying flags from different countries and culminated in a concert given by the Symphonic Orchestra of the City of Campinas.

First National Peace Symposium in the Nuclear Era, Goiania, September 19-21, 1986

The Peace Symposium, sponsored by the Bahá'í community of Goiania and the Brazilian Association for Bahá'í Studies, was officially inaugurated by the wife of the State Governor and attended by about 500 people. The program consisted of presentations by three panels of outstanding personalities and scientists, on Science for Peace, Education for Peace, and Economy and Political Science for Peace.

BRAZIL, PARAGUAY, ARGENTINA

Peace Conference in Foz do Iguacu, Brazil (on the border of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay), September 17, 1986

The 190 conference attendees from three countries met to discuss ideas about peace and to witness the unveiling of a one and one-half meter granite peace monument near the mutual border of the three countries. A bronze plate on the monument is inscribed with the UN International Year of Peace symbol and a quote from Bahá'u'lláh, “The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens.”

BURKINA

Tree Planting near Ouagadougou, August 23, 1986

Bahá'ís joined with other movements to plant 300 trees on a plot of land about 10 kilometers from the capital. This is now a government reserve entitled “The Peace Grove.”

Bahá'í Youth Conference, Ouagadougou, December 27-28, 1986

In keeping with its theme, “Youth in Search of Universal Peace,” a fraternal atmosphere was created by the 50 participants from Niger, Mali, Ivory Coast and Burkina.

BURMA

Peace Conference, April 29, 1986

“All human beings must participate in doing world peace” was the theme of a conference which featured a talk on achieving “Peace Through Bahá’í Teachings.”

World Peace Prayer Meetings in 19 communities, October 19-20, 1986

In addition to the 24-hour prayer meetings in various communities, a special United Nations Day celebration and peace prayer meeting at the National Bahá'í Center was attended by 200 people.

CAMEROON REPUBLIC

Bahá'í Summer School focuses on peace, Limbe, December 24-30, 1986

Forty-nine persons took part in animated workshops on the peace statement during this “high-spirited” summer school which was marked by a greater attendance of women and girls than in previous years.
CHILE
Community Peace Seminars
Seminars on peace, to encourage local communities, have been held in Santiago (2), Viña del Mar, Rancagua, Linares, Temuco,Copiapo and La Serena.

CISKEI
Children and adults attend "Peace Conference II," Mdantsane
Participation of the Bahá'ís in the "Ribbon of Peace"
Coverage was received in the government "Umthombo" and privately-run "Indaba" newspapers.

COLOMBIA
5,000 students have seen a slide program based on the peace statement
Time was allotted after each showing for questions and discussion. The Bahá'í teachers who presented the program in 17 schools focused on the universal principles related to peace.

Bahá'í-sponsored World Religion Day Peace Program, Barranquilla
Speakers from the Jewish, Hindu, Christian, Muslim and Bahá'í communities addressed the topic "Religion, Source of Peace." Extensive media coverage followed on radio, television and in newspapers.

COSTA RICA
National Bahá'í Peace Week

CUBA
Presentation of "The Promise of World Peace" was the principal peace activity
The Cuban Bahá'í community focused its International Year of Peace efforts on presenting the peace statement to leaders of thought in government and the media.

CYPRUS
Illustrated peace statement accepted for commercial distribution
One World Publications, owned and operated by Bahá'ís, has published an illustrated edition of "The Promise of World Peace" which is currently being distributed through an American firm. General bookshop buyers have previously expressed the need for such a book.

DOMINICA
"Think Peace" Caravan, September 14, 1986
Bahá'ís and their friends in a decorated truck and mini-bus displaying the banners "Think Peace" and "The Earth Is But One Country" traveled through villages and the north and east of the island sharing "The Promise of World Peace." After a Peace Concert in Portsmouth, where a Bahá'í drama group performed, other decorated vehicles and a police escort joined the caravan for the trip back to Roseau. By the end of the day, 2,950 copies of the peace statement had been personally given to people along the route.

EASTERN CAROLINE ISLANDS
Day of Peace 1986, Pohnpei
Recognition of the Day of Peace, held under the auspices of the Office of...
Micronesian Relations of the Department of External Affairs of the Federated States of Micronesia, opened with the reading of the final paragraph of a proclamation initiated by the Baha’i’s and signed by Governor Moses. The program, broadcast live on the radio from the ball field where it was held, included prayers for world peace and short talks on peace. Individuals from the Hindu, Jewish, Christian and Baha’i faiths gathered together for this event.

Ecuador

United Nations Day Peace Conference, Guayaquil, October 24, 1986

The large public conference was addressed by members of various Baha’i institutions who represented Ecuadorian, American, Iranian and Japanese cultures and nationalities.

Human Rights Day Peace Conference, December 8-10, 1986

“Education, a Solution for a World in Conflict,” “Religion, a Source of Peace,” and “Human Rights, a Means of Attaining Peace” were the focal points of the Human Rights Day observance.

“What Can I Do for Peace” contest in the middle schools of Cuenca

The director of education and culture for Azuay Province helped sponsor this Baha’i-organized project by distributing, to all participating schools, materials which included contest instructions and copies of the peace statement.

El Salvador

Peace Workshop, San Salvador, June 6-7, 1986

At the opening session of the conference, in which 250 people took part, Dr. Salvador Nelson Garcia, dean of the law faculty at the José Matias Delgado University, spoke on “The Need for World Peace,” and Counselor Hooper Dunbar from the Baha’i World Centre in Haifa, Israel, spoke on “The Promise of World Peace.” The following day, 100 people returned to participate in 10 simultaneous workshops to discuss “The Requisites for World Peace.”

Equatorial Guinea

Five-day Exposition of books about peace

Baha’i National Centre inauguration program encourages peace and unity, March 1986

Fiji Islands

Radio program on “The Promise of World Peace”

The program on the peace statement, produced in English, Fijian and Hindi, has been broadcast and prepared for distribution through local Baha’i communities.

Finland

“World Peace Through Education” Conference, Naantali, May 7, 1986

A Bahá’í psychologist, speaking on “What could be done in Naantali to promote peace?” shared the platform with the chairman of the Finnish Association for the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

Baha’i-organized National Peace Conference, Helsinki, September 14, 1986

The conference, held in Finlandia House’s Chamber Music Hall and attended by 200 people, included performances by musician Karoly Garam, music by children, and speeches. Helena Kekkonen, secretary-general of the Institution of Peace Education and winner of a UNESCO Peace Education Prize, spoke about her field of expertise, while Professor Ingo Hofmann of the German Federal Republic, a professor of nuclear physics, represented the Bahá’í community with a speech on “Possibilities for World Peace.”

France

Peace Exposition and Conference, Montpelier, February 17-21, 1986

“A World Without War” was the theme for two events organized by the Bahá’ís of Montpellier: a conference, and a week-long exposition in the town hall that consisted of panels illustrating the peace theme and of drawings by local school children.

Event for Peace, Marseilles, May 30, 1986

This event, held at the Opera House, included several activities and generated considerable publicity. An exhibit associated with it was displayed in the large hall of the Opera House from May 24-June 3. A Forum on Peace, attended by more than 250, featured talks by representatives of the European Community, various religions, the World Health Organization, the League of Human Rights, the Peace Movement, French Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, Peace Education, and World Physicians. The opening address was by J.P. Riviere, representing the United Nations Information Office in Paris, who spoke about UN activities for peace. Following the Forum, a gala evening with performances by singers, narrators, mimes, flautists and guitarists, as well as a famous quartet from Provence, was presented free of charge to an audience of more than 1,000.

French Guiana

Two kiosks promoting the theme of peace at an Exposition

Baha’i participation in inter-religious prayer meeting organized by the Catholic Church

Gabon

Peace meetings resulting in television coverage and a radio interview

The Gambia

“Peace Message Program” presented in many schools

With the endorsement of the Minister of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture, a “Peace Message Program” prepared by the Bahá’ís was taken to more than 150 primary schools as well as to all secondary and high schools in The Gambia. As a part of the program, students were invited to enter an art or essay competition on the theme of world peace. 3,000 posters and lesson plans were distributed to teachers to help them teach their students about peace.

Germany

Broad-based support in the German Baha’i community for the IYP

Excluding the activities of the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany, Bahá’i institutions, individuals and study groups organized 706 meetings on peace issues, 53 of which were held in conjunction with other groups. Total participation in these meetings was 8,801 Bahá’ís and 10,788 guests. Announcements of the meetings included information booths, exhibitions, advertisements, invitation cards, and 16,261 posters and stickers. “The Promise of World Peace” was personally presented to 9,995 persons, and indirectly to 14,085 others. Trees have been planted in several cities for the IYP and donations given to UNICEF and AKTION SORGENKIND. Reports appeared in 170 newspapers, on 14 radio stations, and in 95 minutes of cable TV broadcasts. These activities were organized by 86 Bahá’i communi-
Jean King, former lieutenant governor of Hawaii, clasps!hands with Bahá’í speaker Dr. James Turpin of Mountain View, California, during a Bahá’í-sponsored peace conference in Honolulu.

ties, 60 Bahá’í Groups and 15 national Bahá’í committees. By February 1987, 61 follow-up activities had already been planned.

Interfaith Service, Bahá’í House of Worship, Langenhain, May 26, 1986

A member of the German Bundestag, local dignitaries, Bahá’í Counsellors Grossmann and Mühlschlegel, other representatives of major religions, and Bahá’ís from Belgium, Finland, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom filled the House of Worship to capacity. The service included music and readings on peace from Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and the Bahá’í Faith.

National Peace Conference, Cologne, October 19, 1986

Distinguished speakers addressed the topics of “World Peace and International Law,” “Contributions of Women to World Peace,” and “Education for Peace” to an audience of 700 people from Germany and neighboring countries.

Benefit Concert for Development and Peace, Duisburg, November 5, 1986

The Bahá’ís and the mayor, with the support of many others, organized the concert which featured Bahá’í jazz musician John “Dizzy” Gillespie and five other groups. The concert was opened by Willy Brandt and Prime Minister Rau. Proceeds were donated to the Willy Brandt Foundation for the Third World.

Peace statement to Frisian Island mayors, November 26, 1986

When the Bahá’ís presented the peace statement to the seven municipal mayors at one of their regular meetings, it was the first time in 20 years that the mayors had received a delegation making an official presentation.

GRENADE

World Religion Day observed with Peace Conference, January 19, 1986

One hundred people including guests of many nationalities and religions attended the conference, and many were deeply moved by a dramatic reading of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech.

GUADALOUPE

World Religion Day Peace Conference, Pointe-à-Pitre

150 people from diverse religions attended the Peace Conference which was accompanied by much publicity in newspapers and on radio and television.

GUATEMALA

Television programs on peace

At the invitation of the state television channel, Bahá’ís presented two hour-long programs on peace.

Peace Conference, United Nations Day, October 24, 1986

The National Spiritual Assembly sponsored a Peace Conference which was attended by more than 150 people who listened to talks entitled “The Need for Peace” and “Steps Toward the Achievement of Peace.”

GUYANA

Inter-Religious Assembly results from peace statement presentation

The President decided to hold Guyana’s first Inter-Religious Assembly as a result of the members of his Religious Advisory Committee having received the peace statement. Bahá’ís helped plan the event and provided a display for it.

HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

International Year of Peace Conference, Honolulu, January 19, 1986

The conference, organized by the Bahá’ís of the Hawaiian Islands, was attended by more than 300 people including representatives of many civic, social and peace organizations. Keynote speakers were Jean King, a former lieutenant governor of Hawaii, and Dr. James Turpin, a Bahá’í from California and former Methodist minister as well as founder of Project Concern. Tribute was paid to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who devoted his life to peace.

Candlelight Peace Walk, Kailua-Kona, Big Island, September 21, 1986

Some 140 members of various peace and religious groups joined Bahá’ís for a walk in observance of World Peace Day. The participants, carrying tiki torches, represented Tongan, Hawaiian, Chinese, European, Filipino, Japanese, Portuguese and American Indian peoples.

“Role of Women in Peace” Conference, Big Island, November 9, 1986

Gladys Brandt, a previous recipient of the Bahá’í-sponsored Agnes Alexander Award and present head regent at the University of Hawaii, gave a penetrating keynote address to the more than 130 people attending the conference. Satellite conferences were held on Kauai and Oahu.

Bahá’ís produce Hawaiian performance of the drama “Peace Child”

“Peace Child,” produced by the Bahá’í International Year of Peace Committee, and performed and directed mostly by non-Bahá’ís, has been well-received by audiences and critics alike.
The schools and media were instrumental in promoting "Peace Child" performances.

Peace and Humanitarian Awards presented, Waikiki, December 14, 1986

As a final IYP event, the Bahá'í presented a special peace award to U.S. Sen. Spark Matsunaga and the Agnes Alexander Humanitarian Award to Professor Betty Jacob, head of the University of Hawaii's Institute for Peace.

"The Promise of World Peace" published in major newspaper, Honolulu and Kauai

The Advertiser Star-Bulletin, with a circulation of about 300,000, published the peace statement in one of its Sunday editions. The complete statement was also published in The Garden Island (circulation 11,000).

"World Peace" float wins first prize in Aloha Week Parade, Honolulu

The Bahá'í community of Hawaii has been taking part in the annual parade for 20 years, and this year's first prize in the non-commercial division was its 17th award.

Five-day children's peace camp held with 40 children attending

HONDURAS

IYP Cultural Program, Tegucigalpa, March 26-28, 1986

Following a request for IYP ideas, the Ministry of Foreign Relations approved a Bahá'í proposal to sponsor a cultural program. More than 1,000 people came to see some of the best-known personalities in the Honduran arts.

HONG KONG

Peace Year party including Peace Ribbons drawn by children (300 attending), December 31, 1985

Essay competition awards given, June 1, 1986

3,000 students from five schools in the Southern district took part in an essay contest sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly. The topic, "The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens," was chosen to encourage students to think about their roles in achieving world peace. In the grade levels, forms one to six, all six winners were girls.

"Peace Post," Shatin, November 9, 1986

In the busy New Town Plaza in Shatin, Hong Kong Bahá'ís provided a "Peace Post" display at which some 500 children and adults stopped to write postcards about world peace to national leaders of their choice.

ICELAND

Peace statement presented to 22 top officials at the NATO base

Three Bahá'ís travel all summer and distribute the peace statement in many areas

"Peace Evening" in the Faroe Islands, July 17, 1986

A week of media coverage on the peace statement by the Bahá'ís in Thorshavn was followed by a "Peace Evening" at which copies of the statement were given to all those attending.

INDIA

World Peace Conference, New Delhi, January 19, 1986

Dr. Nagendra Singh, president of the International Court of Justice, inaugurated the conference to which the UN secretary-general sent a message of support. Justice Beg of the Minorities Commission; Dr. L.M. Singhvi, a leading jurist of India; and a Bahá'í speaker, Dr. S.P. Raman, presented talks. In addition, prizes for an essay competition on "World Peace Through World Religion, World Education and World Government" were awarded.

Peace Conference, Oly, September 25, 1986

The Bahá'í National Center was filled to capacity for a talk by Gloria Faizi on "The Promise of World Peace." As a result, she was asked to present her talk to the Nilgiris Ladies Club and Lions Club.

"The Promise of World Peace" aired on All India Radio, Patna

The Bahá'í State Council of Bihar obtained permission to broadcast the peace statement in daily installments on October 6-24, 1986.

IRELAND

Two-day Association for Bahá'í Studies Conference with the theme "The Dynamics of Peace"

Bahá'ís take part in council of Dublin organizations interested in peace

Two concerts which include Bahá'í talks on peace are very well attended by the public

Production of youth and children's versions of the peace statement

To convey the ideas contained in "The Promise of World Peace" in a language suitable for children and youth, special versions of the peace statement were written. During Peace Week at one school, a Bahá'í spoke and the children's version of the statement was given to 200 students. One class studied it for a week.

ITALY

Peace Exhibition and Concert, Montichiari, Northern Italy, February 7-14, 1986

In addition to the Bahá'ís, 24 groups exhibited peace proposals through posters, documentation and photographs. 700 people attended the concert, which consisted of music interspersed with comments on peace by the mayor of Montichiari; Gianni Ballerio, representing the Bahá'í International Community; and other dignitaries.

Bahá'ís host prayers for the World Day of Prayers for Peace, Assisi, October 27, 1986

The program, prepared by the Bahá'ís, included prayers in several languages, selections from the Bahá'í Writings on peace, and a brief explanation of the Bahá'í perspective on the inevitability of, and means to, peace.
A small part of Australia's mammoth 'peace ribbon' put together by people around the world for the Bahá'í-sponsored 'peace exposition' at the Bahá'í House of Worship near Sydney in March-April 1986.

JAMAICA

National Spiritual Assembly sponsors prize for UN Brochure competition

Peace Exhibitions held in Kingston and Spanish Town libraries

Bahá'ís make significant contribution to national IYP activities

Through membership in the national IYP Committee, Bahá'ís were key organizers of a cultural show for the International Day of Peace, a women's program for International Women's Peace Day, and other activities.

JAPAN

Peace Expo, Ube City, July 28-29, 1986

Peace banners and a guest speaker from Ube City's sister-city, Newcastle, Australia, were among the special features of the Bahá'í-sponsored Expo. Cooperation, Women and Peace, and Family Life were the presentation topics.

KENYA

Bahá'í National Women's Conference has peace theme, February 1986

In addition to presentations on Peace in the Family and "The Promise of World Peace," there was a presentation on home industry and the importance of being guided by Bahá'í principles in one's business.

KIRIBATI

Peace Conference, Bikenibeu, Tarawa, October 24-26, 1986

The President of Kiribati was among those who addressed an audience of about 1,000 and encouraged Bahá'í peace efforts. Addresses, music and dance were presented to commemorate the IYP and the peace statement.

KOREA

Peace statement presented to leaders of government and thought

Starting with the President and members of the National Assembly, the Bahá'ís have presented the peace statement to various prominent individuals in diverse fields including education, the media, medicine, the military, diplomacy, business and public services.

LEEWARD ISLANDS

Bahá'ís exhibit peace posters at the public library in Philipsburg, St. Maarten

LESOTHO

Bahá'í Faith represented at UN Forum, Maseru, October 24, 1986

Counsellor Mrs. L. Mancho Warren joined representatives of the UN and the university to speak on the forum theme, "Is World Peace Possible?" Presentations focused on the peace statement, economics, and the United Nations.

LUXEMBOURG

"Peace and Religion" Symposium, June 1, 1986

The symposium, organized by the National Spiritual Assembly of Luxembourg, included the participation of prominent individuals from the Jewish, Christian (Catholic and Protestant) and Muslim faiths.

MADAGASCAR

Participation in a National Youth Fair, Antananarivo, September 10-15, 1986

The Bahá'ís won first prize for their display and second prize for their musical event at this fair, whose theme was "Youth, Peace and Development."

MALAWI

International Day of Peace Reception and Exhibition, Lilongwe

Two hundred guests including government, civil and religious leaders attended the reception. A slide show and exhibition on the peace statement accompanied talks on the UN and the Bahá'ís aim to promote unity and world peace.

MADAGASCAR

Peace Conference, Kuala Lumpur, January 26, 1986

Talks by representatives of the UN Development Programme and UN Malaysia Association, a 14-nation costume parade, and a Bahá'í youth choir were among the features of the conference. More than 170 Bahá'ís and 120 guests attended.

"Sing for Peace," Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, September 20, 1986

The Bahá'í community and the Jaycees collaborated to organize a musical stage show in which 200 youth and adults took part, with both group and solo performances, to express their support for peace through music.

MARIANA ISLANDS

"Women's Role in World Peace" luncheon, Saipan

International Day of Peace meetings receive media coverage, Saipan and Guam

Peace Symposium, November 1986

At the symposium, opened by the governor of Guam, 16 prominent speakers representing law, science,
education, commerce, youth, women, health and communications addressed the 175 participants.

MARSHALL ISLANDS
Bahá’í National Peace Conference, Darrit, Majuro, August 23-24, 1986
Bahá’ís from more than 20 communities gathered to study and discuss “The Promise of World Peace.” The next day, they held a public meeting which featured prominent guest speakers and cultural dances.

Bahá’ís host IYP dinner for President and other government officials, Majuro, October 23, 1986
The National Spiritual Assembly hosted a buffet dinner for President Amata Kabua, members of the Cabinet and other high government officials to celebrate the close of the International Year of Peace. The peace statement was discussed, hopes and prayers for peace were expressed. President Kabua offered his thoughts about the establishment of peace including his hope for an assemblage of world leaders to talk about peace and search for ways in which to bring about cooperation and justice throughout the world.

United Nations Day Peace Program, Mili, October 24, 1986
Prayers by Christian and Bahá’í representatives opened a celebration of UN Day that was attended by more than 400 and included speeches, music, a dance and dinner. The President and his wife, the vice-speaker of the Legislature, and two Cabinet members were at the dinner.

MARTINIQUE
Bahá’ís participate in Women’s Conference; sponsor Peace Conference
Copies of the peace statement were distributed and an excerpt read at a conference organized by the “Association des Femmes Martiniquaises.” Participants were invited to attend a Bahá’í-sponsored IYP Conference on March 23 in Trois-Îlets.

MAURITIUS
Peace Forum, Camp de Masqué Pavé
Bahá’ís organized an International Year of Peace Forum at the village hall. Representatives of the Christian, Muslim, Hindu and Bahá’í religions took part in the forum.

Peace Forums, Belle-Rose and Port Louis, October 1986
“World Peace Through an International Auxiliary Language” was the first forum theme. In the second forum, three panelists—a journalist, an educator, and a Bahá’í—made presentations relating peace to media, education and religion.

MEXICO
Formal reception has peace focus, Mexico City, January 12, 1986
About 200 people attended the reception and heard a brief history of Bahá’í peace statements from Bahá’u’lláh’s Tablets to kings and rulers in the late 19th century up to the present day in which the Universal House of Justice has addressed “The Promise of World Peace” to “the Peoples of the World.” Following this, excerpts were read from “The Promise of World Peace.”

MOZAMBIQUE
Official International Year of Peace celebration, June 7, 1986
The Bahá’í Faith was among the various religions, groups and humanitarian organizations invited to take part in the official celebration in Mozambique of the International Year of Peace. The event began with a peace march and ended at the stadium with cultural performances and the reading of messages from various participants to an audience of 5,000. As part of the occasion, the Minister of Foreign Affairs received a copy of “The Promise of World Peace” on behalf of the President from a delegation of Bahá’ís.

NEPAL
Peace is the focus of a Bahá’í National Youth Conference
About 120 young Bahá’ís from 10 districts of the Kingdom attended the conference. In addition to talks on excellence, developing Bahá’í virtues, and marriage, a full day of study and workshops was devoted to the peace statement.

NETHERLANDS
Bahá’ís join with 15 groups in a meeting organized by “Sharing for Peace”
Participation in the “First Earth Run” in the Netherlands, October 3, 1986
The First Earth Run fire was brought to the Netherlands for one day, and 25 Bahá’ís took the fire in small oil lamps to their cities. In conjunction with the event, various other activities transpired including a celebration held in Rotterdam with the cooperation of the municipality, and the publication in Middleburg of an interview with the Bahá’í carrying the flame.

NEW CALEDONIA AND LOYALTY ISLANDS
Songs for a Public Day for Peace, Nouméa, New Caledonia

NEW ZEALAND
Extensive dissemination of “The Promise of World Peace”
The Bahá’ís printed 25,000 copies of the peace statement, 5,000 of which were used internally for the Bahá’í community. Most of the remaining 20,000 have been presented to various organizations and institutions at the national and local levels. In addition, 1,200 copies of the statement were printed in Maori and 500 each in Tongan and Samoan. An audio tape of the peace statement was prepared for non-readers and the visually impaired, and a simplified version was produced for children.

Auckland Regional Peace Conference, Auckland University, April 19, 1986
Cultural performances and music by the Manurew High School Maori Club and the Pakuranga Intermediate School Folk Group preceded the morning and afternoon sessions. The presentations addressed: The UN secretary-general’s peace message; human nature; prejudice; women, economics; universal language; disarmament; youth and children; and “The Promise of World Peace.” The conference ended with a Peace Concert sponsored by the University Bahá’í Club.

“Practical Peace,” a four-part series on Radio New Zealand
A Bahá’í, whose 1985 program on peacemaking in New Zealand won her and her co-producer a media peace award for the year’s best radio series, has produced a new series based on the peace statement. The “Practical Peace” program was broadcast in September and October 1986.

NICARAGUA
Billboard promotes peace in 19 languages
The billboard had the word “peace” in various languages and scripts, including Miskito (a local indigenous language), followed by the message, “We are working for world peace. The
Panel discussion on peace, Managua, April 30, 1986

“A New Universal Attitude about Peace” was the topic of the public meeting, organized by the Bahá’is of Managua.

NIGERIA

World Peace Conference, University of Ife, June 11, 1986

The conference, sponsored by the Bahá’ís of Ife, under the auspices of the West African Centre for Bahá’í Studies, opened with an address by the vice-chancellor which was read on his behalf. Other presentations focused on Yoruba oral traditions related to world peace including the visions of the ancient seer Orunmila, and components of the “modus operandi” for peace which must be researched, studied and practiced.

Peace Conference, Lagos, November 21, 1986

The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Lagos organized a Peace Conference which was held in the garden of the University of Ife. Speakers included the director of the Center and the University of Ife’s senior law lecturer.

“The Peacemakers of Oghara” football club formed in Bendel State

The “Bahá’í Peacemakers” are becoming known and other clubs are eager to play them. According to their coach, “one reason the Peacemakers are appreciated is that when they lose they do not fight or damage property.”

NORWAY

Peace Arrangement in University Hall, Oslo, October 23, 1986

A speech on non-violence and peace, written by Mrs. Coretta Scott King and delivered by her son, Dexter King, was the keynote address for the Peace Arrangement. The program, attended by about 600 Norwegians, included music, dance and humor.

PAKISTAN

IYP Program at Bahá’í Hall, Karachi, July 25, 1986

The program featured a talk on “World Peace Through the Eradication of Prejudice” and a presentation of the peace statement to the head of the Department of International Relations at the University of Karachi.

PANAMA

Television program presented on World Peace Day, September 20, 1986

The program, “Religion: Source of Peace,” was presented by the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Panama City and included Jewish, Sikh, Christian, Muslim and Bahá’í representatives.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Unitech Festival of Peace, Lae, July 26-August 8, 1986

The Unitech Bahá’í Club, in conjunction with the university staff and students, sponsored a two-week festival which was opened by the vice-chancellor at a Peace Concert where diverse groups expressed their culture and traditions in song and dance. A prayer meeting the next day included Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist, Zoroastrian, Christian, Muslim and Bahá’í readers. A continuous exhibit of peace posters by students of all ages, and seminars held every other night, attracted many hundreds of visitors.

Port Moresby Peace Exposition, August 30-31, 1986

The Exposition, initiated by the Bahá’ís, received help from a wide range of individuals, the government, and the UN Office. Speakers at a Peace Forum, attended by 250 university students, academics and government officials, included prominent individuals from the government, the university and the community. Additional activities included an International Peace Concert, attended by 1,000 people, and a Peace Poetry and Poster Competition for primary and secondary school students.

IYP Peace Weekend Program, Goroka, October 24-26, 1986

The Bahá’ís, with the cooperation of other individuals, groups and clubs, organized the Peace Weekend to promote the IYP through art, music, presentations, sharing views on peace, and establishing the Goroka Peace Park.

Peace luncheon in observance of UN Day, Lae, October 24, 1986

The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Lae hosted 70 government, university and community leaders at a luncheon where distinguished guests and a Bahá’í Counsellor made presentations on peace.

PERU

“Universal Peace Theatre” group formed by Bahá’ís in Arequipa

The group has performed on radio, in schools, and, on Human Rights Day, at the National Cultural Institute.

A local newspaper reported that the Peace Theatre group “is teaching the concept of world citizenship in support of the International Year of Peace.”

“Peace Ribbon” Exposition displays 145 banners, Lima, December 13-14, 1986

The Exposition, prepared by the Bahá’ís and sponsored by the Municipality of Lima, presented banners on the theme “What Can I Do for Peace?” from schools, peace groups, nursing homes, guide girls, boy scouts, the Red Cross, and Bahá’í communities throughout the country. Media coverage was extensive.

PHILIPPINES

Conference prepares youth for IYP, Nueva Vizcaya, December 30-31, 1985

“Youth Movement for World Peace” was the theme of the Bahá’í International Youth Conference. The conference, attended by 170, rekindled a spirit in the youth to arise and work for world peace.

Peace Proclamation Exhibition, Toamasina, September 16-18, 1986

Regional Peace Symposium, Cagayan de Oro, October 19, 1986

Peace Conference in Cebu City and Seminar in Manila

Many dignitaries were among those attending the conference and receiving copies of the peace statement. The seminar talks were focused on the role of media, education, women and religion in achieving peace.

PORTUGAL

Peace Festival, Cascais, May 25, 1986

Music, dance and a children’s art exhibit were the highlights of an IYP event organized by the local Bahá’ís for youth in the area.

RÉUNION

Symposium on Peace, Municipality of St. Denis, November 5, 1986

The Bahá’ís of Réunion were successful in attracting 450 people including Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Jews and Buddhists to the symposium which began with prayers and included lectures by Dr. Serge Ycard, president of the Academy in Réunion, and Sudel Fuma, a member of the French Commission of UNESCO and lecturer at the University of Réunion.
RWANDA
Two Regional Teaching Conferences emphasize peace: February 22 and 23, 1986
Bahá'ís are invited to travel with a government representative and speak to youth about peace.
The secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Rwanda was invited to travel with an assistant in the government's Department of Youth to various parts of the Commune of Karambo to speak to youth about the message contained in “The Promise of World Peace.”

ST. VINCENT/GRENADINES
Dawn devotional radio spots emphasize peace
Each of the three-minute devotional programs scheduled for broadcast six mornings a week includes music, a prayer, and a selection from the Bahá'í Writings on peace.

SAMOA
Peace Essay Contest Awards Ceremony, American Samoa, February 16, 1986
Certificates of recognition were given to each of 36 finalists and monetary prizes awarded to seven winners, thus culminating the contest sponsored by the local Bahá'í Peace Project Committee. At the ceremony, Lt. Governor Faleomavaega Eni Hunkin and Counsellor Suhayl Alai spoke about peace.

Bahá'í National “Youth for Peace” Conference, Apia, Western Samoa, October 19, 1986
A talk on Family Welfare and Management by Western Samoa's assistant secretary for the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, and talks on peace by Bahá'í speakers were given to the 200 Bahá'ís at the conference.

Special service for peace at the Bahá'í House of Worship, Western Samoa, October 19, 1986
Four hundred people including His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II and representatives of the government, diplomatic corps, and UN agencies attended the service which ended a year of activities in support of the International Year of Peace.

SIKKIM
Peace statement given to most leaders in capital area, November 1985
Almost all ministers, dignitaries and other prominent people in the capital area received “The Promise of World Peace” prior to the commencement of the IYP.
Peace statement summary in Nepali broadcast on All-India Radio, Gangtok
Besides the summary, a 30-minute program on October 24, 1985, consisted of a talk on “World Peace” in Nepali, and four songs about peace, in English, Nepali and Hindi.

SINGAPORE
“Youth for Peace” Symposium, June 8-9, 1986, and Peace Concert, December 1986
Bahá’í Women’s Committee Organizes IYP Commemoration, December 1986
The president of the Singapore Council of Women and a UN Association official were among the 60 who attended a concert and tea to conclude the IYP. The Bahá’í concept of peace was presented to the gathering.

SOUTH AFRICA
International Day of Peace observed in local communities
“Peace News International” tabloid and peace prayer booklet published
The Bahá’ís have sent additional information on peace and a peace prayer in six languages to individuals who had previously received the peace statement, as a means of maintaining their focus on peace.

SOUTHWEST AFRICA/NAMIBIA
Peace statement dissemination is primary Bahá’í peace activity
All of the activities of the Bahá’í Public Relations Committee were centered on the peace statement. The committee organized presentations of the statement at the national level, prepared press statements and paid ads for newspapers, in addition to coordinating and helping local Spiritual Assemblies, individuals and a regional committee to present the statement at the local and regional levels.

SPAIN
Musical Concerts for Peace, Malaga
The Bahá’ís of Malaga organized a series of concerts for the IYP, one featuring all Romani (Gypsy) performers and another in which more than 130 musically talented youth participated.

SRI LANKA
Diverse delegation presents the peace statement to the President
The three Bahá’ís making the presentation included members of the Sinhalese and Tamil communities. In addition, each had come from a different religious heritage: Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim.

Youth Seminar on Peace, Colombo Bahá’í Centre, December 15, 1985
“Peace Can Move the World” was the theme of the seminar, which was
organized by the National Bahá’í Youth Committee and attended by nearly 200 people representing 35 Non-Governmental Organizations. The program for this celebration to conclude the International Year of Youth consisted of two workshops followed by an International Cultural Evening. The workshops presented a framework for action in the IYP: “The Role of Youth in Developing Toward a Peaceful Society” and “Moral and Spiritual Values for World Peace.”

SURINAME

Special lessons on peace are conducted in several secondary schools

Bahá’ís use the media to promote peace

Newspaper articles and radio programs were arranged both before and after the presentation of the peace statement to the President. On the same day, one newspaper printed the full text of “The Promise of World Peace.”

SWEDEN

Peace Week, Uppsala, September 29-October 5, 1986

In honor of Uppsala’s 700th anniversary and the IYP, Bahá’ís organized activities that included public discussions, a museum exhibit, newspaper ads and articles, and a concert featuring classical music interspersed with quotes on peace.

SWITZERLAND

Extensive dissemination of “The Promise of World Peace”

Through the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland, some 19,000 copies of the peace statement have been distributed, reaching all levels of government. It has also been widely disseminated by local communities and individuals.

IYP activities abound throughout the country

A great number and variety of activities (a National Peace Conference, concerts, expositions, a press luncheon, public talks, conferences, roundtable discussions, and a bazaar) took place in some 30 towns in Switzerland.

TAINAN

Bahá’í children make a section for the Australian “Peace Ribbon,” Hsin-ying

Peace statement forms the basis for talks given to universities and clubs

“The Path to Peace,” drawing heavily from “The Promise of World Peace,” was the topic of several talks given by a Bahá’í representative to students, police officers in-training, and heads of companies. These talks resulted in many requests for copies of the peace statement.

TANZANIA

Public meeting on peace, Dar es Salaam, November 29, 1986

“Perspectives on Peace” was the theme of a meeting at the National Bahá’í Centre which was attended by more than 70 people.

THAILAND

IYP Writing Contest: Prizes awarded September 18, 1986

The Bahá’ís, the Coalition for Peace, and major universities co-sponsored the writing contest in which 738 essays, poems and slogans were submitted on “Peace and Development,” “Peace Through Education,” “Religion and Peace,” “Woman’s Role in Peace,” and other topics. Bahá’ís financed prizes in the General Public category, as well as the publication of a book containing the prize-winning essays and poems.

International Education and Peace Conference papers presented, Bangkok, December 1-3, 1986

Three Bahá’í presented papers at the International Conference on Higher Education and the Promotion of Peace. One of the participants, Bahá’í educator Lily Ayman, was interviewed by the Thai press on the role of women and education in bringing about world peace.

TOGO

Conference on World Peace through World Education

Dr. Akouété Akakpo-Vidah, professor of educational science at the University of Bénin, spoke at this meeting, which was held under the auspices of the Bahá’í community of Lomé.

TONGA

International Year of Peace observed in Ha’apai

The Spiritual Assembly of Felemea organized and hosted an IYP meeting attended by heads of religious organizations in the village. The Bahá’ís provided two polas (Tongan-style food) for the occasion.

TRANSKEI

Peace statement presented to government officials, February 19, 1986

All members of the Parliament, cabinet ministers, paramount chiefs and other chiefs, totaling 180 people, received “The Promise of World Peace” at the opening session of Parliament.

TRINIDAD/TOBAGO

Participation in a community Family Fair, San Fernando, May 15-21, 1986

The Bahá’ís had a booth at this Fair which was organized by the Ministry of Community Development and Local Government. Bahá’í prayers and writings were a major part of the opening ceremony, and on the Fair’s third day, Dr. Harry Collymore, representing the Faith, read a prayer and spoke about world peace during a religious service organized by the Inter-Religious Organization. Although not originally scheduled to take part in the closing program, the Bahá’ís were invited on the last morning to present a Bahá’í prayer as part of that ceremony.

UGANDA

“Peace Week” features interfaith service, Kampala, October 23, 1986

The 250 people attending the service at the Bahá’í House of Worship heard songs by the Bahá’í choir and readings from scriptures of the world’s religions. Floodlights illuminated the Temple for the week as a symbol of peace, and daily radio spots and newspaper ads conveyed a message of peace, often quoting from the peace statement.

UNITED KINGDOM

Representation on a National IYP Council

The National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom was invited to join an IYP Council. In addition to having a representative on the council, Bahá’ís also took part in each of its working parties: “Peace and Development,” “Peace and Disarmament,” “Peace and Justice,” and “Peace and the Community.”

Dissemination of “The Promise of World Peace,” England

By early April 1986, Bahá’ís in groups and as individuals had purchased 50,000 copies of the peace statement and were able by that time to

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share it with: 175 mayors, 1,500 counselors, 13 Lords, 200 members of Parliament, 300 other dignitaries, 575 educators, 1,500 academics, 210 editors and reporters, as well as 750 members of various other organizations.


The Bahá'ís of Mendip organized this inter-faith service which united Hindus, Jews, Zoroastrians, Christians, Buddhists, Muslims and Bahá'ís in an evening calling for world peace. It marked the first time the cathedral had been used by a non-Christian group for worship. An article in the Wells Journal stated: "If this kind of unity can exist inside an ancient building, why can't it exist in the outside world? . . . Perhaps the friendship shown by the differing peoples in Wells Cathedral that night is infectious."

Article on the peace statement published in "Peace by Peace," Northern Ireland

The October 1986 issue of the monthly journal "Peace by Peace," produced by the People Peace movement and sent to many parts of the world, carried an article on "The Promise of World Peace" written by a Bahá'í.

Bahá'ís on the Isle of Mull distribute the peace statement island-wide, Scotland

Since the island's population is only 2,500, the Bahá'ís felt it was within their power to deliver a copy of "The Promise of World Peace" to every household. At the time of this report, they were well on their way to accomplishing that goal.

UNITED STATES

National Bahá'í Office provides support for local and individual IYP activities

In addition to coordinating the presentation of the peace statement to government officials and prominent persons at national and regional levels, the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly has provided considerable support for community and individual peace activities. Materials for proclaiming the IYP included billboards, posters, buttons, stickers, balloons and camera-ready ads. Various materials on peace were produced: leaflets on prerequisites for peace; peace presentation kits for media and general purposes; "In Pursuit of Peace," a compilation of essays that explores contemporary views on peace as well as the Bahá'í perspective; and "Peace: More Than an End to War," a 308-page book consisting of the peace statement, various Bahá'í writings on peace, and prayers for peace and unity. A Children's Peace Projects Campaign has been initiated, and Bahá'í youth are encouraged to form Youth Peace Clubs to help unite their fellow high school students around the topic of peace.

International Peace Conference, San Francisco, California, August 28-31, 1986

"Peace—The Promise" was the theme of the conference and the concurrent programs for children and youth, attended by 7,800 Bahá'ís and guests from 28 countries. The 70 workshops, panel presentations and plenary sessions were organized by the National Spiritual Assembly with the help of many local Bahá'í communities and individuals. One of the notable qualities of the event was the impressive diversity of the participants, and especially the representation of American Indians in every aspect of the conference. The keynote speaker was Dr. Ervin Laszlo, co-editor of the Encyclopedia of Peace.

Bahá'ís make 400-mile "Walk for World Peace," Utah, February 1986

Starting in the southwestern corner of the state, Bahá'ís and supporters took turns participating in a walk organized by the Utah Bahá'í Peace Committee. In each town "The Promise of World Peace" was presented to government officials, prominent individuals, the media, and others who requested copies. The walk ended in Salt Lake City with presentations to Lt. Governor Val Oveson and state Sen. Terry Williams who received wide media coverage on radio, television and in newspapers.

Peace Conference, New York City, May 10, 1986

Six hundred people attended the day-long event which featured music by the Mike Longo Trio and renowned jazz trumpeter "Dizzy" Gillespie.

Peace statement presentation leads to City Council endorsement

On June 2, 1986, the City Council of Cambridge, Massachusetts, unanimously passed a resolution encouraging residents of the city to read and study "The Promise of World Peace."

WorldFest '86, Winfield, Kansas, June 7-July 16, 1986

This event, subtitled "A Festival of Life and Culture in the Global Village," included Intercultural Forums, presentations on futurist topics by distinguished thinkers and writers such as Fritjof Capra and John Naisbitt, a Foreign Language Workshop for children. More than 500 people took part in the many activities of this public ser-

President Ronald Reagan accepts a copy of the peace statement from Dr. Robert Henderson, secretary of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly.
The Bahá'ís were the principal local organizers for the Norwalk leg of the First Earth Run. About 200 people attended a ceremony on the Norwalk Green. Proceeds from all fund-raising activities were contributed to UNICEF.

**Peace Fest '86, South Carolina, September 19-20, 1986**

Bahá'ís sponsored this conference, held at the Louis Gregory Institute near Hemingway, to celebrate the governor's proclamation of "Peace Conference sponsored in August 1986 by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States.

Proclamation of the International Year of Peace in New Haven, Connecticut

Mayor Biagio Dileito of New Haven proclaimed 1986 "the International Year of Peace in the City of New Haven, following the lead of the United Nations and the Bahá'í world community." The conclusion of his formal proclamation asserts that New Haven "joins the members of the Bahá'í Faith in reaffirming a commitment to the most noble of all causes—that of world peace."

"The Promise of World Peace" video is well-received by TV station program directors

The video, produced by Radiant Century Productions and distributed by Kalimat Press, both of which are Bahá'í-owned and operated, presents narrated highlights of the peace statement and visual material from Bahá'í and other sources including the United Nations, Kiva Films, and NASA.

Diverse Bahá'í International Year of...
Peace activities at the community level:
- "World Peace Awards," Carlsbad and Oceanside, California
- "Peace at All Levels of Society" Conference, Union City, California
- Booth at town street fair distributes peace statement, Albany, California
- Bahá'ís and Unitarians co-sponsor UN Day peace reception, Manhattan Beach, California
- Peace statements given to local officials at Bahá'í New Year party, Ventura, California
- Panel discussion with panelists from local peace organizations, Arroyo Grande, California
- Gala banquet for peace statement presentation to mayor and other dignitaries, Los Angeles
- "Children for World Peace" parade float gets newspaper coverage, Nederland, Colorado
- 5,000 copies of the peace statement distributed as newspaper insert, Pensacola, Florida
- Bahá'ís march behind peace banner in Fourth of July parade, Middleburg, Florida
- Peace statement in Braille given to singer/composer Stevie Wonder, Albany, Georgia
- Youth sponsor events to promote peace and world citizenship, Magic Valley, Idaho
- University of Chicago's Bahá'í Club sponsors peace concert for 200 students, Illinois
- Peace statement in Russian given to clergy from the Soviet Union, Wilmette, Illinois
- Bahá'ís produce "Wage Peace" signs for their lawns, Bloomington, Indiana
- "Women as Peacemakers" Conference receives television coverage, Des Moines, Iowa
- Women for International Peace and Arbitration founder speaks at conference, Olathe, Kansas
- Labor Day weekend Peace Conference held, Green Acre, Maine
- Lecture series presented on "Facets of Global Peace," Gray, Maine
- Peace statements presented to county officials at luncheon, Howard County, Maryland
- Bahá'ís and local newspaper sponsor peace essay contest, Framingham, Massachusetts
- Peace statement presented to chief of Potawatomi Tribe, southwestern Michigan
- Four Bahá'ís discuss the peace statement on educational television, Mississippi
- More than 3,000 copies of the peace statement are mailed to local leaders, Kansas City, Missouri
- Youth Conference includes workshops on prerequisites for peace, Missoula, Montana
- Bahá'í UN representative addresses UN Association chapter, Lincoln, Nebraska
- Third International Peace Day Festival sponsored by Bahá'ís, Taos, New Mexico
- "Tree of Peace" planted and park bench given to city, White Plains, New York
- "Unity Is Everybody's Business" breakfast honors mayor of Mount Vernon, New York
- Bahá'í Public Information Office sponsors panel on women and peace, New York City
- Peace statement is subject of public discussion, Williamston, North Carolina
- Peace is topic of 30-minute meetings with each of 40 local leaders, Columbus, Ohio
- Week-long prayer vigil leads to proclamation of "World Peace Week," Xenia, Ohio
- Bahá'ís distribute mayor's International Peace Day proclamation, Wilkoughby, Ohio
- Second annual Peace Award presented to physicians' organization, Portland, Oregon
- Peace statement in Mandarin presented to Chinese Council, Portland, Oregon
- Panel co-sponsored by Bahá'ís and university Peace Studies Department, Forest Grove, Oregon
- "The Gift of Peace" is theme of Bahá'í Summer School, Wallowa Lake, Oregon
- The IYP is subject of a display for Universal Children's Day, Doylestown, Pennsylvania
- Bahá'ís provide rest stop booth with peace theme at York Fair, Pennsylvania
- Shopping mall display highlights peace statement issues, Florence, South Carolina
- IYP commemoration dinner at-
tended by 235 people, Houston, Texas

- Bahá'ís enter peace-theme sand-sculpture in contest, Virginia Beach, Virginia
- Peace statement excerpts are read at Whitman College commencement, Walla Walla, Washington
- Bahá'ís co-organize Peace Fair with Worldwide Peace Foundation, Washington, D.C.
- Morgantown Bahá'ís spend a full week in August promoting IYP, West Virginia
- “Peace du Jour” forum on world peace draws 250 people, Cedarburg, Wisconsin

URUGUAY

Tree Planting, Time Capsule and Conference, Montevideo, October 1986

The Bahá'ís hosted an IYP celebration which featured a tree planting and the unveiling of a time capsule containing 71 peace messages, many from prominent individuals and groups. A conference followed.

VANUATU

Bahá'ís help with a 10-day Peace Expo and poster competition

This event, arranged by the UN Office in Vila, received assistance from the local Bahá'í community. More than 700 people visited the exhibit, which included some peace banners from the Bahá'ís in Australia.

VENEZUELA

Peace statement presented to the National Congress of Esperantists

In a speech thanking the Bahá'ís for “The Promise of World Peace,” the Esperanto group's spokesman recalled the links of friendship that have always bound Esperantists and Bahá'ís.

VIRGIN ISLANDS

Lesson plan developed for promoting peace in the classroom

The lesson plan, developed by a Bahá'í educator, Dr. Rod Clarken of the College of the Virgin Islands, has been sent to almost all of the 1,200 teachers in the U.S. Virgin Islands. In addition, the National Bahá'í Center in the U.S. has sent it to the 365 Bahá'í classes in that country.

ZAMBIA

Public lecture on peace, Shaba, September 20, 1986

More than 500 people came to hear the lecture by Professor Yezi, a prominent professor in International Relations, expert in questions related to war and peace, and former priest. The lecture was organized by the Bahá'ís and sponsored by Lubumbashi University.

INTER-zonal conferences include peace on the agenda, Kinshasa

The four conferences attracted many Bahá'ís and guests. One was solely on the peace statement; another, held in Makala under the trees where the local Spiritual Assembly meets, attracted area officials.

Public discussion on world peace, Bandundu, November 17, 1986

90 people took part in a conference and discussion on world peace from a Bahá'í perspective.

ZIMBABWE


The Child Education Conference, held at the Bahá'í Institute, was attended by 80 members of 27 communities. Speakers from government ministries and UNICEF addressed the meetings, and radio stations recorded parts of the programs.

Peace statement extracts published in widely circulated newspaper

One page of extracts from “The Promise of World Peace” appeared in The Sunday Mail prior to a conference held in September 1986, when heads of state and leaders from 100 countries were in Harare.

Vocalist Red Grammer, a member of the well-known folk trio, the Light- lighters, has the spotlight to himself during the International Peace Conference in San Francisco sponsored by the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly.
Western Samoa

Portrait of the Malietoais is unveiled

The following article was written by Dr. A.K. Furudi of Pago Pago, American Samoa.

On May 24, the Bahá'ís of Samoa arranged a special service at the House of Worship to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the independence of Western Samoa.

Attending the service were the Head of State, His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II; the Prime Minister, Mr. Kolone Va'ai; government officials, some heads of churches, members of the diplomatic corps, and many people of various races and religions.

Afterward, everyone was invited to the Ancillary Building where refreshments were offered. The building was decorated with lovely flowers and green leaves. In one corner stood a golden frame, veiled and surrounded by more flowers. It was felt by many that the flowers whispered to one another, “Soon all the eyes will forget our beauty and shall turn to the greater Beauty.”

The hall was crowded with people, many without places to sit, when suddenly a quiet person, with utmost courtesy, approached the veiled frame and was introduced by Counsellor Suhayl Alá’í as Mr. Duffy Sheridan, a talented person in the fields of art and painting.

The hall became pin-drop quiet as Mr. Sheridan removed the veil to reveal a majestic portrait of His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II. As soon as the portrait was seen, the audience became so excited and amazed that there was much wild applause, shouting and stamping of feet.

His Highness was so happy and surprised that he enthusiastically took Mr. Sheridan’s hands in his and greeted him and his family. When the excitement settled, His Highness asked Dr. Asi Faletose to speak in response to this special occasion. Dr. Faletose expressed the extreme pleasure of His Highness for the presentation of the beautiful portrait, and also his pleasure with the special service honoring the country’s independence. He pointed out that His Highness, “who is one of you,” was deeply moved by this noble act of remembrance by the Bahá’ís which he said would be remembered forever.

Mr. Sheridan, who pioneered with his family for seven years in the Falkland Islands, produced a series of paintings in that country which was exhibited in London and throughout the U.S. That exhibit also included a portrait of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that now hangs in the Deanery of Westminster Abbey. Another of his portraits of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was presented several years ago to the U.S. International Goals Committee, which obtained permission to duplicate and distribute it to help deputize pioneers around the world.

Our dear Duffy and his family are presently pioneers to Western Samoa, and we wish them all the good things in their pioneering post.

In the end, I am grateful to Mrs. Joann Marian for helping me in the compilation of this article.—Dr. A.K. Furudi
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Arc on Mount Carmel to be completed

To the Followers of Bahá’u’lláh throughout the world
Beloved Friends,

Nigh on one hundred years ago, Bahá’u’lláh walked on God’s Holy Mountain and revealed the Tablet of Carmel, the Charter of the World Centre of His Faith, calling into being the metropolis of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Through decades of oppression and expansion, persecution and emancipation, His followers have successfully labored to carry His message to the remotest regions of the earth, to erect the structure of His Administrative Order, and to proclaim to mankind the divinely-prescribed cure for all its ills. In the past eight years the agonies suffered by His lovers in Iran have awakened the interest of a slumbering world and have brought His Faith to the center of human attention.

On this same Mount Carmel ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, with infinite pains, raised the Mausoleum of the Báb on the spot chosen by His Father, and laid to rest within its heart the sacred remains of the Prophet Herald of the Faith, establishing a Spiritual Centre of immeasurable significance.

In accordance with the same divine command, Shoghi Effendi embellished the Shrine with an exquisite shell and then, under its protecting wing, began the construction of the Administrative Centre of the Faith, to comprise five buildings in a harmonious style of architecture, standing on a far-flung Arc centering on the Monuments of the Greatest Holy Leaf, her Mother and Brother.

The first of these five buildings, the International Archives, was completed in the beloved Guardian’s lifetime. The second, the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, now stands at the apex of the Arc. Plans for the remaining three were prepared in fulfillment of a goal of the Seven Year Plan, and are now being detailed.

As indicated in our letter of April 30, 1987, the way is now open for the Bahá’í world to erect the remaining buildings of its Administrative Centre, and we must without delay stride forward resolutely on this path.

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

• The Terraces of the Shrine of the Báb. In His plans for the development of Mount Carmel, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá envisaged 19 monumental terraces from the foot of the mountain to its crest, nine leading to the terrace on which the Shrine of the Báb itself stands, and nine above it. These plans were often referred to by Shoghi Effendi, and he completed in preliminary form the nine terraces constituting the approach to the Shrine from the central avenue of the former German Templar Colony.

• The International Teaching Centre will be the seat of that institution which is specifically invested with the twin functions of the protection and propagation of the Cause of God. The institution itself, referred to by the beloved Guardian in his writings, was established in June 1973, bringing to fruition the work of the Hands of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land and providing for the extension into the future of functions with which that body had been endowed.

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

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

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

It is impossible at this stage to give an accurate estimate of the cost of these projects. All that we can now say is that in the immediate future two objectives have to be met: to accumulate rapidly a reserve of $50 million on which plans for the construction can realistically begin to be implemented, and to provide an income of between $20 million and $25 million for the Bahá’í International Fund for each of the next 10 years. As the work proceeds, contracts are signed and costs can be accurately determined, further information will be announced.

The great work of constructing the terraces, landscaping their surroundings, and erecting the remaining buildings of the Arc will bring into being a vastly augmented World Cen-
A model of the Arc on Mount Carmel. Also to be constructed is the Centre for the International Teaching Centre. Also to be constructed is the Centre for the International Baha'i Library (left) and the International Archives is to be extended westward to provide accommodation for the central office of the Archives.

tre structure which will be capable of meeting the challenges of coming centuries and of the tremendous growth of the Baha'i community which the beloved Guardian has told us to expect.

Already we see the effect of the spiritual energies which the completion of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice has released, and the new impulse this has given to the advancement of the Faith. Who can gauge what transformations will be effected as a result of the completion of each successive stage of this great enterprise? The Faith advances, not at a uniform rate of growth, but in vast surges, precipitated by the alternation of crisis and victory.

In a passage written on July 18, 1953, in the early months of the Ten Year Crusade, Shoghi Effendi, referring to the vital need to ensure through the teaching work a “steady flow” of “fresh recruits to the slowly yet steadily advancing army of the Lord of Hosts,” stated that this flow would “presage and hasten the advent of the day which, as prophesied by ‘Abdu’l-Baha, will witness the entry by troops of peoples of diverse nations and races into the Baha'i world.”

This day the Baha'i world has already seen in Africa, the Pacific, in Asia and in Latin America, and this process of entry by troops must, in the present plan, be augmented and spread to other countries for, as the Guardian stated in this same letter, it “will be the prelude to that long-awaited hour when a mass conversion on the part of these same nations and races, and as a direct result of a chain of events, momentous and possibly catastrophic in nature, and which cannot as yet be even dimly visualized, will suddenly revolutionize the fortunes of the Faith, derange the equilibrium of the world, and reinforce a thousandfold the numerical strength as well as the material power and the spiritual authority of the Faith of Baha'u'llah.” This is the time for which we must now prepare ourselves; this is the hour whose coming it is our task to hasten.

At this climacteric of human history, we are called upon to rise up in sacrificial endeavor, our eyes on the awe-inspiring responsibilities which such developments will place upon Baha'i institutions and individual believers in every land, and our hearts filled with unshakeable confidence in the guiding Hand of the Founder of our Faith. That our Beloved Lord will arouse His followers in every land to a mighty united effort is our ardent prayer at the Sacred Threshold.

With loving Baha'i greetings,

The Universal House of Justice
August 31, 1987
Canada

French-Canadians meet to discuss Plan

Responding to the call of their national institution, about 60 Bahá'ís from all parts of French Canada came together June 12-14 in Montreal to explore in depth the two themes put forth by the National Spiritual Assembly: "The Experience of Being a Bahá'í in Quebec: A Bahá'í Perspective" and "The Challenge of Teaching the Faith and Building a Bahá'í Community in Quebec."

The gathering was blessed by the presence of two of the Hands of the Cause of God, John Robarts and Dr. 'Ali Muhammad Varqá, who spoke with the friends assembled at the Bahá'í Shrine during the two evenings of the conference.

Dr. Varqá explained that it had been possible to achieve the goals of the Ten Year Crusade after the death of the Guardian, when the destiny of the Faith rested on the shoulders of the 27 Hands of the Cause, who were not infallible, because they had committed themselves to the infallible Plan of Shoghi Effendi. He encouraged the friends to study the Tablets of the Divine Plan, written by 'Abdu'l-Bahá after His visit to Canada in 1912, and in particular the eighth Tablet which sets out the conditions Canadian Bahá'ís must fulfill in order to be established on the Throne of Glory.

Mr. Robarts spent some precious moments recalling happy memories of 1948 when he was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada whose meetings were held from time to time in the Maxwell home (now the Bahá'í Shrine), and were always followed by a Sunday evening fireside in the very room in which the conference was being held. As Dr. Varqá did, he reminded the friends of their priceless bounty in having this blessed place, the only authentic shrine in North America followed by the presence and prayers of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Present in spirit at the gathering was the first Bahá'í child of Montreal, Mary Maxwell (the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum) who, in a cable, appealed to the believers in Quebec to arise and vindicate the unique position of the first place in which the Faith was established in Canada, in 1902. She recalled the great love that her mother, May Maxwell, had for the French-speaking people and her wish to see the French-Canadians embrace and serve the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. She mentioned the rapid expansion of this process over the past 30 years which witnessed the remarkable services performed by French-Canadians all over the world, as well as the large amount of teaching activity that has resulted in increased numbers of Bahá'ís in Quebec.

The National Spiritual Assembly was represented by its chairman, Dr. William Hatcher; its secretary, Dr. Hossain Danesh; and Ann Wilson.

Bringing with him the loving greetings of the Bahá'ís in the Bahamas, whom he had just visited, Counsellor David Smith enhanced the spirit of the conference by speaking to everyone in a language that was simple, direct and permeated by a deep love for the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. Speaking of integration, Dr. Smith said that what we have to talk about now is unity in diversity, and that if we live a Bahá'í life and work to achieve the goals we have set for ourselves, we will become "integrated." He added that this process of integration is not necessarily pleasant or comfortable, but that we must learn to detach ourselves from the things of this world and to become more attached to the things that are of God. This, he said, is the example of the martyrs, called upon to detach himself from his personal opinions and be willing to give his life for his fellow-believers. We must pray, he said, to become "agents of unity."

Auxiliary Board member Elizabeth Wright spoke about the need to make a connection between integration and teaching, and that integration is only a process, with unity the magnet that attracts the hearts. She explained that the Bahá'í administration is the means chosen by Bahá'u'lláh to enable each individual to take the development of the Faith into his own hands.

Dr. A.M. Ghadirian said that the 20 years he had spent in Quebec had made him a French-Canadian in heart and spirit, and that he was with us in our sorrow and our joy. According to him, this conference was the answer to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's prayers during His visit to Quebec in 1912. Dr. Ghadirian said it takes courage to say the things that are on our minds, and maturity to listen to them.

To stimulate consultation, the National Assembly had invited some French-speaking Bahá'ís to take part in panels and talk about the themes mentioned earlier. They all carried out their tasks to the best of their ability, some spontaneously, others offering the fruits of mature reflection. After one of these presentations, Mrs. Robarts said to one of the participants how much she and her family had prayed for this moment to arrive.

Another highlight of the conference was a presentation by André Bergeron on three Bahá'ís who walked on Quebec soil: Louis Bourgeois, architect of the House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois; and the Hands of the Cause of God William Sutherland Maxwell and Siegfried Schopflocher, who are buried side by side in the Mount Royal Cemetery in Montreal.
The passing of Thornton Chase, the first American Bahá’í, took place on September 30, 1912. It was totally unexpected. Mr. Chase, age 65, had had a few health problems previously, but they were not severe. He was a large man—six feet two inches tall and weighing more than 260 pounds—and his weight had sapped some of his energy. He also had persistent bowel difficulties for 20 years, which necessitated an operation during the summer of 1911. By mid-1912 Mr. Chase was again working full-time, and was active in giving Bahá’í talks whenever he could and tending his home in Los Angeles.

In early September 1912 he fell ill while traveling for his company, presumably from a bout of his bowel troubles. Two brief hospitalizations were necessary.1 After he returned to Los Angeles, his condition suddenly worsened. On September 26 he was rushed to Angelus Hospital and immediately scheduled for surgery. Mr. Chase hurriedly wrote to John Bosch, one of his closest Bahá’í friends:

"They have just brought me to the hospital and are going to operate on me for obstruction of the bowels in about an hour. It is a very serious operation and will tie me up here for two weeks or more. Please let Abdul Baha know."2

The obstruction, probably a cancer, was not treated successfully; as a result, Thornton suffered five days of great pain. But even then he was always thinking of others; he had his secretary send to John Bosch a check for $50 to repay a debt he owed him.

Informing ‘Abdu’l-Bahá of Thornton’s condition proved difficult because He was on a train, traveling across Colorado and Utah en route to California. Finally, on September 28, probably in Salt Lake City, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was contacted. He cabled to Mr. Chase that He was coming west and probably in Utah was contacted. He cabled to Mr. Chase that He was coming west and that "if it were God’s will," He would see him soon.3

On Sunday, September 29, the Bahá’ís in Los Angeles sent telegrams to Bahá’ís all over the West Coast asking for prayers for Mr. Chase’s recovery. On Monday morning he was “very low,” but rallied later that day. In the evening, many of the Bahá’ís from greater Los Angeles gathered at Thornton’s house to pray for him: "The sun had set when a little group of earnest souls, twenty in all, from various parts of Los Angeles, from Pasadena, Tropico and Glendale, assembled in silence on a street corner amid the bustle and din of the metropolis, to pray for the restoration of their brother to physical health and strength.

"About seven o’clock we reached the home and had hardly entered before the telephone rang and we were informed that Mr. Chase had just passed away. Every head was bowed as Mr. Rice-Wray hung up the receiver and said ‘Friends, he has gone.’ Miss Wise arose and read the prayer for the departed, from the little prayer book, and Mr. Rice-Wray read two or three selections from Hidden Words, also another of which Mr. Chase was fond and which he had asked his wife to repeat to him often during his illness:

"‘With patience, then, the course of duty run.

‘‘God never does, nor suffers to be done

‘‘But that which you would do, if you could see

‘‘The end of all events as well as He.’

‘Mrs. Rice-Wray went to the piano and the friends sang ‘Nearer, My God, to Thee.’ Mr. Hall recited a beautiful poem, ‘He is not dead; he is just away,’ and the friends departed, a great sadness upon each soul. We felt, indeed, that we had been in the presence of the Most High and had accompanied our brother as far as we could.”4

The American Bahá’í community was grief-stricken by Thornton Chase’s passing. Memorial gatherings were held in many places, and were annually repeated for many years after his death. Star of the West, the American Bahá’í community’s monthly magazine at that time, contains more descriptions of Thornton Chase’s life and death, and of memorial services in his
honor, than it does for any other American Bahá'í.

In a sense, the American Bahá'ís' first tribute to Thornton Chase came before he died, at the annual convention of Bahá'í Temple Unity on Saturday, April 28, 1912. The convention resolved to send a greeting "to Mr. Thornton Chase, now in Los Angeles, but whose spirit is manifest by the effect of his early teaching and devotion, all present rising in recognition." In this way, the American Bahá'í community acknowledged his services to it while he was still alive.

After Mr. Chase's death, several tributes were published. The Rev. Dr. David Buchanan, who became a Bahá'í as a result of Thornton's teaching efforts, wrote:

"Thornton Chase was a noble-minded and large-hearted man. He understood the spiritual meaning of the Bahá'í life and had attained a height in his own experience reached by few. Everyone loved him because he was a supremely lovable man. He knew Abdu-Bahá as but few knew him, and to have passed away on the eve of the arrival of the one he loved so much is one of the mysteries we can never solve. Thornton Chase had a mind deeply spiritual as well as philosophical and had a profound grasp of the Bahá'í movement."

One of Mr. Chase's closest friends, Arthur Agnew, offered a particularly moving eulogy:

"He was a man of great loving character, with a heart that drew to him warm friends and a love which seemed to reach out, surround and envelop you.

"On friends; when we consider thy loving heart, we do not feel that thou art separated from us. It seems that we should more naturally write to thee than of thee. Continue thou thine efforts for the good of the souls of men an hundredfold now that thou art free in the realms of might and power. Be nearer to the hearts of those in trouble and distress and cease not from thy labors until all the souls of men have come into Peace and Love, and mayest thou always be in the fullness of happiness and joy in nearness to thy Lord and in His good will and pleasure."

Yet the greatest tribute of all was paid to Thornton Chase by the One whom he loved so much, 'Abdu'l-Bahá. On September 30, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was on a train to San Francisco; presumably, He learned of Thornton's death the next morning, after His arrival. In His first public appearance, on October 4—apparently He was exhausted from His long trip and rested in seclusion for several days—He reflected on the considerable difficulties Mr. Chase had experienced during the last few years of his life, and the meaning of his sudden and seemingly premature death:

"This revered personage was the first Bahá'í in America. He served the Cause faithfully and his services will ever be remembered throughout future ages and cycles. He has written many books in this Cause and they will be studied carefully by the coming genera-
sions. He traveled once to Acca and there we associated with each other for several days. Indeed he became free from the troubles of this world. No matter how long he might have remained here, he would have met nothing else but trouble. The purpose of life is to get certain results; that is, the life of man must bring forth certain fruitage. It does not depend upon the length of the life. As soon as the life is crowned with fruition then it is completed, although that person may have a short life. Praise be to God! the tree of Mr. Chase’s life brought forth fruit. It gave complete fruit, therefore he is free. He attained eternal rest. He is now in the presence of BAHÁ’-O’LLAH."  

Apparently, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá also told the Bahá’ís in San Francisco that Thornton Chase’s grave should be visited annually.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá had not intended, when He planned His trip to the West Coast, to visit any places outside the San Francisco Bay area, because He was greatly tired from His demanding schedule of appearances and talks. But Thornton’s death changed His plans. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had already missed the funeral, a lovely service held on October 4 and followed by burial in Inglewood Cemetery. Nevertheless, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá decided to pay His respects to the first American Bahá’í. As He later explained to the Bahá’ís in Oakland, "I would not have gone to Los Angeles had it not been to visit the tomb of Mr. Thornton Chase." ‘Abdu’l-Bahá left San Francisco for Los Angeles on Friday, October 18, visited Thornton’s grave the following day, then took a train back to San Francisco on Monday, October 21.

Twenty-five Bahá’ís accompanied ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to Thornton Chase’s grave. According to His secretary, Mahmúd-i-Zarqání, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá walked straight to the site without asking its whereabouts. He praised the beauty and verdure of the cemetery, then adorned the grave with flowers "with a love and affection which struck the bystanders with astonishment." After chanting a tablet of visitation, He revealed a prayer about Mr. Chase:

"O my God! O my God! Verily, this is a servant of Thine, who did believe on Thee and in Thy signs; verily he hearkened to Thy summons, turned to Thy Kingdom, humbled himself at Thy holy threshold, was possessed of a contrite heart, arose to serve Thy Cause, to spread Thy fragrances, to promote Thy word, and to expound Thy wisdom.

"Verily he guided the people to Thine ancient pathway, and led them to Thy way of rectitude. Verily he held the chalice of guidance in his right hand and gave unto those athirst to drink of the cup of Thy favor. He presented himself at Thy lofty threshold, where he laid his brow on the fragrant soil of Thy garden and circumambulated Thy all-glorious and sublime abode, the traces of which are widespread and the fragrances of whose loyalty are sensed everywhere. Later he returned to these vast and extensive countries and proclaimed Thy name amongst the people, until his respira-
Pictured are some of the more than 350 Bahá'ís and their guests who attended the annual Thornton Chase memorial service held Sunday, October 3, 1965, in California's Inglewood Park Cemetery.

Abdu'l-Bahá then offered a eulogy in which He praised Thornton Chase as patient and long-suffering. He said Mr. Chase had an "illuminated" heart and that he had "witnessed the lights of the Kingdom of ABHA, and he was guided by the lights of Guidance." He reiterated the importance of visiting Thornton's grave and urged the friends to bring flowers there "on my behalf." He stressed that "the traces of this personage will ever shine," and that people "will honor this grave." He even added that the Bahá'ís must have the "utmost consideration for the members of his (Thornton's) family." Finally, He kissed the gravestone.

Abdu'l-Bahá gave two talks in Los Angeles in which Thornton Chase's passing was mentioned. At the second, He urged the Bahá'ís to commemorate Mr. Chase's death each year not only by visiting his grave but by spreading "a feast for the poor and giving charity to those deprived." He also met privately with Mr. Chase's widow, Eleanor. He repeated to her many of His previous statements about Thornton—for example, He again said that Thornton's "value is not known, but will be in the future"—and He sought to comfort her:

"I was exceedingly sad and heartbroken when I heard of the departure of Mr. Chase, for I loved him very much. . . . Be not sad or grieved. Do not sorrow, for no man in this world is permanent. As there was a day for him to come, there is a day for him to leave. . . . Mr. Chase was heavenly. Mr. Chase was spiritual. Mr. Chase was radiant. You have not lost him. At most, there is now a temporary separation between you. In the Kingdom there will be a meeting. It is precisely like taking a journey. You will meet him. Do not sorrow. . . . Certain souls come and believe, and leave behind them an eternal light or radiance, which is the equivalent to a candle that never goes out. . . . You should be
Flowers adorn the resting place of Thornton Chase following one of the annual services in his memory.

comforted. Thus may the spirit of Mr. Chase be pleased with your patience and forbearance. If you were sad, he would be sad, and you would not want to make him sad, too." 15

Thornton Chase's value can best be understood when one considers the importance of the qualities he exemplified. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had named him thabíbit, or "steadfast," because of the great depth of his faith and devotion to Bahá'u'lláh. A statement by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's sister, Bahíyyih Khánum, offers an insight into the importance of this title:

"Steadfastness is a treasure that makes a man so rich as to have no need of the world or any person or any thing that is therein. Constancy is a special joy, that leads us mortals on to lofty heights, great progress, and the winning of the perfections of Heaven. All praise be to the Beloved's holy court, for granting this most wondrous grace to His faithful people, and to His favored ones, this best of gifts." 16

Bahá'u'lláh, too, offers a glimpse into the nature of Thornton's spiritual achievement, and the ecstasy that it brought to him, when He describes God's call to the attracted souls and its transforming power:

"Give ear unto that which the Spirit imparteth unto thee in the days of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting, that His Call may attract thee to the Summit of transcendent glory and draw thee nigh unto the Station where thou shalt behold thine entire being set ablaze with the fire of the love of God in such wise that neither the ascendency of the rulers nor the whisperings of their vassals can quench it, and thou wilt arise amidst the peoples of the world to celebrate the praise of thy Lord, the Possessor of Names. This is that which well beseemeth thee in this Day." 17

In this passage Bahá'u'lláh might just as easily be describing Thornton Chase, whose being was indeed "set ablaze with the fire of the love of God," and who did indeed "arise...o celebrate the praise" of his Lord. It is in this spiritual sense that Thornton Chase was indeed the Occident's first Bahá'í, and a beacon guiding future generations in their own odysseys-to learn the mysteries of the love of God.

NOTES
2. Thornton Chase to John Bosch, September 26, 1912.
4. Ibid.
11. Ibid., p. 15.
12. Ibid., p. 15.
13. Ibid., p. 392.
15. "Words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Mrs. Thornton Chase, at Hotel Lankershim, Los Angeles, California, October 19, 1912," TS, copy in author's personal papers.
16. Bahá'í'í Khánúm, in Bahá'í'í Khánum, the Greatest Holy Leaf: A compilation from Bahá'í'í sacred texts and writings of the Guardian of the Faith and Bahá'í'í Khánum's own letters, comp. Research Department of the Bahá'í World Centre (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1982), p. 148.

A tribute to Thornton Chase by Robert H. Stockman follows
Tribute to Thornton Chase

His services 'will ever be remembered'

'Abdu'l-Bahá's praise of Thornton Chase (1847-1912) makes it clear that he is one of the most significant figures in American Bahá'í history. In addition to giving him the title Ṯabbát ('steadfast')—one of the most significant spiritual titles to which a Bahá'í can attain—'Abdu'l-Bahá designated Mr. Chase's grave a place of pilgrimage, revealed a Tablet of visitation for him, and commanded that his passing be commemorated annually. Few, if any, Bahá'ís in the world, aside from the Central Figures themselves, have received all three of these honors.

'Abdu'l-Bahá said Mr. Chase's "worth" at present "is not known," but "will be inestimably clear" in the future. He added that Mr. Chase's services "will ever be remembered," that his books "will be studied carefully by the coming generations," and that Thornton Chase's station in the future "will be known." 'Abdu'l-Bahá apparently did not designate Thornton Chase a Hand of the Cause of God, but His other statements make it clear that Mr. Chase attained to an exceptionally high spiritual station.

One is at a loss to think of another American Bahá'í of Thornton Chase's generation who possessed his capacities. He was, first of all, an exceptionally even-tempered and mild-mannered man. He scrupulously avoided arguing with others, and always sought to make love, tolerance, kindness and mutual respect the dominant mood in any meeting of Bahá'ís. His capacity to love anyone, especially those who disagreed with him, is repeatedly demonstrated in his words and actions.

No one compares with him in the development of American Bahá'í administration from 1900-1912. He is perhaps the only person before 1912 who had a thorough understanding of the Bahá'í concept of consultation. His service as chairman of the Chicago House of Spirituality, the Bahá'í governing council for that city, probably accounts in part for the great success of that institution, the only well-functioning Bahá'í consultative body in the western world during Mr. Chase's lifetime.

Records make it clear that Mr. Chase was the prime mover behind many of the House's activities. He suggested most of the activities that it initiated and then wrote the letters to others or did the negotiating necessary for them to be carried through to a conclusion. All of this suggests that Mr. Chase deserves the title of "premier American Bahá'í administrator of the Heroic Age."

Mr. Chase's essays and letters, which he meticulously preserved and, in some cases, annotated and edited for future generations, also demonstrate his great capacity. At a time when Bahá'í literature was scarce, Mr. Chase probably had a more complete understanding of the Bahá'í teachings than any other Westerner. He had read—indeed, he edited for publication—most of the works that were available in English at the time. His book, The Bahá'í Revelation, was the only substantial work on the Faith written by an American before 1912.

Mr. Chase's job necessitated a three-or four-month trip each year across much of the United States. He spent nearly every evening on those trips speaking at Bahá'í meetings. As such, he was probably the most traveled American Bahá'í—only Isabella Brittingham can compare. In a day before the American Bahá'ís had a national administration and therefore a sense of belonging to a national community, Mr. Chase's traveling made him by far the most widely known American Bahá'í on the continent.

Most remarkable of all was Mr. Chase's profound grasp of the spiritual essence of the Faith, which, like that of all religions, lies in the individual's efforts to worship God and the struggle to know himself. Mr. Chase understood that the core of the Bahá'í Faith, as Shoghi Effendi has noted, is mystical. The Bahá'í Revelation is the only significant contribution to mystical literature penned by an American Bahá'í to date. Perhaps Mr. Chase deserves the title "premier American Bahá'í mystic" as well.

Thornton Chase underwent 47 years of preparation before accepting Bahá'u'lláh. This part of his life has never been known in more detail than a few paragraphs. But by remarkable fortune, quite a large quantity of documents in non-Bahá'í archives describes those years. As a result, a nearly complete spiritual portrait of the man can be reconstructed for most of his life. Significant events of his spiritual life include: a vision that he had in 1873 or 1874; religious poetry written while he was living in Colorado during 1876-88; four years of membership in the Swedenborgian church, a Christian group that seeks a spiritual and symbolic understanding of the Bible; and 20 years of reading books on all the religions of the world, during which time he came to believe that God was preparing him for some great work.

Central to Mr. Chase's spiritual development was his fascination with the concept of love, one which dominated his poetry, essays, books and letters, and ultimately served as the integrative principle in his understanding of the nature of one's relationship to God and the world. Thornton Chase's life contained fierce tests and great spiritual victories. It reveals him as a shining example to future generations of how to live, to love, and to worship one's Creator.
Pasadena hosts Children’s Conference

“Stepping Stones to Peace” was the theme of the first annual Children’s Conference held April 18 at the Bahá’í Center in Pasadena, California. The event was sponsored by the Bahá’ís of Pasadena at the request of the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears.

The idea for the conference sprang from a desire to invite Mr. Sears to visit the William Sears Bahá’í School in Pasadena, which was named in his honor 15 years ago. Mr. Sears said he would love to visit the school if a children’s conference could be held.

The seed having been planted, the Sears Bahá’í School Council formed a planning committee to begin preparing such an event.

With the San Francisco peace conference still fresh in everyone’s mind, the theme of “peace” evolved. The phrase “Stepping Stones to Peace” came from the peace booklet published by the Bahá’í Publishing Trust of Canada.

The main goal of the conference was to help children understand their role in achieving and maintaining world peace by giving them practical tools and ideas to develop in their day-to-day lives.

Every effort was made to involve the children at the Sears School in preparing for the conference. They participated by designing the conference logo, coloring and making more than 1,000 buttons, assembling 800 workbooks to be used by attendees, creating drawings about peace, preparing speeches, and giving dance and musical presentations.

Among the children featured in the program were Vince Fazzi, who wrote and recited a “Poem to Peace,” and Laleh Shahriaree, who gave a speech entitled “Feelings on Music” and performed two classical selections on the piano.

Prayers for peace were recited in six languages: Spanish by Zaynab Cortez; Fijian (Mary Moody); Persian (Samah Sohrabi); Dutch (Leili Farhangi); English (Michael Perkins); and Arabic (Sarah Sohrabi).

Samira Anayati presented a speech on peace, the Los Angeles Bahá’í Youth Workshop performed several dance selections, and the keynote speaker, 10-year-old Nima Masroori, delivered the same memorable speech he had recited at the International Peace Conference in San Francisco last August.

The program, hosted by Leisa Sinclair, also included performances by “Eyes” (Jamie Heath and Tony Sinclair), and Leslie & Kelly who were joined in their finale by Sabrina Brittan, Brienna Cramer, Brandon Moore, Deanna and Ramona Morgan, Aziza Primous, Michelle Ruiz, Nazanin Saffaie, Justin White and many enthusiastic children from the audience.

Of the 998 persons who registered for the conference, 509 were children ages 15 and under.

Among the workshops was “Spiritual Parenting” hosted by Sherry Masroori, Lisa Janti and Jim and Lee Haslip for children ages 0-3 years.

A special area coordinated by Taya Brittain was prepared so that parents could take part in the adult class while keeping their “little ones” entertained (a very successful concept).

Children ages four to 15 years took part in workshops that helped them to “Define Peace” and to discuss “Barriers to Peace,” “What People You Know Say About Peace,” and “Step-
Above: 'How do you do that?' Trumpeter John (Dizzy) Gillespie never fails to capture the interest of children by demonstrating his rather unique embouchure, as he does here for youngsters at the first 'Stepping Stones to Peace' conference in Pasadena, California. Seated next to Mr. Gillespie is Judge Dorothy W. Nelson, treasurer of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly. Right: Turnabout is fair play. One of the more than 500 children at the conference does an impromptu impression of Mr. Gillespie.

As part of their classroom activities, children signed "peace scrolls" that were presented to representatives of the Universal House of Justice, the National Spiritual Assembly, the Spiritual Assembly of Pasadena, the mayor of Pasadena, President Reagan, Gov. George Deukmejian of California, the Pasadena chapter of UNICEF, the children of the Williams Sears School, and, of course, the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears and his wife, Marguerite.

The youngsters also signed "peace messages" that were attached to more than 500 balloons and released in the afternoon from the courtyard of the Pasadena Bahá'í Center. Several responses have been received and forwarded to the children who sent them.

As a result of requests from many of the children at the conference, a Speech Club and Friendship Club have been formed. (For information, write to P.O. Box 844, Sierra Madre, CA 91204.)

Mr. Sears addressed the conference several times during the day and visited the children's classrooms, becoming better acquainted and creating a special, personal bond with his "grandchildren."

A surprise guest was renowned jazz trumpeter John (Dizzy) Gillespie who captivated the children while sharing his love and his optimism for peace and unity.

To add to these already exciting events, local television stations KCBS, KTLA and KNBC sent news reporters to cover the conference. KCBS and KTLA broadcast parts of their interviews on the evening news, specifically mentioning the Faith and its efforts to educate children toward peace.

The excitement didn't end with the conference. As a follow-up to the day-long program, a public meeting was hosted that evening by Mr. and Mrs. Sears.

Musical entertainment for that program was provided by John Barnes, Marva King, Jerry and Tony Sinclair, Michelle Dickey, and the Bahá'í Youth Workshop.

As Mr. Sears said, "It was a two-day conference in one day."

Plans for the second annual Children's Conference, to be held in the spring of 1988, are under way. It promises to be even bigger than the first.

Musicians, artists, children wishing to perform, present speeches, etc., may send tapes and other materials for consideration to "Stepping Stones to Peace," P.O. Box 844, Sierra Madre, CA 91204.

The Hand of the Cause of God William Sears speaks to his 'grandchildren' during the first 'Stepping Stones to Peace' Conference at the Pasadena, California, Bahá'í Center.
Bolivia

Teaching accelerates in Chaco area

The dispersed and unorganized ranching communities of the largely inhospitable Bolivian panhandle have long been a stronghold for the century-old Franciscan missions, established in the forefront of colonization efforts that combined Indian wars and extermination campaigns against the indigenous Guarani population. Following the dreadful Chaco War of the '30s between Bolivia and Paraguay, the region left a seared memory in the consciousness of Bolivians as a desolate, hellish place.

Our recent efforts to reopen to the Cause of God the Bolivian Chaco, a vast, savannah-like region bordering on northwestern Argentina and Paraguay, more than 15 years after Counsellor Hooper Dunbar's seminal teaching efforts, are beginning to offer hints of promise to the pioneers here after two years of patience and determination.

The pioneering approach in the area was established by Alonzo and Cindy Roat Wind when they were contracted during the first half of 1985 by an international health and development agency to coordinate a primary health care project. The search for effective local counterpart agencies free from governmental intervention led to the exchange of a letter of intent of governmental interest.

Government officials have easily accepted the introduction of Bahá'í beliefs into events such as the inauguration of a health resource training center, where a number of attendees asked for Bahá'í prayers instead of the traditional Catholic invocation.

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By early 1987 important project funding was found for FUNDESIB's active participation in the Chaco Development Project, and a more assertive effort was begun to promote Bahá'í values and principles through project activities. More Bahá'ís have begun to visit and stay in the zone in recent months, so that presently, out of a combined project staff of 25, seven are Bahá'ís.

A goal was set to promote an ongoing cross-border exchange with Bahá'í communities of the Argentine northwest. As a result, interesting developments have taken place. Last November, when the Pope led a day of prayers for peace to honor the 750th anniversary of the birth of St. Francis of Assisi, seemingly drawing counsel from the peace message of the Universal House of Justice, the parish priest of Villa Montes, a young Franciscan from Santa Cruz, Bolivia, and the Foundation for the Integral Development of Bolivia (FUNDESIB), founded by Counsellor Eloy Anello and former Counsellor Athos Costas.

During the first year and a half the Winds taught indirectly and by example, taking care not to mix the professional requirements of the mainstream agency with Bahá'í teaching, and so perhaps confuse the two in people's minds. Here and there people were found who had first heard the Faith mentioned by American pioneer Rizi Sunshine some 20 years ago in Tarija. These people remained devoted to her memory and were receptive to the Cause even though they had heard nothing from the Bahá'ís for a generation or more.

Meetings have been held at the Winds' home, with the result that a number of youth and young adults have become interested in the Faith including several reporters and technicians from the local television station. Special attention has been given to two groups: (1) non-Bahá'í project employees, so that they too could serve as examples in the region; and (2) local clergy, who have been the particular interest of Alonzo.

Within the first group, two young professionals have professed their faith in Bahá'u'lláh, with one agronomist prepared to declare his faith openly, mostly as a result of loving attention from Alex Blake, an American who is in Bolivia on a youth year of service. The nuns and priests have shown sincerity and openness to the principles of the Faith, and one priest, at the Feast of the Virgin del Carmen, dedicated his sermon to the importance of humanity reaffirming the Covenant of Mount Carmel with God, highlighting the importance this has had for all the religions.

Meanwhile, Bahá'í videos are getting air time on local television including locally-produced proclamation materials, while literature is being widely distributed. Government officials have easily accepted the introduction of Bahá'í beliefs into events such as the inauguration of a health resource training center, where a number of attendees asked for Bahá'í prayers instead of the traditional Catholic invocation.

This article about teaching in the Chaco area of Bolivia was written by Alonzo Wind, an Auxiliary Board member from Santa Cruz.

12 October 1987/Bahá'í News
Baha’i beliefs into events such as the inauguration of a health resource training center, where a number of attendees asked for Baha’i prayers instead of the traditional Catholic invocation.

While not as dramatic in comparison with areas where mass teaching is taking place, an important opportunity has been created through the opening of a wedge in the traditionally resistant eastern lowlands of Bolivia, a strategically important area for the Cause of God in a country where 95 per cent of the Baha’is live in the densely populated highland plateaus and valleys. In addition, valuable experience is being gained by Baha’i development agencies in collaboration with a mainstream ecumenical international health agency which has become even more flexible after its directors learned that the noted development theorist, Dr. Farzam Arbab, was a Baha’i.

The combined project remains quite interested in attracting mature Baha’i youth with practical skills and abilities and a degree of proficiency in Spanish for a year of socio-economic development and teaching service in the region. More information about the Bolivia Chaco Project can be obtained by writing to Alonzo Wind, Casilla 4577, Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

Above: Bolivians give their undivided attention as a Baha’i teacher outlines some of the precepts of the Faith. Below: In rural Bolivia, simple dwellings are the rule. Here, a young woman, in open sandals, cape and traditional hat, poses in front of her thatch-roofed home.
Bahá'ís took part May 13-17 in the first Geneva International Fair for Books and the Press held at the Palexpo, next to the Geneva airport in Switzerland.

Twelve Bahá'í publishers from four continents were represented at a Bahá'í booth: the Bahá'í Publishing Trusts of Argentina, Belgium, India, Italy, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom and United States, as well as George Ronald from the U.K., Horizonte Verlag from Austria/Germany, Kalimat Press from the U.S., and Oneworld Press from Cyprus.

Total attendance was 83,000, at least 40,000 of whom visited the Bahá'í display. More than 3,500 pamphlets were given to visitors along with 400 copies of the peace statement by the Universal House of Justice; 500 copies of a special issue of the Swiss Bahá'í publication, *Pensee Bahá'í*, which deals with the International Year of Peace; and 400 copies of another issue of *Pensee Bahá'í* which was devoted to the famed Swiss scientist and Bahá'í, Dr. Auguste Forel.

More than 200 titles in eight languages and copies of the peace statement in 30 languages were displayed at the booth, which was decorated with flowers and included a large photograph of the House of Worship in India; 160 books were sold and orders were taken for even more.

During the opening ceremony, the official procession stopped at the Bahá'í stand while the president of the Fair introduced the Faith to the guests of honor and other dignitaries.

Several people expressed spontaneously their appreciation for the Bahá'í contributions toward world peace.

### Leeward Islands

The Bahá'í community of St. Eustatius in the Leeward Islands is engaged in creative radio programming and carries out an active children's program.

Monday through Friday, Bahá'í radio programs are broadcast in St. Eustatius for 15 minutes starting at 7:30 a.m. Tapes of the U.S. Bahá'í Publishing Trust's "Light of Bahá'u'lláh" are used as a series, with new beginnings and endings adapting them to St. Eustatius listeners. The "World Peace Song" from the "Loving Hands" tape is used as the theme song for the programs.

Local people have told the Bahá'ís that listening to the daily program really improves the quality of their day.

Meanwhile, the Bahá'í children's class has begun a series of "Community Appreciation" projects to honor various civic workers, helping the children to become more aware of the work of each and the kinds of jobs the children themselves might consider as they are growing up.

The first project honored the staff at a community hospital. The children made get-well cards for patients, using the healing prayer, "O God, refresh and gladden my spirit . . . ."

The children had a nurse describe her job and those of other hospital personnel, from cooks to ambulance drivers.

As a surprise, the children presented a poster they had made for the doctors and nurses which read, "Thank you for being here."
Alaska

The Honor Kempton Award, presented annually by the Bahá’í community of Alaska to an Alaskan distinguished for service to humanity, was given this year to Norman Nault, director of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe.

All nine members of the National Spiritual Assembly joined 116 other guests at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage to honor the recipient at a luncheon during which Tod Jones, chairman of the National Assembly, presented the award.

In opening the program, Mr. Nault asked a member of his native community to say the Lord’s Prayer in the Dena’ina language, known only to a few native speakers.

Entertainment included the Bahá’í musical group “Wildflower,” dancers from the East Indian community, and instrumental music.

A citation from the Alaska legislature honored Mr. Nault on his receiving the Honor Kempton Award, saying, “Norman Nault is an example that all Alaskans can learn from; a man who personifies the best in our people.”

Other groups represented at the luncheon included the Human Rights Commission, the Cook Inlet Native Association, and the Native Community.

Finland

A committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of Finland developed a study course for the religious education of Bahá’í children that has been approved for use in the public schools of Finland wherever three or more Bahá’í children are enrolled and where the course is requested by their parents.

Teachers of the course are appointed by the Bahá’í community and paid by the Central Board of Schools.

The Bahá’í community is profiting from a comprehensive law which came into force on August 1, 1985, allowing religious teaching to students who belong to other than those recognized religions taught heretofore.

At present, the Bahá’í course is being taught in three schools in Finland.

Sierra Leone

Local Bahá’ís in Yikandor, in the Pujehun District of Sierra Leone, work together to make mud bricks for their new Bahá’í primary school. Money for the project was contributed by Bahá’ís including the school children. The friends also supplied wood, stones, bricks and sand to help construct the building. Supplementary support was provided by the National Spiritual Assembly.

The Regional Bahá’í Center in Pujehun, Sierra Leone, which was dedicated last January. Present at the ceremony were the Paramount Chief of the area, a member of Parliament, the inspector of schools, and members of the Auxiliary Board.

The Netherlands

On June 26, the Dutch Bahá’í community officially opened the doors of “De Poort,” the conference building for the Bahá’í community of the Netherlands.

Among those present at the dedication ceremony were prominent local persons, members of the Continental Board of Counsellors, and members of the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Netherlands and neighboring countries.

The expressed hope of the National Assembly is that the conference center may develop into a center of Bahá’í scholarship and a beacon for seekers, not only for the area in which it is built but for the entire country and indeed the greater part of northwestern Europe.
Guatemala

Mrs. Raquel de Crezo (center), the First Lady of the Republic of Guatemala, receives a copy of the Universal House of Justice’s peace statement from Bahá’ís Parisa Nabila and Robert Porter, representing the National Spiritual Assembly of Guatemala.

New Zealand

The National Spiritual Assembly of New Zealand has established a Whare Wananga (School of Learning) for Maori Bahá’ís for the comprehensive study of the teachings and history of the Faith, and for the study of Maori culture and its relationship to the Bahá’í teachings.

The Whare Wananga, which started in June, is an intensive course of study held on a marae (a kind of retreat) at least twice a year in various parts of the country. Fifteen students are to make up each group, with specially invited tutors including some non-Bahá’ís.

Although the Whare Wananga is initially for the Maori believers, it will eventually be expanded to include others.

The National Assembly is considering the establishment of a similar forum of learning for Pacific Island Bahá’ís living in New Zealand.

Dominica

Mary Eugenia Charles, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica, receives a copy of the Universal House of Justice’s peace statement, ‘The Promise of World Peace.’

Hawaii

One hundred-thirty people including 85 non-Bahá’ís attended a conference on “The Role of Women in Peace” held last November 9 in South Kohala, Hawaii. The conference was sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of Hawaii’s International Year of Peace Committee.

Gladys Brandt, head regent of the University of Hawaii and a well-known Hawaiian personality, presented the keynote address, highlighting Bahá’í themes, before an attentive and appreciative audience.

Counsellor Gayle Morrison said the conference was a major breakthrough in efforts to involve the Bahá’í community of Hawaii with the non-Bahá’í public, especially the native Hawaiian people.

On the same day, the local Spiritual Assembly of Honolulu achieved another breakthrough as “The Promise of World Peace” was printed in the Sunday edition of the Advertiser Star Bulletin, which has a circulation of about 300,000.
Australia

"Transitions '87" was the theme of the fifth annual Family Farm Weekend sponsored last February 7-8 by the Kentish Bahá'í community of Tasmania.

The annual two-day event is directed toward helping rural families, Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í, make the transition from city to country lifestyles.

The focus this year was on "establishing a community," with a day-long series of workshops followed the next day by a Children's Farm Fun Day.

Attendance, which in past years has numbered more than 1,000, was down this year to 350. This was attributed in part to the absence of large outdoor displays and demonstrations which have been very popular in years past.


Prayers for unity and a special program of readings from the Sacred Scriptures of many religions began Sunday's Children's Farm Fun Day. The devotional opened with a prayer for mankind and closed with the singing of "Blessed Is the Spot" by 50 people of all ages and many nationalities.

The secretary of the "Transitions" committee noted that while attendance this year was the lowest ever, the intensity of the teaching was the best ever with many long conversations about the Faith: "We were there to teach the Faith," she said, "and many people went away with food for thought and books in hand."

Since a Personal Teaching Campaign was launched throughout Australia last March, 1,243 firesides have been held and 30 new enrollments are reported.

Three Bahá'í communities in Queensland, Australia, celebrated the anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb in May by giving an international dinner party for 150 people.

Bahá'í professional entertainers George and Louetta Karko performed, a talk was given, and various national dancers helped create a cultural atmosphere that caused guests to say they'd never before experienced such a wonderful spirit.

One woman was inspired to become a Bahá'í.

The first large Bahá'í-sponsored event ever held in the Burdekin region of Queensland, Australia, a fundraiser for a bicentennial hall for the town, was attended by about 600 people, among whom were a member of Parliament and other prominent persons. The Bahá'ís were praised for the spirit of unity generated by the event.

Spain

These Romani (Gypsy) Bahá'ís of Torrevieja, Spain, are pictured during their Naw-Rúz celebration last March.

Malagasy Republic

Intensive teaching was carried out last March in four areas of the Malagasy Republic. In each sector, meetings were sought with the highest public officials and, when obtained, the courtesy visits provided an occasion for the presentation of the peace statement.

Proclamation events included public lectures, exhibits, and library displays. Visitors to the exhibits numbered in the thousands, and several people were moved to embrace the Faith after visiting the exhibits or hearing public talks. In Miarinarivo, where 100 people heard a Bahá'í talk at a school, 20 youth were enrolled.

A deepening and consolidation program was launched March 23 by the National Spiritual Assembly with a call for volunteers to visit the new believers in each locality.

Visits to local authorities and prominent people, with weekend exhibits at three key places—the Regional University Center, the Alliance Francaise, and the Town Hall—were the key ingredients in a campaign held last January in Toliara and Fianarantsoa. Firesides, a talk for 150 college students, and informal meetings were also held.

There were six declarations during the first two weeks of the campaign.

New translation

The first translation of the prayer by the Báb, the Remover of Difficulties, into one of the languages of the Torres Strait Islands was made April 9. The language is Kala Lagaw Ya, used on one of the western islands; the translator is Ephraim Bani, a Torres Strait Islander by birth, well-educated with degrees in linguistics and anthropology and a recognized authority and translator of that language.
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The passing of the beloved Guardian

All those who were privileged to know the beloved Guardian Shoghi Effendi from the time of his childhood until his passing remember him as being incarnate with life; a dynamic, almost electric force seemed to radiate from him. He was always busy, restless, driving on to whatever goal he had set before his eyes. He was intense in all aspects of his nature: his phenomenal powers of concentration, his deep feelings of passionate attachment to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, his burning conscientiousness in carrying out his duties to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh as its appointed Guardian—these were all facets of the same wonderful nature which God endowed with those special qualities He wished to be uppermost in the one who was firmly to lay the administrative foundations of His Faith all over the world, and to plant the first ensigns of its victory in the four corners of the earth.

That the Cause of God has reached the point where it stands today is due to the self-sacrificing, constant, unspiring, truly herculean labors of its Guardian. That his heart should have stopped, with no warning, at the early age of sixty-one, is not so much due to this ceaseless, tireless work, but to the sorrows and afflictions which he endured, for the most part in reserved silence, from the stirrers-up of disension and the Covenant-breakers, old and new. The early pilgrims, after the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, remember standing at Shoghi Effendi's bedside, where he had called them to say goodbye, and looking at his face, so full of sorrow and despair, his eyes deep-sunken and heavily shadowed, and hearing him say he was going away, that it was too much for him, he could not bear it. He left the Holy Land, fought his inner battle, returned, took the helm of this Blessed Barque and steered it for over one-third of a century through every storm and shoal. But the valiant heart and frail body were receiving blows which left their mark, and in the end took their toll.

The friends of God are well aware of the achievements of their beloved Guardian; what they do not realize fully is that by doing so many things personally over a period of so many years, he, and he alone, made it possible for the big victories to take place. The fact that he did every single thing himself saved the Cause tremendous sums of money; with what he thus saved he was able to go on and commence a new enterprise. For thirty-six years he held in his hands, with power of decision vested solely in him, the funds of the Faith at its World Centre; no expenditures were authorized, no bills were paid that had not been submitted to him. From the beginning of his ministry until about 1940, he saw in person the engineers, the architects, the lawyers, who were carrying out his instructions, as well as many high government officials; it was he who negotiated with them, supervised their work, kept down expenses with an ingenuity and insight truly inspired by God; it was he who instructed where every step should be built, the height of every wall, the spans between every planted tree, the diameter of every flower bed—even the colors of the flowers. It was Shoghi Effendi who, entirely aside from the glorious spiritual leadership manifested in his letters, his books, and his words to the pilgrims, so harbored the financial resources of the Faith that in his lifetime the Temple in Chicago, the Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel, and the International Archives Building could be completed, as well as the extensive endowments of the Faith acquired in Haifa and 'Akká; he made the plans and paved the way for the Temples now being built; he was responsible for the purchase of the Temple sites, the National Hazíratu'l-Quds and endowments, as well as many other things during these last five years; all these accomplishments were made possible by his vigilance and wisdom.

As the Faith grew and the years went by, the beloved Guardian received more able support from believers of capacity, serving him in the Holy Land and abroad, but his personal supervision of expenses, his personal decision as to what was befitting for the Bahá'í Holy Places at the World Centre, was never laid aside. He delegated to others interviews and negotiations locally, but the management, the ordering of objects and furniture for the Gardens and Holy Places, the arrangement of these, the designs and plans for extending them, he kept solely in his own hands, practicing the same economy and showing the same genius as had characterized all his other services to the Faith
entrusted to him by the Master in His Will.

On October 20, 1957, the beloved Guardian arrived in London, accompanied by Ruhiyyih Khánum, for the purpose of ordering some furniture and objects for the interior of the International Archives Building and the Gardens above it. He chose London because it is an international center where objects from every country can be found at much cheaper prices than probably in any other one city of the world. He planned to remain a few days and then proceed to Haifa. As was the invariable custom of the beloved Guardian during his absence from Haifa, no contact was made with any Bahá'í. Ruhiyyih Khánum attended to his mail and carried out his orders as she always did.

On Sunday afternoon, October 27, Shoghi Effendi told Ruhiyyih Khánum that he had a pain across his knuckles in both hands; she asked him if he had any other pains, and he said no, that just his fingers pained him and were stiff. He added: "I feel so tired, so tired." She begged him to rest, saying that if he did not wish to go to bed, at least he should rest quietly because the probability was that he was getting the influenza which was sweeping through Europe and indeed all over the world. (She herself had been in bed with fever since Thursday night.) That night he had a fever and by the following day his temperature had risen to thirty-nine degrees (102.2° F). Ruhiyyih Khánum succeeded in finding an excellent doctor who had taken over the practice of a well-known Harley Street physician who had retired. This doctor was contacted and immediately prescribed medicine for the beloved Guardian, and came to see him early in the evening when he was able to get away from his hospital. He examined his patient very carefully; heart, chest, temperature, pulse, etc., and said that he considered that both the Guardian and Ruhiyyih Khánum had cases of Asiatic influenza, the beloved Guardian's case being the more severe.

The constant stress of work, sorrows and anxieties to which Shoghi Effendi had been subjected had brought about a condition of high blood-pressure, which he had had for a number of years; he mentioned this himself sometimes to members of the International Bahá'í Council, but he was so strong and healthy, had such tremendous powers of endurance and vitality, that it was difficult to persuade him to devote time to caring for himself. However, for the past ten years he had been under the supervision of an excellent doctor, who saw him at least twice a year, and he had consented to take some special cures which were good for his general health and calculated to reduce his blood-pressure. His doctor often urged him not to overdo things when he returned to Haifa, to get more exercise and more rest. But the doctor could not visualize the Guardian's life in Haifa, or the nature of his responsibility; could not know that he had to read letters, reports, journals, and so on for between three to eight hours a day, just to keep abreast of his work; that he spent about four hours most afternoons and evenings, after being up and busy from early morning, giving out what strength he had left to the pilgrims, eastern and western; that he stood sometimes for hours, in all weathers, directing the work he had planned on Mount Carmel or at Bahji; that when he was deeply distressed by some situation he would not feel able to eat and would lose much weight in a few days. About six weeks before the Guardian passed away, he was examined by this doctor who found him in very good health and his blood-pressure lower than in years. The doctor who took care of him in London likewise examined his blood-pressure and found it satisfactory and not high.

During the week of the beloved Guardian's illness—and indeed a number of times during the weeks before his illness—he complained that he had no appetite. He said: "I don't know what has happened to me. I have completely lost my appetite. I don't eat for twenty-four hours, but I still have absolutely no appetite whatever. It is now weeks that I have been like this. The same thing is happening to me that happened to Bahá'u'lláh when He lost His appetite after the death of Navváb."

On Tuesday, Ruhiyyih Khánum had recovered sufficiently for the doctor to allow her to go out on an important errand. As she had bronchitis following the 'flu, he would check on her condition when he had finished his visit to the beloved Guardian, and in this way she was able to find out from him exactly how he felt Shoghi Effendi was progressing. This same day a heavy mail had been received, and as Shoghi Effendi's temperature was still high she persuaded him not to look at it; but the next morning he called for his mail and insisted on going over it personally, as he always did. A great many cables were received and answered by the beloved Guardian during this last week of his life. He said to Ruhiyyih Khánum toward the end of the week: "Do you realize that we have done nothing but work this week?"

He was anxious to leave London and carry out his original plan of returning to Haifa; however, the doctor was very severe on this point and told him frankly that he was quite free to call in another doctor if he wished to, but that as long as he was taking care of him he could not give his consent to his departure until a week after his temperature had fallen. The Guardian accepted this.

The doctor was very careful of the beloved Guardian. When he came every day, instead of being in a hurry like some doctors, he would sit with the Guardian, examine him thoroughly, and stay usually a half-hour, and one evening he remained an hour to chat with his patient. He invariably found him sitting in bed reading, surrounded by papers, his brief case beside him, and one evening he asked Ruhiyyih Khánum, privately, what was the Guardian's work? She replied that he was a religious leader and had many responsibilities. The doctor obviously liked his patient, and after he had been coming for three or four days, he told Ruhiyyih Khánum, after leaving the beloved Guardian's room, that "he was smiling tonight"; that beautiful smile had affected him too. The doctor told the Guardian on Friday that he could get up and sit in his arm-chair as a change from bed, and in order to get his strength back; but Shoghi Effendi did not want to do this, and he continued his work sitting in bed and resting every now and then. However, all during his illness, the Guardian had gotten up to wash, to get papers from his desk and so on. There was no time when he was too weak or ill to get out of bed, not even the days when he had high fever.

On Saturday morning, the beloved
Guardian told Rúhiyyih Khánum that he wanted a large table placed in his room, big enough so that he could lay on it the map of the world on which he had been working. He had prepared one of those beautiful maps he used to make showing the progress of the work, and this one he called the Half-Way Point of the Ten-Year Crusade, in other words, the progress made, and the victories won, during five years. He had already worked a great deal on this map; indeed it seems a strange coincidence that the first time and the last time he worked on it should both have been occasions on which he was ill, symbolic of the great sacrifice of his life and strength that went into the conception and prosecution of the World Crusade. About two months before he passed away, the beloved Guardian had had a cold, with a temperature the first night; the next day he had no fever, but it was understood he would remain in bed and rest. It was that day that he worked on his map for the first time, for about ten hours, and it was on Saturday, November 2, that he worked on it for the last time. He told Rúhiyyih Khánum that he wanted her to check over carefully with him the figures and said that except for adding a few extra details and making sure that what was on the map agreed with his various lists, the work was finished. She remonstrated with him and begged him not to work, saying that in a few days he would be stronger and could then complete it, but he said: “No, I must finish it; it is worrying me. There is nothing left to do but check it. I have one or two names to add that I have found in this mail and I will finish it today.” In the early afternoon he stood in front of the table and worked for about three hours. The table was strewn with pencils and files of papers which constituted the Guardian’s lists of languages, tribes, countries, Temples, Haziratu’l-Quds, work completed, work being carried out, and a tremendous amount of data. At one time, while Rúhiyyih Khánum was checking over with him the various lists and totals, he said to her, as he had said many, many times during the last year: “This work is killing me! How can I go on with this? I shall have to stop it. It is too much. Look at the number of places I have to write down. Look how exact I have to be!”

The beloved Guardian looked tired after working on his map that day. He went back to bed and continued reading the many reports he had received. He had only had a mouthful to eat at lunch-time, and he refused to eat any dinner at all. That evening he spoke with great depression. He had made many plans for his winter’s work in Haifa, and many times he discussed these with Rúhiyyih Khánum, outlining to her some of the work he was going to do on Mount Carmel in the Gardens above the Archives, how he was going to furnish the International Archives Building itself with the things that had been ordered, and that upon his arrival his first act would be to go over to Bahjí and himself give instructions for the demolition of the buildings inhabited for so many years by the Arch-breakers of Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant who had caused the beloved Master so much sorrow. He talked about the disposition he intended to make of the stones and rubble of these houses and of his ideas for extending the Garden at Bahjí. Many times during the past months he had spoken with enthusiasm of these plans he was going to carry out, but this evening he said to her: “Who is going to go back and do all these things? I have no strength left. I am like a broken reed. I can’t do anything more. I have no spirit left to do anything more. Now we will be going back—who is going to go up that mountain and make all those plans and stand for hours and supervise the work? I can’t do it. And I am not going to do anything about the houses in Bahjí. Let them stay like that until I see how I feel. And I am not going to furnish the inside of the Archives this winter. It can wait another year, until everything that is needed to furnish it is collected. I shall just see the pilgrims and stay in my room and rest and do the few things that I have to do. I am not even going to take the telegrams back from Jessie and make copies of them and keep all the receipts the way I have done all these years. She did this in the summer, and she can go on doing it in the winter. I am too tired.” He was very, very sad and depressed, and spoke words such as these for a long time. It was not the first time that Rúhiyyih Khánum had heard him speak in this vein, but it was with far greater intensity and in more specific detail than she had ever heard before, and it distressed her very deeply.

That evening when the doctor came he was satisfied with the Guardian’s condition and said he could certainly leave on Tuesday morning. He told him he could go out if he wanted to and get some fresh air. He also told the Guardian that he had heard over the radio that well over two hundred people had died of influenza during the
week, and they discussed this a little together. When the doctor left that night, after staying quite a while, the Guardian said: "I like him very much. He is a fine man, and a good doctor."

The next day the Guardian appended a few lines to all the English letters that had been written for him, and went over other matters regarding his work, dictating to Ruhiyyih Khánum some instructions to be mailed, and telling her to write two other letters herself that afternoon. He did not wish to get up, preferring to remain in his room, mostly reading his papers in bed, or attending to things on his desk. He later read over the letters that she had written and appended something to one of them. In one of the reports, he read something that caused him intense indignation, and he spoke to her about it. He had also been upset during these past few days by some news given him concerning the activities of some of the Covenant-breakers, and referred to it more than once. Such things always distressed him.

As Sunday was the doctor's day of rest, the Guardian had said the day before that he did not think it was necessary for him to come; however, the doctor telephoned that evening to inquire how Shoghi Effendi was and was needed. Ruhiyyih Khánum, who was speaking on the telephone beside the Guardian's bed, conveyed this message to him, but he said he felt better, and that there was no need for the doctor to come. It was then agreed that he would make his last call the following afternoon. Ruhiyyih Khánum sat in the room with the Guardian and they talked for a while about everyday things. At half-past nine she asked him if he would like to go to sleep, as she was sure he was tired. He asked her: "What time is it?" and she said, "Nine-thirty." He said: "It is too early to sleep now; if I go to sleep now I shall wake up early and then I won't be able to go to sleep again. Stay a little while longer and talk." About ten o'clock she again asked him if he did not wish to go to sleep, and he said yes. She did the last few things to make him comfortable before retiring, and after saying goodnight, left the room, asking him before she went to be sure and call her in the night if he needed anything.

Both Saturday and Sunday nights Ruhiyyih Khánum did not sleep well, lying awake in the middle of the night for long hours. It would not be correct to say that she had the slightest premonition of what was to come, but she did not sleep well, and her heart was heavy and sad.

On the morning of Monday, November 4, she went to the door of the Guardian's room, knocked gently, and, when she received no answer, entered the room. The curtains were drawn over the windows and the room was in twilight. She saw the beloved Guardian lying on his left side facing her, with his left hand folded over toward his right shoulder and his right arm over his left one, in a most relaxed and comfortable position. His eyes were three-quarters open and she thought he was drowsy—in that state when people wake up and lie comfortably beginning to think of their day's work. She asked him how he had slept, and if he felt better. When he neither moved nor replied, and he seemed unnaturally still, a wave of agonizing terror swept over her; she leaned over him and seized his hand. He was ice-cold and absolutely rigid; as the window was not open and the room was very warm, he must have ascended several hours earlier. In spite of her own condition, within two minutes she had reached his doctor by phone at the hospital, and had told him that she was afraid that his patient had passed away, and begged him to come quickly, in case there was something that could still be done. The doctor arrived shortly. In order to calm Ruhiyyih Khánum he gave heart injections to the beloved Guardian and massaged his heart, but of course it was absolutely useless. A few minutes later a second physician arrived and confirmed that there was nothing to be done. The diagnosis was "Death caused by coronary thrombosis." Nothing in the world could have saved the beloved Guardian's life. If the best physicians had been standing beside him, they could not have prevented his passing away from the clot of blood that suddenly entered into one of the heart-vessels.

The beloved friends, heart-broken, desolate and orphaned as they are, must be grateful that this Shoghi Effendi of ours, this sacred and so dearly-loved Trust left us by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, passed away with no illness or pain; indeed it was clear from his position and the expression in his eyes that he had not even had a spasm. His eyes bore no look of surprise, although they were open. They say such deaths are reserved for the just.

It devolved upon Ruhiyyih Khánum, half-mad herself with grief, to think of a way of conveying this terrible and
agonizing news to the Bahá'ís. She thought of the two British Hands of the Cause, so recently elevated to this high rank in the last Message from the beloved Guardian. She first turned to Hasan Balyuzi, an Afíná cousin of his. Within about an hour he was able to join her, and he telephoned John Ferry, enjoining him to silence and telling him to come quickly. A telephone call was then put through to the Hand of the Cause Ugo Giachery in Rome, and he said he would take the next plane for London. He arrived that same night about eight o'clock. Another call was put in for the Hand of the Cause Leroy Ioas in Haifa, and he was reached late in the afternoon. Already, earlier in the afternoon, Rúhiyyih Khánum had cabled the following message to Haifa: "Beloved Guardian desperately ill Asiatic flu tell Leroy inform all National Assemblies inform believers supplicate prayers divine protection Faith." She could not bear to deal the naked blow to the hearts of other Bahá'ís which she herself had received and had been forced to inflict on three of the Hands, so she sent the above message, in the hope of preparing the Guardian's lovers, the ill, the old, and the feeble, to receive the full news. In spite of this effort to protect the friends from the full shock of this cataclysm that had overtaken them, her first cable did not reach Haifa before her telephone message, and the news reached many Bahá'ís in different parts of the world over the radio. A second cable was sent later in the day to Haifa with the request that it be cabled to all National Assemblies, as she felt that the announcement of his passing should go out officially from the World Centre of the Faith. The text was as follows:

SHOGHI EFFENDI BELOVED OF ALL HEARTS SACRED TRUST GIVEN BELIEVERS BY MASTER PASSED AWAY SUDDEN HEART ATTACK IN SLEEP FOLLOWING ASIATIC FLU STOP URGE BELIEVERS REMAIN STEADFAST CLING INSTITUTION HANDS LOVINGLY REARED RECENTLY REINFORCED EMPHASIZED BY BELOVED GUARDIAN STOP ONLY ONENESS HEART ONENESS PURPOSE CAN BEFITTINGLY TESTIFY LOYALTY ALL NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES BELIEVERS DEPARTED GUARDIAN WHO SACRIFICED SELF UTERLY FOR SERVICE FAITH.

RÚHIYYIH

The customs in the West are different from the customs in the East, and the ascension of the Guardian in such a vast city as London posed many problems. Very careful instructions were given to the undertaker by Rúhiyyih Khánum, explaining that in our religion we have no embalming, that no injections of any kind to preserve the body must be given, and that nobody must be allowed to wash it, as provision would be made for this according to our Faith. He fully understood this, as London is a great world metropolis, where people of many religious customs live and die. The friends must bear in mind that in all the arrangements made after the passing of the beloved Guardian, the Laws of the Aqdas, which he himself had so repeatedly stressed and constantly upheld, had to be obeyed. The size of London, and the fact that the only suitable burial grounds lie in its outskirts, had to be constantly remembered, so that no mistake would be made in transporting his precious remains more than an hour's journey. It was the longing of the four Hands, who from the very day of his ascension became responsible for all the pressing matters that had to be attended to in such a short space of time, to have him transported to the National Haziratu'l-Quds where the friends could gather and pray, until the funeral took place. Investigation, however, showed that the journey from the part of London where the beloved Guardian had passed away to the National Haziratu'l-Quds, and from there back again in the same general direction to the burial place, would take more than an hour, and the plan had to be abandoned.

On Tuesday morning a telephone call was put through to the Hand of the Cause Adelbert Mühlischlegel, as Rúhiyyih Khánum had decided that he, a physician, one of the Guardian's own appointed Hands, and a man known for his spirituality, would not only be able to endure the sorrow of performing the last service for the beloved Guardian of washing his blessed body, but would do it in the spirit of consecration and prayer called for on such a sacred occasion. He accepted immediately, with deepest gratitude for this inestimable privilege, and arrived, accompanied by the other German Hand of the Cause, Hermann Grossmann, on Tuesday night at the Haziratu'l-Quds in London. It was decided that because of the Laws of our Faith which are against embalming, the funeral should be held as soon as possible, preferably on Friday. Investigation and consultation, however, showed that this would not allow enough time to settle the formalities involved in purchasing a site for the grave and constructing a suitable vault. The time was therefore set for noon on Saturday, November 9, and the following cable was sent from London to all National Assemblies:

BELOVED ALL HEARTS PRECIOUS GUARDIAN CAUSE GOD PASSED
PEACEFULLY AWAY YESTERDAY AFTER ASIATIC FLU STOP APPEAL HANDS NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES AUXILIARY BOARDS SHELTER BELIEVERS ASSIST MEET HEARTRENDING SUPREME TEST STOP FUNERAL OUR BELOVED GUARDIAN SATURDAY LONDON HANDS ASSEMBLY BOARD MEMBERS INVITED ATTEND ANY PRESS RELEASE SHOULD STATE MEETING HANDS SHORTLY HAIFA WILL MAKE ANNOUNCEMENT TO BAHÁ'Í WORLD REGARDING FUTURE PLANS STOP URGE HOLD MEMORIAL MEETINGS SATURDAY.

RÚHíYíYIH

The first thought of those concerned with making arrangements for a befitting burial of the beloved Guardian's remains had been to secure a piece of land especially for this purpose; however, this proved an impossibility. An appointment with the Home Office had been fixed to discuss this with John Ferraby, but it was soon found to be impracticable because of laws restricting the use of land near London for burials. On Tuesday afternoon, Rúhíyíyí Khanum, Hasan Balyuzi, and Ugo Giachery were taken out to inspect possible sites for the grave in cemeteries within an hour's journey from London. It was raining, and the first cemetery visited had only one plot remotely suitable for the purpose available, which was opposite the massive, depressing vault of a family of the British nobility, and prohibitively expensive, in addition to being very near the entrance gate. Although in the eyes of the world this cemetery must have importance, to the Hands present it was unbefitting and out of the question in every way, and their hearts sank with fear lest they should not find a proper place for their so-dearly-loved Guardian. God had other plans, however, for on motoring in the twilight to inspect the second cemetery, they entered a beautiful, peaceful spot on a hill, surrounded by rolling country, where birds sang in the trees and which had an entirely different atmosphere from the pomp and worldliness of the first. The Superintendent escorted them to the best piece of land he had, on the highest part, and in the center of the cemetery. It adjoined one of the roads and was bounded by three great trees which cast their shade over it. The peaceful woods of the countryside, where birds will make their nests in spring, lay close to it on one side. It was over thirty meters square, and Rúhíyíyí Khanum made arrangements to purchase it immediately, instructions being given to build a strong, deep vault. The Hands then proceeded to the undertaker's, to choose a suitable casket for the precious remains of the beloved Guardian. After much deliberation it was decided that for the present, as well as the future, the wisest course would be to have a lead coffin which could be hermetically sealed, and that this should be placed in a beautiful bronze casket, the most dignified, costly and enduring that could be found. By doing this the Hands were assured that in the future, when the means of transport become so rapid that the journey from London to Haifa can be accomplished in an hour, it would be possible to convey the sacred remains of the Guardian to the Holy Land.

On Tuesday night the Hand of the Cause Amelia Collins, who had only arrived in Haifa on Sunday, having made a special effort to get home in time to greet the Guardian when he returned, joined Rúhíyíyí Khanum in London and was able to give her at this grievous time her much-needed, warm, motherly love and support. Already all European Hands of the Cause were in London. On Wednesday the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles communicated to all the believers the heart-breaking news, and invited them, as members of the community in which this great calamity had occurred, to be present at the funeral of the beloved Guardian, which was to take place on their soil. That afternoon, Rúhíyíyí Khanum, accompanied by Amelia Collins, drove out to the cemetery and made arrangements with a florist in the neighborhood for the decoration of the Chapel, and for the sheath of flowers which was to cover the coffin. On Thursday at two o'clock Rúhíyíyí Khanum and Adelbert Mühlschlegel drove to the place where the body of the blessed Guardian was to be washed. She had already purchased nine yards of the heaviest and finest white silk available and nine yards of a slightly lighter weight for the first shroud, as well as towels and cloths and soap to wash the body. These she delivered to Dr. Mühlschlegel, keeping the second shroud with her. She waited in an ante-room while he washed the precious remains and wrapped them in the first shroud, anointing the body with attar-of-rose which the Guardian himself had given to Ugo Giachery, who had brought it from Italy with him. It was over an hour-and-a-half before Adelbert Mühlschlegel came to call Rúhíyíyí Khanum, and to inform her that he had completed his sacred task. Let him say in his own words—as he afterward wrote them to her—what he felt during that time:

"Something new happened to me in that hour that I cannot, even after a few days, speak of, but I can mention the wisdom and love that I felt pour over me. In that room—which to worldly eyes would have appeared so different—there was a tremendous spiritual force such as I have only felt in my life in the Holy Shrines. My first impression was the contrast between the body left behind and the majestic, transfigured face, a soul-stirring picture of the joyous victory of the eternal over the transient. My second impression, as I prayed and thought and carefully did what I had to do, was that in this degree of consecration to the work of God I should work all my life, and mankind should work a thousand years, in order to construct 'the Kingdom' on earth; and my third thought was, as I washed each member of his body and anointed it, that I thanked those beloved hands which had worked and written to establish the Covenant, those feet that had walked for us, that mouth that had spoken to us, that head that had thought for us, and I prayed and meditated and supplicated that in the short time left to me, the members of my body might hasten to follow in his path of service; and my last thought was of my own distress because I felt how unworthy my hands were to
anoint that blessed brow with attar-of-rose as the Masters of old were wont to do their pupils; and yet what privileges, what duties fall to us, the living, to watch over what is past and mortal, be it ever so exalted. A great deal of mercy, love, and wisdom were hidden in this hour."

Rúhíyyih Khánum asked to be alone with the beloved Guardian to say her own last farewell. Bahá'u'lláh says: "At this point the pen broke and the ink gave forth nothing but blackness." So a veil must be drawn over her feelings alone with her Lord for the last time. But she did tell the friends afterward:

"He was our Guardian, king of the world. We know he was noble because he was our Guardian. We know that God gave him peace in the end. But as I looked at him all I could think of was—how beautiful he is, how beautiful! A celestial beauty seemed to be poured over him and to rest upon him and stream from him like a mighty benediction from on high. And the wonderful hands, so like the hands of Bahá'u'lláh, lay softly by his side; it seemed impossible the life had gone from them—or from that radiant face."

After a little while she called Adelbert Mühlschlegel back into the room; the coffin, padded with soft white silk, was brought; she arranged the second shroud in it and the beloved Guardian was laid inside. The flowers from thethreshold of the Báb's Shrine, which Amelia Collins had brought from Haifa, she spread over that treasured form, covering it from feet to chin, a sacred carpet of love, and the last shroud she folded gently about him, closing away for all time from men's eyes the face on which the Bahá'ís had gazed with so much love.

The coffin was then closed, a pall of purple and gold was spread over it, and a bouquet of flowers Rúhíyyih Khánum had brought with her was placed on the top.

All the next day, in a room full of flowers, the various Hands of the Cause from Persia, Europe, Africa, and America kept vigil and prayed near the mortal remains of their Beloved.

On Friday evening, Rúhíyyih Khánum and Amelia Collins drove out to the cemetery to inspect the Chapel and the grave. The florist was following his instructions very carefully and making every effort to create an atmosphere of beauty worthy of this sacred occasion. Indeed, all the non-Bahá'ís concerned with the death of and the funeral arrangements made for this stranger who had passed away in their country so suddenly, seemed deeply touched and stirred by the great reverence and love that accompanied the still form of God's great Guardian as he passed from life to the grave. They outdid themselves in showing sympathy and cooperation. At the four corners of the grave the florist had already planted four beautiful small cypress trees which Rúhíyyih Khánum had ordered in memory of the hundreds of cypress trees that the beloved Guardian had planted, during his lifetime, around the Holy Places in Bahjí and Haifa. At the top of the Chapel, which was entirely non-denominational and used for services of all religions, was an arched alcove filled with a bank of chrysanthemums and asters, beginning with deep shades of purple and running up through violet, lavender and orchid tones to white at the top. Like two arms reaching out, garlands of lavender chrysanthemums ran along a cornice which framed the raised upper part of the Chapel. Above this, from wall to wall, was a beam of wood, in the center of which a framed Greatest Name was hung. Beneath this, in front of the alcove of flowers, the coffin was to rest on a low catafalque covered by a rich green velvet pall, the color to which the descendants of Muhammad are entitled by their illustrious lineage, and which the Guardian, as a Siyyid himself, through his kinship to the Báb, had every right to bear with him to the grave. Seating arrangements were made for the following day, placing the Hands of the Cause on the right and on the left side of the coffin, facing it. A hundred more chairs had to be ordered as the Chapel normally could only seat about eighty people.

That evening all the Hands of the Cause who were in London, now numbering thirteen, met to discuss appropriate readings for the funeral the next day. The Israeli authorities had instructed the Chargé d'Affaires at the Israeli Embassy in London, Mr. Gershon Avner, to attend the funeral on behalf of the Government (the Ambassador being absent from his post). It had been decided that, owing to the great mourning of the Bahá'í world, the short time available, and the restricted space at the cemetery Chapel, the funeral should be entirely private. The spontaneous gesture of esteem, however, which the Israeli Government had made, by requesting its representative to attend the funeral officially, could not be turned aside. The presence of this non-Bahá'í had therefore to be taken into consideration in connection with suitable readings, and the moving of the beloved Guardian's coffin. As this weighed almost half-a-ton

Led by his widow, the Hands of the Cause follow Shoghi Effendi to his grave.
it was considered that, in permitting the Bahá'ís to have the honor of taking turns carrying it, a very grave risk would be run of its being jostled, tipped, or even slipping from their hands. Special bearers were therefore chosen who carried out their task with the utmost dignity.

While these events were taking place, the National Headquarters of the Bahá'ís in London was becoming the focal center of many agonized hearts, seeking information, asking details, receiving what comfort other broken hearts could give and being directed as to how they could reach the cemetery upon their arrival in London. The telephone at the Hazíratu'l-Quds rang almost all day without stopping, and John Ferraby, secretary of the British National Spiritual Assembly, with the constant help of his wife, also a member of that body, attended to telephone calls from such distant spots as Djakarta, Bombay, Kuwait, Israel, the United States and several European countries, to the ceaseless flow of cables and letters that poured in and out, as well as to press releases and interviews. It began to be clear that the funeral would be attended by many more of the friends than it had been thought possibly could get to London in time. Not only were the British Bahá'ís attending practically en masse, but Hands of the Cause, various National Spiritual Assembly members and Auxiliary Board members, as well as individuals, were pouring in from overseas. As the Bahá'ís arrived in ever-increasing numbers, a great flood-tide of love and sorrow was rising about the silent figure of the Sign of God on earth, preparing to bear his sacred remains befittingly to the grave.

Arrangements had been made to have the funeral cortège assemble about ten o'clock before the Hazíratu'l-Quds, at 27 Rutland Gate, opposite Hyde Park; from there, those believers who were not going direct to the cemetery would be driven by special cars which would follow the hearse. More than sixty automobiles, accommodating over three hundred and sixty people, moved off in solemn file at 10:40 and journeyed to the place where they were joined by the hearse bearing the coffin of the revered Guardian. This was preceded by a floral hearse and followed by the car in which rode Ruhiyyih Khánúm accompanied by Amelia Collins; cars bearing the other Hands, National Spiritual Assembly members, Auxiliary Board members and believers followed behind. It was probably the largest column of vehicles seen in London for many years in attendance on a funeral of any denomination. The journey to the Great Northern Cemetery at New Southgate, where the sacred remains of Shoghi Effendi are now interred, was accomplished in under one hour's time, the laws of the Aqdas being thus fulfilled.

Through Leroy Ioas having promptly informed the Israeli authorities in a befitting manner of the sudden passing of the Head of the Faith, conditions at its World Centre were calm, and he decided it would be safe for him to leave the Holy Land over the weekend, and attend the funeral of the beloved Guardian. This was very fortunate, because it made it possible for him to bring with him, at the request of Ruhiyyih Khánum, a small rug from the innermost Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí, with which to carpet the floor of the vault, and a covering, which had rested likewise in that inner Shrine, for the coffin itself. He also brought a bouquet of white jasmine and a box of flowers gathered from the Gardens at Bahjí, the Rívdán, Mazra'íh and Haifa.

Already a great crowd of believers was waiting at the door of the Chapel when the funeral cortège drove up, on every face was written its own measure of heart-break and many sobbed. The casket was gently handed down, on it a beautiful sheath of deep red roses with fragrant white gardenias, lily of the valley and fuchsias, in the center, and a simple card with the inscription “From Ruhiyyih and all your loved ones and lovers all over the world whose hearts are broken.”

The Great Guardian was carried in and laid on the soft green covering of the catafalque. The Chapel was crowded to the doors, and many had to remain outside. All stood while the wonderful prayer, ordained by Bahá'u'lláh for the dead, was chanted in Arabic. Six other prayers and excerpts from the Teachings were then read by friends with beautiful voices, some in English, some in Persian, and representative of Bahá'ís from Europe, Africa, America, Asia—Negro, Jew, and Aryan.

In solemn file the friends followed the casket as it was borne out, placed in the hearse again, and slowly driven the few hundred yards to the graveside. There it was gently deposited at the head of the grave, so that when the beloved Guardian’s remains were lowered into it, he would face east to the Qiblah of the Faith. The flowers were removed from the casket, revealing an engraved tablet on which was written:

Shoghi Effendi Rabbani
First Guardian
of the Bahá'í Faith
March 3rd, 1896—November 4th, 1957

As all stood, silently waiting for the coffin to be lowered into the grave, Ruhiyyih Khánum felt the agony of the hearts around her penetrate into her own great grief. He was their Guardian. He was going forever from their eyes, suddenly snatched from them by the immutable decree of God, Whose Will no man dare question. They had not seen him, had not been able to draw near him. She decided to ask for it to be announced that before the coffin was placed in the grave, the friends who wished might pass by it and pay their respects. For over two hours the believers, eastern and western, filed by. For the most part they knelt and kissed the edge of the handle of the casket. Rarely indeed in history can such a demonstration of love and grief have been seen. Children bowed their little heads beside their mothers, old men wept, the iron reserve of the Anglo-Saxon—the tradition never to show feeling in public—melted before the white-hot sorrow in the heart. The morning had been sunny and fair; now a gentle shower started and sprinkled a few drops on the coffin, as if nature herself were suddenly moved to tears. Some placed little flasks of Persian attar-of-rose at the head; one hesitatingly laid a red rose on the casket, symbol no doubt of the owner’s heart; one could not bear the few drops of rain above that blessed, hidden face, and timidly wiped them off as he knelt; others with convulsed fingers carried away a little of the earth near the casket. Tears, tears and kisses, and solemn inner vows were poured out at the head of the one who had always called himself their “true brother.” When the last believers in this grief-stricken procession had filed by, Ruhiyyih Khánum approached the casket, kissed it and
knelt in prayer for a moment. She then had the green pall spread over it, laid the blue-and-gold brocade from the innermost Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh on top of it and arranged the still-fragrant jasmine flowers over all its length. Then the mortal remains of him whom 'Abdu'l-Bahá designated "the most wondrous, unique and priceless pearl that doth gleam from out the Twin Surging Seas" were slowly lowered into the vault, amid walls covered with evergreen boughs and studded with flowers, to rest upon the rug from the Holy Tomb at Bahji. A prayer was then chanted in Persian, and the Afnán Hand of the Cause, Hasan Balyuzi, read the closing prayer in English.

All this time—a service that had lasted almost four hours—the representative of the Israeli Government, obviously deeply moved, had been in attendance, himself stepping beside the coffin and, with bowed head, paying his solemn respects. He and the majority of the mourners now left, the Hands of the Cause, the National Spiritual Assemblies and Auxiliary Board members remaining behind by previous arrangement to see the vault sealed.

Prayers were then said in many foreign languages and by friends from distant countries, and the orange and olive leaves brought from the Garden of the Ridván in Baghdad by Tarázul-láh Samandari—the only living Hand of the Cause who was privileged to enter the presence of Bahá'u'lláh—were placed on the grave, as well as the flowers brought by Leroy Ioas from the Baha'i Gardens in the Holy Land; these were sufficient for each person present himself to put some on the Guardian's resting-place. Over the tomb, at his feet, like a shield of crimson and white, lay the fragrant sheath of blooms which had covered his casket, and heaped about was a rich carpet of exquisite flowers, symbols of the love, the suffering, of so many hearts, and no doubt the silent bearers of vows to make the Spirit of the Guardian happy now, to fulfill his plans, carry on his work, be worthy at last of the love and inspired, self-sacrificing leadership he gave them for thirty-six years of his life.

RÚHÍYYIH
in collaboration with John Ferraby

Haifa
December 9, 1957
Guatemala

A teaching trip to the Petén area

According to information we received, little follow-up work had been seen in the Petén area for the past two years. This may have prompted a telegram from the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum concerning the necessity of visiting the area.

As a pioneer to El Salvador for the past two years, I offered my services to the National Spiritual Assembly of Guatemala, an offer that was graciously accepted. The trip was planned during the Ridván period especially for the purpose of electing at least one of the Assemblies in the area. David Robinson, a Bahá’í from the U.S., and his son Jesse accompanied me. What follows is a report of that trip with recommendations for future follow-up.

My memory is engraved with what shall ever be a precious experience. Let it be placed on record that the Petén is an area of enormous spiritual potential; a great harvest seems to be waiting only for the appropriate plans of action.

In five days we were able only to evaluate the surface and open some doors which should lead in the near future to entry by troops. The spiritual receptivity of these people, who are direct descendants of the Mayas, builders of the most advanced pre-Colombian civilization in the Americas, is staggering. They are waiting with great hunger for the Message of God.

The memory of the former glory of what appears to have been a great spiritual as well as material civilization has not faded from their minds. Some of the ancient knowledge and prophecies have been handed down to the present generation. They wait now for an opportunity to rise again and illuminate all regions, as the Master stated. For this, proper education is needed, and the need to step into the field of action is crucial. One must ponder deeply on the high level of civilization once reached by these people to appreciate the role they can play in the development of the Bahá’í World Commonwealth.

The journey began Thursday, April 23. I took a bus from El Salvador to Guatemala in the afternoon, arriving that evening. After spending the night at the home of the National Spiritual Assembly’s secretary, David, Jesse and I left on a 7 a.m. flight Friday for Flores. I had brought some extra money with which to visit the ruins at Tikal to pray and feel inspiration. Little did I suspect that undreamed-of opportunities would begin to open up as a result of what seemingly was a deviation from our intended route.

Tikal is an extraordinary sight to behold, even in ruins. Its ancient “sky-scrappers” tower above the jungle floor, giving one an impression of beauty, majesty and grace. The city, which contains more than 3,000 structures, was built on a platform 30 feet above the jungle floor. We headed on foot for the main plaza, which has been restored. The temples lifted our hearts to prayer and reverence.

In my prayers, I asked that the doors be opened and the souls that we needed to contact be found. I did not know that the answer to those prayers would be so close at hand.

Toward the end of the day I began to feel anxious about doing some actual teaching. Near the Jungle Lodge are a couple of places where one can obtain food and drink. I went to one and ordered mineral water, thirsting more than anything for contact with the Guatemaltecos. Not having any success, I began walking back toward the bungalow when suddenly a strong desire to visit the ruins again, this time by starlight, came over me. Seeing a man walking in that direction with a flashlight, I decided to ask if I might accompany him. As it turned out, he was one of the caretakers, and his name was Augusto Heredia. He looked to be about my age (32 years) and seemed a very agreeable person.

As we walked the old Maya road that winds through the jungle, we began to talk. At first we spoke of the new age and the needs of the times. I quickly realized what a great spiritual capacity this man had, and wondered how a man of such humble origins could have been the recipient of so much profound wisdom and knowledge. The form of the Jaguar Temple was becoming visible under the dim light of the stars when he began to disclose his secret to me.

We climbed a steep incline to the top of the pyramid where the temple rises above the jungle ceiling, then sat entranced by the pure magic of the precious moments we were experiencing. Augusto told me about the history of the city and of Chak Mul, the representative of the Godhead among the Mayas, chief spiritual leader of his race and the one who originated the laws and design of Tikal. I had read that

*This account of a teaching trip to the Petén area of Guatemala in April 1987 was written by Andrew DiMauro, a Bahá’í pioneer from the U.S. to El Salvador.*
when the Spaniards came and tried to destroy all remnants of the old faith, certain priests had hidden some of the old books or codices. The secrets of the faith were then passed down from generation to generation to the present one. Augusto had been given one of the books by his grandfather, who was 115 years old. He was waiting with this great treasure of spiritual and cultural heritage and had recently decided that the time had come to bring it forward.

I told him the story of Bahá'u'lláh Who had come to inaugurate the new Day and bring about the revival of all good things. This pure soul accepted the Message immediately and without question, and began to make plans about how to carry it to his people. He began teaching the Faith the next morning, and had two interested seekers for us to speak to that day. He told me of his desire to donate land for a Bahá'í Center in his home town. There, he said, hundreds of souls are waiting to hear the Bahá'í Message, and he was sure there would be success in enlisting many of them in the Cause of God.

The doors were thus flung open in a way I had never imagined. Considering our limited time and resources, I was struck with a sense of helplessness to deal with the enormity of the task. All I could do was promise that we would return with a team in August and December to continue the work. I would strongly suggest that someone begin to correspond with and send materials to Augusto so that the opportunities that now exist are not lost.

Before we left, he promised to introduce us to a couple of seekers to whom he had already passed the information. Therefore, making plans to return in two days, we set out the following morning for Melchor.

Melchor seemed the most likely area for Assembly formation in the Petén. There had once been an Assembly there, but things had lapsed over the past two years. Our mission was to reactivate the Bahá'ís on our list and, if possible, help elect the Assembly. After a tedious four-hour journey, we arrived in Melchor in mid-afternoon.

Shortly after checking in at a hotel, we found the home of the key Bahá'í. When we arrived there we found the husband seated on the doorstep talking to a friend. After we introduced our-
Rural development at the Zunúzí School

The Anís Zunúzí Bahá’í School is 13 kilometers (about eight miles) north of Haiti’s capital city of Port-au-Prince in a semi-rural/semi-residential area called Lilavois. It helps three smaller Bahá’í schools with teaching materials, curriculum development, administration and teacher training. These schools are in Liancourt (two hours north), Pont Benoit (two and one-half hours north), and Pitimi (six hours north). The Rural Development Project which works out of the Zunúzí School has mini cooperatives, pigs, preschool centers and health activities within a five-hour radius around the school. It is also involved in projects in Liancourt and the Cayes area. In and around Cayes, six local Spiritual Assemblies banded together to build a piggery. One Assembly hopes to start a school of its own. In the north, Guinaudé has a pre-school center run by local Bahá’ís who have approached the project for help in obtaining school lunches. In February 1987 the Zunúzí Project received 10 pigs: nine females and one male, from the Department of Agriculture, as part of its pig distribution program. Since 1983, when the rains stopped coming regularly, fewer and fewer people in the area have been able to depend on crops. The importance of animal-raising has increased proportionally, but pigs have been unavailable due to their eradication during a swine fever epidemic. It was only because of the excellent organization of local residents by the Anís Zunúzí Development Project into mini-cooperatives that the Department of Agriculture decided to provide 10 pigs, and their arrival in February was a cause for great rejoicing.
Escola das Nacoes gains momentum

The Escola das Nacoes (School of the Nations) project in Macau is progressing at an accelerated pace, largely as a result of a Curriculum Development Workshop held the weekend of September 25-27. Educators drawn from the Bahai community of Macau were joined by Baha'is from Hong Kong in an effort to develop general guidelines for the formulation of a suitable kindergarten curriculum.

In perhaps the most far-reaching outcome of the workshop, it was decided that the curriculum should be presented in a bilingual format, with English and Cantonese to be given equal emphasis in a "dual-stream" linguistic approach. Each class is to have two qualified teachers, one English-speaking and the other Cantonese; the children will therefore be exposed to both languages, from consistently separate sources, during the course of their daily routine.

Given the universally recognized importance of developing fluency in the national language of China, however, Mandarin will be introduced into the curriculum as the third language rather than as a medium of instruction, possibly at the Primary One level. The focus on Mandarin will increase gradually through the primary and secondary years, and it is expected that the students will be totally bilingual in English and Mandarin upon completion of their secondary education.

The curriculum will also be multicultural in its approach, and will concentrate on the development of a "world citizen" awareness in the children. In this context, it should be understood that the school is not a Bahai school, and as such the Bahai Faith (that is, the Covenant, history, Central Figures, Administrative Order, and so forth) will not be included in the curriculum. The school is a socio-economic development project initiated as a private venture by individual Baha'is in consultation with Bahai administrative institutions and Baha'i experts in educational development. Accordingly, Bahai principles (such as the need to abandon all forms of prejudice, the equality of men and women, the oneness of mankind) will be incorporated into the curriculum as the fundamental basis of the teaching philosophy.

In a quite recent development, the physical facility itself has been acquired, as a representative of the school signed a contract on September 30 for the purchase of the entire first floor of the "Seng Va" building adjacent to the President Hotel. The facility is modern, spacious and in excellent condition, and it is expected that the necessary renovations will be relatively minor. The coordinators are therefore confidently pursuing their plan to open the school in January 1988 as a pre-school and kindergarten for three- to five-year-olds.

The most pressing concern at this point is the recruitment of trained, qualified teachers and staff. At present, two individuals are employed by the school: Donald Tennant, a pioneer from the U.S. who is serving as its administrator, and Susan Pottier, a pioneer from Canada who has been hired as the first teacher. A second qualified English-speaking teacher, Samantha Corey, is expected to arrive from the U.S. in December. The most immediate need is to find qualified native Cantonese-speaking teachers who have teaching credentials or who would be willing to undertake a teacher-training program.

Any interested native Cantonese speakers are asked to contact the school as soon as possible to discuss employment possibilities. Inquiries and requests for further information may be directed to Donald W. Tennant, Project Coordinator, Escola das Nacoes, P.O. Box 81, Macau.

United States

Ronna Santoscoy, a Bahai from Kansas who is an Auxiliary Board member, was invited last May to meet with one of the top aides to the new governor of Kansas, Mike Haden.

The aide, Jose de la Torre, asked that the Baha'is make an official presentation of "The Promise of World Peace" to the governor, saying that the statement would then be publicly displayed in the capitol rotunda.

He asked for Bahai collaboration with the Boards of Education in the state to provide input for local programs dealing with racial problems in schools, and asked them to help train local law enforcement officers in dealing with racial issues.
A reception in honor of Counsellor Richard Benson was held May 3 during the National Bahá'í Convention in Bikenibeu, Tarawa.

Among the invited guests were the President of Kiribati, the Hon. Jeremia Tabai, and Madame Tabai.

Mr. Tabai congratulated the Bahá'í delegates for their part in electing the National Assembly, and wished its members a successful year of service.

He reaffirmed his belief in religious liberty for Kiribati, saying that the unity which is already established there must be maintained.

Other guests included the ministers of education, finance, natural resources and industry; the secretary to the Cabinet; and two ministry secretaries.

In his address, Counsellor Benson thanked the president for his warm response to the Bahá'í Peace Conference held recently in Kiribati, and for his part in protesting the Iranian government's persecution of Bahá'ís in that country.

The speeches by Counsellor Benson, President Tabai, and the chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly were recorded and broadcast on the radio for 15 minutes the following evening.

**Austria**

The Bahá'í Faith has been "in the news" in Austria during the past year.

Two positive radio interviews with Bahá'ís were broadcast during Ridván, while last December, Austrian television presented a brief report on the dedication of the House of Worship in India and the semi-official Austrian news agency, APA, produced a photo feature based on news of the Temple's dedication.

That feature was also distributed by the European photo agency, EPA, in Europe and America.

In addition, an article dealing with Islam in Der Spiegel (April 27) mentions the Faith in a favorable way.

**Sri Lanka**

The Anwer Cadir Project, a campaign to open to the Faith all remaining localities in the Kegalla District of Sri Lanka, is nearing a successful completion.

The project, which began last January, succeeded by May in opening 102 localities. Two hundred new believers were enrolled, while 2,500 people were contacted with the Bahá'í message.

A reported "army" of Bahá'ís giving dedicated service to the project made these significant gains possible.
Dr. Minda Pamate takes a skin sample for laboratory analysis by the Department of Health during a three-day Bahá'í-sponsored medical clinic sponsored last Naw-Rúz by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Philippines at Tapi-Nabiran, Mindoro Oriental. During the clinic, some 300 Mangyan people were treated by two physicians, marking the first time that doctors had ever brought medical aid to the Mangyan area.

A Mangyan Bahá'í, Inggo Ganjuyan (right-center), explains to a woman in the Mangyan dialect how to take the medicine provided for her during a three-day Bahá'í-sponsored medical clinic held last Naw-Rúz in Tapi-Nabiran, Mindoro Oriental, the Philippines.
India

At the invitation of the Indian Institute for Non-Aligned Studies, that country’s National Spiritual Assembly appointed two delegates to take part in a symposium on “Peace and Security: Asian Dimension” held April 18 in New Delhi.

A paper titled “World Peace is not only possible but inevitable—a Bahá’í perspective” was presented to the distinguished participants, most of whom were academics.

The chairman of the afternoon session referred to the necessity for working toward peace by studying the problem in terms of a new international order, as articulated by the Bahá’í Faith.

Trinidad/Tobago

Banners reading “The Bahá’í Faith teaches we are one world family” were placed in conspicuous places around Trinidad and Tobago during the community’s annual Bahá’í Week celebration last March 20-26.
Malaysia

The Spiritual Assembly of Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, has established a committee composed of children ages 8-13 years.

The committee meets once a month to discuss how to teach, how to tell children's stories of the Faith, how to help the plans of the local Assembly, how to save for giving to the Fund, how to achieve excellence in school, and other helpful topics.

The Assembly feels it is thus able to tap into as well as develop the talents of its community members in this age group.

Three hundred-fifty Bahá'í from 45 Malaysian communities came to a recent Tamil-speakers' summer school which emphasized study of the goals of the Six Year Plan; the Covenant; the law of Huququ'l-lláh; the station of women; and other topics.

Among those attending the spirited gathering were four Auxiliary Board members.

Bermuda

"Women and Peace," a public forum held last February 5 at the Elbow Beach Hotel in South Hampton, Bermuda, greatly enhanced public awareness of the Faith in that country.

Dr. Jane Faily, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, chaired a panel of some of Bermuda's most prominent women including the minister for health and social services, Mrs. Ann Cartwright-DeCouto.

The forum, attended by 135 people, was publicized in the press and covered on television.

United Kingdom

The Spiritual Assembly of Nithsdale, Scotland, has published a booklet entitled "Poems on Peace," comprising selections from the 67 entries received in a peace poem competition for children ages 7-14, youth from 15-21, and adults. All of the poems except one, that of an eight-year-old Bahá'í, were composed by non-Bahá'ís.

Sikkim

Students arrive at the Tadong Bahá'í School in Sikkim where new construction is in progress to provide additional classrooms for the upcoming academic year.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Sikkim is offering a 50 per cent tuition scholarship for children from Bahá'í families to enable them to attend the Tadong Bahá'í School.

Some full and partial scholarships are also being offered to 20 deserving non-Bahá'í students whose parents are unable to pay the school fees.

Additional classrooms are being built for the 1987-88 school year: a facility to be called Shirin Hall, which will replace the extra rented rooms now being used as classrooms.

Nigeria

The Samuel Bakare Teaching Campaign, held May 7-June 11 in Bendel State, Nigeria and aimed at teaching the people of the Oghara Clan, was expanded to include members of the Jesse Clan as well.

As a result, some 856 new believers were enrolled, 304 of them women. Also, 22 new local Spiritual Assemblies were formed by the 26 Nigerian Bahá'ís who took part in the campaign.

Mariana Islands

The island of Rota, at the southern tip of the Marianas, recently hosted its first National Teaching Conference. Attending were 17 adults and seven children, all of whom left the conference with a renewed commitment to spread the Teachings.

Discussion on such topics as "Overcoming Fears in Teaching" and "Why We Teach" were followed by a fireside and a barbecue on the beach.

Andaman/Nicobar Islands

Four new local Spiritual Assemblies were formed during a teaching project last May 15-24 in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

The project, in Diglipur, North Andaman, ended earlier than planned owing to monsoon rains, but nevertheless 25 new believers were enrolled.
Louis Gregory Institute holds Peace Fest '87
On the cover: World-renowned jazz trumpeter John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie leads the 16-member 'Bahá'í Peace Orchestra' during Peace Fest '87, a four-day event held in September at the Louis G. Gregory Bahá'í Institute near Hemingway, South Carolina. Another highlight was the presentation of a Peace Award to South Carolina Attorney General Travis Medlock. A complete report of the festival begins on page 2.
Nearly 450 new believers are enrolled in Taiwan; large-scale efforts undertaken in Nigeria, Canada

DELIGHTED SHARE FOLLOWING TELEX RECEIVED FROM NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TAIWAN:
QUOTE NSA OVERJOYED TO INFORM SUPREME INSTITUTION THAT TWO AND HALF YEARS OF PERSISTENCE ON PART OFF NSA TO LAUNCH TEACHING PROGRAM AIMED AT ENROLLING LARGE NUMBER OF BELIEVERS HAS COME TO FRUITION. NEARLY 450 NEW BELIEVERS DECLARED SINCE INCEPTION MUHAJIR TEACHING PROJECT LATE MAY 1987, 420 OF WHOM ENTERED FAITH SINCE JUNE 19, REPRESENTING OVER 28 PERCENT INCREASE TOTAL NUMBER BAHÁ'ÍS TAIWAN SO FAR. AVERAGE OF 10-15 NEW BELIEVERS EACH DAY ARE ENROLLING. DEEPENING CLASSES ATTENDED BY 10 OR 15 NEW BELIEVERS OCCUR REGULARLY. MASS CONSOLIDATION PROGRAM THROUGH 14 'NOVA' BAHÁ'Í VIDEO PROGRAMS DUBBED INTO CHINESE BEGINS NEXT WEEK. TEACHING DONE WITH CARE AND APPLICATION HOUSE JUSTICE INSTRUCTIONS MASS TEACHING PROGRAM. NSA FULLY CONCERNED ABOUT CONSOLIDATION, SPENT MOST OF ITS LAST WEEKEND MEETING ON WAYS AND MEANS TO ENSURE THE MASS CONSOLIDATION DONE IN PROPER WAY. NSA FEELS OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE IN TERMS OF PIONEER TO HELP CONSOLIDATE NEW COMMUNITIES IS MUCH NEEDED. OUR EFFORTS IN RECRUITING NEW PIONEER HAVE INCREASED. ANY GUIDANCE AND HELP GREATLY NEEDED.

NSA IS SPONSORING A TEACHING INSTITUTE ON AUGUST 30 IN CENTRAL TAIWAN WITH PURPOSE EXPLAINING MASS TEACHING PROCESS TO ALL FRIENDS TAIWAN. SPIRIT ECSTATIC. NSA AND NTC IN FULL CHARGE OF EVENT. 7 NEW LSA'S FORMED, 17 NEW LOCALITIES OPENED SINCE RIDVAN RESULTING THE FIRST ACHIEVEMENT OF LOCALITY GOAL (15) OF THE 1ST PHASE OF SIX YEAR PLAN, FULFILLMENT GOALS WELL IN SIGHT. HUMBLY BESeeching PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES OUR BEHALF.

LOVING BAHÁ'Í GREETINGS, NSA TAIWAN UNQUOTE

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE SEPTEMBER 23, 1987

DELIGHTED SHARE FOLLOWING EXCERPT FROM TELEX FROM NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF NIGERIA REPORTING TEACHING ACTIVITIES UNDER-TAKEN BY YOUTH:
QUOTE ...SIX YOUTH JOINED WEEK-LONG TEACHING PROJECT IN BALOGUN NEAR IFE, OYO STATE, AUG. 17-22. ENROLLED 802 MAJORITY YORUBA TRIBE INCLUDING 80 WOMEN. TEAM STAYED IN HOME OF A LOCAL BAHÁ'Í, WALKED TO 5 VILLAGES, FORMED 3 NEW LSA'S AND STRENGTHENED 2 EXISTING COMMUNITIES. THE YOUTH WHO HAD ATTENDED SAMUEL BAKARE TEACHING PROJECT AND USED THE SAME METHOD INCLUDED COORDINATOR SUNDAY EGVU, SARAF A AMUDA, FATAI ADESINA, SOLOMON WARISO AND KEMI. UNQUOTE

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE SEPTEMBER 23, 1987

WE ARE HAPPY TO SEND FURTHER NEWS OF UNPRECEDENTED SUCCESS OF TEACHING/CONSOLIDATION ENDEAVORS. THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF CANADA:
QUOTE DELIGHTED TO INFORM THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE OF RECENT TEACHING AND CONSOLIDATION EFFORTS IN THE FORT VERMILION AREA OF ALBERTA. IN THIS REMOTE PART OF CANADA, DURING THE PAST FEW MONTHS, THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF A FEW DEDICATED BAHÁ'Í PIONEERS AND TRAVELING TEACHERS, OVER 120 PEOPLE HAVE BECOME BAHÁ'Í, RAISING THE NUMBER OF BAHÁ'ÍS IN THIS REGION TO 300 IN THE SPAN OF A FEW SHORT YEARS. THESE NEW BELIEVERS ARE ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY FROM THE NATIVE POPULATION OF CANADA. THE MOST RECENT DECLARANTS CAME TO THE FAITH AS A RESULT OF DEEPENING AND TEACHING EFFORTS LAUNCHED THIS SUMMER IN THE MEMORY OF GOL AIDUN. A RECENT LETTER FROM ONE OF THE PIONEERS, EUNICE HITCHCOCK, READS IN PART:
"JOHN D'OR (A NEWLY-DECLARED NATIVE BAHÁ'Í) IS ON FIRE....JOHN IS DEAF SINCE BIRTH AND SPEAKS SIGN....IT IS VERY SPIRITUAL TO WATCH HIM TEACH, AND HE DOES IT THOROUGHLY USING THE TEACHING BOOK AND NATIVE SIGN. IT IS A DEMONSTRATION OF THE POWER IN THIS FAITH THAT THE MUTE CAN TEACH THE CAUSE OF GOD....."

WE BESeeCH THE SUPREME BODY FOR PRAYERS ON BEHALF OF THE CANADIAN BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY FOR SUCCESS IN THE ALL-IMPORTANT TEACHING FIELD. UNQUOTE

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE SEPTEMBER 23, 1987

Bahá'í News/December 1987 1
The presentation of a new Peace Award to the Attorney General of South Carolina and the first two performances of a 16-member Baha'i "Peace Orchestra" were among the highlights of Peace Fest '87 held September 16-19 at the Louis Gregory Bahá'i Institute near Hemingway, South Carolina.

The second annual Peace Festival also featured Gospel singing, dance, contemporary music, an international buffet, excellent speakers, and special recognition ceremonies.

The four-day event began September 16 with a jazz concert attended by some 350 Bahá'ís and their guests who saw and heard the premier performance of the Peace Orchestra, composed almost entirely of Bahá'ís from across the country and led by internationally acclaimed trumpeter John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie.

Prior to the performance, Mr. Gillespie was presented the first Louis G. Gregory "Ambassador of Peace" Award.

The program that evening consisted primarily of Mr. Gillespie's own musical compositions and arrangements.

Also on the program Wednesday evening was Palmetto Jazz, a group from Columbia.

The Peace Orchestra performed again the following evening, this time under the leadership of its coordinator, Marvin (Doc) Holladay, a Bahá'í from Rochester, Michigan, who has played saxophone with some of the outstanding big bands in the country including those led by Stan Kenton, Woody Herman, Tommy Dorsey, Benny Carter, Gerald Wilson and others.

For its second concert the orchestra turned to arrangements by a variety of well-known artists including charts by Thad Jones, Frank Foster, Marian McPartland and Don Sebesky.

Mr. Holladay, the orchestra's coordinator, plays baritone saxophone and is an associate professor of music at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan.

The other members of the group, most of whom performed at both concerts, include:

**Trumpets**—Greg Ives, Warren Kime, Roger Lewis, Paul Seaforth.

**Trombones**—Ed Craft (bass), Scott Crum, Charlie Lee, Todd Lowery, Jim Tangney.

**Saxophones**—Jay Corre, Don Erdman, Roger Hogan, Daryl Lowery, Ben White.


Members of the Peace Orchestra, all but four of whom are Bahá'ís, represent a wide range of ages and have an impressive array of professional credentials, having played with such bands as those led by Harry James, Benny Goodman, Woody Herman, Stan Kenton, Buddy Rich, Nelson Riddle, Lionel Hampton, Tex Beneke, Ray Anthony, Ralph Marterie, Benny Carter, Mercer Ellington, Quincy Jones, Gerald Wilson, Manny Albam, Thad Jones-Mel Lewis, Larry Elgart, and many others.

Besides performing with guitarist Kenny Burrell, trumpeters Bobby Shew and Shorty Rogers, saxophonist Benny Carter and others, drummer Sherman Ferguson of Los Angeles, who became a Bahá'í last year, has been an actor on television and appears in four episodes of the current NBC-TV series "The Days and Nights of Molly Dodd."

Trombonist Todd Lowery, one of the younger members of the orchestra...
at age 20, is a student at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York; his brother, Daryl, teaches at the Berklee School in Boston.

Another teacher is trumpeter Roger Lewis who played professionally for 21 years before settling down to teach at Wichita State University in Kansas where he directs the school’s jazz ensemble.

Roger Hogan, a much sought-after musician on the West Coast, is a former member of the Airmen of Note, the official jazz ensemble of the U.S. Air Force, and performed in the television version of “Ain’t Misbehavin’,” the story of the life of legendary pianist Fats Waller.

Trumpeter Paul Seaforth, with fellow musician and Bahá’í Rob Jenkins, has recorded a tape for Kalimat Press entitled “Dove.” Seaforth and Jenkins are popular performers at Bahá’í-sponsored events on the West Coast.

The idea for the Peace Orchestra sprang from last year’s Peace Fest at the Gregory Institute during which Dizzy Gillespie performed with a small group consisting of some musicians from New York City along with saxophonists Doc Holladay and Don Erderman.

Both Messrs. Gillespie and Holladay would like to see the Peace Orchestra become a permanent musical organization.

Mr. Holladay says that although the membership of the orchestra may change, as indeed it did to some extent during Peace Fest ’87, he hopes that the concept and the orchestra itself can continue in some form.

On Friday, September 18, a Gospel jubilee, which lasted more than four hours, brought members of the audience to their feet to sing and clap along with seven top-flight Gospel groups.

The entertainment began with a performance by the newly formed Louis Gregory Bahá’í Choir composed of area believers representing a wide range of ages.

Following the Gregory Choir on stage were the Andrews Community Choir, Sam and the Exciting Linen Singers, the Super Bowl of Gospel (three groups), and the Brown Brothers.

At the conclusion of the program, which continued until after midnight, Gospel singers and members of the audience carrying lighted candles formed a circle of unity around the large tent and sang songs of peace.

Then Dr. William Roberts, an Auxiliary Board member from Springfield, Massachusetts, read prayers of unity from the Bahá’í Writings.

On Saturday, Dr. Robert Henderson, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, was the first speaker during
Dr. Robert C. Henderson, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, addresses the audience at Peace Fest '87.

an inter-religious panel discussion on religion's role in bringing about peace.

Dr. Henderson told the audience of about 200 that we must move beyond the artificial separation of people based on skin color and achieve the unity of races "at the kitchen table and on the sofa."

In describing the need to eliminate the disparity of rich and poor, he used as an illustration the disaster which befell the S.S. Titanic in 1912, pointing out that although there were both rich and poor passengers on the ill-fated ship, its sinking took the lives of both the wealthy and those of more modest means.

Referring to humanity as a whole, Dr. Henderson said, "If there's a hole in the boat, we will all go down."

Other prerequisites to peace that must be addressed, he said, include elimination of the inequality between men and women, the need for universal education, and elimination of unbridled nationalism and religious strife.

The second speaker on the panel, which was moderated by Dr. Roberts, was Dr. Howard McClain, a research fellow at the Institute for Southern Studies at the University of South Carolina, who spoke of peace efforts being developed within the Southern Baptist Assembly.

Pastors must give peace a continuing emphasis, he said, and their congregations must pick up this rhetoric.

Love conquers all, but hatred destroys all in its path, said the third speaker, Imam Hakim Abdu'll-Ali, a Sunni Muslim and head of the Islamic Society of Charleston.

The Imam used the example of a relay race to explain that in order to
overcome racism, people must pass the baton of love from one person to another, and emphasized the role of religion in the peace process by using quotations from the Qu'ran.

Later in the program, Dr. Roy Jones, director of the Louis Gregory Bahá'í Institute, presented the Institute's first Peace Award to Attorney General Travis Medlock, recognizing his initiative in working to eliminate drug abuse in South Carolina through the "Be Free to Succeed" program.

The plaque was accepted for Mr. Medlock by deputy Attorney General Robert Cook, who spoke favorably about the Faith's strong anti-drug position.

The "Be Free to Succeed" program was described to the audience by Casey Manning, an assistant to the Attorney General and former star basketball player at the University of South Carolina who heads the state's drug task force.

This final day of Peace Fest '87 included an international buffet luncheon with outstanding cuisine from five continents for all those attending, and entertainment by the Ihu African Drummers and Umoja Dancers from Charleston; the Atlanta Bahá'í Youth Workshop; "Bahá'í Brothers," a youth rap presentation by young believers from Kingstree and Florence; and music by a rock band known as The Educators.

The Gregory Institute received from Gov. Carroll Campbell Jr. of South Carolina a proclamation designating September 14-20 as "Peace Week" in the state.

It was estimated that about 85 percent of the 800 people who attended all or a part of Peace Fest '87 were not Bahá'ís.
AMS holds 12th gathering at Princeton

More than 350 people gathered October 22-25 in Princeton, New Jersey, for the 12th annual Conference of the Association for Bahá’í Studies.

The focus of this year’s event was the “Converging Realities” of science, religion and the humanities.

Featured speakers at the plenary sessions presented papers on various topics which were later discussed by panels of respondents.

Among the speakers were two members of the Continental Board of Counsellors in the Americas: Dr. Farzam Arbab, director of FUNDEAC, an educational and rural development program in Cali, Colombia; and Donald Rogers, a professor of fine arts at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Canada.

Other featured speakers included:

- Dr. Ervin Laszlo, director of the World Peace Encyclopedia.
- Douglas Martin, director general of the Office of Public Information at the Bahá’í World Centre in Haifa, Israel.
- Dr. Anatol Rapoport, Peace Chair professor at the University of Toronto, Canada, and president of Science for Peace.
- Dr. June Thomas, an Auxiliary Board member in the U.S. and associate professor in the Urban Planning Program at Michigan State University.
- Dr. Lowell W. Livezey, director of the undergraduate program at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University.
- Dr. Karl H. Pribram of the Department of Psychology, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University.
- Dr. Hossain B. Danesh, chairman of the executive committee of the Association for Bahá’í Studies and secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada.
- Dr. George Land of Paradise Valley, Arizona, a general systems theorist and Senior Fellow at the University of Minnesota.
- Dr. William Hatcher, professor of mathematics at Laval University, Quebec, and chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada.
- Dr. Ross Woodman, professor of literature at the University of Western Ontario, London.
- John Fobes of Washington, D.C., a member of the Club of Rome.

The Conference was preceded by the annual Members’ Meeting, which was chaired by Dr. Hatcher and attended by 155 people who were treated to two hours of lively consultation.

Plenary sessions were held at Richardson Auditorium in Princeton’s Alexander Hall.

At the first of these, Dr. Danesh presented a welcoming address, then introduced Dr. Livezey and Camm McGuire, a member of the Princeton University Bahá’í Club, both of whom welcomed everyone on behalf of the university.

The plenary sessions were divided into six areas of discussion.

The first of these, entitled “Unity in Diversity: Models for a New World Order,” included an untitled talk by Dr. Laszlo, and “Unity in Diversity: The Bahá’í Model for a New World Order” by Mr. Martin.

Both talks looked at the Bahá’í community as an example for society in building a new World Order.

Dr. Laszlo focused on key problems
in building such a new society. "I see tremendous potential in the Bahá'í Faith," he said, "which could trigger cultural and sociological change, leading us not to war but toward integration—unity in diversity."

Respondents to those papers included Dr. Livezey and Dr. Arbáb who joined the speakers on a panel that addressed questions from the floor.

The second session was on "Overcoming Institutional Violence: Beyond War, Racism and the Denial of Human Rights."

Papers were presented by Dr. Rapoport ("The Redemption of Science") and Dr. Thomas ("Poverty and Racism in Urban America")

Dr. Livezey then presented a paper on "The Role of Human Rights Organizations."

Respondents to these presentations were Dr. Robert C. Henderson, secretary of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly, and Dr. Wil C. van den Hoonaaard, a professor of sociology at the University of New Brunswick, Canada.

In the third session, entitled "New Perspectives on the Nature of Human Reality," Dr. Pribram spoke on "The Brain: Where Converging Realities Meet," and Dr. Danesh on "From Dualism to Integration: The Convergence of Body and Soul."

Respondents were Dr. Rapoport and Dr. Hatcher.

Three speakers then addressed the topic "The Convergence of the Scientific and the Spiritual": Dr. Land ("The Evolution of Reality: A Transformational View of Science and Spirit"); Dr. Hatcher ("Platonism and Pragmatism"); and Dr. Woodman ("In the Beginning Was the Word").

The respondents were Dr. Pribram, Dr. Laszlo and Dr. Glen Eyford, a professor in the Department of Adult Education and Developmental Studies at the University of Alberta, Canada.

The fifth session was devoted entirely to an audio-visual presentation by Counsellor Rogers entitled "Art and Spiritual Education" during which he pointed out that, in this Dispensation, the work of an artist in service to humanity has been elevated to the level of worship.

The final session, on "The Human Agenda: An Exchange with the Club of Rome," included talks by Dr. Laszlo, Dr. Arbáb and Mr. Fobes.

The respondents were Dr. Thomas and Dr. Tapio Varis, rector at the United Nations University for Peace in Escazu, Costa Rica.

Talks on four topics were given in simultaneous sessions:

- "Esperanto vs. English as an International Auxiliary Language" by John T. Dale Jr., a lawyer from Falls Church, Virginia.
- "Resurgence, Convergence and Synthesis" presented by Sheila Banani on behalf of its author, Betty Hoff Conow of Hacienda Heights, California, who was unable to attend the Conference because of illness.
- Mrs. Banani is a member of the executive committee of the Association for Bahá'í Studies; Mrs. Conow is the author of Bahá'í: A Resurgent Model of the Universe.
- "Dilemmas and Prospects of Writing a Bahá'í Encyclopedia" by Dr. van den Hoonaaard.
- "The Tao of the Middle East" by Amrollah Hemmat of Great Falls, Virginia.

An awards presentation was held to honor those whose papers submitted to the Association showed particular excellence in Bahá'í scholarship.

• University category: Elham Afnan for "The Good of the World and the Happiness of the Nations: A Study of..."
Modern Utopian and Dystopian Literature.


- General category: Dr. van den Hoonard for his paper, "Development and Decline of an Early Canadian Bahá'í Community: St. John, New Brunswick, 1910-1925."

A Saturday evening concert, "The Moving Spirit," which was open to the public as well as to Conference participants, included performances by Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í artists.


Following them were an all-male vocal group, "The Nassoons," and an all-female group, "The Tigressions," both composed of Princeton students.

Also performing were two members of the Princeton Mime Workshop who presented skits with such titles as "Mental Floss" and "Dueling Zen."

Later, Juliet Be Ofiro Menkata, a student at Princeton, read her moving poem entitled "Of War and Peace."

Other Bahá'ís who entertained at the Conference included pianists Jack Lenz of Goodwood, Ontario, Mark Ochu of St. Cloud, Minnesota, and Matthew Freeman of Marlow, Buckinghamshire, England; vocalists Carol Rustein of Amherst, Massachusetts, and Nancy Ackerman of Scarborough, Ontario; and violinist Farzad Khozein of Benbrook, Texas.

Those at the Conference especially enjoyed a performance by the newly formed "Bahá'í Studies Choir" made up of courageous members of the audience who, directed by Mr. Freeman and accompanied by Mr. Lenz, presented a spirited rendition of Mr. Lenz' and Doug Cameron's composition, "Let It Be This Generation."

In the past several years, the Association for Bahá'í Studies has established nine professional interest groups within its membership: agriculture, the arts, consultation and conflict resolution, environmental design, health, intercultural issues, marriage and the family, science and technology, and women's studies.

On October 22, immediately preceding the opening of the 12th annual Conference of the Association, eight of these groups held seminars in Princeton at the Nassau Inn and Hyatt Regency Hotel.

Attendance at these sub-group sessions ranged from about 10 to more than 30.

Papers submitted to the Bahá'í Institute on Agriculture's session related to the development of an effective, just and sustainable system of agriculture at the local, national and global levels.

The Institute for the Arts welcomed the participation in its session of Counsellor Donald Rogers, a professor of fine arts at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Canada.

A meeting was held to discuss the promotion and development of the Institute for the Arts.
stitute for the Arts, which was established to provide a forum in which to explore the relationship of the Bahá'í Revelation to the artistic process and artistic expression.

The seminar held by the Institute for Environmental Design included a talk by Fariburz Sahba, project manager for the Universal House of Justice, on the construction of the Bahá'í House of Worship in India, for which he served as chief architect.

That seminar was combined in midday with the arts seminar. Members of each group shared ideas about how to promote the Bahá'í teachings through their work.

Included in the seminar on Consultation and Conflict Resolution were presentations by Steven Angell of Boston, Massachusetts; Rick Johnson of Winfield, Kansas; Pamela and Dennis Johnson of Eau Claire, Wisconsin; Ted Amsden of Detroit, Michigan; John Cornell of Reedley, California; and Nancy Moore of Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The session conducted by the International Health Agency was geared toward "Current Issues in Health Care."

The keynote address on primary health care was given by John LeBlanc in collaboration with Dr. Ethel Martens.

The Intercultural Issues group, formed within the past year, did not hold a seminar at the Conference.

The session on Marriage and the Family featured talks by Nosrat Peseshkian of Wiesbaden, West Germany ("The Principles of Positive Psychotherapy and Their Applications to Marriage") and Dr. Victor de Araujo of New York City ("The Family and the Family of Nations: A Discussion of the UN Work on the Family").

The seminar on Science and Technology was designed to encourage a dialogue between science and religion, to advance the understanding of technology and its role in the new World Order, and to foster respect and appreciation for the Faith in scientific circles.

At the seminar, Dr. William Hatch er, chairman of the National Spiritual
Assembly of Canada, presented a paper titled “Science, Myth and Reality.”

Other talks were given by Michel Duguay of Quebec, Canada; Azar Majidi of Newark, Delaware; Ishrat Naqvi of Regina, Saskatchewan; Gilbert Bartholomew of Deep River, Ontario; and Brian Aull of Lexington, Massachusetts.

The seminar on Women’s Studies was focused on issues relating to the equality of men and women, women’s studies as an academic discipline, and the role of women in establishing peace.

The speakers included:
- Hoda Mahmoudi of Santa Monica, California (“‘Bahá’í Concepts of Equality: Exploration and Interpretation” and “From Oppression to Equality: The Emergence of a Feminist Perspective”).
- June Remignante of Eliot, Maine (“Women, the Primary Educators: Meaning and Application in Light of the Bahá’í Concept of Equality” and “Being a Primary Educator: First Principles in a Global Context”).

Respondents to those talks included Elizabeth and Michael Rochester of St. Johns, Newfoundland; Richard DaBell of Santa Monica, California; and Badiyyih Nakhjavani of Washington, D.C.

Two new interest groups were established at the Conference. One will focus on the study of economics, the other on education.
Nearly 1,200 at Green Lake Conference

The nearly 1,200 people who gathered September 18-20 for the 28th annual Green Lake Bahá'í Conference at the American Baptist Assembly center in Green Lake, Wisconsin, were asked to “Please Use the Service Entrance” because, as the 75th anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá’s historic visit to North America was being celebrated across the country, living a life of service to the Cause as exemplified by the Master was the central theme of the world’s largest annual Bahá’í conference.

Bahá’ís and their guests enjoyed talks by a number of outstanding speakers, and attended a variety of optional Saturday afternoon sessions, each of which concerned some aspect of service to the Cause of God.

In helping the friends to prepare themselves for service, Counsellor Robert Harris quoted the late Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'lláh Muhájjir: “Don’t wait until it’s convenient to serve. The opportunities will not be there if you wait.

“The day will come when you’ll be ready to serve the Faith; you’ll go to the Bahá’í Center and say, ‘Please, let me sweep the floor!’ And you’ll be told, ‘Sorry, all the brooms are busy now!’

“We have the vision,” Counsellor Harris added, “the dream of world peace, and we have the Source of power to bring it about.

“We must serve mankind; give the world this dream that’s in our hearts. Let’s do it now, because when we feel like doing it, all the brooms may be busy.”

Other featured speakers at Green Lake were Dr. Jane Faily, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada; Auxiliary Board member Morris Taylor; Ernestine Berkey, representing the Bahá’í National Committee on Women; Dr. Manuchehr Derakhshani, secretary of the National Persian/American Affairs Committee; and Dr. Daryush Haghighi, a Trustee of the Huququlláh.

Dr. Faily, speaking on “Servitude,” observed that we have been given the opportunity to serve during the Six Year Plan, 1986-1992, which coincides with the hundredth anniversary of the last six years of Bahá’u’lláh’s life.

During that time, she said, Bahá’u’lláh had left the prison-city of ‘Akka and was living in the mansion of Bahji, where He wrote the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, a warning to the people, calling them to account.

“The Universal House of Justice,” she said, “has said that the Faith has emerged from obscurity. Even as Bahá’u’lláh left the Most Great Prison, we have now emerged from the prison of obscurity.

“In ‘The Promise of World Peace,’ the House of Justice addresses the peoples of the world, repeating the warnings given by Bahá’u’lláh. Like Bahá’u’lláh, Who summed the people to achieve their salvation, the Universal House of Justice summons the people of the world to achieve peace.

“The old world order is crumbling around us. We have been given the opportunity to serve before the establishment of the Lesser Peace. We have a chance to respond to the agony of a world torn by racism. Let us seize this path of service; let us long to be servants!”

Mr. Taylor spoke about the possibilities of extraordinary Bahá’í communities, describing the unique and impressive nature of the Bahá’í world community.

“When we look at the big picture,”

Counsellor Robert Harris conducts a class on ‘The Covenant’ during the 28th annual Green Lake Bahá’í Conference.
he said, "what we are able to achieve seems quite incredible, yet on the local level, the global perspective is not always apparent to the friends."

The challenge before us now, he said, is to use that power inherent in the Faith to do things that are "a little less spectacular," in other words, to meet the challenges we deal with every day in the local community.

"Through the development of healthy Bahá'í communities, building and maintaining strong relationships, and nurturing a distinctive Bahá'í spirit in our large and diverse family," said Mr. Taylor, "we can demonstrate to the world that our vision is indeed becoming a reality."

Mrs. Berkey's two addresses were entitled "Service Above and Beyond the Call" and "The Maidservants of Bahá'u'lláh."

We need to ask ourselves, she said, "how we can best serve to help bring about the maturity of the Faith."

"It would be nice," she added, "if, as the Faith emerges from obscurity, we as Bahá'ís would follow it and emerge also."

In addition to the speakers, the main sessions included entertainment and two splendid audio-visual presentations.

Anne Atkinson of Wilmette, Illinois, delighted everyone with "The Lotus," a slide presentation on the House of
Worship in India produced by Charles Nolley at the Bahá’í National Center, while Ben Levy of Lake Mary, Florida, presented a compilation of slides on “The Guardian: A Life of Service.”

The Green Lake bookstore included many new titles as well as new editions of old favorites.

A series of “peace posters” made by children was displayed, and a new feature was a slide presentation on “Service at the Bahá’í National Center,” produced by its Department of Human Resources.

This year’s 16 optional Saturday afternoon sessions were given titles which aptly described various ways in which to serve.

Counsellor Harris also addressed a special session for youth, saying today’s young people feel they are living in “Disney World.”

“They need to be allowed to travel to other countries where they can truly experience life,” he said. “They need to be shown those who are truly in need, so that their Bahá’í hearts can respond to that need and they can learn how to serve.”

The younger children took part in a variety of activities including a “nature hike.” They enjoyed an afternoon in the kitchen baking cookies and a large “bread-person” which was the hit of their Sunday morning party, at which they shared the products of their endeavors.

The musical presentations at Green Lake are always splendid, and this year was no exception.

The friends enjoyed music by guitarist Mark Spittal; singers Phyllis Peterson, Becky Rice, Jill Simon, George Davis, Donna Kime, and “Songstone,” a quartet from Milwaukee, Wisconsin; pianist Mark Ochu; and the santour-piano duo of Kiu Haghighi and Rosamond Brenner.

Also greatly appreciated were eloquent speeches by three young Bahá’ís, Erin Bodan, Errol Doris Jr. and Saba Firoozi; and dramatic performances by Anne Atkinson, Michelle Broussard and Gregory Gaboo.

Following Saturday evening’s session, many of the friends gathered at the Green Lake Barn for a gala dance and costume party, “Everybody Loves Saturday Knight,” whose theme was medieval but whose music was definitely modern.

Many of the friends came dressed as their favorite medieval “pun,” and enjoyed dancing and fellowship far into the “knight.”
Fostering equality between the sexes was the focus of consultation held August 14-15 at the Bahá'í International Community's offices in New York City at which members of the United Nations Representative's Office and the Public Information Office staff met with representatives of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Canada and the United States. Also taking part were several development specialists who contributed to the effort to set agendas and establish relationships among Bahá'í agencies on the issue of the advancement of women.

The Bahá'í International Community has established the topic of equality of men and women as a top priority for the remainder of the Six Year Plan. A recent focus statement from the BIC says in part: "...There are no grounds, moral, practical or biological, upon which the denial of full equality between the sexes can be justified. Reflecting the key role which the Bahá'í teachings envision women playing in the achievement of world peace, the Community will give a high priority to this aspect of its work."

The session in New York marked the first attempt to address that statement, and was judged by participants to be extremely successful. Topics raised included:
- The importance of men's activities in bringing about equality between the sexes.
- The need to identify specialists and institutions within the worldwide Bahá'í community to assist efforts at the UN and elsewhere.
- The importance of focusing the Bahá'í International Community's efforts on the Third World where needs are clear and immediate.
- The need to promote scholarly study of women's issues within and outside the Bahá'í community.

Those taking part in the consultation were Dr. Victor de Araujo, Mary Sawicki and Paul Ojermark of the BIC's UN Office; Counsellor Wilma Brady, administrator-general of the New York and Geneva offices of the BIC; Giovanni Ballerio from the Geneva office; Hugh Locke and Brad Pokorny of the Office of Public Information; Nancy Ackerman from the Bahá'í National Center of Canada; Wallace Carter from the U.S. Bahá'í Office of Public Affairs; Dr. Jane Faily, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada; special consultants Thelma Khelghati, Mona Grieser and Betty de Araujo; and Sara Harrington and Claudia Gold from the BIC office in New York.

Pictured during its dedication ceremony last February 28 is the Muhájir Institute building at the Guaymi Cultural Center in Boca de Soloy, Panama. About 3,000 Guaymies attended with representatives of the government of Panama, general chiefs from three provinces, and people from nine indigenous tribes in six countries. The entire ceremony was broadcast live on radio.

Leeward Islands

Antigua was host last August 10-15 to the first Bahá'í Caribbean Youth Conference.

Thirty-one young people from 13 countries were joined at the conference by Counsellor Donald Rogers of Canada who was present for much of the consultation and shared the Counsellors' aspirations for the Caribbean youth.

The main topic of discussion was the goals of the Six Year Plan. The problems and rewards of teaching were also discussed in depth.
To emphasize the importance of world peace and the peace message from the Universal House of Justice, the Spiritual Assembly of Utsonomiya, Japan, sponsored its third annual World Peace Day celebration September 20. The barbecue picnic, followed by a 'Mini Peace Expo,' was attended by 60 people, 37 of whom were not Bahá'ís. Besides the Mini Expo, the program included prayers, songs and messages of peace.

The Bridge to World Peace' was the theme of Japan's 1987 Bahá'í Summer School, held August 7-9 on the island of Shikoku and attended by 105 Bahá'ís and 10 guests.

Appropriately, the lovely setting in the hills outside the city was in full view of "The Great Bridge Over the Inland Sea," a 13-km bridge under construction that will introduce rail and vehicular transport between Shikoku and the main island of Honshu.

The mayor of Takamatsu, Nobuo Waki, attended an evening program at the school and gave a sympathetic talk on the prospects for world peace.

Mayor Waki has helped the Bahá'ís many times since receiving a copy of the peace statement.

On August 21-26, the Bahá'ís of Nishi Cugoku, Japan, staged an International Peace Festival in one of the largest shopping centers in Yamaguchi Prefecture, leading to good public exposure for the Faith and the enrollments of one adult, three youth and four children.

An exhibit included UNICEF panels illustrating the present condition of the world; panels with excerpts from the peace statement; hand-made illustrations of the principles of the Faith; Japanese haiku poems on themes of peace; photographs of Bahá'í Holy Places, Houses of Worship, and Bahá'í activities around the world; 90 pictures on peace themes drawn by kindergarten children; lovely traditional Japanese flower arrangements; peace banners, flags and postcards from the Australian Bahá'í Peace Expo; and a display of Bahá'í books.

In addition to the extensive display, far during the campaign are members of local government, school teachers and principals, physicians and postmasters.

The National Spiritual Assembly has appointed a Regional Teaching Committee to help consolidate these victories.

Sri Lanka

Every locality in one administrative district of Sri Lanka was opened to the Faith by the Anwer Cadir Teaching Project which began in January 1987 in the Kegalle District.

The campaign, named in honor of an early Bahá'í in Sri Lanka who died in 1981, was begun by the Anwer Cadir family and is funded and supported by local Bahá'ís.

One special aspect of the campaign has been the consistent effort to contact local officials, proclaim the Faith, and deliver copies of the peace statement before proceeding to teach in the villages. As a result, in some cases these same dignitaries have embraced the Faith.

Among the 217 people enrolled so far during the campaign are members of local government, school teachers and principals, physicians and postmasters.

The National Spiritual Assembly has appointed a Regional Teaching Committee to help consolidate these victories.

Spain

One hundred-seventy Persian-speaking Bahá'ís, some from other countries, met recently in Liria, Spain, for the first Persian Bahá'í School to be held in that country.

Counsellor Adib Taherzadeh was present, and a special message from the National Spiritual Assembly was read.
Poland

The 72nd Universal Esperanto Congress was held July 25-August 1 in Warsaw, Poland, the birthplace of Dr. Ludwig Zamenhof (1859-1917) who invented the Esperanto language 100 years ago.

Forty-five Baha’is from 16 countries were among the 6,000 Esperantists, mostly from Eastern Europe, who attended the Congress. The Baha’is came principally from Europe—Belgium, France, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom—with the largest group, 19, coming from the Federal Republic of Germany. Other countries represented by the Baha’is were the Central African Republic, Iceland, Japan, Togo, and the United States.

Dr. Wendy Heller, author of Lidia: The Life of Lidia Zamenhof, Daughter of Esperanto, presented a talk at which some 750 people were given copies of an article by Dr. Zamenhof’s daughter, Lidia, entitled “Bahaiismo: Religio de Paco.” Another meeting, which included a slide program and discussion of the Faith, drew an audience of 250.

Members of the administrative committee of Baha’i Esperanto-Ligo arranged for an information desk and display of Baha’i publications in Esperanto in the main hall of the Palace of Science and Culture in Warsaw, and also arranged for the sale of Baha’i literature at the official Congress bookshop. About 3,000 copies of “The Pathway to Peace” were given out as well as 4,000 copies of a shortened version of the Universal House of Justice’s peace statement. In all, some 5,000 Baha’i books in Esperanto were either sold or presented as gifts.

Reports from several participants agree on the overwhelming interest shown in the official Baha’i exhibit, observing that serious inquiries about the Faith had never before been so numerous at an Esperanto Congress.

Plans are under way for Baha’i participation in the next Universal Congress to be held in Rotterdam in 1988.

The 43rd Esperanto Youth Congress, held July 17-24 in Krakow, Poland, was attended by about 1,500 people from countries around the world. Among them were 13 Baha’is from Europe and two from Africa.

The Baha’i youth met several times during the Congress for prayers and consultation.

On the morning of July 19, a lecture to be given on the Faith was announced at the plenary session. About 100 people came to hear the talk by Dietrich Weidmann, and afterward asked many interesting questions.

One of the Congress-goers noted during the International Evening that the Baha’i group was the only one comprised of people of various races.

Costa Rica

Five Baha’i professionals visited Costa Rica last July to take part in a seminar on Family Education for Peace at the University for Peace in San Jose.

Dr. Hossain Danesh, a psychiatrist from Canada who is secretary of that country’s National Spiritual Assembly, read a paper titled “Educational Dynamics in the Family and their Impact on Raising Peace-Loving Children.”

Other Baha’is who presented papers on related topics were Dr. John Woodall, a psychiatrist from California; Mrs. Meredith Norwood, a school psychologist from Texas; Dr. Homa Mahmoudi, a sociologist from California; and Dr. Richard DaBell, a clinical psychologist, also from California.

More than 200 people, less than half of whom were Baha’is, attended the lecture series, which was co-sponsored by the Society of Friends (Quakers).

At a public meeting at the Baha’i National Center, Mrs. Norwood spoke on “The Family as Peace-Maker.”

The Baha’i National Education Committee sponsored a one-day Family Life Institute which drew about 90 people including several Guaymi and Bri-Bri Indians. Dr. Woodall spoke on “Youth and the Vision of Love.”

Also speaking at that session were Auxiliary Board member Richard Mirkovich (“Decision-Making in Marriage”) and Dr. Danesh (“Raising Peaceful Children”).

News of the seminar was carried on Peace Satellite Radio, and five newspapers in San Jose publicized the Baha’i-sponsored events held in conjunction with the peace seminar.
USSR

Three Bahá'ís were among the 2,000 women who attended the World Congress of Women held June 23-27 in Moscow, which was called to follow up the Nairobi Conference of 1985 to assess progress in the “Forward-Looking Strategies” adopted at that time. The theme of the Moscow conference was “Toward 2000 Without Nuclear Weapons! For Peace, Equality, and Development!”

Lois Hainsworth, a member of the Bahá'í community of Great Britain, was the sole Observer for the National Council of Women of Great Britain. Also attending were two American women, Juana Conrad and Dr. Homa Mahmoudi, both from California.

Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev addressed the Congress at its opening session in the Kremlin Palace.

It is women, he said, who more fully and feelingly perceive the absolute priority that preserving peace has above everything else.

“The status of women,” said Mr. Gorbachev, “is a barometer of the level of democracy of any state, an indicator of how much respect is given to human rights. Women have taken up the cause of peace in earnest. And they are a great, inspiring, creative and wonderful force.”

No resolutions were made at the Congress and no votes taken. The floor was open to anyone who wished to speak at all Commissions and Topic Centre meetings, which participants were free to attend at will.

While the three Bahá'í women attended different meetings during the five-day Congress, all attended a session on Religious Women which surprised the organizers by drawing 150 women to a room where only 24 or so had been expected.

New Zealand

Bahá'í men in New Zealand emulated their Bahá'í sisters by gathering in “a growing spirit of unity” in the heart of the tribal area of Ngati Tuwharetoa where the first National Women's Hui (Conference) was held in February 1987.

Participants reported that they are “learning to take our rightful place in an ever-advancing civilization.”

Fiji

The Lomaivuna Bahá'í Kindergarten opened its doors last July 28 as an official school registered with the Fiji Department of Education.

The school, founded by Philippa Waisu with help from Moce Waisu, had been functioning for nearly five years in an unofficial capacity as a pre-school.

Moce Waisu now teaches at the school while working on pre-school teacher training at an extension of the University of the South Pacific.

A traditional “Sevu Sevu” ceremony was held at the inauguration, to which parents and children were invited.

A government pre-school field officer, the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, and the National Assembly’s education coordinator—all women—were seated in positions of honor, entertained by the children, and served the traditional kava by the men of Lomaivuna.

One participant noted that, considering the Fijian culture, it was significant that men were serving women in this age-old ceremony of respect and welcome.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Fiji hopes to open one new pre-school during each year of the Six Year Plan.

Nigeria

Members of the 'Bahá'í Peace Makers,' a football (soccer) team from Oghara, Nigeria, are introduced to the general manager of a local industry that sponsored the team during a local government soccer competition last June. The company provided red jerseys bearing the team's name and a nine-pointed star. The Peace Makers lost in the semifinals but won the hearts of many through their good sportsmanship.
UN expresses ‘grave concern’ over violations of human rights in Iran . . . . 1
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On December 7, the United Nations General Assembly approved a resolution that expresses its "grave concern" over allegations of continued human rights violations in Iran.

The measure, which was passed by a vote of 64-22, mentions specifically Iran's persecution of Bahá'ís and calls for a continued investigation of the human rights situation in Iran.

The Bahá'í International Community was quick to praise the General Assembly for its action.

"This makes clear that the world community refuses to accept the Iranian government's ongoing persecution of the Bahá'ís," said Paul Ojermark, a Bahá'í representative at the United Nations. "It will be a great comfort to the Bahá'ís in Iran to know that they have not been forgotten."

Such international support, he said, "is the only means of security for the 300,000 Bahá'ís in Iran.

"Persecuted solely for their religious beliefs, the Bahá'ís are treated as 'non-persons' by the Iranian government and have no protection under that country's constitution, an open door to genocide."

Resolutions such as this one, said Mr. Ojermark, "tell the Iranian government that it cannot abuse its Bahá'í citizens with impunity.

"We believe that this kind of support has been a key factor in preventing the wholesale elimination of the Bahá'í community of Iran. Co-sponsors and member-states who supported the resolution have our deepest gratitude."

The General Assembly vote followed approval of the resolution two weeks earlier by the UN's Third Committee.

That committee, which is composed of the entire membership of the General Assembly, concerns itself with social issues including human rights.
Community development

Bahá’í community as model for change

Evolutionary thinking permeates the literature of the Bahá’í Faith and, from its beginning, has influenced the worldview and practice of the Bahá’í community. The community’s experience as an evolving global society is examined. Its organic nature and unique system of organization are described with special reference to the dynamic interrelations between the processes of change and constancy operating in its evolution. These processes are illustrated by reference to the observed elasticity of administrative functioning, the relationship between member and community, the response it has made worldwide to external threat in the form of the current wave of persecution directed against its members in Iran, and the nature of the community’s expansion.

The 1985 statement on peace issued by the Universal House of Justice, the international governing body of the Bahá’í Faith, has been well described as an example of evolutionary thinking. By specifying the attainment by humanity of its maturity and unity as essential prerequisites to peace, the document links the realization, indeed the inevitability, of peace to the overall direction of historical development toward a global unity. The method of approach it outlines accords with the mode of historical development by underscoring the possibility of consciously choosing action alternatives that are consonant with evolution’s preferred direction, thereby determining the course of the coming bifurcation.

Evolutionary concepts permeate Bahá’í literature and practice. We will examine here the experience of the Bahá’í community as an evolving global society in microcosm, with special attention to the principles and mechanisms of change and constancy that operate in the evolution of this community. In order to provide a context for this discussion, it is necessary to address briefly the question of the over-all direction of historical development.

Laszlo and others have identified patterns in history that are consistent with the general direction and the dominant dynamics of the evolution of life in the biosphere and of matter in the cosmos. The pattern indicated is irreversible, progressive but non-linear, with fluctuations yet an over-all ascending tendency. Teilhard de Chardin conceptualized the evolving organization of humankind on the planet as moving toward a “single, major organic unity.”

The writings of the founder of the Bahá’í Faith likewise view the progress of history in terms of the evolution, through stages of infancy and adolescence to adulthood, of increasing levels of human capacity and maturity. This evolution toward maturity has its counterpart in the increasingly complex organization of human society which, starting with the family in primitive times, has evolved successively into the tribe, the city-state and the nation. The culmination of this process is the unification of the whole world which will signalize the “coming of age of the entire human race” and mark “the last and highest stage in the ... evolution of man’s collective life on this planet.”

Bahá’ís ascribe a civilizing function to religion. To them, the course of history is, in large part, shaped by intermittent providential intervention within the historical process itself. The Bahá’í concept of progressive revelation establishes the major pattern of history to consist of the advent of divine educators, the founders of the world’s great religious systems, and the advance in civilization their appearance evokes. Their seminal teachings and creative impulse, when translated into constructive action, unlock individual potential and stimulate social development. Bahá’u’lláh, the founder of the Bahá’í Faith, whose teachings are designed to promote global unity and world order, is the most recent of these educators, and as such, fits into this historical process.

The Bahá’í community—an organism

The Bahá’í community consists of some three to four million people drawn from diverse nations, cultures, classes and creeds engaged in a wide variety of activities serving the spiritual, social and economic needs of the peoples of many lands. It is a global community which, far from seeing itself as already complete and self-sufficient, is embarked on an infinite series of experiments at the local, national and international levels in its efforts to realize the vision of mankind’s oneness which it finds in the writings of its founder. It has been described as “a

This paper, “The Bahá’í Community as a Model for Social Change,” was written by Dr. Janet Khan of the Research Department at the Bahá’í World Centre in Haifa, Israel, and was presented last June at the 31st annual meeting of the International Society for General Systems Research in Budapest, Hungary.
single social organism, representative of the diversity of the human family, conducting its affairs through a system of commonly accepted consultative principles.

As an organic unit, the community’s functioning is characterized by a holistic orientation toward growth, the interdependence of its elements, an increasing complexity, diversity and order associated with maturation, and the development of new functions arising from the transformation and reorganization of the elements within the system.

A unique feature of the Bahá’í community is its system of organization which functions both to increase its cohesion and facilitate its expansion. The system, known as the Bahá’í Administrative Order, derives its legitimacy, its prescribed structure, and the procedures for its formation, perpetuation and operation from the writings of the Bahá’í Faith. It is viewed as representing the nucleus and pattern of a new social order destined to bring about the unification of mankind. The principal institutions of the Administrative Order already exist and function as an integral part of the international Bahá’í community. In brief, they comprise elected assemblies of consultation operating at the local, national and international levels of society, and include institutions, devoid of decision-making power, that function in a stimulatory, counseling and advisory role to the community.

The institutions of the Administrative Order are organic in nature and operate with the consciousness of evolutionary patterns. For example, in relation to the elected assemblies, it is envisaged that they will add to their present functions those powers, duties and prerogatives commensurate with the growing maturity of the community and its increasing interaction with the world at large.

The dynamic relationship between constancy and change

The Bahá’í social order accommodates change and constancy within the over-all limits of preserving the unity and identity of the community. On the one hand, the spiritual principles, laws and teachings of the Faith, and the pattern of the Administrative Order constitute the bases for the maintenance of order. On the other, progress, which is characterized as one of the “ordinances of God,” is an important value and underlies the Bahá’í worldview.

In relation to the nature of Bahá’í law, while certain fundamental principles remain unchanged until recast by the next divine educator, subsidiary laws may be modified according to the exigencies of time and local conditions. Similarly, spiritual principles designed to produce stability promote change by inducing an attitude, an aspiration, which facilitates the discovery of practical solutions to social problems. In addition, while the pattern of the Administrative Order is specified, given the organic nature of its institutions, and the organic nature of the Bahá’í community itself, there is flexibility both in the way it evolves and the manner in which its provisions are implemented.

In broad behavioral terms, change is promoted through such means as the exercise of individual will and effort, through education, the transformation of individual and group behavior to accord with spiritual principle, cooperative activity, the practice of consultation as a means of group decision-making, and the fostering of diversity within the framework of unity and reciprocity.

The mechanisms promoting constancy and change within the Bahá’í community are inextricably linked. Some examples will serve to illustrate the complexity of the interrelationship:

1. There is an elasticity observed in the functioning of the 32,000 elected assemblies that are operating in towns and villages throughout the world. These institutions are charged with stimulating, unifying and coordinating the activities of the Faith in their particular area of jurisdiction. While conforming to the essential over-all pattern of the Administrative Order, the actual practice of these assemblies will depend on their levels of development and experience, and on the cultural context of their activities. Both the intellectual and the illiterate can function effectively as members of such institutions. The existence of the pattern ensures basic unity in administrative activity. It also permits and fosters maximum diversity by accommodating the backgrounds and needs of the participants rather than reducing all to one common denominator. In addition, adherence to pattern encourages decentralization of governance, increases responsiveness to the grass-roots, encourages local initiative, and strengthens the degree of interdependence with the Bahá’í community as a whole. The manner in which this pattern operates is somewhat reminiscent of the operation of linguistic rules. Such rules not only facilitate orderly communication but also open up “new realms of activity.”

The processes outlined above are clearly demonstrated in the involvement of growing numbers of local assemblies in projects of social and economic development. Such projects are initiated in the local area. They are the outgrowth of the consultative process, responsive to grass-roots needs, and employ local resources. When local resources are insufficient, because of the organic nature of the Bahá’í community as a whole, the local assembly may draw from the larger pool of resources and expertise, available at the national and international levels.

2. The relationship between the individual member and the community provides another cogent example. Both the individual and the community are motivated by a common set of values, endeavor to act in accord with those values, and are open to input from outside the system. The values and actions of each are potentially mutually supportive and reinforcing. The development of individual talents, abilities and increased capacity accrue to the benefit of the community. Similarly, the development of the community reinforces and further encourages individual initiative. The outcome is the enrichment of both individual and community and the possibility of more complex activity consistent with the greater maturity and availability of diversified resources.

The concerted efforts of the Bahá’í community and its individual members to achieve full equality between the sexes is an example of the operation of the processes described above. Individuals strive to put the principle of equality into practice in their daily lives. The community supports such efforts by arranging activities to focus attention on the importance of the principle and by harnessing the newly developed skills of both women and men.
for the service of the community.

3. Since its inception, the Bahá'í Faith has been subject to periodic outbreaks of persecution in Iran, the land of its origin. The most recent attack began in 1979 and continues to the present. In this period more than 200 Bahá'ís have been killed, most of them members of the elected institutions of the Faith. Many have been subjected to torture, and the majority have been deprived of fundamental human rights including the means to earn a living and the right to an education. The Bahá'í Administrative Order was banned in 1983. The response of the Bahá'í community to this external threat illustrates its adaptation through reorganization.

Within the Iranian Bahá'í community, the response, dictated by adherence to the principle of political non-involvement, served to preserve its identity and to increase its social cohesion.

The response of the global Bahá'í community, also dictated by principle and coordinated by the 148 national assemblies elected worldwide, consists of a vigorous campaign to draw attention to the violation of human rights through appeals to governments, the agencies of the United Nations, various humanitarian bodies, approaches to the media, and the general mobilization of public opinion. Such actions required, and continue to require, the development of new skills, capacities and responses on the part of the national assemblies, extended their contact with the world at large, and resulted in an over-all higher level of administrative functioning.

4. The expansion of the Bahá'í community follows to some extent the "necessary and critical chain of events" articulated by Ferguson in relation to social transformation. In her view, the process is triggered by individuals "who care deeply about social change, who find each other," and then devise ways to "foster paradigm shifts in others." Using means that are "as honorable as (the) ends," they develop new strategies which, in the long term, may well "set off a reordering of the whole system." 8 The process of change is the goal that is pursued. Within the Bahá'í community this transformation is also facilitated by the Administrative Order which channels individual initiative and energy into collective, planful action, providing yet another example of the specified pattern promoting orderly change. The typical growth flow involves an individual Bahá'í settling in an area where there are no other Bahá'ís, finding other like-minded persons, and forming a loosely organized group. The group members collaborate in their efforts, and when the membership is large enough a local assembly is elected. The same progressive unfoldment is pursued in other localities within a country. When there are a sufficient number of local assemblies, a national assembly is elected. Similarly, when in 1963 there were some 56 national assemblies throughout the world, the Universal House of Justice was elected.

The expansion of the Bahá'í community that is pursued is not purely numerical, but given the Bahá'í commitment to establishing the unity of the human family and world order, systematic attention is given to diversifying the community and to nurturing the minorities into full participation. This diversification, in turn, increases the unity of the community and enables it to undertake new functions.

With regard to the evolution of world order, the administrative functioning of the Bahá'í community provides an example of in-built flexibility and increasing differentiation and complexity of function. It demonstrates a growing consolidation of the interdependence of the various elements of the international Bahá'í community, e.g., the implementation of joint projects to standardize the translation of Bahá'í literature into the Quecha language. Such collaborative projects are initiated by the national assemblies and often are coordinated by the Universal House of Justice. In addition, commensurate with its size and maturity, the Bahá'í community is becoming more involved with the world at large. Examples of such involvement include the initiation of social and economic development activities, and contacts with governments and international agencies. The latter were initially undertaken as part of a global strategy to deflect the persecutions of the Bahá'ís in Iran, and, more recently, in connection with making known the Bahá'í approach to the attainment of peace.

The Bahá'í community is embarked on the erection of a social system that is "at once progressive and peaceful, dynamic and harmonious, a system giving free play to individual creativity and initiative but based on cooperation and reciprocity." 1 It might well be studied not only as a model for social change but as an experiment in the facilitation of evolutionary change toward a truly global community.

**References**

6. Bahá'u'lláh (1978), Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, p. 130.
London host to Publishers’ Conference


The delegates, from five continents, represented 19 national Bahá’í publishers and five independent publishers.

Invitations were extended to all Bahá’í English-language publishers and publishers in Europe.

David Hofman, a member of the Universal House of Justice, gave the keynote address at the conference, which was called, in part, to mark the 50th anniversary of the Bahá’í Publishing Trust of the United Kingdom.

In his address, Mr. Hofman recalled that the impetus for the creation of the Bahá’í Publishing Trust in the United Kingdom, which was also the first Publishing Trust in the world, was the need to make available the books written by the Hand of the Cause of God George Townshend.

Mr. Hofman also told the delegates: "You are engaged in the greatest undertaking possible—the dissemination of the Word of God."

Opening night ceremonies were also highlighted by the presentation of a bust of Mr. Townshend to the Publishing Trust of the United Kingdom by its National Spiritual Assembly.

The bust was accepted on behalf of the Publishing Trust by John Long, who served for many years as general manager of the Trust in England.

Adib Taherzadeh, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe, spoke at the conference’s opening plenary session.

His talk dealt with the Six Year Plan goal of "a worldwide increase in the translation, production, distribution and use of Bahá’í literature."

He also set one of the themes of the conference by calling for a renewed emphasis on the writings of Shoghi Effendi.

"You can read all the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, but you will not fully understand the Faith until you have read the writings of Shoghi Effendi," he said.

Later in the conference a cable was received from the Universal House of Justice in which the Supreme Body pointed to the "value and significance of the role that Bahá’í publishing agencies play.

"It also said, "We look forward eagerly to the report of your gathering and particularly your recommendations for an unprecedented increase in the availability of the Bahá’í writings whose capacity to uplift, heal, inspire and direct is the very bedrock of all our teaching efforts."

Conference sessions were marked by a warm spirit of cooperation and sharing of information. One session included short presentations from each publisher; others were devoted to the editorial process in Bahá’í publishing, co-publishing, the international distribution of Bahá’í literature, the technical and financial aspects of the production of books, audio-visual materials, the relationship between independent publishers and Bahá’í institutional publishers, and future directions in publishing.

Smaller discussion groups were held on specific topics.

The plenary sessions and smaller sessions produced a number of recommendations including a greater exchange of information among Bahá’í publishers, co-publishing, publishing in multiple languages to lower costs, holding similar publishing conferences on a regular basis, and other specific recommendations that are being forwarded to the Universal House of Justice.

The closing session included the announcement of the creation of the George Townshend Literature Award, to be presented every two years to the author and publisher of the book that does most to contribute to the literature on the Bahá’í Faith.

The initial award was made to George Ronald, Publisher, to honor its 40 years as a publisher of Bahá’í books including many by George Townshend himself.

A bust of the Hand of the Cause of God George Townshend which was presented to the Bahá’í Publishing Trust of the United Kingdom for its many years of service to the Bahá’í community throughout the world.
One youth’s memorable ‘year of service’

Every night for about a week before I left California for Peru I would have the same dream: I am running in a lush, green valley, and suddenly I arrive at a cliff. I’ve picked up speed, so I can’t stop at the precipice; instead, I must keep going and simply have faith that I will survive through whatever awaits me at the edge. And that is how I anticipated my year in South America. I thought of it as a totally unknown land, full of strangers with strange habits, strange customs and a strange language—and that was the abyss into which I was jumping in my dream.

Little did I know that what actually lay ahead of me was a year filled with the richest experiences, dearest friends, incredible cultures, learning two new languages (Spanish and Portuguese), and undreamed-of opportunities to serve and to deepen in the Faith. Having been able to serve the Faith in new capacities, both on an administrative and personal level, and finding my abilities constantly expanded and tested, I began to realize the bases for my pre-Latin America anxieties. I didn’t really understand one of the most basic principles of the Faith, a principle mentioned at every fireside and in virtually every teaching endeavor: that of the oneness of mankind.

It sounds so simple, and yet it’s so profound. Had I truly had faith and an understanding of this concept, fears about pioneering or going abroad would have been quickly dispelled. Think about it: if we truly accepted this idea, going to a “strange land” full of “strange people” would not even be a part of our consciousness. It would simply be going to a different spot on the globe, enjoying a new culture, enriching one’s mind and heart with fresh ideas, meeting brothers and sisters who apparently have quite different living conditions but who share a universe of commonalities with us, even discovering more about who we really are—finding out about our “true selves” and opening and filling spaces in our hearts and souls we never knew existed. This brings to mind a statement by the Guardian about the profundity of this basic principle:

“Let there be no mistake. The principle of the Oneness of Mankind—the pivot round which all the teachings of Baha’u’llah 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 people and nations. Its implications are deeper, its claims greater than any which the Prophets of old were allowed to advance. . . . It implies an organic change in the structure of present-day society, a change such as the world has not yet experienced. . . . It represents the consummation of human evolution.”


I was familiar with this commentary of the Guardian’s before going to South America, yet now it has taken on a new and different meaning for me, after having traveled and seen with my own eyes some of the implications of this principle. All of this also proves to me that pioneer and travel teach is simpler than our U.S. society allows it to be; the crucial step is internalizing this concept of oneness. The opportunities are definitely out there to “make it,” both economically and spiritually; we simply must make ourselves ready to accept them and to obey our institutions who call upon us to arise, diversify our activities, and, in a sense, to balance the resources of our worldwide Baha’i community.

The implications of this concept extended throughout my eye-opening year in South America. It was hard to imagine myself going abroad during my college years; I felt that leaving for a year of service would be too difficult at that point. But an incredible opportunity was presented to me, one that I’d like to encourage all youth to consider. Through my university, the University of California at Los Angeles, or through the University of Indiana or the State University of New York at Stony Brook (at which students who qualify from any other U.S. college may apply), there is a one-year program of study abroad in Lima, Peru (and at other places all over the world) at the country’s leading university. Not only does one study in the native language, receive credits at his home campus, enrich a resume or graduate school application, etc., but he or she also serves as an international youth pioneer and may represent the Faith on campus. Most schools overseas do not yet have college clubs or even Baha’i students, so your experience and initiative could contribute substantially to the recognition of the Faith among some of the country’s brightest youth.

The teaching opportunities are truly amazing. Most students, although becoming a bit cynical, are keenly aware
of the state of the world, concerned about the development of their country, the survival of its people, and the overall well-being of humanity. I found the awareness and sensitivity of the young people I met in South America to be generally much sharper and more intense than what is commonly encountered in the States. Several students did become Bahá'ís, now serve on local Assemblies and are teaching the Faith at the Catholic University (where I was studying), whose faculty and students are mostly Marxist.

The firesides I hosted with another youth pioneer became forums for intellectual and spiritual discovery among both the Peruvian youth and American students who had come to Peru in the same program under which I was studying. Several from the latter group are now back in the U.S. and spreading the teachings of the Faith on their respective campuses. We did receive some opposition to our Friday night meetings (which actually helped us); however, for those who attended our “reuniones hogareñas” (firesides), it was the “cool” way to spend Friday evenings.

Another opportunity that studying in Peru gave me was that of a “summer vacation” in December, January and February, and thus a chance to travel. By land, I first went to southern Chile with my dear friend and accompagne in the Friday firesides. After a four-day journey we arrived at the inauguration ceremony for Chile’s first Bahá’í radio station. From that event, we met Bahá’ís from all over the country who graciously opened their homes to us and with whom we made unforgettable and eternal friendships. After staying for a month in Chile, we traveled overland with two friends from Peru to Argentina and Brazil with a stop in Bolivia.

It was an incredible trip, one that made me realize so many things of which I was not aware about our international Bahá’í community. From all the friends in every country, from visiting classrooms and helping in the gardens at the Muḥájjir and Faizi elementary schools in Chile to visiting May Maxwell’s grave in Buenos Aires, teaching on the subways and buses, attending Feast in Rio de Janeiro, visiting Bolivia’s Bahá’í-run “Universidad Nur,” talking to youth from every level of society and from diverse cultures about current social issues, to all the adventures in between, I was instilled with a sense of urgency, understanding and, especially, of love and faith.

I had scarcely returned home to my post in Peru when I consulted with several members of the National Spiritual Assembly and we agreed that before my classwork became too heavy I should go for 10 days of service in the Amazon region to work with the community and its consolidation. The trip was grueling at first, as the fast had begun and I was not accustomed to the tropical climate and conditions; however, it was definitely a most rewarding journey. We appeared on several radio programs, and the five minutes that the mayor of the region’s capital city gave us to present the peace statement became a one and one-half hour meeting that was ended only because of the lines of people outside his office and the restless bureaucrats who constantly knocked on his door. Then, with only a handful of Bahá’ís, we taught children’s classes and worked on consolidating area villages, many of which were touched by Amatu’l-Bahá Ruḥiyyih Khánum’s historic “Green Light Expedition” more than a decade ago. It was such an extraordinary feeling to be in a remote village in Peru and to meet children with names like Tahirih and Nabil, whose families had become Bahá’ís as a result of traveling teachers, and local deepened believers who are now growing up as Bahá’í youth. What a confirming feeling to share hamsacks, plates, ideas and prayers with our brothers and sisters in the depths of the Amazon! And that is only one aspect among many which taught me more about the often-oversimplified principle of the oneness of mankind.

After returning from the Amazon I resumed classes at the university, accompanied by constant confirmations and tests, and soon had to say goodbye (for the time being) to South America. Now I am back in California, ready to start school again, but felt that I should put on paper a few of the magical experiences that came my way. I’ve had to limit greatly what I wanted to share, but needed to express some of my thoughts in the hope that some of you may feel inspired to have such an experience. It’s not that hard to do; simply a matter of taking the first step.
Love, sharing among the Rapa Nuis

On February 15, 1987, which happened to be my ninth anniversary as a pioneer in Chile, I arrived on Easter Island. Little did I suspect as I stepped off the plane that I was about to embark on one of the most beautiful experiences a person has the rare privilege and bounty to receive from God during his or her lifetime.

As is, I was excited because a personal wish I’d had since my early teens was now a reality. In junior high school I dreamed of becoming an archaeologist and uncovering the secrets of ancient civilizations. I read everything I could related to that field of study. Two books that I read were Thor Heyerdahl’s *Kon Tiki* and Aku Aku, and I remember having thought how much I’d like to go to this island some day. Now, several decades and a new Bahá’í life later, my wish was being granted. God had heard and had not forgotten, but I had come as one of His teachers to help Him raise up a new Divine civilization, not to dig up the old one.

The Chileans call Easter Island “Isla de Pascua” in Spanish, and its people Pascuenses, whereas the native people, who number about 2,550, call the island “Rapa Nui” (the Big Island) and themselves Rapa Nuis. Before the early Dutch explorer Jacob Roggeveen arrived in 1722, the Rapa Nuis often referred to the island in their Polynesian-based language as “Te Pito” or “Te Henia,” which means the navel or belly button of the world . . .

Before the early Dutch explorer Jacob Roggeveen arrived in 1722, the Rapa Nuis often referred to the island in their Polynesian-based language as ‘Te Pito’ or ‘Te Henia,’ which means the navel or belly button of the world.

The other Moais, placed around the shoreline, look inland to the seven central Moais.

Today, for the “comfort-loving” inhabitants of the earth, Easter Island is quite materially untouched and natural. Of course, there are potable water, electricity, some telephones and other modern conveniences, but they are quite expensive and hard to come by since everything must be shipped or air freighted in with the exception of fish and other seafoods and some fruits. None of the roads are paved, and most of the people get around on foot (I lost 12 pounds in 13 days there), on motorcycles or on horseback. There are some Jeeps, trucks, cars and tourist vans, but these are relatively few. The cost of living is relatively high, and the economy relies heavily on tourism.

I had come to the island to help Donald Van Brunt, a loving and stalwart pioneer who has been serving the Cause at this remote post for almost three years. For 31 years, or since the Ten Year Crusade when the Guardian raised the call, until 1984, this goal was not met. Then Don and his wife, Marie, who because of family responsibilities has not been able physically to join him as yet, but who is with him in every other way, fulfilled this goal.

I was lovingly met at the airport by Don and a few of the Rapa Nui Bahá’ís who greeted me with the traditional lei, hugs and kisses. Among those present were Ana Teao (women on the island keep their maiden names) and Santiago Tepano, a descendant of one of the last Rapa Nui chiefs, with whom I would be staying during my visit. The Tepanos live a life that is materially poor, but rich in so many other ways. Their house is one of the most humbly built on the island with an outhouse and a potable water tap in front. When they heard I was coming they prepared within the house a separate sleeping area and a place for me to bathe for my personal privacy and comfort. The bathing cubicle had an open space in the outer wall through which a hose could be passed.

About an hour and a half before sunset on the day of my arrival, the Tepanos walked with me to the nearest Ahu (a raised temple platform on which the Moais are erected), called Tahai. It is within the village limits of Hangaroa, the only community on the island. As I’ve mentioned, I had read about this aspect of their former culture, but this still did not prepare me for the impact it had on me. I was awed not only by the immensity of these works, but also by the serenity and spiritual vibrations I felt. I recalled from the Writings two things: first, how civilizations pass through cycles of creativity and building before reaching a stage of degeneration and destruction; and second, how there have been many greater and lesser prophets but there are no written records of them. I personally feel that the first chief who brought his people to this island was a very wise and spiritually enlightened human being. There is no doubt from the physical evidence that remains, as well as from what is known of this past society, that it flourished and then the degenerative elements set in. It was in

This account of a teaching trip to Easter Island was written by Louise Garnett, a pioneer to Valdivia, Chile.
this environment that the three of us sat down on the Ahu beneath the Moais and discussed the Faith for two to three hours. This was to be the first of many memorable experiences I was to have and will always cherish. What amazed me, and still does, is that each succeeding experience was even more spiritually uplifting than the previous one.

Later that evening, Ana told me how happy they were that I had come because they had so many questions they wanted answered but Don was unable to do so because he did not as yet speak enough Spanish. Also, she said she hadn't slept well the night before my arrival because she and her husband were nervous about my possible reaction to their humble living conditions. I was so moved not only by her concern but by everything that had so far happened in eight short hours that I spoke from the heart when I said, “Ana, I've been received in wealthier homes and more humble ones, but the quality that is most important in any home is the love and kindness of those who live there. You have welcomed me with both, and I feel I'm in my own home.”

On hearing these words their faces radiated the joy they felt, and I could see and feel them relax. After that, I was not only accepted as a friend, but as a member of the family. Later, when they learned that my father had been on Easter Island in 1942, the doors of the Rapa Nuis' homes were flung wide and I was welcomed as the prodigal daughter, sister, niece or cousin who had finally come home.

Oh, how I wish I could share with you the details of all the wonderful things that happened: the television news mentioning my arrival on the island; the public meetings where I showed my slide program of Bahá’í Holy Places (although not many attended, those who did enjoyed it and asked many questions); meeting and speaking with Thor Heyerdahl who was on the island preparing another book and a possible TV special (before leaving I arranged for him to receive a packet with a few Bahá’í pamphlets and a copy of the peace statement); visiting Anakena Beach which to me is the closest thing to a physical paradise that I have known outside of the Bahá’í Holy Places and Temples. But the highlight of everything was simply getting to know the people—their joys and sorrows, their concerns, their personal tests, triumphs and experiences—the human warmth of true sharing.

I found the Rapa Nuis to have a childlike quality combined with inquisitive, intelligent minds. They are open, trusting (which has brought them much suffering in the past at the hands of exploiters), loving, kind, generous, creative, and naturally curious while at the same time observant (actions speak louder than words), thoughtful, and have a high reasoning capacity especially with things relating to their personal experiences and cultural heritage. They want to offer their children a better life, but they also realize that what they have—that is, their more natural lifestyle and lovely island—is something that industrialized societies have lost. They know that because they are few in number they need the protection that a larger country can provide, but they desire enough autonomy to have the last word in any decision or action directly affecting the island and its development.

Any Bahá’í who goes to Easter Island must be aware of the strong influence of the Catholic Church, much like that of the Mormon Church in Utah. I suspect that at least 90 per cent of the islanders are Catholic; nevertheless, Catholicism, while it has succeeded in many ways to instill deeply the teachings of Christ, has not eradicated some of the deep-rooted customs, especially those pertaining to love and sexual relationships. It is not uncommon to meet unwed mothers, couples with several children who have recently married, or couples who have lived happily together for 20 years or more in what we call a common-law marriage in which they vowed their love before God and asked Him to bless their union.

Because few forms of public entertainment exist there, the islanders love to socialize: visiting family, neighbors and friends, getting together for afternoon tea, a birthday party or a barbecue. There are no theaters of any kind, few clubs, and the local TV broadcasts only six hours a day (from 6 p.m. to midnight). The most popular social pastime is going to one of several local discotheques to dance and to drink.

I was invited to many homes. In most cases it was not the proper time to speak directly of the Faith, but far more important simply to live it. I found teaching on the island a refreshing and delightful experience. The islanders are full of sincere and searching questions, not those that are so often asked in a challenging or antagonistic manner. The teacher must be alert at all times and remember to watch their eyes while speaking because they often glaze over when they stop to ponder something the speaker has said. If the teacher does not realize what is happening, an important point may be missed by the listener and the speaker finds he must repeat himself. Worse, he might even misinterpret what has happened and judge the listener to be stupid or uninterested. The islanders have a great capacity to sense the truth; their minds reflect, but their hearts accept. They must feel the truth of the words and the sincerity of the one who is speaking them. If the teacher does not truly believe every word he or she is saying, they know it.

In the States, by the time one enrolls in the Faith he usually has investigated it over a period of time which has included reading and studying the Writings, attending firesides and public meetings, and knowing at least something about the Administrative Order and the various laws. It is a much more intellectual approach than that taken by many of the Rapa Nuis, who have enrolled because their hearts have recognized Bahá’u’lláh. They enter the Faith as newly planted seeds or tender sprouts who need to be slowly nurtured and cultivated.

We Bahá’ís of long standing who come from entirely different cultures must be careful not to insist or overfeed them too much too soon. The teacher must be as patient with them as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi were with us in our early years as Bahá’ís,
and water these tender plants gently with Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings so that their gradual understanding of and love for Him will blossom and flourish and make them firm in the Covenant. Later, little by little, they will take part in the manifold activities of the Faith and obey the laws out of their love for God and Bahá’u’lláh. Let us not make the mistake of earlier missionaries; we come to bring the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh to unite the hearts of human-kind, not to bring the beliefs or lifestyle of any particular culture. Let us unite the hearts with love, as did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and then prescribe in appropriate doses the spiritual medicine they need to become healthy.

The time on Easter Island passed all too quickly; my experience was so spiritually uplifting that I didn’t want to leave, nor did they. Bahá’ís or non-Bahá’ís, want me to; however, my other responsibilities made leaving necessary. Someday, God willing, I will be able to return. I can’t now, but hope and pray that among those who read this there is a Spanish-speaking Bahá’í, preferably a young man or, even better, a young couple who would be willing to arise and join Don Van Brunt in his selfless efforts there. I believe that had someone arisen in 1953, the majority of the Rapa Nuis would now be Bahá’ís, and there would be a functioning Rapa Nui Bahá’í community.

Why do I believe this? Because of two incidents that occurred during my visit: first, an indigenous Bahá’í said, “‘The teachings of Bahá’u’lláh are so beautiful that I want all my people to know about them. I want and pray that my people and their island will become Bahá’ís.’” When I heard that, and felt the sincerity of her words, it took my breath away. Second, a non-Bahá’í said to me, “I have read several of the Bahá’í pamphlets. If I had heard of the Bahá’í Faith and had known of its teachings before I became a Mormon, I would have become a Bahá’í.” Having prior knowledge that before becoming a Mormon he’d had a drinking problem, I replied, “I know that you and your family are happy in your new religion, and that is good. Someday you may want to become a Bahá’í, and you will be lovingly welcomed.”

The opportunities on the island are many. Who among you will arise to join Don, whose intention is to bury his bones there, in harvesting these waiting souls for Bahá’u’lláh and reap in turn the spiritual bounties promised by Him in this world and the next?
## STATISTICAL UPDATE

Information provided by the Department of Statistics at the Bahá’í World Centre.

### Selected statistics of the Bahá’í world community

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<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Spiritual Assemblies</td>
<td>25,424</td>
<td>6,329</td>
<td>6,043</td>
<td>11,519</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups with 9 or more members</td>
<td>24,760</td>
<td>4,673</td>
<td>2,912</td>
<td>16,714</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups with fewer than 9</td>
<td>23,751</td>
<td>12,210</td>
<td>9,253</td>
<td>10,438</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>1,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolated Centres</td>
<td>34,594</td>
<td>13,409</td>
<td>8,672</td>
<td>10,168</td>
<td>1,173</td>
<td>1,269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Localities where Bahá’ís reside</td>
<td>118,525</td>
<td>36,621</td>
<td>26,880</td>
<td>48,839</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>3,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous tribes, races and ethnic groups</td>
<td>2,112</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages into which Bahá’í literature is translated</td>
<td>752</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing Trusts</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahá’í schools</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other development projects</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total pioneers currently in international posts</td>
<td>6,394</td>
<td>1,025</td>
<td>1,453</td>
<td>1,316</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>2,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International pioneers settled in the Six Year Plan</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
United Kingdom

Loving tribute to an intrepid pioneer

Dr. Aziz Navidi was a remarkable man, loved and respected by all who knew him. Although in his capacity as an international lawyer he spoke with presidents and kings, he always remained humble and self-effacing. He sought out and promoted constitutional changes in many countries to secure freedom of worship for millions and protection for the Bahá’ís in particular. He was a masterful lawyer and a consummate diplomat, and above all he was completely devoted to the Cause.

Aziz Navidi was born in Hamadan, Iran, in 1913. He studied law in Tehran and took his doctorate at the Sorbonne in Paris. Soon after completing his military service he was appointed as legal adviser to the Iranian Ministry of the Interior and Defense and soon became one of the most successful advocates in the country.

Recognition and success brought him a great deal of work, but he still found time to defend the poor, for whom he worked without charge. He would receive them early in the morning before going to his office and again upon his return he would often be greeted by a long queue of people anxious to petition him. He often worked late into the night preparing cases for his poorer clients.

In his civil practice he also defended Bahá’ís, sometimes against the most powerful in the land. Many attempts were made on his life, and on one occasion enemies tried to abduct one of his daughters. His friends and colleagues tried to persuade him to drop these contentious cases and to protect himself from the attacks of his enemies, but he continued to fight for justice regardless of the personal risk. He won the respect of everyone around him. On one occasion he had successfully defended a man charged with theft. Outside the court, after his acquittal, the man privately told him that he was in fact guilty. Dr. Navidi did not hesitate for a moment; he marched him straight back into the court, apologized to the judge, and then conducted the prosecution.

In 1953 Aziz and his wife, Shamsi, pioneered to Monte Carlo. Aziz had been offered the post of Consul General in Paris, but being a Bahá’í, he refused it. From his base in Monte Carlo he was sent all over the world to defend the Bahá’ís who were being unjustly treated and persecuted. It was no surprise that the beloved Guardian designated him the “Shield of the Cause of God” and predicted that future historians would study his achievements, although Dr. Navidi himself never spoke of this precious accolade.

He was frequently called upon to be absent from home for six months at a time and Shamsi had accepted to support him in this work and to raise their family almost single-handedly. Their daughter, Guilda, was always a problem at mealtimes, throwing her food over the balcony or surreptitiously putting it into her pockets when no one was watching. She was told on one occasion that if she ate well and gained weight, her father would come home. She secretly inserted two cherries in her cheeks and then asked brightly when he would be coming home.

In 1968 Dr. Navidi became a representative of the Iranian Oil Company for its operations in the Indian Ocean. The family pioneered again, establishing their home in Mauritius. Dr. Navidi then undertook the first of many missions to various African states to secure recognition of the Faith there. He fearlessly visited countries hostile to the Bahá’ís with no protection except his faith and his credentials as official lawyer to the Universal House of Justice. His missions took him to Cameroon, the Central African Re-

This brief tribute to Dr. Aziz Navidi, a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh who died last July 1 in London, is taken from an address by his son-in-law, Graham Walker, which appeared in The Baha’i Journal, Volume 4, No. 6 (September 1987), a publication of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United Kingdom.
public, Chad, the Congo, Gabon, the Gambia, Kenya, Madagascar, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Zaire and many, many other countries throughout the world. He was successful time and again in persuading democratic governments and dictators alike to alter their laws and constitutions and to officially recognize the Bahá’í Faith. His professional brilliance, his calm perseverance in the face of what often seemed to be insurmountable obstacles, and his unswerving faith in Bahá’u’lláh earned him the esteem and respect of even his fiercest adversaries.

In one African country he had been asked to meet with a certain government minister to try and convince him to change his country’s harsh stance toward the Bahá’ís. Every morning he would go to the minister’s office and sit in the waiting room all day. They ordered him to wear a suit and tie while they themselves wore light tropical clothing. At the end of the day he would walk back to his hotel drenched with perspiration and completely exhausted. He was forced to take expensive rooms in the hotel in order to maintain the prestige of the Faith. The little food that he was able to secure was extremely expensive—for example, an egg cost $5. Hepatitis and malaria were epidemic, and theft and murder were commonplace. He was completely without friend or contact. He tolerated indignity and intimidation without complaint, but at the end of three months he began to think that perhaps God did not mean for him to achieve his aim. He prayed ardently for guidance, and decided that he would leave the following day. The next morning he was summoned by the minister who was so impressed by his reasoned argument and firm resolve that he granted the Faith official recognition.

When Dr. Navidi returned from these missions he did not speak of the hardships he had suffered, or of the danger, or of the tribulations of the Bahá’ís. He never himself spoke of what he had achieved, nor at what cost. When the Guardian passed away in 1957 the Hands of the Cause called upon his services. When the Universal House of Justice was elected in 1963 they honored him to become their legal adviser in Africa. It was on one such mission to Africa that he became ill, but he could not bring himself to abandon his task and so did not leave until his suffering became unbearable. By that time his illness was beyond control.

He passed away in a London hospital on July 1, 1987. Messages of condolence were received from individuals and institutions all over the world, and 500 friends and family members attended his funeral service. In recognition of the sterling services rendered to the Cause of God by this devoted servant, the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom arranged a national memorial service which was held September 4 at the Royal Overseas League in London.

Austria

The Bahá’í International Community’s delegation to the United Nations International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, held last June 17-26 in Vienna, Austria, is pictured with two members of the staff of the UN Division of Narcotic Drugs. The Bahá’ís are Neda Forghami (second from left), a BIC representative in Vienna; Dr. A.M. Ghadirian (second from right), a psychologist and author from Canada; and Giovanni Ballerio (right), a BIC representative in Geneva, Switzerland.
The world

Bahá'í takes advice, makes opera debut

Four years ago, at the Bahá'í International Conference in Canberra, Australia, Bronwyn Clark of Brisbane, a dancer since age six and a Bahá'í since age 15, unveiled another of her talents when she sang "One Planet, One People... Please."

Some listeners were so impressed they suggested that she have her voice professionally trained. She took them up on it, studying for three years at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music and singing in the chorus of the Queensland Lyric Opera Company.

While employed as a dance teacher, she continued her singing lessons at the Conservatorium under Mrs. Margaret Nickson.

In 1987 Bronwyn was a finalist in the Dame Mabel Brooks Memorial Scholarship, a grand finalist in the Marianne Mathy Scholarship, and in June won the Wenkart National A.B.C. Opera Scholarship prize, a part of which was the opportunity to make her debut as soloist at the Sydney Opera House.

On September 13, she debuted as a part of the "Highlights of Opera Tenth Annual Concert" in the presence of the governor of New South Wales and his wife.

Some of Australia's leading singers appeared on the program including Helen Adams, Kenneth Collins, Joan Carden and John Pringle.

Bronwyn has been accepted as a student by Audrey Langford to study voice and languages at the Cantica Voice Studio in London and is making plans to travel to the U.K. and Europe to further her singing career.

Mauritius

San Leopoldo, a city in southern Brazil, was chosen for that country's first large-scale teaching campaign of the Six Year Plan. Under the guidance of the Spiritual Assembly of Porto Alegre, almost universal participation by Bahá'ís in the region has been achieved in a campaign that began September 8.

The effort got under way with an orientation presented by Counsellor Shapoor Monadjem and Mas'ud Khamsi, a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre in Haifa, Israel.

Members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil offered direct supervision, and Auxiliary Board members in the area also took part.

The mayor proclaimed September 8-13 "Peace Week" in San Leopoldo with the official support of the United Nations Organization in Rio de Janeiro and other peace-oriented groups.

Activities included public talks, presentations at schools and the university, visits to working-class neighborhoods, and a writing contest on "Peace for a Better World" for which 10,000 invitations, letters and posters were distributed.

Harri Tirvengadum (left), a Bahá'í from Mauritius, shakes hands with the Ambassador from France who has just awarded him a medal and the title of Chevalier (Knight) of France in a ceremony held last March. The knighthood was conferred in recognition of Mr. Tirvengadum's many years of service to the government of Mauritius.
Sweden

Pictured are many of the friends who gathered last July 12 at the Baha'i National Center in Stockholm, Sweden, to meet with the Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone (second row center, wearing dark suit) and his wife, Madge (seated to Mr. Featherstone’s left and holding a child).

Bolivia

Radio Bahá’í-Caracollo in Bolivia is working with the UNICEF Mission in that country as part of UNICEF’s “Revolution in Infant Health” program.

As a part of the effort, 75 radio programs and 5 spot announcements have been produced in Spanish, Aymara and Quechua and distributed to 21 radio stations throughout Bolivia.

Sabino Ortega, coordinator of the Bahá’í radio station, says the Bahá’ís have supplied four courses of instruction by radio instead of the two originally contracted for.

The first course dealt with the four kinds of vaccinations and inoculations for children made available through the project; the others presently in production are “Maternal Milk,” “Goiter and Iodized Salt,” and “Anger and Nutrition.”

Representatives from Radio Bahá’í also visit the 35 broadcasting centers in four Departments of Bolivia where special groups have been set up to monitor and evaluate the program’s effectiveness.

Vern Longie, an American Indian Bahá’í, is pictured during a visit last June to a Summer Camp in Karesuando, Sweden, which is held each year for Lappland believers in Finland, Norway and Sweden with each country alternating as host. The 60 Bahá’ís at the Camp included many Same (Lapp) people who found that they had much in common with the Indian peoples of North America. Mr. Longie and Ruby Lawson, another American Indian visitor, spoke at a public meeting attended by three seekers and their children.
Philippines

Two hundred-seventy Bahá'ís gathered last July 31-August 2 in Sarawak, a Malaysian state on the island of Borneo, for a State Teaching Conference.

The majority of those attending were indigenous believers. They were joined by Counsellor John Fozdar and several members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Malaysia.

Main features included a “cultural evening” that was open to the public, a blood donation drive, a slide program on the Temple in India, and a successful children’s session.

The conference was followed by a three-day training course for 30 traveling teachers and a two-day seminar for school teachers that was attended by 13 people.

Counsellor Zena Sorabjee of India was interviewed last summer by Radio Malaysia in Sarawak.

The interview centered around her involvement in Bahá’í-sponsored projects to raise the standing of women in Indian villages.

The 15-minute interview was broadcast as part of a regular series of programs about women.

Mrs. Sorabjee explained that much of the success of training courses for women in literacy, hygiene, health care, and vocations, run by Bahá’ís and funded by the government, is due to villagers, especially men, first being taught the principle of the equality of women and men, which supports the women in their efforts.

Argentina

Representatives from 11 countries gathered in Argentina last August for the first Bahá’í conference on the production of literature in Spanish.

Representing the World Centre were David Hofman, a member of the Universal House of Justice, and Mas'ud Khamsi, a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre.

Also attending were two other Counsellors, Dr. Farzam Arbáb and Shapoor Monadjem.

Consultation focused on ways to coordinate the translation, publication and distribution of Bahá’í literature in Spanish.
Haiti

According to a teacher at the Anis Zunuzi School in Lilavois, Haiti, the recent civil and political disturbances in that country did not interfere with classes, as final exams had been written and report cards issued shortly before the situation became critical.

One of the major successes of the school year was the interest aroused among educators in Haiti by a book developed at the school by the curriculum team and illustrated by a Bahá’í artist, Moro Baruk. The book, Ouvrons la Porte, is a third-grade French-language reader which meets a critical need for such educational materials in Haiti.

It makes the transition from Creole to French by teaching one French sound at a time with the use of pictures and stories containing Bahá’í principles, although it does not refer specifically to the Faith.

The book is to be presented to an influential group of school principals who may then adopt it for use in their schools.

St. Vincent/Grenadines

People in St. Vincent and the Grenadines recently had the chance to attend a “Bahá’í meeting” without leaving home!

On Sunday, July 12, NBC Radio 705 broadcast a live program from the Bahá’í National Centre, the first time in which the Bahá’ís were presented as hosts of one of the station’s weekly worship service broadcasts.

Included in the program were prayers, a reading on unity from the writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and many of the Vincentian community’s favorite Bahá’í songs.

Also held was a four-part discussion on the unity of family, of race, of the world, and of religion, with each segment led by a different Bahá’í.

The format of the meeting was planned and rehearsed in advance, with the goal being to introduce the public to the way in which Bahá’ís hold their meetings. It was explained that the Faith has no clergy.

Alaska

More than 240 villages in Alaska are receiving 60-second television spot announcements on peace prepared by the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska’s Office of Public Information.

The brief messages begin with the question, “If you only had a moment, and the world was listening, what would you say about peace...?”

The spots are eagerly received by stations throughout Alaska and are aired often and at prime times.

A cable network through which the spots are distributed serves the Anchorage area and nearby towns, reaching about 35,000 households. Sister stations in Juneau and Fairbanks are also broadcasting the “Peace Talk” spots.

Samoa

Crew members of the “Iron Butterfly,” a sailing vessel that visited American Samoa last August, are young Bahá’ís: two Tongans, four New Zealanders, one Iranian and one American.

Sailing the Pacific to promote world peace, the group tries to reach as many people as possible with the message of the oneness of mankind by speaking in schools, on radio and television, and before community organizations.

“Once this (oneness) is universally recognized,” the ship’s captain was quoted as saying in the August 7 issue of the Samoa News, “humanity will be able to develop a system that is fair for everyone.”

Two members of the Bahá’í community of American Samoa took part last August 5 in the “Peacesat” satellite program commemorating International Peace Day and the 25th anniversary of that country’s independence.

Greece

A concert last July 22 by world-renowned jazz musician John (Dizzy) Gillespie proved most effective in proclaiming the Faith in Athens, Greece.

During the concert Mr. Gillespie said he is a Bahá’í and invited the audience to sing with him a song he had written in memory of the Hand of the Cause of God, Enoch Olinga.

Local Bahá’ís later described the amazing event: “Just imagine 5,000 people, only 19 of whom were Bahá’ís, singing ‘Ya Bahá’u’ll-Abhá!’ It brought such joy to our hearts.”
On the cover: Mayor Jack McLean (right) of Tallahassee, Florida, receives a copy of ‘The Promise of World Peace’ from William Leonard, chairman of the Spiritual Assembly of Tallahassee. Members of the city council also received copies of the peace statement last December 10, which Mayor McLean proclaimed ‘Human Rights Day’ in Tallahassee. A complete report of presentations of ‘The Promise of World Peace’ to 198 heads of state around the world begins on page 2. The report was compiled by the Department of Statistics at the Baha’i World Centre in Haifa, Israel.
Faith joins Nature Fund’s Network

Last October 3, the Baha’i Faith became the sixth world religion to join the Network on Conservation and Religion, a ground-breaking alliance formed last year between the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and major world religions.

In a ceremony at the renowned Marwell Zoo in Winchester, England, representatives of the Baha’i International Community issued an official Statement on Nature and formally entered the network.

When the Network on Conservation and Religion was formed in 1986 during an interfaith service at Assisi, which marked the 25th anniversary of the WWF, it was hailed by environmentalists and religious leaders alike as a major step toward broadening support for conservation efforts around the world and widening the ethical underpinnings of the environmental movement.

“The Baha’i International Community has long believed that action to protect the environment must be based on spiritual principles if it is to be effective,” said Douglas Martin, director-general of the BIC’s Office of Public Information. “We thus see the Network on Conservation and Religion as an important step in efforts to invigorate and strengthen the environmental movement, and we are extremely pleased to join this new alliance.”

As a first step, the Baha’i International Community has pledged to launch a new program for environmental action within the Baha’i community. In addition to the statement on nature, that program will include:

• a general call for Bahá’ís who are already involved in ecology, conservation and related areas to develop a deeper understanding of Bahá’í writings in this field;

• an exploration of the possibility of practical collaboration between local Bahá’í development projects and WWF field expertise;

• a new emphasis on the consideration of environmental issues in Bahá’í educational materials.

Frank Schmidt, assistant director-general for WWF International, said WWF welcomes Baha’i involvement in the Network and hopes the Bahá’í program will begin as soon as possible.

The Faith’s Statement on Nature and its impending entry into the Network was the feature article in the Spring 1987 issue of the WWF Network’s bulletin, “The New Road.”
‘The Promise of World Peace’

As of January 1988 the peace statement by the Universal House of Justice, “The Promise of World Peace,” had been presented to 198 heads of state, 75 directly and 123 indirectly. The statement had been translated into 76 languages and an estimated one to two million copies disseminated to people around the world. The following summary of presentations of the peace statement to heads of state in countries and territories of the world was prepared by the Department of Statistics at the Bahá’í World Centre in Haifa, Israel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country or Territory</th>
<th>Type of presentation</th>
<th>Description of presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message sent to Head of State via their Mission in New York, January 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Governor. No details available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered by messenger to Permanent Representative of United Nations, Mr. Justin Papajorgi, March 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message sent to Head of State via their Mission in New York, January 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andorra</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Presented through his secretary to the Bishop of Seo De Urgel, the co-Prince of Andorra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Head of State via the UN Mission, March 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda, Sir Wilfred Jacobs, by a Bahá’í delegation, mid-November 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>On Wednesday, December 10, 1986, Dr. Martinez, Vice President and Acting President, accepted a copy of the peace message which he agreed to give to President Alfonsin upon the President’s return from Brazil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President, Dr. Rudolf Kirchschaeger, on October 18, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message sent to Head of State via their Mission in New York, January 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Head of State directly by Bahá’í delegation; date of presentation not given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to the Governor-General, Sir Hugh Springer, on October 24, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to King Baudoin, indirectly. NSA says it was sent to him on October 28, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belize</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Governor General by a Bahá’í delegation; no date given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President, Mr. Mathieu Kerekou, on November 5, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bermuda</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Governor on October 24, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to King of Bhutan. No details on date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country or Territory</td>
<td>Type of presentation</td>
<td>Description of presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President through his private secretary. Exact date not given; around May 20, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bophuthatswana</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented indirectly to Head of State, December 5, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President, Q.K.J. Masire, on November 25.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace statement presented to President, Mr. Jose Sarney, in the presidential office in the presence of major media networks, September 17, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunei</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered by Paul Ojermark to Permanent Representative of UN, Mr. Haji Omar Bin Haji Serudi, March 26, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement delivered to Deputy Permanent Representative of the UN Mission, Ambassador Garvalov, December 4, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement presented to Head of State through Acting Director General of the President, February 21, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement presented to President U San Yu, May 7, 1986, through the Office of the President.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement sent to Head of State via mail, June 14, 1986; evidence of receipt received by NSA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byelorussia</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered by messenger to Permanent Representative of the United Nations, Mr. Lev Maksimov, March 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message handed to representative of Head of State on December 10, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canary Islands</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Governor Delegate to Canary Islands, Mr. Eligio Hernandez, by a Bahá'í delegation on January 20, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to the President by a Bahá'í delegation, October 29, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cayman Islands</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace statement presented to His Excellency the Governor, Mr. Peter Lloyd, on October 24, 1985, in Grand Cayman by representatives from both Jamaica and the Cayman Islands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement presented to General Secretary of the President by a Bahá'í delegation on March 19, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message given to President; no date or details given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered to President Augusto Pinochet Ugarte through his personal secretary who orally confirmed that it was received by the President, December 23, 1985. A reply was sent to the NSA by the Secretary General of the Presidency on May 22, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered by messenger to Permanent Representative of the United Nations, Mr. Li Luye, March 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciskei</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Head of State, L.L. Sebe, by a Bahá'í delegation, November 1, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President, Dr. Belizario Betancur,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country or Territory</td>
<td>Type of presentation</td>
<td>Description of presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered by messenger to the Permanent Representative of the United Nations, Mr. Massamba Sarre, February 17, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement presented to Mr. Kounkou of the Congo UN Mission for transmission to Head of State, January 29, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Queen's representative by a Bahá'í delegation, October 24, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President on November 6, 1985, by a Bahá'í delegation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement for the Head of State was sent by messenger, in care of the UN Mission for Cuba, on May 9, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus via an intermediary, January 24, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered by messenger to Permanent Representative of the United Nations, Mr. Jaroslav Cesar, March 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to the Queen directly; no date given. The Queen replied through Mr. P. Thornt, Secretariat of the Cabinet, on December 3, 1985, thanking the House of Justice for the message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered by Gerald Knight to First Counsellor, Mr. Ahmed Saleh, on March 24, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President Clarence Seignoret by a Bahá'í delegation on October 24, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to the President through his administrative secretary on December 20, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to the President through the Minister of the Government on October 24, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message sent to Head of State via their Mission in New York, January 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement sent to the President through the Ministry of the President, May 22, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equatorial Guinea</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Head of State through the ambassador of ceremonies of the presidency; no date given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Permanent Representative of the United Nations, Mr. Kebede, met with Gerald Knight on March 12, 1986, and assured him that the peace message had been given by him personally to the Head of State.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falkland Islands</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to the Governor on December 6, 1985, by two representatives of the local Spiritual Assembly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federated States of Micronesia</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>President of Federated States of Micronesia refused to receive the delegates for the presentation of the peace message and it was therefore mailed to him; no date given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country or Territory</td>
<td>Type of presentation</td>
<td>Description of presentation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Head of State, Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau, on October 24, 1985, by a Bahá'í delegation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement given to the President’s adjutant via the adjutant’s secretary to be forwarded to the President.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered to two representatives of President Mitterand; no date given. Date of letter from France is November 15, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Polynesia</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to High Commissioner, Bernard Gerard, through his Directeur du Cabinet, Mr. Morin, on November 12, 1985. Mr. Gerard then wrote a letter to Counsellor Owen Battrick thanking him for the peace message and stating that he had studied it with interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to representative of Head of State on March 3, 1986, by a Bahá'í delegation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gambia</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement received by the Secretary-General for the President (reported January 5, 1986).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered by mail to President on October 24, 1985. Subsequently, on December 5, Bahá’í delegation was received by the President, Dr. Richard von Weizsaecker, for a 60-minute interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany, East</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered by messenger to Permanent Representative of the United Nations on June 6, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Head of State, Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings, through the Secretary for Culture and Tourism, Dr. Ben Abdallah, on December 5, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement for President of Greece presented to Mr. Metaxas, UN Ambassador, in Athens, February 26, 1985, by a Bahá’í delegation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Governor General by a Bahá'í delegation on October 24.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guadeloupe</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Commissioner for the Region of Guadeloupe, Mr. Maurice Saborin, through his deputy, October 24, 1985. He replied in writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guam</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Governor of Guam, October 24, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Head of State, October 24. President Licenciado Vinicio Cerezo, who took office in January, also received the peace statement from a Bahá’í delegation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered by messenger to the Chargé d'Affaires of the United Nations, Mr. Bassy Camara, March 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea Bissau</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message conveyed to Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Eugenio Teixeira Spain, by Gerald Knight and Victor de Araujo, March 27, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President Hugh Desmond Hoyte on September 23, 1985. Official copy presented on February 25, 1986, by entire National Assembly in 45-minute interview. Much publicity was received.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country or Territory</td>
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<td>Description of presentation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Governor on October 24, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented indirectly to Head of State. No date or details in statistics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered to Governor's House. Attempting to arrange personal meeting when special editions arrive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message conveyed to Deputy Permanent Representative, Mr. Miklos Endreffy, and Representative to the Third Committee, Mr. Tamas Hegyi, by Gerald Knight on March 27, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President on October 29. The President of Iceland, Vigdis Finnbogadottir, is the first woman to be elected President by popular vote.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President on October 28.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message for Head of State was delivered in person to Deputy Permanent Representative of the UN Mission, Mr. Sastrohandoyo, on April 15, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message mailed to Head of State, December 4, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Head of State via the UN Mission on January 13, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message sent to Head of State via their Mission in New York, January 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President Patrick Hillery by a Bahá'í delegation on October 31, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President Cossiga through his Diplomatic Secretary, Mr. Berlinguer, by a Bahá'í delegation, January 24, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace statement presented to the Governor General, the Most Hon. Sir Florizel Glasspole, on October 23, 1985. The peace statement was also presented to the Prime Minister, the Hon. Edward Seaga, through his representative, Sen. Olivia Grange, on October 24, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to the Emperor through his Chamberlain, Mr. Tanaka, on October 31, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message sent to Head of State by registered mail from B.I.C. office, January 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kampuchea</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message conveyed to Permanent Representative of the United Nations, Mr. Thiounn Prasith, by Gerald Knight, March 20, 1986. The President, Prince Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, replied in writing on April 17, 1986, acknowledging the message and stating that his government's eight-point proposal conforms to the noble ideal Bahá'ís are upholding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President Daniel Totoitch on May 14, 1986, by Bahá'í delegation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace statement presented to the President, His Excellency Jeremiah Tabai, by representatives of the National Spiritual Assembly at the President's office, October 30, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message conveyed to Deputy Permanent Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country or Territory</td>
<td>Type of presentation</td>
<td>Description of presentation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Head of State, President Kim Il Sung, through Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN by the B.I.C. on February 20, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message sent to Head of State by registered mail from B.I.C. office, January 28, 1986. Receipt from U.S. Postal Service indicates that peace message for His Excellency Sheikh Al-Sabah was collected from the post office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message conveyed to Head of State through Chargé d'Affaires of the UN, Mr. Done Somvorschit, by Gerald Knight, April 7, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement presented to Ambassador Fakhoury, who received it on behalf of President Gemayel, to whom it was being hand-carried the next day by the Ambassador's son.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Head of State through the King's secretary, Mr. Pitso, on November 26, 1985. The secretary wrote a letter of thanks on behalf of King Moshoeshoe II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Head of State, Dr. Samuel Kanyan, by a Bahá'í delegation on October 25, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message sent to Head of State by registered mail from B.I.C. office, January 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liechtenstein</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Prince Hans Adam on October 28. The Prince has executive power of Head of State even though his father, Franz Josef, retains title of Head of State.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to the Grand Duke, through his Court Marshal, Mr. Christian Calmes-Raus, at the Grand Ducal Palace on October 28.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macau</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to the Governor through his secretary. Once the special copy arrives, Bahá'ís will try to obtain a personal meeting with the Governor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement delivered to the General Secretary of the Presidency to be presented to His Excellency the President, February 18, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement presented to Minister without Portfolio by Bahá'í delegation, January 31, 1986. Minister will present statement to Life President on Monday, February 3, 1986. (He received it on February 6, 1986.) Letter later received from Administrative Secretary of the Congress Party to thank NSA on behalf of Head of State; letter dated February 12, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement given to private secretary for delivery to the Head of State.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered by messenger to Permanent Representative of the United Nations, Mr. M. Musthafa, February 20, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message for Head of State, Gen. Traore, presented to Ambassador Seydou Niare, Permanent Representative to the UN, by the B.I.C., February 27, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message conveyed to Permanent Representative of the UN, Mr. George Agius, by Gerald Knight, March 24, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country or Territory</td>
<td>Type of presentation</td>
<td>Description of presentation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martinique</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to the Chief of the Cabinet of the Prefect Commissioner by a Baha'i delegation on October 24, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message sent to Head of State by registered mail from B.I.C. office, January 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Governor General on November 15 by National Assembly representative, Mr. Harry Tirvengadum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement mailed to President de la Madrid on June 14, 1986. He replied in writing through his Assistant Secretary on July 21, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monaco</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered to Prince Rainier III through State Minister on October 24.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message for Head of State, Mr. Batmunkh, presented to Ambassador Gendengiin Nyamdoo, Permanent Representative to the UN, by B.I.C. on February 24, 1986. He promised to forward it to Head of State immediately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message sent to Head of State via their Mission in New York, January 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message conveyed to President Samora Machel through the Chairman of Opening Ceremony of International Year of Peace on June 7, 1986. More than 4,000 attended ceremony. Bahá’í prayer for unity read. Entire ceremony broadcast live on national radio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Administrator-General, October 24, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to the Permanent Representative of Nepal at the United Nations, Mr. Jai Pratap Rana, on April 10, 1986, to be given to the King. The reception was extremely warm and spiritual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to the Queen through the Director of the Cabinet of the Queen; date not given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to High Commissioner through Director of Cabinet on November 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Governor General, Sir David Beattie, on October 25, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to the President through Public Relations Officer on November 15, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Head of State, Major-Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, through Minister of Internal Affairs, October 25.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Marianas</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Governor of the Northern Marianas Islands on October 24, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Cabinet Secretary at the King's Palace on October 24.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message sent to Head of State via their Mission in New York, January 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement mailed to the President on July 7, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President of Republic of Palau, Mr. Lazarus E. Salii, by a Baha'i delegation, April 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country or Territory</td>
<td>Type of presentation</td>
<td>Description of presentation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President Eric del Valle, October 25, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Governor General, Sir Kingsford Dibela, on October 24, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message delivered to President on May 5, 1986, by distinguished professor and friend of Bahá'ís. Delivered directly to President Sarney in more than 20-minute interview with NSA representatives in Midia on September 16, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace statement mailed to President Garcia on February 14, 1986. However, local community of Arequipa was able to personally deliver to him the Spanish-language copy when he visited Arequipa on March 7, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered by messenger to Permanent Representative of the United Nations, May 13, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace statement handed to the President on December 12, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Secretary of State, Hector L. Acevedo, in his capacity as Acting Governor by a Bahá'í delegation, October 24, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message sent to Head of State via their Mission in New York, January 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunion</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement presented to “Prefect” through his representative, Cabinet Director Mr. Allard, October 24, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered by messenger to the Permanent Representative of the United Nations, Mr. Teodor Marinescu, on March 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to the President of the Republic through the Head of Protocol, September 19, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Head of State during reception at Vailima. All members of the NSA were received by His Highness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Marino</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to the Captain Regents of San Marino by a Bahá'í delegation, October 24, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sao Tome and Principe</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered by messenger to the Permanent Representative of the United Nations, Mr. Joaquim Rafael Branco, on March 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message sent to Head of State via their Mission in New York, January 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message conveyed to President through the Director of the Cabinet by a Bahá'í delegation, January 8, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President Rene on November 8, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace statement presented to President by a Bahá'í delegation, October 24, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President, Mr. Wee Kim Wee, on October 24, 1985, by Mrs. Shirin Fozdar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Head of State through the Acting Prime Minister (who is also Minister of Home Affairs and Provincial Government), Mr. Ezekiel Alebua; exact date not given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country or Territory</td>
<td>Type of presentation</td>
<td>Description of presentation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message sent to Head of State via their Mission in New York, January 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President Botha through his secretary, October 24, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message conveyed to Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Nations, Mr. Sergey Nikolayevich Smirnov, by Gerald Knight on March 25, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message sent by mail to the King of Spain after petition for an audience was refused. No date given. Royal Palace acknowledged receipt of message on behalf of His Majesty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Helena</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace statement presented to Governor-General on January 5, 1986, by a Bahá’í delegation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Lucia</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Governor General, Sir Allen Lewis, on October 24, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Vincent</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Governor General, October 24.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message sent to Head of State by registered mail from B.I.C. office, January 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suriname</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President F. Ramdat Misier on October 24, 1985, by a Bahá’í delegation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Her Majesty Indlovukazi through her representative, Prince Khuzulwandle, on October 24, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to King Carl XVI Gustaf through the Court Marshal; no date given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President Kurt Furgler through Chief of Cabinet, Mr. Edgar Fasel, on October 25, 1985. The President replied through a letter from Mr. Fasel to the Universal House of Justice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message sent to Head of State by registered mail from B.I.C. office, January 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement mailed to President on December 31, 1985. Form reply received January 18, 1986, stating letter was received and forwarded to the President.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement presented to His Excellency Ali Hassan Mwinyi through his personal secretary, December 24, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Two delegates from the Bahá’í community attending the King’s birthday celebration in December 1986 left a copy of the peace statement from the Universal House of Justice and were assured that the King would receive it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Head of State by a Bahá’í delegation, December 20, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to King Taufaahau Topou IV on December 13, 1985, by a Bahá’í delegation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transkei</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President on November 20, 1985, by a Bahá’í delegation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President Ellis Clarke on October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country or Territory</td>
<td>Type of presentation</td>
<td>Description of presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message sent to Head of State by registered mail from B.I.C. office, January 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered by messenger to the Permanent Representative of the United Nations, Mr. Iiter Turkmen, on March 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Head of State on January 15, 1986, by a Bahá'í delegation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message delivered to Head of State, Gen. Tito Okello Lutwa, on October 24 by a Bahá'í delegation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered by messenger to the Permanent Representative of the United Nations, Mr. Gunnadi I. Oudovenko, on March 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message sent to Head of State by registered mail from B.I.C. office, January 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message presented through Queen's representative on November 5 as confirmed by letter to NSA Secretary from Buckingham Palace dated November 6, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President Reagan by all nine members of the National Spiritual Assembly, December 10, 1985. President Reagan sent his thanks and appreciation by letter dated December 27, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message conveyed to Head of State through the reception desk of the presidency, end of January 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Head of State Ati George Soko­manu, October 24, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vatican City</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>NSA refused politely to meet with president of Pope's Commission of Iustitia et Pax and sent peace message directly to the Pope by mail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venda</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to President P.R. Mphephu, October 24, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered by messenger to the Permanent Representative of the United Nations, Mr. Bui Xuan What, on March 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgin Islands</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Governor by a Bahá'í delegation, December 19, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen North</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message sent to Head of State by registered mail from B.I.C. office, January 28, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen South</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered by messenger to the Permanent Representative of the United Nations, Mr. Abdalla Saieh Al-Ashtal, on March 24, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace message delivered by messenger to the Permanent Representative of the United Nations, June 6, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaire</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement presented to the President through the Head of State Protocol, June 26, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Peace statement presented to Mr. Sikombe in the Office of Social and Cultural Affairs, who promised that he would have the presidential copy of the statement forwarded to His Excellency, Dr. Kaunda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Peace message presented to Head of State by a Bahá'í delegation, December 6, 1985.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
November 1987 was a joyous month at the Baha'i House of Worship in India, as the anniversary of the Birth of Baha'u'llah was celebrated there for the first time.

The Mashriqu'l-Adhkär was bedecked with flowers and looked like a beautiful bride. The flowers adorned the pathways to the House of Worship for two days, and the happy spirit of the occasion was kept alive throughout the month.

Also observed for the first time last November was the Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha and the Day of the Covenant.

Among the other November highlights:

**School children**
After the glorious celebration of the Birthday of Baha'u'llah, the second half of the month saw a sudden increase in the number of school groups touring the House of Worship.

The guides had to pull themselves up and face this challenge as 36,465 children from 305 schools arrived at the Temple.

On some days, as many as 80 schools were represented. Special prayer programs were held from time to time for the children, and pamphlets and copies of the peace statement were given to each school library.

November 28 was a triumphant success for everyone at the House of Worship, as staff arrived early in anticipation of some 800 students who were to arrive that day.

Students from 53 schools came to the House of Worship, and not a single one was unattended. This success was due largely to the cooperation and unity of all, from guards to volunteers.

On November 15, 23 children from a Bahá'í moral class took part in the Sunday choir service. Their enchanting voices touched the hearts of visitors, while their impeccable behavior impressed the teachers who accompanied the school group that day.

**Dignitaries**
The cultural departments of the embassies of the USSR and the People's Republic of China regularly bring visitors to the House of Worship.

Mr. Zakharov, Minister of Culture from the USSR, visited the Temple in November along with other high embassy officials and was impressed by the architecture as well as by the aims and ideals of the Faith.

The minister was given a copy each of "The Promise of World Peace" and the short obligatory prayer, both in Russian.

On November 6, the second Secretary in the Russian Embassy escorted the USSR's Ambassador-at-Large to the House of Worship.

Shortly afterward, the new Vice Consul General of China, Mr. Wang Zhao, and his wife came to the House of Worship and were highly impressed.

On November 15, a group of 120 performing artists from the famous Bolshoi theatre of Russia visited the Temple and stayed for more than an hour to hear about the Faith. They were happy to receive copies of the peace statement.

Also visiting in November were some 350 ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialists from all over the world. A special prayer program was arranged with Bahá'í selections on "The Divine Physician and Healing."

On a Monday, when the House of Worship was closed to visitors, Sri Swami Satchidananda and 30 of his followers from the U.S. were special guests.

The Swami was well-informed about the Faith, and asked many questions about the Temple. He and his followers have built a lotus-shaped temple in Virginia with each petal dedicated to a particular religion.

He asked that a plate of the "Greatest Name" be sent to him so that he might place it in the altar devoted to the Bahá'í Faith.

Another distinguished visitor in November was Baba Hardev Singh Nirankari, head of the Nirankari sect of Sikhism, who came with 36 of his disciples, his own media and security people.

**Tourist groups**
As winter sets in, the tourist season begins in India, and the House of Worship has become a point of attraction for tourists.

First in November came a group of New Zealanders who were full of enthusiasm and asked many questions about the Central Figures of the Faith.

One gentleman said he had read about the Faith and its principles, believed in them, and would like to become a Bahá'í. Several others in the group said they, too, would like to become Bahá'ís.

On one Sunday in November, more than 6,000 visitors were at the House of Worship when the gates opened at 9:30 a.m.

They were delegates from various parts of India to the Bhartiya Yoga Sansthan conference in Delhi, and the more than 100 tour buses that brought them could be seen lined up from the Temple parking space to the end of the approach road.

For about 45 minutes, the prayer hall was a mass of swirling humanity. It was only when order was restored, some 20 minutes later, that the morning prayer program could begin. More than 1,500 people attended the program.

The number of visitors to the House of Worship in November was 123,505.
**Scandinavia**

**Report from ‘Bahá’ís of North Calotte’**

A calotte is a skull cap. Look at a map of Scandinavia and you can easily visualize a skull cap resting snugly over the tops of Norway, Sweden and Finland. In Norwegian, this area is called the “Nordkalott”—in English, it is the North Calotte. Despite the international boundaries, the people native to this region think of it as one area. So do the Bahá’ís living in the North Calotte.

The people of the North Calotte are a mixture of Finns, Norwegians, Samis (Lapplanders) and Swedes, with a little Russian influence here and there. There are even more language groups, and it is not uncommon for people to be tri-lingual (for example, Norwegian, Finnish and Sami) as well as having learned English or German in school.

In the coastal areas of the North Calotte, the people have generally become “Norwegianized.” However, if one goes far enough inland he can still find traditional Sami. People with Finnish ancestry live in eastern Finnmark, in the Lakselv area, and near Alta. For obvious reasons, Russian influence is strongest in the eastern areas of Finnmark, from the Soviet border to about 150 km (93 miles) west. Most people of the North Calotte are of mixed ancestry, but there are still entire villages where nearly everyone is related to one another. This means that new people and new ideas are not always welcomed with open arms.

Life in Finnmark is very much affected by the seasons and climate. When the ice breaks up in late spring, “salmon fever” strikes. During June and July, the sun never goes below the horizon, and these months are the best for many outdoor activities. Berry-picking time is in August, along with mushroom-hunting for those with enough knowledge to find the ones that are harmless. The hunting seasons begin in September—first ptarmigan, then elk. After one has secured a good meat supply for the year, it’s time to start rebuilding the wood pile. This must be done by early November.

From November to the end of January, the dark period takes over—accompanied by beautiful displays of the aurora borealis (northern lights)—and people spend more time indoors. They make intricate handicrafts, do repairs on their homes, boats and tools, attend classes, read books, and, if they are fortunate enough, take a trip to a warmer climate for a dose of sun and sand. It is easy to understand why the best time of the year for a Bahá’í visitor to come to the North Calotte is during November, December and January—it is during these dark months that the inhabitants are less busy with outdoor activities.

When the sun returns in January or February (depending upon latitude), many places celebrate with a “Sun Party,” and some schools even give the children the day off. People start skiing and ice fishing. In recent years, some have even begun to have snow scooter rallies.

There are six “Norwegian” Bahá’ís living in the North Calotte, five on the western side and one in the east. To give an idea of the distances involved, the Bahá’ís living in the east must drive for four and one-half hours—in good weather—to reach the nearest Bahá’ís, who aren’t in Norway but in Inari, Finland. To reach the nearest Bahá’ís in Norway, she must drive about seven hours.

The Bahá’ís in Havøysund must take a 90-minute ferry ride to come to the mainland and then drive another 90 minutes to visit the nearest Bahá’ís, in Alta. During bad weather (meaning snow, ice and high winds, all of which can occur from October to early June), travel is often restricted to public transportation (slow buses or expensive airplanes) to assure that one reaches his planned destination.

Bahá’ís wishing to visit the North Calotte can be put to many uses. It is preferable that prospective visitors first become acquainted with one or more of the Bahá’ís in the North Calotte before traveling, so that one’s expectations can be made known and careful plans made so that unnecessary difficulties are avoided. The people of the North Calotte are especially open to native Bahá’ís, but everyone is, of course, welcome.

Possible activities for a guest are:
- Visiting friends and acquaintances of Bahá’ís.
- Speaking in schools.
- Visiting newspapers and radio stations.
- Attending/taking part in cultural gatherings.
- Calling on officials at the various Sami institutions.

**Fixed events held during the year are**:
- Sami markets at Easter time in Karasjok and Kautokeino.
- Several Sami markets in the fall and spring in northern Sweden.
- Winter Market in Jokkmokk, Sweden, first week in February.
- Bahá’í Mid-Summer Camp held each June in one of the three countries.
- Culture days, weekends, and weeks held in various places throughout the year in all of Finnmark.

For more information about Bahá’í activities in the North Calotte, please contact Jorunn Hagan, Malmveien 94, 9022 Krokelvdalen, Norway.

\[This article, “Bahá’ís of the North Calotte,” was written for the National Spiritual Assembly of Norway by Lynne Hippler and R. Randall Padfield.\]
Colombia host to radio seminar

Coordinators from all seven Bahá’í radio stations in the world gathered August 17-29 at the Ruhi Institute in Puerto Tejada, Colombia, for a radio seminar involving 40 participants from 11 countries.

Counsellors Eloy Anello, Farzam Arbáb and Ruth Pringle and three members of the International Bahá’í Audio-Visual Centre—Alex Frame, Kurt Hein and Donald Witzel—were among the consultants, as were members of the Guaymi, Mapuche and Quechua peoples.

The seminar focused on the study of the Sacred Texts, the writings of the Guardian, and messages from the Universal House of Justice, combined with classes on rural development and administration.

As a result of attending the seminar, participants said, they were inspired with “a new vision of Radio Bahá’í” and were “ready to assume new challenges of deepening, proclamation and education via radio, in a spirit of sacrificial service.”

Reunion

Twenty-eight students from a military school and three of their teachers visited the Bahá’í National Centre in Saint-Pierre, Reunion, an island in the Pacific Ocean, last July. The students, ranging in age from 14 to 16 years, were introduced to the Faith by several speakers and asked many questions. Copies of the peace statement were given to each of the visitors, while books on the Faith were requested by the teachers.

Cyprus

The 10-day North Cyprus Bahá’í Summer School, held last August in Famagusta, drew 75 participants from Austria, Turkey and Cyprus.

The involvement of youth and children was happy and wholehearted, and study sessions were well-attended and lively.

Among the participants was Counsellor for Asia Ilhan Sezgin.

Brazil

“Bahá’í Week” was celebrated last September 15-22 in Goiania, capital of Goias State in central Brazil.

All three television channels broadcast the event, 11 items were published in local newspapers, and 28 brief advertisements were seen on television during the week.

Proclamations were made to all strata of society from the university to public officials to residents of the impoverished areas of the city.

A medical care campaign reached 800 people in three days with cooperation from the authorities, who offered free medicine to the poor. Five Bahá’í physicians from various states came to help, and a total of 23 volunteers included seven non-Bahá’ís.

Festivities during the week-long celebration included a “peace/poetry evening,” a program for youth called “Youth Can Move the World,” which was seen by 200 in a public park, and the planting of a “Peace Tree” by the mayor of Goiania in which earth from five countries was used.

Ivory Coast

The Bahá’í Publishing Trust of Ivory Coast will soon distribute five new translations of “Words of God,” a compilation by the Universal House of Justice. The translations are in the African languages of Béoule, Bete, Guere, Dioula and Senoufo.
Malaysia

Pictured is the Yan Kee Leong Bahá'í Institute near Bakalong in the State of Selangor, Malaysia. The Institute, which stands on nearly seven acres of Temple land property owned since 1977 by the National Spiritual Assembly of Malaysia, is used for Bahá'í classes, conferences, summer and winter schools, and the National Convention. It is dedicated to the memory of the late Counsellor Yan Kee Leong and is situated on the spot where he was born. The National Assembly calls the Institute a “silent teacher” which attracts the attention of people in the neighborhood.

Australia

A Mongolian Bahá’í who now lives in Australia accepted the Faith following a special service last October 11 at the House of Worship near Sydney.

The purpose of the service was to attract members of the Asian community to the Faith. Seven of the readings were in Asian languages including various Chinese dialects, while five of the readers were non-Bahá’í Chinese including two physicians and a scientist.

About 170 people attended the service, 70 of whom (including 45 of Chinese origin) were not Bahá’ís.

Judy Hassall, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia, was interviewed last October for half an hour on a radio program of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

The program, in which searching questions were directed toward the Bahá’í teachings on the future of mankind, changes in society needed to achieve peace, and especially the emerging role of women as peacemakers, was aired in all capital cities of Australia and on all regional stations.

Nigeria

Pictured are Bahá’ís and their fellow villagers in Idi Ose, Nigeria, standing on a wall of a community school that they were building. The local Assembly made a cash gift, and Bahá’ís donated their labor to the community development project. The older gentlemen wearing headdresses are members of the community, while most of the young people in the photograph are Bahá’í workers. Since this picture was taken, work on the building has been completed.
Bahá'í International Community

The Bahá'í International Community and five national Bahá'í communities were honored recently by the United Nations for their contributions to the UN's International Year of Peace in 1986.

In all, about 300 national and international organizations were awarded the "Peace Messenger" certificates "in recognition of a significant contribution to the program and objectives of the International Year of Peace."

Bahá'í national communities so recognized were those of Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Kenya and Lesotho.

Separate award ceremonies were held in each of those countries.

In New York City, the Peace Messenger Award was accepted on behalf of the worldwide Bahá'í community by Dr. Victor de Araujo, a UN representative for the Bahá'í International Community.

Costa Rica

Fifty-two people representing 16 nationalities took part last May 30 in the first International Bahá'í Dinner in Costa Rica.

The event was planned by the country's Chinese Teaching Committee. The majority of those invited were not Bahá'ís but included people from Taiwan, Korea and Indonesia.

The hall of the National Haziratu'l-Quds was tastefully decorated with flowers, balloons and paintings, and two banners were hung which read, in Spanish and Chinese, "Welcome Friends" and "First International Dinner."

Two professional musicians with an international repertoire were engaged to provide entertainment, while an international folk dance group performed dances from around the world.

Dominican Republic

Bahá'ís from the Dominican Republic and Haiti, who share the island of Hispaniola, have begun border teaching efforts.

On June 27, eight Dominican Bahá'ís from Dajabon crossed the border to meet with Haitian Bahá'ís. The groups prayed and sang together, then went in small groups to teach.

Local residents were startled to see the love and joy between Haitian and Dominican Bahá'ís.

The Haitians taught in Creole while those from the Dominican Republic taught in French. As many Haitians also understand Spanish, the Dominican visitors were also able to use their own language.

The people were friendly, courteous and receptive, and that afternoon there were many enrollments in the Faith.

Cameroon

A Bahá'í Holiday School for Cameroon's North West Province, Bamenda, was held last June 20-27 at a government high school in the lovely Bambili Hills.

The 74 participants were mostly youth who studied The Dawn-Breakers and family life. Fourteen later volunteered for teaching projects.

Pictured is the new national library and national office building of the National Spiritual Assembly of Pakistan in Karachi.

Bás'í school at Sariab, saying he was pleased to learn about the social welfare projects carried out by the Bahá'í community of Pakistan.

He was pleased to learn of the non-political nature of the Faith and gave assurances of his government's special consideration for minorities.

The interview was reported the following day with photographs in two daily newspapers.
Ecuador

Pictured is one of 15 groups who performed last August 9 in the 10th annual “Nucanchic Tono” (Our Music) Festival sponsored by Radio Bahá’í in Otavalo, Ecuador. The contest, which has become a popular event, supplies much of the indigenous music for Radio Bahá’í and has encouraged rural musicians who have gone on to become professionals. Five regional festivals are held each year in various towns, with a final one taking place at the Coliseo in Otavalo. Last year’s finals drew an audience of about 8,000. The panel of judges was composed of indigenous people, professional musicians from Otavalo, and international professionals.

Bangladesh

The National Youth Committee of Bangladesh organized a one-day medical aid project last August 13 in a flood-ravaged area about 100 km (62 miles) from Dacca.

Last year’s floods caused heavy damage to farms, destroyed thousands of homes and took many lives.

The government supplied all the help it could, but due to the great need, the Youth Committee decided to organize a number of medical camps as social and economic development projects for the Six Year Plan.

The first of these was led by Dr. Parsvis Shahidi and two members of the Youth Committee, Farzad Forganian and Shahab Das, who were driven to Fulpur and walked the rest of the way to the flood-stricken village of Bakai.

They worked all day, treating about 200 people and distributing most of the free medicines they had brought.

Germany

This book display by Bahá’í Verlag, the Bahá’í Publishing Trust of Germany, was presented last September 8-14 at the sixth International Book Fair in Moscow, Russia.
The use of mass media in service to the Faith
Recounting a memorable visit to France

The recent visit to France by the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum was undertaken primarily in memory of her mother, May Maxwell, who established the Faith there and was the first Bahá’í in Europe. Arriving on November 11, 1987, she visited 17 places during her 33-day stay: Nice, Vence, Monaco, Cannes, Hyères, Marseille, Annecy, Chapareillan (near Chambéry), Lyon, Paris (four times), Rouen, La Celle-Saint-Cloud, Bordeaux, Nantes, Rennes, Chartres and Strasbourg.

During this time a two-day National Teaching Conference was held in Paris; seven regional gatherings throughout the country in Nice, Marseille, Annecy, Bordeaux, Nantes, Rennes and Strasbourg; and a National Youth Conference in Lyon. Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum declared that although her French was imperfect, she would give her talks in that language, and she often spoke for five hours a day at various occasions.

The general impression had been that it was almost impossible to teach the Faith in France: the community was weak, and things were not progressing fast enough. She found, on the contrary, that the French community was very much alive, with immense potential for growth. The majority of Bahá’ís there are French, devoted, active, often young people, college students, musicians, married couples with young children—in all, she said, an extraordinarily vital and dynamic group of people, friendly, responsive to the meetings she had with them, and eager to serve the Faith. Although many communities are small, they are quite active, holding regular Feasts and firesides. The French, she said, are an alert and progressive people, and Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum feels there are presently great teaching possibilities in France, and that if the French Bahá’ís are encouraged and helped, receive pioneers and traveling teachers to reinforce their limited manpower, great progress can be made now.

. . . . (she) feels that there are presently great teaching possibilities in France, and that if the French Bahá’ís are encouraged and helped, receive pioneers and traveling teachers to reinforce their limited manpower, great progress can be made now.

In Nice, and 80 friends from 11 places in Marseille.

During the conference in Nice (and later at the National Teaching Conference in Paris), an excellent evening program of sound and light was presented: the music, quotations, and photographs of flowers created a most moving spectacle. In Nice, Marseille, Lyon, Paris and elsewhere, talented and enthusiastic young Bahá’ís played and sang, often their own compositions, to the delight of the Bahá’ís and their guests. Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum was thrilled by the wonderful Bahá’í youth in France, their talent and enthusiasm.

Throughout France the Bahá’ís took full advantage of her visit to invite friends and relatives who were not Bahá’ís to attend special meetings and receptions; as a result, a number of those already interested accepted the Faith.

One of Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum’s precious experiences was a trip to Hyères to call on a 91-year-old believer; not only she (frail, but on her feet, clear of mind, and eagerly waiting) but the director of the home and the matron were touched and delighted by the visit.

Coverage by the media in France is hard to obtain; however, in Marseille, the Hand of the Cause had an interview with a well-known columnist published in one of the large papers in southern France, followed by a number of others in various cities.

Conference on Swiss border

The third Regional Conference was in Annecy, on the Swiss border. More than 200 friends participated, most of them from Switzerland; a social evening and concert ended the event, and were attended by the deputy mayor of Annecy and his wife. The mayor’s remarks were cordial and full of praise for the teachings and goals of the Ba-
há'ís. A meeting for the friends in the Chambéry district took place in the home of a Bahá'í in Chapareillan, where a hospitable dinner was followed by an enthusiastic meeting.

From Annecy, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum went to Lyon to address a National Youth Conference. When one thinks of the distances involved, it was encouraging to find more than 100 present from all parts of France, Switzerland and Belgium; many excellent questions were asked. A meeting and dinner also took place with the Lyon and neighboring Bahá'ís, at which 45 were present.

Visits with high officials

The most important part of her visit to France took place during the first visit to Paris. The National Assembly had arranged a number of interviews with officials. The Prime Minister of France had delegated Mme. Albanel Delagar to meet with Rúhiyyih Khánum on his behalf. Mme. Delagar is "in charge of the Affairs of Cultes" (the French use the word "culte," not religion). She was an intelligent, agreeable person, surprised to hear so many things about the Faith, about which she evidently had little knowledge, interested in the material Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum was able to show her, and particularly to note that the Bahá'í International Community had recently joined the Conservation and Religion Network of the World Wide Fund for Nature.

Another of the important engagements in Paris, perhaps the most important, was with Mme. Simon Veil, who is at present the representative of the Republic of France in the European Parliament, and formerly its president. On that body she had raised her voice publicly in defense of the persecuted Bahá'ís in Iran and is keenly interested in events affecting the Faith in that country. She was interested to hear from Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum the history of the relationship of the Faith with the State of Israel.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Canada had requested that Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum call on the Canadian Ambassador; as he was out of town, she was courteously received by the Canadian Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Wright, and for more than half an hour had a pleasant conversation with him: the persecutions in Iran were discussed at length, as well as the progress of the Faith throughout the world, especially in the Third World.

Paris Teaching Conference

On November 28-29, a weekend National Teaching Conference was held in Paris, the largest of its kind ever held there. Four hundred-fifty to 500 people from all parts of France as well as from other countries attended, including Counsellor Agnès Ghaznavi and a number of Auxiliary Board members. In addition to talks by Rúhiyyih Khánum, the gathering was addressed by the Counsellor and members of the National Spiritual Assembly of France, all of whom underlined the needs of the Six Year Plan. There was, she reported, a wonderful sense of oneness and enthusiasm, to which, undoubtedly, the spirit of the many Bahá'í youth present contributed.

Photograph at the Eiffel Tower

The Spiritual Assembly of Paris, after entertaining Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum at lunch, commemo­rated her visit by adjourning to the Eiffel Tower for a photograph in the same place where, 75 years ago, the beloved Master had been photographed.

Amatu'l-Bahá and Mrs. Nakhtjavání were able to attend the meeting at the Hazíratu'l-Quds in Paris marking the anniversary of the Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá; about 200 of the friends were present at the beautifully conducted meeting.

During this visit, the Bahá'í youth had an evening meeting with Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum following a dinner with her at the National Center. About 80 young Bahá'ís were present, and a happy evening was spent together.

The National Spiritual Assembly had rented a hall in Paris for a general meeting at which about 100 people were present; after a talk, many questions were asked.

Meetings in suburbs of Paris

In addition to all the other activities in Paris, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum was able to have two happy meetings with communities near that city: in Rouen, an active and devoted group of the friends, many of them refugees from Iran, entertained her and all the friends at lunch; in La Celle-Saint-Cloud, some 50 people were present, a number of them from neighboring sub­urbs of Paris, in the home of one of the believers.

After the eventful days in Paris, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum left for Bordeaux where she met the official who was, to her, the most important of her entire trip.  

Interview with mayor of Bordeaux

The small but active community in Bordeaux had arranged an interview with the mayor, Jacques Chabon Delmas, a one-time Prime Minister of France, and at present the Speaker of its House of Representatives. Although the visit in his private office at City Hall lasted only about 15 minutes, she was able to mention many things about the Faith, of which he knew little. The mayor had, however, heard about the persecutions in Iran, which he strongly deplored. She was also able to inform him that the Bahá'í International Community had been accepted, on an equal basis with other world religions, into the WWF Network on Conservation and Religion. It was an extremely cordial interview.

Vitality of small communities

The vitality of these small French communities, she noted, is truly remarkable. The Regional Conference in Bordeaux, attended by more than 50 Bahá'ís and their guests from six localities, was preceded by a lavish dinner prepared by the local community; Bahá'ís had come from as far south as Saint-Jean-de-Luz in the Basque country—six of them were Basques.

After Bordeaux came Nantes, the scene of the fifth Regional Conference with about 100 of the friends attending from 11 localities; there were a number of dynamic and happy meetings including one with the children. Every place that Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum went, in Paris or the provinces, invariably, the Bahá'ís had gathered their children together and insisted she should meet with and speak to them. It was clear that the French Bahá'ís are paying attention to the fundamental duty of raising their children in the Faith.

The Hand of the Cause was deeply touched to meet in Nantes with an Auxiliary Board member from Niger, Africa, whom she and Mrs. Nakhtjavání had known on their African safari and who had come all the way from Niger just to see them again.
Stories of village Baha’is

Throughout France it was clear that French Baha’is and Persian Baha’is work well together: at Nantes, a French Auxiliary Board member and his Persian wife gave a reception for about 50 people, half of them non-Baha’is who had heard about the Faith from them. Amatu’l-Baha Ruhiyiyih Khánúm was struck by the fact that although these people were well off, sound, middle-class “petit bourgeois,” they seemed deeply interested in what she felt strongly moved to talk about, namely, her experiences in Africa and in villages, and how there are village Baha’is all over the world, many of whom are illiterate. When she had finished, a young, very charming woman came to her and said: “You know, what you said interested me so much because I have been coming to these meetings and I have been reading the Baha’i Writings, but I didn’t see how it could apply to the whole world; I thought it was only for people like us, and all the time my thoughts go to these people in the developing countries, these masses of illiterate and uneducated people in villages, and it didn’t seem to have any connection with them, and yet these are the people that interest me, and for whom I have a very strong feeling. Now you tell me that hundreds of thousands of these people are Baha’is!” She was one of those who, with her husband, accepted the Faith shortly after the visitors left.

From Nantes Amatu’l-Baha Ruhiyiyih Khánúm went to Rennes, the capital of Brittany. Over and over, she was astonished by the capacity for organization of these small Baha’i communities, many of them just managing to hold their local Assemblies. The National Spiritual Assembly of France left it to the local Spiritual Assemblies to make the arrangements for activities connected with Ruhiyiyih Khánúm’s visit, and she was impressed by how smoothly everything was planned and carried out. In Rennes, there is a Cambodian Baha’i who accepted the Faith in a refugee camp in Thailand. As he worked all day, his amiable non-Baha’i mother-in-law cooked a delicious Cambodian lunch for 30 or so people in their home. The man is truly exemplary; he has the determination, devotion and stability to be a Baha’i wherever he is and to raise his five children as Baha’is, as well as to show his hospitality and love, even when neither he nor his wife can be present. This was indicative of the fine spirit encountered by Amatu’l-Baha Ruhiyiyih Khánúm in communities all over France. At a small meeting held that same evening, three of the friends who had been attracted to the Faith expressed their desire to be enrolled, which made the gathering a memorable and happy one for all.

In Strasbourg, the last of her engagements in France and the seat of the European Parliament, two important interviews with officials had been arranged. The first was with Mme. Knorr, whom the mayor—absent from Strasbourg—had deputized to meet her. Mme. Knorr, who is in charge of religious affairs and education in the local government of the Department of Alsace, spent a long time with Amatu’l-Baha Ruhiyiyih Khánúm, showing a lively interest in the Faith. The second interview was with a prominent figure in France, Mr. Hoeffel, a Senator who is also president of the Conseil General of the Bas-Rhin District. Looking tired after an all-day meeting and an evening session the previous day with the Parliament of Europe, he said to Ruhiyiyih Khánúm, “What can I do for you?” “Do for me?” she replied. “I didn’t come here to have anything done for me; I don’t want anything.” Mr. Hoeffel looked absolutely astonished; evidently, he had thought he had an appointment with someone who had some kind of a demand, petition or complaint. The Hand of the Cause continued: “I have come here to pay my respects to you as a member of the government; I haven’t come to ask for anything. I don’t want anything at all.” Mr. Hoeffel was taken aback, and said, “Well, won’t you sit down?” They had a worthwhile and pleasant chat about the Faith, and mention was made of the persecutions in Iran.

Amatu’l-Baha Ruhiyiyih Khánúm spent two nights in Strasbourg where the local Baha’is held a dinner in her honor at the Baha’i Center on the first evening, followed by an informal and happy meeting with all the friends; on the second night, her last in France, a large meeting was arranged. Strasbourg is on the German frontier, and the Rhine River runs through it. In a hall on the border, more than 200 of the friends from that area of France, as well as from Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium and Switzerland gathered in a befitting final occasion for Amatu’l-Baha’s historic visit.

Returning to Paris, on the last day before her departure, Amatu’l-Baha Ruhiyiyih Khánúm had a long meeting with the National Spiritual Assembly of France during which she commented on her trip and experiences in France but expressed her deep conviction that now is the time to push forward as never before with teaching the Faith, as there is a new receptivity stirring in the land. After that meeting, the National Assembly invited its beloved guest and her companion to a delicious lunch, and the next day the entire membership of the National Assembly saw her off at the airport, just as they had so lovingly greeted her on her arrival.

Uruguay

Eighty-two delegates from 13 Departments in Uruguay gathered last September 20 for a National Teaching Conference at the National Center in Montevideo to analyze the goals of the Six Year Plan. Among those taking part were Counsellor Eloy Anello and Auxiliary Board members Shahnaz Rassekh and Teresa de Lugo.

A decision was made to increase the national community by 400 new believers and to add four localities to the 96 now open to the Faith in Uruguay.

In connection with an architectural conference sponsored last October by the Baha’is of Paysandu, Uruguay, the Sunday edition of the newspaper El Telegrafo featured the Temple in India in page after page of stunning photographs and a text filled with superlatives describing the “Lotus of Bahapur.” Seventy-five architects, builders, skilled workmen, architecture students, draftsmen and others were present at the municipal cultural center of Paysandu where a slide show, talk and photo exhibit on the Temple were presented.
A closer look at ‘mass communication’

As the Six Year Plan is implemented in countries throughout the Bahá’í world, there is a need in many places to assess the way in which the media can best serve the Faith at this particular time in our history. Until now, our approach to media use has been sporadic, with local and national Bahá’í communities being happy with whatever exposure could be obtained. As recently as a decade or two ago, many areas were still being opened by pioneers who had to assume responsibility for whatever publicity was given to the Faith; indeed, many of them rendered sterling service in this area, and continue to do so.

Now, however, the Faith of God is firmly established in most places, and Bahá’í communities the world over have drafted their own Six Year teaching plans calculated to achieve a dramatic increase in admirers and sympathizers as well as new declarants. With this step forward should come more systematic use of the media, big and small, electronic and print, through live events, recorded presentations, artistic works or written themes. It is time to move from the “pioneering phase” of media use to well-orchestrated campaigns involving a broad base of largely local manpower, with central coordination and constant communication among responsible agencies.

At “campaign level”—national, regional or local—thoughtful analysis can be made of the general goals of the Faith for the area in the current plan, as well as an assessment of its status in the eyes of the government, other leaders and the general public, its level of consolidation, and its present and possible manpower base. From this overview, consultations can center on how media use can assist each need, with due consideration for the ideas of concerned institutions, committees and individuals.

All media—large and small, local and national—should be used to the greatest extent possible, dictated by need, opportunity and human and material resources. This suggests a media-coordinating body with ready access to the Teaching Committee and other arms of the Faith (e.g., Public Relations; Social and Economic Development; Women, Youth and Children’s Committees, and so forth) as well as the National or local Spiritual Assembly itself from time to time. This central agency would maintain the necessary overview, considering media in light of Bahá’í needs and objectives. Once plans are formulated, more specialized work can take place: coordinating the use of radio, television, newspapers, billboards, direct mail, sidewalk and park displays, exhibits, flyers, shoppers, posters and public presentations as necessary and practical for the achievement of specific ends.

At this level enter budgetary and human resource considerations, the latter including the training of Bahá’ís native to the area in various facets of media use. This step should lead to the development of production skills and, particularly, train local Bahá’ís to be the “presenters” of the Faith in their area to the greatest extent, whether on-camera, on-microphone, meeting with government officials or newspaper editors or reporters, or on-stage as speakers or performers. Production hardware (for radio or TV presentations, graphic arts, etc.) may or may not be efficient to own and use, depending on what is accessible, quality available, cost, and Bahá’í manpower, among other factors.

In defining how the media might best serve the needs of the Faith at any given time, we must first assess such needs:

I. Systematic proclamation—to impart “the fact and general aim of the new Revelation” to a large and measurable segment of the population (preferably 100 per cent). Many forms of media may be used in concert for proclamation, whose goals are most often realized when a person hears a theme (radio, meeting, friend), sees the same message (TV, exhibit, billboard), and reads it somewhere (newspaper, poster, flyer) so that various media become reinforcing.

We must first define objectives: what should someone in the target area derive from a sustained campaign to proclaim? If the goal is to impart to 10,000, 100,000 or one million people the news that God has sent a new Messenger; that He is Bahá’u’lláh and His followers are Bahá’ís; and that He came to unite mankind and bring universal peace, then we should state these facts simply and directly by every avail-

This article, “Use of the Media in Service to the Faith,” was written by K. Dean Stephens, a member of the executive committee of the International Bahá’í Audio-Visual Centre (IBAVC) and professor of development communication at the Amoz Gibson Training Centre for Bahá’í Media in Arecibo, Puerto Rico.
able means: through spot ads in electronic and print media, via posters, billboards, stands, exhibits, dramatic and musical presentations, in person, by mail, and so forth.

One activity during such proclamation endeavors might be a survey undertaken by teams of youth and others to areas representative of various income and cultural groups within the target populace who would explain the campaign and ask the interviewee whether he/she has heard of Bahá'u'lláh, and when or how. Obviously, this not only gives hard data on the progress and effectiveness of the campaign, but also provides an opportunity to proclaim and often to teach on the spot.

As a universally available medium in most of the world, radio is especially suited for proclamation. A single station in an urban center might potentially be heard by four million listeners; stations in 100 large cities could similarly reach 400 million souls with the healing Message, a figure representing 10 per cent of the entire population of the earth. This makes the use of radio a “must” if we wish to be faithful to our mandate to proclaim to all mankind. Bahá’í radio stations could very well structure proclamation formats, but few exist in larger population centers, where high cost usually rules out ownership. In some regions, however, bulk time can be purchased, allowing an hour or two at regular intervals for presentation of a Bahá’í radio block including messages of peace and harmony interspersed with Bahá’í spots about God and His Prophets, His promises to mankind, His Messenger for this Day; music; cultural and educational vignettes; and other spiritual fare.

In other situations, series of spot announcements can proclaim the information desired. In either case, first-year goals can be set:
1. That a high percentage of the populace agree that God exists, and that He does send Messengers from time to time as He promised.
2. That 50 per cent of the population hear that a new Messenger has come, and that His name is Bahá'u'lláh.
3. That 30 per cent of the population hear that Bahá'u'lláh has come to unite mankind and to bring peace on earth.
4. That 20 per cent of the population know how to get more information about the Bahá'í Faith.

These are examples of goals that can be measured in surveys of various kinds. It should be remembered that radio is more effective if used systematically and combined with other media in a campaign.

II. Sustained teaching—to make the principles and ideals of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh readily available to persons awakened by proclamation. The mass media are largely too impersonal to undertake direct teaching to any extent. They are far better utilized to support teaching activities: by publicizing a gathering or concert, giving out information (of a Bahá'í meeting or Center), focusing on a single principle (world peace, brotherhood), or indirectly presenting the Faith through performing or other arts, sponsoring a well-known speaker on a Bahá'í theme, etc. In areas where systematic teaching is being undertaken by the Bahá'ís, proclamation activities should be heightened to prepare waiting souls.

III. Enrollment—the integration of those souls newly afire with love for Bahá'u'lláh and His teachings into the mainstream of the Bahá'í community—is indirectly rather than directly related to media use. In fertile areas where teaching is taking place, the media can provide important help in this heart-to-heart process: giving credibility to the Bahá'ís doing the teaching and support to the one being taught by establishing that the Faith is a presence in the area. Such support may be crucial in helping an awakened soul to declare allegiance to the Blessed Beauty.

IV. Deepening—to make available a wealth of writings, literature and community experience to every Bahá'í, veteran or newly declared; to inspire and stimulate until the fire within burns of its own accord. Electronic media can be useful in this process if programs are kept short and simple, dealing with only one theme at a time. Too often, we try to teach and deepen by radio, for instance, using half-hour or even longer formats rather akin to sermonizing. Better to present a single concept—unity in diversity, equality of men and women, universal peace—in mini-programs of 1-5 minutes each, a tactic that elevates the function of the program to proclamation, teaching and deepening simultaneously.

On the other hand, print media can be used in certain situations for deepening and even teaching. For example, “The Promise of World Peace” might be serialized in a daily newspaper. Direct mail, a viable media form, can similarly be used in deepening new be-
lievers. Within the Bahá’í community, music and other presentations can help
the deepening process: dramatizing the Faith’s history, highlighting a prin-
ciple, teaching a prayer, a song or a Hidden Word.

V. Likewise for consolidation—the process of community-building going
forward in every corner of the world. Bahá’í radio is especially useful to this
process, since it can impart the rhythm of Bahá’í community life, with special
programs for Feasts and Holy Days, individual and institutional deepen-
ings, programs about the Administrative Order, and local Bahá’í news in-
cluding conferences, activities and Assembly elections. The commercial
media can be used to some extent for such purposes, but less effectively;
however, a number of alternative media forms exist which may excel in
areas not blessed with Bahá’í radio. These include sound trucks; direct
mail; film, slide and video presentations; and “road shows” with drama,
dance and musical offerings.

VI. Public relations and community
service—these activities can well in-
clude Bahá’í troupes: an interracial, in-
ternational group of Bahá’ís of all ages
might travel from place to place with
songs, dances, speeches and dramatic
presentations emphasizing world unity,
peace, or some other great theme. Such
presentations attract non-Bahá’í media
for advance publicity, direct coverage
of the events themselves, interviews
with visitors, and follow-up stories.
And in each region, local Bahá’í talent
and culture can be incorporated into
the show, at once infusing new life into
the Bahá’í communities visited and giv-
ing the presentations more local ap-
pel.

Successful Bahá’í social and eco-
nomic development projects are the
stuff of which good feature stories are
made, in both print and electronic
media. We should not count on others
to do this important work for us, but
rather become so skilled as to appeal
directly to existing media channels.
Wherever there is a Bahá’í-operated
radio station, the local culture is pro-
moted through festivals, indigenous
musical groups, children’s art, dance
and song, marathons, parades and simi-
lar events. Bahá’ís in other areas can
initiate these activities as well, easily
drawing favorable media coverage for
a popular annual presentation. Thus a
media event may in itself be a social or
economic development activity, and
vice versa.

As the Faith continues to grow and
consolidate, opportunities to use the
media effectively are ever more avail-
able. But media use should be much
more systematic and focused upon
proclamation, teaching and other Ba-
häuser-related goals, a process requiring
new creativity, training, sophistication
and dedication. If we make the effort,
the rewards promise to be great as our
Faith, now having emerged from ob-
scurity, becomes the guiding force in
the forward march of humanity.

Hawaii

Highway Department engineer Irving
Ocasio de Leon (left) consults with a
machine operator about a new access
road at the Amoz Gibson Media Train-
ing Centre in Arecibo, Puerto Rico.
The old road was damaged during a
Highway Department feasibility study
and rebuilt at no charge.

Carol Padilla presents a framed certifi-
cate of tribute from the Bahá’ís of
Honolulu, Hawaii, to Myron Thomp-
son, president of the Polynesian Voy-
aging Society, to honor the voyages
of the double-hulled canoe Hokule’a.
More than 250 people including more
than 20 of the Hokule’a’s crew attend-
ed the ceremony as the Neil Blaisdell
Center in Honolulu. The program in-
cluded a video record of the canoe’s
second voyage of 16,000 miles that in-
cluded stops in Tahiti, the Cook Is-
lands, New Zealand, Tonga, Samoa
and Rangiroa. The voyages have dem-
onstrated that early Polynesians could
have sailed the largest oceans using
non-instrument navigation techniques.
"Is there any greater blessing conceivable for a man, than that he should become the cause of the education, the development, the prosperity and honor of his fellow-creatures? No, by the Lord God! The highest righteousness of all is for blessed souls to take hold of the hands of the helpless and deliver them out of their ignorance and abasement and poverty, and with pure motives, and only for the sake of God, to arise and energetically devote themselves to the service of the masses, forgetting their own worldly advantage and working only to serve the general good."

The above passage was written by 'Abdu'l-Baha in 1875, as part of a work now known as *The Secret of Divine Civilization*. In this remarkable discourse, the Master speaks of "establishing new bases for human happiness and creating and promoting new instrumentalities toward this end." More than a century later, the Universal House of Justice mobilized the Bahá'í world for social and economic development activities:

"Now, after all the years of constant teaching activity, the Community of the Greatest Name has grown to the stage at which the processes of this development must be incorporated into its regular pursuits; particularly is action compelled by the expansion of the Faith in Third World countries where the vast majority of its adherents reside... all, irrespective of circumstances or resources, are endowed with the capacity to respond in some measure; all can share; all can participate in the joint enterprise of applying more systematically the principles of the Faith to upraising the quality of human life.

"Progress in the development field will largely depend on natural stirrings at the grassroots, and it should receive its driving force from those sources rather than from an imposition of plans and programs from the top. The major task of National Assemblies, therefore, is to increase the local communities' awareness of needs and possibilities, and to guide and coordinate the efforts resulting from such awareness... . . ." (Letter to the Bahá'ís of the world dated October 20, 1983)

Participatory community Bahá'í radio is one such possibility, offering a potent "instrumentality" for communication and development. The above paragraph continues:

"Already in many areas the friends are witnessing the confirmations of their initiatives in such pursuits as the founding of tutorial and other schools, the promotion of literacy, the launching of rural development programs, the inception of educational radio stations, and the operation of agricultural and medical projects. As they enlarge the scope of their endeavors, other modes of development will undoubtedly emerge."

*Bahá'í radio models*

Three Bahá'í educational radio stations were on the air in 1983: medium wave (AM) and shortwave stations in Ecuador, and an AM unit in Peru. By 1987, the number had grown to eight stations worldwide, with the addition of AM facilities in Bolivia, Panama, Liberia and Chile, and an FM station.
in the United States. All these stations serve communities of largely indigenous peoples, whether Guaymi or Mopuche Indians, rural blacks in the southern U.S., tribal cultures in Liberia, or Quechua-speaking peoples descended from the Inca Empire; all broadcast in the languages of the people, promote the local culture, and thrive on the participation of their audiences. In such aspects, village radio can emulate these full-size stations, performing the same services on a smaller scale. But village radio, as presented here, is quite distinct in other respects.

**What is village radio?**

Village radio is a small and informal broadcast station staffed by volunteers who are devoted to serving the needs of a community or area isolated from other means of communication, power and utilities. It consists of a low-power, low-cost, self-contained “table top” radio station capable of broadcasting to the village or region in question. The package outlined below features a 3- to 5-watt AM transmitter, but power levels can vary from fractions of a watt to hundreds, depending on conditions and desired coverage area. Various village radio models can broadcast on AM or FM, radiate from an antenna or be contained in a cable or wire. Very low power (milliwatt) transmitters, carrier current or closed circuit modes may not require a license in some areas; the legal requirements must be ascertained for each country and locale.

### Village radio hardware

A typical village radio system broadcasts over a range of 10-20 km (6.5-13.5 miles) from a wire antenna and requires a government license to operate. Such a package includes a three- to five-watt AM transmitter tuned to an assigned frequency, a 12-volt studio complete with five-channel mixer, two D.C. servo turntables, two cassette players, table and floor microphones, and headsets. Also included are an antenna tuning unit, wire and mounting hardware, extra cartridges, styli and other spare parts, tape stock, and portable cassette recorders for interviewing and gathering news of community interest, music, and folklore indigenous to the area. The package may also contain an alternate energy system including solar panels, batteries and lighting. A complete village station, with all studio and transmitter equipment, can fit atop a 75 x 150 cm (2.5 x 5 ft) table, with room to spare for papers and microphones.

Whereas an average station on the AM radio band transmits 1,000 to 5,000 watts of power, village radio might broadcast with 1 to 25 watts. On FM, South Carolina’s WLGI Radio radiates 50,000 watts; a village radio FM station might emit 50 watts. The cost of equipping a conventional 1,000-watt AM station varies from about $50,000 to $150,000; a five-watt village radio station could cost as little as $1,500 to $3,000 to equip. Commercial radio stations in various parts of the world may have an operating budget ranging to several hundred thousand dollars a year; the annual operating cost for a 1,000-watt Radio Bahá’í facility in South America is more like $24,000.

### Commercial radio stations in various parts of the world may have an operating budget ranging to several hundred thousand dollars a year; the annual operating cost for a 1,000-watt Radio Bahá’í facility in South America is more like $24,000.

### Village radio costs and benefits

Commercial radio stations in various parts of the world may have an operating budget ranging to several hundred thousand dollars a year; the annual operating cost for a 1,000-watt Radio Bahá’í facility in South America is more like $24,000.

Under similar propagation conditions, a five-watt AM village transmitter can cover a 27 km (17.5 mile) radius, versus an 87 km (56.5 mile) radius of coverage for a 1,000-watt AM station. So, for an initial outlay of 1/25 the equipment cost compared to 1,000-watt Radio Bahá’í, a village station covering 1/3 the radius can be realized. Even de-rating village radio’s coverage to a 10-mile radius around the transmitter (to allow for a simple wire antenna), such a station can provide adequate coverage to most small communities and their immediate surroundings.

### Table: Village Radio Costs and Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQUIPMENT COST</th>
<th>YEARLY OPERATING COST</th>
<th>RADIATED POWER</th>
<th>COVERAGE AREA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial AM:</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>1,000 watts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Bahá’í AM:</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
<td>1,000 watts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Radio AM:</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>5 watts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial FM:</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>50,000 watts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Radio FM:</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>50 watts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Energy independence

Village radio can run entirely on 12-volt D.C. power. In areas without electric mains, the station comes equipped with its own energy source, one or more photovoltaic solar panels that charge a heavy-duty automotive battery during daylight hours. In an area with an average of six peak solar hours per day (clear sky, high-angle sunlight), one 40-watt solar panel sends a 15-amp charge to the battery, power that is sufficient to keep a five-watt station on the air for six to eight hours. In this example, the added cost of self-sufficiency is about $300; double that amount to maintain the station on the air for 12 hours under similar conditions.

“The Cause... must now develop new ways and means of interesting the masses and teaching them, and both radio and moving pictures can be of very great help...”

“The Bahá’ís should not always be the last to take up new and obviously excellent methods, but rather the first, as this agrees with the dynamic nature of the Faith which is not only progressive, but holds within itself the seeds of an entirely new culture and civilization.” (Letters from Shoghi Effendi through his secretary to an individual believer, dated October 16, 1944, and May 5, 1946)

How can village radio serve a community?

Like its full-sized Radio Bahá’í counterpart, a village radio station can become an active part of the spiritual, cultural and material development of a community. Spiritually-oriented program fare can vary from light and indirect proclamation to direct teaching and consolidation, depending upon local needs and exposure. Short announcements might promote one of the principles of the Faith (world peace, equality of men and women, etc.); meditations can include a prayer or a Hidden Word; special offerings may be made for Feasts and Holy Days; broadcast firesides, interviews and round-table discussions might explore great themes such as God and His Messengers, and serve to answer listeners’ questions about the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh.

Cultural programming is apt to form the backbone of Bahá’í village radio. Most of its musical fare, for example, will probably come from the folklore, and may include a good deal of music performed and recorded locally. Village radio should strive to become the voice of the people and their traditions, promoting and helping such cultural activities as music festivals, drama and dance, harvest celebrations and other events of special significance. Communication should be “horizontal,” with local voices speaking local dialects. If the native language or certain traditional values are being forgotten, these can be supported and given worth by Radio Bahá’í. Interviews with respected older people may help the process considerably. The rhythm of the community should pulse in village radio, with every broadcast featuring programs and information of interest and concern to the local populace.

Nor should material and human education be neglected. If the base of the community’s economy is agriculture, regular communication should be devoted to that topic: how various crops are doing, what José did about his potato bugs, how to make compost, the long-range weather forecast, the current price of crops in the market place. Other programs might feature health, cottage industry, handicrafts, and home economics. A visiting specialist from abroad can be interviewed; so might a chief or school teacher from the next village. Popular programs on present Radio Bahá’í stations feature news of local events: a school activity, a dramatic presentation, the arrival of some needed supply, even of Pedro’s lost cow. Equally popular are “comunicados”—quite simply, messages from one person or community to another.

Informal, participatory radio

Perhaps the most important aspect of village radio is its natural, informal sound. If the voices on the air are those of local people—if the station is truly representative of the community—such a sound will take little effort to achieve. A low-power village station should not have to worry about production finesses; a slick, tight sound would probably sound foreign to the locale in any case. Intervals of “dead air” (silence) and even irregular broadcast schedules might be acceptable in a remote village setting. What matters most is that village radio become an institution of the community, an extension of the people’s communication process, and a tool for use in their development.

Facilities

As a consequence of its tiny size and informal sound, a village radio station can fit into almost any setting: a school or community hall, a Bahá’í Center, a...
private home. In the latter case, a caretaker family might provide shelter and help operate the facility on a voluntary basis, or in return for some solar electricity in their home. In addition to the table space needed for the equipment, an antenna line should be run from the transmitter to the top of a tall post, tree or nearby hill. If the station is to be powered by solar energy, one or more photovoltaic panels must be mounted on a roof or frame angled toward the sun’s path (to the south in the northern hemisphere, at an angle slightly greater than north latitude). A typical solar panel measures 30 x 120 cm (1 x 4 ft) and is wired to charge a 12-volt automotive battery near the station equipment. If the home or Center is to receive electrification as well, more panels and batteries may be required.

Village radio staff

As mentioned, a village radio operation might be staffed totally by volunteers, especially if a caretaker family can be found. At the beginning, broadcast time may be short, varying with the availability of persons to operate the equipment. As the station captures the spirit and loyalty of the community it serves, people to operate the equipment and serve in other capacities will emerge. One major activity involves recording live music, interviews and events in the field for later replay on the air. The basic tool for such “outside broadcasts” is a simple cassette recorder: concert-hall quality is not the objective. What does matter is that people hear themselves and their neighbors on the air, that they accept “ownership” of the station.

Organization and administration

Village radio can be organized in several distinct ways. A local Spiritual Assembly may serve as host and administrator, essentially following the pattern of larger Radio Bahá’í operations on a more local scale. However, a local Bahá’í community considering such an idea should first consult with the National Spiritual Assembly of its country, since the licensing and ownership of a radio station has many national-level implications. Another possible organizational structure involves an existing community council or similar secular body; in this case, the Bahá’ís of the area would participate along with others. A station could also be owned and operated by a school, farmers’ cooperative or other agency for development, or by an individual or corporation.

In any case, the entity administering village radio should set general policy, monitor progress, keep an ear to the needs of the community as well as the goals of the station, keep the staff stimulated and happy, and serve as a clearing-house for suggestions, recommendations and grievances. If the project is managed by a local Spiritual Assembly, that body would receive guidance and direction from the Bahá’í administration as well.

Options and models

Village radio models may be classified as private, institutional or public; commercial, cultural or educational, depending on legal constraints and the situation in any community. In some countries, licensing procedures may be long and complicated, without distinction from larger stations. In others, experimental licenses or certain waived requirements may be a possibility. There exist “wired” village models that may not require any licensing other than community permission; this must be carefully researched in each instance.

From the chart on page 8, it can be seen that a low-power AM station covering a given area costs less to acquire and operate than a comparable FM station. Moreover, AM radio receivers are generally more universally available, and at lower cost than FM.

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Who should consider village radio?

Shoghi Effendi (in Messages to America, p. 24) speaks of “... the model Bahá’í community—a community divinely ordained, organically united, clear-visioned, vibrant with life, and whose very purpose is regu-
Bob Brown mans the control board in the Amoz Gibson Training Centre’s production lab during the summer 1987 radio broadcasting course.

lated by the twin directing principles of the worship of God and of service to one’s fellow-men.”

Any Bahá’í social and economic development project should be a natural outcome of needs, desires and organic growth within the Bahá’í community itself, benefiting in turn a larger segment of the general populace. Moreover, any project undertaken must be able to sustain itself and gain momentum, not collapse after an initial surge from lack of human or material resources. The important principle is that “…the spiritual precedes the material. First comes the illumination of hearts and minds by the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh, and then the grass roots stirring of the believers wishing to apply these teachings to the daily life of their community.” (The Universal House of Justice, letter to a National Spiritual Assembly dated May 1, 1984)

Village radio presents a development option to Bahá’í communities that have reached a certain plateau of spiritual unity and administrative maturity. By mid-1987, one Bahá’í community had made application through its National Spiritual Assembly to the government for a license to operate a village radio station in an isolated indigenous area, and several others had projects under consideration. If your community is interested in a village radio project, here are some questions to consult upon:

**Six questions**

1. Is there widespread interest and support for such a venture in this Bahá’í community? Do we have the base of Bahá’í activities, especially teaching, to justify the venture?

2. Is village radio a legal possibility here? Would it be a worthy undertaking in this community? Are there genuine needs that such a project could fill? Is the community likely to accept the station? Would they be content with a Radio Bahá’í type of operation, or would they require a more secular structure?

3. Do we have the human resources available to proceed with a long and often involved licensing process? Are there Bahá’ís who would help in legal, programming, technical or other areas?

4. Are there sufficient persons who could be counted on to operate the station seven days a week, year after year?

5. What about material resources? A typical village radio station might cost $3,000 to buy and install (excluding licensing and other legal fees), and $1,200 or more per year to operate, even with a volunteer staff. Are we certain of such funding?

6. Is village radio cost-effective? Would the same expenditure of human and material resources in another project result in greater gain to the Bahá’í and secular communities?

**Further information**

If the answers to these questions are affirmative, the Bahá’í community should consult with its National Spiritual Assembly. One agency that can lend assistance in all phases of village radio—feasibility studies, licensing, engineering and installation, programming, staff and management training, and technical operation—is the International Bahá’í Audio-Visual Centre. A village radio “owners’ manual” now being prepared will probably be distributed by the Centre. Here are addresses for three IBAVC offices willing and able to serve:

IBAVC Central Office, 7200 Leslie St., Thornhill, Ontario L3T 6L8, Canada.

IBAVC Radio Operations, Apartado 1794, Maracaibo, Venezuela.

Amoz Gibson Training Centre, Apartado 14765, Arecibo, Puerto Rico 00612.

“Ultimately, the call to action is addressed to the individual friends, whether they be adult or youth, veteran or newly-enrolled. Let them step forth to take their places in the arena of service where their talents and skills, their specialized training, their material resources, their offers of time and energy and, above all, their dedication to Bahá’í principles, can be put to work in improving the lot of man.” (The Universal House of Justice to the Bahá’ís of the world, October 20, 1983)

**Korea**

A marriage Tablet revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is read at the recent wedding ceremony of Kim Jun-ho and Chon Kum-soon (foreground), the first Bahá’í marriage ceremony ever performed on Cheju Island, Korea. It also took place without any other kind of wedding ceremony, an historic first for the Faith in Korea. About 100 guests attended the ceremony.
School of Nations marks seventh year

August 1987 marked the seventh year of operation of the School of the Nations, a Bahá'í-run international school in Brasilia, Brazil, and the opening of the new school year in its recently completed building.

The new building has three classroom modules, a large cafeteria and an administration center. Within the classroom modules are 15 classrooms, a library and a science/art room. Each module is built around an inner garden area connected to all three modules by extensive covered walkways.

The playgrounds consist of a sand and climbing equipment area for younger children, a grassy field for soccer and baseball, and a hard-surface court with spectator benches. The cafeteria also serves as an auditorium with stage and piano which has been used continuously since August, the inaugural stage production having been a play presented by the teachers for the children.

The school has 3,600 library books for children and 1,000 volumes in the professional library for teachers as well as two color television sets, two video cassette players (VHS and Beta), a sound system, and filmstrip and overhead projectors.

In January 1987 the school began a Suzuki method string program for interested children to complement the Kodaly method in singing and music theory given in the classroom from kindergarten through eighth grade. Next August, the school plans to open its high school.

The program in all grades is bi-lingual, with half the day taught in Portuguese and the other half in English. International students receive an additional eight hours of English instruction per week.

The Iowa Basic Skills tests show that 77 per cent of the school’s seventh-and eighth-grade students are above the grade level in achievement. For the first time last year, the science test was also given, and it was found that 66 per cent of the students were two years above their grade level, while among that group, 77 per cent were three years above. The school attributes these results to (1) the bi-lingual program, which gives a “double dose” of such subjects as science and math; (2) the children of 35 nationalities who attend the school, broadening everyone’s awareness; (3) the special attention paid to children with learning difficulties and the consideration given to everyone’s individual differences; and (4) the Bahá’í prayers that begin each day and the universal concepts that are included and studied within the curriculum.

Curriculum writing is a constant and ongoing process among the Bahá’í staff; at present, staff members are studying the application of scientific principles elucidated by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His writings and talks and applying them in the science program. For example, in astrophysics, His well-known comparison of magnetism to love could be used when speaking of the formation of atoms in the creation of...
"You mean to tell us," one little girl asked, "that love is the cause of the universe?" The School of the Nations encourages thorough freedom in the investigation of such themes.

This year, aided by the new physical plant, the traditional United Nations celebration the week of October 24 was especially successful. As a social service, the children decided to raise money for UNICEF's abandoned children programs. The annual Parade of Nations was held with children either in costumes from their countries or in a national costume of their choice. This was followed by a short program of peace songs and plays, after which the fair began. Each classroom designed and manned a booth, selling food, handicrafts or games; older children designed more than one. A popular booth was the Elegant Mail Service, in which beautifully crafted messages were written and sent from one friend to another for a small fee. Clowns were everywhere, thanks to a dozen handmade clown suits donated to the school by a Bahá'í from the United States. Parents helped by running a flea market which sold everything from Paraguayan straw hats to Polish folkdance records, while local businesses donated gifts for a raffle.

On November 5 an international dinner was held with entertainment presented by the older children consisting of peace plays and a chorus with violin accompaniment. Afterward, the student body presented a check for the equivalent of $1,000 to the director of UNICEF in Brazil. News of the presentation was carried on national TV to all parts of the country. In his remarks, the director of UNICEF said the gift signified "children-to-children" participation, that it would sustain a program in Brasilia for a month, and that it heightened his respect not only for the School of the Nations but for the Bahá'í community whom he had grown to love. About 250 people attended the presentation ceremony.

The school is presently in great need of English-speaking teachers, with training and experience, from kindergarten through high school. The school seeks unmarried teachers, pays passage to and from home base after two years of service, and offers a salary of $7,000 a year (reasonable for living in Brazil) plus a housing allowance. Please send inquiries to the Board of Directors, Escola das Nações, Caixa Postal 7093, Brasília, D.F. Brazil 71600.
The world

Nigeria’s Olinga campaign enrolls 353

The first week of the Olinga teaching campaign in Eket, Nigeria, carried out by 20 dedicated Nigerian Bahá’ís, brought 14 new Assemblies into being and raised up 353 new believers in the “heart of the Christian area,” according to a telex received last December 10 at the World Centre from the National Spiritual Assembly of Nigeria.

The relationship between the Bahá’ís of Nigeria and the traditional rulers of South Africa continues to deepen.

Last December the Prime Minister of Oghara, Chief Agunu, received a delegation of 20 Bahá’ís from the Harmattan Bahá’í School, talking with them for an hour and a half. He asked for a Bahá’í to come each week or two to the palace to help him deepen in the Bahá’í Writings.

The chief accepted an invitation to visit the school the following Saturday, arriving on schedule with four of his chiefs, all wearing white robes, white hats and coral beads. They stayed for an hour while prayers were offered in Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Ibibio and English, and a Bahá’í choir sang three songs.

As requested by the Bahá’ís on their visit to him, Chief Agunu addressed the school in his flawless English on the topics of traditional Urhobo marriages and the yam festivals.

An Auxiliary Board member has been asked by the National Assembly to be the chief’s teacher. The National Assembly has assigned a teacher to each of the chiefs in Bendel State to provide deepening on a personal basis, as they are unable to attend general meetings.

Last December another traditional ruler in Nigeria was enrolled in the Faith. He is Chief S.A. Iduwe, the Enogle of Obe, hereditary king of the Obe Clan.

The chief, whose wife and sister have also been enrolled, said he plans to be an active Bahá’í. All three attended classes last December at the Harmattan Bahá’í School.

The chief has endorsed a mass teaching project for Obe whose goal is the establishment of nine Assemblies, one in each village.

The recent enrollment in the Faith of the traditional ruler of Ekpoma, Bendel State, marks the ninth such dignitary to enlist in the Cause in Nigeria. The traditional rulers are highly respected personages in Bendel State.

South Africa

Lowell Johnson (left), author/editor of the art biography book ‘Reginald Turvey, Life and Art’ presents a copy to the executive director of the 1820 Settlers Foundation in Grahamstown, South Africa, during an arts festival there. More than 2,000 people learned about the Faith at a retrospective exhibit of Mr. Turvey’s paintings sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of South Africa as a social and economic development project. Mr. Turvey, a descendant of the British settlers who came to South Africa as pioneers in 1820, was called by the Guardian “the father of the Bahá’ís of South Africa.”

Panama

United Nations Day was celebrated last October 24 by the Bahá’ís of Panama with a program at the House of Worship followed by a talk on the promulgation of peace by Bahá’í Oscar Torrez.
An adult education program, begun in 1984 by the New Era High School's Rural Development Program in Panchgani, India, has developed rapidly and drew praise in a recent evaluation by representatives of the central government's Ministry of Human Resource Development, which said, 'We have one of the good adult literacy programs in the country.' In 1984, 30 centers were opened with 900 adult students, 750 of whom were women. By 1986 the program had expanded to 60 centers. There are presently 60 teachers, 43 of them women, who receive regular training and support from the New Era Development Institute. Pictured above are members of a teacher training class held at the Institute.

On January 31, at the invitation of Archbishop Angelo Fernandes and members of the Development, Justice and Peace Commission of Delhi Archdiocese, the National Spiritual Assembly of India sent a representative, A.K. Merchant, to the Multi-Religious Prayer Meeting for Peace held at the Convent of Jesus & Mary, Bangla Sahib Marg.

Included in the second half of the program were prayers by members of various faiths including Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Sikh and Bahá'í.

The Faith was introduced as dedicated to the oneness of mankind, world peace, and the establishment of a “new World Order.”

The prayer meeting coincided with the 40th anniversary of the martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi.

Hushmand Fatheazam, a member of the Universal House of Justice, is pictured after laying the foundation stone last September at the Bahá'í Publishing Trust-owned plot at Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-I, New Delhi, India, where the production unit of the Bahá'í Publishing Trust of India is soon to be constructed.

A seminar on Religion in the Arts was held last October 24 at Bahá'í House, New Delhi, the national Bahá'í headquarters, with the participation of 40 students from Delhi University and 10 Bahá'í youth.

The event was co-sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of India and the World Conference on Religion for Peace (India), at the latter’s suggestion.

Speakers included the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, R.N. Shah, and Dr. A.K. Merchant who spoke from his 12 years' experience as a student and active member of the Faith about the transforming effect of religious truth on human thought and action.
Malaysia

The Spiritual Assembly of Hilir Perak, Malaysia, held a peace conference last November, one of the few public functions approved by the police in the wake of a recent ban on public gatherings.

The District Officer officiated, giving a supportive address on creating peace awareness.

One hundred-fourteen participants, 67 of whom were not Bahá'ís, were registered for the day-long event. Each was given a copy of the summary of the Universal House of Justice's peace statement and a report from the Bahá'í International Community. All peace topics were handled by the speakers in a most effective way, with one non-Bahá'í speaker taking most of her text from the Bahá'í Writings on peace.

Two local Assemblies in Malaysia, the city Assembly of Kota Kinabalu and the rural Assembly of Kota Marudu, collaborated with the Metro Lions Club last September to carry out a rural health screening project.

Bahá'ís spread the word and put up two posters in advance, and as a result, more than 200 rural people turned up at a community hall for the screening. The Lions Club brought a physician, two dentists, a nurse and medical supplies. Bahá'ís from Kota and Kinabalu helped while screening for diabetes and visual problems was carried out, teeth were extracted, check-ups were given, parasites treated, and vitamins distributed.

St. Vincent/Grenadines

Residents of St. Vincent and the Grenadines recently had the chance to attend a Bahá'í meeting without leaving home.

The historic meeting, held at the Bahá'í National Center, was broadcast live on radio—the Bahá'í community's first opportunity to take part in the station's weekly "Divine Worship Service" broadcast.

More than 20 adults and children attended the event which included prayers, a reading on unity from the writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, songs in English and Zulu, and a four-part discussion on the theme of unity.

Alban Ballantyne (who explained that the Faith has no clergy) was master of ceremonies and gave a brief introduction to the Faith.

More than 100 people attended a celebration last November 12 of the anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh held at the home of a Bahá'í in Harare, Zimbabwe. Among the guests were the Permanent Secretary of Information, representatives of the Department of Women's Affairs, and a member of the City Council. After readings and the song 'Blessed Is the Spot,' a brief talk on the Faith was presented.

Alaska

The National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska presented its 1987 Honor Kempton Service to Humanity Award to Norman Nault, director of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe.

Among the 116 people who attended the presentation ceremony in Anchorage were Counsellor Lauretta King and all nine members of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Letters were received from the lieutenant governor, senators, legislators, friends and family members for inclusion in the commemorative album that is given to each recipient with pictures of the event.

Rita Pitka Blumenstein, a Yup'ik tradition bearer originally from Tununak on Nelson Island, was presented the 1987 Governor's Award for the Arts, which is given annually to individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to the arts in Alaska.

Mrs. Blumenstein, a Bahá'í from Palmer, is a dedicated teacher who has shared her knowledge of basketry, skin sewing, story-telling and Yup'ik dancing with hundreds of people in Alaska, Europe, Canada and South America.

She presently teaches in the community college in Palmer and in the Johnson O'Malley (Indian education) programs in the public schools.

Vanuatu

Encouraged by the Bahá'í International Community to build friendly relations with United Nations entities, the National Spiritual Assembly of Vanuatu sponsored UN Day meetings last year in two Bahá'í Centers—in Vila, the capital, and in Lenakel, on the island of Tanna.

Six weeks earlier, the National Assembly's representatives from Efate and Tanna met with the acting head of ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) to plan their collaboration in the UN day observances.

Meetings in both places followed a similar pattern: uplifting prayers and music, talks on the UN/Bahá'í relationship, and UN displays and video materials.
New Zealand

A major National Bahá'í Teaching Conference was held for the first time last October on a Maori marae (meeting place) in New Zealand.

Councilor Lisiate Maka of Tonga, a special guest, was given the customary welcome with full Maori protocol, to which he responded in his native tongue.

The 540 friends attending included Maori, Tongan, Samoan, Persian and Pakeha (European) Bahá'ís of New Zealand and individuals from other Pacific Island groups—Tuvalu, Cook Islands, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and the Philippines.

The National Assembly of New Zealand called the gathering a “hallmark conference” symbolizing a transition the New Zealand community is passing through.

The 335 Bahá'ís who gathered the first week in January at the North Island Summer School in Pukekohe, New Zealand, included believers from Tonga, Samoa, Japan, Australia, the Cook Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Fiji, and New Zealand in the Pacific region.

Other participants were natives of Iran, Iraq, Peru, Malaysia and South Africa.

A deeper understanding of the Covenant was the focus of the study, and the large group of children and youth were praised for their exemplary behavior.

Bangladesh

The Bahá'í National Teaching Committee of Bangladesh organized a seven-day deepening institute last October 25-31 in Dhaka.

About 30 Bahá'ís from 15 communities attended the institute. Most were relatively new Bahá'ís, and classes on many basic topics relating to the Faith were held. Among the participants were six Bahá'ís from the Marma tribe in Chittagong.

A highlight of the institute was the presence at a unity feast October 24 of Counsellor Mas'ud Khamisi, a member of the International Teaching Centre in Haifa, who inspired the friends with news of the progress of the Faith around the world and also spoke about the importance of deepening one's knowledge of the Faith.

Also attending and taking part in many classes was Shamseer Ali, an Auxiliary Board member from Pakistan and the representative of Counsellor Sábir Afáqi.

The closing ceremony was conducted by Auxiliary Board member Masumul Huda who called on the friends to feel the great responsibility that is on their shoulders to carry the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to every area of the country and to be steadfast in His Cause.

The institute ended with the distribution by Mr. Khamisi of rose petals from the Holy Land.

A report received last November from Bangladesh indicates that members of the Rajshahi tribe were enrolled in the Faith in great numbers in October: 150 (the entire village) in Bagdi, and 97 in Kushtia.

Costa Rica

His Excellency Oscar Arias (right), president of Costa Rica and winner of the 1987 Nobel Peace Prize, receives a copy of the peace statement by the Universal House of Justice. The presentation was made last October 7 by Counsellor Rodrigo Tomás and Mrs. Helen de Sánchez, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Costa Rica. The president was given 'The Promise of World Peace' in Spanish and a special English-language edition prepared in Canada and titled 'To the Peoples of the World.' Only one week after the presentation, President Arias was awarded the Nobel Prize.
Baha'i development: worldwide progress report
Taiwan enrolls 1,165 new believers, opens 59 localities to the Faith
World Centre provides an update on Bahá’í development projects
Bahá’í tutorial school is approved, opens in Yikandor, Sierra Leone
In Bolivia, Bahá’í-founded FUNDESIB aids development programs
Around the world: news from Bahá’í communities all over the globe
On February 3, the National Spiritual Assembly of Taiwan cabled the Universal House of Justice the joyous news that 1,165 new believers had been enrolled during its recent teaching campaign, representing a 74 percent increase in the number of Baha'is in that country.

Fifty-nine new localities were opened to the Faith (the National Assembly's goal was 15) and five new Baha'i Centers established, one in each teaching area.

As of February 3, eight new local Spiritual Assemblies had been formed in Taiwan, with a ninth soon to be elected.

"Expansion/consolidation programs have picked up all across island," the National Assembly said in its cable to the World Center. "Community united and joyous (over) victories won; determined to win greater ones."

Pictured are six young Taiwanese who were enrolled in the Faith in Taipong last October 23 during the Muhajir Project, a teaching campaign that has resulted in many hundreds of youth embracing the Faith in recent months. These young women, who are all between the ages of 15 and 17, are members of three different ethnic minorities—the Paiwan, Amé and Puyan tribes. As of February, some 1,165 people on Taiwan had been enrolled, 59 localities opened to the Faith and eight new Spiritual Assemblies formed as a result of the Muhajir Project.
Development

A look at programs around the world

Since the July 1986 Report on Bahá'í Development Projects was published, the total number of development projects reported to the World Centre has increased by 19 percent, from 1,247 to 1,482. This increase, while substantial, is not nearly as dramatic as the surge witnessed during the period 1983-86, when the number of development programs operated by Bahá'í institutions almost doubled each year, soaring from 196 to 1,247.

During this past year, the number of projects increased by 15 percent in Africa, by 2 percent in the Americas, by 21 percent in Asia, and rose in Australasia and Europe by 152 percent and 129 percent respectively. It should be noted that both of those continental areas had lower levels of activity initially: Australasia had 27 projects reported in 1986, while Europe had 31. The local activities taking place in Australasia and the United Kingdom, newly reported in detail, account largely for these increases.

Although Bahá'í schools still constitute the largest single category of development project, their number remained virtually unchanged during the past year, whereas the number of other programs rose by 36 percent. India and Zaire, which have approximately 70 percent of the tutorial schools worldwide, are making determined efforts to improve the quality of education at existing schools through increasing the attention paid to teacher training, curriculum development, and—most importantly—to including spiritual and moral education based on the Bahá'í Teachings in tutorial school programs. In addition, new schools are being opened only when local Assemblies are prepared to assume major responsibility for their operation.

By offering Bahá'í classes, introducing Bahá'í concepts in the academic curriculum, and emphasizing consultation as a means for problem-solving, a tutorial school can raise the entire community's level of understanding about the Faith.

This report on Bahá'í development projects (October 1987) was prepared by the Department of Statistics at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel.

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AFRICA

Education. Achievements during the last year include the extensive development of the Ruaha Technical/Agricultural Secondary School in Tanzania, the inauguration of the Olinga Library and an agricultural training program in Chad, and the initiation of a technical skills development program in Nigeria. In addition, Bahá'í communities in several countries conducted teacher training programs. In the midst of a major construction program, the Ruaha School has increased enrollment from 160 to 270 and attained self-sufficiency for daily operational costs. In Chad, the Moissala Assembly constructed a small public library and stationery store in the same building. Proceeds from sales in the stationery store pay the salaries of the library/store attendants. This local Assembly also started a program to train people in development-related skills so they will be able to help rural communities with agriculture and community development.

Recognizing that teacher training is essential to the success of tutorial schools, literacy and pre-school programs, Bahá'í institutions in Kenya, Zaire and Zimbabwe have conducted recent training programs. National Spiritual Assemblies in Liberia and Malawi developed written guidelines for their tutorial school programs, clarifying the responsibilities of the local and National Assemblies. In Zaire, it has been noted that the local tutorial schools often play an important role in the consolidation of Bahá'í communities.

Health and social services. In Burkina Faso, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia, programs to train volunteer community health educators have recently been conducted. The community
health educator training programs, whose over-all goal is to improve both physical and spiritual health, follow a model developed by Dr. Ethel Martins, which apparently could be replicated successfully in many other places as well. Specific training focuses on preventive health measures and covers topics such as growth monitoring, breast-feeding, oral rehydration, immunization, personal hygiene and environmental sanitation. Every effort is made to engage the trainees in discussion which often focuses on methods for applying the newly-acquired information in one’s home community. Since the example set by health educators is an important stimulus for change, trainers emphasize its importance during the course of the program. Provision has been made in each country for supervising the volunteers and following up on their activities, thereby reinforcing the initial training given.

Agriculture and forestry. A total of 62 small-scale local agriculture and tree-planting efforts are under way throughout Africa, according to records held by the Department of Statistics. Cooperative farms or garden plots supervised by the local Spiritual Assembly comprise the majority of these activities. Produce is often contributed to Bahá’í conferences or other events, while monies raised through sale of cash crops frequently are donated to the Bahá’í Funds or used to construct a local Hazírat’u’l-Quds or tutorial school. Tree-planting or farming on Temple sites or other Bahá’í properties also safeguards ownership of the property in some cases and demonstrates the Bahá’ís’ commitment to improving the environment. In Burkina Faso, a Bahá’í community recently obtained land from village authorities for an orchard, which will be held by the Assembly as one of the Faith’s national endowments.

Radio stations. Radio Bahá’í Liberia (ELRB), the first Bahá’í-owned radio station in Africa, aired its initial broadcast in December 1986. Reaching most of Liberia and parts of Guinea, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone with its 5kW signal, ELRB has rapidly attracted a diverse and enthusiastic audience with its blend of cultural, service and Bahá’í programming.

Community development and other projects. Noteworthy developments in this field include the expansion of Zaire’s Pygmy project, the initiation of a major “Youth Year of Service” project in Botswana, a technical assistance program and writers’ project in Nigeria, and economic development activities in Sierra Leone. Zaire’s Pygmy population has long been subject to discrimination, but through the influence of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation and the application of appropriate technologies, a number of Pygmy communities are steadily transforming themselves. The Pygmy project with its combination of educational, agricultural, health and community development activities has expanded to 10 additional villages.

In Botswana, the National Spiritual Assembly has launched an ambitious teaching and service program, using the services of a group of dedicated youth from Europe and North America who came to take part in its “Youth Year of Service” project. A Nigerian Bahá’í community has implemented a technical skills development program based on the laudable principle that people who have technical skills should pass them on to others. The same community has also extended help to three other communities for their agricultural projects. Another Nigerian community has established a writers’ project, apparently unique in the Bahá’í world, which encourages its members to develop writing, research and consultation skills and helps them to write about the Faith. Meanwhile, the National Assembly of Sierra Leone has established a revolving loan fund which currently assists three Bahá’í communities with agricultural services, while another loan fund has helped launch a soap-making enterprise.

AMERICAS

Education. The use of Bahá’í institutes as sites for social and economic development training activities increases yearly. Established Bahá’í (summer/winter) schools in the United States, such as Bosch, Green Acre and Louhelen, have added educational programs designed for the general public to their long-established Bahá’í curriculum and devoted more courses to the topic of development. The Tabarsi Training Institute in Honduras and the Tumen Kin (formerly Martha Root) Institute in Mexico have initiated training activities for predominantly indigenous Bahá’í populations while proceeding with major construction programs. El Salvador’s Jamaliyyih Institute also is developing its facilities in preparation for programs that will combine practical training in agriculture, construction, basic health care and literacy with intensive Bahá’í deepening. As part of the Amazon Project

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in Brazil, a rural polytechnic institute also is under construction. Trainees from all of these institutes are expected to return home and apply their newly-acquired skills while teaching them to others, thereby contributing to the development of Bahá'í community life.

Notable efforts to improve the quality of education offered in Bahá'í schools include: a training program for Panama's tutorial school teachers; collaboration in the publication of a Guaymi-Spanish-English dictionary (which should help efforts to enhance literacy among the Guaymi Indians); programs conducted at the Ruhi Institute in Colombia to orient youth who have volunteered a year of service to the Faith; and the development in Haiti of a third-grade reading text which helps students make a transition from Creole to French as the language of instruction. This reader, the first of its kind in Haiti, has been favorably reviewed by the government's educational authorities, and the most prestigious publishing house in that country is negotiating rights for its publication. There are indications that this reader will be used in schools throughout Haiti.

Health and social services. Recent social service activities include alcohol and drug abuse programs in Alaska and projects to help supply food to the poor in Canada and the U.S. Efforts in the health field include an anti-parasite campaign in the Dominican Republic and development of the Project Bayan health clinic and hospital in Honduras. Several Alaskan Bahá'í communities are actively engaged in programs to combat alcoholism, a condition which has been identified as the primary health and social problem among the state's indigenous population. By applying spiritual principles to these problems, Bahá'í communities have gained increasing recognition among the general public.

In Canada, the Bahá'í community of North York, Ontario, is taking part in a local food bank, providing free food to people in need, while in the United States the local Assembly of San Marcos, Texas, organized a community-wide program to collect non-perishable food supplies for low-income families. The anti-parasite campaign, organized by the Dominican Republic's local Spiritual Assembly of Dajabon in collaboration with several local organizations and 100 volunteers, treated more than 600 children with an anti-parasitic powder. In Honduras, two Bahá'í pioneer families completed the construction of a small rural hospital in an isolated region with a sizeable Bahá'í community where the nearest hospital was 100 miles away; a U.S.-based charitable organization recently flew in a medical team for a nine-day visit, donating large quantities of medical supplies, treating some 1,200 people, and contributing patient fees toward the construction in Palacios of a badly needed secondary school.

Agriculture and forestry. Within the past two years, Bahá'í-sponsored tree planting programs in Haiti have distributed more than 100,000 seedlings for planting. Development of a tree nursery in Lilavois, carried out with help from an international agency, has enabled the project to double its output and supply several reforestation projects in the area. In Costa Rica, indigenous believers have started a project that involves the cooperative production and marketing of agricultural products, while at the Native American Bahá'í Institute in the U.S. a native seeds garden and fruit orchard have been successfully established.

Radio stations. In November 1986 Radio Bahá'í Chile joined four other Bahá'í stations in Latin America, all of which serve predominantly indigenous populations. Its signal reaches more than 200 rural communities, including the area inhabited by most of Chile's Mapucche Indian population. This Radio Bahá'í station broadcasts cultural and community service programs which have already attracted a sizeable

A front view of the Anís Zunúzí Bahá'í School in Lilavois, Haiti.

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and loyal listening audience and, in the near future, the station plans to institute more Bahá’í programming. Radio Bahá’í Panama, which went on the air in January 1986, has increased its broadcast schedule from four to 12 hours each day and plans to raise the number of programs geared specifically toward the Guaymi Indian community. To fully integrate the radio stations’ work with ongoing Bahá’í teaching and community development activities, coordinating committees have been established for all of the Latin American Bahá’í radio stations. As a step toward administrative development, all station coordinators were invited by the International Bahá’í Audio-Visual Centre (IBAVC) to attend a recent deepening and training seminar at the Ruhi Institute in Colom­bia. The participants agreed that the occasion was timely and that the discus­sions held were highly beneficial.

**Community development and other projects.** Major activities include the inauguration of the Guaymi Cultural Center in Panama, a dramatic rise in the number of self-help groups guided by Haiti’s Anís Zunúzí Rural Development Program, the initiation of “Year of Service” or other youth service projects in several countries, and additional varied activities. Through Bahá’í deepening and programs designed to promote Guaymi culture, the newly inaugurated Guaymi Cultural Center in Panama promises to play a crucial role in consolidating and teaching the Faith in a region that has been exceptionally receptive to the Message of Bahá’u’lláh. The construction of the Cultural Center using locally available materials was in itself a major development project, as the Guaymi Bahá’ís rallied to provide much of the needed labor force.

In Haiti, the Anís Zunúzí Development Program has been promoting the formation of mini-cooperatives as a means of enhancing community self-reliance, and recently this process seems to have accelerated dramatically. The number of these “groupements,” consisting mostly of non-Bahá’ís but guided where they exist in the Lilavois and Liancourt areas by Bahá’í development workers and local Assemblies, has more than doubled in the past year, standing now at about 80. Not only has the number of small groupements in­creased, but several associations of groupements have been formed, and various larger-scale cooperative businesses have been launched.

National Assemblies in Alaska, Panama and Venezuela report various youth service projects, while the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada has organized a Youth Service Overseas Program, sending more than 20 young people to foreign countries, mostly in service to the Faith; Grenada Radio Bahá’í Panama, which went on the air in January 1986, has increased its broadcast schedule from four to 12 hours each day and plans to raise the number of programs geared specifically toward the Guaymi Indian community.

**Radio Bahá’í Panama, which went on the air in January 1986, has increased its broadcast schedule from four to 12 hours each day and plans to raise the number of programs geared specifically toward the Guaymi Indian community.**

and Belize have initiated activities in support of the United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless; Bahá’ís in Colombia have embarked on the unique project of writing the history of rural communities engaged in social and economic development activities.

**ASIA**

**Education.** The organization of the New Era Development Institute (NEDI) in India, the major development of several schools and institutes, the consolidation of India’s tutorial school system, the development of literacy classes in Laos, the further strengthening of tutorial schools in the Philippines, and the establishment of Bahá’í schools in Thailand’s refugee camps have been the most notable achievements during the period under review.

Recently organized, the New Era Development Institute has integrated the former Bahá’í Academy and the Centre for Rural Development and Technology into a unified organizational structure. The Institute, which places special emphasis on the training of women, primarily aims to provide spiritual and practical training to selected Bahá’ís. A major construction program is being initiated to provide the additional facilities necessary for NEDI’s operations. Significant construction activities are underway at India’s Faizi Institute to expand the Bahá’í Vocational Institute for Rural Women, and at the (Tadong) Bahá’í School in Sikkim, while the National Bahá’í Development Institute in Bangladesh has added new facilities within the past year. In Pakistan, the New Day Montessori/High School has been legally recognized by the government; this lays a foundation for future development.

Lately, the National Spiritual Assembly of India has been making a concerted effort to enhance and strengthen its tutorial school system. To this end, it has formulated a comprehensive policy to guide the future development of these rural primary schools, including the stipulation that the schools achieve self-sufficiency, while fostering its own capacity plus that of the State Councils and Teaching Committees to provide administrative support. As part of this effort, the Rabbaní Community Development Program has been training tutorial school teachers from several states. In Nepal, the National Assembly has expanded its adult literacy program and is taking steps to improve supervision and teacher training. For several years the National Spiritual Assembly of the Philippines has been expanding and strengthening its tutorial school program, which operates primarily in remote tribal communities having sizeable Bahá’í populations. Some of the teachers play an important role in the over-all development of their communities through helping to consolidate the local Assemblies and exerting an influence on local agriculture and health practices. Since the people trust the Assemblies, government agencies have used Bahá’í Assemblies as their official liaison in dealings with tribal communities in some instances.

Other noteworthy achievements include the development of kindergartens and literacy classes for the general community at Bahá’í Centers in Laos, which has been appreciated by the authorities, as well as the development of Bahá’í schools in refugee camps and resettlement areas in Thailand where many Indochinese refugees have become Bahá’ís. The local Spiritual Assemblies formed in these camps have established schools which must operate without external support.

**Health and social services.** Activities
reported in the past year include medical camps and the training of volunteer community health workers in India, a pilot health program in the Philippines, a health education effort in Malaysia, plus health screening and community social service programs in Singapore. Medical camps were conducted in several Indian states, primarily serving tribal peoples who lack adequate access to health services. Recognizing the efficacy of preventive health measures, Bahá'í sponsors increasingly provide health education with curative medical and dental care. These camps often include Bahá'í deepening and teaching activities, during which the visiting health teams can explain the Faith's teachings on health and healing, including the relationship between physical and spiritual health. Medical camps also have been held in Bangladesh and Pakistan, while in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands the local Spiritual Assembly of Port Blair organized homeopathy medical camps in two localities which provided badly needed health care, and incidentally generated publicity for the Faith in the local media.

The New Era Development Institute in India has developed a manual incorporating Bahá'í principles on health for training community health workers and has used it in at least one training program, while the Rabbani Community Development Program has begun training village women as volunteer health workers. This is especially important because it is difficult for village men to discuss health issues with women in many parts of the world, and the women have primary responsibility for family health matters. In a pilot health project launched in the Philippines, a Bahá'í medical team visited a remote tribal area, walking for eight hours to reach it. This was the first time that doctors had come to the region, and within three days they were able to treat more than 300 people. The area has many strong Bahá'í communities whose help the National Assembly intends to call upon to ensure the success of its planned child immunization program, to be conducted as an extension of this project. Malaysian Bahá'ís organized an anti-drug seminar in collaboration with the local Information Department; the believers in Singapore carried out a high blood pressure screening program and helped with the swimming program at a school for handicapped children.

Agriculture and forestry. Bahá'í institutions manage a total of 35 agricultural and tree-planting endeavors in Asia, with most of them located in Malaysia where 20 small cooperative farming ventures and fish ponds enable Bahá'í communities to contribute to the Fund and to other community activities. However, the most notable effort by far was the afforestation program conducted by the Rabbani School in India, for which the school won the prestigious Indira Gandhi Friends of the Trees Award in the schools category. This national award, presented by the Prime Minister in a ceremony that was extensively covered by national media, lauds Rabbani students for their involvement in tree-planting activities in nearby communities and praises the school for curtailing drastically its own consumption of wood through use of fuel-efficient stoves. A model tree nursery has been established at the school, and several villagers have begun their own tree nurseries with help from Rabbani staff. The Rabbani School also conducts an agricultural development program in a number of neighboring villages, providing residents with guidance and systematic training to adopt better methods of farming.

Community development and other programs. The initiation of a program to develop model Bahá'í villages in India, and the community service activities carried out by Vietnamese Bahá'í refugees in Hong Kong highlight recent community development initiatives. In India, Uttar Pradesh's state Bahá'í Council has embarked on a program to develop model communities, starting with a handful of predominantly Bahá'í villages which have strong local Spiritual Assemblies. The State Council intends systematically to cultivate development which is spiritually, socially and materially balanced in these villages, thereby demonstrating the power of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation to transform society. Many of the Vietnamese residing in Hong Kong's refugee camps have become Bahá'ís, and in spite of horrendously overcrowded living conditions and bleak prospects for resettlement, this gallant community of believers has maintained a positive outlook. Besides holding regular Nine-
The Bahá'í Teaching Institute in Lelata, Apia, Western Samoa.

Teen Day Feasts and Assembly meetings, the Bahá'í refugees conduct a monthly clean-up campaign, cheerfully doing a great deal of heavy, dirty work. This service has greatly impressed the camp authorities, resulting in increased respect for the Faith in Hong Kong.

AUSTRALASIA

Education. Several countries have established Bahá'í schools and other educational programs recently, and schools in Papua New Guinea and Fiji have obtained official recognition. In a remote area of Papua New Guinea where the Faith has spread rapidly, local believers have constructed a school building, a dormitory and a teacher's house as well as having contributed a part of the teacher's salary. The National Spiritual Assembly believes that this school not only fills an urgent educational need but that it also will help considerably in the Bahá'í community's consolidation.

In Samoa, the National Assembly oversees the operation of a Montessori school, which has attracted a highly diverse group of children. Recognizing the critical importance of helping Iranian Bahá'í refugees maintain their native language and culture while integrating with the general society, the Perth Assembly in Australia has established the Hedayat School of Persian Language. Other achievements include the long-sought registration of the Lomavuna Bahá'í Kindergarten in Fiji and legal recognition of the Bahá'í Study Centre in Lae, Papua New Guinea, as a high school. This Papuan school enrolls students who had to leave the government schools after grade six, helping them pursue the government correspondence course for grades seven and eight.

Health and social services. A health aid post and Ayyám-i-Há service project in Papua New Guinea, a dyslexia project in Fiji, plus various community service activities in Australia stand out as noteworthy achievements during this reporting period. In a collaborative effort initiated by the government to restore health services in an isolated area, the National Spiritual Assembly of Papua New Guinea recruited a Bahá'í with some health training to serve in the aid post, paying his salary. The local Assembly provides his housing and a garden, a hospital has given him supplementary training, and the Health Department maintains the facility and provides medicine and other supplies. This joint venture became necessary when the dominant church in the area withdrew the Health Officer (whose salary was paid by the church) after a large percentage of the local population enrolled in the Faith, and health conditions there were noticeably deteriorating.

In Fiji, the National Women's Committee arranged for a specialist in dyslexia (a medical condition that impairs one's ability to learn) to spend six months in Fiji during which 100 children received treatment. The committee's determined efforts earned considerable praise for the Faith. In response to Bahá'u'lláh's exhortations to conduct charitable activities during Ayyám-i-Há, adult Bahá'ís in Lae, Papua New Guinea, donated blood to the local transfusion service while the Bahá'í children visited sick youngsters in a hospital, giving them

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Many local Assemblies in Australia have lovingly helped Persian refugees integrate into Australian society as rapidly as possible, making contacts on their behalf about housing, employment and education. When a typhoon devastated the Solomon Islands, the National Assembly of the Mariana Islands spearheaded a drive to send needed supplies, enlisting the support of various civic organizations. The National Spiritual Assemblies of New Zealand and Papua New Guinea also helped the Solomons after the typhoon.

Community development and other projects. The inauguration in Australia of a residential community and training center for Aboriginal people was an outstanding achievement—one that holds great promise for the upliftment of Australia's indigenous citizens. Featherstone Park, named for the Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone, comprises 40 acres of land in Queensland on which a center will be developed to combine Bahá'í deepening and agricultural training. Initially, the Bahá'í's will construct a meeting place and cultivate bananas. Programs and facilities are expected to expand in accordance with the needs and capacities of the local Aboriginal Bahá'ís, with a Bahá'í community gradually developing on the property.

Another Australian initiative was the establishment in Queensland of a youth support center which helps young people find jobs and offers courses in various practical job skills. Government funding permits the operation of a permanent office with a paid Bahá'í organizer.

In Vanuatu, the local Assembly in a predominantly Bahá'í village oversees the sale in the capital city of vegetables produced by local believers. Through this effort, the community has been able to repay quickly a loan obtained from the National Spiritual Assembly that enabled purchase of the small second-hand truck used to transport the produce. Proceeds are shared among the individual growers, the truck project, and the Bahá'í Funds. Other efforts in this category include the following: a Bahá'í Assembly in Fiji has actively supported a government program to promote use of smokeless fuel-efficient stoves; a community in the Marshall Islands initiated construction of a shelter at the local landing strip, prompting the rest of the community to complete the structure; and a Bahá'í community in Hawaii has established a distinctive scholarship program whereby the annual award is made to the graduating high school senior who best exemplifies certain specified spiritual and ethical qualities based on the Bahá'í Teachings. The award has had a considerable impact on the small, isolated and largely native Hawaiian community.

![The Landegg Bahá'í Centre in Switzerland.](image-url)

EUROPE

Social services. National Spiritual Assemblies in Ireland, Norway and Switzerland report programs to integrate Persian Bahá'í refugees into their new countries. The Irish Bahá'ís have found that consultation is the key means for solving the myriad problems faced by the refugees. In each of these countries the positive attitude and adaptability of the Persian believers, coupled with the loving and determined efforts to help on the part of European Bahá'ís, have contributed immensely to successful integration. In general, adjustment has been much better when the refugees have agreed to settle as pioneers in goal areas away from large concentrations of other Iranian believers, because there is more incentive to learn the local language and to develop friendships with Europeans. In Germany, the National Spiritual Assembly has responded to the problem of chronic unemployment by appointing four Bahá'ís as counselors to consult with and encourage unemployed Bahá'ís.

Community development and other programs. During the past year a variety of projects have been developed, with several of them focusing on children and youth. The French National Youth Committee organized a month-long youth service and teaching project in Corsica that involved 19 youth who cleared brush, tended young trees in a forest grove, and performed many other services, consciously striving to demonstrate Bahá'í principles through their humble behavior, hard work and self-sacrifice. In conjunction with the Manchester Youth Conference, the National Youth Committee of the United Kingdom held youth service projects dedicated to the two Bahá'í youth most recently martyred in Iran. In Ireland, a summer camp for children sought to enhance cooperation and concern for the environment, while a traveling puppet show developed by a Bahá'í community educates children on peace. Communities in the United Kingdom, France, Germany and the Netherlands have all contributed financially to development activities in Third World countries.
Tutorial school opens in Yikandor

Last August 25, the Bahá’í tutorial school at Yikandor, in the Pujehun District of Sierra Leone, which was established in November 1984, received approval from the country’s Ministry of Education as a primary school.

One of the requirements was the employment of a trained and qualified teacher to run the school. The offer by a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Sierra Leone to move to the area and take up the appointment enabled the school to start on a firm footing.

The original two-classroom wattle building, built completely through the unified action of the local community, was replaced by a permanent cement structure with a zinc roof, built by the local community with help from the National Assembly and sponsored by the Bo/Pujehun Rural Development Project. The new building consists of three classrooms, an office and a store. The people of Yikandor provided the labor and materials such as sand, boards, sticks and stones. Everyone—men, women and children—took part in the work.

While construction was going on, a series of photographs was taken showing the progress of the work. When it was completed, the photographs were presented to officers of the Ministry of Education so that the registration and approval of the school could be effected. On August 25, 1987, the Ministry gave its final approval, and the school was registered with the number P77. The Bahá’í school was one of only three approved at that time in the entire country.

More than a thousand people attended the school’s opening ceremony on November 21, 1987. Among them were the Paramount Chiefs of the Panga-Kabonde and Malen Chiefdoms; the inspector of schools, Pujehun District; the District Officer and assistant District Officer; the Officer Commanding (police); the Inspectorate officers; head teachers, teachers, section chiefs, town chiefs, and six members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Sierra Leone. The Muslim primary school in Benga and the District Education Committee school at Masahun Fortune were represented, while several groups of native dancers graced the occasion, the planning for which had begun several months before.

The ceremony began at 11:30 a.m. with prayers in English, Mende (the local language) and Arabic. After a speech of welcome by Aminata Lusenie, a Class 4 student, Alfred Robinson, a pioneer to the area, explained how the Bahá’ís had established the school in response to requests from the villagers themselves, who said, “The children you train (at the school) will be your true Bahá’ís.” And so the school was begun with Miss Mary Sam, a resident of the village, as the volunteer teacher.

One of the Paramount Chiefs said that, as this is the first Bahá’í primary school in the country, he would do his utmost to give his full support to the Bahá’ís, and urged his people to do likewise. The district Inspector of Schools added that this was not the time for words, but deeds. The Bahá’í school, he said, was “the fastest progressing” he had ever seen in the area. He promised that he would always be prepared to serve any agency that would do “just as the Bahá’ís have done.”

The representative of the Community Development Program Officer for Bo/Pujehun Project, Tahiru Fullei, expressed appreciation for the speed and quality of the work. “The cooperation and efforts of the Bahá’ís in this community has made a never-to-be-forgotten impression,” he said, “and we are always ready to give you our support.”

The chairman called on the Town Chief, Moibeh Jusu, who is a member of the Spiritual Assembly of Yikandor, to cut the ribbon, after which the sounds of musical instruments were heard throughout the village. Food was served, and everyone enjoyed special dances by students at the school.

The school now has five staff members including the head teacher and 135 students, some from other villages such as Benga, Gabena, Barleh and Sahn. There are plans to extend the curriculum to include arts and crafts, needlework and agriculture, and the community is planning to build housing for the staff near the campus.
Bolivia

FUNDESIB aids development work

Bolivia is a country whose geography shows many contrasts. La Paz, the capital, is 12,000 feet up in the Andes mountains; other major cities are nestled in lovely mountain valleys, and, proceeding east, one comes down from the mountains and foothills to encounter tropical jungles.

The teaching work of the Faith has gone well in Bolivia; today there are almost 100,000 believers, or about one percent of the population. Most of them are indigenous village people who live in small communities in relatively inaccessible areas of the country.

This rugged and beautiful country has been plagued recently by a steady economic decline, and the Bahá'í villagers as well as the rest of the population suffer more and more from this. Their communities lack even the most basic services, and relief does not appear to be at hand in the foreseeable future.

Into this arena of steadily eroding fortunes, FUNDESIB (Fundación de Desarrollo Integral de Bolivia, or, in English, Foundation for the Integrated Development of Bolivia) has come into being. FUNDESIB was founded in 1982 by a group of Bahá'ís, some of whom were pioneers and some native believers. Its main goals are the development and growth of Bolivia, and its by-laws incorporate divine principles established by Bahá'u'lláh and set forth in His Writings.

FUNDESIB's first development task was the establishment and promotion of a Bahá'í university in Bolivia. With help from Counsellor Eloy Anello, who lives in Bolivia, Universidad Núr was founded in 1984 in Santa Cruz as a private university dedicated to the development of its students in the service of rural development.

While the University of Núr concentrates on higher education, primary education is the concern at the Badi School in Sucre which was founded more than four years ago by pioneer Bruce Fox and employs some of the most innovative educational techniques seen in Bolivia.

Now that Núr University has been launched and its future is being guided by capable believers, FUNDESIB has recently begun its own development in-

For more information about Núr University or FUNDESIB, contact Steven A. Kozlow, Núr University Liaison Officer, 2411 S. Lafayette St., Shelby, NC 28150 (phone 704-484-1697).

For more information about the Dorothy Baker Institute for Environmental Studies, contact Dr. William Baker, Casilla 280, Cochabamba, Bolivia.

For more information about Badi School, contact Bruce Fox, Badi School, Casilla 658, Sucre, Bolivia.

Manucher Shouii, rector of Universidad Núr in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.
itiative in the Chaco, an inhospitable region in southern Bolivia, northern Argentina and northeastern Paraguay characterized by desolate rolling hills and savanna grasslands. The region is all but forgotten by the governments of these three countries, and the people who live there can count on few social services of any kind.

FUNDESIB entered the Chaco less than a year ago with a community development project, the funding for which came from several sources including the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

FUNDESIB is also working with ESPERANCA, a health development organization which operates a child survival project in the Chaco. Although FUNDESIB's own project is relatively small and has only modest funding, what is exciting is that FUNDESIB has come to be recognized as a legitimate and professional development organization in Bolivia and has been approved for funding by international donor agencies. The foundation is presently seeking more funding for its work and is slowly making a name for itself in development circles.

Bolivia also boasts a most unusual development program, in Cochabamba, which was founded and continues to be run by Dr. William Baker. The Dorothy Baker Institute for Environmental Studies is situated on land behind one of the mountains that surround the city of Cochabamba. It has been the work of Dr. Baker over the last few years that has put the Institute in a position to help in the development of appropriate technologies among the indigenous population of Bolivia. Innovative irrigation methods, fish farming, solar energy, bio-gas collection, new crops and farming techniques, and raising small farm animals are only some of the areas that are being explored at the Institute. Village residents come to the Institute for a six-month live-in experience that includes hands-on work with all the innovative activities as well as courses and conferences. When they leave, they take these appropriate technologies back to their villages.

Another development project, this one under the aegis of the National Spiritual Assembly of Bolivia, is Radio Bahá'í, a community station that broadcasts mostly in indigenous languages to the rural villagers. Its programming to date has been mostly community affairs and folk music; now it is in the process of reorganizing its programming to include a significant amount of educational broadcasting. The station was recently approached by the Radio Learning Project, an educational program funded by USAID, about broadcasting that agency's radio mathematics series for the next three years.

Last November, in Cochabamba, an especially important event took place: a Bahá'í development conference whose attendees represented all of these development projects in Bolivia as well as representatives from Radio Bahá'í of Lake Titicaca, Peru. What was momentous about the conference was the feeling of excitement about how the Bahá'í-sponsored development projects in Bolivia have come out of obscurity and are beginning to make themselves known in national and even international circles. There was an excitement in the air, and also an air of anticipation . . . anticipation of bigger and better things to come.—Steven Kozlow

Cameroon Republic

More than 70 university students from a number of ethnic backgrounds in Cameroon and from several other countries took part last November 27 in an international social evening organized by the Bahá'í Club at Yaoundé University as a part of its yearly program.

The aim of the evening was to welcome all foreign students while providing a forum for an exchange of ideas between them and their Cameroonian counterparts outside of the normal classroom contacts.

Serving as coordinator was Guebe Francois, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Cameroon, whose guidance and inspiration contributed greatly to its success.

Besides pleasant conversation, there were refreshments, music, games, riddles and jokes.

Among the Bahá'ís taking part were two young women from Iran.

Bahá'ís from as far away as France and Ghana attended a Bahá'í Summer School held last December 23-27 in Yaoundé, Cameroon Republic.

A highlight was the presentation of a video of the recent visit to France by the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum.
The world

Bahá’ís spearhead anti-drug program

A public seminar on drug and alcohol abuse organized last November by the Bahá’í community of Newtownards, Northern Ireland, gained front-page news coverage the following day, the first time in Northern Ireland that a meeting sponsored and organized by Bahá’ís has been featured so prominently.

Guest speakers included representatives from the local police and YMCA, a community alcohol nurse, a member of Alcoholics Anonymous and a doctor who is an expert in this field.

The meeting was chaired by Eddie Whiteside, chairman of the Spiritual Assembly of Newtownards.

The city of Londonderry was the scene of the first Northern Ireland Teaching Conference in the second phase of the Six Year Plan.

Nearly 80 Bahá’ís from all parts of the country attended along with some from Letterkenny and Limerick in the Republic of Ireland.

Among those present were Ridvan Moqbel, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly; Auxiliary Board member Beman Khosravi; and traveling teacher Roxanne Terrell.

A highlight was the presentation of a video tape of the nationwide television interview of Charles Macdonald, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, called "A Question of Faith," devoted its December 1 meeting to a talk on the Faith by Dr. C.K. Munro.

The Philippines

The Spiritual Assembly of Morong, Bataan, in the Philippines held a one-day teaching institute last November 30 for 29 Bahá’ís, many of them refugees from Indo-China staying at the Refugee Processing Center in Morong.

There was a visible expression of unity in diversity as Filipino, American, Vietnamese, Laotian, Chinese and Samoan friends joined in studying the basic teachings and special approaches to teaching Christian and Buddhist topics.

Presenters were a Samoan Bahá’í youth pioneer to the Philippines, an American pioneer, a Filipino traveling teacher, a Laotian refugee, etc.

The Spiritual Assembly of Quezon City, the Philippines, with the support of five neighboring Bahá’í communities, has launched a new radio series called "One Planet, One People, Please."

The programs are heard each Sunday morning at 9 o’clock on station DWAD.

Two other ongoing radio programs in the Philippines are part of a goal of nine regular programs during this Bahá’í year. They are in the communities of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, and Cagayan de Oro City.
Thailand

The International Day of Peace in Bangkok, Thailand, was organized last September by the United Nations Information Service which invited the Bahá’í community to take part by mounting a display at Bangkok University where the celebration was held.

The display, consisting of six panels, outlined in the Thai language the message contained in “The Promise of World Peace.” Copies of the peace statement and other proclamation materials were on hand.

The main speaker was Ambassador Richard Smith of Australia who presented a talk on disarmament, after which, to the delight of the Bahá’ís, the chairman of the celebration announced that a “Peace Messenger” certificate was being presented that same day to the Bahá’í International Community in New York.

Zaire

The National Bahá’í Women’s Committee of Zaire (recently recognized by the Department of Women’s Affairs) held a Regional Women’s Conference last September 20 at the Bahá’í National Center in Kinshasa.

Ninety participants, mostly women, heard talks on marriage, family life, and the education of children.

The mayor of the Zone of Gombe took an active part in the discussions on education and, at the close of the conference, graciously thanked the Bahá’ís for the illuminating teachings.

Ghana

About 30 traveling teachers recently visited Nzema land, Ghana, access to which is quite difficult, especially during the rainy season when roads are impassable in wetter years such as this one.

Despite the hazardous conditions, the teachers were able to come to the area and form five new local Spiritual Assemblies and to open 18 localities to the Faith. Nzema land now has a total of 11 Assemblies.

Members of the National Spiritual Assembly and National Teaching Committee of Ghana took part in the project.

Germany

The Peutinger Collegium, a cultural association composed of some of the most influential people in the State of Bavaria, has taken a second major step to express its sympathy for the Faith, since it distributed copies of the peace statement last year to all members of the State Parliament, and to more than 300 guests at its triennial gathering last December.

The Collegium has published in its December 1987 news organ an article by Dr. Udo Schaefer about the persecution of Bahá’ís in Iran. The publication, whose circulation is about 30,000, is distributed to virtually all of the leading figures in southern Germany.

In addition, a gala event is being organized by the Peutinger Collegium at which a nationally prominent speaker is to share the platform with a Bahá’í speaker, both of whom will address the plight of the Bahá’ís in Iran.

A recent “Festival of Understanding Among Peoples” sponsored by the Spiritual Assembly of Bad Mergentheim, Germany, drew an audience of 5,000.

The Assembly in this town, which was once visited by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, enlisted the help of several other groups including UNICEF, SOS Children’s Villages, Amnesty International, an Esperanto club, a sports club, and music and dance groups.

The open-air festival was widely publicized with pages of photographs in two area newspapers and lengthy articles in others.

Participants in the Bahá’í Winter School at Lindlar, Germany, numbering 130 of every age group and nine nationalities, contributed a Tree for Peace to the public park in Lindlar.

The school reported “a mighty spirit of unity” among the diverse groups as they studied the first 140 years in the development of Christianity, Islam and the Bahá’í Faith.

Japan

Among 50 people who attended the first Bahá’í Youth Conference in Kurume, Fukuoka, Japan, which was held last summer. The event was coordinated by the local Bahá’í youth group and sponsored by the Spiritual Assembly of Kurume. The conference theme was “The Six Year Plan and Japanese Youth.” Speakers represented three nationalities: Japanese, American and Canadian.
Uganda

Uganda held its first-ever Baha’i Children’s Conference last December 24-26 with 34 children from the Kampala and Mbale areas welcomed to Kikaaya, Kampala, by members of the National Spiritual Assembly.

The reporter for the Baha’i Gazette said the number attending was affected by a fuel shortage that had transport in the country almost at a standstill.

Nevertheless, the program generated a new spirit of service, as parents were surprised to see how their children performed and participated. Mbale children presented a play on the beginnings of the Faith and entertained with traditional dances.

Zimbabwe

More than 150 non-Baha’is were present at a recent Baha’i marriage ceremony in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, conducted by marriage officer E. Sohaili (authorized by the government to perform Baha’i marriages).

The ceremony was held in a lovely garden setting for two non-Baha’is who wished to have a Baha’i wedding ceremony.

Laos

The conference closed with Mr. S. Isimai pointing out the importance of children in teaching the Faith, giving an example of how the Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga had taught the Faith in West Africa by teaching children who then told their parents about the Faith.

More than 100 books were sold and 160 copies of the peace statement distributed last October 16-17 at a Baha’i display in Mityana, Uganda, where an agricultural fair commemorated World Food Day.

The fair’s theme was “The Small Farmer.”

The Baha’i Faith was the only religion taking part in a Preferential Trade Area Exhibition last September 21-December 5 in Kampala, Uganda.

Thousands visited the Baha’i booth and made serious inquiries about the Faith.

Among those who stopped to greet the friends were the President of Uganda, the Prime Minister, other ministers, permanent secretaries, Bishops, and delegates from abroad.

The Prime Minister of Zimbabwe also passed by the booth.

A local newspaper carried a full-page article about the Faith’s participation in the Fair, and a radio interview was held on “Why the Baha’i Faith participated in a trade fair.”

Australia

The small but active Baha’i community of Geraldton in western Australia staged a “Uni-Fest”—United Nations Intercultural Festival—last October 24, United Nations Day.

About 175 people from four religions and more than a dozen countries gathered for a program of music by groups from Italian, Vietnamese, Thai, Scottish and Cocos Island cultures.

Classical music was provided by a guitarist, and an Australian bush-band performed.

Two newspaper columnists and several news articles hailed the event for its unique contribution to unity.

The presence of overseas visitors at this year’s Baha’i Summer School for Western Australia brought a spiritually uplifting note to the 250 children, youth and adults who were present.

The visitors included Aboriginal believers from north of the Tropic of Capricorn who participated actively.

In January, 36 children from 9-13 years of age, supported by 15 adults offering skills, expertise and energy, held the first Baha’i National Children’s Camp in Yerinbool, Australia.

Fiji

Miss Moce Waisu, the teacher of the Lomaivuna Baha’i kindergarten in Fiji since its inception in 1983, held a two-day workshop last October at the Lomaivuna Baha’i Center under the sponsorship of the local Spiritual Assembly.

Responding to a request from Peace Corps volunteers, she instructed teachers from 11 pre-schools in Naitasiri Province on music, art and storytelling.

On the last day of the session, a Naitasiri Province Pre-Schools Association was formed, and Moce was elected president.
A Campaign for Peace, sponsored by Baha'is in Sao Leopoldo, Brazil, opened last September 8 at the Municipal Library in Sao Leopoldo. Brazilian Baha'is (third and fourth from right) are Dr. Zilmaran Walker, Baha'i representative to the United Nations Organization in Brazil, and Dr. Washington Araujo, representing the Baha'i community. Other dignitaries on the dais include the mayor of Sao Leopoldo, consular and civil officials, educators, and a representative of the Brazilian Society of Physicians for Peace. The week-long series of events, which included an essay contest for young writers, was highly praised by the director of the UN Information Center who expressed the hope that other communities in Brazil would follow the example set by Sao Leopoldo.

Guatemala

After Guatemala's affirmative vote in the UN General Assembly's debate on human rights in Iran, a personal visit was made to the country's Minister of Foreign Relations to thank him on behalf of the Baha'is of Guatemala and to give him an update on the situation of the Baha'is in Iran prepared by the Baha'i International Community. A letter of thanks and a copy of the update were sent by mail to Guatemala's Permanent Representative to the UN who cast the affirmative vote.

The new National Baha'i Institute “Shiraz” has been inaugurated in El Tejar, Chimaltenango, Guatemala, with the attendance of the mayor of El Tejar and the governor of the Department of Chimaltenango.

During the ceremonies, Counsellor Arturo Serrano explained the purpose of the Institute, the governor commented on his hopes for the progress of the Faith and Institute, and a ceremonial ribbon was cut while 100 helium balloons were released.

As a result of the cooperation of a Baha'i representative from Guatemala with UNICEF and other government and private groups in organizing the “Peace Run” when it passed through Guatemala, UNICEF not only sent a special letter of thanks to the National Spiritual Assembly but also asked the Baha'is to work with them in planning and organizing a contest throughout Central America with prizes for newscasts that focus on the needs of women and children.

The Baha'i public relations committee in Guatemala prepared nine pages of short quotations from the Baha'i Writings on peace, education, consultation, unity, world government and related topics, taken from the peace statement and other sources.

Grenada

Baha'i youth in Grenada, inspired by the recent visit of a musical group from Guyana and by the Caribbean Youth Conference, have put together their own group which gave its first public performance last October at the Baha'i National Center.

Included were songs, a drama to illustrate the evils of gossip, and a solo performance on the steel drum, all enhanced by dramatic stage lighting and a creative approach to costume and make-up.

Austria

Nine countries were represented among the 190 participants at the Austrian Baha'i Winter School in Bad Hall, Upper Austria, at the end of 1987.

Two Counsellors, Dr. Leo Niederreiter and Ilhan Sezgin, addressed the sessions, and two new believers were enrolled in the Faith.
India

In the far northern state of Himachal Pradesh, India, bordering on China, a new Assembly was formed in a tribal area at Barmour and 56 tribal people in various parts of the state embraced the Faith as a result of a nine-day teaching-deepening campaign held last year in memory of the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’l-Hi Muhájjir. Also, 75 new believers were enrolled in Kinour District where a public meeting was arranged in a Tibetan school.

A Bahá’í lending library is to be established in the district.

A new course in roadside mechanics began August 3 at the New Era Development Institute in Panchgani, India. Twelve students were enrolled in the 21-day course which covers three topics: ‘‘Roadside Mechanics Theory,’’ ‘‘Roadside Mechanics Practice,’’ and a section in Bahá’í Studies.

On January 20, after hearing testimony of the persecutions in Iran from Ruhíyyih Jahanpur, a cellmate of some of the Bahá’í martyrs and prisoners in that country, the Supreme Court Bar Association of India adopted a resolution expressing its deep concern and sympathy for the plight of the Bahá’ís in Iran and assured the Bahá’ís that the resolution would be forwarded to the Prime Minister of India with copies to the government of India and the ambassador of Iran.

Miss Jahanpur was invited to address the more than 80 members of the Bar by one of its members, Advocate Raghunath Singh. Many of them had read newspaper accounts of the persecutions, but Miss Jahanpur’s visit marked the first time they had heard a first-hand account of them.

Afterward, as the Bahá’ís were on their way to donate a number of books to the Library of Judges, they met a former judge, Mrs. Kapila Hingorani, who said that during a Law Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 1987 she had highlighted in a paper she presented the plight of the Bahá’í minority in Iran. She further said that she would be happy to attend Bahá’í-sponsored public meetings on this and related issues.

Members of six Councils, one State Teaching Committee, the Auxiliary Board, and area teaching committees of the northern states of India met for a three-day consultative conference last September 18-20 in New Delhi.

The gathering was inspired by a message from the Universal House of Justice about mass teaching in Taiwan and Nigeria, and was honored by the presence of Hushmand Fatheazam, a member of the House of Justice, whose guidance was greatly appreciated.

Four members of the Continental Board of Counsellors also were present.

Twenty-two women from seven states in India met last October 29 to study the compilation on women prepared by the World Centre and to identify needs of women, adopt specific goals, and begin women’s activities.

The four days of meetings were dedicated to Táhirih and to the present-day martyrs in Iran.

Students at the Pahádiyir Village Bahá’í Tutorial School in India are pictured during a physical training competition held last February at a Bal Mela (Children’s Fair). The event, in Phanpur, was one of seven such fairs held so far this year for the Bahá’í schools in Uttar Pradesh with 53 schools and 1,820 children taking part.

Pictured are members of a Bahá’í-sponsored adult literacy class, one of 60 conducted by the New Era Development Program, which meets in a village in the Krishna Valley near Panchgani, India.
Republic of Ireland

Inspired by reports of worldwide youth activities, the Bahá’í youth of Ireland met at the Irish Summer School and drew up plans for a 64-mile ‘Walk for World Peace’ (the Tahirih Project) from Cork to Limerick. Forty-five walkers from many communities in Ireland and Northern Ireland as well as from Australia and the U.K. took part in the walk last October 3-4. They were sent on their way by David Hoffman, a member of the Universal House of Justice, who presented a moving account of the recent martyrdoms in Iran. More than 300 copies of the peace statement were handed out during the 19-hour walk, and the effort was crowned by receipt of a telex from the Universal House of Justice on their arrival in Limerick.

Jamaica

Twelve young Bahá’ís from North America (among them three Native Americans, three blacks and three of Persian origin) took part last year in Jamaica’s Summer Youth Project, working daily with Jamaican youth from all areas of the island.

Between July 25 and August 23, when the summer project ended with a National Youth Conference, the 12 visitors dispersed to six rural communities and visited at least 16 others. They held workshops, established children’s classes, laid the groundwork for youth clubs, entertained, worked on building an annex to the National Center, held public meetings, firesides and Nineteen Day Feasts, and visited individual believers to deepen and activate them.

In a ceremony last May 28 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bahá’ís were awarded two Certificates of Merit for their participation in International Year of Peace activities in Jamaica.

The ceremony, organized by the UN System of Organizations in Jamaica, included the presentation of a commemorative medal to the country’s Minister of Justice, the Hon. Oswald Harding, on behalf of the United Nations Secretary-General.

Bahá’ís receiving awards were the communities of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands for underwriting the Brochure Competition on achievements of the United Nations, and the Bahá’í Peace-Maker Players for presenting a Peace Pageant that raised $10,000 for UNICEF.

Bangladesh

The Mona Teaching Project in Chitagong, Bangladesh, has brought 25 new believers into the Faith and resulted in proclamations to more than 100 authorities.

Costa Rica

The Bahá’í Youth Art Institute, under construction on a six-acre site in a valley about 10 miles east of San Jose, the capital of Costa Rica, is to serve as a center for training young people to use the arts in service to mankind.

Courses will be offered in music, dance, drama, public reading of the Holy Scriptures, and the preparation of mass media programs and materials.

Construction began last June, and by the end of August the basement and a part of the ground floor of the dining hall were completed. The center is to consist of a large dining hall, a multi-purpose area, and dormitories for 35 students, for a total floor space of about 8,000 square feet.

Singapore

The Bahá’í Women’s Committee of Singapore supported the United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless by holding a food fair last September at the Bahá’í Hospice.

The purpose was to raise funds for the destitute.

Bahá’ís who patronized the fair and attended a unity feast held the same day helped, by their participation, to raise money that was forwarded to the UN Development Program (UNDP) on November 12, the anniversary of the Birth of Bahá’u’lláh.

Colombia

A two-month International Training Course for tutorial school teachers and youth preparing for a year of service was held last October-November at the Ruhí Institute in Cali, Colombia.

Forty-three youth attended, among whom were two from Brazil, one Guatemalan, one Paraguayan, two North Americans, and 36 from various parts of Colombia.

A highlight of the course was a visit by Dr. David Ruhe, a member of the Universal House of Justice, who was visiting Colombia with Mrs. Ruhe.

A unique aspect of this year’s course was the participation of non-Bahá’ís who came to learn how tutorial schools function in order to apply the curriculum in their communities.

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Peace: the message continues
On the cover: Bahá'ís all over the world continue to present copies of the peace message from the Universal House of Justice, "The Promise of World Peace," to public officials and other prominent persons. In this photograph, taken last December, Gov. Henry Bellmon of Oklahoma (left) receives a copy of the statement from the Spiritual Assembly of Oklahoma City, which was represented by Dr. George Cooper. Gov. Bellmon is the second governor of Oklahoma to have received a copy of the Bahá'í statement on world peace.

On February 17, the Egyptian Court of Appeals in Cairo acquitted 12 Bahá'ís who were among 48 convicted last May 11 of allegedly violating a law banning Bahá'í activities in that country and sentenced to three years in prison. Others of the original 48 were scheduled to be re-tried in March.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the United States issued a statement saying it was delighted with the outcome of the hearing and expressing its gratitude to the U.S. government, which through the Department of State and Congress brought its concern for the Egyptian Bahá'ís to the attention of the country's government officials, and to other governments who put forth efforts on behalf of the Egyptian Bahá'ís.
The media: Handle with care

Bahá'u'lláh referred to the swiftly-appearing newspapers of the late 1800s as “a wonderful phenomenon and a great matter.” 1 If “wonderful” and “great” are His characterizations of newspapers, what would He say about the complex networks of electronic media that now girdle the planet? If the newspaper medium is a “wonderful phenomenon and a great matter,” then radio, cinema and the various contemporary forms of audio and video communication are simply beyond the power of words to describe.

Bahá'u'lláh wrote in that same Tablet that newspapers are as “a mirror which is endowed with hearing, sight and speech,” and that they “display the doings and actions of the different nations; they both illustrate them and cause them to be heard.” 2 Unfortunately, mankind has strayed far from the true spirit of religion, and is consequently experiencing a degree of universal anarchy and upheaval unparalleled in recorded history. In characterizing some aspects of the present social and moral decline, Shoghi Effendi wrote: “In whichever direction we turn our gaze, no matter how cursory our observation of the doings and sayings of the present generation, we cannot fail to be struck by the evidence of moral decadence.” 3 He continues to note, referring directly to the media, the “degeneracy of art and music, the infection of literature, and the corruption of the press.” 4

And yet how far have we sunk in the short period of time since those words were written only decades ago. “With sovereign unconcern,” writes the noted Bahá'í scholar, Udo Schaefer, summarizing in 1983 the current state of affairs, “the permissive society now permits modes of behavior that have been taboo for thousands of years . . . the prohibition signs toppled—except for one: Prohibition prohibited!—Taboos taboo!” 5

So what is it that the media are reflecting into our communities and homes? They are reflecting, to a great extent, the present moral and social gloom, a fact that was colorfully expressed by television producer Eliot Daley when he described commercial television in North America in the early 1970s as “death and disaster one moment, trivia and banality the next, cemented together with the 60-second mortar of manipulation and materialism.” 6

How can an inappropriate way of relating to the media potentially undermine our spiritual development? The media literally saturate our lives and permeate every aspect of society. In this regard the media can be considered culture-bound, and thus, like eating habits, are difficult to analyze objectively, much less modify or change. Being almost synonymous with culture itself, the media have a considerable subconscious influence. “Television is a powerful teacher—and dangerous because we are not aware of being taught when watching it,” writes Nathan Rutstein in his book, Go Watch TV.

Information and knowledge seem to seep into our consciousness without our knowing it. Values are inculcated and we become acculturated.” 7

This process of acculturation can be a good or bad thing. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá pointed to the media’s potential for good when He wrote: “The publication of high thoughts is the dynamic power in the arteries of life; it is the very soul of the world.” 8 Think of the effect on the world of just the Bible and Qur’an alone, or the use of print and other media in formal education, or the globalizing effects of modern communications media.

On the other hand, the media continue to be an effective catalyst in the negative process of cultivating materialism and immorality. It is the subliminal nature of the media, and man’s unawareness of his true nature, that make them so effective as a tool in the hands of “those with not so noble aims and interests,” as Counsellor Farzam Arbáb so tolerantly referred to those who wield control. 9 Some, such as Dr. Ernest Dichter, a pioneer in motivational research, make a conscious effort to change the values of society. Dr. Dichter has admitted that “the task of advertising is not primarily to sell products, but to convince Americans that the hedonistic approach to . . . life is a moral, not an immoral one.” 10

In an effort to sell, with the primary motivation being self-interest, advertisers and media professionals have found that appealing to the public’s lower nature—that is, to baser physical and emotional needs and fears—is effective. Blind to the spiritual reality of man, these media professionals have unwittingly become responsible in part for promoting the moral breakdown of society.

This process of moral degradation

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Essay

This article, “Relating to the Media Requires Careful Reflection,” was written by Richard and Joyce Harmsen of Big Rapids, Michigan.

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can be slow or quite rapid, but it can go on whether or not we are aware of it. As one individual observed, his grandparents' generation "now watch with apparent interest and not the least trace of embarrassment, television programs which would have shocked and disgusted them 20 years earlier." This is a good illustration of the gradual subliminal process that can undermine the morals of an entire generation. Actually, it is alarming and tragic to think that in two or three generations "marriage," "chastity" and "fidelity" could lose their meaning to a large part of society. Alexander Pope, in his Essay on Man, wrote in this regard: "Vice is a monster of so frightful mien; "Is to be hated needs but to be seen; "Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face, "We first endure, then pity, then embrace." 11

But according to the Hand of the Cause of God A.Q. Faizi, the degenerative process can be almost instantaneous. In one of his talks, Mr. Faizi explains Bahá'ulláh's warning that we should not even approach those things that are unwholesome, and likens our unwitting approach to stepping into a pit of tar, where our retreat is much more difficult than our approach. In the story, two Arabian boys were returning home and one wanted to save time by crossing a supposedly hard lake of tar. His companion argued against it, but "the other boy wouldn't listen. He went some steps and then the left foot was down—imperceptibly. To pull the first one out, he had to press the right one harder. The right foot went in. Gradually, gradually he was drowning, but very, very slowly. The other boy ran for help and... they brought a car and chain. When they pulled, the bones were separated... he couldn't bear it. They brought a helicopter... (but) eventually he was drowned." 12

Young people especially, Mr. Faizi concluded, "must be very careful of the first step... They're so sticky, these evil habits of life." 13 Examples of taking a "first step" via the media might include browsing curiously through a pornographic magazine or glancing at an X-rated movie on cable television, or indiscriminately exposing oneself to popular cinema which is saturated with unhealthy attitudes and images, or reading popular literature which often depicts immorality, violence and lust for power and prestige. The problem comes when we think we are immune—that it can't hurt us—like the boy at the tar pit.

Mr. Faizi relates another story, this one told by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, about "a very pious person who asked one of these ruffians who used to drink and smoke and do everything like that to 'come and pray with me for 40 nights and then see how you'll be transformed.' The man replied with a confident smile: 'You come with me for only one minute and see how you'll be transformed!'" 14

Modern communications media have made it infinitely easier to "approach" those things that are unhealthy to the spirit of man, and much of the time we allow these images and ideas to literally invade our homes and saturate our lives uninterrupted. But exactly how do television and the media gradually and persistently desensitize us to violence and immorality? According to Dr. Joseph Wolfe, a behavior modification therapist, "systematic desensitization is most effective when done with images... in a non-threatening environment." 15

Karen Mains, a noted Christian author, has found that television viewing in the home parallels remarkably the process used by behavior modification therapists to help parents alter negative behavior in children. She challenges the listener, or in this case the reader, to "make your own comparisons to television viewing.

"1. The person views familiar images in a comfortable, non-threatening situation. He is completely relaxed. No emotional arousal is noted." 16

"2. Certain images or scenes known to arouse emotional reactions are introduced. The patient's relaxation ceases.

"3. The scene shifts or viewing is interrupted. The viewer's arousal is not allowed time to react.

"4. The viewer is given a respite period of approximately one minute during which he resumes a relaxed mental and physical state. This is facilitated by eating or drinking.

"5. As the viewer's emotions subside, the viewing of non-threatening images resumes. The subject is completely relaxed. No strong feelings are noted by the therapist.

"6. This cycle is repeated and therapists who use systematic desensitization claim that it usually only requires 20 to 30 exposure sessions to alter a person's feelings from acceptance to rejection or, more importantly, for the purposes of our discussion, from rejection to acceptance." 15

For the last 35 years, Ms. Mains concludes, "television has enjoyed a luxury no behavior modification therapist ever dreamed of having. It's been allowed to work its demoralizing effects in its subject's most relaxed, natural and non-threatening environment—his own home. But most of all, television has been allowed to rehearse its basic collection of limited themes over and over again—not 30, but thousands of times; not in weekly therapy sessions but daily." 16

If the behavior of a maladapted patient can be modified in 30 desensitization sessions, what is the effect on a human being who has spent much of his formative years in front of a television set? And what do we—and our youth and children—see? According to Donald Wildman of the National Federation for Decency, four out of five scenes of sexual intercourse implied on television are between non-married couples.17 And by the time the average youngster graduates from high school, he or she will have seen around 1,800 murders simulated on the television screen.18

Regularly courting commercial television in North America will not, according to the best evidence, turn us into criminals or deviants, but it does have the capacity to sap our spiritual energy, desensitize us to violence and immorality, waste our precious time, and thus undermine our efforts to cultivate spirituality and to develop the distinctive characteristics of Bahá'í life.

This point can readily be appreciated if we view the home, as Mr. Faizi has suggested, as a kind of spiritual womb-world in which the soul and spirit of every family member should be nurtured and strengthened.19 He points out that backbiting, among other things, can completely destroy that environment. "Courtesy and dignity are what bring nobility and standing to man," wrote Shoghi Effendi in a letter...
to an individual, “whereas frivolity and facetiousness, ribaldry and effrontery will lead to his debasement, degradation and humiliation.” These qualities are regularly modeled on North American television. Surely a regular media menu of these qualities, as well as immorality, sarcasm, faultfinding, violence, slander and other negative behavior representative of much of today’s television programming can effectively thwart our efforts to spiritualize our lives, which is so absolutely essential to true human happiness and the fulfillment of our sacred trust.

“We cannot segregate the human heart from the environment outside us,” Counsellor Hooper Dunbar explains, emphasizing the importance of the environment upon our spiritual condition. Paraphrasing the Guardian, Counsellor Dunbar continues, “The inner life molds the environment, and the environment deeply affects the inner life of man... and every abiding change in the life of man is the result of these mutual reactions.” It is for this reason, he says, that we must consider carefully how to create the best possible environment in our homes, and the media looms as a significant factor in the creation of this environment.

There is yet another concern. In economics, decisions are seen in terms of the “opportunity costs” which no longer are possible once the money has been committed. If thought of in this way, in terms of what constructive activities we and our children could alternately be engaged in—whether they be physical, spiritual or intellectual in character—we often realize that television or other media entertainment is a poor investment given the alternatives. According to Dr. Urie Bronfenbrenner, a specialist in human development, “The primary danger of the television screen lies not so much in the behavior it produces as the behavior it prevents—the talks, the games, the festivities... through which much of the child's learning takes place and his character is formed.”

Viewing the media within the context of man’s spiritual reality can alter radically our perception of what is appropriate or inappropriate, healthy or unhealthy. Shoghi Effendi points out that “evil forces do take control of our life, but it is within our power to free ourselves from falling under their influence,” and that “they (the Baha’is) should therefore open their eyes to the existing conditions, study the evil forces that are at play, and then with a concerted effort arise and bring about the necessary reforms.” That the nature and power of the media warrants serious consideration by every Baha’i, and that it is worthy of general consultation within Baha’i communities, should now be apparent. Notwithstanding this pressing concern, however, the media’s culture-bound nature dictates that we should when discussing these issues use tact, wisdom, moderation and tolerance lest—God forbid—it should become a source of disagreement and division among the friends.

What we see, hear and read does affect us, often subconsciously and, at times, dramatically. Why not, through selective control, use these “wonderful” phenomena we call the media to inspire and uplift us, rather than allowing them, through indiscriminate or unwise exposure, to counter and even overtake our efforts to realize our spiritual potential.

Perhaps these timeless words of the beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, can serve us well as a standard by which to guide our media-related behavior: “Such a chaste and holy life, with its implications of modesty, purity, temperance, decency, and clean mindedness, involves no less than the exercise of moderation in all that pertains to dress, language, amusements, and all artistic and literary avocations. ... It calls for the abandonment of a frivolous conduct, with its excessive attachment to trivial and often misguided pleasures. ... It condemn the prostitution of art and of literature. ... It can tolerate no compromise with the theories, the standards, the habits of a decadent age.”

NOTES
2. Ibid.
3. Call to the Nations: Extracts from the Writings of Shoghi Effendi (Haifa: Baha’i World Centre, 1977), p. 86.
4. Ibid., p. 10.
7. Rustein, Go Watch TV.
13. Ibid., p. 20.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
21. Quoted by Hooper Dunbar in “The Forces of Light and Darkness,” a taped presentation at the Louheen Baha’i School (Davison, MI: Reflections, 1985), tape 1, side 1.
22. Quoted in Go Watch TV, p. 129.
Dearly Loved Friends,

"The stage is set for universal, rapid and massive growth of the Cause of God."

These soul-stirring words were issued at Ridván 1987 by the supreme Institution of our Faith, the Universal House of Justice.

The onward march of the Faith, recently impelled by the guiding hand of Bahá'u'lláh directing His Supreme Institution step by step along the path of its glorious destiny, must evoke in our hearts feelings of pride, of unbounded joy and gratitude at His holy threshold. The successive victories already achieved within so short a period of time since the termination of the third epoch of the Formative Age, both at the World Centre and throughout the globe, are truly soul-stirring and laden with such potentialities as can generate enormous spiritual forces for a greater expansion of the Faith everywhere.

To these creative energies which come to us from on high is coupled the spiritual potency of the blood of the martyrs of Persia in recent times. These two forces combined enable the tree of the Cause of God to grow. One imparts to it the heat and the light which emanate from the Sun of Truth, the Author of our Faith; the other supplies water to its roots which penetrates deep into the soil of the human heart.

Although these forces are invisible to our eyes, their effect is clearly discernible. The former releases its energies through the instrumentality of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh. It finds expression through an ever-flowing stream of guidance and enlightenment which, today, issues forth from God's Universal House of Justice, the channel for the outpouring of that world-vitalizing Spirit generated by His glorious Revelation. The latter force released by the martyrs comes from the world of man. It is the response of the believers sacrificing their all in the path of their Beloved. It seems that whenever these two forces—one descending from on high from the realms of God, the other arising out of sacrifice and ascending from the world of man—combine, a new strength and vitality is imparted to the community of the Most Great Name.

The beloved Guardian, in one of his messages to the Persian believers as far back as 1933, attributed the winning of many victories of the time, and indeed of the future, victories such as Queen Marie of Rumania's attraction to the Faith, and the notable teaching exploits in the West and the growth of the Faith in general, to the powers released by the blood of the martyrs which has been shed in such great profusion in Persia since the inception of the Faith in that country.

And now these forces are mysteriously at work. The Universal House of Justice clearly issued this fate-laden message:

"The stage is set for universal, rapid and massive growth of the Cause of God."

These words have set in motion at this particular moment in time those creative energies which are described above and which are now suspended between earth and heaven, ready to descend upon those who believe, who arise, and who turn.

BELIEVING wholeheartedly that the statement of the Supreme Body about the "massive growth" of the Faith is absolutely true and valid;

ARISING with a selfless and determined spirit to teach the Cause of God; and

TURNING to Bahá'u'lláh with devotion to become the recipient of His bestowals and confirmations.

When these three elements are brought together, miracles will happen and our teaching efforts will result in a "massive growth" of the Cause of God.

Let us examine these three vital factors separately:

1. BELIEVING

Recognition of the station of Bahá'u'lláh

There is nothing more precious and more vital for a Bahá'í than his faith in Bahá'u'lláh, believing that He is the Supreme Manifestation of God. But faith is a relative term; its intensity varies in individuals and is dependent upon the extent to which one has recognized the station of Bahá'u'lláh.

The beloved Guardian has made it "the first obligation" of a believer to deepen his understanding of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. These are his words:

"To strive to obtain a more adequate understanding of the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's stupendous Revelation must, it is my unalterable conviction, remain the first obligation and the object of the constant endeavor of each one of its loyal adherents. An exact and thorough comprehension of so vast a system, so sublime a revelation, so sacred a trust, is for obvious reasons beyond the reach and ken of our finite minds. We can, however, and it is our bounden duty to seek to derive fresh inspiration and added sustenance as we labor for the propagation of His Faith.
through a clearer apprehension of the truths it enshrines and the principles on which it is based."

Steadfastness in the Covenant

Recognition of the station of Bahá'u'lláh and believing in Him, important as they are, will not be a sufficient guarantee of one's faith unless one remains loyal and steadfast in His Covenant. One of the distinguishing features of our Faith is that Bahá'u'lláh has not abandoned us to ourselves. He has left in our midst a source of divine guidance to which we can turn. He conferred His Divine powers and authority upon 'Abdu'l-Bahá and made a firm covenant with the believers to follow and obey Him with absolute devotion and love. And, this covenant was further extended to include Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice.

Today, the Universal House of Justice is the Centre of the Cause. The Bahá'ís do not consider this august institution to be purely an international administrative body of the Cause operating by the talents of its individual members.

To hold such a view is tantamount to denying one of the most sacred truths of their Faith. We believe that the Universal House of Justice is the prescribed and authentic channel through which Bahá'u'lláh guides His followers in the service of His Cause. It is an institution described by 'Abdu'l-Bahá as "the source of all good and freed from all error." It is an institution whose pronouncements are not solely the product of human thinking, but are divinely guided and possessed of that creativity which is born of the Cause of God in this day.

Beloved friends, the Universal House of Justice states: "The stage is set for universal, rapid and massive growth of the Cause of God."

The urge to teach comes about when the believer recognizes the greatness of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and, as a result, becomes enamored of Him. The greatness of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, in turn, dawns on the individual when he reads the Holy Writings regularly, studies the history of the Faith, and associates with the "loved ones" of God and His "chosen ones" whose companionship Bahá'u'lláh has described in these words:

"He that seeketh to commune with God, let him betake himself to the companionship of His loved ones; and he that desireth to hearken unto the word of God, let him give ear to the words of His chosen ones."

Frustration in the teaching work

One of the basic laws of nature is that for every action there is a reaction. This law exists in the Faith also. As soon as the individual arises to teach, he will be tested in various ways, often without realizing it. Each time he is successful in passing a test, he will acquire greater spiritual insight and grow stronger in faith. He will come closer to God and the Cause with greater enthusiasm but his tests will be more difficult next time.

This is one of the reasons that some believers arise to teach the Cause, but when tests come their way, they find their activities frustrated and their enthusiasm dampened. Detachment from the things of this world is the key by which one may overcome these tests and intensify the urge to teach. In the world generally, detachment from material things is identified with mendicancy, asceticism and poverty. Such a view is not upheld by the teachings of the Faith.

Detachment, from a Bahá'í point of view, may be described as submission of one's will to the will of God and to seeking His good pleasure above one's own. When a person reaches this exalted position, the interests of the Faith take precedence over his personal interests. And, when the time comes to arise for the service of the Cause, he will be ready to meet the challenge whatever the cost. Becoming detached from something of this world is often a painful process and involves sacrifice.

But when the believer gives up something dear to him for the sake of the Cause of God, mysterious forces as testified by Bahá'u'lláh will be released, which will cause the Faith to grow. To offer up one's time, to labor for the establishment

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of the Faith in a locality, to give up the comforts of home and go as a pioneer to foreign lands, to offer up one's substance for the promotion of the Cause, to be persecuted for one's faith, and even to give one's life at the end—all these sacrifices are meritorious in the sight of God and will undoubtedly bring victory to His Cause, provided one's motives are pure and sincere.

3. TURNING

When we arise with confidence and determination to teach the Cause of God, our efforts will bear fruit if we turn to Him. This is the key to our success in teaching. Without His confirmations and assistance our services will not produce the desired effect. Our teaching activities will be frustrated if we rely on our own knowledge and other accomplishments, no matter how great these may be. To confront the seeker with a set of proofs, no matter how irrefutable, or to demonstrate the truth of the Faith with indisputable logic, will not necessarily win him over to the Cause of God. On the contrary, these often become barriers for him.

Teaching the Cause is the act of revealing to the individual, progressively, and with great wisdom, glimpses of the light of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation in such a way that each time he can feel a measure of the Faith's vivifying spirit penetrate his heart. This can only be achieved when the Bahá'í teacher carries the power of Bahá'u'lláh with him and teaches the Cause while his heart is in communion with the Source of divine power. Then, and only then, can his talks and conversation influence the hearts of his hearers. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has set the example for us.

Reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit

In one of His talks in 'Akka, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said that whenever He was about to speak to a congregation during His journeys to the West, He used to turn His heart to the Abhá Kingdom for a few minutes and beg for God's assistance. He would not begin to speak until He could feel that the confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh were surrounding Him.

During His travels in Europe and America, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, on many occasions, spoke to His companions of the power of divine assistance which, He affirmed, was alone responsible for His outstanding success in the proclamation of the Faith to the people of the West. To cite an example:

After giving one of His brilliant discourses to a distinguished audience in Denver, Colorado, 'Abdu'l-Bahá turned to a few of His companions and said: "Did you see what a fire I ignited in the hearts of people? ... A teacher must be inspired himself if he is to inspire others."

On another occasion in that same city, commenting to His companions on the honor which was shown to Him by the public and the enthusiasm created in the hearts of many people, 'Abdu'l-Bahá attributed these victories to the confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh, and said: "We must not imagine that these marks of honor which are shown to me are because of my talks or the eloquence of my words." Then, pointing to the lamps in the room, He said: "These lamps which are lighted will become dark as soon as they are switched off from the source of energy." By this remark, He meant that if the power of divine assistance were cut off, there could be no success in one's service to the Cause of God.

This is why 'Abdu'l-Bahá has advised Bahá'í teachers that when they intend to give a public talk on the Faith, they should turn their hearts to Bahá'u'lláh and ask for divine guidance from on high. It is then that His confirmations will reach them and inspire their utterances. Of course, this advice does not exclude the study of a subject or research by a believer who intends to speak on a specific topic. But teaching the Cause is a different matter altogether. Indeed, a teacher who becomes the recipient of Bahá'u'lláh's confirmations will be in no need of a prepared talk. His words, as attested by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, will move the hearts and inspire His audience.

In one of His Tablets, 'Abdu'l-Bahá states:

"O thou maid-servant of God! Whenever thou art intending to deliver a speech, turn thy face toward the Kingdom of Abhá and with a heart detached, begin to talk. The breaths of the Holy Spirit will assist thee."

and again, in another Tablet, He affirms:

"Speak, therefore; speak out with great courage at every meeting. When you are about to begin your address, turn first to Bahá'u'lláh, and ask for the confirmations of the Holy Spirit, then open your lips and say whatever is suggested to your heart; this, however, with the utmost courage, dignity and conviction."

TEACHING THE CAUSE

Success in teaching

Success in teaching depends on one's ability and readiness to draw upon the power of Bahá'u'lláh. There is no alternative. If the believer does not open the way for Bahá'u'lláh through his love for Him, by his life, and by teaching the Cause with devotion, His confirmation and assistance cannot reach him, and he will fail in his service to Him. Those who rank foremost among Bahá'í teachers were always conscious of the presence of Bahá'u'lláh at every stage of their teaching activities. It was because of the consciousness of His presence that they were enabled to approach with genuine love and humility those who were seeking the truth, attracting them with the warmth of their faith and the creative power of their words. It was this consciousness that enabled them to radiate the glory of the new-born Faith of God, to demonstrate its truth, to promote its interests, to withstand the onslaught of its enemies, and to win imperishable victories for their Lord.

The power of Bahá'u'lláh does not come to us by itself. God pours out His bounties and grace upon man, but man must make the necessary move to receive them. Without him opening his heart and submitting himself, the gifts and bounties of God cannot reach him. In The Hidden Words, Bahá'u'lláh has laid down the law of this Covenant in these words:

"Love Me, that I may love thee. If thou loveth Me not, My love can in no wise reach thee. Know this, O servant."

Necessary qualities for a Bahá'í teacher who wishes to draw upon the power of Bahá'u'lláh are humility and self-effacement. We note in nature that energy can be generated between two points where there is a difference of levels. Water can flow from a higher plane to a lower one; electrical energy may be generated when there is a difference of potential between two points in the circuit. Similarly, to draw on the power of Bahá'u'lláh, the believer must assume
a position of lowliness in relation to Bahá'u'lláh's station of loftiness. Bahá'u'lláh may be likened to the summit of a mountain and the believers to the valley below. In the same way that water pours from the mountain-top into the valley, the energies of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and the tokens of His power and might can reach a Bahá'í who turns to Him in a spirit of true humility and servitude. The Writings of the Central Figures of the Faith bear abundant testimony to this basic principle which governs the relationship of man to His Creator. In The Hidden Words, Bahá'u'lláh prescribes: "Humble thyself before Me, that I may graciously visit thee..."

Teaching the Cause is a daily activity

There are certain routines in this life such as eating, sleeping, and working that must be observed on a daily basis. These routines cannot be altered to become weekly or monthly. Similarly, there are certain observances in the Faith that are to be carried out on a daily basis. The obligatory prayers, the reciting of the Holy Writings, and the act of teaching are among these daily obligations. To disregard this basic requirement is to impede one's spiritual growth. The beloved Guardian said through his secretary:

"...Never must they let a day pass without teaching some soul, trusting to Bahá'u'lláh that the seed will grow. The friends should seek pure souls, gain their confidence, and then teach that person carefully until he becomes a Bahá'í, and then nurture him until he becomes a firm and active supporter of the Faith."

Search for receptive souls

There are a great many receptive souls in every locality who have the capacity, and are ready to embrace the Cause of God. Our challenge is to find these souls. But as experience has shown, this challenge cannot be met by our usual methods of attracting people to the Cause. The most effective way is, prior to our teaching activity, to pray every day, and beseech God to guide us to these souls. And to pray ardently until we feel that our prayers are being answered. But praying alone is not enough; it has to be followed by action, and action is to come into contact with people, knowing that Bahá'u'lláh will guide us to those souls who are being prepared for His Cause.

To do all these things, we must be ready to sacrifice some of our cherished ways of life in order to allocate a reasonable period of time each day for praying, for coming into contact with people, and for teaching those who will be attracted to the Cause.

The act of teaching

Bahá'u'lláh has described teaching as "the most meritorious of all deeds." To carry out such an act of devotion to God, the Bahá'í teacher must, as exhorted by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, act with wisdom. In one of His Tablets, Bahá'u'lláh counsels one of the believers not to disclose to people everything about the Cause at first, but rather to teach them little by little until they are ready to absorb more. He likens this process to feeding infants who need to be given a little milk at a time until they grow in strength and are able to digest other food. This exhortation of Bahá'u'lláh is the basis of teaching the Cause of God. The principles involved are quite similar to those that a school-teacher employs in teaching his or her students little by little and in accordance with their capacity. Before teaching the Cause to anyone, it is important to know his background and capacity. The most successful teachers are those who, after familiarizing themselves with the beliefs and ideas of an individual, reveal the truths of the Faith to him gradually. But the little they impart is the correct remedy and is so potent as to influence and stimulate the soul and enable it to take a step forward and become ready to absorb more.

Another vital requirement is to have some basic knowledge of the Faith and to be able to converse with people on matters of religion. The source of this knowledge is the Kitáb-i-Iqán, and also Some Answered Questions. Furthermore, the Bahá'í teachers of today must be knowledgeable about various ideologies prevailing at the present time, be aware of the problems and difficulties facing humanity, and be able to put forward effectively the relevant teachings of the Faith as the remedy for the ills of humankind.

OUR CHALLENGE: 'MASSIVE GROWTH OF THE CAUSE'

Beloved friends, the time has come to change radically our vision of teaching, to arise as never before for the promotion of the Faith, to enter the arena of teaching with unrelenting perseverance, to place our reliance on Bahá'u'lláh, to get on our knees and pray to Him for the descent of His confirmations which alone can guide our steps, to come in contact with a far greater number of people than has been our experience so far, to apply wisdom in all our teaching efforts, and to be assured of victory provided we arise to fulfill our responsibilities, and are never frustrated or disheartened when tests come our way and results are not readily forthcoming.

These words of Shoghi Effendi, written so eloquently almost half a century ago, are particularly applicable to our time. He presents us with a challenge so moving, so fateful and so glorious:

"...There is no time to lose. There is no room left for vacillation. Multitudes hunger for the Bread of Life. The stage is set. The firm and irrevocable promise is given. God's own Plan has been set in motion. It is gathering momentum with every passing day. The powers of heaven and earth mysteriously assist in its execution. Such an opportunity is irreplaceable. Let the doubter arise and himself verify the truth of such assertions. To try, to persevere, is to ensure ultimate and complete victory."

Would to God that every believer, young or old, man or woman, employed or out of work, newly enrolled or veteran, might set aside at least one hour a day exclusively for Bahá'u'lláh—to do nothing during that time but to pray, to attract His confirmations, and then to go out for the sole purpose of coming into contact with some receptive souls who are ready to respond to the call of God in this age.

If every believer arises to do this every day with devotion, audacity and wisdom, great powers will descend upon us from on high, and we shall be astonished at the unbelievably large numbers of people who will embrace the Cause of God.

With deepest Bahá'í love,

Adíb Taherzadeh
Stepaside County, Dublin
July 9, 1987
United States

Congress hears Bahá’í testimony

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States presented testimony March 16 at a hearing in Washington, D.C., before the House of Representatives’ Judiciary Committee’s Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and International Law. The panel was considering H.R. 807, “The Genocide Convention Implementation Act of 1987.”

The National Assembly was represented at the hearing by its secretary, Dr. Robert C. Henderson.

Dr. Henderson appeared as part of a “concerned groups” panel whose other members were Hyman Bookbinder (for Elie Wiesel and the American Jewish Committee); William Haratunian, chairman of the Board of Directors of the Armenian Assembly of America; and Dith Pran, an author and photojournalist whose tribulations in Cambodia were the basis for the movie “The Killing Fields.”

Also offering statements in favor of the Resolution were Sen. William Proxmire of Wisconsin; Richard Schifter, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs; Victoria Toensing, deputy Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, Department of Justice; and Trisha Katson, director of legislative affairs for the Liberty Lobby.

A second panel of “concerned groups” was comprised of Paul Hoffman, a board member of Amnesty International; Stephen Klitzman, chairman of the International Human Rights Committee of the American Bar Association; Seymour Reich, president of B’nai B’rith International; Kathleen Stone, member of the Board of Directors of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute; and Alvin Steinberg, chairman of the National Planning Committee of the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith.

H.R. 807, the Genocide Convention Implementation Act, makes genocide a federal crime, establishes penalties for commission of that crime, and defines the jurisdiction of the United States over acts of genocide.

Its passage is essential before ratification by the President of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, whose ratification was approved 83-11 by the U.S. Senate on February 19, 1986, after nearly 37 years of consideration.

During that time the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held many hearings on the Convention, favorably reporting it to the full Senate no less than six times.

The Convention has been in force since January 1951, and 96 other countries have become parties.

The National Spiritual Assembly began its support for U.S. ratification of the Genocide Convention in 1985, working with a core of 15 organizations which together coordinated the effort that led to Senate ratification in 1986.

To provide grassroots support for H.R. 807, the legislative component that puts into law the penalties to be assessed for the crime of genocide, the National Spiritual Assembly asked Bahá’ís in key areas of the country to write articles or letters to their local newspapers or to phone their congressmen on behalf of their Bahá’í communities to urge passage of the legislation.

The Convention’s failure for so many years to win Senate approval is evidence of the deeply held opposition to the treaty and of the tenacity of the issues which some feel are raised by it.

Those issues include: whether such a human rights treaty is within the treaty power of the U.S.; whether the Convention might override provisions in the Constitution; whether it would affect the balance of power between Federal and state jurisdiction in criminal matters; and whether it would require extradition of U.S. citizens to other countries where they might be charged with genocide.

Other issues have been raised by the definition of genocide used in the Convention, the exclusion of political groups from that definition, the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, and the role of an international penal tribunal.

In September 1984, the Reagan administration announced its support of ratification of the Convention with the
inclusion of three understandings and one declaration favored by the executive branch and Senate Foreign Relations Committee since 1970.

Senate passage in 1986 included provision for implementing legislation referred to in Article V of the Convention, which is the area addressed by H.R. 807.

The Bahá'í community was invited to send a representative to the Subcommittee's hearing because of the widespread knowledge within the government of the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran, the elements of which, as Dr. Henderson pointed out in his testimony, constitute genocide as defined by the Convention.

"Most of us will agree," Mr. Schifter told the Subcommittee members, "that genocide is not likely to take place within the borders of the United States.

"Our action on this Convention...underlines our role of leadership in the free world on behalf of the cause of human rights.

"It is for that reason that we sincerely hope that the House will act on this bill at an early date and that it will soon become law.

Following is Dr. Henderson's statement to the Subcommittee on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly:

"Genocide is the ultimate crime against humanity. The United Nations Convention on Genocide to which, after decades of debate, the United States has recently adhered, defines the crime of genocide as 'any one of five kinds of action, committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such.'

"Thus the concept of genocide is much broader than outright massacre and includes other measures designed to destroy groups of people.

"The Bahá'ís, members of a worldwide religious community dedicated to peace, unity and brotherhood among all peoples, nations and religions, have been victims of genocide in Iran for more than a hundred years.

"Shortly after the inception of the Bahá'í Faith in mid-19th century Iran, some 20,000 of its early followers were killed at the bidding of the Shi'ite clergy supported by the government. In the last 20 years the Bahá'ís of Iran have once again become victims of acts in every one of the categories that define genocide. For example:

"The Convention defines killing as genocide, and the Iranian government has executed since 1979 more than 200 Bahá'ís, most of them leaders of the community.

"The Convention states that 'causing serious bodily or mental harm' is genocide; and thousands of Bahá'ís have been unjustly imprisoned and subjected to torture to compel them to recant their faith.

"The Convention states that 'deliberately inflicting...conditions of life calculated to bring about (the) physical destruction' of the group is genocide.

"Iran has not only confiscated all the Bahá'í community property—meeting places, schools, hospitals, shrines and even cemeteries—but forced the Bahá'ís to disband all the elected assemblies which governed the Bahá'í community and to give up all organized religious activity.

"The last two types of action defined as genocide involve 'imposing measures intended to prevent birth within the group (and) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.' Iranian Bahá'ís have suffered these outrages as well.

"In supporting human rights throughout the world and in ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Prevention of the Crime of Genocide, the United States explicitly commits itself to an unrelenting struggle for the elimination of what is undoubtedly the greatest evil of our century.

"The power and influence of the United States are indispensable for the achievement of victory in this struggle.

"The Bahá'ís make no specific proposals for legislation in support of the Convention, but they do wish to emphasize the spiritual and moral imperative that all laws necessary for the implementation of the Convention be passed, unanimously if possible, or at least by an overwhelming majority.

"During the first three weeks of March, Bahá'ís observe a fast, devoting the early hours of every morning to prayer and meditation, attempting to spiritualize their lives, and hoping to bear witness to the unity of humanity, to the need for protecting the weak, to the duty of succoring victims of oppression.

"It is in this spirit that we urge our representatives to approach the legislative task now before them."

Australia

Pictured are four of the 717 Bahá'ís who attended last December's Australian National Teaching Conference which boasted strong participation by Islanders and Aborigines. Those shown represent (left to right) Papua New Guinean, Asian, Australian Aboriginal and Iranian backgrounds, an accurate reflection of the multicultural Bahá'í community in Australia.
Trinidad and Tobago

Faith flourishes in multi-racial arena

"Every creed and race finds an equal place.
"And may God bless our Nation."

The sentiment expressed in this line from the national anthem of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is indeed represented in these two lovely and unique tropical islands, situated at the end of the string of Caribbean Islands and separated from Venezuela by seven miles of clear, calm water.

Due to a quirk of history, the population of Trinidad and Tobago is an amalgam of peoples from all corners of the earth who have brought with them their various cultures and religions.

Trinidad was discovered in 1492 by Christopher Columbus. Later, the Spanish landed and claimed the territory, and within a few short years succeeded in virtually wiping out the indigenous population of cannibalistic Carib and peaceful Arawak Indians (a few of whom still survive), thanks to superior weapons and imported European diseases.

The Spanish consolidated their position and introduced slaves from Africa to work on the land in Trinidad, while the French, Dutch and Portuguese struggled to maintain sovereignty over Tobago. Some of these Europeans plundered and left, but a few settled, as well as some Frenchmen who came from other islands during the French Revolution. In 1797 the British conquered Trinidad and added to their vast empire, which by that time already included Barbados and Tobago.

When slaves were emancipated in 1834, the plantation owners had to look elsewhere for laborers. First they tried the Chinese, but this proved unsuccessful because of the heat and poor working conditions, although many of the Chinese who came later became successful businessmen and shopkeepers.

The owners then looked to the Uttar Pradesh area of India for potential laborers. Some, including children, were abducted—lured on board ships with the promise of an ample supply of sugar and candy. Others came voluntarily, having been promised either a return trip home after five years or land of their own. After a long and often terrible journey, they disembarked to find endless sugar plantations, hard work in the burning sun, low pay and no way to return after five years, although some were given land as promised. Later, a few Syrian families came to Trinidad as merchants and settled there.

This multitude of immigrants arriving over the years were the ancestors of the present inhabitants of Trinidad and Tobago. They brought with them their diverse cultures and religions, which they continued to practice in comparative seclusion for some time. Now, however, a new generation has been moulded with a new outlook and new identity.

A foreigner (of yet another land and culture) once asked a young girl of obvious Indian descent, "Are you Indian?" To which she replied, with some surprise, "No, I'm Trinidadian." How did the change in identity come about? Primarily by successive generations of peoples being born in the country and living together, associating closely with one another, and being educated together.

In the past the various religious denominations ran the schools, and if a child wished to attend a certain school he would have to accept that particular religion. This required some children to change their religion, but it also meant that children from different racial and religious backgrounds were associating freely with one another. Later, with the advent of free government primary education, children of an even wider variety of backgrounds began meeting and mingling side by side, and frequently intermarried when they grew to adulthood.

The point is that prejudice, which separates, whether it be racial, religious or economic, is not intrinsic or inherited—it must be taught. In these relatively small islands, it simply was not practical for such a diversity of people to remain separate, and so these prejudices were not reinforced. The successive generations became integrated, accepting that they were equal to one another and tolerating their differences; i.e., unity in diversity.

Another significant development in Trinidad and Tobago in recent years has been the founding of an Interreligious Organization, initiated by Mr. Wahid Ali. It is an organization unique in the world, going far beyond any ecumenical movement for unity among Christian denominations.

The Interreligious Organization of Trinidad and Tobago is comprised of four of the world's major religions, each of which is represented in this country. In recent years the Hindus, Christians and Muslims have been joined by the Bahá'í Faith, which has played a significant role in supporting and encouraging the activities of the organization. During a recent antidrug campaign leaders of the four re-
A group of happy Bahá'ís from Trinidad and Tobago outside the Bahá'í Centre in Palmyra.

Religions appeared on television to express their support. The Catholic archbishop, representing the largest Christian sect, introduced them all, referring to the Bahá'ís present as representing the fourth religion of Trinidad and Tobago.

Bahá'ís also took part in a rally at the National Stadium, during which a printed Bahá'í prayer was given to members of the audience to be read by all as an opening prayer. Also at this rally, the president of Trinidad and Tobago gave a short talk, expressing his support in very Bahá'í-like terms.

The Interreligious Organization, which consists of leaders of the various religions, is proving to be quite influential. Through this organization the Bahá'ís have been invited to take part in many interfaith services in churches, mosques, temples and other locations throughout the country. In fact, it is becoming fashionable to launch new ventures with an interfaith service including the reading of Bahá'í prayers, which are considered to be very beautiful.

Bahá'í concepts are often quoted by those in authority in religious or governmental offices, whether or not the source is named. Bahá'ís have also undertaken the publication of a newsletter for the Interreligious Organization in which contributions are made by people of all religious persuasions, thus facilitating the exchange and blending of thoughts and ideas.

This group of religious leaders is respected and consulted by the government on various issues, for example an amendment to a government bill concerning rape and women's rights.

At the opening of Parliament, following the election of a new government late in 1986, an open-air religious service was held in a large public square outside the Parliament building. Here Bahá'ís were positioned next to the president and played a prominent role by reciting the opening prayer, which was also recited by everyone present, copies having previously been distributed among the crowd. The service was attended by thousands of people and was televised and broadcast live throughout the country. Many heads of state and dignitaries from neighboring islands and countries attended, some of whom were impressed by the Organization and expressed a desire to develop a similar institution in their own country.

Truly, in Trinidad and Tobago, religious and racial tolerance exists, and the Interreligious Organization has played an important part in bringing the Bahá'í Faith out of obscurity in this country, so that now it can be included among others in the concept expressed by the national anthem:

"Every creed and race finds an equal place,
And may God bless our nation."
Hawaii welcomes Mr. and Mrs. Sears

In January, the Bahá'í community of Hawaii welcomed a visit by the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears and his wife, Marguerite. They came to meet with the friends and to consult with the Board of Counsellors for Australasia which convened for one of its regular meetings January 14-20 on Kauai, an island neighboring Honolulu.

On January 15, Mr. Sears spoke to a large gathering of Bahá'ís on Kauai, encouraging them to "strive for the victories" that can be theirs.

Later that same day, he met for two hours with the National Spiritual Assembly to discuss collaboration on the publication of his two latest books, *Tokoloshe* and *The Half-Inch Prophecy*.

That evening, Mr. Sears conferred with the Counsellors, the National Assembly, and the four Auxiliary Board members for the area. In a cable to the Universal House of Justice, the National Assembly called the meeting a significant step toward the growing spirit of unity between the senior institutions of the Faith.

Mr. Sears also spoke twice to the friends in Honolulu: on January 23 and at a public meeting on January 30 which drew more than 140 people to the National Haziratu'l-Quds.

Mrs. Sears gave a fireside on January 22 for more than 50 Bahá'ís and their guests.

United Kingdom

Dr. A.P. Flint, chairman of Flint and Neill Partnership in London, recently received a special award from the Institution of Structural Engineers for the firm's work on the Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi, India.

The award was given for realization of the architect's concept, which suffered only minor changes, producing a building that emulates the beauty of a flower and is striking in its visual impact.

Two Bahá'ís attended the Gold Medal Special Awards Dinner at which Dr. Flint was honored.

In accepting the award, he said that it is not often that engineers are able to take part in a project that is "dedicated to the Glory of God."

He said further that his firm was privileged to have made a contribution to the beautiful building and to have been able to conform closely to the inspired vision of its architect, Fariburz Sahba.

The Bahá'í community of Chelmsford, England, received an invitation from Amnesty International for an Iranian refugee who had recently moved to the town to speak at its annual meeting.

About 25 members of AI heard a moving account of the believer's experiences as a prisoner and about the many difficulties and persecutions the Bahá'ís in Iran must endure.

Some 20 copies of "The Promise of World Peace" were given out, and Amnesty International offered its help and support to the Bahá'ís in Iran.

Swaziland

Four hundred-fifty Bahá'ís from 31 countries attended an international Bahá'í Summer School held last December 19-24 in Swaziland.

They were addressed at the opening session by the Minister of the Interior, representing the Prime Minister, who commended the Faith.
Italy

Last January, a 45-minute program in an Italian television series on "Men and Prophets" was devoted entirely to the Faith.

The introduction, by Prof. Sergio Noia, a lecturer in languages and literature at the Catholic University of Milan, was accurate and impartial.

He described the independent nature of the Faith, explained its clear distinction from Islam, and showed that religious fanaticism has been the cause of the persecution of the Faith from the time of the Babis to the present.

Giovanni Fava, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Italy, was interviewed on the spiritual, social and organizational aspects of the Faith.

Students ranging in age from 3-12 years in a Bahá'í children's class in Milan, Italy, recently raised money to "adopt" a child in Haiti by paying his tuition for a year at the Anis Zunuzi Bahá'í School in Lilavois.

The funds came from the sale of useful and decorative items made by the children and sold to the community.

Greece

Bahá'í youth in Greece report that they were "overjoyed" by the arrival of youth from Cyprus, Italy and the United States at their Youth Winter School last December 24-27 in Loutraki.

The school embodied at least two "firsts" for Greece: the first participation of youth from other parts of Europe, and the first time that the school has been held at a non-Bahá'í site.

Brazil

Proposals were made last fall by the National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil to the Constitutional Assembly that is drafting a new Brazilian Constitution.

In a document entitled "The Bahá'ís and the Constitutional Assembly," submitted to the Senators and deputies comprising the drafting group, the National Assembly set forth recommendations based on Bahá'í principles on topics including human rights, education, international relations, the rights of women and indigenous peoples, and more.

To date, 46 Senators and deputies have written favorable and substantive responses to the Bahá'í proposals.

Bahá'ís in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, have appeared regularly for several months each Thursday morning on a program called "Our Land, Our People" on the National Radio Station. Several enrollments have resulted from the program of music, commentary and music.

Ecuador

Pictured is one of the dance groups which took part last June 5 in a Children's Festival sponsored by Radio Bahá'í in Otavalo, Ecuador. The annual event, called 'Guaguamanta Guaguarac,' a Quechua phrase meaning 'by the children and for the children,' is presented by Radio Bahá'í to promote the talents of rural children and foster an appreciation of their culture. Last year's festival involved 17 schools and 3,000 spectators in an eight-hour program of music, dance, poetry and drama.

Haiti

Last October 3, a young couple was united in marriage in a moving and spiritual ceremony at the Anis Zunuzi Bahá'í School in Haiti.

On the afternoon of the same day, family members and friends filled a nearby church for a Christian ceremony. An inscription on the church reads "The Glory of God."

Singapore

A Bahá'í singing group from Malaysia arrived last December 8 in Singapore to take part for five days in a street teaching campaign.

Singaporean youth and Malaysian helpers, organized into four or five teams, contacted about 200 people through street teaching.

A total of 40 seekers attended four musical firesides given by the Malaysian singers. Impressed by the presentation of the Bahá'í message, many of the inquirers stayed far into the night to talk to their hosts.

The National Teaching Committee of Singapore says that the spirit of sacrifice, devotion and single-mindedness and the attitude, dress and conduct of the young Malaysian Bahá'ís left a positive, deep and lasting impression on the Singaporean youth and community.
India

On January 4, a 15-minute telecast in India featured the Bahá’í House of Worship in New Delhi, calling it “the architectural marvel of the 20th century.”

Since that time a record number of visitors has been received, with a record-breaking 50,000 in a single day on January 26. In only one hour, between 4:30 and 5:30 p.m., some 25,000 visitors were welcomed.

On February 7, the National Assembly’s Nineteen Day Feast letter reported the event: “... every avenue leading up to the central auditorium was packed with excited, colorful crowds coming to see ‘New Delhi’s equivalent of a dream in marble,’ as described by the Evening News, a Delhi daily. The visitors were interested not only in seeing the Temple, but also wanted to know who are the Bahá’ís and what are the teachings of the Bahá’í Faith. This type of proclamation the Temple at Bahápour is doing is something whose scale the Bahá’ís... never imagined.”

On January 30, a delegation of Bahá’ís was received by Dr. S.D. Sharma, the vice-president of India.

The group was composed of Counsellor Zena Sorabjee; R.N. Shah, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of India; Dr. T.K. Vajdi, Jagdish Gandhi and Mr. S. Olyai.

Papua New Guinea

The Bahá’í Women’s Committee of Papua New Guinea hosted a seminar on ‘Health Care for Our Children’ January 31 at Rabaul International Primary School. The invited speakers were Rita Kinakap, Sister in charge of the Rabaul Town Clinic; Dr. Jalal Mills, a dentist; Diane Quilty, a provincial nutritionist; and a physician, Dr. Margaret Cass. About 40 people heard the speakers while fathers supervised children’s games.

The largest gathering of Bahá’í youth ever held in Papua New Guinea was held last July 5-8 in Lae. About 70 youth from various parts of the country enjoyed a high-quality program and brought credit to the Faith by their cooperative behavior, punctuality and radiant spirits.

The largest group, from Simbu Province, had prepared choral and dramatic performances. Other young people came from Rabaul, Kimbe and Lae, and there was one youth from Baiyer River in the western highlands.

The Bahá’ís of Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, raised $10,075 for the Arc project in the Holy Land through a special event held last November 28, the Day of the Covenant.

The sum was offered, they said, as a token contribution in loving response to the worldwide appeal by the Universal House of Justice.

They invited the vice-president to the House of Worship in New Delhi and presented him with a selection of Bahá’í literature including “The Dawning Place of the Remembrance of God” (a book about the Temple) and Vol. XVIII of The Bahá’í World.

Sixty-two women attended a deepening institute presented last November at the Malhousi (India) Bahá’í Center by the Bahá’í State Council of Uttar Pradesh.

In describing the event, P.C. Agnihotri, director of Bahá’í tutorial schools for Uttar Pradesh, said, “Very often you ask about miracles in the Bahá’í Faith. This gathering itself was a miracle, where ladies had come outside of their homes to discuss the evils of society and to give their views.”

He called the institute “a unique occasion for enlightening the women of this area,” suggesting that a women’s winter school in the area could help “to activate the other half of India’s strength (its women), who have been imprisoned within four walls for so many centuries.”

In Kerala, a state in southwestern India bordering the Arabian Sea, a teaching campaign among tribal peoples of the Trivandrum District, undertaken by women who were mostly volunteers, has resulted in the enrollment in the Faith of almost the entire population of two tribal villages, according to a telegram from Counsellor S. Nagarathnam.

Hong Kong

Bahá’ís in Hong Kong joined with a dozen like-minded groups last October 24 to stage a Peace Fair at the Island School on Hong Kong Island.

The eight-hour fair attracted 1,000 people with its offerings of music, a video film festival, cooperative games, a magic show, vegetarian food from many countries, and a peace exhibit.

The Bahá’ís gave away balloons with the legend “Peace: Don’t Leave the World Without It,” distributed and sold Bahá’í literature, and were represented in the video festival by the tape on “The Promise of World Peace.”
Canada

A Bahá'í soccer team has been formed in the greater Vancouver area of British Columbia, Canada, as a social and economic development project of the Bahá'í community of New Westminster. All team members but one are Bahá'ís. They plan to join the Greater Vancouver Senior Soccer League to contact people of many cultural backgrounds and introduce them to the Faith.

At the University of Saskatchewan, the local chapter of the Association for Bahá'í Studies co-sponsored an evening seminar last January on "Agriculture—Values, Ethics and Ecology."

Bahá'í agriculture students chose the theme and gave it a spiritual perspective throughout the seminar. Among the participants were a noted university ecologist, a Unitarian minister, and an award-winning Canadian author.

The 200 attending also included many professors, farmers and students along with 12 Bahá'ís.

On the Saskatchewan campus, where many students have embraced the Faith over the years, the seminar was an important advance in establishing the reputation of the Association for Bahá'í Studies.

The Spiritual Assembly of Summerside, Prince Edward Island (population 9,000) is making an effort to deliver the Universal House of Justice's peace statement to every residence in town.

The plan was launched when the mayor of Summerside signed a Bahá'í proclamation designating last September 14 as International Day of Peace. By the end of that month, 1,850 copies of the statement had been delivered, and only four percent were turned down.

The Gol Aidun Mobile Teaching Institute, named in honor of a Canadian Bahá'í who was killed late in 1986, began operations last August in a remote area of northern Alberta province, where the native people have shown an exceptional degree of receptivity to the Faith.

Combined teaching and deepening aspects of the campaign, it is hoped, will bring a speedy development of the Faith to that area.

Panama

The Bahá'í radio station in Boca del Monte, Chiriqui Province, Panama, which has been on the air since January 29, 1987, working with the Guaymi Cultural Center at Boca de Soloy whose activities promote the education, culture, health and agriculture of the Guaymi people, Bahá'ís and others.
Spain

Pictured are members of the local Spiritual Assembly formed recently in Loja, Spain, the majority of whose members are Roma. This is the second such local Assembly formed among the Romani people of Spain.

Iceland

Iceland’s endowment property at Skogar in the northwestern area of the country is the object of a reforestation project begun by the original owner and presently carried on by the Bahá’í community.

The property is the birthplace of a renowned Icelandic poet, Matthias Jochumsson, whose nephew donated it to the Faith, asking that the Bahá’ís continue Mr. Jochumsson’s plans to transform the land into a forest.

Part of the Skogar area is important in the history of Iceland, having been mentioned in one of the famous Icelandic sagas, and it is rich in natural beauty. Through their efforts to preserve it, Bahá’ís are earning the respect of area residents and reforestation authorities.

Guyana

The first national conference for assistants to the Auxiliary Board in Guyana was held last January 8-10 near Georgetown.

Group discussion, which focused on the special tasks of assistants during the Six Year Plan, was facilitated by Counsellor Peter McLaren and six members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Guyana.

New Zealand

More than 500 Bahá’ís gathered last October on the Ratana Pa south of Wanganui, New Zealand, for a National Teaching Conference.

Those present represented more than 15 nationalities including Maori, Tongan, Samoan, Persian, Pakeha and Peruvian along with some friends from other Pacific Island groups including Tuvalu, the Cook Islands, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands and the Philippines.

The special guest speaker, Counsellor Maka from Tonga, was an inspiration to everyone.

Also attending were three members of the National Spiritual Assembly of New Zealand, two Auxiliary Board members, and the members of the National Teaching Committee.

The major topic of consultation was the Six Year Plan goal of “Unity in Diversity.”

Mariana Islands

Members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Mariana Islands are pictured during a meeting with Joseph F. Ada, the governor of the Territory of Guam (fourth from left) at which he was given a copy of ‘The Promise of World Peace’ and a calligraphic rendition of a selection from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh on ‘trustworthiness’, a major theme of his administration.

Pictured with the governor are (left to right) Wesley Daniels, Patricia Daniels, Annabelle Aguon, Anna Jen Smithwick and Thomas Smithwick.

A letter from the Superintendent of Education of the Northern Mariana Islands to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Mariana Islands, dated September 10, 1987, granted permission for Bahá’í children of Saipan, Tinian and Rota to be absent from school on six Bahá’í Holy Days falling within the school calendar year.
Trinidad/Tobago

The National Teaching Committee of Trinidad and Tobago recently won its goal of enrolling a number of new believers greater than the number lost as martyrs in Iran.

Two hundred-fifty people entered the Faith in a 60-day period as believers from all areas of the country rushed to the teaching field to support the National Teaching Committee’s plan.

Thirty-seven Baha’is (including four youth and three children) were in the field on one or more occasions, while most of the Teaching Committee members took part in all the activities.

The friends visited 40 localities, mainly visiting Bahá’ís in their homes, deepening them and their children, and teaching nearby relatives and friends. Apart from such visits, 14 deepenings were held with from five to 55 people present. During these deepenings, the new believers contributed spontaneously to the Fund.

Three traveling teachers came to help with the campaign: from Barbados, Malaysia and the United Kingdom. The entire campaign was self-supporting; no monies from the National Teaching Committee’s budget were expended.

Thirty new Bahá’ís were enrolled during a weekend meeting in Tobago last December 11-14 of the National Teaching Committee of Trinidad and Tobago.

The meeting was part of a teaching-deepening campaign adopted by the National Teaching Committee to visit on a weekly basis the various Area Teaching Committees.

A story headed “Senator lauds work by Bahá’í members” appeared in last December 7’s issue of the Trinidad Express.

The article resulted from remarks made at a dinner given by the National Spiritual Assembly in honor of Sen. Sahadeo Basdeo of Trinidad and Mrs. Basdeo, who had recently visited the House of Worship in India. Dr. Basdeo enthusiastically conveyed his impressions of that visit to more than 200 Bahá’ís and their guests.

The newspaper report stated that Dr. Basdeo had praised the Bahá’ís for their contribution to international peace and human understanding, and congratulated the National Assembly for extending that contribution to Trinidad.

In Trinidad and Tobago, he said, the Bahá’í influence has helped to strengthen and enrich the spiritual fabric of the nation, with its already diverse religious and ethnic character.

Cook Islands

In February, two special events in Rarotonga brought distinction to the Bahá’í community of the Cook Islands.

On February 12, a youth conference was visited by former Cook Islands Prime Minister Sr. Thomas Davis and his wife, Lady Pa Ariki Davis, a Bahá’í and member of the Cook Islands nobility.

One week later, a National Teaching Conference began with a youth concert in Constitution Park which was attended by 600 including members of six youth groups.

A highlight of the teaching conference was an address by telephone from the Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone.

Central African Republic

Due to the efforts and support of the Bahá’ís of Batalimo, the Central African Republic now has its first all-Pygmy local Spiritual Assembly.

The accomplishment owes much to the many years of work by Jean-Robert Lalawé, a pioneer from Chad. The Pygmy believers are devoted and know by heart many prayers and passages from the Bahá’í Writings. Two members of the community attended last year’s National Convention.
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To the Bahá’ís of the world
Dearly-loved Friends,

At this resplendent, festive season, we greet you all in a spirit of renewed hope.

A silver lining to the dark picture which has overshadowed most of this century now brightens the horizon. It is discernible in the new tendencies impelling the social processes at work throughout the world, in the evidences of an accelerated trend toward peace. In the Faith of God, it is the growing strength of the Order of Bahá’u’lláh as its banner rises to more stately heights. It is a strength that attracts.

The media are giving increasing attention to the Bahá’í world community; authors are acknowledging its existence in a growing number of articles, books and reference works, one of the most highly respected of which recently listed the Faith as the most widely spread religion after Christianity.

A remarkable display of interest in this community by governments, civil authorities, prominent personalities and humanitarian organizations is increasingly apparent. Not only are the community’s laws and principles, organization and way of life being investigated, but its advice and active help are also being sought for the alleviation of social problems and the carrying out of humanitarian activities.

A thrilling consequence of these favorably conjoined developments is the emergence of a new paradigm of opportunity for further growth and consolidation of our worldwide community. New prospects for teaching the Cause at all levels of society have unfolded. These are confirmed in the early results flowing from the new teaching initiatives being fostered in a number of places as more and more national communities witness the beginnings of that entry by troops promised by the beloved Master and which Shoghi Effendi said would lead on to mass conversion. The immediate possibilities presented by this providential situation compel us to expect that an expansion of the Community of the Most Great Name, such as has not yet been experienced, is, indeed, at hand.

The spark which ignited the mounting interest in the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh was the heroic fortitude and patience of the beloved friends in Iran, which moved the Bahá’í world community to conduct a persistent, carefully orchestrated program of appeal to the conscience of the world. This vast undertaking, involving the entire community acting unitedly through its Administrative Order, was accompanied by equally vigorous and visible activities of that community in other spheres which have been detailed separately. Nonetheless, we are impelled to mention that an important outcome of this extensive exertion is our recognition of a new stage in the external affairs of the Cause, characterized by a marked maturation of National Spiritual Assemblies in their growing relations with governmental and non-governmental organizations and with the public in general.

This recognition prompted a meeting in Germany last November of national Bahá’í external affairs representatives from Europe and North America, together with senior representatives of the Offices of the Bahá’í International Community, intent on effecting greater coordination of their work. This was a preliminary step toward the gathering of more and more National Spiritual Assemblies into a harmoniously functioning, international network capable of executing global undertakings in this rapidly expanding field. Related to these developments was the significant achievement of international recognition accorded the Faith through its formal acceptance last October into membership of the Network on Conservation and Religion of the renowned World Wide Fund for Nature.

At one of the darkest periods in the prolonged oppression of the dearly-loved, resolutely steadfast friends in Iran,
Shoghi Effendi was moved to comfort them in a letter of astounding insight. "It is the shedding of the sacred blood of the martyrs in Persia," he wrote, "which, in this shining era, this resplendent, this gem-studded Bahá'í age, shall change the face of the earth into high heaven and, as revealed in the Tablets, raise up the tabernacle of the oneness of mankind in the very heart of the world, reveal to men's eyes the reality of the unity of the human race, establish the Most Great Peace, make of this lower realm a mirror for the Abhá Paradise, and establish beyond any doubt before all the peoples of the world the truth of the verse: '...the day when the Earth shall be changed into another Earth.'" Reflections like these, in adding such wondrous future consequences from the horrific suffering to which our Iranian friends are subjected, illuminate the opportunity and the challenge facing us all at this crucial moment in the fortunes of the Cause.

The great projects already launched must be pursued to their completion. The terraces below and above the Shrine of the Báb and the Arc on Mount Carmel must be completed, fulfilling the glorious vision of the efflorescence of God's holy mountain; the second World Congress must be held in the City of the Covenant to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the inauguration of that Covenant; the steadily advancing work on the translation and annotation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Most Holy Book, must be brought to publication; the interest shown by the friends in the Law of Huquíqu'lláh must be cultivated; the pioneers and traveling teachers must go forth; the expenses of the Cause must be met; all objectives of the Six Year Plan must be achieved.

But the paramount purpose of all Bahá'í activity is teaching. All that has been done or will be done revolves around this central activity, the "head corner-stone of the foundation itself," to which all progress in the Cause is due. The present challenge calls for teaching on a scale and of a quality, a variety, and intensity outstripping all current efforts. The time is now, lest opportunity be lost in the swiftly changing moods of a frenetic world. Let it not be imagined that expedience is the essential motive arousing this sense of urgency. There is an overarching reason: it is the pitiful plight of masses of humanity, suffering and in turmoil, hungering after righteousness but "bereft of discernment to see God with their own eyes, or hear His Melody with their own ears." They must be fed. Vision must be restored where hope is lost, confidence built where doubt and confusion are rife. In these and other respects, "The Promise of World Peace" is designed to open the way. Its delivery to national and governmental leaders having been virtually completed, its contents must now be conveyed, by all possible means, to peoples everywhere from all walks of life. This is a necessary part of the teaching work in our time and must be pursued with unabated vigor.

Teaching is the food of the spirit; it brings life to unawakened souls and raises the new heaven and the new earth; it uplifts the banner of a unified world; in the victory of the Covenant: and brings those who give their lives to it the supernatural happiness of attainment to the good pleasure of their Lord.

Every individual believer—man, woman, youth and child—is summoned to this field of action; for it is on the initiative, the resolute will of the individual to teach and to serve, that the success of the entire community depends. Well-grounded in the mighty Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, sustained by daily prayer and reading of the Holy Word, strengthened by a continual striving to obtain a deeper understanding of the divine Teachings, illumined by a constant endeavor to relate these Teachings to current issues, nourished by observance of the laws and principles of His wondrous World Order, every individual can attain increasing measures of success in teaching. In sum, the ultimate triumph of the Cause is assured by that "one thing and only one thing" so poignantly emphasized by Shoghi Effendi, namely, "the extent to which our own inner life and private character mirror forth in their manifold aspects the splendor of those eternal principles proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh."

Beloved friends—you who are addressed by the Best Beloved, the Blessed Beauty, as "the solace of the eye of creation," as "the soft-flowing waters upon which must depend the very life of all men"—we urge you, with all earnestness from the utter depths of our conviction as to the ripeness of the time, to lay aside your every minor concern and direct your energies to teaching His Cause—to proclaiming, expanding and consolidating it. You can approach your task in full confidence that this clear field of progress outstretched before you derives from the operation of that "God-born Force" which "vibrates within the innermost being of all created things" and which, "acting even as a two-edged sword, is, under our very eyes, sundering, on the one hand, the age-old ties which for centuries have held together the fabric of civilized society, and is unloosening, on the other, the bonds that still fetter the infant and as yet uncarnated Faith of Bahá'u'lláh."

Have no fear or doubts. The power of the Covenant will assist you and invigorate you and remove every obstacle from your path. "He verily will aid everyone that aideth Him, and will remember everyone that remembereth Him."

You have our abiding assurance of ardent and constant prayers for you all.

_The Universal House of Justice_  
Ridván 1988
The sixth Bahá'í International Convention was held April 29-May 2 at the Bahá'í World Centre on the slopes of Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel, and at the Haifa Auditorium. On these pages are photographs that we hope have captured some of the atmosphere and flavor of that historic event at which members of 132 National Spiritual Assemblies gathered to consult together and to elect the Universal House of Justice. Above: Delegates walk down the main path at Bahji to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. Right: A delegate from Korea is flanked by two delegates from Swaziland, all of them attired in colorful costumes that reflect their national heritage.
Left: Delegates to the sixth International Convention gaze upward in awe and wonder before entering the magnificent Seat of the Universal House of Justice. Above: Two beautifully costumed delegates are captured by the camera with the Seat of the Universal House of Justice in the background. They are Liv Vitol (left) of Norway and Jone Waqavesi of Fiji. Below: A delegate from Bolivia, Eusebio Marca Fily, rises to make a point during consultation at one of the Convention's plenary sessions.
The Six Year Plan: a statistical update

WORLD CENTRE GOALS

Publication of a copiously annotated English translation of the Kitdb-i-Aqdas and related texts

• A little more than one-third of the Kitdb-i-Aqdas was translated by the Guardian. Two-thirds of the remaining Text has been translated and the newly translated portions await final approval. Supplementary texts, such as its "Questions and Answers," are being assembled for translation and initial steps have been taken for the preparation of annotations.

Education of the Bahá’í world in the Law of Huququlláh

• Consultations on the Huqququlláh, attended by the Trustee, the Hand of the Cause ‘Ali Muhammad Varqa, and his deputies were held in the Holy Land. Eighteen deputy Trustees and 77 Representatives spread over the entire world have now been appointed or confirmed to assist the Trustee.
• Compilations, a codification and a brief history of the institution of the Huqququlláh have been sent to the National Spiritual Assemblies and have been translated, published and widely distributed.
• The spontaneous response of a growing number of believers, including many westerners, has swelled by 150 percent the Huqququlláh payments received from 88 countries.

Pursuit of plans for the projects on Mount Carmel

• Mr. Fariburz Sahbá has been appointed Project Manager to execute the designs of Mr. Husayn Amánat for the remaining buildings on the Arc. He has also been commissioned to design the terraces below and above the Shrine of the Báb.
• Toward the realization of these projects contributions for a reserve of $50 million have been called for, with an additional $20 million to $25 million during each of the succeeding 10 years for these and other activities at the Bahá’í World Centre.

Broadening the base of the international relations of the Faith

• The Office of Public Information now has liaison offices in London and Paris.
• The Bahá’í Faith became the sixth world religion to join the Network on Conservation and Religion of the World Wide Fund for Nature.
• The Bahá’í International Community’s United Nations Office and its branches have further extended the range of their influence through close collaboration with the United Nations departments and agencies, and with the conference of Non-Governmental Organizations. Areas of mutual interest and action included women, youth, family life, health, food and agriculture, education, the environment and human settlements, narcotics and drug abuse, and human rights.
• The United Nations Office of the Bahá’í International Community co-ordinated the actions of National Spiritual Assemblies in requesting, on behalf of the persecuted Bahá’ís in Iran, that positive action be taken by their governments, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, and the United Nations General Assembly. Similar actions were taken in relation to the European Parliament.

WORLD-WIDE GOALS

Carrying the healing Message of Bahá’u’lláh to the generality of mankind

• Some 20 National Spiritual Assemblies have experienced large-scale enrollments during the past two years.
• A number of National Assemblies have identified minority populations for special teaching efforts. A four-day conference on Chinese teaching was held in Hong Kong, under the auspices of the International Chinese Teaching Committee; an international conference was held in Germany to discuss European teaching; and Romani teaching was the topic of a conference held in Spain.
• Of the 429 specific international pioneer needs named by the Universal House of Justice for the two-year period 1987-89, a total of 131 have been met. Another 918 Bahá’ís have settled in posts not specified as goals of the Plan.
• The use of music and drama for teaching is being widely adopted, with many National Assemblies reporting enthusiastic responses from Bahá’ís and non-Bahá’ís alike. Many notable individual and community efforts were recorded.
• The following table provides data on the present size of the Bahá’í world community:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>Americas</th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>Australasia</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Localities</td>
<td>37,234</td>
<td>27,067</td>
<td>41,882</td>
<td>2,866</td>
<td>3,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Assemblies</td>
<td>5,967</td>
<td>5,594</td>
<td>6,490</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with 9 or more adults</td>
<td>5,145</td>
<td>3,172</td>
<td>19,678</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fewer than 9 adults</td>
<td>12,544</td>
<td>9,592</td>
<td>8,292</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>1,211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolated Centers</td>
<td>13,578</td>
<td>8,709</td>
<td>7,422</td>
<td>874</td>
<td>1,130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A numerical decrease of 6,100 localities and 11,000 local Spiritual Assemblies occurred in India alone due to the revised civil areas of jurisdiction; similar changes took place in other countries.

6 June 1988/Bahá’í News
Six Year Plan update

Greater involvement of the Faith in the life of human society

- Following the global distribution of the peace statement to heads of state and government officials, the peace issue has remained the single most effective bridge between the Bahá'í community and the people and organizations involved in development, ecology, family life, equality of the sexes, relief of famine, inter-religious cooperation, justice, eradication of racism, and promotion of the rights of indigenous people. Bahá'ís around the world organized conferences, exhibits, expositions, festivals and public meetings on peace during which the Teachings were shared with people from widely diverse backgrounds.


- The 1988 Encyclopedia Britannica Book of the Year reported the Faith as having “a significant following in more sovereign and non-sovereign countries than any listing other than Christianity.”

- The Bahá'í International Community and the National Assemblies of Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Kenya and Lesotho were among some 300 organizations designated as “Peace Messengers” by the United Nations for their “significant contribution to the program and objectives of the International Year of Peace.”

- The Universal House of Justice convened a meeting in Germany of national external affairs representatives from 17 countries in Europe and North America, along with senior staff members of the Bahá'í International Community offices in New York City and Geneva, to confer on the extension of the range of their activities in government and public relations.

- Many National Assemblies trained individuals to work as public relations representatives while others held conferences and workshops on the effective use of the media. The International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Centre and its Amoz Gibson Centre for media training conducted far-flung and recurrent media educational efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean.

- After discussion of various Bahá'í principles with the President of the Constituent Assembly in Haiti, the Bahá'ís presented their ideas for a new National Constitution to the Assembly. Similarly, in Brazil 18 of 20 specific propositions for a new Constitution suggested by the Bahá'ís to the government were given first legislative approval. In New Zealand, the Bahá'ís submitted to the Royal Commission on Social Policy recommendations for 11 points of social principle and action. The Bahá'ís of Nigeria submitted a proposal to the government in response to a public request from the President for suggestions on the functions of the civilian government which is to return to power in 1990.

- In Jamaica, the Faith was accepted by the Caribbean Examination Council for inclusion in the secondary education curriculum. A series of lectures on the Faith, developed in Fiji and conducted at the University of the South Pacific, now forms part of the university's extension services throughout the region. In Finland, a course of study for the Faith was accepted by the Central Board of Schools. A number of other National Assemblies are persevering in efforts to have the Faith included in the religious education curricula of secondary schools. There is one university course about the Faith offered in Thailand, and another at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, which is taught by an eminent non-Bahá'í scholar.

- More than 60 conferences were held throughout the world concerning a variety of issues related to implementation of the equality of the sexes.

A worldwide increase in the translation, production, distribution and use of Bahá'í literature

- New translations of the Sacred Text have been made in one Native American and three African languages, bringing the total in which there is Bahá'í literature to 802: 266 in Africa; 172 in the Americas; 174 in Asia; 110 in the Pacific Islands; and 80 in Europe. Many communities have printed new prayer books, some for children. The “Words of God” booklet was published in seven additional languages, for a total of 63 languages in which the booklet is available.

- There has been a substantial world-wide increase in the production of expositional literature by institutional and independent Bahá'í publishers. Peace and themes related to the peace statement have been dominant topics of Bahá'í publishing during this period.

- Under the aegis of the Universal House of Justice, an international publishing conference took place in Argentina on the subject of Spanish-language publications, and a second was held by the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom for publications in English.

- A large number of well-printed, well-bound and attractively presented items of Bahá'í children's literature, journals and other educational materials, mainly aimed at younger children, were produced in many languages.

Acceleration in the process of the maturation of local and national Bahá'í communities

- Reports on community consolidation indicate a continuing need to focus on this vital element. Most National Spiritual Assemblies have developed teaching plans designed not only to increase the number of believers but also to consolidate the home communities, to assist lapsed Assemblies, and to reach and stimulate isolated believers. The following table presents statistics on local Spiritual Assembly activity:
Consultation was the topic of study at institutes and summer schools in a large number of countries, and by many local communities, in preparation for sharing this vital method of problem-solving with the peoples of the world.

To improve the functioning and efficiency of their national offices, a number of National Assemblies formed committees, engaged the services of individual believers, or introduced computer technology to assist the National Secretary and/or the Treasurer. An electronic mail network among National Spiritual Assemblies with the Bahá'í World Centre has begun and is in an early stage of development.

Twelve National Assemblies conducted institutes for the members of local Spiritual Assemblies or their officers, while others distributed compilations or sent traveling teachers to educate local believers about the administration.

With the incorporation of the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Marshall Islands and St. Lucia, there are now 115 incorporated National Spiritual Assemblies.

Legal recognition came in a variety of ways, such as the registration of the National Assembly of Singapore as a charity under the Charities Act of 1982, the registration of Bahá'í schools by the governments in Fiji, Macau, Papua New Guinea and Sierra Leone, and the inclusion of the Faith on the Seychelles government's national census forms.

With the addition of Malawi and Guyana, the number of countries where Bahá'í marriage is recognized reached 56.

Well-planned and organized summer and winter schools have been conducted by most National Assemblies, with increased attendance.

A total of 114 National Assemblies have attained financial self-sufficiency and are meeting their own administrative expenses: 33 in Africa; 31 in the Americas; 22 in Asia; 8 in Australasia; and 20 in Europe.

Thus far in the Plan, 133 properties have been acquired in 60 countries. The numerical growth of the Bahá'í communities, the emergence of the Faith into public and media attention, and the use of properties for purposes such as social and economic development activities have in some cases necessitated the enlargement and improvement of present structures or the acquisition of new ones.

National Assemblies, with the help of property committees or property managers, are devoting much-needed attention to maintenance, conservation, insurance and security of their holdings.

Greater attention to universal participation and the spiritual enrichment of individual believers

The major themes of spiritual education and individual deepening in most national communities were the Bahá'í laws, the Covenant, the Fund, and the Huququ'lláh.

Fifteen Associations for Bahá'í Studies, primary promoters of Bahá'í scholarship and contact with academia, have now been formed. Various special interest groups have been developed in such fields as agriculture, the arts, consultation and conflict resolution, education, the environment, health, marriage and family life, science and technology, and women's issues.

A wider extension of Bahá'í education to children and youth, and the strengthening of Bahá'í family life

In addition to the large number of National Spiritual Assemblies which have long been involved in the Bahá'í education of children, 25 National Assemblies have reported the initiation of regular children's classes. Institutes for teachers of Bahá'í children's classes were conducted by at least 20 National Assemblies, while 14 others reported that they are developing their own lesson plans.

Summer schools, institutes, conferences and other activities organized for youth have continued at a high level. In addition, reports indicate an increase in the number of youth offering a year or more of voluntary service.

Initiatives undertaken to consolidate Bahá'í families include marriage and family life institutes, regular publications for children and parents, audio-visual productions, and summer school programs.

The pursuit of projects of social and economic development in well-established Bahá'í communities

The following table provides a current summary of Bahá'í development programs:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>Americas</th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>Australasia</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Forestry</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Schools</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial Schools</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Schools</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Projects</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Projects</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Social Services</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Stations</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>6*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td>336</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1,482</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The sixth radio station in the Americas was inaugurated in Temuco, Chile, in November 1986; the first radio station in Africa began broadcasting in Monrovia, Liberia, in March 1987.

- Currently, 95 National Spiritual Assemblies are involved in social and economic development efforts. The vast majority of these are small-scale local initiatives which need and receive little or no external support. Since Rîdvan 1986, the number of development projects world-wide has increased by 44 percent, to 1,482.
- More than half of the Bahá'í development projects in the world are in the area of education. Of these, 70 percent are pre-schools or primary schools. The Maxwell International School, a secondary school in Canada, will open in September. Two new ventures into higher education were launched: a preparatory organization for a College of Human Services in India, and the Louhelen Residential College in the United States.

**Chile**

More than 120 Bahá'ís and their guests gathered at Piedra Azul, about 15 km. (9 miles) from the port city of Puerto Montt in Chile's 10th region, for the annual Southern Summer School. Classes were coordinated by the National Bahá'í Life Development Committee, while the physical facilities were arranged for and obtained by the Spiritual Assembly of Puerto Montt.
Some thoughts on Huqúqu’lláh

One of the exalted attributes of the Manifestation of God, distinguishing Him from the whole of the human race, is His utter detachment from the things of this world. Bahá'u'lláh had no regard whatsoever for the possession of material things. He has clearly stated in His Writings that this material world has no worth in His sight. In several Tablets He states that if this world had any value, He would have been occupying its highest thrones. In a Tablet revealed in 'Akka, He states that the One Who created this world has renounced it. For if it had any value He would not have allowed Himself to live in the most desolate of cities.

In another Tablet revealed in the Holy Land, He affirms that if His aim were to acquire earthly things, He could have taken possession of all that is on earth and no one could have questioned His authority to do so. He further states in the same Tablet that whenever He had accepted a gift from a believer, the basic reason had been to bestow His bounties and favors upon him. The mere acceptance of a gift endowed the soul of the individual with eternal blessings.

The believers sometimes sent articles such as carpets, clothing and similar items to Bahá'u'lláh, but He seldom used them for Himself. He usually gave all gifts away. One person who coveted them was His amanuensis, Mirzá Aqá Ján. Knowing that Bahá'u'lláh had no interest in keeping the believers' offerings for Himself, He longed to possess these gifts and Bahá'u'lláh sometimes gave them to him. Mirzá Aqá Ján did not realize that this was his test and the cause of his downfall. To be in close contact with Bahá'u'lláh, to serve Him day and night and to abide within such a sacred realm, required utter detachment from all earthly things. The desire for material benefits while serving in His holy presence was fatal.

God always tests man. The higher he is in the field of service, the greater are his tests. Mirzá Aqá Ján acted as a servant to Bahá'u'lláh and was the individual who was closest to Him. He was a materialistic and corrupt being who fell from grace during the latter part of Bahá'u'lláh's life, later violated His covenant and perished spiritually.

When Bahá'u'lláh was in Adrianople a certain believer from Káshán by the name of Muhammad-Báqír presented Him with a small silk carpet. He wrote a Tablet, thanked him for the gift and showered His bounties upon him. He told him that He had accepted the gift, but was now returning it to him as a favor on His part. He stated that He preferred to sit on the ground in that remote Prison (Adrianople) than to sit on a silk carpet. This is a typical example of how Bahá'u'lláh would respond to gifts presented to Him.

One of the believers, a certain Mirzá Muhammad-Qulí, presented Bahá'u'lláh with an overcoat. In a Tablet, Bahá'u'lláh informed him that He had worn the coat for one day as a bounty on His part.

There is an interesting story about another of the believers, Mirzá Ja'far, in the early days of the Faith in Yazd. Hájí Muhammad-Tahir-i-Malmiri has recorded this in his memoirs:

Aqá Mirzá Ja'far was an erudite divine of Isláม. In his youth, he taught at a theological school. . . He left the school altogether when he embraced the Cause and became a very steadfast believer. In those days, the Ancient Beauty was in Baghíddá. Knowing that He was living an austere life in that city, Mirzá Ja'far wished to provide some funds for the relief of His blessed Person. In the end he came up with a plan. There were many vases and other ornaments made of copper in the mosques of Yazd. He used to go to a mosque at night, climb to the upper chambers, dismantle the ornamental copper vessels which were hanging from the ceiling, and take them home. Little by little he stole similar vessels from several mosques. In the end he gathered nearly half a ton of these copper items. . . He then transported them to Ardikán (about 100 miles from Yazd) to the home of a certain Ustáb Kázím, an ironmonger. There he cut the copper articles to pieces and eventually succeeded in selling the metal for 70 tanmans (a large sum of money in those days) in silver coins. He placed the silver inside a specially made leather cummerbund, tied it around his waist and set off on his journey on foot to Baghíddá where he attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh and presented the money to Him. The Blessed Beauty accepted the money from him, and bestowed upon him His blessings and fa-
vors. But He ordered him to accompany Mirzâ Ağá Jân, Khádímulláh (the Servant of God), to the banks of the river and throw the money into its waters. Mirzâ Ja’far became a servant of the household, and was among those companions who accompanied Bahá’u’lláh to Istanbul.

 Hájí Muhammad ‘Alíy-i-Afnán, a cousin of the Báb, had sent a length of white flannel to ‘Aká. According to a Tablet written in the handwriting of Mirzâ Ağá Jân, Bahá’u’lláh graciously accepted the gift from him and although since His departure from Baghdád He was in the habit of wearing coats made only of black flannel, He ordered a white one to be made as a token of His grace and favors toward the Afnán.

According to Hájí Muhammad-mud-Táhir, Bahá’u’lláh would usually wear a long woolen upper garment and a woolen cloak; and in the summer, cotton garments.

These stories reveal His magnanimity and utter detachment from the things of this world. Sometimes Bahá’u’lláh ordered simple gifts to be sent to certain people. For instance, on one occasion Mirzâ Ağá Jân wrote on the instructions of Bahá’u’lláh to the same Hájí Muhammad-‘Alíy-i-Afnán, who was living in Hong Kong, asking him to send some china dishes which were intended as a gift for ‘Abdú. On another occasion Mirzâ Ağá Jân was instructed to ask another of the Afnans to send a few pairs of spectacles complete with cases for presentation to some of the authorities. (In those days there were no custom-made spectacles. A type which was commonly worn had a simple magnifying glass as a lens.)

It must be pointed out that the same attitude of detachment from earthly things so permeated the souls of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi, the two successive Centers of the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh, that it was against their nature to turn their affection to the things of this world. They both lived austere lives and followed the example of Bahá’u’lláh. Although they received large contributions from the friends, they authorized their spending strictly for the promotion of the Cause of God and did not have the slightest inclination to spend the funds for their own personal ends. Indeed, similar to Bahá’u’lláh, neither of them had any personal assets, whether monetary or of any other type.

When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá traveled to the West to spread the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh and diffuse the divine fragrances in Europe and America, He had to use some of the funds which the Persian friends had contributed to Hájí Amin as Huququ’lláh. But He observed such care in spending the absolute minimum for Himself that His companions sometimes felt concerned about the lack of comfort which often resulted.

The renowned chronicler of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s journeys to the West, Mirzâ Mahmud-i-Zarqâni, His devoted secretary and companion, has recorded in his diaries (Badáy’u’l-Áthâr) that when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and His party were traveling across the United States, the train journey proved to be tiresome—especially for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Who was nearly 70 years of age. Yet in spite of this, He frequently declined to pay the extra small sum of money for sleeping accommodations on the train. Instead, He would sit up all night on the hard wooden seats and close His eyes to rest. But, as demonstrated on that journey, He opened His purse and generously placed coins of silver and gold in the palms of the poor and needy wherever He found them. How different are the ways of God and man!

It was during those same epoch-making journeys that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá demonstrated a magnanimity and detachment characteristic of God’s chosen ones by declining with graciousness all offers of funds and gifts from friends and strangers.

In his famous diaries Mirzâ Mahmud recounts a story of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá when He was in New York shortly before His departure from the United States:

"...that day some of the friends presented ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with some funds, but He did not take them in spite of their persistently begging Him to accept them. He said: ‘Offer it up to the poor on my behalf. It would be as if I have personally given it to them. But for me the best gift is the unity between the loved ones of God, their service to the Cause, the diffusion of divine fragrances and their carrying out the teachings and exhortations of the Blessed Beauty.’"

On such occasions the believers became very sad, because their offerings were not accepted by their Beloved. In spite of this, the believers in New York, knowing that these were the last few days of His stay in the United States, gathered some presents for the members of the Holy Family (including the wife of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, His sister, daughters and other female members of His household). Some of the friends had vowed together that they would persist in their request for acceptance of the gifts, that they would cling to the hem of His garment and not leave His presence until He had accepted their offerings. They presented their gifts and earnestly pleaded with Him to take them. He then spoke to them in these words:

"I am very grateful for all your services. Truly you have served me, offered hospitality, rendered your services day and night and persevered in the diffusion of divine fragrances. I shall never forget your devoted services, because you had no other motive but to attain the good pleasure of God, and had desired no station other than entry into His Kingdom. Now you have brought some gifts for my family. These gifts are very praiseworthy, but more exquisite than these are the gifts of the love of God which may be preserved within the treasure-house of the hearts. The former gifts are transitory, but the latter are eternal. These gifts are to be kept in boxes and upon the shelves and will eventually perish, but the other will remain eternally in all the worlds of God treasured within the heart. Therefore I carry with me your love to them (i.e., the Holy Family) which is the greatest gift of all. In our house there is no room for diamond rings or other jewelry. That house is devoid of the vanities of this world."

"Now, I accept these gifts, but I entrust them to you to sell them and send the proceeds to Chicago for the construction of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár (Bahá’í House of Worship)."

The friends, with tearful eyes, were disappointed. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said: "I want to take with me a gift from you which may remain till eternity, the jewels which belong to the treasure-house of the heart."

The Law of Huququ’l-láh

The greater part of the donations given to the Cause by the believers was spent at Bahá’u’lláh’s behest in the
promotion of the Faith and the care of the poor and needy of the community. He Himself and the members of His family, however, lived an austere life. There were many occasions when He was in great need, but did not accept financial help from the friends.

In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas (the Most Holy Book), Bahá'u'lláh revealed the law of Huqúqulláh (the Right of God). It concerns those whose possessions reach a certain value. They are hidden by God to pay 19 percent of that value to the Centre of the Cause. In one of His Tablets, revealed in the words of His amanuensis, Bahá'u'lláh states that when the full text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was completed He did not order its release for some time because it contained the law of Huqúq, which has been ordained by God as a sign of His mercy and loving-kindness unto His servants. He explains that the reason for withholding the Book temporarily was His apprehensiveness lest some of the believers might not carry out this commandment or might come to the wrong conclusions. The mere contemplation of this, He says, is unworthy of the Day of God. The very thought that some, in their immaturity, might possibly assume that the Huqúq was intended for Bahá'u'lláh's personal use, must have been extremely painful to Him. The most cursory study of His life and teachings will amply demonstrate that He constantly exhorted His followers to detach themselves from earthly possessions and not to place their affections in the things of this world. In one of His Tablets to Napoleon III, Bahá'u'lláh admonishes the emperor in these words which clearly demonstrate how worthless is this material world in His sight:

Exultest thou over the treasures thou dost possess, knowing they shall perish? Rejoicest thou in that thou rulest over the treasures thou hast amassed? Behold, thou art as the eye of a dead ant?

In another Tablet, Bahá'u'lláh makes a similar statement:

By the righteousness of God! The world, its vanities and its glory, and whatever delights it can offer, are all, in the sight of God, as worthless as, nay even more contemptible than, dust and ashes. Would that the hearts of men could comprehend it. Wash yourselves thoroughly, O people of Bahá, from the defilement of the world, and of all that pertaineth unto it.

The following passages gleaned from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh portray His expectations from His followers:

He is the true servant of God who, in this day, were he to pass through cities of silver and gold, would not deign to look upon them, and whose heart would remain pure and undefiled from whatever things can be seen in this world, be they its goods or its treasures. I swear by the Sun of Truth! The breath of such a man is endowed with potency, and his words with attraction.

By Him Who shineth above the Day-Spring of sanctity! If the whole earth were to be converted into silver and gold, no man who can be said to have truly ascended into the heaven of faith and certitude would deign to regard it, much less to seize and keep it... They who dwell within the Tabernacle of God, and are established upon the seats of everlasting glory, will refuse, even though they be dying of hunger, to stretch their hands, and seize unlawfully the property of their neighbor, however vile and worthless he may be.

The purpose of the one true God in manifesting Himself is to summon all mankind to truthfulness and sincerity, to piety and trustworthiness, to resignation and submission to the will of God, to forbearance and kindness, to uprightness and wisdom. His object is to array every man with the mantle of a saintly character, and to adorn him with the ornament of holy and goodly deeds. Say, he is not to be numbered with the people of Bahá who followed his mundane desires, or fixeth his heart on things of the earth. He is My true follower who, if he come to a valley of pure gold will pass straight through it aloof as a cloud, and will neither turn back, nor pause. Such a man is assuredly of Me. From his garment the Concourse on high can inhale the fragrance of sanctity.

While Bahá'u'lláh was reluctant to send a copy of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas to Persia, some of the believers were requesting that the laws of the Faith be revealed for them. As a result of these requests, Bahá'u'lláh eventually sent a copy, but gave clear instructions that no one was to implement the law of the Huqúq. For about five years after the revelation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas this law was not put into execution. Then, as the Cause began to expand in Persia and neighboring countries, there was a need for funds, and those who were eligible to pay the Huqúq did so with joy and gratitude.

This is the text of the law of Huqúqulláh as revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas:

Should a person acquire one hundred mithqals of gold (each mithqal is equal to 3.641666 grams), nineteen mithqals thereof belong to God, the Creator of earth and heaven. Take heed, O people, lest ye deprive yourselves of this great bounty. We have prescribed this law unto you while We are wholly independent of you and of all that are in the heavens and on the earth. Indeed there lie concealed in this command, mysteries and benefits which are beyond the comprehension of anyone save God, the All-Knowing, the All-Informed. Say, through this injunction God desireth to purify your possessions and enable you to draw nigh unto such stations as none can attain, except those whom God may please. Verily, He is the Generous, the Gracious, the Bountiful.

O people! Act not treacherously in the matter of Huqúqulláh and dispose of it, except by His leave. Thus hath it been ordained in His Epistles as well as in this glorious Tablet.

Whoso dealeth dishonestly with God will in justice be exposed, and whoso fulfilleth the things he hath been commanded, divine blessings will descend upon him from the heaven of the bounty of His Lord, the Bestower, the Bountiful, the Most Generous, the Ancient of Days. Verily He desireth for you the things that are inscrutable to you at present, though the people themselves will readily discover them when their souls take their flight and the trappings
of their earthly gaities are rolled up. Thus warneath you the Author of the Preserved tablet.

It must be noted that in the above passage Bahá'u'lláh has merely set the rate of Huqúq at 19 percent. It is not meant that the minimum amount subject to Huqúq is 100 mithqáls of gold; the minimum amount is the value of 19 mithqáls of gold. Bahá'u'lláh Himself has clarified this point in the following statement:

The minimum amount subject to Huqúqú'lláh is reached when one's possessions are worth the number of Vahid (19); that is, whenever one owns 19 mithqáls of gold, or acquires possessions attaining this value, after having deducted therefrom the yearly expenses, the Huqúq becometh applicable and its payment is obligatory.

As regards its application, Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Faith, has stated through his secretary:

"Regarding the Huqúqú'lláh... this is applied to one's merchandise, property and income. After deducting the necessary expenses, whatever is left as profit, and is an addition to one's capital, such a sum is subject to Huqúq. When one has paid Huqúq once on a particular sum, that sum is no longer subject to Huqúq, unless it should pass from one person to another. One's residence, and the household furnishings are exempt from Huqúq... Huqúqú'lláh is paid to the Centre of the Cause."

Bahá'u'lláh was very anxious that no one should ever feel forced to pay the Huqúq. He instructed Háji Abú'l-Hasan-i'Amin, the Trustee of the Huqúq, and other eminent Bahá'ís not to accept money from anyone unless they were sure that the individual wished to give with the utmost joy and devotion. He also forbade the soliciting of Huqúq by the Trustees. In many of His Tablets, Bahá'u'lláh has made such exhortations. To cite an example, the following is part of a Tablet revealed in honor of His Trustee, Háji Amin:

O Abú'l-Hasan:

May my Glory rest upon thee! Fix thy gaze upon the glory of the Cause. Speak forth that which will attract the hearts and the minds. To demand the Huqúq is in no wise permissible. This command was revealed in the Book of God for various necessary matters ordained by God to be dependent upon material means. Therefore, if someone, with utmost pleasure and gladness, nay with insistence, wishes to partake of this blessing, thou mayest accept. Otherwise, acceptance is not permissible.

The following passage from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh will shed further light on this subject:

For a number of years Huqúq was not accepted. How numerous the offerings that on reaching Our presence were returned to the donors, because they were not needed then. However, in recent years We have, in view of the exigencies of the times, accepted the payment of the Huqúq, but have forbidden solicitation thereof. Everyone must have the utmost regard for the dignity of the Word of God and for the exaltation of His Cause. Were a person to offer all the treasures of the earth at the cost of debasing the honor of the Cause of God, were it even less than a grain of mustard, such an offering would not be permissible. All the world hath belonged and will always belong to God. If one spontaneously offereth Huqúq with the utmost joy and radiance it will be acceptable, and not otherwise. The benefit of such deeds reverteth unto the individuals themselves. This measure hath been ordained in view of the necessity for material means, for "avere is God from putting aught into effect except through its means." Thus instructions were given to receive the Huqúq.

In another of His Tablets, Bahá'u'lláh states that there is no act more reprehensible than to beg for funds in the name of God.

A special responsibility concerning the Huqúqú'lláh was placed upon the Hands of the Cause. As we have already stated, Bahá'u'lláh always insisted that no one should be solicited to pay the Huqúqú'lláh, and even that payment should not be accepted unless the individual was willing to observe the Huqúq with the utmost joy. In His Tablets to the Hands, Bahá'u'lláh often gives the details of the numerous occasions on which He refused to accept donations from individuals as the Faith did not need financial assistance at that time. He urges them to uphold the standards of detachment, dignity and magnanimity which their Lord has always displayed.

In a Tablet to Ibn-i-Asdaq, Bahá'u'lláh describes in the words of His amanuensis how at one time the King of the Martyrs had felt that the means of subsistence for the Holy Family and the believers in the Holy Land were inadequate. He had dispatched therefore Jamál-i-Burjírjí to the province of Khurásán to solicit the friends for the payment of the Huqúq. As soon as the news of this reached the Holy Land, Bahá'u'lláh immediately issued strict instructions to withdraw from this action. The verses that were revealed by Him on that occasion forbidding Jamál to proceed on his mission were charged with supreme authority and might.

On receiving these instructions, Jamál, that egotistical teacher of the Faith (who later became a Covenant-breaker), was hurt. He wrote a letter to Mírzá Áqá Ján, Bahá'u'lláh's amanuensis, and complained that his services had never been accepted by, or were pleasing to, Bahá'u'lláh. He indicated in this letter that a number of believers, all from Jewish background, had donated a certain sum of money with the utmost pleasure. If their contributions were to be refused, they would become disappointed. As a result of his petition Bahá'u'lláh ordered the acceptance of the sum, but at the same time made arrangements for all of it to be used in financing the teaching activities of a few chosen teachers of the Faith in Persia.

In the same Tablet, Mírzá Áqá Ján gives further examples. When a few souls from Fáráín (including Áqá Mir Muhammad Big and his son, Sháh Khalílu'lláh) attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, they presented a sum of money to Him in payment of the Huqúq. He graciously accepted their offering but then returned the full amount to them as a gift. He had done the same to many others, and Mírzá Áqá Ján mentions the names of some of them in this Tablet. He further states that all throughout this period the means of livelihood in the Holy Land had been so inadequate that it had been necessary to borrow money from time to time in order to enable the large number of pilgrims and believers to subsist. This Tablet was revealed a few months before the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh. Mírzá Áqá Ján mentions...
that a sum of money had been donated some time before by an individual be­liever through His Trustee, Hājī Amin, but up to the time of writing Bahá'u'lláh had not accepted it. However, it had not been returned either, because it could become a cause of embarrass­ment.

Another example of the magnanim­ity and detachment from earthly things manifested by Bahá'u'lláh comes to us through one of His Tablets to Mullá 'Ali-Akbar. A devoted servant of the Blessed Beauty, 'Azim-i-Tafrishí, had passed away in the Holy Land, and in his will he had left all his savings to his Lord. But Bahá'u'lláh issued instructions for the money to be sent to 'Azim's heirs in Persia.

The concept that a portion of one's possessions is the right of God and belongs to Him may be appreciated by observing nature and examining certain physical laws. It has already been stated that the laws which exist in the physical world are also present in the spiritual worlds of God, and that religious teachings are the spiritual counterparts of physical laws. For instance, we may observe that the law of Huquq'ulláh finds its parallel in the vegetable kingdom. We observe that the blossoms, the flowers and the fruits do not originate from the tree. They are the hidden properties of the soil. The tree brings out all these potentialities which the earth possesses. The earth is the producer of everything and the entire substance of the tree comes from it. The earth produces the root, the branches, the leaves and the fruits. It also provides all the nourishment for its growth and fruition.

Having established the fact that the tree owes its existence to the creative power of the earth, we note that each year the tree sheds its leaves upon the earth. It gives back to its creator, as a matter of course, a portion of its wealth. The fallen leaves do not benefit the earth. They act as a fertilizer and therefore their benefit reverts to the tree itself. This physical process is similar to the law of Huquq'ulláh, and, as Bahá'u'lláh has stated, "the benefit of such deeds (payment of the Huquq'ulláh) reverteth unto the individuals themselves."

During Bahá'u'lláh's Ministry the law of Huquq was applicable to only a very small number of Bahá'ís. The great majority of the community were poor and not eligible to pay the Huqûq. Often the Trustee of Bahá'u'lláh was unable to fully cover the expenses of the Bahá'í teachers and those in need. Of course, Hājī Amin, the Trustee, was not pleased about this. In one of His Tablets, Bahá'u'lláh makes a sweet and humorous remark about His Trustee. He says: "We must impose a fine upon Jináb-i-Amln! We have one treasurer and he is bankrupt! Gracious God, there is one treasury belonging to God, and that is empty of funds. Indeed, by virtue of its exalted station, such a treasury ought to be freed and sanctified from earthly things and not be confused with the treasuries of the world."

The Huqûq should not be confused with the normal contributions of a believer to the International Funds. Although both are donated to the Centre of the Cause—today to the Universal House of Justice—there is a great difference between the two. The Huqûq in reality does not belong to the individual, as it is the right of God, whereas ordinary donations are given by the believer from his own resources and are motivated by a heartfelt desire to give of one's substance for the promotion of the Cause of God.

Hawaii

Counsellor Lisate Maka of Tonga (right) presents a copy of 'The Promise of World Peace' to Alton Wade (center), president of Brigham Young University-Hawaii, on January 12, 1988. Looking on is Jerry Strain, a member of the Bahá'í community of Koolau­loa. The presentation was made at the Laie campus of Brigham Young in Oahu.
Friends in Cuba proclaim Faith

The Bahá’í community of Cuba was invited last August to take part in the closing ceremony in Havana of a Christian Conference for Peace.

The Bahá’ís took the opportunity to present copies of the peace statement in English, Portuguese and Spanish to the presidency.

In September, another opportunity to present the Faith came from a Presbyterian church in Havana at which Bahá’ís were invited to speak and present slides of the dedication of the House of Worship in India.

That same month, Bahá’ís were invited to a conference at the principal Methodist church in Havana by the Secretary-General of the World Council of Churches.

Also, for the first time since the revolution in Cuba, the Faith has been mentioned by the news media.

Malaysia

Pictured are some of the 86 children from ages 5-13 years who gathered last December for a Children’s Institute in Larut Matang, Malaysia. It marked the first time that sessions were conducted in three languages: Tamil, English and Bahasa Malaysian. The children are reported to have impressed the guest speakers with their happiness and mature questions.

last August and September mentioned the Faith, and on September 27 an article in the newspaper *Juventud Rebelde* recounted part of an interview between famed American jazz musician and Bahá’í John (Dizzy) Gillespie and Cuba’s President, Fidel Castro, which took place in February 1985.

In the interview, Mr. Gillespie said he is a Bahá’í and made known to the president that the inhabitants of the world are the citizens of one country. It was reported that Sr. Castro signified his basic agreement with that.

Switzerland

Bahá’ís gathered February 19-22 at the Cultural Esperanto Center in the Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland, to hear talks on “The History of Esperanto in the Bahá’í Religion.”

One was about the Esperanto magazine, *The New Day*, which was distributed worldwide from 1925-36 by the Bahá’í community of Germany. It was eventually prohibited by the Nazi government, as was the Bahá’í Faith itself.

Also presented was a story about Martha Root and Lidia Zamenhof, daughter of the founder of Esperanto: how they met during the Universal Esperanto Conference in 1925 in Geneva, became friends and later performed invaluable services in promoting far and wide both Esperanto and the Faith.

Another talk concerned the life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Who often emphasized the need for an international language and praised the usefulness of Esperanto.

The weekend was arranged by the Bahá’í Esperanto League together with the Esperanto Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland.
Panama

Ivory Coast

Zekrollah Kazemi, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Africa, was among the speakers at an "African Roundtable on Religious Freedom" sponsored by the World Council on Religious Freedom and held last November 16-18 in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

Mr. Kazemi's presentation was titled "The achievement of the world village of God, a challenge to promote understanding and tolerance of differences among religions, beliefs and religious practices: a regional appraisal."

The Counsellor linked the idea of a world village of God to the declaration of Baha'u'llah more than a century ago. He then spoke of "The Promise of World Peace," quoting several passages from that message from the Universal House of Justice to the peoples of the world.

The Bahá'í concepts presented at the conference aroused the interest of the audience and led to the inclusion of a Bahá'í speaker on the ad hoc committee to draft and approve a resolution from the symposium.

After the conference, participants were invited to meet with President Félix Houphouët-Boigny. The Bahá'ís took advantage of the opportunity to present him with a copy of the peace statement.

Marshall Islands

Dr. Gary Morrison, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Hawaii, was the guest speaker at the Marshall Islands Peace Conference held last October 24 in Majuro.

Eighty-four adult participants heard talks on various peace-related topics and saw presentations to prize-winners in a Bahá'í-sponsored peace essay contest.

Four recent weddings and a kamem (first-year birthday party) were occasions for indirect teaching in an area of the Marshall Islands where social and religious tradition form a stronghold against change.

The opportunity to explain Bahá'í marriage laws and the spiritual nature of marriage as the basic family structure impressed the community in which common-law marriage is the custom.

A young Marshallese Bahá'í spoke to those gathered to celebrate the first birthday of one of the children in the community, stressing in his remarks the spiritual nature of the child.

When a child is born to a Bahá'í couple, he explained, "the parents realize that they have two children: the physical child and the spiritual child."

The audience, which at first seemed disinclined to listen to a "non-minister" speak of prayers, the spiritual life, and God, fell into silence and listened attentively to the words the young man had been inspired to speak.

Ghana

The first Bahá'í Women's Conference in the western region of Ghana was held January 30-31 in Bowodie.

Seventy-eight Bahá'ís attended the event at the Bowodie Bahá'í Center, a mud-walled structure perched on a hill, the most prominent landmark in Bowodie.

Counsellor Beatrice Asare and four members of the National Spiritual Assembly were present and contributed to the discussions on the education of children, the Covenant, Bahá'í marriage, equality and morality, as well as major concerns of the community such as getting more women into the Faith and encouraging their full participation.

Bahamas

A letter from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Bahamas appeared recently in the Nassau Guardian in response to charges made against the Faith by the Islamic Foundation in a letter to the editor.

The National Assembly's letter delineated Bahá'í principles and provided a comprehensive history of the Faith.
India

Major efforts in the environmental field undertaken by the Baha'is of India include tree-planting and conservation.

At the New Era High School in Panchgani, students have begun plantation work on the steeply sloping hills above the surrounding valleys. The goal is to re-establish ground cover to prevent erosion.

Village school children in Uttar Pradesh and adults in three districts of that state have become involved in tree-planting. During the past year 8,000 trees were planted; the goal is to double that number this year.

The Rabbani High School and Nursery Conservation Program in Madhya Pradesh combines community development and instruction in practical skills with its standard middle and high school programs.

Since 1985, more than 10,000 surviving trees have been planted in neighboring villages.

A tree nursery begun in 1984 has produced more than 40,000 seedlings in its own nursery and 15,000 in each of two villages. Through an awareness campaign, the school has created a demand for all the trees and is presently increasing the size and scope of the program.

In cooperation with the World Food Program, the school has taken on a project in nearby villages to construct and popularize a smokeless stove for village homes which uses about 60 percent less fuel, thus conserving the use of wood.

Four hundred such stoves have been built and are in use, and the number will eventually be in the thousands.

A pilot project in health and sanitation training took place in January in Malhousi, Uttar Pradesh, India. The project, organized by the State Baha'i Council, trained 106 tutorial school teachers in specific skills from which they could earn income while rendering service to the community.

The program covered first aid skills, personal hygiene, water sanitation, and home sanitation.

Participants also learned the importance of immunization and decided to hold classes for parents in the villages on their return.

Sri Lanka

The National Spiritual Assembly of Sri Lanka has announced that as a result of the Anwer Cadir teaching project, all localities in an entire administrative district of the country have been opened to the Faith.

The project, carried out in loving memory of one of the first Baha'is in Sri Lanka who served for many years as chairman of its National Assembly before his death in 1981, opened 109 localities in the Kegalle District, which had been the scene of many Baha'i activities since the early 1950s.

Especially noteworthy is the fact that the project was organized, funded and supported by the local believers.

The final locality, entirely Muslim with most families living close to the mosque, was opened after six trips by various teaching teams.

All locality goals (268) have been opened and five local Assemblies have been formed in the Kandy District Teaching Project in Sri Lanka.

By January 18, nearly 500 new believers had been enrolled, and it is estimated by those taking part that 5,000 people had heard of the Faith since the campaign began.

The balance of the goals are being actively pursued while consolidation is in progress with regular deepening of the new believers.

Republic of Ireland

At the suggestion of the Bahá'í International Community's United Nations office, and with the approval of the Universal House of Justice, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Republic of Ireland spearheaded an effort last December to bring Angelo d'Almeida Ribeiro (right), the UN Special Rapporteur on religious discrimination, to Ireland. A steering committee composed of 13 groups was formed with Patrick O'Mara, secretary of the National Assembly, serving as its secretary. Mr. Ribeiro, who has the task of investigating the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1981, spent three days in the Republic of Ireland meeting with theologians, educators, lawyers, government officials, diplomats, religious leaders, women's groups, etc. At all of these events a representative of the Faith was present and was freely associating and discussing matters with these leaders of thought, an opportunity never before experienced by the Baha'is of Ireland.
REJOICE ANNOUNCE APPOINTMENT COUNSELLOR MEMBERS INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE FOR FIVE-YEAR TERM BEGINNING MAY 23, 1988: DR. FARZAM ARBÁB, DR. MAGDALENE CARNEY, MR. HARTMUT GROSSMANN, MR. MAS'ÚD KHAMSÍ, MRS. LAURETTA KING, MR. DONALD ROGERS, MRS. ISOBEL SABRI, MRS. JOY STEVENSON, MR. PETER VUYIYA. VIEW SUPREME IMPORTANCE ACCELERATION TEACHING WORK THIS STAGE FORMATIVE AGE, NUMBER COUNSELLOR MEMBERS NOW RAISED TO NINE. EXPRESS PROFOUND GRATITUDE MR. 'AZIZ YAZDÍ AND MISS ANNELIESE BOPP FOR THEIR ASSIDUOUS DEVOTED SELF-SACRIFICING SERVICES TEACHING CENTRE OVER SO MANY YEARS.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

MAY 18, 1988

Resolution in U.S. Congress condemns persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran.

Bahá'í House of Worship in India welcomes 207,992 visitors in March.

A further report on the sixth Bahá'í International Convention in Haifa.


The United Nations and the problem of the world's homeless people.

Around the world: News from Bahá'í communities all over the globe.
On May 23, U.S. Senators Christopher Dodd of Connecticut and John Heinz of Pennsylvania introduced Senate Concurrent Resolution 120 urging the government of Iran to respect the human rights of members of the Bahá'í Faith in that country.

The resolution, which was co-sponsored by 33 other senators from both parties, was referred to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

The text of the resolution and Sen. Dodd's remarks were published in the Congressional Record on May 23.

"This is a particularly opportune day for the submission of this concurrent resolution," said Sen. Dodd. "May 23, 1988, marks the 144th anniversary of the founding of the Bahá'í Faith.

"Bahá'ís throughout the 160 countries and territories where they reside celebrate this day as one of the holiest of the year.

"Today they reflect on the past decade, when the successors of those clergymen (who persecuted the early Bahá'ís) continue to torment the small law-abiding Bahá'í community, many of whose members are descendants of those who were killed 140 years ago.

"At the time that our country is about to complete the process of its accession to the Genocide Convention," Sen. Dodd pointed out, "it is instructive to recall that the possibility for actual genocide to occur has not been eliminated even in this supposedly enlightened age.

"It can be argued that measures taken by the government of Iran against the Bahá'í minority in recent years have, in fact, constituted the most recent example of this horrendous crime against humanity.

"Mr. President, it is time again to call the attention of the government of Iran to the international norms of civilized behavior.

"By supporting our concurrent resolution, our colleagues can take a small step in trying to restrain and eliminate religious intolerance from this world. I urge my colleagues to do just that."

On June 2, Reps. John Porter of Illinois and Tom Lantos of California introduced a similar resolution in the House of Representatives (H. Con. Res. 310) with the co-sponsorship of 81 other members of the House also showing wide bi-partisan support.

Reps. Porter and Jim Leach of Iowa added remarks about the House resolution in the Congressional Record on June 3.

"...Iranian Bahá'ís have suffered severe persecution," said Rep. Porter, "solely for their belief in the divine authority of the founder of the faith.

"...it is time again," he said, "for Congress to join over 100,000 American Bahá'ís in support of their brothers in Iran and elsewhere throughout the world."

"While there have been recent reports of the release of a number of Bahá'ís from prisons in Iran," said Rep. Leach, "and while executions appear to have declined, the international community dares not be silent until all such grievous human rights abuses have ended.

"Far too fresh in our memories are the executions of over 200 Bahá'ís in Iran since 1979, the pattern of brutal torture and imprisonment, the desecration of property sacred to members of the faith, and the economic hardships visited upon the Bahá'ís.

"The terror which has befallen this vulnerable religious community is unconscionable.

"Until the campaign of religious persecution and genocide against the Bahá'ís comes to an end," Rep. Leach added, "this body and the executive branch have an obligation to monitor events in Iran, to work with other governments to bring pressure on Iranian
authorities to cease their human rights violations, to press the case of the Bahá'ís in international fora, and to provide appropriate assistance to those fleeing persecution."

A concurrent resolution is one that contains similar wording in both the Senate and House versions. Hearings on the resolution, which was referred to a subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, are expected to take place this summer.

S. CON. RES. 120

Urging the Government of Iran to respect the human rights of members of the Bahá'í Faith, and for other purposes.

Whereas the Congress has, by concurrent resolutions adopted in 1982 and 1984, and in numerous other appeals, declared that it holds the Government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all its nationals, including members of the Bahá'í faith, Iran's largest religious minority;

Whereas the Congress has condemned the Government of Iran's actions against the Bahá'ís on account of their religious beliefs, and has urged the President to work with appropriate foreign governments and with the United Nations in efforts to appeal to the Government of Iran concerning the Bahá'ís;

Whereas nearly 200 Iranian Bahá'ís, including many elected leaders of the religious community, have been executed since 1979, on account of their religious beliefs, thousands more have been imprisoned, and many subjected to torture and demands for recantation of their religious faith; and

Whereas the Government of Iran has not only undertaken to deprive Bahá'ís of civil, economic, and social rights, but also has in many cases confiscated Bahá'í community and personal property and denied access for Bahá'ís to education, employment, pensions, insurance, and other benefits available to other Iranians; Now, therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), that the Congress—

(1) continues to hold the Government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all its nationals, including Bahá'ís, in a manner consistent with the Government's obligations under international agreements guaranteeing the civil and political rights of its citizens;

(2) welcomes reports of the recent release of Bahá'ís from prisons in Iran and takes note of the decline in the numbers of Bahá'ís and others executed in that country;

(3) expresses the hope that these developments may indicate a greater willingness on the part of the Government of Iran to act in a manner consistent with its obligations under the various international agreements to which it is a party;

(4) urges the Government of Iran to restore fully the rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including freedom of thought, conscience and religion, education, and equal protection of the law; and

(5) calls upon the President—

(A) to continue to observe and report on developments affecting the Bahá'í minority in Iran, and to monitor developments affecting the Bahá'ís in countries in which their rights might be abridged on account of their religious beliefs;

(B) to cooperate with other governments in continuing to make appeals to the Government of Iran concerning the situation of the Bahá'ís;

(C) to initiate and support efforts in the United Nations and its agencies on behalf of measures to promote the protection of the religious rights of Bahá'ís; and

(D) to provide, and to urge others to provide, for refugee and humanitarian assistance for those Bahá'ís who flee their homelands for reasons of religious repression.

Sec. 2. The Secretary of the Senate shall transmit a copy of this concurrent resolution to the President.

Peru

Last December the Bahá'í youth group of Cajamarca, a northern mountain city of Peru, distributed Identification Cards of World Citizenship to prominent people in that city.

The group, calling itself "Universal Friendship," presented cards to the nationally known singer Camucha Cartes and other persons.

The following week, during a celebration of the "National Day of Peace," the young people organized a showing of a film about peace. Radio and television reporters attended the event, which was held in the city's main square.

In January, 38 children between the ages of four and 14 years from the Aguarian tribe of Bajo Naranjillo in the jungle region of Peru attended a Bahá'í Children's Summer School.

Non-Bahá'í children also took part in an atmosphere of spirituality and cooperation.

A seminar for youth entitled "A New World" was held February 6-7 in Punta Hermosa Beach near Lima, Peru, during an International Bahá'í Summer School held in Lima from January 31-February 14.

The goals of the seminar were to include the participation of several non-Bahá'í youth groups and to strengthen the bonds between the Bahá'í community and those groups.

In all, nearly 20 youth groups sent representatives to the seminar.

Dominican Republic

The Sheila Rice-Wray Gallery of Art was inaugurated at the Dominican-American Cultural Institute last year in a beautiful ceremony presided over by Dr. Federico García Godoy, director of the prestigious Institute in Santo Domingo, the country's capital city.

Sheila Rice-Wray, for whom the gallery is named, has been a distinguished teacher of art and has held administrative posts at the Institute for 40 years since she first went to the Dominican Republic in 1947 as a pioneer.
India

Temple continues to draw big crowds

The highlight of activities during March at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Bahapur, India, was the Naw-Rúz celebration sponsored by the Spiritual Assembly of New Delhi.

Included in the program, which drew an audience of more than 300, was chanting by a 26-member choir. The Temple was specially illuminated for this joyous occasion.

During the nine-day Navratri Mela (Fair) organized each year by the nearby Kalkaji Temple, the House of Worship received some 112,365 visitors.

Jose Hermogenes de Andrade, a well-known writer from Brazil who had visited the Temple in March 1987 and made a video tape which he later presented to the Bahá'í community of Rio de Janeiro, returned this year with his wife and a group of 21 Brazilians, one of whom is a minister of the Catholic Church.

At their request, a special prayer program with only Bahá'í prayers and recitations was arranged, and when the visitors came out of the prayer hall they said they had felt "the presence of God" inside.

Jagdish Dhingra, an engineer who first came to the Temple in the company of the head of the Laxmi Narayan sect, visited again with two friends, one of them an engineer from Illinois.

This gentleman was much impressed by the Bahá'í principles, and the first question he asked after seeing the audio-visual program was, "How can one become a Bahá'í?"

After a gap of five months, two groups of Israelis visited the House of Worship. They proudly said that they live close to our Holy Shrine in Haifa and have visited it too.

One of the women said, "I like the Bahá'í philosophy; it is so open, it is for everybody."

It has been noted that more and more visitors of Islamic background are visiting the Temple, especially younger people, and that they are asking pointed questions. One Muslim youth was so attracted by the Bahá'í principles and the House of Worship that he declared himself a Bahá'í.

Among the dignitaries visiting the House of Worship in March was Dr. John B. Taylor, secretary-general of the World Conference on Religion and Peace International.

Others included Col. Gen. Wolfgang Reinhold, deputy defense minister of the German Democratic Republic; Margaret Catley Carlson, president of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); Dadi B.K. Prakashmani, administrative head of the Brahma Kumaris; Stephen Lewis, the Canadian ambassador to the United Nations; and Dadi Hari Devi Vaswani, a revered member of the Sadhu Vaswani Mission.

In all, the House of Worship welcomed 207,992 visitors in March.
The 6th Convention: a further report

"A silver lining to the dark picture which has overshadowed most of this century now brightens the horizon. It is discernible in the new tendencies impelling the social processes at work throughout the world, in the evidences of an accelerated trend toward peace.

"In the Faith of God, it is the growing strength of the Order of Bahá'u'lláh as its banner rises to more stately heights. It is a strength that attracts."

These stirring words from the Ridván message of the Universal House of Justice were read to the assembled delegates by the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum at the first consultative session of the sixth Bahá'í International Convention held April 29-May 2 in Haifa, Israel.

They struck the keynote of the inspired and inspiring message—"a new paradigm of opportunity" has emerged, and "new prospects for teaching the Cause at all levels of society have unfolded."

The message continues:

"The present challenge calls for teaching on a scale and of a quality, a variety, and intensity outstripping all current efforts."

The theme was to recur repeatedly in the consultations of the delegates.

The Convention was officially opened Friday morning, April 29, with prayers in four languages. Six hundred sixty-three delegates representing 132 of the 148 National Spiritual Assemblies were present in Haifa Auditorium to take part in the election of the Universal House of Justice.

In addition, mail ballots were cast by delegates from the 16 countries who were unable to attend.

The spectacular array of humanity, many wearing national costumes, colored the atmosphere of solemnity as each delegate stepped forward to cast a ballot.

A highlight of the balloting was the presence of two delegates from Cuba, which had never before been represented at an International Convention. They were warmly applauded as they crossed the stage to cast their ballots.

A highlight of the balloting was the presence of two delegates from Cuba, which had never before been represented at an International Convention. They were warmly applauded as they crossed the stage to cast their ballots.

The results of the voting were announced at noon on Saturday, June 30, by the chief teller, Dr. Firuz Kazemzadeh, vice-chairman of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly. The members of the House of Justice are:


Of the 1,296 ballots cast, only one was invalid. The members were elected by a total of 7,880 of the 11,655 individual votes cast.

The nine members of the House of Justice were called to the stage as the delegates applauded.

Then wave after wave of sustained applause swept the auditorium as the two retiring members of the Universal House of Justice, David Hofman and H. Borrah Kavelin, were called to the stage and saluted by the audience of delegates and World Centre staff members for their long and dedicated service.

Three other former members of the House of Justice were affectionately called to mind: Charles Wolcott, recently deceased; Amoz Gibson and Lutfu'lláh Hakim, whose daughter and grand-daughter, respectively, were present as delegates to the Convention.

A special sadness coupled with a feeling of pride pervaded the hall as the absence of delegates from Iran was noted.

In paying tribute to the sacrifices and continued suffering of "our brothers and sisters in Iran," Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum announced that a closing prayer would be offered in their memory, and called for an enormous bowl of 120 red roses, a gift from the Baha'ís in Iran, to be brought to the center of the stage.

Five of the Hands of the Cause of God were present for the opening session, lending a special dignity and the spiritual force of their high office: Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum, 'Ali Akbar Furútan, Dr. 'Ali Muhammad Varqá, William Sears and Collis Featherstone.

These dear "remnants of the Guardian" each participated in unique ways during the five days of the Convention.

The topic of Huqúqu'lláh was addressed by Dr. Varqá who pointed out that this institution should be seen as a spiritual obligation based on the love of the believer; it is a tangible aspect of the Covenant of God, and it strengthens the relationship between God and man.

The other Hands of the Cause of God contributed their guidance on themes dealt with in the Ridván message. Mr. Sears brought special greetings from those Hands of the Cause who were not present: Dr. Ugo Giachery, Jalál Khâzeh and John Robarts.

From April 30-May 2, all sessions were chaired by Counsellors: Dr. Magdalene Carney, International Teaching Centre; Zena Sorabjee, Asia; Dr. Wilma Brady, Americas; Joy Stevenson,
Australasia; Lucretia Mancho Warren, Africa; and Polin Rafat, Europe.

Under the gilt emblem of the Greatest Name, and occupying the entire center stage, a magnificent, large, full-color aerial photograph featuring the Shrine of the Báb, set against a skillfully overlaid architect's rendering of the future terraces with their myriad young cypresses, paths, fountains and shrubs, and the Arc with its five edifices completed, constantly reminded the delegates of the compelling needs of the Arc Project.

The architect and project manager, Husayn Amánat and Fariburz Sahbá, drew further attention to the detail, grandeur and financial needs of this project in their slide presentations.

Two Holy Days were celebrated by delegates, visitors and World Centre staff during the Convention period.

The Ninth Day of Ríḍván was commemorated in the forecourt and gardens of the Haifa Pilgrim House adjacent to the Shrine of the Báb with the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears presiding.

Readings in five languages—Arabic, English, Spanish, French and Persian—were followed by the recitation of the Tablet of Visitation, after which the friends silently and reverently circumambulated the Shrine of the Báb.

Following the close of the last Convention session, on the Twelfth Day of Ríḍván, the distinguished visitors and World Centre family gathered in the Haram-i-Aqdas at Bahjí where the celebration was opened with forceful remarks by the Hand of the Cause Colliis Featherstone about the significance of the occasion.

Readings in five languages were followed by the solemn but joyous circumambulation of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh by more than 1,000 of His followers.

For four days prior to the Convention, the delegates enjoyed a series of visits arranged for them to the Holy Places of the Faith in Haifa and 'Akká.

Also, scores of consultative sessions were held among groups of National Spiritual Assemblies which share common goals and interests. These took place on the days before the Convention opened and in the evenings after the general sessions, often lasting into the late hours of the night.

Delegates to the sixth Bahá'í International Convention visit the House of "Abbud in the prison-city of 'Akká, Israel.

Counsellors from all five Continental Boards attended the Convention—16 from Africa, 16 from the Americas, 12 from Asia, eight from Australasia, and nine from Europe—61 in all.

Special meetings and events were held for the Counsellors under the auspices of the International Teaching Centre. Five “continental” sessions were held for members of each of the Boards and the National Spiritual Assemblies in their areas.

Following the Convention, from May 3-8, the Hands of the Cause and Counsellors remained in Haifa to take part in a Counsellors' Conference and to consult with the Universal House of Justice and the International Teaching Centre.
The Faith’s statement on nature

In September 1986 the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) launched its Network on Conservation and Religion, bringing religious leaders representing Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews and Muslims together with environmental leaders in Assisi, Italy. Each of the five religions represented there issued a declaration on nature. In October 1987 the Bahá’í Faith became the sixth major religion to join the new alliance, and put forward this statement in support of the Network’s goals.

Nature in its essence is the embodiment of My Name, the Maker, the Creator. Its manifestations are diversified by varying causes, and in this diversity there are signs for men of discernment. Nature is God’s Will and is its expression in and through the contingent world. It is a dispensation of Providence ordained by the Ordainer, the All-Wise.

With those words, Bahá’u’lláh, the Prophet-Founder of the Bahá’í Faith, outlines the essential relationship between man and the environment: that the grandeur and diversity of the natural world are purposeful reflections of the majesty and bounty of God. For Bahá’ís, there follows an implicit understanding that nature is to be respected and protected, as a divine trust for which we are answerable.

Such a theme, of course, is not unique to the Bahá’í Faith. All the world’s major religions make a fundamental connection between the Creator and His creation. How could it be otherwise? All the major independent religions are based on revelations from one God—a God Who has successively sent His Messengers to earth so that humankind might become educated about His ways and will. Such is the essence of Bahá’í belief.

As the most recent of God’s revelations, however, the Bahá’í teachings have a special relevance to present-day circumstances when the whole of nature is threatened by man-made perils ranging from the wholesale destruction of the world’s rain forests to the final nightmare of nuclear annihilation.

A century ago, Bahá’u’lláh proclaimed that humanity has entered a new age. Promised by all the religious Messengers of the past, this new epoch will ultimately bring peace and enlightenment for humanity. To reach that point, however, humankind must first recognize its fundamental unity—as well as the unity of God and of religion. Until there is a general recognition of this wholeness and interdependence, humanity’s problems will only worsen.

“The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established.” Bahá’u’lláh wrote. “The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.”

The major issues facing the environmental movement today hinge on this point. The problems of ocean pollution, the extinction of species, acid rain and deforestation—not to mention the ultimate scourge of nuclear war—respect no boundaries. All require a transnational approach.

While all religious traditions point to the kind of cooperation and harmony that will indeed be necessary to curb these threats, the religious writings of the Bahá’í Faith also contain an explicit prescription for the kind of new world political order that offers the only long-term solution to such problems.

“That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of the world,” Bahá’u’lláh wrote, “is the union of all its people into one universal Cause.

Built around the idea of a world commonwealth of nations, with an international parliament and executive to carry out its will, such a new political order must also, according to the Bahá’í teachings, be based on principles of economic justice, equality between the races, equal rights for women and men, and universal education.

All these points bear squarely on any attempt to protect the world’s environment. The issue of economic justice is an example. In many regions of the world, the assault on rain forests and endangered species comes as the poor, legitimately seeking a fair share of the world’s wealth, fell trees to create fields. They are unaware that, over the long term and as members of a world community which they know little about, they may be irretrievably damaging rather than improving their children’s chances for a better life. Any attempt to protect nature must, therefore, also address the fundamental inequities between the world’s rich and poor.

Likewise, the uplifting of women to full equality with men can help the environmental cause by bringing a new spirit of feminine values into decision-making about natural resources. The scriptures of the Bahá’í Faith note that: “…man has dominated over woman by reason of his more forceful and aggressive qualities both body and mind. But the balance is already shifting; force is losing its dominance, and mental alertness, intuition and the spiritual qualities of love and service, in which woman is strong, are gaining ascendancy. Hence the new age will be an age less masculine and more permeated with feminine ideals…”

Education, especially an education that emphasizes Ba-
há’i principles of human interdependence, is another prerequisite to the building of a global conservation consciousness. The Faith’s theology of unity and interdependence relates specifically to environmental issues. Again, to quote the Bahá’í sacred writings:

“By nature is meant those inherent properties and necessary relations derived from the realities of things. And these realities of things, though in the utmost diversity, are yet intimately connected one with the other. . . . Like the world of existence to the temple of man. All the organs of the human body assist one another, therefore life continues. . . . Likewise among the parts of existence there is a wonderful connection and interchange of forces which is the cause of the life of the world and the continuation of these countless phenomena.”

The very fact that such principles should come with the authority of religion and not merely from human sources is yet another piece of the over-all solution to our environmental troubles. The impulse behind the Assisi declarations on nature is testimony to this idea.

There is perhaps no more powerful impetus for social change than religion. Bahá’u’lláh said: “Religion is the greatest of all means for the establishment of order in the world and for the peaceful contentment of all that dwell therein.” In attempting to build a new ecological ethic, the teachings of all religious traditions can play a role in helping to inspire their followers.

Bahá’u’lláh, for example, clearly addresses the need to protect animals. “Look not upon the creatures of God except with the eye of kindliness and of mercy, for Our loving providence hath pervaded all created things, and Our grace encompasses the earth and the heavens.”

He Himself expressed a keen love and appreciation for nature, furthering the connection between the environment and the spiritual world in Bahá’í theology. “The country is the world of the soul, the city the world of bodies,” Bahá’u’lláh said.

This dichotomy between spirituality and materialism is a key to understanding the plight of humankind today. In the Bahá’í view, the major threats to our world environment, such as the threat of nuclear annihilation, are manifestations of a world-encompassing sickness of the human spirit, a sickness that is marked by an over-emphasis on material things and a self-centeredness that inhibits our ability to work together as a global community. The Bahá’í Faith seeks above all else to revitalize the human spirit and to break down the barriers that limit fruitful and harmonious cooperation among men and women, whatever their national, racial or religious background.

For Bahá’ís the goal of existence is to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization. Such a civilization can only be built on an earth that can sustain itself. The Bahá’í commitment to the environment is fundamental to our Faith.
1987 was designated United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. This article, "Building for the Homeless," is reprinted from a publication devoted to that theme produced by the UN Department of Public Information.

The problem of homelessness

The spectre of homelessness and squalid, unhealthy housing for the poor is as old as civilization. Writing in the second century, the poet Juvenal described the plebeians living in noisome, ramshackle tenements so flimsy they were "bestirred by every wind." In a memorandum dated 1684, the Chief of Police of Paris, France, referred to the "frightful misery that afflicts the greater part of the population of this great city," where between 40,000 and 65,000 were reduced to outright beggary. Thomas Carlyle wrote eloquently from the next century about the rural poor in their "clay hovels and hutches" on the eve of the French Revolution. On a visit to Liverpool in the 1830s, Herman Melville was shocked to see a homeless woman and her two children lie dying in a cellar opening under the sidewalk, not to be picked up until after their bodies had begun to rot.

For one billion people living at the end of the 20th century, the passage of time has not noticeably changed things. The homeless today—the pavement dwellers, those who sleep in doorways, subways and recesses of buildings, those made homeless by natural or man-made disasters, and the hundreds of millions who do not have access to safe water and sanitation, who do not have security of tenure and personal safety, and who, because of their poverty, are confined in slums and shanty towns—live under conditions that duplicate those under which the plebeians of Juvenal lived.

Today an estimated one-fifth of the world's population does not have adequate shelter. About 100 million people have no shelter whatsoever. Every 24 hours, more than 50,000 people, most of them children, die of malnutrition and disease—deaths generally linked to lack of adequate housing.

The problem is evident nearly everywhere. In industrialized countries, officials are concerned about the deterioration of the inner cities. Any visitor to the great cities of the world, where vagrancy has long since ceased to be an enforceable offense, has seen the homeless who wander the streets.

In the developing world, the picture is even worse. There, up to 50 per cent—in some cities nearly 80 per cent—of the urban population lives in slums and squatter settlements. The population of these settlements is increasing at twice the rate of the cities themselves—representing a yearly growth rate of 3.5 per cent, or some 49 million people. And, within the next 15 years, the urban population of the developing countries will double.

In the shanty towns, which spring up virtually overnight, the poor live in paralyzing insecurity, evicted repeatedly from homes they have often seen razed to the ground, and facing hostile officials who refuse to recognize their existence and deny them medical care and education for their children. In slum and squatter areas, shelters are often constructed on marginal lands vulnerable to floods, fire and landslides. Slum-dwellers have no
Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, has seen such a proliferation of slums that overcrowdedness in some areas reaches nearly 600 people per acre.

means of getting cheap building materials. Most lack the technical and organizational skills necessary to make more than marginal improvements on their shelters. They cannot use public transportation, either because it does not extend to their neighborhood or because it costs too much. Absence of transportation in turn limits their access to health, education, welfare services, and employment.

In rural areas of the developing world, housing conditions are too often marked by mass poverty, malnutrition, poor water supply, inadequate sanitation and lack of other services. As many as one-third of the rural population do not have title to the land they occupy and have little hope of acquiring it. Only 41 per cent of these people have access to safe drinking water—as against 71 per cent of the world’s urban population. Only 12 per cent are served by adequate sanitation—as opposed to 59 per cent of the urban population. They suffer from high infant mortality rates, low life expectancy and a high incidence of disease. Because of these factors, coupled with lack of employment opportunities, more and more of them are drawn to the cities.

**The United Nations and the homeless**

The groundwork for United Nations action on behalf of the homeless was laid in 1976, at Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held in Vancouver, Canada. At that meeting, representatives of 132 governments formally addressed the many formidable problems existing in the condition of shelter, and, in the Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements, committed themselves to improving the quality of life for all peoples through the development of human settlements, and adopted 64 recommendations for national action to this end. These recommendations covered settlement policies, settlement planning, provision of shelter, infrastructure and services, land use and land tenure, the role of popular participation, and effective institutions and management.

In 1977, the United Nations General Assembly decided to establish an intergovernmental Commission on Human Settlements. It merged various existing UN human settlement units into a new United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), with headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. It charged the Centre with assisting its governing body, the Commission on Human Settlements, in coordinating human settlements activities in the United Nations; executing human settlements projects; providing the focal point for an exchange of information about human settlements; and promoting collaboration with an involvement of the scientific community working in this field.

In the late 1970s housing problems worsened, particularly in the developing world. Population increases and unplanned, too-rapid urbanization deepened the housing crisis. The world-wide recession that began in the mid-1970s also had an impact on government economic plans. Short on funds, many governments that had planned housing efforts were forced to reorder their priorities and even reduce expenditures for shelter.

In an address to the General Assembly in 1980, Prime Minister Ranasinghe Premadasa of Sri Lanka termed the special international provision of adequate housing “a basic aspect in the global assault on poverty,” and urged the declaration of a year dedicated to the problems of the homeless and those living in substandard housing. In December 1982, the General Assembly,
by consensus, adopted resolution 37/221 proclaiming 1987 the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.

The Assembly set two primary objectives: the first was to improve the shelter and neighborhoods of some of the world’s poor and disadvantaged by 1987, especially in the developing countries, according to national priorities. The second was to demonstrate ways to improve the shelter and neighborhoods of the poor by the year 2000.

To help achieve these larger objectives, the Assembly set a series of subsidiary goals. It called for renewed political commitment by the international community to improve shelter and neighborhoods of the poor and disadvantaged and to provide shelter for the homeless in developing countries. It asked for consolidation and sharing of new knowledge and experience, so as to offer tested and practical alternatives for improving and providing shelter. New methods were to be developed to assist directly the efforts of the homeless poor and disadvantaged themselves to obtain or improve shelters and neighborhoods, and to provide a basis for new national policies and strategies to achieve these ends by the year 2000. Finally, the Assembly asked countries to exchange experience and provide support in order to meet the objectives of the Year.

The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements was put in charge of coordinating the efforts of UN bodies and other concerned organizations to promote action against homelessness for the International Year. The Centre drew up a plan of action needed to launch the Year. The Plan of Action was endorsed by the General Assembly in 1983.

A Plan of Action

To pursue the goals of resolution 32/221, the Plan of Action encouraged states to adopt innovative approaches toward ameliorating the problem of homelessness for at least some of the poor before 1987. It encouraged them to undertake various “shelter demonstration projects” (i.e., pilot projects in housing) in which new schemes for improving housing in their countries would be tested.

It divided efforts surrounding the Year into three phases:

In the first phase, the international community was urged to review and evaluate, between 1983 and 1986, existing information and experience relating to shelter, and to put shelter demonstration projects into operation.

In the second phase, governments and other participants were asked to evaluate, in 1987, during the International Year itself, the information derived from the shelter projects and to share it with the international community. The year 1987 was seen as a crucial transition period between the search for solutions and their extensive application.

Between 1988 and the year 2000, the third phase, new shelter policies, programs and methods based on the information gained in the first two phases were to be implemented as integral parts of national economic and social development plans. This phase, especially, would require an effective program of international cooperation and support.

The entire program was to be funded by voluntary contributions, most of which would go directly into actual projects and project support services. There was no call in the Plan of Action for a major global conference or a global information effort to publicize the International Year. The Year’s information campaign was to concentrate on supporting the search for solutions, on making successful results more widely known, and on training and direct project support.

When the UN Commission on Human Settlements held its 10th (commemorative) session in Nairobi on April 6-16, 1986, one of the purposes was to review and evaluate progress on implementing the Plan of Action for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. It also looked at future perspectives, major human settlements trends up to the year 2000, and national and international cooperation in the field of human settlements, in an effort to make plans for a strategy in advance of the year 2000.
The urban habitat

Reaching the limits

Around one billion people now live in cities in the developing world, and by the year 2000 this number will double to 2.1 billion. The challenge to city planners is overwhelming:

**Housing**

- Cairo has 750,000 houses less than it needs — and the deficit is growing at 150,000 a year.
- Most city people work — but don’t earn families are traditional in the countryside, and people continue to have them.

**Employment**

Industry provides income but also brings risks: 1,000 tons of pollutants fall daily in Greater Bombay.

**Transport**

- Average traffic speed in Mexico is half that in London or Paris.

Life in the slums

There are many characteristics common to life in these marginal urban areas:

**Roots**

Most slum and shantytown dwellers are of rural origin. The majority of migrants are driven to town by poverty, and start their urban life in the worst areas.

**Youth**

The average age of slum inhabitants is very low. Large families are traditional in the countryside, and people continue to have them.

**Overcrowding**

Population density is the highest in the world. It is common to find a family of ten members sharing one room.

**Women householders**

In many slums women — abandoned or divorced — are the only providers for 50% of the households.

Squalor

Overcrowding and lack of drainage and sanitary systems create conditions hazardous to health. Rubbish piles up in the street and is not removed.

No services

In these conditions, the need for water and sanitary disposal services is acute. Most slum households must fetch their water from a standpipe, and deposit their waste in open drains. The rate of infection is therefore high; there is a constant risk of epidemic.

Malnutrition

Slum dwellers are dependent for their food entirely on cash. As incomes are very low, children are malnourished.

Premature adulthood

Most mothers earn, and are absent from home. Children fend for themselves, in the care of older ones. Many are abandoned, or leave home, at an early age.

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### Housing

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<th>Cities</th>
<th>GNP per capita (1982 figures)</th>
<th>Cost of unit (US$ 1970 prices)</th>
<th>Monthly payment (US$)</th>
<th>Income required (US$)</th>
<th>% of households unable to afford</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td>2.090</td>
<td>3.005</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>4.240</td>
<td>1.670</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>2.076</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogota</td>
<td>1.180</td>
<td>1.474</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmedabad</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madras</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All estimates in US dollar equivalents; the interest rate is assumed to be 15%; 15% of household income is assumed to be devoted to housing; the repayment period is assumed to be 30 years.

### Public health services

Population of developing countries (excluding China) currently lacking access to community water supply and sanitation services.

**The daily use of water**

1. city dweller with several taps
2. city dweller with one household tap
3. city dweller with a standpipe
4. rural consumer without tap or standpipe

---

### Transport

The level of traffic congestion in the cities of the developing world is chronic, in spite of the fact that comparatively few people own cars. Public transport is generally deficient, and squatter settlements often lack bus services. However, buses account for two-thirds or four-fifths of motorized trips in many poorer cities. They are supplemented in many cities by communal taxis, auto-rickshaws, etc.

**Motorized trips in selected cities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Automobile</th>
<th>Bus</th>
<th>Other (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kuala Lampur</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caracas</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinshasa</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangkok</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San José</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogota</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karachi</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Includes taxis, "permys", etc.
(2) Rail services are also important

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Source: UNFPA


Baha'i News/July 1988 11
A weekend institute for local Spiritual Assemblies was held March 25-27 on Watom Island, Papua New Guinea. Nineteen people took part in the institute, which was organized by the Bahá’í youth of Rabaul.

Among the speakers was Auxiliary Board member Habib Yaganegi who spoke about the Covenant and the functions of the Bahá’í Center.

Other talks covered such topics as the election of a local Assembly and its functions, Bahá’í administration, community development, women’s activities, the roles and duties of Assembly officers, the Bahá’í Fund, the Nineteen Day Feast, Holy Days and the Bahá’í calendar, and teaching the Faith and deepening.

Between 40 and 50 people attended a video presentation during one evening of the institute.

Taiwan

Li Ya-Chiao (center), magistrate of Tainan County, Taiwan, receives a copy of 'The Promise of World Peace' from Danel Boone (to Mr. Li’s left), representing the Spiritual Assembly of Hsin Ying. Also pictured are members of the magistrate’s staff of 300, each of whom also received a copy of the statement, as did Mayor Yen Ji-Wu of Hsin Ying. Mr. Boone was helped in making the presentations by his wife, Auxiliary Board member Jean Wu Boone.

Chad

Several years of diligent work by the Bahá’ís of Chad were rewarded recently when they were given a Diploma of Participation from the Trade Chamber at the fourth International Fair of UDEAC (Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa).

Since 1983, the Bahá’ís of Chad have incorporated social and economic development projects into their regular activities, initiating many activities including training health agents, constructing dispensaries, opening village pharmacies, training agricultural agents, and creating tutorial schools.

When invited to take part in an International Fair at N’Djamena, the Bahá’ís in that region responded enthusiastically. They created an attractive exhibit explaining the history of development, how to support it, and how to protect against economic crises.
Cameroon

More than 50 Bahá'ís from 14 communities attended the eighth Bahá'í Summer School held last December 23-27 at the national Hazíratu'l-Quds in Limbe, Cameroon. After morning talks followed by lively discussions, the friends were divided each afternoon into smaller groups to study in depth the topics presented in the classes. After supper there were slide shows, songs, games and a dramatic presentation illustrating collaboration among the institutions of the Faith.

Sri Lanka

On their eighth annual observance of World Religion Day, the Bahá'ís of Sri Lanka received wide coverage in newspapers, on radio and television in three languages: Sinhala, Tamil and English.

The articles mention the principles of the Faith, and also note that Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Bahá'ís all observe this day in Sri Lanka.

The Kandy Teaching Project, launched in July 1987 by the Spiritual Assembly of Kandy, Sri Lanka, ended its expansion phase with the gratifying total of 286 localities opened to the Faith, 11 new local Assemblies formed, and 706 new believers enrolled.

Consolidation activities have begun and plans are being laid to strengthen all Assemblies in the district.

Hawaii

As a part of their contribution to the "Year of the Hawaiian" proclaimed by Hawaii's governor, the Bahá'ís of Honolulu and other communities on Oahu worked together to sponsor an event last July to honor the Polynesian voyagers of the Pacific.

The program, called a "tremendous success" by the National Spiritual Assembly of Hawaii, had a large non-Bahá'í audience (250 total) to witness the love and respect the Bahá'ís showed the native Hawaiian honorees.

The August 1987 issue of Hawaii Architecture carried an article about the Bahá'í House of Worship in India. In addition to a half-page photo of the Temple, there were smaller pictures of the Houses of Worship in the United States, Germany and Uganda.

The Temple in India was called "a triumph for the Indian construction industry ... a marriage of old and new technology, craftsmanship and computers."

In keeping with the United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, the Bahá'ís of Hawaii presented their 1987 Agnes Alexander Award for Service to Humanity to Donald R. Hanson, chairman of several organizations in Honolulu devoted to self-help housing projects.

Mr. Hanson was previously active in similar efforts in Asia, the Caribbean and Africa.
Italy

Prof. Alessandro Bausani, a renowned Orientalist and eclectic scholar who served for many years as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Italy, died March 12 in Rome after a long illness.

On March 15, a moving funeral service for Prof. Bausani was attended by hundreds of people, among whom were local authorities and many representatives of the academic world.

In addition to prayers and readings from the Sacred Texts, the program included a brief review of Prof. Bausani's life and achievements, prepared by the National Spiritual Assembly of Italy, and talks by two eminent representatives of the academic world, Prof. Francesco Gabrieli and Prof. Achille Tartaro, both of the University of Rome.

France

On the Day of the Covenant last November, a local radio station in the Basque area of France broadcast an hour-long program on the Faith.

Regular announcements told of the evening program and invited listeners with questions to phone the station where three Bahá'ís, two of whom were natives of the Basque region, supplied answers.

Philippines

Twenty-seven new local Assemblies were formed and 848 new believers enrolled in the Faith during a recent three-week teaching campaign on Marinduque and Mindoro Islands in the Philippines.

Through the efforts of local Mangyan believers, unit conventions were held and delegates elected on Mindoro. The Mangyans are a significant ethnic and linguistic minority group in the Philippines who have enrolled in the Faith in large numbers.

A "Bahá'í Mothers' Deepening Project," developed by the National Teaching Committee of the Philippines, began last February, offering guidance to Bahá'í mothers and mothers-to-be on such tasks as the care, education and training of children; maintaining a Bahá'í atmosphere in the home; and cultivating a rapport and understanding with husbands and families.

So far, 21 deepening classes have been held in various parts of the country. The project was to end with seven large Family Life Conferences in March and April of this year.

Kenya

The Bahá'í Faith is now included in the Christian Religious Education syllabus of Kenya as a new topic for study. As most teachers know little about the Faith, one of them, at Shanzu Teacher Training College in Mombasa, invited members of the Bahá'í community of Mombasa to speak about the Faith to first-year students at the college. The presentation was given to an attentive audience by Bahá'ís Amal Rouhani (seated at left), Caroline Jezza (seated second from left) and Dr. Chowghi Rouhani (standing at right).

The sixth National Youth Conference at Nakuru, which ended last December 18, drew together more than 200 young Bahá'ís from Kenya and several from Tanzania and Sudan who were joined on the second day by Counsellor Edith Senoga. The five days of spirited activity included a competition of choirs from many localities.

Many of the youth pledged to take an active part in a major teaching campaign scheduled to follow the conference.
Republic of Ireland

The recently established Cork Shee School in the Republic of Ireland has decided to close its doors on the anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh. Five Bahá'í children are enrolled in the interdenominational school whose board chairman, Pat Barry, is a Bahá'í.

Sweden

Pictured are many of the 60 Bahá'ís from Sweden, Norway and Finland who attended a 1987 Arctic Midsummer Camp held in Karesuando, Sweden, about 200 miles above the Arctic Circle. Special visitors were two American Indians, Vern Longie and Ruby Gubatayo, who were traveling and teaching in Scandinavia last summer.

In January, the Winter School for the North of Sweden was held in Sundsvall with 90 participants, 40 of them children. Three days were given to consultation and deepening, emphasizing pioneering to northern regions of the country.

India

A comprehensive article commemorating the first anniversary of the Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi, India, appeared in a recent issue of the daily newspaper, *The Punjabi Post*.

The article includes a large photograph of the House of Worship, mentions the names of a number of prominent people who have visited there, outlines the purpose of the House of Worship and the principles of the Faith, and includes extensive quotations from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh.

Hundreds of people visited a one-month book exhibit conducted by the Spiritual Assembly of Bangalore, India, as part of “Crafts India” held on the palace grounds in Bangalore. Many of the visitors already were familiar with the Faith as a result of having visited or heard about the Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi.

Switzerland

“A Peace with the Environment” was the theme last October 30-November 1 of a Bahá'í-sponsored conference at Switzerland’s Landegg Centre.

About 250 people attended the two-day event; 40 Swiss organizations concerned with peace and/or the environment sent delegations.
Australia

The Spiritual Assembly of Croydon, situated in a semi-desert area in far northern Queensland, Australia, has been formed as a result of the patient teaching and deepening efforts of two couples, Steve and Mosiana Johns and Fineeva and Dolores Taufelele, who are homefront pioneers there.

Aboriginal believers constitute the majority of the new Assembly.

The devoted teaching efforts of three Iranian Baha'is who recently settled in Australia, Farhad and Roofia Noranbakht and traveling teacher Hassan Derakhshan, have resulted in the enrollment of 10 more Aboriginal Baha'is in Mareeba, also in far northern Queensland.

Trinidad/Tobago

On December 4, 1987, Sen. Sahadeo Basdeo, a professor of history at the University of the West Indies, spoke to an audience of more than 200 people including a number of non-Baha'is about his impressions of the Bahá'í House of Worship, which he and Mrs. Basdeo had recently visited. The gathering was held at the home of Dr. M.H. Jamalabadi, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Trinidad and Tobago, and his wife, Auxiliary Board member Shahnaz Jamalabadi, in Port of Spain, Trinidad. Sen. Basdeo, who had requested the meeting and was effusive in his praise of the Temple, is pictured second from the left in this photo; his wife is standing to his left.

A team of 28 young Baha'is who call themselves the Wildfire Project toured Australia in February giving a show entitled "It's Not the End of the World."

The modern, energetic show, which includes music, dance and comedy centered around peace themes, met with a warm response from the 3,000 people—many of them Aboriginal—who saw it during its two-week tour that covered large areas of New South Wales, South Australia, and Victoria.

More than 360 young people from every state in Australia gathered last January in Perth for a National Youth Conference, a highlight of which was the participation of the Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone.

The youth year of service, according to a message sent to the World Centre, is gaining momentum in Australia. The message added that, following the conference, a teaching team had set out to visit areas of Western Australia.
**Virgin Islands**

On January 18, the governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Alexander Farrelly, was given a copy of the peace statement by a delegation of Bahá’ís representing the National Spiritual Assembly of the Virgin Islands.

Among the members of the delegation were Counsellors Wilma Brady, Ruth Pringle and Alan Smith.

Joan Bennett, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly, made the presentation in the governor’s private office in Government House, St. Thomas, just prior to the official government observance of the anniversary of the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., at which Dr. Brady was the featured speaker.

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**Cyprus**

Oneworld Publications, a publishing house owned by Bahá’í pioneers to Cyprus, entered its edition of *The Hidden Words* of Bahá’u’lláh in a competition for “Best Designed Books from All Over the World” at an exhibition last year in Leipzig, Germany, in which publishers from 49 countries participated.

The book won an award for “high artistic merit and technical standards” which was presented at a ceremony in March during the International Book Fair in Leipzig.

Possibly the largest Bahá’í teaching conference ever held in Cyprus took place last October 18 at the newly renovated and redecorated Haziratu’ll-Quds in Nicosia. According to a telex from the National Spiritual Assembly, a “vigorously and exhausting children and youth program” was much appreciated.

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**Tanzania**

In September 1987, the National Spiritual Assembly of Tanzania met with Counsellor Oloro Epyeru, four members of the Auxiliary Board, and members of the National Teaching Committee to plan two teaching campaigns in designated mass teaching areas.

The two three-month campaigns were begun shortly thereafter, one in the Kasulu district of the Kigoma region on Lake Tanganyika and the other in the Morogoro region in central Tanzania.

The combined results included the enrollment of 575 new believers, the formation of 12 local Spiritual Assemblies, the revival of several lapsed Assemblies, and the opening of a number of new localities to the Faith.

In Kitungwa, the Assembly has begun daily children’s classes which include reading and writing as well as Bahá’í teachings.

A Bahá’í youth choir from Kigoma went to many villages in the Kasulu district, which attracted large numbers of people and was the foundation of the success of the Kasulu project.

In Morogoro, more than 4,000 secondary school and technical school students saw a slide program on the Bahá’í concept of peace and heard talks about the Faith.

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**New Zealand**

A long, spear-like Maori weapon carved into a digging tool was presented last December by the Bahá’ís of New Zealand to the Bahá’í community of India to mark the first anniversary of the dedication of the Bahá’í House of Worship in New Delhi.

The carving was made by Wallace Heteraka, a Bahá’í who is Master Carver of the Tai Tokerau people. Steeped in symbolism, it converts a traditional design usually related to war into a symbol of peace.

“This carving,” said Mr. Heteraka, “says we will teach no more war... I felt a great calmness, a real sense of satisfaction and humility with the knowledge that a weapon once used violently (is) now a tool of peace.

“This is a challenge to all the craftsmen of the world to do this with their weapons. This is my ancestors’ contribution to world peace.”

Dr. Paul Friedman, a dedicated Bahá’í and Esperantist from Hamilton, New Zealand, has been elected, unopposed, president of the New Zealand Esperantist Association.

Dr. Friedman is also active in BEL estraro (Bahá’í Esperanto League).

Following his election, which took place at the annual Esperanto Congress in Howick, Auckland, Mr. Friedman presented an informal talk on the Faith. Some pamphlets and copies of the peace statement in Esperanto were distributed among the guests.

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**Sarawak**

At the request of the Universal House of Justice, Dr. Ethel Martens of Canada, a consultant on primary health care, visited Sarawak in February to discuss the possibility of setting up health care programs there.

Dr. Martens has developed a program for training primary health care workers that is being implemented in India and in several African countries.
Bloomington Welcomes

Baha'i
INTERNATIONAL
YOUTH CONFERENCE
In June, the news was received that a court in Egypt had acquitted 32 Bahá'ís who were sentenced in 1987 to three-year prison terms on charges that they violated a 1960 edict barring organized Bahá'í activities in that country. A District Court in Cairo ruled on June 13 that the monthly meetings held in Bahá'í homes were not illegal because they were "private and personal" in nature.

The 32 Bahá'ís thus acquitted were among a group of 48 sentenced in May 1987 to prison terms on religious charges. At that time, two of the accused who recanted their faith were found not guilty. Thirteen others convicted last year were acquitted February 17 by the Egyptian Court of Appeals in Cairo.

According to reports from Cairo, the court rulings did not address the defense's argument that the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, to which Egypt is a signatory, requires Egypt to respect the rights of all citizens to practice their religion.

With grateful hearts convey to the followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout world joyful news first meeting newly appointed International Teaching Centre.

On morning Friday third June the Hands of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum and 'Ali Akbar Furútán, the members of the Universal House of Justice and the nine Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre gathered in Bahjí and entered the Most Holy Shrine for prayers before proceeding to the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh where their first joint meeting was held in room associated with Shoghi Effendi. All were acutely conscious of the inestimable blessing of initiating their consultations in these sacred precincts.

In this and subsequent consultations during the days which followed, the tasks of the International Teaching Centre in face of the tremendous opportunities for teaching now before the Bahá'í world were reviewed, and new patterns of operation were formulated.

Rejoice new vistas opening for victorious promotion Cause God.

*Universal House of Justice*
*June 13, 1988*

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**Bahá'í News**

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**No. 689**

More than 100,000 embrace Cause in India; 11 new Counsellors named . . . 1

Upwards of 3,000 at U.S. Youth Conference pledge service to Cause . . . . 2

Congress again hears testimony of U.S. National Spiritual Assembly . . . . 10

Canada's first 'Festival of Human Spirit' celebrates importance of arts . . . 12

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Youth are ablaze in Indiana

More than 40 declarations of faith in Bahá'u'lláh ... upwards of 3,000 commitments of service to the Cause of God ... nearly 6,000 youth, adults and children from 50 countries and every continent on earth: this was a conference to cherish, to savor and to remember for a lifetime.

What is more important, the 1988 Bahá'í International Youth Conference may be recalled by future generations as the event at which "the stage was set" for a remarkable transformation in the American Bahá'í community, one that would lead to victory in the Six Year Plan and help bring about the process of entry by troops which was, in the words of the Universal House of Justice, "promised by the beloved Master and which Shoghi Effendi said would lead on to mass conversion."

The conference, held June 30-July 4 on the campus of Indiana University in Bloomington, was marked by a serious-mindedness and sense of purpose seldom seen at an event of its size and scope.

This was underscored Sunday afternoon when young people from all over the world stood before a large audience including Counsellors and members of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly and described recent events in their countries that have helped advance the Cause of God, and again that same evening when the National Assembly asked for written pledges of service to the Faith.

As the audience stood and applauded, the pledges began arriving on stage—singly at first, then in handfuls, and finally boxes full of these marvelous commitments to serve, more than 3,000 in all.

The heart-stirring news was cabled immediately to the Universal House of Justice, which said in its reply:

"With joy and thanksgiving we hail the outstanding success of the International Youth Conference in Bloomington, Indiana, which has been distinguished by an unprecedented number of pledges of service to be carried out in support of the goals of the Six Year Plan ...."

"We have full confidence that the American Bahá'í youth, who comprise a strong element of the community honored by the Master with the title of 'apostles of Bahá'u'lláh,' will exert themselves to the fullest to fulfill the pledges they have made at this conference."

While the significance of those commitments cannot be overstated, they were but one aspect of a stupendous gathering whose effects will be felt within the American Bahá'í community for many years to come.

The over-all theme, "The Stage Is Set," was taken from a passage by the Guardian (Messages to America: 1932-46, p.17) in which he says: "...There is no time to lose. There is no room left for vacillation. Multitudes hunger for the Bread of Life."

"The stage is set. The firm and ir-
More than 100,000 embrace Cause as a result of teaching campaign in India’s Uttar Pradesh State

WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS SHARE NEWS RESOUNDING TEACHING VICTORIES INDIA FIRST EVIDENCE RESPONSE RIDVÁN MESSAGE APPEAL.

FOLLOWING DECISION NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DECLARE JUNE MONTH OF MASS TEACHING, STATE BÁHÁ’Í COUNCIL UTTAR PRADESH DEvised SPECIAL PLANS WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ENROLLING WOMEN YOUTH FAMILIES THREE DISTRICTS THAT STATE.

INSPIRED BY COUNSELLORS AND LED BY THREE COORDINATORS TWO COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES 110 DEVOTED SOULS AROSE TO SPREAD LIFE-GIVING MESSAGE OF BÁHÁ’U’LLÁH AMONG THEIR COUNTRYMEN.

RESULT THEIR EFFORTS WITHIN ONE SHORT MONTH WAS BEYOND ALL EXPECTATION. OVER ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND MEN WOMEN YOUTH MANY BELONGING SAME FAMILIES ACCEPTED FAITH.

EFFECTIVE FOLLOW-UP PROGRAM INITIATED ESTABLISHING AT LEAST FIVE DEEPENING INSTITUTES PER MONTH IN CENTRAL AREAS. ALREADY 1,000 NEW BELIEVERS CONTRIBUTED TO FUND SUBSCRIBING TO HINDI BÁHÁ’Í MAGAZINE. LARGE QUANTITY HINDI LITERATURE INCLUDING PICTURE OF MASTER BEING PRODUCED WITH ASSISTANCE COUNSELLORS FOR DISTRIBUTION TO NEW BELIEVERS. AUDIO CASSETTES OF HOLY WRITINGS, PRAYERS, SIMPLE TALKS BEING PREPARED. THREE LARGE RURAL CONFERENCES FOR WOMEN YOUTH FAMILIES BEING PLANNED. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS BEING CONSULTED UPON.

CONFIDENT SUCH VICTORIES ATTAINABLE IN OTHER PARTS OF PLANET AS WELL. URGING FOLLOWERS MOST GREAT NAME THROUGHOUT WORLD ARISE WITH HIGH RESOLVE FOLLOW EXAMPLE THEIR INDIAN BRETHREN CALLING MANKIND TO FAITH OF GOD AT THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE HUMAN HISTORY. EAGERLY AWAITING NEWS RESULTS THEIR EFFORTS. ASSURE ARDENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES BESIEGING BLESSINGS ANCIENT BEAUTY THEIR DETERMINED EFFORTS MASS TEACHING FIELD.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

House of Justice appoints 11 Counsellors to fill vacancies on Continental Boards, pays loving tribute to retiring Counsellors

To the BÁHÁ’ÍS of the World
Dear BÁHÁ’Í Friends,

Recent events have given rise to 11 vacancies in the membership of the Continental Boards of Counsellors. Mr. Adib Taherzadeh has been elected to the Universal House of Justice; Dr. Farzam Arbáb, Mr. Hartmut Grossmann, Mrs. Lauretta King, Mr. Donald Rogers, Mrs. Joy Stevenson, and Mr. Peter Vuyiya have been appointed as Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre.

In addition, ill health has sadly made it impossible for Dr. Chellie Sundram to continue his services as a Counsellor for Asia, Dr. Iraj Ayman and Mrs. Thelma Khelghati have been compelled by circumstances beyond their control to leave, respectively, the continents of Asia and Africa in which they were serving, and Mr. Adam Thorne has had to resign, for personal reasons, from the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe. We wish first to express our profound appreciation of the contributions these dear friends have made to the advancement of the Cause of God during their years of service as Counsellors, and we pray that the blessings of BÁHÁ’U’LLÁH will surround them in all they undertake in the future.

We now have great happiness in announcing the appointment of the following believers as Continental Counsellors:

Africa: Mr. George Allen and Mr. Hizzaya Hissani. The Americas: Mr. Gustavo Correa, Mrs. Jacqueline Delahunt and Dr. William Roberts. Asia: Dr. Kim Myung-Jung and Mrs. Shantha Sundram. Australasia: Mrs. Violette Haake. Europe: Mr. Patrick O’Mara, Mrs. Elisabeth Mühlschlegel and Dr. Shapoor Rassekh.

Furthermore, as two of the Counsellors now appointed to the International Teaching Centre had been Trustees of their respective Continental Funds, we now appoint Counsellor Peter McLaren to be Trustee of the Continental Fund in the Americas, and Counsellor Ben Ayala to be Trustee in Australasia.

As was abundantly apparent at the time of the sixth International BÁHÁ’Í Convention and in the meetings of the Counsellors which followed, the BÁHÁ’Í world has entered on a stage of the greatest importance in its development, when the teaching work throughout the world must be in the forefront of the thoughts of every ardent follower of BÁHÁ’U’LLÁH. The challenges and opportunities are great, and are increasing in number with each passing day. We supplicate the Almighty to grant an unprecedented measure of divine confirmation to the institutions of His embryonic World Order and to His faithful believers who are laboring for the diffusion of His Message in every region of the globe.

With loving BÁHÁ’Í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice
June 16, 1988

Bahá’í News/August 1988 1
In terms of energy and visual excitement, it would be hard to top the superlative Ukrainian Dance Ensemble which came all the way from Chicago to perform at the Youth Conference.

A revocable promise is given. God's own Plan has been set in motion. It is gathering momentum with every passing day. The powers of heaven and earth mysteriously assist in its execution.

"Such an opportunity is irreplaceable. Let the doubter arise and himself verify the truth of such assertions. To try, to persevere, is to ensure ultimate and complete victory."

Every aspect of the conference, from plenary sessions to discussion groups and even social events, was geared toward realizing the goal of that theme: one's personal commitment to arise and serve the Cause of God.

The conference was blessed by the presence of several members of the senior institutions of the Faith whose wise counsel was ardently sought and freely given throughout the five-day event.

They included one member of the Universal House of Justice, Hooper Dunbar; Counsellors Wilma Brady, Jacqueline Delahunt, Robert Harris, William Roberts, Fred Schechter and Arturo Serrano; and five members of the National Spiritual Assembly—William Davis, Alberta Deas, Robert Henderson, Jack McCants and Dorothy Nelson.

Also taking a leading role in the conference, which, as Dr. Henderson pointed out, "was planned by youth for youth," were a number of young speakers and masters of ceremonies from the U.S. and abroad whose outstanding contributions helped make this a truly memorable event.

The task of introducing speakers, entertainers and other participants at plenary sessions was capably handled by half a dozen Baha'i youth including three from the U.S. (Traci Gholar, Ryan Heydarian and Mehr Mansuri) along with Nobi Garrigues (Spain), Rocky Moncho (Botswana) and Terrance Simmons (Guyana).

Apart from the Counsellors, members of the National Assembly and its committees and agencies, the speakers were a diverse group who came from far and near and represented a number of ethnic groups.

They included Nelson Sapad (Southeast Asian now living in California), Sophie Berhane (Ethiopian now studying at the Louhelen Baha'i School in Michigan), Homa Sabet (California), Louis Henrique Beust (Brazil), and Varta Sokhanvar (Canada).

The conference was convened Thursday evening with an opening night social, the first of two presentations of a dramatic three-act play, "Tahirih," by the Louhelen Youth Theatre, and a late-night prayer session by candlelight.

Each morning from Friday through Sunday the youth, children and adults held separate sessions. Afternoons were devoted to discussion groups for parents and youth as well as other...
Above: Bahá'ís and their guests gather in front of Indiana University's Assembly Hall to prepare for one of the Youth Conference's plenary sessions.

Below: The wide-ranging entertainment included music by Persian santour player Kamel Missaghian from Puerto Rico.

special activities, while evening sessions saw all groups coming together in IU's Assembly Hall for inspirational talks and entertainment.

A highlight of the Saturday evening session was the presentation of a plaque by the Spiritual Assembly of Bloomington to Dr. Herman B. Wells, long-time chancellor of Indiana University, recognizing his many years of devotion to the causes of world peace and human rights.

The following afternoon a tree was planted at the IU arboretum, also in honor of Dr. Wells.

Monday morning's closing session included a presentation honoring Tomilea Allison, the mayor of Bloomington, and a "challenge to the American Bahá'í community" by the Counsellors and members of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Other special events included:

- A Friday evening talent show featuring performers from across the country.
- Late-night discussion groups at several locations on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
- A FUNd Run to raise money for the completion of the Arc on Mount Carmel.
- A "Celebration of the Family" on Saturday afternoon whose centerpiece was a performance by Bahá'í singer/composer Red Grammer.
- A Sunday evening concert by well-known Bahá'í entertainer Dan Seals.
- A second performance Saturday afternoon of the play "Táhirih."
- A celebration that same evening of "The Unity of Mankind" with music and dancing.
- Several programs especially for Persian believers including a slide show, "The Time Is Now," and a reception for refugees hosted by the National Persian-American Affairs Committee.

Each of the plenary sessions was centered around a theme whose cumulative impact was designed to inspire the individual Bahá'í to arise in service to the Cause. Those themes were:

- Friday morning, "The Significance of This Day."
- Friday evening, "Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation."
- Saturday morning, "The Individual's Mission."
- Saturday evening, "The Immedi-
There were, of course, activities for those of all ages.

ate Future.”
• Sunday morning, “A New Attitude.”
• Sunday evening, “The Time Is Now.”
• Monday morning, “Let the Doubter Arise.”

The wide-ranging and provocative discussion groups for youth included something for nearly everyone, answering such questions as “Are Bahá’ís socialists?” and “Is Money the Root of All Evil?” and covering topics in such diverse areas as “the promise of world peace,” life as a single adult Bahá’í, sexism and the media, prayer and meditation, families in crisis, a fresh approach to career/vocations, and “Model United Nations: an international experience.”

Meanwhile, parents were discussing topics that included developing cultural pride in one’s children, moral challenges facing youth, spiritual and psychological survival in the ’80s, spiritualization of the work place, developing your child’s potential through reading and writing, and discipline: parenting’s “most challenging issue.”

In addition, there were two discussion groups for pre-youth: “Calling All Younger Youth!” (conducted by Counsellors Wilma Brady and Robert Harris), and “Set Yourself Free!” (conducted by Cindy Savage, author of the new novel, Nothing in Common).

Ms. Savage’s book was a best-seller at the conference, whose over-all sales were described by a representative of the Bahá’í Publishing Trust and Distribution Service as “the best in at least a decade.”

The conference was front-page news in the Sunday edition of the local newspaper, the Herald-Times, which described the event in a lengthy article with color photograph as “the biggest ever held in Bloomington.”

The friends were also welcomed by a number of billboards and signs on roads and business establishments in and around the city.

The plenary sessions for youth (mornings) and youth, adults and children (evenings) were a skillful blend of talks and entertainment designed to inform, edify and inspire everyone at the conference and to instill a greater love for and commitment to the Cause of God.

That they succeeded in that purpose was evident in the large number of commitments made in response to the National Spiritual Assembly’s request for tangible pledges of service.

The spirit of those commitments was equaled by that of two performing groups who, having rehearsed for months especially for the conference, were asked to relinquish their time so
From the children's reaction, it would seem that language is no barrier to entertainment.

Although greatly disappointed, both groups—"Global Beat" from San Diego and "Fourth Epoch" from Michigan—agreed without hesitation to do so.

The speakers at this grandly international event came from many countries (others attending the conference came from as far away as Korea, Nepal, New Zealand and South Africa) and included several groups of youth and pre-youth whose remarks were especially well-received.

The first of these group presentations, "The Vibrating Influences of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation," was given Friday evening by Shahrokh Bahador, Leon Graham, Parisa Payman, Natasha Miller, Glen Evans and Ricky Martinez.

A second, "Serving the Faith," on Saturday morning, consisted of brief remarks on that theme by Adriana Tomás, Bobby Ahdieh, Ndely Agbaw, Margie Bulkin, Rambod Hashemi and John Stahl.

On Sunday evening, "Summoning the Heroes" was addressed by Kaylin Anderson, Michelle Lancaster, Verdia Louis, Cyprian Sajabi and Jene Wallace.

The youngest speaker at a plenary session was 12-year-old Saba Firoozi of Glencoe, Illinois, whose theme was "Bahá'u'lláh."

Saba is a participant in a children's public speaking project conducted by Gayle Woolson who gave three workshops on public speaking as a means of developing children and youth from "ordinary" to "extraordinary."
While the youth were meeting each morning in Assembly Hall, parents and other adults were at the Auditorium for talks and other presentations by such well-deepened Bahá'ís as Counsellors Wilma Brady and Fred Schechter; Judge Dorothy Nelson, chairman, and William Davis, treasurer of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly; Helen Markovitch Sanchez, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Costa Rica; Bahia Mitchell from the Bahá'í World Centre; John Smith of the National Teaching Committee, and Linda Ahdieh of the National Youth Committee.

Other activities for parents included two "open mike" sessions and a multimedia presentation, "The Seven Year Plan: A Retrospective."

The children's program, held each day in the Student Union, was varied and interesting with entertainment, games and other activities for those ages 3-11.

More than 200 people of all ages took part in Sunday evening's FUNd Run. On-site pledges to the Fund exceeded $7,200 with thousands of dollars more pledged by sponsoring individuals and communities.

One runner completed 106 laps, generating an estimated $6,000 in contributions.

In a sense, of course, everyone at this most remarkable conference was "running," or at the very least moving quickly forward toward a deeper understanding of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and a greater commitment to teaching, which the Universal House of Justice said in its Ridván 1988 message to the Bahá'ís of the world is "the food of the spirit; it brings life to unawakened souls and raises the new heaven and the new earth; it uplifts the banner of a unified world; it ensures the victory of the Covenant and brings those who give their lives to it the supernal happiness of attainment to the good pleasure of their Lord."

More photos on pages 8-9 →
Above: When it comes to play time, 'the messier the better' seems to bring the most pleasure. Above right: Hooper Dunbar, a member of the Universal House of Justice, addresses the conference. Right: One of the special sessions for the Persian Bahá'ís. Below right: The Los Angeles Bahá'í Youth Workshop entertains at an outdoor 'Family Day' event. Below: A game of 'hide-and-seek,' perhaps?
Above: IU Chancellor Herman Wells (right) is given an award by the Spiritual Assembly of Bloomington. Right: Some of the 3,200-plus pledges of service arrive onstage. Below right: Young people from 30 countries tell of recent advances of the Cause in their areas. Below: Red Grammer entertains.
United States

Congress hears testimony on Iran

For the third time in six years, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States has presented testimony about the persecution of Bahá’ís in Iran before the House Foreign Affairs Committee’s Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations.

Appearing at the Subcommittee session June 29 were the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, Dr. Robert C. Henderson, and its secretary for External Affairs, Dr. Firuz Kazemzadeh.

Also testifying on behalf of the Bahá’ís were Rep. John Porter of Illinois and Richard Schifter, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs.

The hearing followed by less than two months the introduction in the Senate and House of a joint resolution calling on the government of Iran to respect the civil rights of all its citizens including the Bahá’ís who are not protected under the Constitution that was put in place after the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

This latest resolution—also the third since 1982—has 90 co-sponsors in the House and 39 in the Senate.

Although no Bahá’í has been executed in Iran since last September and none has been arrested since last February, said Dr. Kazemzadeh, “the Iranian authorities have not given any indication of relenting in their explicitly stated purpose of destroying the Bahá’í community...”

After listing a number of hopeful signs concerning the treatment of Iran’s Bahá’í community in recent months, Dr. Kazemzadeh said, “It is an unfortunate fact that the persecution of the Iranian Bahá’ís has not ended and may at any time flare up again in its most savage forms.

“International complications, economic crises, changes in leadership, domestic upheavals could produce situations in which one or another group of extremists would want to use the Bahá’ís for a scapegoat, as has happened repeatedly in the last 150 years.”

Dr. Henderson presented the testimony of two Bahá’ís who, he said, “cannot appear in person because threats have been made against members of their families still living in Iran.”

Both of these individuals, according to their testimony, were harassed, imprisoned and tortured by Islamic authorities before they were able to flee the country.

The National Assembly also presented Iranian government documents showing instances in which Bahá’ís in that country were dismissed from schools and employment, denied business licenses, pensions, inheritance, compensation for injury and even a proper burial, and had legal marriages annulled by the courts.

In every case, the reason given was none other than membership in the “errant sect,” that is, the Bahá’í Faith.

Nevertheless, said Dr. Kazemzadeh, “in 1987 there began to appear signs of change in the Iranian government’s treatment of Bahá’ís.”

Since last September, he told the
Dr. Firuz Kazemzadeh (right), the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly's secretary for External Affairs, testifies before the House Foreign Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations. Looking on is the National Assembly's secretary, Dr. Robert C. Henderson.

Subcommittee, "no Bahá'í has been executed; and no Bahá'í has been arrested since February 1988.

"Moreover, there has been a significant reduction in the number of Bahá'ís held in the various Iranian prisons.

"Eighteen months ago more than 750 Bahá'ís were in prison. The latest data show 152 . . . .

"Until recently, for every Bahá'í released, another one would be jailed. Currently, releases occur without new arrests, thus genuinely reducing the Bahá'í prison population.

"There have been no reports of torture inflicted on any Bahá'í prisoners in the last several months," said Dr. Kazemzadeh, "and there are indications that the general treatment of prisoners has been somewhat improved."

For the first time, he added, "a few Bahá'ís have been issued visas and permitted legally to leave the country . . . .

"In several instances Bahá'ís whose homes, shops or farms had been confiscated were permitted to resume ownership. It must be noted, however, that as of now only a small fraction of confiscated properties has been returned."

One of the most encouraging developments, said Dr. Kazemzadeh, "has occurred in the field of education," as some Bahá'í students who had been expelled from schools and colleges have been invited to resume their studies.

"We do not know how many," he said, "and it remains to be seen whether the right to education will be extended to all Bahá'ís or will be granted only in exceptional cases."

In the absence of firm data, Dr. Kazemzadeh said, "it is futile to speculate about the reasons for the change in the treatment of the Bahá'ís by the authorities in Iran.

"Whatever the reasons, we welcome the change and hope that it will continue until the Iranian Bahá'ís are guaranteed all their human rights."

And despite the recent improvement in their condition, he said, "American Bahá'ís hope that the United States will continue to show, through its elected representatives in Congress, its concern for the fate of the Iranian Bahá'í community . . . .

"The case of the Bahá'ís in Iran," Dr. Kazemzadeh concluded, "is such a pure instance of religious persecution that it may serve as an archetype.

"The American Bahá'ís hope that advocacy of the cause of the Iranian Bahá'ís would not only alleviate the sufferings of the Iranian Bahá'ís but help all who suffer persecution for their faith."
‘Festival of Spirit’ celebrates arts

There was a burgeoning of creative expression at Canada’s first “Festival of the Human Spirit,” which was held June 30-July 3 at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario.

The focus of the event was the importance of the arts in celebrating the beauty and diversity of the human spirit and contributing to a better world.

An estimated 1,000 people attended the festival, which was sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada and the Bahá’í Arts Council of Canada, an organization that was formed as a goal of the Six Year Plan.

At one of the opening sessions, Dr. Hossain Danesh, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, paraphrased a Japanese Haiku: “When the almond tree was asked of God, it blossomed.”

There was much evidence of blossoming in the multi-faceted artistic presentations, exhibits, talks about marriage and education, and activities for children and youth, all of which served to encourage and integrate the artistic and intellectual capacities of the Bahá’í and non-Bahá’í participants (about one-third of the performers were not Bahá’ís).

Highlights on the main stage included music by Andrew Pemberton-Pigott; santour player Kiu Haghighi accompanied by his daughter, Keely, and Nancy Ward; a celebration of the folklore of French Canada presented by Ellie Melling-Cyr and a company of 18 singers, dancers and musicians; and the premiere of a ballet based on the story of Badi’, performed by Roderick Johnson & Co.

Among other evening events were a disco dance for people of all ages and two evenings of late-night informal performances (music, poetry and story-telling) hosted by Nancy Acker-son & Co.

Among the highlights were talks and poetry readings by Roger White; a slide presentation and talks by Fariburz Sahba, who designed the Bahá’í House of Worship in India; and a slide presentation and talk by artist and Counsellor Donald Rogers, a member of the Arts Council.

Many other presentations, performances and workshops were held in various buildings on campus. Topics ranged from “Educating Children for a Peaceful World: The Role of the Arts” to “The Art of Japanese Flower Arranging,” “Sacred Ceremonial Sand Painting” and “Out of Africa: Views and Fashions.”

Dramatic performances included a play, “Anticipation,” by John Dunn; “The Passing of Exquisite Music,” a one-woman play about Martha Root, written and directed by Ann Boyles and performed by Susan Lyons; and “Lord of the Flies,” a creative adaptation acted by children (ages 9-16) under the direction of Daniel Danis of Group Capture.

Among other highlights were talks and poetry readings by poet Roger White; a slide presentation and talks by architect Fariburz Sahba, who designed the Bahá’í House of Worship in India; and a slide presentation and talk by artist and Counsellor Donald Rogers.

Americans who took part in the festival included Kiu and Keely Haghighi (santour/piano), Mark Ochu (concert pianist), Donna Kime (jazz/classical fusion singer/pianist), and Deborah Chicurel Conow and Anne Gordon Atkinson, who performed dramatized versions of the poetry of Roger White with music by Donna Kime and lighting by designer Danny Phillips.

Festival exhibits included works by five contemporary Canadian artists, four of whom are non-Bahá’ís: Donald Rogers, Greg Curnoe, Jamelie Hassan, Geoffrey Holdsworth and Susan Shantz.

In addition, a “Festival Emporium” featured art works and crafts for sale.

The children’s program included many quality performances and workshops in dance, drama and music. The Children’s Festival Choir, composed of many of the children at the festival, performed for everyone at the closing ceremony.

Also provided was a day care program with arts and other activities for children under five years of age.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Canada has decided to make the Festival of the Human Spirit an annual event during the remainder of the Six Year Plan.

Next year’s festival is tentatively scheduled to be held in eastern Canada, with the following year’s in one of the western provinces.

The power of the spirit was certainly evident at this first festival celebrating the diversity and creativity of humanity. Future festivals promise an even more abundant blossoming of the artistic efforts of Bahá’ís and their guests.—Anne Gordon Atkinson

12 August 1988/Bahá’í News
Report on ‘dynamic’ Ruaha School

The first Bahá’í secondary school in Africa is a dynamic place to visit and to pioneer. The Ruaha Technical Secondary School, which is nestled on some 50 acres along the Ruaha River and several kilometers outside the town of Iringa, Tanzania, at an elevation of about 5,000 feet, was begun a mere three years ago with the laying of the foundation stone on October 29, 1985.

Only 55 days later, when the first classroom building was completed and the school administrators asked permission to open, the government Ministry of Education was astonished, and sent several officers to check the buildings. They were quickly reassured, and classes began on March 27, 1986, with students in Form I, the first year of high school. Now in its third year of operation, the school has Forms I, II and III with about 300 students. Plans are to continue adding students until Forms I-VI are included; the latter two Forms are above the usual four of high school and will teach the technical subjects—air conditioning and refrigeration, auto mechanics and electric power production are some of the possibilities.

The school is on property donated by the Town Council of Iringa. All buildings are constructed of brick which is fired right on the property; they include classrooms, a science lab, offices, a canteen and shop for everyday items, a staff room, and teachers’ housing. The school is owned by the National Spiritual Assembly of Tanzania and approved by the country’s Ministry of Education.

Besides regular classwork, each student takes part in regularly scheduled activities in self-reliance—carrying bricks, planting bananas, digging foundations, watering and weeding his own 10 trees (gifts of the Town Council), and so on.

The curriculum, which is determined by the Ministry, includes English, Swahili (the national language), geography, history, agriculture, chemistry, physics, biology, political science, mathematics and religion—Christian, Islamic and Bahá’í studies. Students sit for examinations in these subjects at the end of Forms II and IV. Besides regular classwork, each student takes part in regularly scheduled activities in self-reliance—carrying bricks, planting bananas, digging foundations, watering and weeding his own 10 trees (gifts of the Town Council), and so on. These activities are designed to foster pride in the school based on participation in all its aspects.

The headmaster, Hushang Garmroud, is originally from Iran. He and his wife, Susan, who is from Lebanon, have lived in Iringa for 12 years while Mr. Garmroud gained excellent experience in a growing secondary school following his education in India. Mrs. Garmroud studied at the American University in Beirut and has served as one of the school’s English teachers. Three of their four children were born in Iringa.

As of March 1988, four pioneers were on the staff—an Australian with experience in teaching science, and three Americans, one of whom is trained in agriculture and oversees the banana plantation and agriculture classes. Another is setting up the technical aspects of the school, while the third teaches English. The remaining teachers are Tanzanians, two of whom were trained abroad, the others locally.

Already, the school is highly respected for its high standard of instruction and for efficiently building and outfitting its facilities. Evidence of this respect can be found in the many requests for enrollment of their children by local and national government officials. Emphasis is placed on regular attendance by students and teachers, and on the use of English throughout the school, in and out of classes. In cases of infractions of school rules, parents are called to the school for consultation, and students often must perform extra work as punishment. In addition, free after-school tutorial sessions are held for students who need extra help.

With a pump producing plenty of clean water and a small shop selling a number of household items, the school serves the nearby community and has also hosted student teachers from the training college in Iringa. Especially for students, the school shows weekly video tapes, serves inexpensive snacks in the canteen, and sponsors clubs. For example, the science club recently built a demonstration solar water heater.

Among the attractions for pioneers to Iringa are a pleasant climate, electricity and running water in the staff housing, a friendly staff of fellow workers, a community of about 200 Bahá’ís in Iringa itself with a fairly new Bahá’í Center, and a Bahá’í-run nursery school in Iringa. Expansion plans at the school include hostels for students and classrooms in which to house additional students and the technical program.

This article on the Bahá’í-operated Ruaha Technical Secondary School in Iringa, Tanzania, was written by Laurel West Kessler of Shingletown, California, who visited the school with her family in August 1987.

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The world

‘Street plays’ aid India development

An innovative rural development project was held last April 1-6 in India’s Jhabua District. Using drama, the projectors aimed at motivating tribal villagers in self-development. The project was organized by the Jhabua local center of the Bahá’í Vocational Institute for Rural Women, Indore, and sponsored by CAPART (Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India).

The project director, Miss Janak Palta, has established excellent relations with the government and other officials, all of whom have praised the project highly.

Five coordinators from each of the district’s five villages were chosen and trained in rural development. They deepened their understanding of the needs and demands of village life and how to take the initiative to resolve difficulties and meet those needs.

Nearly 300 tribal members in each of the villages enjoyed and responded to educational “street plays” staged by the projectors. The villagers expressed their appreciation for the messages conveyed in the plays whose themes included health, child care, hygiene, water sanitation, forest development, education, self-employment, family planning, and other developmental issues.

A visit to the project by Dr. Prayag Mahta of the government Ministry of Rural Development received newspaper coverage.

Canary Islands

More than 100 people took part in the National Youth School of the Canary Islands last April. Among them were 50 youth, 20 children and 12 seekers as well as members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Canary Islands and one Auxiliary Board member.

Ecuador

The exciting finish of a 250 km (155-mile) foot race through the Andes mountains was witnessed last March 20 by some 2,000 people gathered at Radio Bahá’í in Otavalo.

The crowd welcomed more than 300 runners who had begun at dawn the day before to cover the rugged, mountainous course of a “Chasqui for Unity” sponsored by Radio Bahá’í to mark the Bahá’í new year. (Chasqui is a Quechuan word meaning runner-messenger, and refers to an ancient Andean tradition repopularized in recent years by Radio Bahá’í.)

The runners carried translations in Quechua of the peace statement as well as Naw-Rúz greetings to local officials in 44 country towns and villages reached by Radio Bahá’í broadcasts.

As excitement built among the people of Imbabura Province, hundreds gathered at the radio station in Otavalo for a dual celebration—the arrival of the runners and a festival of Andean music.

The 13 groups who were finalists in the annual Festival of Folkloric Music put on a magnificent program which lasted into the late evening hours of March 20.
Germany

On March 21, Naw-Rúz, the prestigious Peutinger Collegium, an association for the promotion of humanitarian and cultural activities, held a gala dinner in Munich, Germany, to give public testimony to the peaceful spirit of tolerance shown by the Baha'is of Iran in their time of severe difficulty and to pay respect to the Faith in general.

About 230 non-Baha'is including leading dignitaries and people of prominence from southern Germany were present with 10 representatives from the Baha'i community.

A German member of the European Parliament, Dr. Otto von Habsburg, spoke about human rights, praised the teachings of Baha'u'llah and related them to world peace.

The president of the Collegium commented that this “Baha'i evening” had drawn the greatest participation of any event that body had ever sponsored.

Everyone at the dinner received a copy of the peace statement and other literature about the Faith.

In 1987 the Peutinger Collegium distributed copies of the peace statement to members of the Bavarian State Parliament and, in December of that year, published an article about the persecution of Baha'is in Iran in its news organ which is distributed to some 30,000 leading figures in southern Germany.

United States

A cooperative effort encouraged by the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly and its Office of External Affairs, and implemented by the United Nations representative, has sparked participation by six selected local Spiritual Assemblies in a project called “Africa Focus.” The project's principal sponsor is the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service; co-sponsor is the YMCA of the U.S. whose branches will serve as liaisons at the local level.

Six pilot cities were chosen by the sponsors to initiate efforts designed to heighten nationwide awareness of the critical plight of an entire continent, Africa, which was described by the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, as "truly awakening and finding herself and (which) undoubtedly has a great message to give and a great contribution to make to the advancement of world civilization."

The local task forces in these cities will be composed of civic leaders and representatives of various non-governmental organizations including the Baha'i Spiritual Assemblies. Their goal will be to build in the community an awareness of Africa’s economic and social problems and of African initiatives being taken to solve them. American partnership in long-term solutions will be crucial to the success of African development efforts.

Although participation was entirely optional, the six Spiritual Assemblies in the pilot cities have eagerly chosen to join the effort. They are the Spiritual Assemblies of Atlanta, Georgia; Birmingham, Alabama; Boston, Massachusetts; Cincinnati, Ohio; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and New York City, New York.

First and second phases of the project involving task force formation and consultation have already begun. Third phase activities are to include community-wide conferences or symposia on Africa, teacher workshops for curriculum development, fact-finding missions, lecture series at universities, media roundtables, and other means of generating interest and support.

Swaziland

When Baha'is in a village in Swaziland arrived to organize the funeral of a Baha'i in a neighboring community, they found that a Christian minister had already arranged the service. After agreeing that the Baha'is would carry on the funeral, the minister was amazed to see that women could complete the task.

He asked about the Faith and invited the Baha'is to his church where, following the service, each of the Baha'is gave a brief talk, with the meeting lasting for two and one-half hours.

The minister then distributed Baha'i pamphlets to each of the 50 adults and 20 youth present, all of whom were moved by what they had heard.

Dr. Peter McLaren, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for the Americas, addresses a large group of Baha'is last December 12 at the home of Dr. and Mrs. M.H. Jamalabadi in Trinidad, West Indies. Dr. McLaren described the beauty and magnificence of the Baha'i House of Worship near New Delhi, India, and spoke on a wide range of other topics during the evening.
Canada

Howard J. Brown, a former Auxiliary Board member and long-time member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska who in 1963 was the first person ever to cast a vote for the election of the Universal House of Justice, died May 27 in Palmer, Alaska, two months after his 79th birthday.

United Kingdom

Pictured is the exhibit mounted by the Bahá’í Publishing Trust of the United Kingdom last March at the London International Book Fair. The prominent stall featured a wide and colorful range of books from many Bahá’í publishers. The fair was officially opened by Her Royal Highness the Duchess of York whose tour of the exhibits brought her past the Bahá’í display. Seen here (left to right) are George Ballentyne from the Bahá’í Publishing Trust, Wendi Momen from George Ronald Publisher, Bahá’í author Joseph Sheppard, and Donna Adamson, director of information at the Bahá’í National Centre in London.

In 1957 Mr. Brown was elected a delegate to the first National Convention of the Bahá’ís of Alaska and was elected vice-chairman of the newly formed National Spiritual Assembly, serving in that capacity for eight years until appointed to the Auxiliary Board by the Hand of the Cause of God Zikrullah Khadem.

In 1963, all nine members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska were in Haifa, Israel, for the historic International Convention at which the Universal House of Justice was first elected.

Since National Assemblies were seated alphabetically, Alaska was in the first row. Mr. Brown, always a gentleman, stood aside as the women took their seats in the middle of the row. As a result, he was seated on the aisle when balloting began, and was the first person called upon to cast a ballot.

In 1948, Mr. Brown and his wife, Lea, had helped to form the second local Spiritual Assembly in Alaska, the Anchorage Recording District (now Oceanside), and in 1960 they helped form the first Spiritual Assembly of the Matanuska Valley before pioneering to Wrangell, Petersburg and Haines.

Mr. Brown was the first person in Alaska to be appointed to the Auxiliary Board. His territory included Washington, Idaho and northern Oregon. He served the Board until 1982 when his deteriorating health forced him to resign.

About 25 people from the Anglican Church, the Uniting Church, the Catholic Church and the Bahá’í Faith attended a public meeting last April 24 in Ontario, Canada, which was organized by the Richmond Hill Ecumenical Peace Group.

The featured speaker was Geoffrey Pearson, executive director of the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security and the son of former Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson.

After he was introduced, Mr. Pearson said that his third daughter is a Bahá’í, has spent some time in India and is presently working on a degree in religious studies.
Singapore

On March 8, International Women's Day, Mrs. Shirin Fozdar, a Bahá'í from Singapore, was given a plaque by the Singapore Council of Women in appreciation of her work for the equality of men and women and women's rights.

More than 100 people attended the event, many of whom had an opportunity to hear about the Bahá'í Faith for the first time.

Mrs. Fozdar was described as an ardent champion of women's rights, an influential leader, an idealist and a well-known social worker.

As early as 1925 she had taken an active interest in women's issues, and in 1952, after moving to Singapore from India, she founded the Singapore Council of Women.

Through the council, Mrs. Fozdar has worked to bring to public attention the discrimination and mistreatment of women and has campaigned against polygamous marriage.

Her many activities have included leading delegations to international women's conferences, presenting lectures in many countries, and starting schools for rural children in Thailand and India.

New Zealand

Bahá'ís presented two papers last May 12-15 at the World Conference on Refugee Mental Health in Wellington, New Zealand.

More than 200 people attended the event including the governor-general, the minister of social welfare, the United Nations high commissioners for refugees from Bangkok, Canberra and Geneva, and representatives of scores of other organizations.

The papers presented by the Bahá'ís, one on refugee mental health and the other on the New Zealand Bahá'í Refugee Resettlement Program, were received with considerable interest by the 24 attendees in spite of three simultaneous alternative programs.

The Bahá'í participation in the event led to many opportunities to present the principles of the Faith and to foster cordial relations with the community at large.

Four Bahá'í communities in and around Auckland, New Zealand, recently braved wet weather to dedicate a Bahá'í Peace Grove in Marlborough Park, Glenfield.

Ivory Coast

During Intercalary Days last February, the Bahá'ís of Danane, Ivory Coast, went to the local prison to serve lunch to its 178 inmates.

At midday, the prisoners were brought from their cells to the courtyard. A prayer for forgiveness was read, followed by a talk and guidance relating to the question, "Should a criminal be punished?"

The talk was based on the chapter "The right method of treating criminals" in Some Answered Questions.

Brazil

A recent nationwide contest for the design of the National Bahá'í Center in Brasilia, Brazil, drew entries from some of the most prominent architects in that country.

The contest was sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly and planned by the Brasilia section of the Brazilian Institute of Architects.

Eighty-two architectural teams (composed of about 200 individuals) from 11 states in Brazil entered the competition. A panel of judges chosen by the Brazilian Institute of Architects included four leading Brazilian architects and a representative of the National Spiritual Assembly, Mrs. Venus Sahibi Peseshk, who is herself an architect.

The Journal of the Brazilian Institute of Architects advertised the contest alongside an article about the Faith which included a photograph of the Bahá'í House of Worship in India.

The award-winning entry used contemporary Brazilian architectural design in which were incorporated Bahá'í concepts.

An inauguration ceremony was held last December for the Bahá'í-operated School of the Nations in Brasilia, Brazil.

The ceremony, which marked the school's move to its permanent location, coincided with the week in which Brasilia was declared by the United Nations to be a "patrimony of humanity."

The program included prayers and readings from the scriptures of many religions and musical performances by staff members. At its close, a bronze plaque bearing a quotation from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh was unveiled.
TO THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

JOYOUSLY SHARE NEWS EXCITING RECENT DEVELOPMENT. YOUTH AMBASSADORS OF AMERICA, WITH HEAD OFFICE IN BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON, U.S. MAINLAND, SPONSORED YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM ON MAUl PAST TWO WEEKS. PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED ELEVEN YOUTH, FOUR ADULTS FROM SOVIET UNION INCLUDING WIFE, CHILDREN OF MINISTER OF SCIENCE VELIKOV, PLUS FIVE YOUTH FROM CALIFORNIA, ABOUT FIFTEEN MAUl YOUTH AND OTHER LOCAL PEOPLE.

LSA MAKAWAO (MAUl) VOLUNTEERED BAHÁ'Í ASSISTANCE WITH COOKING INCLUDING ORGANIZING, SEEKING FOOD DONATIONS, PLANNING MENUS, ALL COOKING AND GENERAL CLEANUP. TWO BAHÁ'IS FROM KAUAI, ONE YOUTH AND ONE ADULT, FLEW TO MAUl TO SERVE AS FULL-TIME KITCHEN CREW AND ASSIST MAUl BAHÁ'IS. ALL WERE INTRODUCED EARLY ON AND WERE KNOWN AS BAHÁ'IS AND REFERRED TO AS THE BAHÁ'Í YOUTH THROUGHOUT TWO-WEEK PROGRAM.

WONDERFUL RAPPORT ESTABLISHED, BONDING AND FRIENDSHIPS DEVELOPED, LEADING TO TEARFUL FAREWELLS, ENTHUSIASM TO REMAIN FRIENDS AND VISIT EACH OTHER'S COUNTRY. LAST NIGHT (JULY 28) DURING EVENING FAREWELL SOCIAL, BAHÁ'Í YOUTH WERE INTRODUCED AND AS THEIR FAREWELL THEY PRESENTED COPIES OF 'THE PROMISE OF WORLD PEACE' TO EACH PARTICIPANT. EACH PEACE STATEMENT WAS INSCRIBED WITH FOLLOWING: 'TO THE YOUTH AMBASSADORS OF THE WORLD: WE BELIEVE WORLD PEACE IS NOT ONLY POSSIBLE BUT INEVITABLE. WE ENCOURAGE YOU, CO-WORKERS, IN YOUR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL. WITH LOVE FROM YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS, THE BAHÁ'Í YOUTH.'

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF HAWAII
JULY 29, 1988

Bahá'í News
Bahá'í Year 145
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Taiwan

Teaching successes: A personal account

The Bahá’í world has been hearing about the successful teaching in Taiwan from many sources, but most specifically from the Universal House of Justice. Messages relating statistics of the large numbers of enrollments and the consolidation activities have been circulated to National Spiritual Assemblies and published worldwide. The message dated February 7, 1988, reported 1,165 new believers, representing a 74 per cent increase in the Taiwan Bahá’í community’s membership. When I left Taiwan in March 1988 there were more than 1,500 new believers. The city of Taipei had, on one weekend, enrolled 50 new Bahá’ís, and the work continues. The needs were so great that the National Spiritual Assembly had tripled its Fund goal, while contributions had risen by 70 per cent.

Why Taiwan? What makes Taiwan newsworthy? The Bahá’í world has had reports of large numbers of enrollments in the past. India’s teaching victories are well-known, while areas in Africa and South America have also seen large increases in the number of enrolled Bahá’ís. But somehow Taiwan has caught the imagination of the friends everywhere. For many of us who were and are directly involved, it’s no mystery why Taiwan is news.

But first, a personal note: When I first heard, last August, that Taiwan had had 700 new enrollments since May, I was not overly excited. Like many who had been deeply involved in what we sometimes refer to as “mass teaching,” I had become disillusioned with the idea. Too often I had returned to places where I had previously taught only to find no interest or recognition on the part of those who had signed enrollment cards. More often, the new believers couldn’t be found at all! It was too painful. I felt there was a crying need for continuity, for a plan, for a support system. It seemed that all we ever did was “hit and run.” The thrill was in the teaching, the enrolling. This I knew was not enough, but I couldn’t change things by myself. I had found my teaching niche working with the Chinese. Let others, I told myself, experience the heartache of trying to locate mass-taught new believers for consolidation purposes. I was finished with mass teaching campaigns.

Then I was asked to go to Taiwan to coordinate the National Spiritual Assembly’s consolidation program. Now, that got my attention! The National Spiritual Assembly of Taiwan had plans to teach and consolidate, all at the same time! It seemed a dream come true. I couldn’t wait to go.

I stayed in Taiwan for five months. So much happened, and it wasn’t always easy. After working so closely with the National Spiritual Assembly, the Auxiliary Board members, and the many lovely friends—Chinese, pioneers and traveling teachers—in that vibrant community I would love to share the stories everywhere if I could. But I want to tell of the victories, which are by no means limited to the number of enrollments. The new believers are happy to become Bahá’ís.

This personal account of recent teaching successes in Taiwan was written by Jene Bellows of Skokie, Illinois, who spent five months in Taiwan as coordinator of the National Spiritual Assembly’s consolidation program.
they love the teachings and are quick to enroll. Many are educated, thinking people, open to learning about the world. It was not hard to teach them. I could tell you about Yang Hong-I, Ah Kuan, Michael, Steve, Tony, Andy, Jane, Hwei Jie and many, many others... all the new Chinese Bahá'ís whose hearts were touched by Bahá'u'lláh. I remember and still share through correspondence the joy of these new believers.

But to my mind the story to tell first is that of the teachers who overcame self and ego every day, and taught the Faith with such love: the young Malaysian girls; a Japanese youth who is an example to young Bahá'ís everywhere; the traveling teachers who came from Alaska, Australia, Hong Kong, Macau, Malaysia, Singapore and the United States. I remember laughter and tears, silliness and sadness, praying and playing. And I remember hard-earned wisdom.

Consultation! I remember consultation: mini-courses, multi-languages, all working, teaching, praying together. We overcame differences because all decisions were made through consultation. Love and respect were the result.

In the beginning the enrollments were youth. Soon after I arrived last October, I made my first full circuit around the island to the teaching sites. Of all the new believers, I met only two adults at that time. When I left Taiwan, however, there were many adults among the new believers... whole families had become Bahá'ís... the police chief of a village, high-school teachers, business people, to name a few. The new believers were bringing their friends and family members to meet the Bahá'ís, to help them learn about Bahá'u'lláh.

Most of the teaching, at least initially, was done in local tea and coffee houses. It is the way in Taiwan. In the U.S., the young people hang out in shopping malls. When I was young, we hung out in drug stores. The youth gathering places were where the Bahá'ís made friends and taught the Faith.

As success followed success, the Universal House of Justice spread the news around the Bahá'í world. National Spiritual Assemblies responded to the call for help and made goals to send traveling teachers to Taiwan. Many young people soon arrived to help; but a significant development helped broaden the base of enrollments: older Bahá'ís, adults from other countries, joined the teams. A member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska came to Taiwan for three months. With one of the Malaysian Chinese teachers, she moved into the Bahá'í Center in Makung City, in the Peng Hu Islands (formerly the Pescadores). A wonderful couple, senior citizens from Vancouver, Canada, rented their home and came to Taiwan for four months and lived, with a Taiwanese girl, in the Bahá'í Center in Taidong, a town in southeastern Taiwan where about 400 young people had become Bahá'ís within a few weeks.

Other adults soon joined the teams.
Old and young alike worked side by side, teaching and deepening. The younger new believers showered love on the older Bahá’í friends. The diversity of the teachers attracted considerable attention, and the credibility of the teaching work was enhanced. To the Chinese, age is an asset. The older you are, the more important you are in the family and the more respect you have earned. For many months, the teachers on the teams had all been younger people. It wasn’t until the gray-haired friends joined the teaching teams that the older Chinese began to listen. And to enroll.

And what of consolidation? This is the question on everyone’s mind. How does it work? Does it work? The friends are looking for a model, for a guaranteed successful way to teach—to expand and consolidate.

There is no guarantee, except to follow the teachings given to us so generously by the Central Figures of the Faith and our beloved Universal House of Justice.

The letters from the Guardian and the House of Justice published in the booklet “A Special Measure of Love” tell us what to do. The letters from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the Tablets of the Divine Plan tell us how to teach, as do the letters and instructions of the Guardian in The Advent of Divine Justice. It is not a secret.

In Taiwan there was unity. There was obedience. There was love. There was audacity. There was creativity. There was perseverance. There was sacrifice. There was prayer. There was humility. And there were tests. Group tests were resolved through consultation. The only time we got in trouble was when we didn’t follow through on the decisions that were made. Sometimes there were misunderstandings about a decision. That’s when trust came in, and flexibility accompanied by a willingness to sacrifice self. I saw the friends, all of us, members of institutions, and teachers young and old, grow. Maturity was the result.

It all began with the National Spiritual Assembly. Several years ago, when the Universal House of Justice called for a vast increase in the enrollment of new believers from all strata of society, the National Spiritual Assembly of Taiwan obeyed. It decided to launch a widespread teaching campaign. When I visited Taiwan in 1986, I knew there was such a campaign, but I heard no news of great success at the time. But they persevered.

Then the enrollments began to come in. Starting in May 1987 the increase became significant. I asked a few of the teachers who had been working with the campaign from the beginning to share with me their impressions of the reason for this success.

The Universal House of Justice’s peace statement is presented to Father Jack, a Catholic missionary in Shan Mei Chuen, a small village in the Chiagi mountains. He has been a strong friend of the Bahá’ís.

Street teaching in one of Taiwan’s many towns and villages.
They had been teaching for some time, I was told, but with few enrollments. Although self-conscious, they were determined. One weekend, feeling somewhat subdued in spirit, they went to the home of one of the pioneers who had been in Asia for more than 30 years and had taken part, with the Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Muhájír, in many teaching efforts in Korea, the Philippines and Japan. They shared teaching stories, studied the Writings, and prayed together. They fell in love with Bahá'u'lláh all over again, with a new depth of commitment and understanding. They also fell in love with each other. And they decided to take that love to the people of Taiwan.

From that time on they “loved” the people into the Faith, sharing the message with their hearts, yet following always the guidance of the Universal House of Justice regarding enrolling mass-taught believers. They brought the love of Bahá'u'lláh and His plan for world peace to the people of Taiwan. I saw this and was privileged to be a part of it.

The other story to tell is that of the National Spiritual Assembly. The working relationship we had with that institution is an example for local and national Assemblies everywhere.

When I went to Taiwan my assignment was to coordinate the consolidation—but as time went by the National Spiritual Assembly, in its wisdom, realized that expansion and consolidation had to work hand-in-hand. The coordinator of the teaching work and I were paired as coordinators of the project. This was not easy for either of us, but the National Assembly trusted us to work together. The campaign was on our shoulders, we were told. But we weren’t left alone; we had instant access to the National Assembly, giving us the support and guidance of that institution, in a tangible way, whenever we asked for and needed it. We all worked together. There was a shared commitment that placed no member of the Faith higher than another. We all had our jobs to do: National Assembly members, teachers, and coordinators. There was mutual respect and trust, not to mention deep love and appreciation. There was unity.

And there was a plan. The National Assembly told us we could not open a new locality without finding and renting a Center as soon as possible. The new believers needed a place to go immediately. The Center had to be open every night, easily accessible to the new friends. One or two people had to live in the Center. And of course, the Center was to be the home base for the teachers who traveled on a circuit, as assigned, to visit and go back and forth to the areas where they had been teaching.

Systems for follow-up were implemented. Traveling teachers who joined the teams had to be briefed by the coordinators before they could take part. The National Assembly established a minimum of rules, regulations and guidelines. We who were working in the field were expected to work out our day-to-day activities. There was no strict hierarchy. Any teacher or other individual who felt the need could bypass the coordinators and go directly to the National Spiritual Assembly for guidance.

New believers were included and involved in the activities from the outset. And they came to the Centers at night, after finishing their work or studies, to
pray with us before going home to bed. Everywhere we went we heard “Alláhu’-u’Abhá.”

One of the most important elements of any teaching campaign is communication. Without adequate communication there can’t be unity. All nine members of the National Spiritual Assembly were involved, and it was obvious to us that not only did every member know exactly what was going on, but that the teaching campaign was top priority on everyone’s agenda. The unity was there. But without close communication with the National Assembly we, the teachers and coordinators, could have become the victims of doubt. Small concerns would have grown larger. Incomplete or inaccurate information shared with the decision-makers could have led to wrong decisions, thus slowing down and confusing the work. The National Assembly was on top of every aspect of the campaign, and responded immediately to our needs. This, I believe, was the foundation of its success.

Another thought relates to consolidation. That’s where the tests come in. Consolidation is a long process; some people respond immediately while others take longer. Some never become active. It takes perseverance and patience. And it takes teaching to keep consolidation going. Without the spirit of teaching, the consolidation work becomes a chore. A fine balance must be maintained. All who are involved—teachers and administrators—must be flexible. What worked last week may not work this week. What worked in Africa may not work in Taiwan. What worked in Taiwan may not work in the U.S. or anywhere else.

What does work is following the principles, teachings and guidelines already given to us. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá told us to make a beginning and all would come right. That is what Taiwan did. It made a beginning when the National Spiritual Assembly obeyed the Universal House of Justice’s call for a vast increase in the enrollment of new believers. And when difficulties arose, the friends didn’t give up. They persevered.

When I went to Taiwan it was to join a six-month campaign, but after I arrived the National Spiritual Assembly told us there was no termination date. The teaching campaign would not end. It was to become a way of life for the Bahá’í community.

Indeed, how can it be otherwise? Do we stop teaching after we have reached some numerical goal? Is there anyone we can leave out, anyone who doesn’t need to hear of Baha’u’llah? Didn’t the House of Justice send its message of peace to all the peoples of the world? We know the answers to these questions.

What makes Taiwan news? Is it so different? Not really. We can all do the same. Perhaps the reason for the deep interest in Taiwan’s success is that we are all restless to get on with establishing the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh. After all, that is our goal, our reason for being. We have our administrative institutions in place, we are involved with social and economic development projects around the world, our offices of external affairs have successfully brought to the attention of the world’s leaders the suffering of the blessed martyrs in Iran. Our Faith has truly emerged from obscurity. All that is left is to fill in our ranks, to TEACH! TEACH! TEACH! To “lay aside (our) every minor concern” and TEACH the Cause!
The winds blew steadily from north, south, east and west August 1 welcoming Indian people from all parts of the Americas to the fifth Continental Indigenous Council at Indian Memorial Park on the edge of the Standing Rock Reservation in South Dakota.

The days were blessed with rain, bringing to an end a long drought in the northern plains.

These seemed to be physical manifestations of the spiritual refreshment brought to the area by the gathering of more than 400 people including more than 300 from nearly 60 tribes who met to consult on the spiritual well-being and unity of their people and the long-awaited fulfillment of their prophecies.

The Continental Indigenous Councils, sponsored by the Bahá'ís, are held every 2-3 years with the meeting-place rotating among Alaska, Canada and the U.S. This year's Council was sponsored by the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly and held August 1-5 in the approximate geographical center of the North American continent.

Indian communities around the world were represented as tribal members came from Greenland, Canada (including the Yukon territories north of the Arctic Circle), Costa Rica, the U.S. and even Australia.

A roll call underscored the great diversity of tribes present with everyone from Athabascan and Aztec to Yaqui and Yuchi and many tribes in between among those who identified themselves.

In traditional American Indian style there were no keynote speakers; instead, there was a format in which participation by all those attending was encouraged.

Consultation was held on the spiritual destiny of the Indian people, and thanks were given to Baha'u'llah for having "brought brothers from all four directions together finally."

An address was made by a special guest, Hooper Dunbar, a member of the Universal House of Justice who was welcomed as a long-lost brother by many of those present who remembered his many teaching trips to their native lands.

Mr. Dunbar pointed out that Indians have the largest population of all races in the Bahá'í Faith, but that the North American Indians represent only a small percentage of that population.

In our quest to spread the Message of Baha'u'llah, he said, we must be "warriors of the spirit" against our lower selves.

"Teaching the Faith," said Mr. Dunbar, "will attract the Holy Spirit's assistance to help break the horse of the lower spirit."

Other Bahá'í guests taking part in the Council included Lauretta King, a Tlingit from Alaska who is a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre in Haifa, Israel, and four Counsellors for the Americas: Jacqueline Delahunt, a member of the Lakota tribe; Ruth Pringle, William Roberts and Fred Schechter.

National Spiritual Assemblies represented were those of the U.S. (by Alberta Deas; Robert Henderson; Ches-
A colorful sign beckons Council participants to take a break.

A brief time-out from consultation for a spirited game of volleyball.

Singers of Big Eagle, South Dakota.

The Council is enlivened by spirited drumming from the Running Antelope.

Bahá'ís feel ready to assume a greater responsibility in spreading the Message of Bahá'u'lláh among their people, moving steadily forward in a spirit of unity to fulfill their destiny as set forth by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the Tablets of the Divine Plan.

To open the Council, Mr. Locke described the vision of the great chief Tatanka Iyotake, Sitting Bull, who understood and articulated the spiritual power inherent in the Indian people.

Around 1890 Sitting Bull called a gathering of tribes to consult about the spiritual health and survival of native peoples, saying to them, “Let us put our hearts together and see what future we can make for our children.”

Before the meeting could be held, however, Sitting Bull was killed by government police who feared an Indian uprising.

As consultation at this latest Council began it was pointed out that this “circle of tribes” had come together “to bring unity not only to our tribes, but to all humankind.”

A call for pledges, symbolizing the readiness of Indian believers to “shed illumination upon the world,” resulted in more than 100 pledges from non-Bahá’ís as well as Bahá’í participants.

A number of discussion groups were held to focus consultation on particular areas of interest:

ter Kahn, a Navajo from Arizona; Dorothy Nelson and James Nelson; Alaska (by Eugene King, a Tlingit elder, and Walter Austin); Canada (by Louise Leblanc of the Tlingit/Tutchone tribes); and Mexico (by Carmen de Burafato).

They were joined by two Auxiliary Board members, Steven Birkland and Kevin Locke, a member of the Standing Rock Lakota tribe.

Several traditional native leaders, both men and women, also were present to lend their guidance and prayers.

The first two days of the Council were spent in fellowship as the friends set up their campsites and watched the “big top” go up for the Council circle. The next three days were devoted to consultation, prayer and celebration.

The consensus of consultation was, as indicated in a message sent to the Universal House of Justice, that although they gratefully acknowledge the help of non-Indian homefront pioneers and traveling teachers, the Indian
As is evident from this picture, the weather during the Indigenous Council ranged from hot to cold and from wet to dry.

- Arlene Trouse, a member of the Lummi/Coast Salish tribe from Bellingham, Washington, and Woody Blackcloud, a Hunkpapa/Lakota from Little Eagle, South Dakota, led a discussion on the goals of the Six Year Plan and the readiness of the Indian Bahá'ís to bring the Faith to their people.
- Mary Jane Litchard, an Eskimo now living in Mobridge, South Dakota, led a group discussion on the role of women as peace-makers.
- Atwell Seward, a Cherokee from Vermillion, South Dakota, and Dalen Corazon from Forest Park, Illinois, conducted a workshop on family life.
- Lorraine Mafi-Williams, an Aboriginal from Australia, came to the Council to share the wisdom of the Aboriginal culture and prophecies.
- John Robinson of Redmond, Washington, facilitated a group discussion on race unity.
- Charles and Lois Myers-Pelton of Aberdeen, South Dakota, led a workshop entitled "Peacemaking from Within."

The Counsellors and members of National Spiritual Assemblies were asked to address the Council, and each offered the love and support of the institutions of the Faith to help bring into being the spiritual destiny of the American Indians.

Following the Council, the National Assembly held its regular monthly meeting in Mobridge.

Among a contingent of 50 Navajo Bahá'ís from Arizona who came to the Council were the Pine Spring Singers, a group of young boys who played drums and sang, encouraging everyone to dance, and a group of young girls in traditional Navajo dress who circulated through the audience, greeting the guests and offering them pieces of candy.

Some of the older Navajo women also wore lovely traditional dresses of buckskin.

The gathering also enjoyed powwow style dancing to the drums of the Running Antelope Singers, fiddle playing by Riel Aubuchon from British Columbia, Canada, Eskimo drumming by Jens Lyberth from the Northwest Territories, and a traditional Hawaiian dance by Norman Ing.

A Wopila, or ceremony of thanksgiving, was held to offer thanks for the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

A tribute of honor was paid to those who had passed on, while a naming ceremony was held for two children who were receiving their Indian names.

The families of the children gave presents to friends in honor of their children, and a general gift-giving ceremony was held at which others offered presents to thank or to welcome one another.

Four "tipis" were set up next to the larger Council tent, the first and largest

Young Bahá'ís study the 'Word of God' deepening booklet.
of which was used to house the children's classes.

The children, Indian and non-Indian, Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í, learned Bahá'í songs from many Indian cultures and took part in an archaeological walk along the banks of the nearby Missouri River to study the remains of two ancient Indian villages.

An audio-visual program about ancient Arikara Indian settlements in the Missouri River area was shown at an amphitheatre in the campground.

In the second tipi, an Intensive Study Institute for youth was held using as its text the "Word of God" booklet.

The other two tipis were set up for personal prayer and for registration. Fires were kept burning in two of the tipis, as temperatures during the week ranged from hot to quite chilly.

A fifth tipi, in a design created for the Council by Woody Black Cloud of Little Eagle, South Dakota, was painted and set up by a group of pre-youth.

On the final evening of the Council, a traditional Indian dinner was served consisting of a huge pot of stew, boiled in the open over a large cook-fire, with fry bread and choke cherry pudding.

The Council ended later in the evening with a "farewell circle" in which each person spoke for the last time to everyone else in the circle.

Although sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly and National Teaching Committee, it was pointed out on several occasions that the Council was actually organized in large part by a committee of Indian believers from North and South Dakota.
The following are English translations of articles that appeared last May 15 in the newspaper O Popular of Goiania, Brazil, about the Bahá’í-sponsored "Peace Monument" project in that city.

Front page

In 1986, in the “Bosque de Buritis” botanical garden, was installed the base upon which is to be constructed the Peace Monument, which will be inaugurated September 20, International Peace Day. The initiative is going to be coordinated by Shahrokh Pezeshk, a member of the Bahá’í community, and has won the support of many people such as Siron Franco, responsible for the artistic authorship of the project. The monument has the form of an hourglass, in the center of which there will be glass compartments containing earth from nine countries, representing the five continents.

Second section (under the headline "Peace Monument, Symbol of Union")

By Karla Jaime Morais

In the song “Imagine,” ex-Beatle John Lennon encouraged people to consider the possibility of a different world—“Imagine all the people living life in peace . . .”—and to accomplish that end, suggested the unity of mankind in search of this common objective.

Lennon was assassinated, in one more proof of how fragile peace is, but his thoughts continue to resound:

“You may say I’m a dreamer, but I’m not the only one; I hope one day you’ll join us, and the world will be as one,” he believed.

Adding its voice to the chorus of those who sing for times of greater equilibrium and tranquillity, an initiative was born in Goiania and is being carried forward by a group of persons.
A blueprint for the Peace Monument in Goiania, Brazil.

It is the project for the construction of the Peace Monument, the inauguration of which is scheduled for September 20, instituted by the United Nations as International Peace Day.

The idea was put forth at the time of the formulation of the program of the fourth Bahá’í Week of Goiania and the first National Symposium on Peace in the Nuclear Era, which took place in September 1986. On that occasion, a tree was planted for peace, earth from five countries was symbolically poured on the spot, and the base of the monument was inaugurated, in the Bosque de Buritis, explains Shahrokh Pezeshk, a member of the organizing committee of the sixth Bahá’í Week of Goiania, and who is the general coordinator of the project.

Shahrokh says he is wearing various hats for the time being, but he predicts that “great support” will be forthcoming from all sides, “which will come like an avalanche of contributions of resources.” And in fact, the proposal has been winning supporters, one of whom is plastic artist Siron Franco, responsible for the artistic design of the monument.

“At first my idea was to make a big column of glass, with earth from various countries, modeled after those bottles filled with sand that are made in the Northeast. The idea evolved and wound up as an hourglass, which arose in answer to a practical necessity to guard against vandalism, and also for aesthetic reasons. The hourglass is tied to an image of time, which flows precisely where the pieces of earth will be. The monument may also be seen as two pyramids, one of which is inverted. All this is laden with symbolism, without mentioning the practical side: being in a higher place, the glass belt runs less risk of being destroyed,” the artist stated.

The symbolism mentioned by Siron is also taken up by Shahrokh: “The plastic form and functioning of the monument remind one of a stylized hourglass, consisting of two pyramid trunks, the top one being placed upside down over the other. As the pyramid is known as a symbol of concentration of forces and power, it expresses our material needs, in the form of science, and the concentration of forces of spiritual power, in the form of true religion or a philosophy of life.

“The hourglass, representing the human temple, shows the need for harmony between the two powers, in order to have a complete temple,” he explains, in a text in which he presents a synthesis of the project for the construction of the monument.

Continuing, he analyzes the fact that the hourglass “can also be considered as the human temple composed of material, spiritual and moral needs,” and that “it may also be considered the temple of humanity represented by woman and man, with the union and balance of these two forces essential to the development and progress of humanity.” He concludes that the monument is “a complete symbol of peace in the sense that it shows the past (history), the present and the future. The past is the upper part, where we have the whole experience of war and peace; the present at each moment, descend-
ing to the earth; and the future, which will be whatever mankind chooses.

Universal peace is one of the fundamental principles of the Baha’i Faith, a religion established in many countries and which was born in Persia, now called Iran, in 1844; it arrived in Brazil in 1921. In Goiania, the Baha’i community elected its first local Spiritual Assembly 12 years ago.

"There is a concern for peace in the Baha’i Faith," Shahrokh confirms, pointing out that the followers of this religion are people who have normal activities and are professionals, and that "it is not permitted (in the Baha’i Faith) to use religion as a profession."

The common ideal of peace is what attracted the participation of Siron Franco. "I have always taken a stand in favor of ecology, in my work," he says, "taking art to the public square, so to speak. This work is my contribution, from an aesthetic point of view, to peace."

In the belt linking the two pyramids, the hourglass will have glass compartments representing the five continents of the world, through earth sent from each of them—from Australia, Asia (represented by Israel), Africa (represented by Ghana), the Americas (by the United States, Brazil and Uruguay) and Europe (by Portugal, Sweden and Holland), bringing the total to nine countries.

"Each country’s earth will have its own characteristics," says Siron, adding that each compartment will be distinct in order to individualize the earth contained therein. "And on one side of the hourglass, there will be a larger compartment with all the earths mixed, without losing their identity, but with love, in a symbolism that will make sense when the world has no more flags." Separating one compartment from another, vertical strips of yellow, blue, red, white and green will stand out. "At first," says Siron, "I started with the use of the three basic colors—a symbol of perfection—and from the mixture of the three I arrived at the two others, for a total of five, which also represents the continents."

Above the hourglass will be the symbol of radiation, from the creative viewpoint of Siron, who at the time of the radioactive accident in Goiania transformed it, making the head of a bird emerge from one of its angles.

"The greatest fear today is precisely nuclear destruction, perhaps the greatest threat to peace," says Siron, who is clearly in search of new forms of expression to comprise the monument. "Art evolves," he says. The monument really is dynamic, as an opening will be left on the upper surface to permit receiving more earth from countries interested in participating. The contributions will be deposited every year.

"As the pyramid is known as a symbol of concentration of forces and power, it expresses our material needs, in the form of science, and the concentration of forces of spiritual power, in the form of true religion or a philosophy of life."

The design calls for a monument of a little over five meters (16 1/2 feet), which will absorb about 50 tons of concrete. In order to carry forward the work, Shahrokh, as general coordinator, divided the execution among other coordinators, each of whom is responsible for a part of the work. Representatives of each area have been meeting weekly to discuss progress. The coordination of these projects is the responsibility of Shahrokh’s wife, Venus Sahihii Pezeskh, who also serves as landscape architect. The structural calculations of the monument, "made to last a thousand years," according to the general coordinator, are ready, and were done by Ricardo Veiga of Metodo Engenharia Ltda. Enedino Neto is responsible for the publicity coordination, to which is linked City Councilman Nonato Motta, who is in charge of contact with the authorities. "In the political area I’m going to continue giving the support I have always given," he says, "as when we presented the request in the City Council; it was approved by Mayor Nion Albernaz, instituting Peace Week."

The building coordination was assigned to Marcio Jose Correa, president of the Engineering Club of Goias State. "The intention," he says, "is to implant an embryo, to render assistance to the cause of peace. It is only possible to build a nation around peace." He says further that "the project is fully viable; the contracting firms of Goiania should participate, because those people have never refused to contribute to this type of movement." Marcio synthesizes his intention: "Engineering does not only build nuclear weapons, but also instruments of peace."

Taking part in the areas under the coordination of Marcio, who is in charge of the hourglass, is the Canadian firm Soheil Custom Fabricators, which offered to evaluate the project and indicate which type of glass is most appropriate for the work. A multilaminated glass, similar to bullet-proof glass, may be used.

There remains the coordination of events, to which no one has as yet been appointed, and for which Shahrokh himself has assumed temporary responsibility.

"On September 19," he says, "the awarding of the National Peace Prize will take place, which is to become a tradition. One month before, the Baha’i community will award the local Best Citizen of Peace prize, and then a mixed commission will make the evaluation of the winners (from all over Brazil), in Brasilia, to choose one single name." A small bronze hourglass in the form of the Peace Monument will be given to the local winners, and the recipient of the national prize will receive a larger one in the same format. All will be made by Andre Crispim, who has wide experience in terms of artistic execution.

"On September 20," Shahrokh continues, "the Monument will be inaugurated, and the expectation is that representatives of embassies and various authorities will come. In the future," he continues, "we're going to ask the United Nations to declare the Monument to be the Patrimony of Humanity, so that it will have official protection."
Women from Finland, Sweden, the Soviet Union and the United States came together June 26-July 1 for the fifth annual East West Seminar for Peace held at the Bosch Bahá’í School in California’s Santa Cruz mountains.

The seminar began with a lovely Russian tea reception and ended with a public reception at City Hall hosted by the mayor and city council of Santa Cruz. Messages of support were received from many groups around the world.

The 75 women united in drawing up an agenda based on priority issues relating to peace. (Ten Bahá’ís took part including two members of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly.) Those areas considered to be most important by a majority of the participants included: eliminating the concept of "the enemy"; working for a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty; tactics for resolving conflict peacefully without losing diversity; exchanging information on strategies for peace education; and creating a "think bank" of ideas that have worked.

The participants first heard global reports from each of the four national groups as a background for their deliberations. The Soviet women's report included the following concerns: opposition to nuclear energy, even for peaceful uses; concern that the peace movement is losing its momentum; creation of nuclear-free zones worldwide; a 50 per cent reduction in strategic arms; and the signing of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

After a week of intensive work, three resolutions were drawn up and signed by participants to be shared with government leaders all over the world.

There was an overwhelming consensus of concern about the environment. Many scientists agree that even more stringent measures to reduce the air pollution responsible for the greenhouse effect can only buy time to adjust to a warmer world; and this is only a part of the over-all problem.

Another dominant theme was conflict management and alternative forms of conflict resolution. Some of the steps necessary for the mediation of disputes were discussed: fact-finding; encouraging parties to discuss possible solutions/remedies; enlisting the help of expert mediators; and coming to an agreement.

Other highlights of the seminar were a real California earthquake, a barbecue, an evening of jazz, another of Russian songs, a slide presentation on black artists, and a walk under a full moon.

The atmosphere was characterized by trust, friendship, cooperation and a deep feeling of commitment to establishing peace for our children, their children, and future generations.

In creating and maintaining such an atmosphere, the seminar fulfilled the intention of Nordic Women for Peace who in 1982 began these seminars to help bridge the East-West gap and promote international women's networks which in turn would develop strategies for peace, justice and a better understanding among nations.

The seminars grew from a series of marches by Nordic Women for Peace, the first of which, in 1981, was an effort to unify the women of Europe. Previous seminars were held at Aaland Island, Finland (1983), Leningrad, Russia (1984), Lillehammer, Norway (1985), Lovanger, Sweden (1986), and at the World Congress of Women in Moscow (1987).

The 1988 seminar, sponsored by Continuing the Peace Dialogue, was endorsed by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament, Women for International Peace and Arbitration, Beyond War, the National Women's Conference Committee, and Educators for Social Responsibility. Many groups and individuals contributed to scholarship aid, making possible a greater diversity of delegates to the seminar.—Shiva Tavana

Pictured are many of the 75 women from Finland, Sweden, Russia and the United States who took part June 26-July 1 in the fifth annual East West Seminar for Peace held at the Bosch Bahá’í School near Santa Cruz, California. (Photo by S. Tavana)
The world

Bahá'ís reach out, embrace Maoris

Two large teaching events held recently in New Zealand focused on cultural exchanges between Bahá'ís and the Maori people, opening doors to mutual sharing and learning. They also addressed a primary goal of the Six Year Plan for New Zealand: giving "special attention to understanding the culture, traditions and unique qualities of the Maori people."

Both events were held at a marae, a traditional Maori meeting place, where the Bahá'ís were formally welcomed by the elders of the Maori community.

The first, held at Papawai Pa near Greymouth, involved discussions about the land, myths and legends of the Maori, and the relationship between some of the traditional practices and beliefs and Bahá'í laws. One of the elders of the Papawai Pa joined the discussion, sharing stories of the history of the Maori community.

The second event, at Aramiro marae in the Waitetuna Valley, looked at aspects of prayer and meditation in the Maori culture and in the Faith. Again, the Bahá'ís were formally welcomed by the host community. A report of the event reads in part: "The elders had been praying for the return of the spirit and the Bahá'ís contacted them."

Because the event was held in a traditional, familiar environment, the local people felt free to ask questions and to share stories of the history of their people. At its close, some books and a photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in an engraved wooden frame were presented by the Bahá'ís to the elders of the host community.

Bangladesh

In March, 234 people in Bangladesh embraced the Faith. Ten new local Spiritual Assemblies were formed in the Khulna district, where the Faith has recently been proclaimed to more than a thousand people.

Said Akhtar Khavari, a Bahá'í visitor from abroad, accompanied by Dr. S.S. Bahar, spent six days teaching in Khulna. During that time, 158 people were enrolled and five new local Assemblies were formed.

A four-day medical camp was held last January 20-23 in three villages near Sirajganj, Bangladesh. Three Bahá'í doctors, P. Shahidi, S. Shabani and B. Shahed, treated 500 general patients and 100 dental patients and vaccinated more than 300 animals.

While the camp was open, two Bahá'ís visited nearby Assemblies. As a result of the camp and their efforts, 28 people were enrolled in the Faith.

At a similar camp in Kumuria, 29 people embraced the Cause and one new local Assembly was formed.

Mali

A teaching institute held last December in Bamako, Mali, was dedicated to the memory of a prominent artist and Bahá'í, Lamine Sidibe.

Mr. Sidibe was involved with the National Drama Troupe of Mali and traveled extensively throughout Africa and Europe. His work enabled him to share the Faith with his colleagues and others including high government officials.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Mali organized the institute in part to reflect the great value of artists in teaching the Cause.
Mauritius

Two Auxiliary Board members, 59 delegates, 140 other adult Bahá'ís and 52 children gathered last May at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute in Mauritius for that country's 25th Bahá'í National Convention. In a cable to the Universal House of Justice they reported: 'TV coverage first day Convention. Deeply inspired Supreme Institution message. Consultation stressing teaching fulfillment goals. Determined sustained service Cause.'

Sikkim

More than 400 adults and 200 children attended a Naw-Rúz Peace Conference held on the Temple Land School premises at Tadong, Gangtok, Sikkim. The program was opened with a speech by Krishnan Iyer, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Sikkim, and this was followed by entertainment by the school children of Tadong and Ranipool.

Lowell Johnson, a Bahá'í from South Africa (left in back row), introduced his book 'The Eternal Covenant' to Bahá'ís in Mauritius during a recent two-day visit to the Bahá'í Institute in Belle-Rose.

The honored guest at the conference, S.D. Lepcha, the minister of animal husbandry, congratulated the Bahá'ís for the disciplined education in their schools and for the efforts by Bahá'ís around the world in establishing peace.

Same-day news coverage was given to the conference by All India Radio.

Japan

The Bahá'ís of Shimonoseki, Japan, completed the first of a series of mass-teaching events last June 3-5 with a successful International Peace Festival.

The small Bahá'í community on the southern tip of Honshu, Japan's largest island, was supported by the Area Teaching Committee and by Bahá'ís from all over Japan during the three days of teaching.

Janet Maloney, a well-known Bahá'í television personality from Tokyo, was interviewed by several newspapers, resulting in articles about the Peace Festival in several newspapers.

The festival, held in a large shopping center in Shimonoseki, included copies of the peace statement, pictures of Bahá'í centers and activities around the world, books and pamphlets, activity corners including an English conversation table, a Japanese discussion table, a "world citizen" questionnaire, and tables for children's activities.

Six video tapes of Janet Maloney shows featured her singing Bahá'í songs, talking about peace and the Faith, and conducting a peace quiz.

As a result of the festival, 10 people embraced the Faith and many more became friends of the Bahá'ís.
Brazil

The first group of physicians to take part in a medical project organized by the International Bahá'í Refugee Office and the National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil, in cooperation with the Brazilian government, recently settled in Belém, Pará Province.

The Bahá'í Refugee Office chose Brazil as a starting point for the effort because of the needs for essential support services related to health and medicine in that country, and the responsive attitude of the Brazilian government.

The project takes advantage of the skills of many Bahá'í refugee doctors who are unable to practice in their new countries.

In petitioning the government, the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly and the coordinator of the International Bahá'í Refugee Office traveled to seven states in the interior of Brazil, talking to chancellors of those universities with medical colleges, the Secretary of State for Health, and the Officer of Social Security. As a result, government officials were quite willing to issue visas to the refugees.

On arrival, each doctor is required to take courses in Portuguese and two refresher medical courses at the Federal University of Pará. This is followed by an examination. During this time they also attend to patients at a medical center five times a week under the supervision of a local physician.

Afterward, their medical papers are legalized, and the Brazilian government issues permanent residence visas to the doctors and their families if they are willing to settle in areas that lack adequate medical services.

Germany

On April 16, a 50-member men's choir, all non-Bahá'ís, performed a 45-minute worship service at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Langenhain, Germany, using holy texts and songs from the Bahá'í writings and the Bible. It marked the first time that such an event was held in the Bahá'í Temple.

The melodies for the Bahá'í texts, taken from The Hidden Words, were composed by Michael Neunteufel, a Bahá'í from Austria who is a close friend of the choir director, Heinz Gorges, who, in cooperation with the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany, arranged the historic service.

The choir, honored in 1977 with the title "Master Choir," consists of employees in a large factory in Ubach-Palenberg, near Aachen.

Choir members came to Langenhain with their families, 80 people in all, and expressed their appreciation for the friendliness and hospitality shown by those at the Bahá'í National Center.

In addition to choir members and their families, the event drew some 100 friends and their guests including some members of the media who praised the event as an unparalleled experience of high spiritual content.

About 230 people gathered June 5 at the National Bahá'í Center in Langenhain, Germany, to hear Professor Ervin Laszlo speak about the Bahá'í peace statement.

About 75 were not Bahá'ís. They included local citizens, the mayor, and representatives of conservation movements.
Mexico

Thanks to the perseverance of a U.S. Bahá'í in her 70s, a new locality was opened and a new Assembly formed in the town of Mulegé on the southern Baja California peninsula.

Maggie McClendon of Santa Cruz, California, lived in Mulegé, which is 600 miles south of San Diego on the Sea of Cortez, from November 1987 to April 1988. She was able to support herself for the most part by playing piano in the evenings at one of the town's largest hotels, for which she received room and board but no salary. As a result, her days were free for making friends and teaching the Faith.

During December she was joined by Chris Hoyt, a Bahá'í from Manzanillo, Mexico, and a young man from Anaheim, California. At that time they had their first declarations including a seeker whom Mrs. McClendon had been teaching for some time.

By March, when Mrs. McClendon was visited by Harold and Marjorie Johnson of San Diego, accompanied by another Bahá'í from Ensenada, Mexico, there had been a total of nine declarations, eight adults and one youth.

During the Johnsons' visit a deepening class on the importance of daily prayer was attended by five of the new Bahá'ís and some seekers. It was followed by a Unity Feast at which each person read a short prayer or passage from the Writings.

Afterward, the Bahá'ís visited another new believer who had broken a leg and found, to their pleasure, that he had used his convalescence to memorize the short obligatory prayer and had taught his two children to recite from memory the prayer that begins "O God, Guide Me . . . ."

Not too long after these events, another adult was enrolled in the Faith and the community was able to form its first local Spiritual Assembly.

Canada

Several Bahá'í physicians from the U.S. and Canada recently attended the eighth World Congress of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) in Montreal.

About 2,000 doctors were present at the Congress. Affiliated groups in 55 countries have a total membership of 170,000.

On the morning of June 5, when an interfaith service was held, three Bahá'ís were among those representing the world religions. They briefly introduced the Faith, and one of them, a French-Canadian, recited a prayer in French.

The co-founders of the international movement, Nobel Prize winners Drs. Evgeni Chazov and Bernard Lown, responded favorably when given copies of the peace statement by one of the Bahá'ís, Dr. A.M. Ghadirian.

The IPPNW, whose position is neutral and non-partisan, seeks to encourage physicians around the world to unite on the basis of their professional commitment to preserve life and health and to work for the prevention of a nuclear disaster. Its next World Congress will be held in October 1989 in Hiroshima, Japan.

More than 100 youth gathered last May 6-8 for the first Bahá'í youth conference ever held at the new Maxwell International Bahá'í School on Shawnigan Lake, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

The school, which opened in September as a coeducational residential secondary school for grades 7-9, is administered by the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada.

Marshall Islands

Last December 21, an adventurous team of Bahá'ís set off from Majuro, in the Marshall Islands, on a trimaran boat, "Hawah," to launch its second teaching campaign to the outer islands in the Marshalls group.

The team, composed of husband and wife John Sammons and Jane Lamb and their Marshallese friends, visited the northeastern group of islands including Aur, Maleolap, Wotje, Likiep, Ailuk, Uttrik and Mejit.

In March, 11 people embraced the Cause in Jang on the remote island of Maleolap. As a result, a local Spiritual Assembly was formed, bringing to 24 the number of Assemblies in the Marshall Islands.

The "Hawah" is expected to continue its travels for 18 months until all the atolls in the Marshalls have been visited. The expedition is the first of its kind to take place in these islands.
On the cover: The Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi, India, has received a major international award for the excellence of its outdoor lighting. The award, given by the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America, follows the receipt of two other top awards for architectural and engineering excellence since the structure was completed in December 1986. The most recent honor, the Paul Waterbury Award of Special Citation for Outdoor Lighting, was accepted during a ceremony at the IES's annual conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The Temple's architect has arranged the night-time illumination so as to make it appear that the entire structure is suspended in the air. Last year, the House of Worship received the coveted honor award for religious architecture from the Interfaith Forum on Religious Art and Architecture (IFRAA), which is perhaps the top award for religious architecture in the world; it also won a special award for structural engineering from the British Institute of Structural Engineers.
Commentary

Huququ’lláh: ‘The Rights of God’

Dearly loved friends,

At the inception of the Six Year Plan of the Universal House of Justice, which coincided with dramatic changes in many aspects of society, a new arena for rapid development of the Faith of God has been attained and the purpose and aim of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation have been unveiled before the very eyes of government authorities, heads of state and scholars who were not even aware of its existence.

At this rightful time the Universal House of Justice has emphasized the importance of acquiring knowledge of the laws and ordinances revealed by Bahá’u’lláh, and has adopted the translation of the most Holy Book, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, into English as one of the sublime goals of this new Plan.

Among the commandments and decrees revealed in this sacred Book is the law of Huququ’lláh, previously applicable only to the friends in the East. The Western friends became aware of this law with the dissemination of the holy text and the sacred writings prepared by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice.

Huququ’lláh is an Arabic word composed of two words, “Huq” meaning “rights” and “Allah” meaning “God.” Therefore, Huququ’lláh means “the Rights of God,” a part of the individual’s possessions and income offered at the Threshold of the Lord.

In a Tablet addressed to Jináb-i-Zayn referring to Huququ’lláh, Bahá’u’lláh states that the progress and the promulgation of the Faith of God depend on material means; therefore, the expansion and the advancement of God’s Revelation and the establishment of a new order and a new world civilization cannot be achieved without material means.

The embryo of this sacred law was established by the beloved Báb in the Bayán where, for the first time, the word Huququ’lláh was mentioned by Him. Bahá’u’lláh brought some modifications in its contents and accepted it as one of the executive ordinances of His Revelation.

Although Huququ’lláh is one of the most significant laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, we should not take the word “law” in its rigid and literal meaning, defined in the encyclopedia as “the obligatory rule promoted by a sovereign authority.” It is not a law which is enforced with pressure, but rather a spiritual obligation based on the love of the believer who is eager to obey the will of His Beloved. In this ordinance there is no room for pressure or intimidation. Obedience is a reflection of the highest degree of love and ardent desire.

Huququ’lláh, by its special and unique characteristic, combines might and humility, power and humbleness. It is one of the fundamental ordinances of the Bahá’í Faith, like prayer and fasting. Its importance has been manifested by these words of Bahá’u’lláh: “Say: O people, the first duty is to recognize the one true God—magnified be His glory—the second is to show forth constancy in His Cause and, after these, one’s duty is to purify one’s riches and earthly possessions according to that which is prescribed by God. . . .”

By studying the writings revealed by Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá regarding Huququ’lláh, four essential points emerge. First, in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Bahá’u’lláh states:

“Should a person acquire one hundred mithqáls of gold, nineteen mithqáls thereof belong unto God, the Creator of earth and heaven. Take heed, O people, lest ye deprive yourselves of this great bounty. . . .”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá emphasizes that Huququ’lláh is payable on whatever is left over after deducting the yearly expenses.

The payment of Huququ’lláh is based on the calculation of the value of one’s income in respect to the gold unit. Whenever the annual income of the individual, after the deduction of his complete year’s expenses, reaches 19 mithqáls of gold value (equivalent to 2.22456 ounces or 69.19112 grams), 19 per cent of that amount is the Right of God and should be submitted to the Focal Point of the Faith. The calculation of sustaining means of livelihood which are exempted from Huququ’lláh depends on the spiritual maturity of every believer and his innermost conscience. No criterion can be established for this purpose, for it varies according to the living conditions and social status of each believer, and the degree of his spiritual attachment and material detachment.

The second point is that the payment of the Right of God is like a magnet, which attracts divine blessings and confirmation. It is the mainspring of God’s mercy and compassion. Bahá’u’lláh, in His writings, showers His limitless benediction upon those who observe this law.

Again, in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Pen of Glory decrees:

“. . . and whoso fulfilleth the things he hath been commanded, divine blessings will descend upon him from the heaven of the bounty of his Lord, the Bestower, the Bountiful, the Most
Generous, the Ancient of Days . . ."

In another Tablet we read:

"They that have kept their promises, fulfilled their obligations, redeemed their pledges and vows, rendered the Trust of God and His Right unto Him—these are numbered among the inmates of the all-highest Paradise. . . ."

In a Tablet revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, we find:

"Those who have observed this weighty ordinance have received heavenly blessings and in both worlds their faces have shone radiantly and their nostrils perfumed by the sweet savors of God's tender mercy. . . ."

The third factor is that just as the payment of Huququ'lláh would attract divine bounty and blessings, its negligence or failure causes deprivation and is interpreted as tantamount to treachery to a Fund rightfully belonging to God.

This Fund is to be spent on whatever is of benefit for the promulgation of the Faith under the complete and absolute decision of the authority "to which all must turn." Only this authority and none other, not even the donor, has the right to interfere in its management.

In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Pen of Glory warns those who neglect the payment of Huququ'lláh:

"O people! Act not treacherously in the matter of Huquq 'lláh and dispose not of it, except by His leave. . . ."

And He continues:

"Whoso dealeth dishonestly with God will in justice be exposed, and whoso fulfilleth the things he hath been commanded, divine blessings will descend upon him from the heaven of the bounty of his Lord, the Bestower, the Bountiful, the Most Generous, the Ancient of Days. . . ."

Therefore, withholding the payment of Huquq 'lláh or spending it on other concerns, no matter how charitable their nature, would be interpreted as misappropriation of the funds belonging to God, and an act of dishonesty. Any donation for charity and beneficent purposes such as contributions to the various funds should be made after the contributor is free of his debt to God.

And finally, God Almighty has decreed that the payment of the Right of God is conducive to prosperity and assists the progress of the human soul in the spiritual realms of the Everlasting world.

Bahá’u’lláh says:

". . . the treasures laid up by kings and queens are not worthy of mention, nor will they be acceptable in the presence of God. However, a grain of mustard offered by His loved ones will be exulted in the exalted court of His holiness and invested with the ornament of His acceptance. . . ."

The high station of Huquq 'lláh and its exceptional rank among the commandments of Bahá’u’lláh is endowed with great veneration and respect. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, referring to the words of Bahá’u’lláh, says:

". . . the utmost honesty hath to be observed in matters related to the Huquq. The Institution of Huquq is sacred."

In order to respect its sanctity, Bahá’u’lláh strongly forbids soliciting Huquq 'lláh. No individual or institution is authorized to demand it. Whenever it is necessary to bring the importance of this obligation to the attention of the believers, it should be mentioned as a general reminder. Spiritual maturity must stir the conscience of the believers and nothing else. In a Tablet addressed to Hájí Amin, the second Trustee of Huquq 'lláh, Bahá’u’lláh says:

"No one should demand the Huquq 'lláh. Its payment should depend on the volition of the individuals themselves. . . ."

And again:

". . . Ye may relinquish the whole world but must not allow the detraction of even one jot or tittle from the dignity of the Cause of God. Jináb-i-Amin—upon him be My glory—must also refrain from mentioning this matter, for it is entirely dependent upon the willingness of the individuals themselves. They are well acquainted with the commandment of God and are familiar with that which was revealed in the Book. Let him who wisheth observe it, and let him who wisheth ignore it. . . ."

The concept of Huquq 'lláh is an evolutionary process subject to great changes, dependent on our spiritual growth, and our deepening of the Holy writings.

Most of the friends believe Huquq 'lláh is a way for fund raising, and its aim is to strengthen the material potential of the Faith.

Indeed, the payment of Huquq 'lláh contributes to a large extent to the needs of the Cause. It is an important instrument for building and strengthening the structure of the edifice of the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh, and when it is fully established there will be an ever-flowing source of revenue at the disposal of the Focal Point of the Cause of God to promote the Faith and to meet the growing needs of establishing a new World Order. But, in fact, the purpose and aim of Huquq 'lláh is far beyond that and much greater and more spiritual than we imagine.

In 1978-79, following the Iranian upheaval, when the most important source of revenue of the Faith stopped functioning, I asked the Universal House of Justice if it was time for the implementation of Huquq 'lláh in some of the Western countries. The Universal House of Justice replied that Huquq 'lláh is a very important law, and that its implementation needs time and consultation in the future. At the time, I could not comprehend the wisdom of what had been stated. It was after studying the Holy writings with more depth that I have realized that Huquq 'lláh, which could be interpreted as the material aspect of the Covenant of God, in reality is a spiritual and learning process, a way of strengthening the link of love and dedication between man and God, and its implementation needs studying and deepening.

Bahá’u’lláh, in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, says:

"Indeed there lie concealed in this command, mysteries and benefits which are beyond the comprehension of anyone save God, the All-Knowing, the All-Informed. . . ."

Therefore, we cannot expect to comprehend the essence and the wisdom hidden in this sacred law. They are kept in the treasury of God's knowledge and are related to the evolution and progress of the human soul in the worlds of God. What we can conceive through our human understanding is that the payment of Huquq 'lláh is the sign of our love and obedience, a proof of our firmness and steadfastness and a symbol of our trustworthiness in the
Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh. It creates and develops our spiritual quality which leads us toward perfection; it harmonizes and balances our material endeavor, protects us from excessive desire which is born in our human nature, and when unleashed turns into a positive element for our spiritual growth. When man realizes that a part of his income will be honored by the acceptance of the Lord, the presence of God is felt in all his endeavors, and undoubtedly he will strive to live his life in a just and legitimate manner in order that his offering may deserve to be spent in the path of God.

It is important to note that although there is some similarity between Huququ'lláh and the other donations, and that all are the marvelous fruits of love, enthusiasm and devotion of the believers to the Faith, there are four major differences between them: 1. The payment of Huququ'lláh has priority over all other contributions because it belongs to God. The contribution of the believers to the funds should be made from their possessions and not from what belongs to the Lord. 2. The payment of Huququ'lláh according to the explicit text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is an obligation subject to specific laws and ordinances, whereas other donations are not considered as a law. They are rather an indication of the sacrifice, generosity, detachment and magnanimity of the contributor to meet the needs of the administration of the Cause. 3. Huququ'lláh is determined precisely on accurate calculation, whereas there are no rules related to the frequency or the amount of one's contribution to the funds. 4. The disposal of the Huququ'lláh is left solely to the discretion of the Focal Point of the Faith, and none other, whereas the disposal of the other contributions can depend on the purpose for which the contribution has been earmarked.

Undoubtedly, the awareness of the friends about Huququ'lláh will raise many questions, including those related to its calculation and the appraisal of that part of one's belongings which is subject to exemption. One should consider that what is revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas about Huququ'lláh is only the fundamental basis of this injunction, and the approach of the Blessed Beauty is confined to these guidelines and general principles. He has not set any special rules or legislation. In all His writings related to this matter, God's self-sufficiency and independence of all things has been manifested, and the fragrance of His compassion, generosity and mercy is inhaled. According to the letter written in 1878 by His secretary to an early believer, for the first time the acceptance of Huququ'lláh was granted to those Persian friends who had the desire to contribute; therefore, during five years after the revelation of the law, Bahá'u'lláh did not accept Huququ'lláh and on many occasions the offering of the friends was returned to them. It could be assumed that since He, Himself, as the Central Figure of His Revelation, is the only recipient of Huququ'lláh, He did not want to go into details, but left them, in conformity with the Will of God, to the Universal House of Justice, the Body which has the power to enact laws that are not precisely given in the Book.

When the Kitáb-i-Aqdas reached Iran and as the friends became aware of its contents, a consultative body, which could be the nucleus of our actual local Spiritual Assemblies, was formed in Tehran. In their minutes we notice that the dissemination of the knowledge of Huququ'lláh was one of the goals set by that body 101 years ago.

The growing eagerness of the believers for the execution of God's injunction led them to ask Bahá'u'lláh for elucidation regarding Huququ'lláh and this was given to them in various Tablets. The most important guidance was revealed—in response to Jináb-i-Zayn's request—as an annex to the Kitáb-i-Aqdas in the form of questions and answers. More guidance from the beloved Master, the Guardian, and in recent decades from the Universal House of Justice has shed light on Huququ'lláh, which we can find in the compilation issued by the World Center.

With the increasing awareness of the Bahá'ís and the fast-growing complexity of the social and economic system of society, the Bahá'í community will witness the establishment of rules and guidance on Huququ'lláh by the Supreme Authority of the Faith. Meanwhile, according to the Universal House of Justice's letter of March 1, 1984, in the absence of explicit text and Holy writings on Huququ'lláh, the friends are free to honor the obligation of Huququ'lláh based on their own judgment and conscience.

Indeed, while the establishment of rules and directions can explain the different aspects of Huququ'lláh, the ideal functioning and efficiency of these legislations depends on the spiritual advancement of the friends and their deepening in the Holy Writings.

That is why the Universal House of Justice has, as one of its major goals of the Six Year Plan, adopted education in the law of Huququ'lláh as a priority, preparing the way for the implementation of the law of God in the Bahá'í world, and has asked for the fervent collaboration of the major institutions of the Faith such as the National Spiritual Assemblies and the Continental Boards of Counsellors to share this important task with the Institution of Huququ'lláh in promoting the education of the friends in God's injunction to the Bahá'í community at large.

During the last two years, some of the National Spiritual Assemblies—in particular those of the United States, Canada and a few others in other parts of the world—have offered remarkable assistance for this sublime goal, and it is hoped that many more will join in the future to help with this task.

As a result of the effort of such National Spiritual Assemblies, a number of Western friends are contributing to Huququ'lláh even before its formal implementation. This leads us to hope that education on this subject will become more widespread and that, by the end of the Six Year Plan, the Bahá'í world will have attained a higher level of flourishing spiritual advancement.

All quotations in this article are taken from the compilation on Huququ'lláh compiled in June 1985 by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice.
Lessons from past, hope for future

The following is the text of a speech, "United Nations: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," given last April 12 at the New York City Public Library by UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar.

It is a great pleasure for me to be here with you in the premises of this storehouse of human knowledge. Both the venue and the theme of this series of lectures suggest a perspective broader than the storm and stress of present-day events. The United Nations is facing more than one challenge at the moment. This evening, however, I would invite you to take a look at the organization not in relation to the contentious issues of today, but in relation to the emergence and evolution of the global community at large.

To talk about the United Nations yesterday, today and tomorrow is really to talk about the phenomenal change which has been the most striking characteristic of our age. It is the massive transition in all domains of human affairs which has determined the composition and agenda of the United Nations. However, the organization has been not only a faithful mirror of a rapidly changing world. In several important respects, it has itself influenced the nature and speed of the historical process. In other words, it has been both witness and agent of the greatest transformation the world has ever undergone.

This link between the working of the United Nations and the process of peaceful change is so organic that the thought occurs to me often that it may well explain both the strengths and the weaknesses of the organization. To the extent that governments have kept pace with change in the international context and adjusted their policies to humanity’s emerging concerns, the UN has achieved results which even its founders could hardly anticipate. To the extent that governments have assumed postures appropriate to an earlier age, the United Nations has found itself bypassed, ignored or rebuffed. Any policy that is oriented toward our global future provides strength and sustenance to the world organization. Any policy, international in its implications but parochial in motivation and backward-looking, in effect weakens it. With my daily experience of dealing with issues in dispute I am, of course, aware of their diverse origins and the different ways in which they need to be handled. But there is one source of difficulty common to all: it is the inability or refusal of one or more parties concerned to accept the solution of an issue on the basis of the principles of a new world order qualitatively different from what prevailed prior to the establishment of the United Nations.

Like all formative principles which have given new direction to human affairs throughout history, these principles are simple and have been stated without ambiguity in the preamble and the first two Articles of the Charter of the United Nations. I assume that all of us here are familiar with them. The world organization is in essence the institutionalized expression of these principles. Take them away and we are back on the road of power politics, trailing wars and mass killings and oppressions and unfathomable misery—in our age, heading toward disaster for the whole planet. The fundamental change which is reflected in the establishment and working of the UN is that, for the first time ever, the nations of the world have agreed to abide by these norms of international behavior and accepted common goals for their joint endeavor. The formulation of these purposes and principles in the Charter was a major global event in itself, but a development of even greater magnitude has been their acceptance by those who did not participate in the original formulation. The founding of the world organization by 51 states in 1945 represented an historic point of departure, but the enlargement of the organization, mostly consequent on decolonization, to embrace virtually the entire world community has signified nothing short of a global revolution. All revolutions, whether sudden or spread over a span of time, unsettle some earlier modes of thought and behavior; this one, a revolution of the vastest scope in human history, is no exception.

It is not, therefore, surprising that resistance to this revolution still lingers in certain forms: some overt, others subtle. The most regrettable is the persistence of international behavior that stems from a disregard for the rights of others and reliance on superior force. The somber fact that a number of states have not yet come to terms with the global revolution is demonstrated painfully by the eruption of scores of wars, especially in the Third World—wars that not infrequently are fueled from well beyond. These wars make a mockery of adherence to the Charter by the states concerned. I have taken every occasion available to me to impressed the states of the Third World, first, that they cannot afford to repeat the experience of conflicts which attended the growth of the nation-state system in Europe in the past; second, that belligerence no longer brings dividends; and third, that they do not now have the alibi which they had before an international machinery for the peaceful settlement of disputes was put in place. The reasons for the recurrence of armed conflicts in the Third World...
are complex and the present is not the occasion to analyze them. One of the reasons, however, is certainly a lack of experience—both in the Third World and beyond—in adjusting to the new international environment. But what is disquieting is that, even in societies with mature experience and those that have made major contributions to humanity's political culture, there are signs that the thrust of the global revolution has not been fully realized. Such trends, if allowed to persist, can jeopardize the whole enterprise of the United Nations.

Let me mention some questioning attitudes toward the United Nations apparent at the present time. One is the tendency to draw unfavorable comparisons between the UN as it is today and what it was when it came into being. It is true that, four decades ago, the organization was a tidier, more manageable and, in some ways, perhaps a more decorous place and, except for the incipient rift between the East and the West, an assembly of mostly like-minded nations, speaking in the same political idiom. There is an understandable nostalgia for those days, but it is nostalgia for expectations which had not yet come face to face with the collisions and congested realities of the world today. Let it not be forgotten that, at that time, the United Nations represented less than one-third the number of peoples in the world; it included only nine Member States from Asia and not more than four from Africa. Its credentials, therefore, were not much stronger than those of its predecessor, the League of Nations. What has given the United Nations the personality that the League entirely lacked is not only the far greater sophistication and evocative power of the Charter when compared to the Covenant of the League, but the universality of its membership on the basis of the sovereign equality of states, large and small. This is a new phenomenon altogether and, against the residual experience of centuries, we have had only a few decades to learn to deal with it. Nothing in the experience of previous ages enabled a power, large or small, to come to terms with the world in all its diversity. Being new, the phenomenon represented by the United Nations calls for a new kind not only of tolerance but also of understanding.

Another trend which also reflects a harking back to an ancien régime is apparent from the talk of what is called an "automatic majority" at the UN. The talk stems from an impression which has no basis in fact. The record of votes in the General Assembly on such current major political issues as those relating to Afghanistan, the Middle East, southern Africa and Kampuchea reveals no pattern of alignment by the majority of Member States in a kind of a priori opposition to one or another of the major powers. On the contrary, what it confirms is only the fact that the majority of states from Asia, Africa and Latin America have genuinely chosen non-alignment between the East and the West. It is entirely understandable for one or the other major power to question whether these nations have the right perception of the issues involved. But it would be totally unrealistic to expect that these nations would not develop their own world views on which they would base their own judgment of the merits of different issues. Nor is it fair to believe that they are impervious to argument and are not moved by the cogency and persuasiveness of the positions taken by the main protagonists in the various situations faced by the United Nations. The states that belong to the majority have different cultural backgrounds, are subject to different compulsions owing to their individual geopolitical positions and are, at present, at different levels of economic development. But they share a common experience of either direct subjugation or indirect domination in the colonial age. Their emphasis on the principles of equal rights and self-determination of people is, therefore, bound to be stronger. However, differences of perception or emphasis in the global society are to be taken in the same way as they are within national contexts, where they stem from the disparities of interests between classes or social strata. No one in a democratic society turns his back on the national legislature when it becomes a theatre of fierce debate between the representatives of different segments of the population. By the same token, no one need look askance at the United Nations simply because the different urges of the different segments of the global society are emphatically expressed there. The quest in one and the other context is the same: to harmonize the different interests and to hammer a consensus out of divergent positions.

I believe that, in this respect, it is useful to cast our minds back to another process of massive change that.
took place inside developed societies a century or so ago. Then, too, mass enfranchisement created severe problems of adjustment. These were overcome as the different social strata learned to deal with one another, to engage in dialogue and accommodate one another's interests in the larger national interest. We will not be misreading the historical process we are going through if we believe that what happened then domestically is what is happening now on the global plane. The United Nations provides nations with an instrument designed precisely to bring about the accommodation of legitimate national interests in the wider international interest. But this demands a sense of purpose, a clear idea of the direction that needs to be given to international affairs and the stamina to pursue that course.

Another disquieting sign of an inability or failure to adjust to the new world is the challenging of international law and the legal obligations which flow from the Charter. One of the ends stated in the very preamble of the Charter is to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained. International confidence would rest on quicksand if the domestic necessities of states were allowed to override the international obligations they have solemnly undertaken.

The idea of a legal order has been a principal motif of the evolution of Western societies. The United States is second to none in the matter of sensitivity to law and the working of law. The global revolution which is my present theme has entailed an effort to make the legal order encompass the whole community of nations. In the highly complex world of sovereign states and conflicting interests, only a legal order can provide the necessary framework for multilateral cooperation.

Prior to the establishment of the United Nations, international law was but rudimentary; it possessed no institutionalized framework of a permanent character for development and adaptation on a multilateral basis or for adjudication by a standing court system. It is one of the achievements of the United Nations that it has fully discharged the mandate to encourage the progressive development and codification of international law. This has been done against the backdrop of a three-fold increase in the size of the community of nations and, owing to rapid economic and technological change, of a vast expansion of inter-state activity. In the past 40 years, more has been done by the United Nations in codifying international law than in all the previous years of history together.

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that, without international organizations such as the United Nations which provide permanent machinery for law-making, there would be no means to guide international life toward order and growth in conditions that harmonize the interests of all states, powerful or relatively weak. But all this pain-staking endeavor would be of little avail if the rule of law were to meet with no respect and international arbitration or adjudication with disdain. It is in the equal interest of all nations, large or small, to work toward a world where nations, like individuals, will operate within a complete, coherent and viable system of law, impartially administered and enforced. Any movement away from this goal holds equal danger for all.

Parenthetically, I might refer to the question which naturally arises in the public mind: what is the use of principles and rules and laws if they are flouted recurrently as they certainly are in the world today? As the prevalence of crime in national societies does not argue for the repeal of criminal law and the abolition of law-making bodies, so the persistence of international conflict in disregard or defiance of the United Nations is not a justification for turning away from the United Nations. Rather, it makes it all the more incumbent, especially in the more privileged and influential states, to set persuasive examples of strengthening the ability of the UN to fulfill its mandate.

We thus see that there still linger attitudes toward the United Nations that are related to the thinking and responses of an earlier age. Parallel to the dual revolutions of industrialization and mass disenfranchisement in the last century have been the dual revolutions of information and decolonization in ours. The emergence of new states has taken place at the same time as there has been a proliferation of global concerns. Among the factors which have brought about this increase, not the least important is a new consciousness of rights which has made old inequalities and discriminations on grounds of race, gender, age or disability totally unacceptable. This determines the tone and content of the international dialogue of which the United Nations will remain the principal center and to which it has endeavored to give a focus. Considering this, assuming rationality on the part of the world’s political leadership and also assuming that international anarchy is not to be countenanced and a nuclear disaster is to be avoided, it is hard to see how nations can manage the vast areas of their joint concern except through the world organization.

The Charter of the United Nations does not promise a problem-free world. All it promises is a way of dealing with problems rationally and through international dialogue and cooperation. It accepts it as an inherent part of the human condition that disputes will arise among nations. But if it rejects the proposition that these disputes can be settled by war or by the use of the means of domination or coercion.

Looking to the future, there are four global imperatives for assuring peace and justice, human dignity and freedom and, indeed, the health of human society, which need to be answered by systematic and coherent action on the part of governments. The United Nations provides them with a central instrument for doing so.

The first of these is that of arresting and reversing the arms race. For decades now, the arms race has been allowed to proceed senselessly, draining nations of their treasure, aggravating insecurity, undermining confidence and placing humanity at that extremely perilous point where a combination of accident and miscalculation could send it hurtling into ultimate disaster. Recent moves by the world’s two most powerful states indicate a recognition on their part that the race has reached an absurd limit. If this recognition is sustained, and if it leads to further agreements, as is expected, it will mean a vast improvement of the international scene. But, by itself, it will not be enough. Disarmament, in order to
be meaningful in human terms, has to become the joint undertaking of all nations and extend beyond the nuclear and conventional armories of the great powers to the mass of weapon which has agglomerated in the hands of others. The United Nations is fully constituted to be the primary vehicle of this process.

The second great challenge requires giving proof that international disputes, no matter how charged with emotion and how hardened through the entrenched attitudes of the parties involved, are capable of being settled by peaceful means. This, more than anything else, will restore credibility to the commitment made by Member States in acceding to the Charter of the United Nations. There are a number of regional conflicts agitating the global society today. For its part, the UN has recommended fair terms of settlement, or the way of arriving at a settlement, in the case of every one of these disputes. The reason for the failure to achieve their settlement on such terms does not lie in any inherent defect in the world organization. It lies in the fact that its potential toward that end has not been fully utilized. The world organization alone offers a forum where all the parties involved in a dispute are equally represented and can receive equal hearing. Nor is the process of negotiating a settlement restricted to public debate. The Charter itself envisages the organization to be also an instrument of multilateral diplomacy at the anticipatory or preventive level. In certain situations, quiet diplomacy, if backed by the permanent members of the Security Council not merely through agreeing to a common text but through a shared understanding of that text and coordinated policy on its basis, can have a most salutary impact. In other situations, where such means are exhausted and negotiations yield no result, the Charter's provisions for collective action for peace and security need to be put fully into practice.

Through much of its existence, the United Nations has had to function with a vacuum in collective security. This vacuum has been caused by disjunction among the permanent members of the Security Council, by the failure of Member States to resort to the Charter's mechanism for the settlement of disputes, and by their lack of respect for the decisions of the Security Council. While the vacuum is apparent even today, some recent indications hold the promise that we may be on the threshold of a new age that will diminish or even eliminate the first of these causes. If this promise is fulfilled, it will directly affect the other causes as well. In that case, I see a future for the United Nations brighter than its present. Should this prediction prove to be untrue, the result will not be only a world organization relegated to marginality but humanity drifting toward anarchy.

The third challenge is that of putting the world economy on a new expansionary path so as to reinvigorate the process of development, not least in the less privileged sections of the global community. This needs to be done in a way that protects our global environment and does not degrade it. This subject is usually surrounded by technical jargon and rhetoric with the result that its human import is often confused. The fact is that for hundreds of millions of human beings in scores of countries, everyday life continues to be a desperate struggle for survival in conditions of absolute poverty. During the present decade, many have even had to suffer a reversal of the modest social and economic gains that had been made earlier. A way has to be found to overcome the economic stagnation and recession of which they remain victims. And it has to be a way to which both the affluent and the disadvantaged can agree. Such a global consensus can best be evolved through the United Nations.

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The fourth challenge is that of encouraging universal respect for human rights. To achieve international cooperation for giving content and meaning to human dignity is one of the principal purposes of the United Nations. As long as violations continue to take place, as they do at present on a massive scale in different parts of the world, as long as a government like that of South Africa can with impunity maintain a system of blatant racial discrimination, as long as fear grips an untold number of people that they will be penalized for the color of their skin or for their beliefs, we cannot claim that we have put an end to the brutalities which have darkened human life on earth. With all our vaunted progress, our global future can hardly be considered bright if, with the help of newer technologies, torture and oppression become easier and more lethal. The United Nations has adopted a number of conventions for the safeguarding of human rights. Every one of them constitutes a challenge to men and women of conscience around the globe. It is they who can encourage their governments to strengthen the hand of the United Nations in ensuring that these conventions are fully observed.

We stand at this time at a point where an era of confusion and uncertainties about the common goals of nations as stated in the Charter of the United Nations may be coming to an end. The great powers seem to be beginning to view their relationship in a less obsessive frame of mind than they did during the Cold War. The initial phase of the experience of independence for the newly emerging states has also yielded lessons of the values of international cooperation, regional and global. Optimism about a healthier state of international relations is by no means unwarranted. But it is not a development which will come about automatically. At every stage, it calls for the active engagement of people of thought and goodwill in the struggle for a better world order to which the United Nations is committed.
Commentary

Covenant should be our major theme

In its Ridván 1987 message to the Bahá’ís of the world, the Universal House of Justice makes the following statement:

"Preparations for the Holy Year 1992, when the 100th anniversary of the Ascension of the Blessed Beauty and the inception of the Covenant will be commemorated, have already begun. It is fitting, then, that the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh, which links the past and the future with the progressive stages towards the fulfillment of God’s ancient Promise, should be the major theme of the Six Year Plan. Concentration on this theme will enable us all to obtain a deeper appreciation of the meaning and the purpose of His Revelation—‘A Revelation,’ in the words of the Guardian, ‘hailed as the promise and crowning glory of past ages and centuries, as the consummation of all Dispensations within the Adamic Cycle, inaugurating an era of at least a thousand years’ duration, and a cycle destined to last no less than five thousand centuries, signaling the end of the Prophetic Era and the beginning of the Era of Fulfillment, unsurpassed alike in the duration of its Author’s ministry and the fecundity and splendor of His mission...’ The questions that such concentrated study should answer will undoubtedly include the meaning of the Bahá’í Covenant, its origin and what should be our attitude towards it."

A concentrated study of the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh as recommended by the Universal House of Justice requires a detailed examination of the Holy Writings of the Faith and is beyond the scope of this article. Here we may reflect, however, on some of the issues presented by the House of Justice in the above passage: (1) 1992 commemorates the 100th anniversary of the Ascension of Bahá’u’lláh and celebrates the inception of His Covenant; (2) the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh “... links the past and the future with the progressive stages towards the fulfillment of God’s ancient Promise”; (3) the Covenant “should be the major theme of the Six Year Plan,” and (4) “concentration on this theme will enable us all to obtain a deeper appreciation of the meaning and purpose of His Revelation...”

In *God Passes By*, the Guardian writes about the great sorrow of Bahá’ís all over the world who found themselves totally lost after the Ascension of Bahá’u’lláh. He then makes this remarkable statement: "Yet, as the appointed Center of Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant and authorized Interpreter of His teaching had Himself later explained, the dissolution of the tabernacle wherein the soul of the Manifestation of God had chosen temporarily to abide signalized its release from the restrictions which an earthly life had, of necessity, imposed upon it. Its influence no longer beclouded by its human temple, that soul could henceforth energize the world to a degree unapproached at any stage in the course of its existence on this planet." (p. 244)

During His ministry, Bahá’u’lláh had completely fulfilled the glorious mission entrusted to Him by God. By the power of His Revelation, the whole universe was re-created and a new spiritual springtime was begun. He revitalized humanity’s faith in God and created in us a greater awareness of our constant need for God’s mercy and bestowals. Bahá’u’lláh also revealed social teachings and doctrines essential for the establishment of His new World Order and the consequent elevation of humankind to the stage of maturity. In addition to these, and in contrast to all previous religious systems, as the Guardian pointed out, "Above all, the Covenant that was to perpetuate the influence of that Faith, insuring its integrity, safeguard it from schism, and stimulate its world-wide expansion, had been fixed on an inviolable basis." (*God Passes By*, p. 244)

After the Ascension of Bahá’u’lláh, the splendor of the Manifestation of God was now to shine ever brighter through the legacy of His Covenant and through an administrative order whose essential foundations He Himself had laid, and whose detailed structure was to be delineated by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Center of His Covenant.

It is interesting to note that the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh did not address itself solely to the issue of successorship to the Manifestation of God, but also defined in clear terms the authority and functions of the Center of the Covenant, that is, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, He to Whom all must turn for guidance, the only Person to understand fully the significance of Bahá’u’lláh’s mission and the only One Who could interpret His Writings.

Bahá’u’lláh also created the necessary institutions and administrative channels through which the spirit of His Covenant could flow uninterruptedly in the future, a legacy that was reiterated by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who, in His Will and Testament, bestowed on Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Cause of God, the same functions and authority that His Father had bestowed upon Him. The authority to interpret the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, an essential element of the Covenant, was given only to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and after him to Shoghi Effendi, and lasted for a period..."
of 65 years from the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh in 1892 to the passing of Shoghi Effendi in 1957. Both the authenticity and duration of this unique and the soul of the Manifestation of Baha'u'llah's Covenant.

After the passing of the beloved Guardian, another aspect of the Covenant, namely that of loyalty and obedience to the Center of the Cause, now the Universal House of Justice, remained fully in effect. This loyalty to the Covenant on the part of Bahá'ís is all over the world has carried the Faith triumphantly forward to the present time and will continue to shape the progressive stages of its evolution into the future. Thus one finds a dynamic link between the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh and the soul of the Manifestation of God. As that soul was released from the restrictions of earthly life and began to shed its radiance upon the world, the Covenant appeared as a divine Instrument to "... perpetuate the influence of that Faith, insure its integrity, safeguard it from schism, and stimulate its world-wide expansion. . . ."

The Universal House of Justice says that the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh "... links the past and the future with the progressive stages towards the fulfillment of God's ancient Promise. . . ." While it is true that all previous religions have contributed to man's spiritual and social enlightenment and have succeeded in achieving a rather limited but growing sense of unity among segments of human society, neither were they destined, as the Guardian has said, to fulfill the ancient Promise of God and bring about the unity of all peoples in one human family, nor had humanity reached the level of maturity necessary to understand and to work toward achieving that goal. Thus it remained the primary goal of the Bahá'í Revelation to achieve the colossal task of spiritualizing and unifying the entire human race.

A statement by 'Abdu'l-Baha in the Tablets of the Divine Plan illustrates how indispensable is the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh in the realization of the oneness of mankind: "... Today no power can conserve the oneness of the Bahá'í world save the Covenant of God; otherwise differences like unto a most great tempest will encompass the Bahá'í world. . . . It is evident that the axis of the oneness of the world of humanity is the power of the Covenant and nothing else. . . ." (p.18) So we see that it is the power of the Covenant that unites human hearts and cements the tormented fragments of society in the single body of mankind. How could the Bahá'í Faith bring about the unity of mankind if it were not fully united itself? And how could the Faith have been so united were it not for the power of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh? The answers are clearly stated in the Writings. Without the Covenant, the Bahá'í Faith could neither preserve its own unity nor could it offer the human race any hope for eventual unity.

We are now more than two years into the Six Year Plan, the goals of which are diverse and may vary widely from one national community to another. But whether these goals are related to teaching, pioneering, consolidation, education, publication of Bahá'í literature, or any other goal of the Plan, we are reminded by the Universal House of Justice that the major theme of the Plan should be the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh. It is the Covenant that must permeate all our services to the Faith, to motivate and inspire us to higher levels of sacrifice. It then becomes clear how important it is for each of us to engage in a concentrated study of the Covenant to obtain a clearer understanding of the nature of Bahá'u'lláh's mission and the significance of His stupendous Revelation. Once we begin to understand more fully the meaning of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant and to glimpse, however dimly, the significance of His Revelation, we might begin to ponder the nature of our responsibility toward the Covenant and how we can make our belief in it a part of our daily lives. To that end, the Guardian offers the following guidance:

"In order to avoid division and disruption, that the Cause may not fall prey to conflicting interpretations, and lose thereby its purity and pristine vigor, that its affairs may be conducted with efficiency and promptness, it is necessary that every one should conscientiously take part in the election of these Assemblies, abide by their decisions, enforce their decrees, and cooperate wholeheartedly in their task of stimulating the growth of the Movement throughout all regions." (Bahá'í Administration, p. 41)

In this passage the Guardian outlines three tasks, all based on spiritual principles, which, when practiced "conscientiously" and "wholeheartedly," will lead to the growth of the Cause of God: (1) participating in the election of Bahá'í Assemblies; (2) abiding by their decisions; and (3) cooperating with them and supporting their plans and programs. It seems that by conscientious participation in the election of one's local Spiritual Assembly the individual believer achieves a sense of unity and togetherness with that divinely ordained institution; this unity is reinforced as the individual abides by the decisions of the Assembly, adopts its activities and programs as his or her own and works to carry them out. Achieving such a state of unity enables the individual to play a major role in the community and makes him or her an essential component in building a Bahá'í civilization.

We are living in a challenging and exciting time. The Bahá'í community throughout the world is expanding at an accelerated pace. With this expansion, the rest of humanity is gaining a greater awareness of the redeeming power of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh; the influence of the Faith on the social and spiritual well-being of humanity is now being felt by increasing numbers of people and their leaders. Challenges and opportunities undreamed-of even a few years ago are facing us, in whichever field of service we are engaged. Many wonderful promises given by Bahá'u'lláh are being fulfilled here and now. As we face the challenges and the opportunities which the fulfillment of these promises and the emergence of the Faith from obscurity have provided us, we must choose carefully our priorities and take the proper course of action in agreement with the goals of the Six Year Plan. Whatever our circumstances, and to whatever extent we may succeed in becoming humble instruments serving the Cause of God, we have been promised in the Writings that by striving to live a Bahá'í life, teach the Cause, and support wholeheartedly our administrative institutions, we will be playing an essential part in extending the protective wings of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh over the whole of mankind.
Panel on ethics draws 600 in Germany

A panel discussion, "Selling off the Creation: Have Our Ethics Failed when Facing the Environment," sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany, was held last July 7 at the city hall in Hofheim.

More than 600 people were present for the event, which explored the role of religion in environmental conservation.

The panelists were Professor Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, director of the Institute for European Environmental Politics in Bonn, London and Paris; Professor Philip Schmitz of the Philosophical-Theological University of the Jesuits of Frankfurt; Dr. Ingeborg Franken, a physicist and member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany; and Dr. Gottfried Edel, a member of the cultural section of the German federal television network.

The event was especially significant in that panelists came from a variety of religious and scientific backgrounds. Its success, according to a report from the National Spiritual Assembly, was due to the fact that it addressed an issue currently affecting society and included non-Bahá'í speakers.

The panel was one of several events held during a "cultural week" in Hofheim organized by the Federal State of Hessen and publicized by millions of programs distributed throughout the country.

The Bahá'í House of Worship in Langenhain was featured in the program along with a Bahá'í exhibit, the panel discussion, and a Bahá'í program for children entitled "Program for World Peace: Music and Dance."

Almost 500 Bahá'ís gathered in Hofheim last May 22, following the National Bahá'í Convention, for a National Teaching Conference.

Consultation was focused on the Ridván message from the Universal House of Justice and reports from the National Convention. Also, slides and video tapes of the sixth International Convention were shown.

Several well-known Bahá'ís who were visiting Germany were among those attending a worship service last July 9 at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Langenhain which marked the anniversary of the martyrdom of the Báb.

Nearly 400 Bahá'ís and their guests from several countries enjoyed the service and had the privilege of meeting and hearing from the Hand of the Cause of God 'Ali Akbar Furútan; Adib Taherzadeh, a member of the Universal House of Justice; Counsellor Hartmut Grossmann, who was en route to Haifa, Israel, where he now serves as a member of the International Teaching Centre; and two former Counsellor members of the Teaching Centre, 'Aziz Yazdí and Anneliese Bopp.

Local and regional newspapers throughout Germany continue to publish favorable articles on the activities of local Bahá'í communities, such as the election of local Spiritual Assemblies and the observance of Bahá'í Holy Days.

The great majority of these articles no longer refer to the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran but reflect instead the broad range of activities presently undertaken by Bahá'ís.
Finland

The Bahá'ís of Finland took part last May in a street display festival in Oulu during which 25 local groups presented their development projects in Third World countries.

The Bahá'ís of Oulu introduced to the public their varied social and economic development projects in India, Africa and Latin America.

About 30 color photographs taken from a slide show prepared by the Baha'i International Community were shown with captions and statistics. There was also a map of the world and several attractive UN posters.

The display sign read, “The international Bahá'í community has more than 1,200 development projects in about 1,000 localities.”

Introductory pamphlets on the Faith and copies of the peace statement were given to visitors, many of whom asked questions about the teachings of the Faith.

The “Market of Possibilities,” as it was called, received coverage on two local radio programs which mentioned the Bahá'í Faith. The event is scheduled to be held again in May 1989.

Swaziland

Princess Gcinaphi Lindi Khumalo of Swaziland is a Bahá'í who has been taking part since November 1987 in a course offered by the Hebrew University and Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem leading to the degree of Master of Public Health.

Last July 16, she and 17 of her colleagues in the MPH program were invited by the Secretary-General of the Bahá'í International Community to visit the Bahá'í Holy Places in Haifa and 'Akká.

The group, representing 10 countries of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Pacific, was received by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum. All expressed their gratitude for the warm hospitality shown them throughout their day-long visit, and their delight at the beauty of the Shriners and gardens.

During her stay in Israel, Princess Gcinaphi has been presented formally to the Prime Minister and President of the State of Israel. Both occasions received media coverage.

United Kingdom

Last April 23, the Bahá'ís of Cardiff, Wales, were hosts to 125 guests at the Temple of Peace, where they celebrated the 40th anniversary of the formation of their local Spiritual Assembly, the first in Wales.

Guests from the local council and church took part in the event, creating an apparent “interfaith flavor” in the friendly exchange of spiritual hopes and aspirations.

A Unitarian minister, Roy John, spoke of the close ties that the Bahá'ís of Cardiff have with the United Nations Association and the interfaith group in that city, and praised their persistent work for peace.

Before the celebration, Welsh independent television interviewed two members of the Bahá'í community of Cardiff on the program “Wales on Sunday,” which has an audience of about 70,000.

Amid stirring deliberations ignited by the Ridván message from the Universal House of Justice, “Youth Challenge '88” was launched at the fourth annual National Youth Convention held May 20-22 in Edinburgh, Scotland.

The “Challenge” is an initiative of the Bahá'í youth of the United Kingdom which is aimed at reaching the mass of young people in those islands with the healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

At its heart is a series of projects with the key themes of prayer, audacity and movement.

At the first Youth Challenge evening, in Edinburgh, 9,000 invitations were sent to leading Scottish youth organizations. About 40 young people from a variety of religious, political and social groups responded.

Among exciting results are the forthcoming active participation of Bahá'í youth as voting delegates to the British Youth Council and the proposed publication of a document addressed to young people in the United Kingdom pinpointing current concerns and social issues and inviting them to consult with Bahá'í youth committees on these and other matters.

Sri Lanka

National television in Sri Lanka delighted the hearts of the friends with its coverage of the sixth Bahá'í International Convention in Haifa, Israel, news of which was broadcast in three languages.
**Australia**

Thelma Perks, a former Counsellor for Australasia, Auxiliary Board member, and member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia, died last May at the age of 86.

Miss Perks, who became a Bahá’í in 1947, was one of the few remaining Bahá’ís who knew both Clara and Hyde Dunn, the pioneers who opened the continent of Australia to the Faith.

In 1950 she donated nine acres of land to the Yerrinbool Bahá’í School, insisting that it not be named after her. Three years later, when the Ten Year Crusade began, she was one of several Bahá’ís who moved temporarily (in her case, to Grafton, New South Wales) to open goal areas.

In 1954 she was elected for the first time to the National Spiritual Assembly, and shortly afterward was appointed with Collis Featherstone by the Hand of the Cause of God Clara Dunn to serve as an Auxiliary Board member.

Miss Perks served until 1963 as both an Auxiliary Board member and member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia, meanwhile teaching the Faith throughout the Pacific area.

In June 1968, when the Universal House of Justice announced the establishment of 11 Continental Boards of Counsellors, the Board for Australasia consisted of Suhayl Ala’i, Howard Harwood and Thelma Perks.

Miss Perks served as a Counsellor until her retirement from that position in 1980. Her sadness over many years that members of her family took no interest in her Bahá’í activities turned to joy in recent years when her niece, Annette Sherringham, became a Bahá’í.

Jack Malardy, a 90-year-old Bahá’í who is the elected leader of six Aboriginal tribes living together in Biddyadanga, 150 km (93 miles) south of Broome in the north of Western Australia, undertook an extensive journey as a delegate to this year’s National Convention, visiting Bahá’ís and non-Bahá’ís along the way.

Mr. Malardy was the first Aboriginal believer in Biddyadanga. Six months after he embraced the Cause, there were enough Bahá’ís there to form the first local Spiritual Assembly of Biddyadanga.

Last May, Mr. Malardy was elected delegate from his area to the National Convention in Melbourne, which is about 6,500 km (4,030 miles) from Biddyadanga. He was accompanied on his long journey by the delegate from the neighboring region, Firaydun Mithaq.

In February the Bahá’ís of Maddington, West Australia, were invited to entertain at an evening celebration given by three local Rotary Clubs to mark the 83rd anniversary of Rotary International.

A program whose theme was peace included cultural dances and choral selections, after which copies of the peace statement were given to two district governors and three presidents.

The chairman referred at length to the Bahá’í teachings, encouraging members of Rotary to become familiar with them and ask questions of the Bahá’ís who were present. Many of the 150 people at the event asked for literature on the Faith.

Two local Spiritual Assemblies in New South Wales are working together on a campaign for “entry by troops” that is attracting seekers and transforming the Bahá’í community.

One report said, “It was such an incredible feeling to go to bed every night during that week with a voice so hoarse from teaching the Faith.”

The careful planning includes four aspects: (1) creating mass awareness of what the Faith is and what it has to offer; (2) making the Faith highly visible; (3) making it easily accessible to the public; and (4) creating greater confidence in the believers by assuring them of Bahá’u’lláh’s promised assistance.

One effective teaching aid has been a large badge which reads, “I’m a Bahá’í. Ask me why,” which is worn by both Bahá’í children and adults.

In Queensland, Australia, the Bahá’í Faith is now regarded as “a religious body for the purposes of the Stamp Duty Act.” This means that local Spiritual Assemblies in that state are exempted from the payment of stamp duty on any properties they purchase.

The ruling came about after the Spiritual Assembly of Brisbane, about to purchase some property, sought an exemption and found that it had previously been given only to Christian denominations.

**Botswana**

![Dr. Gaositwe Chiepe (left), Botswana’s Minister of External Affairs, accepts a copy of ‘The Promise of World Peace’ from Counsellor Lally Warren as Zia Ahmadzadehan, public relations officer for the Bahá’í community of Botswana, looks on. Dr. Chiepe expressed her personal commitment and that of the government of Botswana to the cause of world peace and commended the Bahá’í community for its efforts in promoting this vital principle.](image-url)
Zaire

Bahá'í mothers and representatives from the Department of Women's Affairs and various religions filled the National Bahá'í Centre in Kinshasa, Zaire, last March 27 to take part in a conference on family health.

The event, which was part of a socio-economic program organized by the Bahá'í mothers, focused primarily on the prevention of childhood diseases.

The delegate from the Department of Women's Affairs was so impressed by the instructor, Dr. Farzin Davachi, that she asked the Bahá'í community for permission to place Dr. Davachi at the disposal of her department for a conference tour on the same theme in the zones of the capital.

An adventurous traveling teacher trekked through isolated areas of Zaire last December and January, areas generally regarded as inaccessible because of their remoteness and the hostility of local residents toward outsiders.

Makolo Yapanu of Kinshasha, traveling under the aegis of the Auxiliary Board of Western Zaire, went some 57 km (35 miles) on foot to visit the villages of Mabunzi, Pangi Bolia, and Bibelo 1, 2 and 3 in the equatorial forest.

His efforts led to the enrollment of 27 people, among whom was the chief of a village.

Japan

The Bahá'ís of Japan held their annual Teaching Conference last March 25-27 in Yamaguchi.

This year's event included only two plenary addresses, with the main features of the conference being a teaching project focusing on a questionnaire titled "How International Are You?" and a public Peace Festival.

The festival introduced participants to teaching techniques that have been quite successful in the Nishi-Chugoku area of the country. Featured were thought-provoking displays about world peace and Bahá'í solutions; English and Japanese "conversation corners," and children's activities.

Well over 100 people from the area, three of whom embraced the Cause, attended the festival.

Chile

This photograph of the main building of Radio Bahá'í Chile in Labranza, Commune of Temuco, was taken in February, shortly after the celebration of the station's first anniversary. Radio Bahá'í, operating on 1160 kHz and serving principally the indigenous population of Mapuche Indian communities, was officially opened on December 20, 1986.

During February, the group of young Bahá'ís shown here, from the communities of Las Condes and Temuco, Santiago, volunteered between one and two weeks each to Radio Bahá'í Chile. Their project helped fulfill a youth 'week of service' campaign launched by the National Spiritual Assembly as a part of its goals for the Six Year Plan directed specifically toward youth.

Alaska

At the third annual meeting of the Interior Alaska Ecumenical Peace with Justice Council, held last May in Fairbanks, the Bahá'í Faith was given an award in recognition of its "Peace Talks" television series.

David Rychetnik, who represented the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska at the meeting, said he was pleased to accept the award on behalf of the National Assembly and the Bahá'ís of the Fairbanks area who made the effort to get the spots on the air.

"We have a long road ahead before real peace will be established," he said, "but Bahá'ís believe there is great hope for mankind, and that slowly, sometimes painfully, our eyes are opening.

"After all, as this television campaign tries to point out, peace truly begins in our hearts... and under the right circumstances, as we know, hearts have been known to change... instantly."

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Nicaragua

*El Nuevo Diario*, a national daily newspaper in Managua, Nicaragua, has published several recent articles about the Bahá'í Faith voluntarily and free of charge.

One was entitled "The Origin and Principles of the Faith," another "The Promise of World Peace," and a third "Participation of Delegates to the 6th International Bahá'í Convention in Haifa."

Six members of the Bahá'í New Era Youth Club were interviewed recently by a local radio station in Jinotepe, Nicaragua.

The club, which began with eight members, now boasts an enrollment of 28 youth, the majority of whom are not Bahá'ís. Its purpose is to maintain unity in diversity while enjoying social and cultural activities.

Cristina Arouz, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Nicaragua, and Auxiliary Board member Carlos Manzanares were interviewed for 10 minutes on television last June 14, marking the first time in 13 years that the National Spiritual Assembly of Nicaragua was able to arrange such an interview about the Faith.

India

The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Ranasinghe Premadasa, visited the Bahá'í House of Worship in India last April 5. He was accompanied by Sri Lanka's High Commissioner in India.

The Prime Minister, who is the first head of state to visit the Temple, spent an hour there and attended a devotional service.

A packet of literature presented to him contained selections from the Sacred Writings in Sinhalese, a copy of the peace statement, the book *The Dawning Place*, and photographs of the House of Worship.

In return, Mr. Premadasa, who expressed his appreciation for the Temple's design and purpose, presented a gift of a lovely brass plaque and instructed the High Commissioner to send a volume of the *Dhamapada* for the Temple library.

The Bahá'ís took the opportunity to express to the Prime Minister their appreciation for the recognition given annually to World Religion Day in Sri Lanka and for that country's issuance in 1986 of a commemorative postage stamp honoring the Bahá'í-sponsored event.

The Prime Minister's visit was televised in India and covered by the Sri Lankan and Indian press.

United States

Thirty-five people from 10 states, none of whom was a Bahá'í, took part in an Elderhostel program held last April 30 at the Bosch Bahá'í School near Santa Cruz, California.

Three five-hour courses were presented including a course on "The Economics of a World Commonwealth" prepared in cooperation with the Bahá'í Club at the University of California-Santa Cruz. The course, taught by a Bahá'í, explored the economic theories of Marxism, socialism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and the Bahá'í Faith.

One enthusiastic participant said she looked forward to returning to Bosch for another such program, adding that she would "probably be a Bahá'í by then."

Elderhostels are a network of more than 900 educational institutions found in 30 countries around the world. They offer special low-cost, short-term residential academic programs for adults over 60 years of age, believing that one's later years can provide an opportunity for new experiences.
Guyana

Two Bahá'í physicians from Great Britain, Drs. Rustom Beheshti and Farzin Rahmani, visited Guyana for two weeks last June to conduct lectures and work at Georgetown Hospital.

At a reception at the National Cultural Centre in Georgetown, Prime Minister Hamilton Green said that the coming of a Bahá'í medical team was a tangible demonstration of the ongoing concern the Bahá'ís of Guyana have for the welfare of their countrymen.

The following day, two radio broadcasts mentioned the reception. The report was repeated once or twice on subsequent days.

In the evenings, the Bahá'í physicians took part in teaching activities. On Tuesday evening they attended a public meeting at the Zeeburg School, at which more than 200 people were present and 12 were enrolled in the Faith.

Two public meetings the following evening, one in Leonora that drew 80 people, the other at Grove Village with an audience of 300, resulted in a total of 20 declarations.

Other public meetings were held throughout their visit, attracting many people and inspiring some to declare their faith in Bahá'u'lláh.

By the end of May, the teaching goal of Guyana's "Youth on the Move" campaign was won, with 261 new Bahá'ís enrolled, far surpassing the target of 50.

Other goals—including the number of children's classes conducted by youth, increasing the number of areas holding youth activities, fund-raising, and increasing participation at the Nineteen Day Feast and local deepenings—also met with success.

Phase Two of the campaign was to run from June 1 through July 31.

The fifth annual Border Camp of Guyana and Suriname was held last April 1-4 in Corriverton, Courantyne, Guyana.

More than 120 people took part including representatives from all three counties in Guyana.

Also attending were eight members of Guyana's National Spiritual Assembly, three Auxiliary Board members, and Bahá'ís from Malaysia, Suriname and Barbados.

Canada

The works of three Bahá'ís—Geoffrey Nash, Nancy Raham and Roger White—were recently featured in two Canadian literary publications, the New Canadian Review (Vol. 1, No. 2), and the White Wall Review 1988.

The Chinese Teaching Committee of the Bahá'ís of Montreal, Quebec, supported by the local Spiritual Assembly, undertook an audacious project on the occasion of the Chinese new year last February.

A contest was held by the Bahá'ís for the Chinese communities of Montreal and Toronto. Four quotations from various religions were printed in Montreal's Chinese-language newspaper, in the Toronto Chinese Canadian Daily, and advertised on a Chinese-language radio station in Montreal. Those entering the contest had to identify the religion in which each quotation originated; first prize was a copy of the new Encyclopedia of Peace.

As a part of the project, a booth was set up in a fair in Chinatown that provided an opportunity for a diverse group of Bahá'ís to talk to many of the thousands of people passing through. Copies of the peace statement were given out along with 500-600 balloons with "the earth is one country" written on them in Chinese.

Lesotho

About 30 people gathered last March 8 at a Bahá'í home in Maseru, Lesotho, to celebrate International Women's Day. The event was planned by local Bahá'ís in consultation with officers of the United Nations and the Women's Alliance.

A Bahá'í, Mrs. Debbie Christensen, opened the program with a look back at major efforts to since 1946 to realize the equality of men and women, looking especially at the 1975-85 UN Decade for Women.

Afterward, representatives from the UN office and the Lesotho Alliance for Women presented talks outlining the need to address the issue of equality in a manner appropriate to the people and the cultural environment in Lesotho.
Hong Kong

On learning of an imminent lecture tour in China by Dr. Ervin Laszlo, the Bahá'ís of Hong Kong organized a five-day itinerary of events coupled by an extensive media and publicity campaign in Hong Kong.

The itinerary included lectures at universities, press conferences attended by 10-15 reporters, tours and receptions.

In his lectures, Dr. Laszlo, an internationally known philosopher and member of the Club of Rome, quoted extensively from the Bahá’í writings, drawing parallels between current scientific thought and the teachings of the Faith.

He has developed a close relationship with the Bahá’í Faith, first through the United Nations office of the Bahá’í International Community in New York and later as a guest speaker at many Bahá’í conferences in Canada and the U.S.

Three pioneers to Hong Kong were overwhelmed by the loving reception given to them by Bahá’ís at the Chinawan Refugee Camp on Lan Tso Island when they arrived last April 21 to help with the election of the local Spiritual Assembly.

The devotion of the refugees touched the visitors as well. A picture of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and a vase of flowers graced a table beside a carefully constructed ballot box. Even though some of the refugees hadn’t been Bahá’ís very long, there appeared to be a real sense of appreciation for the significance of the election.

The election itself began with prayers, and afterward an elaborate Vietnamese R智van supper was served to all.

Under an ordinance passed June 16 by the Legislative Council of Hong Kong, that country’s National Spiritual Assembly was officially incorporated.

The move gives the Faith vitally important legal status and protection under the law, even after 1997 when Hong Kong is to become a part of the People’s Republic of China.

Brazil

Enedino Rodrigues Benevides, a Bahá’í youth from Brazil, is one of six recipients worldwide of the Rotary International “Pro-Peace” Prize.

For winning, Mr. Benevides received a one-year scholarship to Leeds University in England where he plans to study international history, philosophy and political science while carrying the title of “Goodwill Ambassador” for Rotary International.

The young Bahá’í from Goiania State attributes his success to the Bahá’í Faith.

Last year a Bahá’í committee for the coordination of women’s activities was established with a membership of nine women representing six communities in southern Brazil.

The committee held its first Institute last June 11-12 in Londrina, Parana State, and has distributed 6,000 pamphlets to the public on the equality of men and women as well as a Bahá’í prayer for expectant mothers.

The opening of a mass teaching campaign in Paraiba State, Brazil, was one immediate result of a youth conference held last July 8-10 in Salvador, Bahia.

About 150 youth were joined in the effort by Counsellors Eloy Anello and Rolf von Czekus, three members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil, and two Auxiliary Board members.

The conference supplied 30 Bahá’í teachers to local communities as they began to organize a campaign aimed at opening all the municipalities in the State to the Faith and forming 19 new local Spiritual Assemblies by R智van 1989.

The Bahá’í Development Agency for the Amazon (ADCAM) sponsors a home for abandoned children, called Lar Linda Tanure Home, in Brazil.

Thirty-five children are in residence with a constant flow of admissions and departures as children are prepared for integration into society.

Nine of the children are enrolled in public schools, while others are being trained at the home at the pre-school and first grade levels.

Alaska

The director of the Bahá’í Office of Public Affairs was among 20 people invited to a recent meeting in Anchorage, Alaska, to discuss the topic of world peace with a delegation of Soviet physicians.

During the meeting, the Soviets asked each of those in the audience to introduce himself and present a brief talk on his or her ideas and actions for peace.

The two Bahá’ís present, David Rychetnik and Marian Johnson, had prepared packets of material including copies of the peace statement and other publications. The packets given to the Soviet guests included Russian translations of the peace statement.

An incredible personal teaching project was undertaken last April by Judi McClain, a 42-year-old grandmother from Kotzebue, Alaska.

Alone, except for her 11 sled dogs, she traveled more than 300 miles by sled to visit villages in the Nana region. On some days, she traveled up to 60 miles.

Mrs. McClain has planned a similar journey for later this year, traveling this time some 600 miles to visit two villages she did not reach on her first trip.

Two Bahá’ís in Petersburg, Alaska, serve as volunteers in the Women Against Violent Emergencies (WAVE) program in their community.

When domestic violence occurs, the program calls upon local ministers and Bahá’í volunteers for help. During a two-year period 26 people have embraced the Faith in Petersburg as a result of contacts made with Bahá’ís involved in this community program.

Republic of Ireland

A 1988 desk calendar, which is being distributed throughout the Republic of Ireland by major companies, lists the Bahá’í Faith among seven religions under the heading “Major Religious Denominations.”
Tanzania

About 100 people attended a National Bahá'í Youth Conference held last June at the Ruaha Technical Secondary Bahá'í School in Iringa, Tanzania.

Because of recent transportation problems within the country, this was considered to be a very high level of attendance.

Members of the National Spiritual Assembly and the Auxiliary Board were among those at the conference, whose theme was “Bringing People Together.”

Belgium

Aid to the needy in the Charleroi region of Belgium was the topic at a workshop held last January 30-31.

After an evening of consultation, the 25 youth, several adult Bahá’ís and some non-Bahá’ís reconvened the following day for prayers and inspiration, then went to work repairing moisture-damaged homes, cleaning houses, helping immigrant Moroccan children with their school work, and visiting elderly people who were happy to meet enthusiastic youth.

That evening, stories of the day were shared and everyone agreed that the effort should be continued. Two young people volunteered to keep in touch with the families that were served and to be available when needed.

At a gathering in Brussels last March, 21 people embraced the Faith in Bounguia II, a Pygmy village some 15 km (9.3 miles) from Franceville. The village chief, Jean-Baptiste Mouyiki, was the first to enroll.

These successes came after an individual Bahá’í had adopted the village as his personal teaching goal.

Cooperation among local and regional civil authorities and the Bahá’ís of Gabon has resulted in the start of construction of a dispensary that will serve the needs of about 1,000 people in six localities.

Baha'is are coordinating the building project with other local people providing the labor. The regional government is supplying masons and carpenters.

Korea

In March the Bahá’ís of Korea undertook mass teaching, fielding a full-time traveling team in various parts of the country, a team in Seoul every day, and another in Cheju every weekend.

At a teaching conference March 5-6, participants heard about the teaching work in Taiwan, which had inspired the current project in Korea.

Nine volunteers completed a teacher training institute held March 24-29, while others attended many of the sessions and have helped in the daily teaching in Seoul.

The National Spiritual Assembly reports that the new spirit of love and unity within the Korean Bahá’í community had attracted 46 new believers during the first two weeks of the campaign.

Gabon

Many new teaching initiatives have been undertaken by individuals and groups of Bahá’ís in Gabon as a result of the first of two Regional Teaching Conferences held last December in Gabon’s capital city, Libreville.

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UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

OCTOBER 13, 1988
United States

Gregory Institute hosts Peace Fest '88

A second appearance by the Bahá'í "Peace Orchestra" and the presentation of an award to Mrs. Billye Aaron, vice-president of the United Negro College Fund and wife of baseball superstar Henry Aaron, were among the highlights of Peace Fest '88 at the Louis G. Gregory Bahá'í Institute near Hemingway, South Carolina.

The third annual event, sponsored by the Gregory Institute and WLGI Radio Bahá'í, began Friday, September 16, with an evening of "music to inspire the soul" featuring Gospel singers and choirs from all over the Palmetto State.

Saturday's activities included a "youth fest," the presentation of the Louis G. Gregory Peace Award to Mrs. Aaron, and an evening jazz concert by the 15-member Peace Orchestra.

On Sunday, the Institute held a worship service for peace at which the speaker was Dr. Wilma Ellis, director of the Bahá'í International Community's offices in New York City.

Following the service, Peace Fest '88 ended with a barbecue and picnic lunch.

Also taking part in Peace Fest '88 was Kevin Locke, a Lakota Indian Bahá'í who performed his well-known hoop dance, played the flute for those at the Peace Fest, and also performed for more than 600 black elementary school children at St. Mark School.

Besides receiving the Peace Award, Mrs. Aaron was keynote speaker at Saturday afternoon's Peace Forum at which the Louis G. Gregory Ambassador of Education Award was given to Mrs. Ruby Forsyth for more than 50 years of service as a teacher.

Taking part in the forum with Mrs. Aaron were three representatives from nearby school districts: Joan Thompson, assistant superintendent of instruction, Williamsburg County; C.B. Dodson, superintendent, Georgetown District; and Muriel O'Tuel, assistant to the superintendent, Horry County District.

The Peace Orchestra dedicated its concert to the memory of Steve Perlow, a talented musician and Bahá'í who died in August.

The orchestra was directed this year by baritone saxophonist Marvin (Doc) Holladay.

The other members were trumpeters George Graham, Warren Kime, Roger Lewis and Paul Seaforth; saxophonists Jay Corré, Ernest Hensley and Roger Hogan; trombonists Bruce Clark, Laney Furr and Jim Tangney; bass trumpet Ed Kraft; pianist John Di Martino; drummer Sherman Ferguson; and bassist Walter Urban.
Maxwell Bahá'í School opens its doors

Well over a year of hard work and careful preparation was culminated September 19 when the Maxwell Bahá'í School in Shawnigan Lake, British Columbia, the first full-time academic Bahá'í school in North America, began classes for grades 7-9. The following report from the school recounts some of the history of its development and discusses its plans for the future.

Maxwell's first-ever group of students represents a variety of nations and cultural backgrounds—Japan, Samoa, Papua New Guinea, Tanzania, South Africa, New Zealand, Canada, United States, Native American, Persian, and black American—expressing one of the fondest hopes for Maxwell. As one looked around the dining hall at students and staff gathered for their first meals as the "Maxwell School family," one truly had an opportunity to "consider the flowers of the garden: though differing in kind, color, form, and shape, yet... invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm, and addeth to their beauty." ('Abdu'l-Bahá)

As the school develops, it is hoped that students from all nations will attend. Dr. Ray Johnson, the principal, has invited local and national Bahá'í communities to consider funding scholarship programs to enable an ever-increasing number and diversity of students to attend Maxwell. "We remember the Master's statement," says Dr. Johnson, "that one of the purposes of education is 'to bring those who have been excluded into the circle of intimate friends,' and we deeply hope that Maxwell may be such a place."

The story of the Maxwell International Bahá'í School actually began long before the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada purchased the property in the spring of 1987. The site was first developed at the turn of the century as a tourist retreat known as Strathcona Lodge. Later, in the early 1900s, the lodge became Strathcona Lodge School, a girls' boarding school. Strathcona School continued until the late 1970s when financial difficulties forced it to close.

Some years before the closing of Strathcona School, a major fire destroyed significant school buildings, which necessitated the rebuilding, expansion and modernization of the campus. It is this rebuilt and expanded version of the Strathcona School property which passed into the hands of the Bahá'ís. Because the school property had been unused for more than a decade, preparations to receive students included substantial work on the physical plant. Although work on buildings and grounds will be a continuing process, the major projects relating to making the campus safe, functional and lovely were completed by the time students arrived. Because of the efforts of school staff and many dedicated volunteers to refurbish the long-unused buildings and to beautify the grounds, visitors now are touched by the beauty of the campus—the freshly painted buildings, the lovely gardens, and the forested, lakefront setting. Maxwell School is, indeed, a developing jewel on Shawnigan Lake.

The Maxwell teaching staff were asked to arrive on campus five weeks before the coming of the students to allow for an extended period in which to develop a strong foundation of unity with respect to the school's educational vision, curriculum, and methods of instruction. This period of orientation was intended, first, to "spiritualize" the vision—to orient thoughts toward the spiritual significance of education and to develop an educational ap-
The approach that was firmly grounded in the Bahá’í principles. Intensive group consultation was focused on the Bahá’í Writings, as they provide guidance regarding the human reality of body, mind, soul and spirit; the purpose of education; the role of the teacher; suggested curriculum and methods; and other pertinent topics. Integrated in this exploration was consideration of contemporary “cutting edge” educational theory and practice, the goal being to develop an educational approach that best expressed a dynamic fusion of the Book of Revelation and the Book of Creation—of Bahá’í principles and the best of contemporary research and thought.

Before the opening, preparations were given special meaning through visits by the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears and Mrs. Sears, and two members of the Universal House of Justice, Hooper Dunbar and David Ruhe. The Maxwell teaching staff have a wide diversity of previous teaching experience and professional training. All staff teach classes in one or two “core” subject areas (visual arts, English, science, social studies, French, music, physical education, math and computers) but consciously approach these areas from a transdisciplinary perspective—creating a rich intermingling of ideas, approaches and concepts from many disciplines. Most of the teachers have taught in cross-cultural situations and/or have experience teaching in other countries—from native settlements above the Arctic Circle to European cities and African villages. When this wealth of personal backgrounds and diverse disciplines was brought together and encouraged to intensively study the spiritual meaning and significance of education, the most wonderful “unfolding” of Maxwell’s educational vision took place as the fruit of a truly consultative process.

The Maxwell International Bahá’í School sees learning as a process in which all branches of knowledge, human concerns, spiritual values and personal aspirations converge. Thus, the Maxwell curriculum expresses a holistic concern for human spiritual, intellectual, social and physical development. As a learning community, Maxwell affirms nine core principles which guide the over-all program:

**The Vision Principle:** Infusing throughout the Maxwell program the spiritual vision and practical wisdom of the Bahá’í principles, and affirming these principles as the foundation of the over-all Maxwell program.

**The Respect Principle:** Expressing an unconditional positive regard for all persons and promoting, through word and example, a sense of reverence for God, oneself, other people, and the natural environment. Encouraging an awareness of the important relationships between oneself and all living things.

**The Balance Principle:** Recognizing the interconnection of spiritual, mental, emotional and physical health, and promoting the health of the whole person by providing balanced activities.

**The Integration Principle:** Demonstrating that each area of learning is highly valuable as a “window” on a rapidly changing global civilization. Exploring interconnections among all areas of learning and subject matter, showing through theory and practice the relationship of one area of learning to another.

**The Excellence Principle:** Providing clear, well-defined processes by which learners and teachers can together assess what is being learned and celebrate achievement. Helping each person to understand and value “excellence in all things.”

**The Relevance Principle:** Exploring the relevance of all learning for total life development (life—work, family, community service) and helping the process of understanding one’s own values in relation to real-life issues.

**The Personal Development Principle:** Developing a sense of personal responsibility for learning, and encouraging a capacity for independent investigation of truth. Aiding in developing creative and critical thinking abilities through all learning activities.

**The Community Principle:** Striving to promote the integration of the entire Maxwell School “family” (students, staff and families) into a caring and unified teaching/learning community. Helping each person to realize the fullness of potential within a nurturing community. Valuing both masculine and feminine attributes and encouraging respect for the necessary contributions of both to healthy community life.

**The Global Citizenship Principle:** Developing, through study and activities, a vision of “servant leadership” in the “global village.” Encouraging trans-cultural understanding by exploring the essence of diverse cultures and celebrating the contributions of all cultures, peoples and religions toward human advancement. Promoting an understanding that world peace is an urgent need of our time, and encouraging the attitudes and skills necessary for each individual to contribute to peace-
building.

Informed by these guiding “first principles,” the teaching staff have chosen five themes to provide a special focus of the curriculum throughout the school year. The themes are: “The Books Are Open” (referring to the need to study both the Book of Revelation and the Book of Creation for a balanced education); “The Oneness of Religion”; “The Oneness of Mankind”; “The Hidden Words,” and “Planetary Peace.” These themes will be followed throughout the Maxwell School program for 3-5 weeks each, and provide a common focus for inquiry and exploration. At the end of each theme period there will be a community-wide “celebration of learning” that will showcase special projects, provide opportunities for students to share learning, and include special arts and music programs.

The intent of the Maxwell School is to provide an excellent education infused throughout with the principles noted above. The core of the academic program, as far as content is concerned, is the curriculum recognized by the Provincial Government of British Columbia, a standard North American course of study providing broad exposure to central subject areas such as math, English and modern languages, arts, social studies and science. The Maxwell School will meet or exceed the government’s requirements in core subject areas and, additionally, provide courses in world religions, Bahá’í studies, visual arts, music, aquatics and computers that are not present in the regular government curriculum.

Peace studies are infused throughout all curriculum areas. All students take part in weekly service projects. Although there will be no separate courses in those areas, environmental and outdoor education will play a large role in the Maxwell program because of the school’s setting in the heavily forested mountains of British Columbia and the staff’s awareness of pressing ecological problems.

Preliminary steps are being taken for Maxwell to offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma, a highly regarded, internationally recognized secondary school degree. Because the International Baccalaureate program is quite rigorous and recognized for advanced placement purposes by colleges and universities around the world, an extensive application and preparation process is required for schools that request permission to grant the IB degree. Maxwell has taken the initial steps necessary to properly apply and prepare itself to offer the IB program, and the staff look forward to the time when the Maxwell School will be approved to offer the International Baccalaureate diploma.

Visiting classes at the Maxwell School, one sees an approach to learning characterized by (1) careful attention to assuring that high-quality learning takes place rather than a minimal compliance with standards; (2) a blending of various learning approaches to make the best possible connection with each individual student; (3) a classroom extended beyond the campus to include, as integral parts of the learning process, people, museums, libraries, arts events, and other resources from the culturally rich environment of Vancouver Island; (4) a focus toward trans-cultural and global learning experiences to help students learn from diversity, to see things that are common to different peoples, and to understand global issues; (5) opportunities to learn about all the great world religions from an attitude of respect and acceptance; (6) a balance of competitive and non-competitive activities with an emphasis on respect for common group goals and values in all of them; (7) exercises to teach creative conflict resolution; (8) use of group consultation to explore value questions and to encourage seeing issues from a thoughtful, compassionate perspective; (9) opportunities for public speaking; (10) the integration of arts and music throughout the curriculum; and (11) regular evaluation of students’ over-all progress using a variety of qualitative and quantitative measures.

Maxwell students are organized into “family groups,” in addition to grade-level and class groupings for other purposes. Family groups contain seven students and a faculty leader. These groups represent a mixture of ages and a balance of males and females. The family group always eat the noon meal together and meet frequently at other times for discussions and activities. As the family groups develop they will provide a trusting, comfortable atmosphere in which to develop consultative skills in such areas as problem-solving and exploring issues of moral development. Since most of the Maxwell School’s students are far from their own families, and many are away from...
home for the first time, the family groups also provide a setting for friendship and family-style intimacy. Family groups are responsible, on a rotating basis, for planning and leading the daily 15-minute all-school assembly program which normally includes prayers, singing, and a thought for the day.

A Youth Year of Service program has brought eight young volunteers to the Maxwell School for a 10-month residence. Youth serve in such areas as gardening; office services; tutoring; kitchen; maintenance; helping supervise student activities such as recreation, sports, drama and service projects; housekeeping; leading deepening classes; and providing leadership in the residence halls.

During this first year of operation, most Maxwell students have come from outside the immediate area and thus live in residence halls on campus. There are a limited number of “day students” who live at home and commute each day to the school, and it is planned to increase that percentage of the student body each year. Each residence hall, besides housing students, has a live-in faculty “dorm parent” and several youth volunteers. The residence hall program includes daily group prayer, morning and evening.

With the first academic year under way, the Maxwell International Bahá’í School looks to the challenges of its future development with a sense of expectation and optimism. Dr. Johnson and his wife, as principal and head of residence, respectively, are often heard speaking about this sense of expectation:

“We expect to produce students who will make a positive difference in these dramatic transitional years reaching toward the 21st century; we expect to develop approaches to education that will break exciting and healthy new paths; we expect to become a center of educational service and learning resources that will gradually come to infuse and enrich every Bahá’í community; we expect to become known throughout the world for the style of ‘servant leadership’ that characterizes our contribution to humanity; and we expect to work closely with the worldwide Bahá’í community to transcend the tests that will surely come. If we do not expect great things, and give every ounce of our faith and work to achieve even greater things, why should we exist?”
Green Lake holds 29th Conference

Nearly 1,200 Bahá'í and their guests gathered September 16-18 to "Have (Their) Vision Checked" at the 29th annual Green Lake Conference, held as always at the American Baptist Assembly's conference center in Green Lake, Wisconsin.

Participants focused on "restoring vision . . . where hope is lost," as directed by the Universal House of Justice in its Ridván 1988 message to the Bahá'ís of the world. The conference theme was "Have Your Vision Checked (Bring Your Contacts)."

Featured speakers included Auxiliary Board members Stephen Birkland, Javidukht Khadem and Morris Taylor; John Hatcher; Nadjia Birkland; Paul Lample from the U.S. National Teaching Committee office; and Claudius Adebayo from the National Treasurer's Office.

In a spirit of unified action, four of the speakers joined Mr. Birkland on stage for a question-and-answer session called "Seeing Is Believing."

The audience was captivated by the appearance of Allen and Mark Eghrari, five-year-old twins from Oak Brook, Illinois, who presented a memorized talk entitled "Humanity Is One Family."

Two other children, who, like the Eghrari twins, are trained in public speaking by Gayle Woolson of Evanston, Illinois, also spoke: 10-year-old Erin Bodan of Glen Ellyn, Illinois, and 12-year-old Saba Firoozi of Glencoe.

Music was presented throughout the program, with one session devoted entirely to the arts.

Among those contributing their talents were singer/guitarist Mark Spittal of Minneapolis; pianist Cecilia Smith of Cleveland, Ohio; santour player Kiu Haghighi and his daughter, pianist Keely, of Glenview, Illinois; "Kindred Spirit," singers Jill Simon and Rebecca Rice, also from Minneapolis, who performed the conference theme song, "Vision"; and vocalist Phyllis Peterson from Loves Park, Illinois.

Paul Baumgartner of Milwaukee shared some of his poetry including a poem dedicated to the memory of the Hand of the Cause of God Zikrullah Khadem.


An exhibit hall featured a Bahá'í bookstore, arts and crafts, special interest booths, and a display of children's peace posters.

A variety of activities was provided for the more than 350 children at the conference—everything from puppet-making to video taping, as well as gathering together to work on consultation skills and to talk about teaching the Faith.

Sessions for youth included presentations by some of the speakers, a soccer game, a watermelon feast, and the production of skits that depicted many ways to teach the Faith (as well as many ways not to teach).

As always, a number of optional sessions were offered on Saturday afternoon:

- With an Eye Toward Justice (Diane Loftus).
- Understanding and Promoting the Oneness of Mankind as a Requisite for Teaching (Morris Taylor).
- Close One Eye and Open the Other (Manouchehr Derakhshani and Puran Stevens).
- "I Care" Made Easy (Steve Suhm).
- Oshki Bemaudiziwin (Ojibwe for "Growth and Development") Nick Hockings.
- Bahá'í Basics (Stephen Birkland).
- The Inner and Outer Covenant (Javidukht Khadem).
- Seeing and Creating Healthy Systems (Dorothy Marcic).
• Experiencing the Presence of God (Carolyn and Loren Ritacca).
• The Seven Valleys (Reza Shaker).
• Oneness of Mankind... Youth Year of Service (Selma and Chuck Howard).
• Huqu'ullá: An Introduction (James Borland Jr.).
• Look, Then Leap... Focusing Your Faith (Bob Reddy).
• Envision This... Service at the World or National Center (Office of Human Resources, Bahá'í National Center).
• Eliminating Racism by Seeing Within (Rita Starr and Charles Young).
• Creative Visualization (Teddi Wehr).
• Brainstorming for Green Lake (Kamran Mesbah).
• Education Issues for the 21st Century (Joan M. Sayre).
• Yoga with Parents.
• Financial Planning for the Bahá'í Family (Gerald Helt).
• Choosing the Right Spouse for You (Sue and Khalil Khavar).
A statement on the environment

Introduction

The Bahá’í International Community welcomes the request of the World Commission on Environment and Development to share its experience and views on environment and development within the framework of the Commission’s “Mandate, Key Issues, Strategy and Workplan.” This important document highlights a number of issues of vital concern to the Bahá’í International Community. We share the Commission’s perspective that this is “a time of unprecedented growth in pressures on the global environment.”

More important, however, we also share the Commission’s relatively uncommon view that “it is possible to build a future that is more prosperous, more just and more secure.” Indeed, all of the activities and resources of the Bahá’í community are directed toward the establishment of a new world order.

The Bahá’í International Community agrees that “significant changes in current approaches: changes in perspectives, attitudes and life styles; changes in certain critical policies and the ways in which they are formulated and applied; changes in the nature of cooperation between governments, business, science and people; changes in certain forms of international cooperation which have proved incapable of tackling many environment and development issues; changes, above all, in the level of understanding and commitment by people, organizations and governments” are necessary. These far-reaching changes touch on all aspects of mankind’s collective life.

The recent Independent Commission

on International Development Issues, in identifying and analyzing those factors which have inhibited progress, acknowledged the need “for a vision of the future without which no great task has ever been completed.” As we are in full agreement with that perspective, we feel it necessary to begin by presenting a brief summary of the vision we hold for the future along with some prerequisites for achieving it. This background places our subsequent comments on your report in context. It will be noticed that the major issues are seen by us as being defined by what may be called a “moral” or “attitudinal” agenda, which would be needed in addition to the “standard” and “alternative” agendas described by the Commission.

Vision of the future

World-wide, the Bahá’í community shares a common vision of the future which provides a focus for its many activities. It can be summarized as follows:

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

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

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

In the Bahá’í view, sustained progress is difficult to achieve (and perhaps impossible) if diverse elements of society are simultaneously pursuing different visions or goals. The issues of the standard agenda are often in conflict because isolated sectoral goals are usually not incorporated and balanced in a common vision of the future. Many features of the foregoing vision are no doubt shared by the Commission and, of course, implied in the Charter of the United Nations, since the Commission, established in 1983 by Resolution 11/3 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, was welcomed later that year by the UN General Assembly in Resolution 38/161, of 19 December. However, to achieve progress in the social and economic development of mankind and to minimize the destruction of the environment in which that development must take place, a clear common vision (even if at first it is general) is necessary.

Unity—A prerequisite to progress
Unity is essential if diverse people are to work toward a common future. However, there is little evidence to suggest that the peoples of the world have fully grasped the importance and implication of establishing unity. The Commission might wish to identify those aspects of unity which are essential to achieving the much-needed changes in the area of environment and development. In the Bahá’í view, “The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established.”1

This contrasts with a widespread view that unity results from successful development. The Bahá’í community has, therefore, focused on the concept of unity and on actions designed to achieve it. Since, for Bahá’ís, humanity, an aggregate of spiritual beings dependent on the Creator of the universe, is one, unity does not imply “uniformity,” but means instead the achievement of harmony in diversity, the rich diversity of the one human race. Further, among the objectives, essential to world unity, which the Bahá’í community actively pursues are:

1. The elimination of prejudice on the grounds of religion, race, nation, class or sex.
2. The achievement of equal rights and opportunities for all human beings.
3. The recognition and establishment of the effective harmony between science and religion.
4. The unfettered search after truth by all individuals in society.
5. The implementation of universal and compulsory education.
6. The elimination of extremes of poverty and wealth.
7. The preservation of the sanctity of marriage and family life.

Qualities of individuals and social groups
The Bahá’í community is convinced that the establishment of unity and the material and spiritual progress of mankind require individuals who are characterized by a high standard of morality and integrity. Historically, all of the world’s major religions have provided the guidance and motivating force for the establishment of the ethical standards essential to the development of human society. Although the Bahá’í International Community, through its local and national communities, is engaged in implementing development activities and in providing community services, its first and fundamental purpose is one of inculcating the moral standards and creating the social co-

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hesion required for successful and sustainable social and economic development by environment and development agencies and by individuals. In the Bahá’í view, individuals should strive to be distinguished “for faithfulness and sincerity, for justice and fidelity, for firmness and steadfastness, for philanthropic deeds and service to the human world, for love toward every human being, for unity and accord with all people, for removing prejudices and promoting international peace.”

Groups of people or communities also require certain essential qualities if they are to develop. From the Bahá’í experience, those characteristics include universal participation, the art of consultation, and self-reliance. In the Bahá’í view, universal participation is “a concept which means the involvement of all community members regardless of sex or age in the affairs of the community, (and) provides for full deployment of all human resources. This is a supportive climate for anyone who is aiming for the fulfillment of his or her potential, whether mentally, emotionally, artistically, spiritually, or educationally. Moreover, the consultative process achieves many goals in the local community by combining the rights of individuals to express their opinions and the requirements of the collectivity.”

One of the challenges before the Commission, we feel, is to identify a strategy that could facilitate the mobilization of the world’s spiritual and human resources for the purpose of raising the moral standard of mankind and creating new environmental ethics. The Commission may also wish to identify and highlight those aspects of community functioning and development without which real progress is impossible.

Comments on ‘Mandate, Key Issues, Strategy and Workplan’

Bahá’ís accept that to achieve economic and social progress “the chief goal is the development of the individual and society, through the acquisition of spiritual virtues and powers.” Material development, although necessary, is a secondary goal intended to facilitate the intellectual and spiritual development of the individual. Material progress is largely a reflection of the degree of man’s spiritual growth. With respect to environment, from the Bahá’í perspective, “We cannot segregate the human heart from the environment outside us and say that once one of these is reformed everything will be improved. Man is organic with the world. His inner life moulds the environment and is itself also deeply affected by it. The one acts upon the other and every abiding change in the life of man is the result of these mutual reactions.”

Thus we see that the environment includes the mind and that development of the mind is foremost in importance.

Key Issues

The standard agenda given by the Commission reflects the most commonly mentioned issues of importance to environment and development. However, there are a few additions that are becoming increasingly important. Because of the relation between the human mind and the environment, we suggest that the key issues should also include pollution of the mind by noise. Particularly in urban settings, noise levels become excessive from traffic, machinery and other human activity.

There is evidence to suggest that “space” also is critical to the state of mind of people. Perhaps the depletion of living space and stress-creating crowd conditions should be included as either a natural resource or a human settlements issue. Religious communities, and also many non-religious groups and individuals, recognize the need for an undisturbed place for quiet thought and meditation. The physiological and psychological effects of lack of space can be a very real impediment to human progress.

The Commission’s alternative agenda provides a different point of view on the key issues of environment and development. It is fully agreed that it is valuable to consider causes rather than effects in order to avoid “react-and-cure” solutions. From an eco-system viewpoint, the alternative agenda emphasizes processes rather than the individual state variables of the standard agenda. Certainly an eco-system perspective is useful in that it allows an understanding of the process and gives a framework for multi-disciplinary approaches. The eco-system approach leads to conceptual models of energy flow and nutrient cycling. Adjusting the partitioning of the elements of such dynamic systems can give rise to technical solutions to some problems. The Commission’s example of “Energy: Environment and Development” is a case in point. Reducing entropy in processing energy will probably result in reduced production of atmospheric carbon dioxide.

While the alternative formulation of the Key Issues provides an eco-system perspective instead of isolated approaches to sectoral problems of environment and development, it does not really address the question of “sources” of problems as implied in the limitations of the standard approach (Page 20, V-43). The eco-system approach (alternative strategy), nevertheless, is quite useful from a technical perspective and will no doubt give rise to technical solutions to limited aspects of the environment-development problem.

As already indicated, the alternative agenda, in our view, needs to be supplemented because it does not deal with the root causes of environmental problems. Mankind is part of the global eco-system along with all the other biotic and abiotic components. Neither the processes which link these components together nor the individual components themselves can be called the sources of problems because the part is not the cause of the whole. All parts of a system act and react on one another directly or indirectly. That there is an imbalance is, however, evident, but the problem is not confined to any one part. Thus a comprehensive solution is needed. The dilemma is that because man is part of the system he cannot possibly comprehend the whole, and therefore is limited in his capacity to provide a remedy to the complex of global problems. It is in this context that people of religion view the crucial role of the teachings given by their Founders, who are perceived as being in touch with a Source external to the system.

The sources of the global crisis of environment and development, in the Bahá’í view, are the lack of a globally accepted vision or goal of the future; the lack of unity among the races, tribes, nations, creeds and sexes of the human population; the need for a higher moral standard among the individuals of the world; and the lack of skills for the effective functioning of groups. Although the technical perspectives of
both the standard agenda and the alternative agenda are valuable and must be considered, the Bahá'í International Community does not expect the necessary progress without a commitment to an "attitudinal agenda" such as that outlined herein. We therefore recommend that the Commission incorporate attitudinal and educational issues in its strategy and workplan.

Strategy and Workplan

The objective of international cooperation does not seem to have been discussed by the Commission in the report. We agree with the general view expressed that there is a need "to strengthen international cooperation on environment and development and to assess and propose new forms of cooperation that can break out of existing patterns and influence policies and events in the direction of needed change." The previously described "attitudinal agenda" can, in our opinion, be a basis for addressing these critical issues. In the area of practical international cooperation, it is our view that non-governmental organizations can play an important role. Recent efforts by the Environment Liaison Centre to encourage networking among NGOs is but one example of possible courses of action.

With respect to the short-term task of the Commission, the Bahá'í International Community stands ready to participate in the meetings that are planned in various parts of the world, and we would therefore appreciate receiving a schedule of events. Such meetings would enable us to exchange further views on the issues of environment and development and convey information from the Commission to members of the Bahá'í community throughout the world.

In the long term, we are prepared to participate in a number of areas to which reference is made on page 33 of the Commission's document. The Bahá'í community has a global network of more than 40,000 communities which are dedicated to the establishment of a new world order in which development and environment are harmoniously interwoven. Bahá'í communities at local and national levels are increasingly applying themselves to bringing about also material progress. On a limited scale this is now being done with regard to health care, afores-
The world

Historic North-South Conference held

On the weekend of September 3-4, an historic North-South Conference was held in Londonderry, Northern Ireland.

The conference was called by the Spiritual Assembly of Londonderry and endorsed by the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom, each of whom was represented at the conference—Ireland by Gerry O'Mahony and the United Kingdom by Iain Palin.

The main purpose was to investigate the needs and promote understanding of the Faith among Catholics, especially in the north.

To this end a practical demonstration was arranged in Shantallow, a Catholic area of the city, when 26 of the friends gathered for prayers and went to meet some of the local people.

Of the 53 people at the conference, 14 came from the Republic of Ireland and 36 from Northern Ireland. In all, 19 separate areas of Ireland were represented.

A member of the Bahá’í community of Ireland gave a talk on “Spirituality” last March at a meeting commemorating International Women’s Day.

About 60 people including members of the local clergy attended the event, which was sponsored by the Waterford Federation of Women’s Organizations in Ireland.

Mauritius

The new national Haziratu’l-Quds of Mauritius was inaugurated in a ceremony last September 24 in Port Louis that included the participation of the country’s Governor-General, Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo.

The dignified and spiritual occasion was publicized by the press, radio and television.

Bolivia

Bolivia

Students enjoy their day at Badí’ School, an educational institution established by a Bahá’í family in Sucre, Bolivia, in 1984. The school is bi-lin- gual and incorporates Bahá’í principles in its curriculum. In 1987, about 800 students were enrolled.

Nigeria

The united efforts of the Bahá’ís of Eket, near the southern coast of Nigeria, have resulted in 28 new local Spiritual Assemblies being formed there and 643 people embracing the Faith.

The campaign, named the Olinga-Akwa Ibom Teaching Project, was carried out by a group of 27 Bahá’í teachers. Other mass campaigns employing the same group teaching methods are planned.

Mina Jafari, executive secretary of the Bahá’í Women’s Development Board, has been told that her paper, “Educate Women, Build a Nation,” which was presented this year at the International Women’s Day celebrations for the Kaduna State Ministry of Health, is to be published as a booklet and distributed among the local governments in Kaduna State.

On that same occasion, a non-Bahá’í presented a paper entitled “Integration of Women in Economic Development” which began with three quotations from the Bahá’í Writings.
United Kingdom

Bahá'ís in Eniskillen, Northern Ireland, responded to a recent bombing incident in that city by organizing a vigil to promote unity in the strife-ridden community.

After receiving clearances from the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom, the Bahá'ís in Eniskillen began posting advertisements for the event.

A Methodist minister who contacted the Bahá'ís to inquire about the vigil continued to act as a liaison between the friends and the local clergy.

Instead of the 150 or so people expected, about 1,000 people gathered to take part in the procession and vigil. One report said, "It was the most dignified crowd I had ever seen."

The people came together in silence. Song sheets were handed out and everyone began to sing, moving down the street "as one body, without any leader." The feeling of unity was reported to be "tangible."

As a result of contacts made in this bold initiative, the local Bahá'ís are now helping a new group that is promoting cross-community activities in Eniskillen.

Forty-eight participants from a variety of artistic disciplines met February 20-21 at the Bahá'í Center in Rutland Gate for the first national Bahá'í Arts Symposium in the United Kingdom.

The purpose of the gathering was to explore ways in which to use the arts for teaching and development projects.

The importance of integrating the arts into one's individual Bahá'í life was stressed throughout the weekend.

Liberia

The Robert Doughbeh Elementary School in Liberia's Gardnersville Community has applied to the National Spiritual Assembly of Liberia to be accepted as a Bahá'í school.

After studying the Faith for a period of several months, the school's principal invited the Bahá'ís to teach the Faith during devotional services each Friday morning.

From June through August, besides teaching the Faith, Mrs. Beatrice Matthews, the Bahá'í National Librarian for Liberia, also taught personal hygiene at the school.

Other Bahá'ís who taught there were Henry Appleton, Elouise Sanders, Mr. and Mrs. William Hill, and Elham Springer.

Last June, the principal enrolled in the Faith, after which he attended a mass teaching institute.
The Bahá’í community of Spain held its first Bahá’í Youth Conference last July 7-10 in Madrid.

Participants from Canada, the Canary Islands, Crete, Holland, Italy, Northern Ireland, Puerto Rico, Spain and the United States came together to discuss “entry by troops.”

Consultation was divided into four areas of concern: the Year of Service, teaching trips, contributing to the Fund, and recognition of the significance of the messages of the Universal House of Justice.

As a result of the conference, two families and one youth volunteered for a Year of Service, three teaching teams visited four local goal cities, nearly $100 (U.S.) was contributed to the Fund, deepening on messages from the Universal House of Justice were held, and four young people embraced the Faith.

Important people in the town of Tarragona, Spain, were invited to a celebration of the 10th anniversary of the formation of its local Spiritual Assembly.

At the end of the festivities, which were enhanced by music from a talented group, “Catalonia,” seven people from communities in the area embraced the Faith.

On October 24, 1987, United Nations Day, a Bahá’í in Liberia, Mrs. LaVerne C. Enoanyi, was recognized (with other Liberian women) by the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism for outstanding achievements in the field of communication.

The honor came as a result of Mrs. Enoanyi’s work (with her husband, Frank Enoanyi) in starting the first magazine in Liberia dedicated to advancing the status of women.

Last July, 27 participants from 15 communities including six from the rural Mapuche Indian areas gathered for the first instructional institute to be held by Radio Bahá’í in Chile since its founding in December 1986. They consulted on the potential of Radio Bahá’í, underwent volunteer training, and shared the joys and challenges of Bahá’í radio. To symbolize their spirit of unified action, those attending the institute planted 50 trees on the grounds of the station.
Tonga

Sione Tu'itahi, Auxiliary Board member for Tongatapu and 'Eua, presented a talk on the Faith last August 20 to a meeting of the heads of the Department of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga.

The event, which was designed to bring together department heads and church volunteers from overseas to meet and to listen to a lecture on a topic of interest, drew about 40 prominent church members including the secretary, the principals of the three major church schools, heads of various departments, and many overseas volunteers.

A 30-minute question-and-answer session after the talk elicited questions about the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran as well as many about the basic Bahá'í beliefs.

The Gambia

As part of an ongoing effort to distribute the peace statement and to promote an understanding of its contents, the National Spiritual Assembly of The Gambia organized a World Peace Seminar last January 31 at which speakers of various faiths contributed ideas about peace from the teachings of their respective religions.

An Indian medical doctor spoke on Hinduism; a Gambian educator spoke on Christianity; a Canadian pioneer to Senegal spoke about the peace statement; and the guest of honor, Sarjo Touray, parliamentary secretary of the government Ministry of Education, himself a Muslim, made positive remarks about the importance of religion in working for peace, and expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the Bahá'ís in that respect.

France

Six hundred-fifty people gathered at an assembly hall in Antibes, France, last February 23 to see an audio-visual program presented by Bahá'í André Brugiroux.

The presence of the assistant mayor and media representatives led to favorable reports in the newspaper Nice-Matin.

About 70 people remained after the formal program for more information.

Last March 3, about 50 people attended a public lecture in Grenoble, France, celebrating the European Year of the Environment.

Dr. Arthur Dahl, a consulting ecologist and Bahá'í presently living in France, spoke on the theme “Environment and the Future of Man.”

Dr. Dahl later met with the mayor-assistant of Grenoble and was interviewed for half an hour on France-Isère Radio.

An intense discussion is held during one of the workshop sessions at the International Youth Conference last August 18-21 in Maracaibo, Venezuela.

Venezuela

A few days after Venezuela's first International Youth Conference, held last August 18-21 in Maracaibo, several groups of young people began to put their words into action. In Coro, the country's oldest city, 270 new believers were enrolled in five days.

More than 220 youth from North and South America attended the conference to consult on “Youth at the Service of Mankind.” The impressive results of their teaching efforts exemplify their determination to be the “driving force” of the Bahá'í community.

The young people heard addresses by Counsellors Isabel de Calderón, Gustavo Correa and Peter McLaren. Also present were eight members of the Auxiliary Board and several members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Venezuela and its committees.

Dr. Rafael Yanes C., director of churches for the Ministry of Justice, presented the opening address, praising the Faith and the spirit of service of the Bahá'í youth.

After presenting an inspiring concert during the conference, Bahá'ís K.C. Porter and Rodolfo Castillo were interviewed on youth-oriented radio and television programs and by a local newspaper.

Conference participants were invited to make pledges of service to the Cause of God, and a cable was sent to the Universal House of Justice which read in part: “... Offers 21 Year of Service, 19 pioneers, 14 participants Youth Force, more than 25 youth groups and others. . . .”
Sierra Leone

Last April 27, students at the Bahá’í Primary School in Yikandor, Sierra Leone, helped celebrate the 27th anniversary of that country’s independence.

The children paraded through the town singing “We are the boys/girls of the Bahá’í school.” As they approached the center of town they were joined by their parents and other townspeople, young and old alike.

On their arrival at the Town Hall, the children lined up with their teachers for a presentation to the Town Chief, Moibeh Jusu.

The national anthem of Sierra Leone was sung, and the head teacher, A.S. Momudu, delivered a message from Major General Joseph Saidu to the people of the village.

Malaysia

A Bahá’í in Gombak, West Malaysia, who always wanted to be a traveling teacher but was unable to obtain leave from work, conceived an idea for international teaching in Thailand by corresponding from his home in Malaysia.

He wrote to the Bangkok Post and asked that his name be placed in the “pen-pal” column. It didn’t take long for letters to begin flowing in, and for friendships to develop.

So far he has sent about 80 copies of the peace statement to various penpals, most of whom have heard of the Faith for the first time through this exchange.

Michael Soo, a Bahá’í from Bin­tangor, Malaysia, was recently rewarded for his literary talents when his work, “Getting the Malaysian Public to Read,” became the winning essay in the Borneo Post for January 1. He also won a consolation prize for another essay published in the same paper and entitled “Student Discipline.”

Six people embraced the Faith during the Tamil Summer School held last April 29-May 2 at the Yan Kee Leong Institute in Malaysia.

Two hundred-sixty Bahá’ís attended the school, whose theme was “Toward the Lesser Peace.”

Tan Hock Siew, an Auxiliary Board member from Malaysia, recently received a national award of the Scout Association for his excellent services and outstanding performance as a Scout leader.

New Zealand

A “rescue plan” developed by the National Spiritual Assembly of New Zealand to achieve that country’s goal of 66 local Spiritual Assemblies inspired and directed the energies of New Zealand’s Bahá’í community for the three months between the first of the year and Ridván 1988.

The final report reads: “The Rescue Plan rekindled the spirit of travel teaching in New Zealand; encouraged and directed the enthusiasm and energy of numbers of youth, giving the community a glimmer of their potential; inspired and assisted small communities to be courageous in their teaching efforts and confront or ignore their perceived limitations . . . fanned to life a flame.”

Paraguay

One hundred-thirty women from seven countries in the Americas attended the first International Women’s Conference in Paraguay which opened last July 15.

Among those present were Counselors for the Americas Isabel Pavón de Calderón and Shapoor Monadjem.

The conference was given extensive coverage for several days on both local television channels and all three newspapers.
Costa Rica

Nearly 120 people, mainly youth, from North, Central and South America came to the Charles Wolcott Youth Institute last January 22-25 to take part in Costa Rica's third International Youth Conference.

The event, whose theme was "Youth Participation ... Vibrant Power," was reported to have been "successful beyond all expectations."

A television crew made up of two youth from El Salvador, a Baha'i from Venezuela, and two non-Baha'i volunteers filmed the conference for a program to be aired in El Salvador.

Immediately afterward, 20 young Baha'is went on teaching trips throughout Panama and Costa Rica.

Johnny Martin Bonilla, a Baha'i from Costa Rica, has become the first blind person in Central America to graduate from a course of study that qualifies him to be a radio and television announcer.

Since finishing the course in July 1987, Mr. Bonilla has been looking for an opportunity to host his own program especially for youth.

Kenya

The Baha'i Faith is now listed as a topic of study in the Christian Religious Education syllabus of Kenya. As a result, the head of Christian Religious Education at Shanzu Teacher Training College in Mombasa invited speakers from the local Baha'i community last February to address first-year students on the general beliefs and practices of the Faith.

Some 420 students heard an address on the history and principles of the Faith. They were most attentive, and asked many questions during the two-hour session.

Atieno Mboya, a young woman from Kenya, set much of Malawi alight during a recent teaching visit.

She began her work in the southern districts of Bangula, Mulanje and Netchu, and completed it in the north.

At Rumphi Boys Secondary School, after being welcomed by the headmaster and talking to the students, she was invited to return the following day. After her second talk, 53 youth embraced the Faith.

Thailand

Pictured are the principals in the first Baha'i wedding held in a refugee camp. The marriage took place last October 7 at Site 2 North Camp in Thailand.

Macau

Pictured in front of the school are students and teachers who took part in last summer's program at the Baha'i School of the Nations in Macau. Thirty-eight children were enrolled in the half-day language program, which is designed to help prepare students for school in September. The program for Chinese-speaking children is in English, and the program for English-speaking children is in Mandarin Chinese.
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A visit to the World Centre
On the cover: Members of the Inter-Religious Advisory Committee to the Mayor of New York City stroll with their Bahá’í hosts through the lovely gardens on Mount Carmel during a recent visit to the Bahá’í World Centre in Haifa, Israel. In the background is the golden-domed Shrine of the Bab. The 10-member group was in Israel for consultations with officials of the Anti-Defamation League and for visits to various of Israel’s religious communities. Besides touring the gardens, the group was able to have lunch at the Pilgrim House and to visit the Seat of the Universal House of Justice. Among those conducting the tour was Douglas Martin (at left in photo), director-general of the Office of Public Information at the World Centre.
President ratifies Genocide Convention

Years of steady work by the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly and a number of human rights groups reached a historic conclusion November 4 when President Ronald Reagan signed legislation implementing the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The Bahá'í community of the United States was represented at the signing ceremony, which took place at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, by Katharine Bigelow, deputy director of the National Spiritual Assembly's Office of External Affairs in Washington, D.C.

She was invited to witness the signing as an acknowledgment of the role played by the National Assembly in helping to secure passage of the legislation.

During the past three years the National Spiritual Assembly had worked with many non-governmental organizations including the American Bar Association, Amnesty International, the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, B'nai B'rith International and the United Nations Association to encourage members of the Senate and House of Representatives to vote in favor of the legislation.

At the request of the National Assembly, several Bahá'í communities and individual Bahá'ís contacted their government officials by phone or by letter, first to urge that the Senate "advise and consent" to the treaty, and, later, to encourage congressional approval of the implementing legislation.

The U.S. first signed the Convention in 1948. Since then, many individuals and organizations have devoted years to the ratification effort.

Retiring Sen. William Proxmire of Wisconsin, one of the leading proponents of ratification, gave more than 3,000 speeches in the Senate over a 19-year period urging his colleagues almost daily to ratify the UN document.

In "The Promise of World Peace," the Universal House of Justice says that measures such as the Genocide Convention, "if courageously enforced and expanded, will advance the day when the specter of war will have lost its power to dominate international relations."

The Bahá'í community rejoices that America, the nation on which 'Abdu'l-Bahá bestowed inestimable praise, has joined with the 96 other nations of the world that have already ratified the Genocide Convention.

In examining those forces that led ultimately to U.S. ratification, recognition must be given and tribute made to the Bahá'ís of Iran whose "heroic steadfastness, fortitude and patience" under the genocidal policies of the Islamic regime led to the Faith's emergence from obscurity and enabled the American Bahá'í community to take part as an equal partner with other national organizations in activities promoting ratification of the UN Genocide Convention.
Pioneering

Reaching out to the Family of Man

Anthropology tries to identify cultural diversities in the world and to discover those social elements that are common to all of us; those uniquely human qualities that interconnect the peoples of the earth into one family.

Usually, religion has pretty well made up its mind about this and is too busy with things "spiritual" to look deeper at man as a social being. It is significant that, in a time of increasing international racial and ideological strife, one religion seeks the same understanding of mankind as this science. The Bahá’í Faith teaches us about the need for the "independent investigation of truth" and points out two important responsibilities we have to the Family of Man.

The first of these is that we must turn our attention toward understanding and appreciating human diversity; the things that distinguish us as different; the second, that we must fix our minds on finding the ways and means of becoming more socially and spiritually united as a single human race. Bahá'u'lláh has declared that world unity is the most important issue of this age. The attitudes that perpetuate diversity and disunity on this planet must be changed and ultimately replaced with the realization that, as Bahá'u'lláh has told us, "the earth is but one country and mankind its citizens." The only way to achieve this is through the concept of "unity in diversity." This responsibility falls squarely on the shoulders of us, His followers.

World unity is a high aspiration and a complex and difficult thing to achieve; it must be built soundly and sequentially. Considerable groundwork must first be laid for its edification. Unity requires cooperation, and cooperation requires a shared sense of purpose and direction. The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh provide that purpose and that direction.

As Bahá'ís, we are taught that the purpose of human life is to "carry forward an ever-advancing civilization" and to "safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race and foster the spirit of love and fellowship." The direction in which mankind should be heading is away from "all forms of provincialism, all insularities and prejudices" and those "social assumptions and religious formulae" which have "ceased to promote the welfare of the generality of mankind," and toward "a wider loyalty," a primary allegiance to the world as a whole, which does not "attempt to suppress the diversity of ethnic origins, of climate, of history, of language and tradition, of thought and habit, that differentiate the peoples and nations of the world." The dissemination of these teachings into every land is the first step toward building the foundation on which peace and unity can be raised. This is where we come in.

As a developing and self-aware Bahá'í community, we should realize that the elimination of provincialism, insularity and prejudice must begin on the inside and flow outward. We must understand that these debilitating limitations must be overcome within our community before there is hope of encouraging others to do so, and that progress toward unity cannot be accomplished in isolation or even facilitated by well-wishing from afar. Direct contact, interaction and cooperation must be established. These are the keys we can offer for the social salvation of mankind.

With this in mind, many Bahá'í pioneers, motivated by a personal commitment to spread abroad this ideal of world unity, have emigrated to new continents. It is little wonder that in the language of Bahá'u'lláh, the Persian word for pioneer, "mohajer," is the same word for "emigrant." Each Bahá'í "mohajer" who travels to a foreign land, settles there, and successfully shares the Cause of God with his fellow-men, is fortunate because he witnesses, at first hand, many more facets of human diversity than those who do not. He encounters the wonderment of new ideas, beliefs and values, and the knowledge of a culture beyond his own. In time, these will naturally have an effect on him. Those elements of cultural wisdom that he finds compatible or complementary to his own, or reasonable in light of the surrounding environment, will be slowly assimilated and embraced. Others
that, at first encounter, lead to “culture shock” and appear to be completely at odds with some of the basic and trusted patterns of his own culture, will only be appreciated as he becomes attuned to his adopted culture and learns to communicate with images and concepts that are familiar to the people around him.

Every bewildering example of cultural belief and behavior has an explanation, and the mere acquisition of the language of a different tribe, race, society or country enables the Bahá'í pioneer to stand in the footsteps of another human being, for a while, and to see the world from a new perspective. When a Bahá'í pioneer does this, he loses some of his ethnocentric outlook and is thereby able to learn. This kind of learning is a fundamental prerequisite to teaching others about the Bahá'í Faith.

Exposure to another culture is a wonderful stimulus. It initiates a process of learning and change in the heart of the pioneer, a product of which is an inner awakening as to what “unity in diversity” truly means. This discovery, for himself, of the essential unity of mankind, through observing and participating, in an unpatronizing way, in the daily life of a society distinct from his own, is one of the most introspective and humbling experiences a Bahá'í pioneer can have. It is an eye-opening affirmation of the greatness of the unity spoken of by Bahá'u'lláh. It is an experience which can galvanize an intellectual acceptance of the unity of mankind into an unshakable certainty; it can raise one’s agreement with this principle from an indifferent “yes” to an insightful “yea.”

We must come to the realization that the establishment of unity among the peoples of the world is the basic social responsibility of every Bahá'í. If we neglect this, we blatantly ignore the central purpose of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh. The achievement of this unity depends upon the degree to which the meaning of “social diversity” is understood. In the simplest terms: culture is diversity. The things that make us profoundly different from one another—our ideas, beliefs, values and accumulated knowledge—are all cultural. The more superficial distinctions such as color and race are far too ambiguous and much less important than the culturally-based concepts and actions of the mind and behavior of man. Race is not merely physiological but inseparably interwoven within the matrix of culture. For the pioneer, language is the key. It is the best means of perceiving culture, and thus truly appreciating the depth of human diversity. So important is language in understanding culture that some anthropologists have suggested that “language is culture.”

The spoken and written word are certainly the ways in which all the elements of culture are transferred from one generation to the next. As far as teaching the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, language is the best means of communication with the heart and intellect of our fellow-men; it is the way in which new morals and mores, concepts and wisdom are passed from one mind to another. This is why it is imperative for the Bahá'í pioneer to learn to speak the local language of the society in which he lives. He must become linguistically fluent to the point of being able to articulate, conceptualize and even dream in his new language. The central duty of the pioneer is to transfer his understanding of the Faith, in images that are understandable in the culture, and to enkindle an interest in and commitment to the Faith among his hearers that will be self-sustaining and enduring without the pioneer’s continued and indefinite encouragement. Without language, this is all but impossible. Language is the magic social ingredient which guarantees success in disseminating the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

As Bahá'ís, we are admonished by the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, to be cognizant of the need to be culturally flexible: “Nor should any of the pioneers, at this early stage in the building of Bahá'í national communities, overlook the fundamental prerequisite for any successful teaching enterprise, which is to adapt the presentation of the fundamental principles of their Faith to the cultural and religious backgrounds, the ideologies, and temperament of the diverse races and nations whom they are called upon to enlighten and attract. The suscepti-
bilities of these races and nations... differing widely in their customs and standards of living, should at all times be carefully considered, and under no circumstances neglected."

Each Bahá’í pioneer should strive to eliminate cultural naivete within himself. Naivete is no longer acceptable. It is simply ignorance, and the discovery of diversity must replace ignorance. We must be interested in the diversity of ethnic origins, history and tradition for a greater reason than mere idle curiosity. We know that one of the long-term needs of mankind is the adoption of a wider-based social allegiance, a loyalty to something higher: the development of a sense of world community. This is difficult to envision because a vital element remains missing: a pan-cultural self-image.

Photographs from space of the blue-green ball we call the planet earth are a beginning; they give us a good physical self-image. But the world has not yet evolved a clear, world-encompassing social self-image. It is impossible for us to identify with the world as "one unit" because we lack enough empirical experience, enough direct exposure to diversity. We cannot possibly relate to "world citizenship" in isolation from our fellow-men. We can help the world visualize itself better by setting a good example. It is time that we reached out and made what in the past would have been called "inconvenient social acquaintances" and establish long-lasting friendships among cultures and races.

Without this wider exposure and experience, our sense of allegiance to the world will be more or less equal to the stereotype of our particular cultural and national heritage. We must discover those things that are common to us all, those universal spiritual and social verities that are pan-cultural, because it is in them that the elements of a global self-image will be found. It is for us to discover these. It is a requirement of the age in which we live. Ultimately, it is this that will allow us to truly see that "the face of God is present in every face."

We have, however, a long way to go. Nothing perpetuates ignorance better than segregation. Hopefully, our efforts as Bahá’ís, mass communication, and the movement of peoples from one area of the world to others will accelerate this process. The standard of planetary unity is God’s tailor-made message to mankind in this age, and the dissemination of this message by the Bahá’ís will help ease humanity’s adolescent pains as the world becomes smaller.

New efforts and insights are required. Christ’s teaching of “love thy neighbor” is no longer sufficient, because it seems, unfortunately, to have been amended to read “love thy neighbor from afar” like some Orwellian law on the wall at Animal Farm. The ethnic isolation and sense of religious superiority which have resulted have led to such appallingly rationalized social systems as apartheid and slavery. Bahá’u’lláh requires that we become united and interdependent. To be this, we must become more acutely informed about other kinds of social organizations in the world. If we remain unaware of other peoples, then we are ethnocentric; there is nothing else we can be. The age of relying on no more than “love and good intentions” is past. Practical discernment, good deeds and steady progress are the only things that work.

The teachings of Bahá’u’lláh not only assert the fundamental oneness of mankind, but also present a system that allows ideas to be interconnected and joined. It provides a large enough spiritual universe so that human diversity can mingle in a series of infinite social permutations. This social flexibility provides a forum for the free exchange of opinions, perceptions and cosmologies. In a shrinking world, we seem to have been losing social options for a long time, until we are now faced with a furcated Hobson’s choice of either seeking world unity or world extinction. The nature of the teachings of the Bahá’í Faith help us and everyone else to overcome some of the narrow-mindedness which is one of the major stumbling blocks on the road to an enduring, world-embracing peace.
The 13th annual Conference of the Association for Bahá’í Studies was held October 7-10 at the Skyline Ottawa Hotel in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

This year’s theme, “Toward a Global Civilization,” was addressed by a number of speakers, Bahá’í and non-Bahá’í, whose focus was on the role of culture in (1) creating civilization; (2) providing and protecting identity through art, myth and language; and (3) facilitating social change and transformation.

This year’s Hasan Balyuzi Memorial Lecture, “Learning from History,” was presented by Moojan Momen, a well-known Bahá’í scholar and author from Bedingsford, England.

Essay awards were given in four categories: high school (to Amelia Danesh), general (Robert White), multi-author (Harry Massoth, Marilu Jeno), and university (Deborah R. Thorpe).

The Conference drew a number of distinguished non-Bahá’í speakers including:

- Dr. Noel Brown, director and special assistant to the executive director, United Nations Environment Programme, New York.
- David Burleson, UNESCO senior adviser and liaison officer to UNICEF, New York.
- Dr. Riane Eisler, co-founder of the Center for Partnership Studies, Pacific Grove, California.
- Dr. Alvino Fantini, director of the Language and Culture Center at the School of International Training, Brattleboro, Vermont.
- Dr. Edward T. Hall, noted author, lecturer and anthropologist.
- Dr. Susan Stoddart, USAID information officer, Oakton, Virginia.
- Robert Vachon, director, Centre Interculturel Monchanin, Montreal, Quebec.
- Bernard Wood, director, North-South Institute, Ottawa.

Among the Bahá’í speakers were:

- Dr. Kurt Hein of the International Bahá’í Audio-Visual Centre (IBAVC).
- Mildred Mottahehdeh of New York City.
- Louise Prophét-LeBlanc of Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada.
- Shapoor Rassekh, a social scientist and member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland.

The ABS Conference was preceded by a children’s conference and professional interest seminars in agriculture, business and economics, consultation and conflict resolution, education, environmental design, intercultural issues, marriage and the family, science and technology, and women’s studies.

A special feature this year was cultural presentations by North American Indians, blacks, and French-Canadians. By sharing their art, their ceremonies and their history, they demonstrated the meaning of culture in their societies and furnished material for discussion.

The 14th annual ABS Conference will be held September 14-17, 1989, in Irvine, California.

Members of the Louis G. Gregory Bahá’í Institute’s Unity Choir from South Carolina perform during an inter-cultural program as a part of the 13th annual Conference of the Association for Bahá’í Studies held October 7-10 at the Skyline Ottawa Hotel in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
Environment: facing the next frontier

Twenty-one years ago, Malta’s chief delegate to the UN proclaimed the resources of the seabed to be the “common heritage of mankind,” setting in motion the events that led to the Law of the Sea treaty. Now, at the initiative of Malta once again, the General Assembly is being asked to proclaim the earth’s climate too as part of that “common heritage.” In making the proposal at the most recent General Assembly session, Maltese Ambassador Alexander Borg Olivier called for a major UN study of threats to climatic stability, which would lead to a global strategy for dealing with climatic change. The result could very well be a Law of the Air.

A coordinated inquiry into climatic change appeals strongly to Assembly delegates. And although the idea of applying the “common heritage” concept to the winds, the rain, the sunshine, and the seasons has raised questions among Western delegates, they voted with the rest of the General Assembly to take up Malta’s proposal.

Borg Olivier’s timing was obviously right. During the Assembly’s general debate, minister after minister expressed deep concern about the increase in greenhouse gases, global warming, rising seas, and damage to the ozone layer. Proposals for urgent UN action have come from all over the world. Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar has called for an international agreement to coordinate government policies that have an impact on the climate. Canada

The British Antarctic Survey identified damage to the ozone layer; the U.S. Department of Energy has done vital research on carbon dioxide; the Russians, Canadians and Americans have programs on the dynamics of Arctic ice. offered to host an international conference that would address laws for the protection of the atmosphere. Cyprus proposed a special session of the General Assembly on the environment. Britain declared that the UN must not leave a problem of this magnitude to technical bodies but must conduct a serious debate on it. The Soviets called for three UN emergency meetings on different levels and for the establishment of a UN Environment Council “capable of taking effective decisions to ensure ecological security.” Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze also suggested that Soviet-American cooperation was especially important in this field, recalling the moral of the fable about the two elephants: Whether they make war or love, it is the grass that suffers.

This explosion of demands for UN action on the climate is new, but the issue has been on the General Assembly’s agenda for many years. The first UN Conference on the Environment took place in 1972, giving birth to the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). Since then, while UNEP has drawn criticism for not doing enough, governments have been stingy in their contributions to it. Despite this, UNEP has several achievements to its credit.

The most significant of these is the Montreal Protocol, scheduled to come into force on January 1, 1989, which requires a 50 percent cut in the production of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) within the next decade. CFCs, commonly used in refrigerants, plastic foam, and many aerosol sprays, destroy the ozone that protects the earth from lethal radiation. However, the ink had hardly dried on the agreement before there was new scientific information to indicate that the protocol, dramatic as it is, does not go far enough. To prevent further ozone depletion, CFCs must be cut by 75-80 percent.

UNEP, together with the World Meteorological Organization and the International Council of Scientific Unions, has also been studying the phenomenon of global warming with a view to providing governments with an authoritative assessment of the seriousness of the threat and the kind of action it requires.

Many other groups, national as well as international, have been studying the causes and consequences of climatic changes. The Brundtland Commission, headed by the Prime Minister of Norway, drafted a vast report on “sustainable” economic growth, meaning growth that does not degrade the environment or injure the climate. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is monitoring food supplies affected by climatic instability. The British Antarctic Survey identified damage to the ozone layer; the U.S. Department of Energy has done vital research on carbon dioxide; the Russians, Canadians and Americans have programs on the dynamics of Arctic ice. Universities, scientific institutes and other organizations all over the world are investigating different aspects of climatic change.

Under Malta’s proposal to the General Assembly, the first step would be to coordinate all the findings of all

This article on the United Nations and the environment was written by Jane Rosen, UN correspondent for the Manchester Guardian, and is reprinted from the fall 1988 issue (Vol. 14, No. 4) of the inter dependent, a publication of the United Nations Association of the U.S.
these groups. "The Secretary-General should establish an inter-agency mechanism," Borg Olivier says, "to give us a report on what has already been done, what information is available, what are the areas in which action is possible, and what kind of strategies should be adopted in order to save the world’s climate."

Borg Olivier expects that once the information is available, political leaders would begin to frame "a global response, a global ethic. Obviously," he says, "no one country has the right to alter the climate in ways that could be detrimental to others." While Western delegates agree, they anticipate a battle over Borg Olivier’s insistence that climate is "the common heritage of mankind."

Britain’s Ambassador, Sir Crispin Tickell, is an expert on climate and the author of the highly praised book, Climatic Change and World Affairs. "We certainly don’t regard climate as a common heritage," he says. "It’s not a resource like seabed minerals. Moreover, the use of that phrase raises hackles all over the place because of the way in which it was used during the Law of the Sea negotiations." Many of the industrialized countries feel that the non-aligned majority used "common heritage" as a weapon to restrict legitimate national activities having to do with the seabed and to extract concessions. "‘Common heritage’ is a non-aligned war-cry," said an American diplomat.

But Borg Olivier doesn’t see it that way. Malta has "a very strong sentimental attachment to the concept of common heritage and a sincere interest in expanding it," he notes. "As far as climate is concerned, ‘common heritage’ means it must be managed for the benefit of all mankind."

To that end, some delegates are already talking about an international treaty to prevent global warming along the lines of the Montreal Protocol on ozone depletion. Such a treaty might provide for a 10 percent reduction in consumption of fossil fuels by the year 2000 or 2010. Since the developing countries could not afford either to reduce their energy consumption or to switch to cleaner technologies, the industrialized countries would be expected to provide the necessary aid.

Further down the road many scientists foresee an international law to prohibit or restrict all actions that change global, regional or local climate. Besides the use of fossil fuels and other industrial pollutants, the ban would apply to the permanent diversion of major rivers, construction of far-reaching irrigation systems, deforestation of large areas, destruction of top soil, oil-drilling in certain areas, and perhaps even the construction of large cities. The activities of virtually every country in the world would be affected.
On teaching the Faith to our loved ones

Teaching the Faith in this day is a sacred duty. Most of us take this responsibility seriously and devote many hours to the teaching work. We approach our teaching with enthusiasm, and often with unbridled courage. Yet most of our teaching is directed toward those in our extended social network—friends and co-workers. Many seekers turn out to be strangers. Few of us identify on our list of seekers those in our immediate family—our spouse, children, brothers and sisters, parents. Why should this be so?

There is no simple answer. Often the question itself elicits a variety of responses that range from defensiveness to outright feelings of guilt. The topic is a sensitive one. To properly address the question, there are several things to consider from the standpoint of the teacher, the loved one, and the family. What follows are some reflections on teaching the Faith to loved ones, first set forth in a workshop on that topic held about three years ago.

Some assumptions

I have made some assumptions that guided my own thinking about this topic. You may decide that these assumptions need to be modified to fit your particular circumstances. If so, then feel free to modify them. I do not hold these ideas to be patent truths or universal techniques.

The first assumption is that teaching loved ones is really no different than teaching a friend or a stranger. The basic obligation to share the Message of God for this day is restricted only by our limitations and self-imposed restrictions on who we identify to teach. Second, we assume no responsibility for the decision of our loved ones, as we cannot assume responsibility for anyone's spiritual development. The choice is theirs, not ours. Third, to be an effective teacher we are obligated to become intimately acquainted with the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh within our own capacity to do so. Fourth, teaching is an active process. It is a reciprocal dialogue between seeker and teacher, not a one-way communication of facts about the Faith to others. We should remember that the range and depth of the Writings are infinite. Recognizing that there is so much in the Writings should be a comfort to us; unfortunately, many of us are too compulsive and tend to become overwhelmed by the task of being sure that our loved ones “know all.” We need only remember how we became a Bahá'í to realize that “knowing all” is a false notion.

The fifth assumption, which should be obvious, is that everyone is unique. What the Faith stirs in each one of us is unique and qualitatively different. Should we assume that our loved ones will react to the Faith in the same way that we did? I think not. Sixth, we must not assume that we know what our loved ones need to know, read or experience in their investigation of the Faith. And finally, the power of prayer should not be underestimated. We should remember that Bahá'u'lláh will ultimately guide our steps in our teaching work. We must have faith in Him. Irrational beliefs and contradictory notions about the family

Why is it so apparently difficult to teach loved ones? I contend that we often harbor irrational beliefs and contradictory notions about teaching loved ones that only serve to limit us. We enjoy a special intimacy in our families, which is generally perceived as a source of support and strength. The special power and unique quality of the family sometimes fosters a perception that it is somehow delicate and fragile. The fragile quality we feel about the relationship is the fear that somehow it cannot withstand the test of sharing and experiencing something we hold sacred and precious—our faith.

While the basis for concern about family harmony is founded on solid ground in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, it can be taken to the extreme by even the most stalwart Bahá'í. If one denies one's own family members knowledge of Bahá'u'lláh and His life-giving message, then haven't we missed the point? Bahá'u'lláh's teachings about unity need to begin at home. If there is disharmony about the Faith in the home, we must determine why this is so and correct whatever in our power we can to achieve a loving home life.

This article, "Teaching the Faith to Loved Ones," was written by Dr. James M. Schear, a Bahá'í who lives in Augusta, Georgia, with his wife and three children and is employed as a psychologist.

Bahá'u'lláh's teachings about unity need to begin at home. If there is disharmony about the Faith in the home, we must determine why this is so and correct whatever in our power we can to achieve a loving home life.
of us have decided that a person we thought was a seeker seemed unreceptive and we were comforted by Bahá'u'lláh's counsel to leave them to themselves. To leave them to themselves, however, does not mean to abandon them. We can still love them and pray for them. Worse than this, we could harbor preconceived notions about our loved ones' receptivity to the Faith. Many times, our ideas are off the mark or out of date. If we avoid the opportunity to gain more information about where our loved ones are in their development, we may miss an important opportunity to teach.

The nature of the relationship may result in a wide range of variations. For example, teaching one's parents is different than teaching a spouse. The teaching, whenever and however it is done, takes place within the larger context of an already established relationship. The growth and development of that relationship is the foundation on which teaching is done. Some of us think of that foundation as either an asset or a liability. If it is a liability, then it becomes necessary to find out why and what can be done about it. We tend to spend a lot of time showing our love to those we teach in other contexts. Why shouldn't we devote the same effort to this 'special relationship' we have with our loved ones? One difference, it seems, is that we don't usually work to establish a loving relationship since it already exists. Yet all loving relationships require careful, deliberate and diligent nurturing. We should not allow our family bond of love to be taken for granted. Teaching cannot be accomplished where love and trust are weak.

In some families there are some topics that are considered taboo; religion often is one of them. Unfortunately, as we Bahá'ís well know, communication is crucial if we are going to teach others. If communication is restricted, we are indeed at risk of limiting an opportunity to increase our understanding of one another and to experience growth in our relationship. In those instances in which communication is limited, it is my contention that there is much room for misunderstanding. It is important to remember that we are always changing in unexpected ways. Life is growth and development. We are moving in time and space; nothing in life is static. Why should we believe that our loved one's beliefs and attitudes may not have changed or been modified across time?

It is critical to know if such changes have taken place by word or deed. One way to deal with our lack of knowledge about where our loved one may be in his/her spiritual journey is to strengthen communication. Direct discussion about the Faith is best, although it may not always be possible. We need to remember that we learn things by what we are told, and also by what we observe. Observing others who are 'living the life' can provide the observer with substantial information. We should also train ourselves to be good listeners and observers so that we can be prepared to teach at those moments when our loved one is seeking answers.

**Approaches to teaching**

What can we do? First, we should be conscious of how important our teaching work is in this day. All of us should have our own teaching plan.

We all know the steps in effective teaching. Teaching involves identifying who to teach and developing a plan for that individual or group. We need to develop a list of prospective seekers. Included on that list should be our loved ones. For everyone on our list, we should have an approach; we should specify how to teach the Faith to that loved one. Teaching can be done passively or directly. Whatever the approach, we should evaluate it periodically and modify it as needed.

Teaching can be done by sharing our experiences with others, framing what we do in terms of our Bahá'í way of life, as well as modeling the Bahá'í way of life in our daily behavior. Teaching can best be accomplished by remembering how 'Abdu'l-Bahá taught. Sometimes we become very narrow in our view of how to teach. Teaching is multi-dimensional; it involves being imaginative and creative. It is a process whereby we offer all aspects of the Faith to the seeker, not simply what we think he is interested in or may be attracted to in the Faith.

**The context of teaching loved ones**

Our anxieties about teaching the Faith to loved ones are usually diffuse and unspecified. We tend to exhibit this diffuse fear whenever either direct or indirect references about the Faith are made to our loved ones. At the same time, we often become overly critical about what should be communicated and how it should be said. In fact, teaching is a human activity full of human limitations. We should be prepared to accept our limitations.

The human element in our teaching work is frequently the most attractive aspect of our Faith. Bahá'í teachers are not professional clergy. Most teachers are not public speakers but ordinary people sharing God's message for this day. We teachers must reflect upon our work.

In our families we sometimes react to loved ones according to past roles. For example, grown children sometimes interact with parents in ways more appropriate to an earlier stage of development. Both children and parents frequently foster this kind of strained relationship, especially when dealing with something as emotionally loaded as religion. For parents, it can be difficult to comprehend why their children would 'reject' the religious teachings they had so dutifully fostered. They often feel rejected and guilty when their children convert to another faith. It becomes our obligation to communicate with them and show them how becoming a Bahá'í is neither a rejection nor a denial of their religious teaching and that their guilt is unfounded. Bahá'u'lláh has given us special prayers for parents (see Bahá'í Prayers, 1985 edition, p. 65). We should pray for them. I would suggest that you consider sharing this prayer with them and letting them know that you are using it.

Another situation involves parents who have become Bahá'ís. In this case, the adult children may find it difficult to comprehend why their parents have changed their religion. The same kind of difficulties reminiscent of the adolescent period may recur. In this situation, communication may be strained. It is important for the Bahá'í parents to recognize when this is happening and to deal with it in a spirit of loving consultation. The Bahá'í Faith offers us many ways to deal with such tests and difficulties if only we take the time to study the problem and seek ways in which to solve it.

A similar situation exists with siblings. Brothers and sisters often act toward one another in ways that are
more appropriate for an earlier period in their lives. We should let nothing stand in the way of achieving and maintaining a wholesome and loving bond among our brothers and sisters. We are obliged to show them how our new religion represents a source of unity and not rejection. This can be done by word and by deed.

How we teach depends on us and our loved ones. What may work for one person may not work for another. As in any teaching effort, we can’t expect to deliver the wonderful gift of the Message of God for this day if we have not armed ourselves with a clear notion about our duties and obligations to our teaching work and to our family. We must work to achieve answers in our own particular circumstance and develop our own deepening on these topics. At the same time, Bahá’u’lláh reminds us that in this Dispensation each person must choose for him/herself. As teachers, we teach by sharing the Creative Word and offering the seeker knowledge about the Manifestation of God for this day. We take no responsibility for the choice made by the seeker. When a Bahá’í teaches his loved ones and no action is taken by them, he must accept that inaction and resist the temptation to feel guilty about it. As

TEACHING THE BAHÁ’Í FAITH TO LOVED ONES
SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS

Family

O ye two believers in God! The Lord, peerless is He, hath made woman and man to abide with each other in the closest companionship, and to be even as a single soul. They are two helpmates, two intimate friends, who should be concerned about the welfare of each other.

If they live thus, they will pass through this world with perfect contentment, bliss, and peace of heart, and become the object of divine grace and favor in the Kingdom of heaven. But if they do other than this, they will live out their lives in great bitterness, longing at every moment for death, and will be shamefaced in the heavenly realm.

Strive, then, to abide, heart and soul, with each other as two doves in the nest, for this is to be blessed in both worlds. (Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 122)

According to the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh the family, being a human unit, must be educated according to the rules of sanctity. All the virtues must be taught the family. The integrity of the family bond must be constantly considered, and the rights of the individual members must not be transgressed. The rights of the son, the father, the mother—none of them must be transgressed, none of them must be arbitrary. Just as the son has certain obligations to his father, the father, likewise, has certain obligations to his son. The mother, the sister, and other members of the household have their certain prerogatives. All these rights and prerogatives must be conserved, yet the unity of the family must be sustained. The injury of one shall be considered the injury of all; the comfort of each, the comfort of all; the honor of one, the honor of all. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 168)

Bahá’ís should be many-sided, normal and well-balanced, mentally and spiritually. We must not give the impression of being fanatics but at the same time we must live up to our principles. (On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, quoted in Bahá’í Marriage and Family Life, p. 74)

Surely Shoghi Effendi would like to see you and the other friends give their whole time and energy to the Cause, for we are in great need for competent workers, but the home is an institution that Bahá’u’lláh has come to strengthen and not to weaken. Many unfortunate things have happened in Bahá’í homes just for neglecting this point. Serve the Cause but also remember your duties towards your home. It is for you to find the balance and see that neither makes you neglect the other. We would have many more husbands in the Cause were the wives more thoughtful and moderate in their Bahá’í activities. (Letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, quoted in Bahá’í Marriage and Family Life, p. 74)

In considering the problems that you and your wife are experiencing, the House of Justice points out that the unity of the family should take priority over any other consideration. Bahá’u’lláh came to bring unity to the world, and a fundamental unity is that of the family. Therefore, we must believe that the Faith is intended to strengthen the family, not weaken it. For example, service to the Cause should not produce neglect of the family. It is important for you to arrange your time so that your family life is harmonious and your household receives the attention it requires. (The Universal House of Justice, in Bahá’í Marriage and Family Life, p. 76)

If love and agreement are manifest in a single family, that family will advance, become illumined and spiritual; but if enmity and hatred exist within it, destruction and dispersion are inevitable. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, pp. 144-45)

It is one of the essential teachings of the Faith that unity should be maintained in the home. Of course this does not mean that any member of the family has a right to influence the faith of any other member; and if this is realized by all the members, then it seems certain that unity would be feasible. (Letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in Unrestrained as the Wind, p. 140)

She should certainly not grieve if she finds that her family are not receptive to the teachings—for not every soul is spiritually enlightened. Indeed, many members of the families of the Prophets themselves have remained unconverted even in the face of the example and persuasion of the Manifestation of God; therefore, the friends should not be distressed by such things but rather leave the future of those they love in the hand of God, and by their services and devotion to the Faith, win the right to plead for their ultimate spiritual re-birth. (Letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in Unrestrained as the Wind, pp. 140-41)

The Great Being saith: The heaven of divine wisdom is illumined with the two luminaries of consultation and compassion. Take ye counsel together in all matters, inasmuch as consultation is the lamp of guidance which leadeth the way, and is the bestower of understanding. (Bahá’u’lláh, quoted in Unrestrained as the Wind, p. 141)
Shoghi Effendi reminds us, “many members of the families of the Prophets themselves have remained unconverted even in the face of the example and persuasion of the Manifestation of God...” (Quoted in Unrestrained as the Wind, p. 141)

There are many occasions every day in which we employ some aspect of the Faith to deal with life events. It sometimes helps to call attention to what we are doing. In another way, we can be embarrassed by our weaknesses and our failure to live up to our Bahá’í standards. Our families often see this first-hand. Often we desire to be “perfect” Bahá’ís, but perfection, we should remember, is not within our capacity. The efforts we put forth—living the life, obeying Bahá’í laws, praying each day, attending Feast, etc.—are behaviors we can point to as representing a source of power and strength. All of these practices need to be there; if they are weak and need improvement, we must consider how to make the necessary changes. At the same time, we know that by “living the life” we draw the strength that we need and become firm in the Covenant.

Developing an individual teaching plan

We often are more content with no activity than we are to develop a teaching plan. What can the individual do?

- We can elevate teaching to its proper station in our life. In this day and age, teaching is the ultimate act of service to the Faith. We must have faith in Bahá’u’lláh to guide us in our work.

- We can rely upon prayer as a source of support, comfort and strength. We can pray for our loved ones and other seekers and with them. Our prayers in the morning and at night can be for teaching.

- We can show our loved ones the love that we derive from our Faith.

- We can deepen our knowledge of the Faith. This knowledge of the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh will arm us with steadfastness, peace of mind and certitude.

- We can invite our loved ones to share in our Bahá’í life by inviting them to attend firesides with us, to attend Holy Day observances, deepenings, summer/winter schools, etc.

- We can look inward for ways to improve ourselves and to share our progress with our loved ones. We may wish to ask them for their assessment and help.

- We can develop a teaching plan for teaching our loved ones, and periodically evaluate and modify that plan.

- We can identify those things that may stand as impediments to their declaration.

- We can accept their non-acceptance.

- We can periodically invite them to become Bahá’ís.

- We can maintain a positive attitude about our teaching efforts with them. Never say “never,” especially about whether or not a loved one will declare. Too many of us have been proven wrong.

- We can be happy in our teaching work and let our loved ones share and enjoy our happiness.

The community teaching plan

What can the Bahá’í community do? It can pray for family members and consult about ways to teach loved ones. It can deepen on the three areas of teacher, loved one and family. It can provide the individual believers and their families with love and fellowship. We need to remember that the Faith is not merely a series of meetings. It is a religion that encompasses all aspects of our lives including recreational activities.

The Bahá’í community can foster a loving environment in which non-Bahá’í family members can be free to learn more about the Faith at their own pace. It can invite those loved ones who are receptive to take part in firesides or deepenings. Eventually, they can be asked to take on responsibilities for firesides or deepenings, and we may even be so bold as to ask them to do more than reflect on their own ideas and challenge them to investigate what Bahá’u’lláh has said about topics they deem important.

As there are no universal techniques for teaching, there are no universal techniques for teaching loved ones. However, Bahá’u’lláh has given each of us all we need to teach. We each have unique talents, and should use them in our teaching work. Our love for our families is, I believe, where we should begin. In this brief essay I have presented a few ideas for your reflection. Love your loved ones by teaching them about the Faith. And above all, be happy in your efforts!

Australia

Over the past four years Kylie Stark, a 22-year-old Bahá’í nurse from New South Wales, has received a number of prestigious awards, among them the Jaycees’ Outstanding Young Australian of the Year award.

This year she was a finalist for the Young Australian Woman of the Year award given by the Australia Bicentenary Commission.

Offered the award, she withdrew in order to complete her year of service at the Bahá’í World Centre and to carry out personal commitments in England and the United States.

Ms. Stark is co-founder of CAN-TEEN (Teen-agers with Cancer), an Australia-wide organization of 600-800 members with a branch in New Zealand which sets up peer support groups and trains youth who are in recovery with counseling skills they can use to help other cancer-inflicted youth.

“Celebration of a Dream,” the second annual Bahá’í Peace Festival of Western Australia, commemorating the 25th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I have a dream” speech in Washington, D.C., was held August 28.

Forty-five hundred people attended the festival which featured 56 stalls and displays on peace and a number of excellent guest speakers including Cal Bruton, one of Australia’s best-known basketball players; Jack Davis, an internationally acclaimed Aboriginal playwright; Dr. Keith Suter, a peace activist from the Uniting Church; and June Williams, Western Australia’s Equal Opportunity Commissioner.

Each of the entertainers, exhibitors and speakers was given a copy of the peace statement with a letter of appreciation for taking part.

Radio, television and newspaper publicity was extensive, and 27,000 leaflets advertising the event were distributed.
The world

U.K. presents humanitarian awards

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to Great Britain, the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom presented a series of awards for service to humanity.

The award recipients were Bertha Bradley for her services to the women's movement; Dr. Edward Carpenter, former dean of Westminster Abbey, for his work in promoting religious unity; Archbishop Trevor Huddleston for his efforts to improve racial harmony; and LIVE AID for its work in famine relief.

Posthumous awards were given to two renowned Bahá'ís: potter Bernard Leach for his contribution to art, and Richard St. Barbe Baker for his pioneering work in the field of ecology.

The awards ceremony was held last June 30 at St. John's Smith Square, Westminster, a spot visited by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1912.

In accepting his award, Archbishop Huddleston referred to the Bahá'í Faith as being "... profoundly significant for our world, precisely because it stresses and deeply understands the reality of human oneness, of the movement toward one world, which, whether people and nations like it or not, is the most significant movement of the day. ... The Bahá'í Faith is a wonderful example to the rest of the world and to other faiths of the primacy of this truth. ..."

For the first time in the history of the British Parliament, permission has been given to speakers of faiths other than the Anglican Church to meet in the House of Commons and to present their views to both Houses.

Hugh Adamson, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom, represented the Faith at such a meeting last July 13. He was invited by the International Consultancy on Religion, Education and Culture (ICOREC).

Mr. Adamson and representatives from six other religious groups each gave a brief presentation of their faith's views to "an all-party conservation group" of both Houses of Parliament and the World Wide Fund for Nature.

Each was asked to submit a statement of not more than 400 words outlining activities or plans in regard to conservation, and the reasons for their faith's involvement in the movement.

The text of those statements is to be reproduced in the Hansard and other U.K. parliamentary journals which are circulated to the Parliaments of Canada, New Zealand, Australia, India and other "daughter Parliaments" of the United Kingdom.

Hawaii

Fifteen-year-old Meriah Hudson, a Bahá'í from the Hawaiian Islands, has been chosen to receive a Rotary International Exchange Scholarship to Machida-Naka, Japan, where she will live for one year as a "Youth Ambassador for Peace."
United States

Some of those who took part last June 26-July 1 in the fifth annual East-West Peace Seminar, held at the Bosch Bahá’í School near Santa Cruz, California, enjoy an opportunity to meet new friends and consult about peace-related issues. Seventy-five people from Finland, Sweden, the United States and USSR, 10 of whom are Bahá’ís, heard reports from national representatives and talked about strategies for building peace at national and local levels. After the intensive week-long seminar, three resolutions were drawn up and signed by the participants to be shared with government leaders.

Macau

The School of Nations, a private venture initiated by Bahá’ís in Macau in consultation with institutions of the Faith and believers who are experts in educational development, recently began operations, meeting the educational needs of the community.

The organizers underwent a long period of careful research and planning before developing a curriculum suited to the needs of the local community. They then acquired a facility and obtained a permanent license to operate a school.

The school presently offers a day school for kindergarten and primary grade levels. The Centre for Continuing Education, a night school, offers courses in foreign languages (Cantonese, English, Mandarin and Portuguese), recreation (cooking, calligraphy, painting, and various games) as well as vocational courses including accounting and business administration.

In addition, special classes are held for individuals and groups who request them including classes in English for a group from the Macau Daily News, Macau’s largest newspaper, and classes in Mandarin for a group from the International Women’s Club of Macau.

Plans for development include those for a computer training center; an in-house training program for factories, companies and other organizations; a School of Nations English Association with library facilities; an overseas college admissions assistance program; and tutorial classes.

Puerto Rico

A series of public talks based on “Marriage: A Fortress for Well-Being” began recently at the Bahá’í Center in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The talks, presented by Dr. Nilda Keene, a psychiatrist, have drawn wide media support. Five radio stations have broadcast weekly announcements about the project while one popular radio station invited Dr. Keene to take part in a two-hour “call-in” program over the course of several months.

The public talks now include other topics and will continue to be offered for an indefinite time.

About 100 people attended a Bahá’í Winter School last December 26-31 at the Amoz Gibson Training Centre for Bahá’í Media in Arecibo, Puerto Rico.

The Centre provided funding for the school out of proceeds from its workshop in public speaking and media interviews which was held earlier that same month.

Burkina

On June 24, for the first time in Burkina, the United Nations Information Office organized a round-table discussion devoted to disarmament, with the current session of the UN being devoted to that issue.

The Bahá’ís were invited to attend the discussion with government representatives including the ambassadors from the U.S., USSR, France, China and Algeria.

Also attending were members of other organizations working for peace, a former president of Burkina, representatives of the ministries of defense, foreign affairs, national education and interior, and members of the news media.

The Bahá’ís were able to share their approach to peace-making and problem-solving and to present copies of the peace statement to those who asked for them.

The event was covered on national radio and television.

Bahá’ís in the mining city of Poura, 250 km (155 miles) southwest of Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina, have been given permission to broadcast Bahá’í programs on local radio.

The station, part of a national network, allocates 45 minutes each week to the Christian and Muslim communities as well as to the Bahá’ís.
Honduras

"Project Bayan," an ambitious medical project initiated by two families of Bahá'í pioneers, is flourishing in Palacios, a village in the Honduran Mosquitia, one of the country's most remote areas.

The Sabripour and Smith families were inspired by the call of the Universal House of Justice for Bahá'ís to become more involved in social and economic development.

Houshang Sabripour, a physician who had been pioneering in Honduras with his family since 1976, and Barry Smith, a pioneer with his family since 1980 who was employed by the United States Agency for International Development, got together early in 1985 to plan the Bayan Project.

Palacios, 50 miles from the nearest road, has no government services such as electricity, water, communications or mail. It is inhabited by Miskito and Garifuna Indians. At the time of the Smiths' first visit, the community of about 7,000 had no direct access to health care, no doctors, and hospital facilities that were accessible only by plane and only two days per week.

Mass enrollment in the Faith had taken place, but the remoteness of the area prevented any regular consolidation efforts.

In late 1985 the Sabripour family bought seven acres of land on which to build a home. Construction of a four-bed hospital was begun in 1986.

After moving to Palacios, Dr. Sabripour's growing reputation as a doctor who could be trusted laid a firm foundation for the further development of the project.

The Spiritual Assembly of Palacios began to function, and the family began to make regular visits to neighboring communities.

In late 1987 Mr. Smith joined the other members of his family, who had moved to Palacios the year before; the hospital was then opened, and Project Bayan moved into high gear.

Sponsorships and donations greatly aided the project during its early stages, but it is now self-supporting.

The friends are now considering opening a clinic two days per week in Cocobila, a Miskito Indian village about two and one-half hours away, since many of their patients are from that area.

Since 1987, two youth have completed periods of service at the hospital.

Bahá'í International Community

Relations between the Bahá'í International Community and the World Health Organization (WHO) moved significantly forward last May with the participation of two Bahá'ís delegates at the 41st World Health Assembly held last May in Geneva, Switzerland.

Since 1985, UN non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been invited to attend the World Health Assembly, but only those having official status with WHO are invited to contribute to the deliberations.

This year, for the first time, the BIC was invited to take part in the discussions.

The Bahá'í delegates, Dr. Ethel Martens and Giovanni Ballerio, were also asked to present a visual display of the involvement of Bahá'ís in primary health care around the world. The display was exhibited for an entire week.

"Health for All by the Year 2000" is WHO's long-range goal. The focus is on the use of preventive rather than curative medicine, and on health care that will enable people to live socially and economically productive lives.

One aspect of this approach involves the training of village and community health workers and educators.

As a result of her participation in the conference, Dr. Martens was invited to take part in a meeting in August that was to decide the future role of NGOs in the World Health Organization.

Colombia

About 100 people attended a public forum last June 4 on "Women: Equality, Development and Peace" which was organized by the Bahá'ís of Bucaramanga, Colombia.

The event, held at the Chicamocha Hotel, included a panel of well-known speakers including Maria Eugenia Mantilla de Martinez, who last year received Colombia's "Woman of the Year" award.
Canada

A nationwide peace-promoting road show, "Let It Be This Generation," performed by a troupe of Bahá'í youth in Canada, ended last June 23 after winning the hearts of young people in high schools, colleges, universities and community centers across the country.

The group gave 150 performances including 63 in high schools, seven in junior highs and six in elementary schools. They estimate that about 12,000 people have seen the show, not including those who saw them on television.

The show, based on the inevitability of peace and the steps needed to attain it, communicates those ideas through dance, slide shows, music and drama. While on tour, the youth troupe gave away between 6,000 and 8,000 copies of the peace statement.

The show was praised by school counselors, teachers and principals, and the youth were described as "energetic, intelligent and committed to the cause of peace."

Rainbow Reforestation, a company begun in 1984 in Dryden, Ontario, by two Bahá'í students, Laurie Fernandez and Anne Marie Kulhberg, was given the Minister's Award for Outstanding Achievement at a ceremony held last March in Toronto.

In the summer of 1987, 1.57 million trees were planted by their company in four months.

Sri Lanka

A series of dental camps held last May 28-June 5 in the Kandy, Kegalle and Nuwara Eliya districts of Sri Lanka was not only successful in serving the needy in those areas but also in regenerating activity and confidence within the local Bahá'í communities.

The project was a joint venture of the Office of Social and Economic Development of the Bahá'ís of Sri Lanka and a Bahá'í medical and dental team which consisted of a dental surgeon, a nurse and volunteer aide.

Local officials were cooperative, superintendents offered their dispensasries for use by the team, local Bahá'ís arose to offer their help, and more than 1,000 adults, youth and children were treated.

Botswana

Youth working on the "Star '88" project in Botswana are bringing the Faith to many areas of southern Africa as a result of a comprehensive orientation program which acquainted them with aspects of traditional African culture and gave them an opportunity to listen to the advice of experienced Bahá'í teachers.

During the last phase of their orientation the youth were sent out to field test their new skills. In Dimaje, in northeastern Botswana, nearly the entire village turned out to see a slide presentation given by the youth. On the following day, 45 adults and many children embraced the Faith.

Following the orientation, the young people traveled to neighboring countries such as Lesotho and Zambia to begin the project.

In September, the project, now in full swing, was reinforced by the Star '88 Conference, conducted by the youth and attended by 130 young people from 18 countries.

They welcomed the participation of Counsellors Lucretia Mancho Warren and Roddy Lutchmaya, members of the Auxiliary Board, and a visitor from the Bahá'í World Centre.

A scroll expressing appreciation to the government of Botswana for its support of human rights was presented last July 22 in a ceremony at the Bahá'í National Center.

Among the many dignitaries attending were the ambassadors from China and Nigeria and members of the diplomatic corps from Germany and the United States.

After the ceremony, several people asked for copies of the scroll, and the UN representative invited the Bahá'ís to co-sponsor this year's national UN Day observance.

The ceremony was covered the following day on Radio Botswana.

Portugal

The first Iberian Bahá'í Youth Conference was held last August 3-4 in Lisbon, Portugal. Attending were more than 120 youth, children and adults from nine European countries.

David Hofman, a former member of the Universal House of Justice, took part in the conference, as did Counsellor Leo Niederreiter, Mrs. Niederreiter, and Sean Hinton, a youth from the United Kingdom. Members of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Spain and Portugal also attended.

The closing performance by "El Viento Canta," a touring musical group, celebrated the great success of the conference.
Iran

This painting, rendered by a Bahá’í who is a prisoner in Yazd, Iran, depicts nine trees which have been felled, each representing a martyr of Yazd, seven during 1980 and two in 1984. The artist explains, ‘The earth is covered with snow. Thousands of tiny trees are growing out of the larger roots. In some areas the snow is melting to water the new trees. The snow is a sign of hardship and calamities. ‘Verily God hath made adversity as a morning dew upon His green pasture.’”

The Gambia

The Mobile Institute Team, made up of three traveling teachers from Ghana and The Gambia, recently spent several months trekking through The Gambia under the guidance of that country’s National Spiritual Assembly. Every month the National Assembly presented the team a plan of action, detailing the villages to be visited and the goals to be accomplished. The team followed the schedule, keeping a detailed account of activities and identifying “key believers” in each locality. Activities included deepenings, firesides, slide presentations, mini-institutes, classes for women and children, and help in the election at Ridván of local Spiritual Assemblies.

Sikkim

Thirty people have recently embraced the Faith in Machong, East Sikkim, fulfilling a goal of 25 new Bahá’ís promised by the local Spiritual Assembly during that country’s most recent National Convention.

India

Well-planned teaching campaigns in India’s southern states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu last July and August brought hundreds of people into the Faith. In Karnataka, an ongoing campaign named in honor of the late Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’lláh Muháhir, is also consolidating the district capital’s local Spiritual Assembly in Tumkur as the Assembly assumes a greater role in teaching and deepening. The campaign has won the support of the District Assistant Commissioner and the chairman of the town municipality, generated wide media coverage, and enabled more than 300 people from colleges, hostels and offices to embrace the Faith. One newspaper has agreed to publish “Bahá’í Views” as a regular feature every Saturday. In addition, a dental project in Tumkur has drawn considerable attention to the Faith from media and public and is being extended to nearby villages on request.

In the Nilgiris plateau region of Tamil Nadu, an ongoing campaign begun last July 25 has so far enrolled more than 1,000 people from all strata of society, and more than 400 Assembly-based projects are now in operation. In Andhra Pradesh, Nizamabad was opened to the Faith when 40 people declared, and the community’s first local Spiritual Assembly was formed.

 despite the intense summer heat, 213,782 visitors came last June to the Bahá’í House of Worship in New Delhi, India. One of the groups was a Standard VII class from a public school in Delhi. The students were given a set of eight questions about the House of Worship to answer. They pursued their task diligently, asking the staff many difficult questions while parents who accompanied them bought Bahá’í literature for more information.

Malawi

Seven Bahá’ís in Malawi recently organized, on their own initiative, a “big walk” for teaching. They laid out a 90-km (60-mile) route from Lilongwe to Mchinji, to be covered in three days of walking, and set a conference in Mchinji at the end. The endeavor was named the “Mullá Husayn Walk,” as much of the material shared by the walkers was taken from a book of stories about Mullá Husayn.

The walkers counted the trip a success, saying that within three days, information about Bahá’u’lláh had been presented to more than 40 villages.

Virgin Islands

The Bahá’í community of St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, recently held a memorial service to honor the Bahá’ís martyred in Iran since 1978. A large ad listing the names of the martyrs was placed in the St. Thomas Daily News, informing the public of the event and inviting their participation.

16 December 1988/Bahá’í News
Kenya

Auxiliary Board member Dr. Chowghi Rouhani and his wife, Amal, recently visited Bahá'ís in Malava, West Kenya, as part of a nationwide project to encourage the friends to learn about and contribute to the fund for building the Arc on Mount Carmel. The campaign, launched by Dr. and Mrs. Rouhani under the guidance of the National Spiritual Assembly of Kenya, involves extensive traveling to local communities in West Kenya where slide shows are presented and deepenings given to the friends.

Sixty-seven people took part last February in a National Women’s Conference at the Bahá’í Center in Nakuru, Kenya.

The program, which was opened by Counsellor Peter Vuyiya, included talks on family development and a number of practical topics related to local needs.

Participants also enjoyed craft workshops, traditional dances, and songs about Bahá’u’lláh, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi.

The success of the conference led to the planning of a series of regional women’s conferences in Kenya.

Mariana Islands

A teaching campaign launched last July in Saipan, Mariana Islands, in response to the Ridván message from the Universal House of Justice has led to the enrollment of almost 50 new Bahá’ís.

Its success to date is attributed in part to the enthusiasm shown by these new believers and to their determination to teach.

Two of the new Bahá’ís gave a fireside later in July, conducting the meeting as though they had been doing it for years. Five more people accepted the Faith that evening.

Two days later, the new believers gave a party to meet the rest of Saipan’s Bahá’í community. Seventy-five people including 40 non-Bahá’ís attended the party, which was so successful that it was repeated the following evening, when 12 more new believers were enrolled.

Australia

About 2,000 people attended a multicultural festival presented last June 6 by the Bahá’ís of Stirling, Western Australia, which brought together many of the ethnic communities in the area for the country’s bicentennial.

The day-long event included stalls and displays by various groups, an art exhibit, a selection of food from a number of countries, children’s activities and entertainment including a concert.

At the concert, the audience was welcomed by the mayor of Stirling who presented prizes for the school art competition held during the festival.

Ghana

A recent teaching campaign in Nzema Land, Ghana, has led to the formation of five local Spiritual Assemblies and the opening of 18 communities to the Faith. There are now 11 Assemblies in that region.

Although access to villages is extremely difficult, especially during the rainy season, this did not prevent a group of 30 dedicated Bahá’ís from taking part in the campaign.

A visit by members of the National Spiritual Assembly and National Teaching Committee greatly encouraged the teachers.
FULLY ONE YEAR SINCE ACCEPTANCE BAHÁ'Í FAITH INTO NETWORK ON CONSERVA-
TION AND RELIGION WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE, WE ARE IMENSELY PLEASED
TO ANNOUNCE OUTSTANDING SUCCESS FUND-RAISING BANQUET AND RECEPTION
ON 26 OCTOBER IN LONDON CO-SPONSORED BY WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE
AND BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, HELD AT SYON HOUSE, ANCESTRAL
HOME OF DUKES OF NORTHUMBERLAND, EVENT LAUNCHED ARTS AND NATURE
PROGRAM CONCEIVED BY HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE PHILIP. DUKE OF EDIN-
BURGH, AS MEANS OF DRAWING ON VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS TO ENLIST
PUBLIC SUPPORT OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL NEEDS AROUND WORLD.

AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚHÍYYIH KHÁNUM, REPRESENTING BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COM-
MUNITY, GAVE CAPTIVATING BRIEF ADDRESS IN WHICH SHE APPEALED TO HER
DISTINGUISHED HEARERS TO JOIN IN COMMON EFFORT TO CONSERVE NATURE. IN HIS
SUBSEQUENT SPEECH, PRINCE PHILIP REFERRED REPEATEDLY TO POINTS SHE HAD
MADE.

ATTRACTING SOME MOST INFLUENTIAL FIGURES IN BRITISH SOCIAL AND PUBLIC
LIFE AMONG ITS 200 GUESTS, EVENT BROUGHT TOGETHER NUMBER OF LEADING EU-
ROPEAN ARTISTS IN PERFORMANCES ON THEME ‘ART AND NATURE,’ WHICH WAS
FURTHER HIGHLIGHTED BY DISPLAY AT SYON HOUSE OF WORKS OF ART FROM
ROYAL COLLECTION WHICH HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN HAD LOANED FOR THE EVEN-
ING.

OUR SPIRITS STIRRED BY POWERFUL INDICATIONS THUS GIVEN OF GREAT POTEN-
TIALITIES FOR SERVICE WHICH BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY WORLDWIDE CAN AND MUST
RENDE R IN MAKING ITS DISTINCTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONSERVATION AND EN-
RICHMENT PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OUR BEAUTIFULLY ENDOWED PLANET.
'Trustworthy, reliable' Borrah Kavelin

H. Borrah Kavelin, who crowned nearly half a century of devoted service to the Cause of God with membership on the Universal House of Justice from its inception in 1963 until his retirement early this year, died December 15 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Mr. Kavelin had returned to the U.S. in October to take part with David Hofman, another former member of the House of Justice, in the 12 "Vision to Victory" conferences called for by the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly to launch a two-year period of commitment and sacrifice on the part of the American Bahá’í community.

After speaking at the conference November 4-6 in Danvers, Massachusetts, Mr. Kavelin traveled to Chattanooga, Tennessee, site of the second conference, but was taken ill and rushed to a hospital before that event got under way.

Although unable to leave his hospital bed, he insisted on video taping a brief address which was shown to those at the conference in Chattanooga and, the following weekend, at the Northwest conference in Seattle, Washington.

Mr. Kavelin remained gravely ill, but was allowed to leave the hospital and return to his home in Albuquerque.

Howard Borrah Kavelin became a Bahá’í in New York City in 1941 and served on the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly from 1950-63 and from 1961-63 on the International Bahá’í Council, the forerunner of the Universal House of Justice.

He was chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly from 1958-63.

As a businessman, Mr. Kavelin was executive vice-president of Durand Taylor Company, a nationally known commercial real estate and management organization in New York.

He was involved in the sale of a number of New York landmarks including Ebbets Field, once the home of baseball’s Brooklyn (now Los Angeles) Dodgers.

In 1952, he was given an award by the New York Title Company for the most ingenious commercial real estate transaction of that year.

While in New York, Mr. Kavelin served for nine years on the city’s local Spiritual Assembly including several as its chairman.
Edna M. True, whose matchless services to the Cause of God in North America and Europe spanned nearly a century, died peacefully in her sleep December 9 in Wilmette, Illinois, close to the Mother Temple of the West that was so dear to her heart.

Upon learning of Miss True’s passing some four months after her 100th birthday, the Universal House of Justice cabled:

"Her long period outstanding dedicated services Cause, especially illuminated by her attainment presence beloved Master and personal acquaintance Shoghi Effendi, comprised wide range historically significant contributions as stalwart pillar American Bahá’í community during critical decades its early administrative development and as single-minded, energetic, resourceful promoter European Bahá’í community whose rise after second World War is forever linked with her extensive activities for 17 years behalf European Teaching Committee."

"Her 22 years on National Spiritual Assembly United States as its recording secretary indicate how intimate was her involvement in shaping Bahá’í community that country.

"Her memorable membership Continental Board of Counselors North America and Trusteeship Continental Fund crowned century-long, exemplary life wholly worthy her illustrious Bahá’í heritage."

Miss True, who was born July 29, 1888, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, lived most of her life in the Chicago area including the last 59 years in Wilmette.

She was a daughter of the Hand of the Cause of God Corinne Knight True whose valiant work from 1909-25 as financial secretary of Bahá’í Temple Unity was instrumental in building the House of Worship in Wilmette.

Corinne True died April 3, 1961, only seven months short of her 100th birthday.

Edna True was formally enrolled in the Faith as a 15-year-old in 1903, the same year in which Orville and Wilbur Wright flew the first heavier-than-air plane at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

Six years later she was graduated from Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, where she had excelled in academics and sports and captained the basketball team.

She was a young woman of 23 in 1912 when 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited Chicago and laid the cornerstone for the House of Worship in a ceremony on May 1 of that year.

Like her mother, Miss True became intimately involved in the completion of that magnificent edifice, serving on its construction committee from 1947-53, lending her expertise to interior design, and helping to plan its formal dedication in 1953.

During World War I Miss True was a part of the Smith College Relief Unit in France, ministering to the needs of U.S. servicemen overseas.

From 1940-46 she was a member of the Bahá’í Inter-America Committee, serving as its chairman in 1941-42 and secretary in 1945-46.

Harry Truman was president in 1946 when Miss True was elected to membership on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States. She served as recording secretary for the next 22 years.

Meanwhile, she served as chairman of the European Teaching Committee for the entire span of its existence (1946-64), putting her organizational skills to work to help form local Spiritual Assemblies and, later, National Spiritual Assemblies in 11 European countries.

Professionally, Miss True was the founder and manager of North Shore Travel Service in Evanston, a position whose many contacts overseas helped greatly in her work with the European Teaching Committee.

In 1968, now 80 years old, Miss True was named by the Universal House of Justice as a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for the Americas.

She served with distinction as a Counsellor and Trustee of the Continental Fund until 1981 when advancing years (she was then 93) forced her to reduce her activities.

Miss True remained an active member of the Wilmette Bahá’í community almost to her last year, regularly attending Feasts and other gatherings with her longtime friend and companion, Thelma Jackson.

In 1986, Miss True and Miss Jackson
made a pilgrimage to the World Centre in Haifa, Israel, where they visited the Holy Shrines and were entertained by members of the Universal House of Justice.

On her 99th birthday in July 1987, the National Spiritual Assembly presented Miss True a scroll recognizing her many years of service to the U.S. Bahá’í community. From the National Teaching Committee, she received a framed copy of the commemorative print honoring the 75th anniversary of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit to North America.

In return, she presented to 19 young volunteers at the National Center copies of The Dawning Place, Bruce Whitmore’s book about the building of the Mother Temple of the West. The first of the memorial services in her honor was held two days later during the “Vision to Victory” conference in Chicago. Among those paying tribute to her exemplary life of service were David Hofman, a former member of the Universal House of Justice; Dr. Wilma Ellis, director-general of the Bahá’í International Community; and Judge Dorothy W. Nelson, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Also presented was a brief audiovisual retrospective of Miss True’s life and services to the Cause of God.

MAGNITUDE LOSS DEARLY-LOVED, STEADFAST, DEVOTED, HIGHLY RESPECTED MAIDSERVANT BAHÁ’U’LLÁH EDNA M. TRUE PROFOUNDLY FELT. RECALL WITH DEEP APPRECIATION RADIANT, DIGNIFIED COUNTENANCE OF ONE WHOSE EVENTFUL LIFE SPANNED MORE THAN THREE DECADES HEROIC AGE AND SIXTY-SEVEN YEARS FORMATIVE AGE. HER LONG PERIOD OUTSTANDING DEDICATED SERVICES CAUSE, ESPECIALLY ILLUMINED BY HER ATTAINMENT PRESENCE BELOVED MASTER AND PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE SHOGHI EFFENDI, COMPRIS-ED WIDE RANGE HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS AS STALWART PILLAR AMERICAN BAHÁ’Í COMMUNITY DURING CRITICAL DECADES ITS EARLY ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT AND AS SINGLE-MINDED, ENERGETIC, RESOURCEFUL PROMOTER EUROPEAN BAHÁ’Í COMMUNITY WHOSE RISE AFTER SECOND WORLD WAR IS FOREVER LINKED WITH HER EXTENSIVE ACTIVITIES FOR 17 YEARS BEHALF EUROPEAN TEACHING COMMITTEE. HER 22 YEARS ON NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY UNITED STATES AS ITS RECORDING SECRETARY INDICATE HOW INTIMATE WAS HER INVOLVEMENT IN SHAPING BAHÁ’Í COMMUNITY THAT COUNTRY. HER MEMORABLE MEMBERSHIP CONTINENTAL BOARD COUNSELLORS NORTH AMERICA AND TRUSTEESHIP CONTINENTAL FUND CROWNED CENTURY-LONG, EXEMPLARY LIFE WHOLLY WORTHY HER ILLUSTRIOUS BAHÁ’Í HERITAGE.

PRAYING FERVENTLY HOLY SHRINES HER LUMINOUS SOUL MAY BE ACCORDER JOYFUL REUNION HER DISTINGUISHED MOTHER ABHÁ KINGDOM AND MAY EVER PROGRESS THROUGHOUT DIVINE WORLDS.

EXTEND HEARTFELT SYMPATHY HER RELATIVES. ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS IN HER HONOR AT MOTHER TEMPLE WEST AND IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT UNITED STATES. ALSO ADVISING OTHER COMMUNITIES NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE HOLD SIMILAR GATHERINGS.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
DECEMBER 12, 1988

DEEPLY SHARE SENSE LOSS WITH NORTH AMERICAN BAHÁ’Í COMMUNITY PASSING EDNA TRUE LAST VALIANT MEMBER OLDER GENERATION TRUE FAMILY, WHOSE DEVOTION AND SERVICES TO ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ CENTER COVENANT AND LATER HIS SUCCESSOR SHOGHI EFFENDI THE GUARDIAN MARK THEM AS ONE OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED BAHÁ’Í FAMILIES OF THE WEST DURING FORMATIVE AGE FAITH. ARDENTLY HOPE YOUNGER GENERATION BELIEVERS WILL PAY BEFITTING TRIBUTE MEMORY THIS OUTSTANDING, EXEMPLARY SERVANT AND ARISE AS NEVER BEFORE TO SPREAD THE CAUSE OF GOD AMONG THE MASSES OF EVERY COLOR, RACE AND BACKGROUND IN THE UNITED STATES AS A WORTHY REMEMBRANCE THIS WONDERFUL SOUL.

RÚHIYYIH
DECEMBER 12, 1988
A Survey of Basic Education Activities in Selected Bahá'í Communities

1. Introduction

Education of the individual and of society is a primary focus of Bahá'í activity. Bahá'í beliefs impel each individual to strive to develop his or her own capacities and to participate actively in the development of the community; and Bahá'í law requires the community to provide means for the development of its people. These commonly held values and goals create in communities an ideal environment for fostering education. Since their formation in the mid-19th century, Bahá'í communities have encouraged individual and social development, leading not only to high rates of literacy among individuals, but also to significant improvements in all aspects of community life.

The Bahá'ís of Iran, for example, began informal schooling in the 1880s, when compulsory education was only beginning to be accepted in the West, and over the next 50 years built a network of more than 40 schools for girls and boys, some of which were the first modern educational institutions in that country. This community had achieved near total literacy within its ranks by the early 1950s, through a campaign that placed special emphasis on women and those in rural areas.

This same drive for self-improvement and the well-being of the community is evident in the more than 20,000 Bahá'í communities now established around the world. These local communities are systematically extending their capacity to support the educational aspirations of the people they serve, both Bahá'ís and those of other beliefs. Furthermore, national and regional organizations in 148 nations and independent territories facilitate the efforts of local institutions to move themselves and their communities forward and contribute to the unfoldment of a global civilization based on the fundamental principle of the unity of the human race.

2. Promotion of education by the local Bahá'í community

The educational activities of the local Bahá'í communities may be examined in terms of four interrelated sets of goals and methodologies.

2.1 Creating and sustaining a literate environment

With the help of regional and national institutions, local communities endeavor to create a literate environment by encouraging their members to read daily as an individual spiritual discipline, to deepen their knowledge and understanding of various topics of study, and to consider the promotion of knowledge and education a personal obligation. By now, reading materials have been produced in many languages and this endeavor continues to be pursued energetically.

The Bahá'í system of community organization stimulates a desire to learn. Each member participates in regular meetings of the community, assists in planning and implementing its programs, and elects and may serve on its governing council. The knowledge that they bear a collective responsibility for the welfare of the community motivates all members to acquire and improve their literacy skills. Some newly elected Bahá'í councils whose members may initially be illiterate arrange literacy and study classes for themselves and their communities. This pattern, established in Iran almost 100 years ago, continues today in the communities of the developing world.

Bahá'í councils enable people to educate themselves. Presently, more than 10,000 locally initiated classes are conducted under the auspices of such councils. These democratically elected institutions strive to consult fairly, to create unity, and to demonstrate a spirit of service. They are responsible for arranging classes for children, youth and adults, irrespective of class, caste, race or religion. Special efforts are made to provide educational opportunities for women, and the education of girls has been a priority since the first girls' schools were opened in Iran at the turn of the century.

2.2 Moral and spiritual education of children

The provision of moral and spiritual education for children is a primary focus of Bahá'í activity in basic education, as the inculcation of good character is considered to be fundamental to social progress and individual success. In 1986, 4,295 children's classes were reported in 165 countries and independent territories; many of these classes were joint efforts by several local Bahá'í councils.

National programs of teacher training and curriculum development help local councils to provide moral education. An international network distributes children's class curricula across nations and continents. Between 1979 and 1986, 525 institutes for training teachers of children's classes were held in 77 countries. To help promote the education of children, 209 seminars on this subject were held in 47 countries during the same seven-year period.

The publication of literature for chil-
dren is another assistance to local Bahá’í councils in their efforts for children. Since 1979, 226 books for children in 36 languages including Maori, Kinvarwanda, Icelandic and Acholi have been published.

2.3 Community learning centers

The establishment of a community learning center represents the next level of involvement in education. A learning center is an effort by the community to meet its own educational needs using its own resources. It provides basic education, often to a population not served by official schools.

Some community learning centers concentrate on pre-school education to create a foundation for success in primary school, and some are one-room, one-teacher primary schools. Adult literacy is part of the curriculum of at least one-quarter of all learning centers. Crafts are also taught and guidance to schoolchildren is included in the activities of quite a few. These different types of learning centers are now operating in 573 Bahá’í communities. There are 164 in Africa, 70 in the Americas, 330 in Asia, and 9 in the Pacific. More than 20,000 people take part in their programs.

It can be said that the majority of the learning centers are self-reliant, community-based institutions, although they receive some level of support from regional or national institutions. In some countries the teachers are volunteers; in others, they receive modest remuneration from funds raised through communal farm work, through school fees, or from scholarships. Learning centers are the product of a long process of community development. The real resources which create them are the people’s confidence in their own capacity, their vision of their role in the upliftment of society, and their ability to consult and carry out decisions together. These qualities give the community learning centers a general continuity that is often lacking in grassroots endeavors.

2.4 Formal schools

At yet another level, a number of communities gradually establish formal schools that grow in size according to the increasing capacity of the people to manage a more complex educational institution and to respond effectively to their own needs. At present, Bahá’í communities operate 29 formal primary and secondary schools: 4 in Africa, 12 in the Americas, 12 in Asia, and one in the Pacific. About 5,000 students attend, 80 percent of whom are not Bahá’ís. These schools are open to all religious denominations and ethnic groups, striving to provide the same quality education for all strata of society. A number of these educational institutions operate in particularly disadvantaged regions where modern school facilities are otherwise lacking. Like the learning centers, the majority of these establishments have emerged from the initiative of the community and thus tend to express and preserve the positive aspects of the local culture, at the same time preparing the children for the challenges of an interdependent world. They are not only places for the transmission of knowledge, but also training centers for developing high standards of behavior and conduct, where priority is given to moral and ethical education.

Although the establishment of formal schools is not an imposition from outside, but the fruit of a community’s development, once these schools come into existence they are supported by a growing system of international collaboration. Through national and international administrative assistance, many have been able to draw resources from distant communities, in the form of scholarships, technical assistance and voluntary workers. The origins of this collaboration go back to the first years of this century when a few American teachers arrived in Tehran to help with Bahá’í schools, and to the successful establishment of scholarship funds for students in the Iranian schools. A desire to enable others to become educated now links Bahá’ís from Brussels to Lucknow; from Cali to Lagos; from Port-au-Prince to Sydney.

It is well known that in many rural or less-developed regions of the world, schools have become powerful instruments leading to the migration of skilled members of the local society to more developed regions. One of the greatest challenges to the growing network of Bahá’í-administered schools is to reverse this process. They endeavor to do so both by fostering a strong sense of responsibility in their students, by designing curricula that enable their graduates to make definite contributions to the development of their communities, and by involving the parents and the community in the learning process.

Some of the Bahá’í schools are:

Anís Zunúzí Bahá’í School, Lilavois, Haiti: Since opening in 1980, it has gradually expanded its program to include kindergarten, grades 1-8, and a new technical section, and now serves 270 students from the surrounding rural area. A rural development program is based at the school.

Bahá’í School, Tadong, Gangtok, Sikkim: More than 870 students, ranging from nursery up to Class IX, attend the Tadong Bahá’í School, which is known to have a high academic standard. An outstanding characteristic of the school is its harmonious integration of a multi-ethnic student population.

Colegio Núr, La Cisterna, Santiago, Chile: Inaugurated in 1977, Colegio Núr is Bahá’í-owned and administered, but receives state support in the form of teachers’ salaries. Its curriculum spans pre-school through high school including commercial/technical training. Nearly 400 students attend.

Escola das Naçoes (School of the Nations), Brasilia, Brazil: More than 175 students from more than 30 countries attend this international bi-lingual school, which presently includes preschool and primary grades.

Maxwell International Bahá’í School, Shawnigan Lake, British Columbia, Canada: Opened in September 1988, this coeducational residential school offers grades 7-9 to an international student body, and will eventually include secondary grades 10-13.

New Day Montessori/High School, Karachi, Pakistan: Since its establishment in 1978, enrollment has grown to 359 students, with a Montessori kindergarten and eight primary grades operating at present.

New Era School, Panchganhi, Maharashtra, India: This international school, established in 1945, offers classes from pre-school through junior college, attended by more than 400 students. It is closely associated with an extensive regional development program in literacy, women’s development, agriculture and health improvement in the immediate area.
such as health and afforestation mobilizers. To the family, to women, or to issues promoting the education of individuals.

Rabbanî Higher Secondary School, Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, India: Offering standards (grades) VI-XI to about 200 students, the Rabbanî School heavily emphasizes vocational and agricultural training, with a large self-help component. A 72-acre farm with poultry, animal husbandry, horticulture, and a plant nursery augments the academic program. A regional development program operated by the school involves some 20 villages in educational and agricultural upliftment.

Ruaha Technical Secondary School, Iringa, Tanzania: Since starting operation in March 1986, this rural secondary school has expanded its enrollment from 160 to about 270 students, and is developing commercial and technical training components.

Santitham School, Yasothon, Thailand: Established in 1963, the school includes a large kindergarten, a functioning children's library, a vocational training program for rural women, and a small commercial school. Total enrollment is about 200.

3. Promotion of education by regional and national institutions

As Bahá’í communities and councils become established in a region and their educational capacities begin to grow, Bahá’í institutions on the regional and national level step in to support and complement their activities. Again, regional and national educational activities take various forms and occur at different levels of complexity.

3.1 National and regional programs

Summer schools and study retreats are sponsored to encourage and facilitate lifelong learning. During the period from 1979-86, 1,880 such meetings were sponsored in 128 countries and independent territories.

Conferences to motivate and assist specific groups are also held. During that same seven-year period, various national communities held 203 parent-training and family-life courses, 1,126 conferences for youth, and 434 conferences to advance the status of women.

Festivals and cultural activities are arranged to overcome class, caste and racial barriers, helping to establish new patterns of social interaction while promoting the education of individuals. Special educational campaigns related to the family, to women, or to issues such as health and afforestation mobilize the community to focus its attention on specific social problems.

3.2 Bahá’í schools and radio stations facilitating community education

Special efforts to promote basic education have been possible using the resources of Bahá’í schools and radio stations.

The Anis Zunúzi Development Service, an outreach program of the Anis Zunúzi Bahá’í School in Haiti, has established rural cooperatives and 52 community learning centers. An introductory reader has been produced in Haitian Creole, the first school textbook in this language to be used in Haiti.

Attached to the Rabbanî School in Gwalior, India, the Rabbanî Community Development Project incorporates community development, support for some 15-20 community learning centers, afforestation efforts, health programs and a farm demonstration project.

The New Era Development Institute, based in Panchgani, India, and closely associated with the New Era Bahá’í School, offers a variety of courses related to community development and Bahá’í studies, as well as rural development programs in agriculture, health, and women’s development. More than 60 adult literacy classes, partially funded by the government, are offered through the Institute to villages in the area.

The network of Bahá’í radio stations is also increasing its involvement in community education. The station broadcasting from Otavalo in Ecuador has well-developed community-service programs in agriculture, health and general culture, and Radio Bahá’í Caracollo in Bolivia has carried out an extensive collaborative health program with UNICEF. These radio stations, as well as those at Lake Titicaca in Peru, in South Carolina, in the United States; in Temuco, Chile; in Boca del Monte, Panama, and near Monrovia, Liberia, are all using their facilities to create a motivation for self-improvement and united action in their listeners.

4. Concepts and programs of five regional Bahá’í efforts in basic education

4.1 The Ruhi Institute

4.2 The Faizi Institute for Rural Women

4.3 The Regional Committee for Social and Economic Development in Kivu (CREDESE)

4.4 The Guaymi Cultural Center

4.5 Radio Bahá’í Ecuador

In order to convey not only the existence but also the vision and strategy of Bahá’í activities in basic education, concepts and programs of five regional efforts are presented.

The Ruhi Institute in Colombia demonstrates a systematic effort to develop curricula especially for youth, guiding them along a path of service. The Faizi Vocational Institute for Rural Women in India shows the importance attached to the education of women and the interconnection between moral education and income-generating skills. The Centers for Bahá’í Education in Zaire reveal the enabling process of a people as they undertake to become literate and tread the path of self-reliance. The Guaymi Cultural Center in Panama demonstrates the efforts of an indigenous group to restore the elements of their own culture and to mobilize themselves for their own welfare. Radio Bahá’í Ecuador illustrates the utility of modern communications media such as a radio station in the upliftment of a people.

4.1 The Ruhi Institute

The Ruhi Institute is an educational institution operating under the guidance of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Colombia, which dedicates its efforts to the development of human resources for the spiritual, social and cultural development of the Colombian people. Although its center is in the town of Puerto Tejada in the department of Cauca, its area of influence includes the majority of the rural areas of Colombia and is being gradually extended to several other countries in Latin America.

Concepts

Like any other institution involved in the process of education for development, the Ruhi Institute has formulated its strategies within a special framework and a philosophy of social change, development and education. In this case, that understanding has emerged from a consistent effort to apply Bahá’í principles to the analysis of the present social conditions:

1. The Bahá’í Faith sees the present...
state of human affairs as a natural
stage in an organic process that will
lead finally to the unity of the human
race within one social order. Humanity
as a whole has gone through evolution-
ary stages similar to those experienced
by an individual; having passed
through infancy and childhood, it is
now experiencing the difficult culmi-
nating moments of a turbulent adoles-
cence. The present state of confusion,
doubt and belligerence is simply to be
understood as the condition of an ad-
olescent who strongly desires growth
and maturity but is still attached to
childish attitudes and customs. Yet the
moment is ripe for this adolescent to
take a final step and enter the construc-
tive and dynamic but balanced state of
maturity and adulthood.

2. In analyzing the rapid changes
taking place in the world today, Ba-
ha'i identify two parallel processes
operating at all levels—village, town,
nation and global society. On the one
hand, it is clear that human society is
suffering from a process of disintegra-
tion that manifests itself in wars, ter-
rorism, chaos, physical and psychologi-
cal insecurity, and a widespread condi-
tion of material poverty. On the other
hand, forces of integration are moving
individuals and groups toward the
adoption of new values, new forms of
organization, and appropriate struc-
tures that can lay the foundation for
the establishment of a new social
order. The Ruhi Institute defines its basic
aim as that of becoming a channel for
the spiritual forces of our time to be
applied to the lives of the masses of
humanity, empowering them to con-
tribute to the establishment of a new
world order.

3. In its efforts to understand and
contribute to a process of social
change, the Ruhi Institute tries to
avoid two sets of theories that have
dominated the discourse on develop-
ment and change for too many de-
ades. On the one hand, it disagrees
with concepts of social change that are
entirely individualistic in their outlook,
which analyze society only in terms
of the psychological make-up, the skills,
and the behavior of the individual, and
which assume that social structures
somehow will change by themselves
once the individual is saved or correctly
trained through religious conversion or
secular education. On the other hand,
it also rejects theories that consider the
human being entirely as a product of
society, and claim that no improve-
ment is possible unless social struc-
tures, especially those related to politi-
cal and economic power, are changed
first. There are too many examples of
participation by the “righteous” and
the “highly trained” in the structures
of oppression to allow any objective
observer of social processes to accept
proposals of change based entirely on
the redemption of the individual with-
out direct attention to social forces and
structures. At the same time, history
has already shown the evils of systems
that deny individual freedom and de-
rive their moral and social codes from
a perception of the necessity for change
in the structure of power, a change
their proponents believe should be
achieved at any cost.

The Ruhi Institute tries to under-
stand the processes of the transfor-
mation of human society in terms of a far
more complex set of interactions be-
tween two parallel developments:
namely, the transformation of the
individual, and the deliberate creation of
the structures of a new society. More-
over, just as it does not view the human
being as a mere product of interactions
with nature and society, it does not
identify structural change only with
political and economic processes.
Rather, it sees the necessity of change
in all structures—mental, cultural, sci-
entific and technological, educational,
economic, and social—including a
complete change in the very concepts
of political leadership and power. It is
understood that individuals, all of
whom possess a more or less developed
spiritual nature, may be illuminated by
divine teachings, even under the influ-
ence of the most oppressive social
forces. These individuals, then, by no
means perfected, try to walk the path of
social transformation, a path which,
nevertheless, is not one of individual
salvation but one which implies a con-
stant effort to create and strengthen
the institutions of a new social order.
These new institutions, even when de-
signed perfectly, may not function
perfectly at first, but they do make it
possible for an increasing number of
human beings to walk further the path
of spiritual growth and transforma-
tion. This continuous interaction be-
tween the parallel processes of the
spiritualization of the individual and
the establishment of new social struc-
tures describes the only dependable
path of social change, one that avoids
both complacency and violence and
does not perpetuate the cycles of op-
pression and illusory freedom that hu-
manity has experienced in the past.

According to this vision of social
change, the Ruhi Institute directs its
present efforts to developing human
resources within a set of activities that
conduce to spiritual and intellectual
growth but are carried out in the con-
text of each individual's contribution
to the establishment of new struc-
tures—for now, mostly in villages and
rural areas.

4. Yet another important element of
the conceptual framework of the Ruhi
Institute is the concept of participa-
tion. Although by now most programs
concerned with development and
change accept the importance of par-
ticipation by the local community in its
own path of development, and most
try to avoid imposing their own pro-
jects and ideas, there usually is little
clarity and agreement as to the nature,
form and extent of this participation.
The Ruhi Institute, following the ideas
progressively more complex to include stories and memorization of instructive quotations. The acts of service become activities that begin with simple activities such as visiting a person which might consist of songs, stories and memorization of instructive quotations. The acts of service become progressively more complex to include
driven by the vision of a new world order that will embody in all its structures and processes the fundamental principle of the unity of the human race.

6. At the Ruhi Institute, the design and implementation of educational activities are always guided by a profound conviction in the basic nobility of the human being. The Bahá'í writings state:

Man is the Supreme Talisman. Lack of a proper education hath, however, deprived him of that which he doth inherently possess. Through a word proceeding out of the mouth of God he was called into being; by one word more he was guided to recognize the Source of his education; by yet another word his station and destiny were safeguarded. The Great Being saith: Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom.

Education, then, is not simply seen as the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills, but also in terms of the development of vast and powerful potentialities inherent in the very nature of every human being. Again, the development of these potentialities and talents, which is considered a God-given right and responsibility of the individual, attains fruition when it is pursued in the spirit of service to humanity and in the context of creating a new world order.

Each participant in the programs of the Ruhi Institute acts as a student in certain educational activities, and as a tutor in others. The Institute, then, uses the term "collaborator" to refer to all who take part in its programs. Based on the conditions and the needs of the population served by the Institute, courses are designed along a series of "paths of service" which a collaborator follows according to personal interests and capacities. At the beginning of each path of service, collaborators mostly learn and develop new skills. Later on, they participate in courses that prepare them to act as tutors of the earlier courses, thus creating a unique and dynamic environment for the development of human resources. The courses that have been designed, or are in the process of being developed and tested, now fall along four paths of service, as shown in the following diagram:

The first path shown on the diagram, called "Basic Deepening," is followed by all collaborators at the Institute. Presently, the path is divided into four levels, each comprising nine courses. The courses are organized around "acts of service" that begin with simple activities such as visiting a family to share and discuss a specific idea or teaching a simple class for children which might consist of songs, stories and memorization of instructive quotations. The acts of service become progressively more complex to include nurturing the development of village-level decision-making bodies and other community structures.

At each level, some of the nine courses are concerned with the development of relevant skills needed to carry out the acts of service. Others address spiritual and social topics, the understanding of which elevates the collaborator's service from mere mechanical actions to meaningful and rewarding experiences. In this respect, the Ruhi Institute attaches great importance to the following quotation from the Bahá'í writings:

One righteous act is endowed with a potency that can so elevate the dust as to cause it to pass beyond the heavens. It can tear every bond asunder, and hath the power to restore the force that hath spent itself and vanished. . . .

The next path, referred to as "Education of Children," may be chosen by the collaborator who has already studied five courses of the first level, has gained practical experience by
teaching simple children’s classes, and wants to become proficient in the education of children in a more formal setting.

While continuing with the courses of the “Basic Deepening” path, the collaborator may now decide to advance along a series of courses that begin with the curriculum for a small village kindergarten and lead gradually to the possibility of managing a village “center of excellence” that offers occasional courses to various age groups within the community.

The Ruhi kindergarten curriculum has been fully elaborated. The next curriculum, now being designed and tested, is to be offered through “centers of excellence” to older children to enrich and supplement the reading, mathematics and science instruction they receive at public primary schools.

About 20 collaborators have advanced sufficiently along this path to be successfully operating community kindergartens in various parts of Colombia.

The next parallel path, “Community Development,” is designed to develop the collaborator’s capacities as a community development worker. Participants taking the courses on this path progressively learn to promote group action in communities, especially among youth of various age groups. They also learn to promote special activities among women and to serve as resource persons for the kindergartens. In addition, they act to support and assist village-level decision-making bodies in their projects for the material and spiritual development of the community.

Participants in these courses are often young people from the villages and towns in Colombia who offer a year of service to the Ruhi Institute, living there and performing the corresponding acts of service in nearby communities, under the supervision of more experienced collaborators.

The next path, “General Studies,” is offered in conjunction with an institution named Fundación para la Aplicación y Enseñanza de las Ciencias (FUNDAEC) which, though not directly related to the Bahá’í Faith, shares many views and principles in common with it. FUNDAEC has developed an innovative educational program that includes a set of textbooks covering the entire secondary school level. The Ruhi Institute offers some of these courses on a tutorial basis to some of its collaborators who wish to complement their studies.

To illustrate the program described above, it may be useful to relate the experience of one young collaborator at the Institute, a woman who comes from a small town in the north coast region of Colombia. She began her association with the Ruhi Institute at the age of 16 when she enrolled in a two-week seminar offered in the north coast and completed the first five courses of level one, “Basic Deepening.” Following the seminar, she went on to complete more courses along the path, and soon afterward established a bi-weekly children’s class in a village near the city of Cartagena, where she was attending high school. She was helped in this work by the Bahá’í regional committee of the north coast, as well as by other collaborators of the Ruhi Institute in that area.

Over the next two years, she took part in various conferences and community development activities and continued with courses on the “Basic Deepening” path including some at the second level. After finishing high school, she decided to offer a year of service and has been at the Ruhi Institute since January 1988. During this time she has taken a one-month course for kindergarten teachers and has taken part in the courses and the practices of the “Community Development” path of service and learning. She has successfully started and guided two youth groups in a village near the Ruhi Institute and helped them in their studies and acts of service. She is now learning to serve as an adviser to another youth who has started a kindergarten, and also plans to help a group of women with their projects in another village.

When she finishes her year of service, she hopes to return to the north coast, establish herself in a small town, start a kindergarten with support from the local and regional Bahá’í committees, and help the development of nearby communities.

4.2 The Faizi Vocational Institute for Rural Women

The Faizi Vocational Institute for Rural Women seeks to create conditions for positive social change while teaching income-generating skills to women of the tribal areas of southwestern Madhya Pradesh State. It is guided and supported by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of India and also receives funding for its programs from the State of Madhya Pradesh and the government of India. The Institute provides a residential learning environment in which rural women can develop their spiritual and intellectual capacities and learn useful crafts.

Concepts

The Faizi Vocational Institute for Rural Women shares the basic concepts of social change and development which have been explained in the section on the Ruhi Institute. These include a perception that the world is in a stage of transition to a more stable, cooperative and mature condition and that development happens through parallel, complementary processes of individual transformation and the creation of new social structures. At the Faizi Institute, as at Ruhi, participation, service and expression of the inherent nobility of human nature are at the same time goals and strategies for development. In addition to these ideas, the Faizi Institute bases its activities on several other guiding principles:

1. The Bahá’í Faith considers that the advancement of women is essential for social progress and that the capacity of humanity is limited when women are not able to develop fully. The Faizi Institute believes that women who gain a sense of their innate abilities can reshape tribal societies as they bring up their children and play an economic role in the community. It is stated in the Bahá’í writings that:

   Woman’s lack of progress and proficiency has been due to her need of equal education and opportunity. Had she been allowed this equality, there is no doubt she would be the counterpart of man in ability and capacity. The happiness of mankind will be realized when women and men coordinate and advance equally, for each is the complement and helpmeet of the other.

   Promoting the equality of the sexes is considered to be the task of both men and women, and one that can be achieved fully only if the goal is shared

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by everyone. One aspect of the Institute's recruitment program is an effort to foster in male family members a desire for women's advancement.

2. Economic development and moral development are viewed as complementary and highly integrated activities. Income-generating skills can best be learned and used in a context of human dignity and honor, of trustworthiness and mutual support; hence, these values are emphasized in the Institute's program. In turn, the women's feelings of purposefulness and self-worth increase as they gain the ability to earn an income.

The achievement of social well-being requires both economic and spiritual approaches. Neither the materialist's view, which emphasizes concrete, measurable advances and considers spiritual concerns irrelevant or inappropriate in the development context, nor the mystical view of reality, which exalts material poverty, is useful for the tribal people the Institute serves. The conscientious integration of economic and moral development is especially critical in a vocational institution, as crafts training programs have often failed through corruption and a lack of trust.

3. The Institute considers that exemplary actions by individuals are an important and far-reaching source of social change. The value of a model in stimulating development has been universally acknowledged; people who see an efficient means of water supply and useful technologies in a neighboring village are motivated to acquire the same things for their own village. The value of an individual example, however, is that it helps people become aware of new possibilities within themselves. In this sense, village women who have attended the Institute make a valuable contribution to their communities as they overcome the social barriers to progress, such as a sense of hopelessness and inferiority, strict intertribal taboos, and universal discrimination against girls. The Institute values the influence of personal morality and seeks consciously to cultivate it in both staff and trainees.

Programs

The Faizi Vocational Institute for Rural Women offers courses at the Institute's main facility in Indore, and also in the villages of Jhabua and Kalanpura. Trainees are identified through the cooperative efforts of Bahá'í communities, women who are graduates of the Institute, and government functionaries, as each trainee must be proven to be below the poverty level according to local administrative records. Potential trainees are identified through a series of visits and meetings in the villages. Drama is used to attract and involve villagers. Discussions of the needs, problems, and interests of the village people are the initial focus of the meetings. In later meetings, the programs at the Institute are explained.

Residential programs at the Institute last from two weeks to four months. Each course includes learning income-generating skills, health and hygiene education, service, and spiritual and moral education. Literate trainees tutor the illiterate ones so that everyone leaves the course feeling that they are equally educated. Informal discussions each day stimulate self-expression and awaken women to world development and the establishment of peace, and to scientific thought. Useful village technologies, such as a fuel-efficient smokeless stove, are also introduced.

Income-generating skills taught at the Institute include weaving, machine-knitting, candle- and chalk-making, beadwork and other crafts. Each trainee learns the skills that are best suited to her abilities and interests. Efforts are made to help graduates market their products independently, but for some crafts, raw materials are still supplied and finished products marketed by the Institute.

The Institute does not measure its success only in the ability of its graduates to generate an income for themselves, but also in the emergence of a new consciousness of unity and human solidarity that the program seeks to foster in its participants. Women of tribes who do not normally associate with one another live and work together at the Institute. Initial reluctance to overcome untouchability taboos breaks down during the period of training, and caste prejudices are replaced by an ability to treat one another as human beings. The staff of the Institute consider this to be one of their most important contributions to the region.

4.3 The Regional Committee for Social and Economic Development in Kivu (CREDESE)

In the Kivu region of northeastern Zaire, the activities of a large number of local Bahá'í councils are supported by the Regional Committee for Social and Economic Development. With the encouragement, training, and organizational and technical assistance offered by CREDESE, at least 10,000 inhabitants of Kivu are gradually extending their capacity to uplift and transform their communities.

Concepts

1. CREDESE recognizes that successful community development requires a united community; that development takes place when people feel responsible for the welfare of their neighborhood or village, trust one another, and share a commitment to work together for its betterment. To support this inner foundation of social progress, CREDESE offers assistance only when it sees evidence of unity, self-reliance, strength, and a will and capacity for joint endeavor. Practical activities, such as establishing a learning center, are considered to be the fruit of a subtle process of developing a community will and consciousness. CREDESE works with other Bahá'í institutions to nurture communities to a condition of enthusiasm and awareness of their own capacity; once this is definitely established, communities are invited to take part in the training and other programs offered by CREDESE.

2. Another concept that shapes the work of the Committee for Social and Economic Development is the value of self-sacrifice. Social progress is considered to depend on a willingness to sacrifice one's own interests for the benefit of the community, an attitude which is fostered by religious faith. Establishing a pattern of altruism and selflessness is seen to be a long-term contribution to the region, even though it might seem to limit the number of learning centers.

3. CREDESE tries to develop a pattern of people learning from one another, in its teacher training program, in the curricula of the learning centers, and in its other activities. Everyone has ideas to contribute in a literacy class or in a discussion of a community problem, and teachers help people learn to express themselves confidently.

4. Another aspect of the community
learning centers that are assisted by CREDESE is the belief that learning should be carried into action. Literacy and other skills are not useful by themselves, but as means of understanding and improving people's lives. Volunteer teachers are taught to incorporate local challenges and needs into lessons, so that students discuss individual and community goals, hygiene, a balanced diet, and other issues while learning to read.

Programs

Training teachers for community learning centers and providing support and encouragement to those learning centers is a major focus of CREDESE's activity. One hundred-two learning centers were reported in October 1987. According to the most recent reports, there are 2,500 participants. Women and girls comprise 73 percent of the learners, and 27 percent are not Bahá'ís.

CREDESE does not actively solicit local Bahá'í councils to establish learning centers; it waits for the local councils to choose this action and demonstrate the determination and ability to complete it. A local community that clearly wants to establish a learning center and is united in this ambition, that is already conducting regular activities and showing patterns of mutual support, is allowed to send people to the teacher training program. Trainees must represent a local community, must promise to teach as volunteers, and their community must provide the means for their support during training.

The training program is mobile: the teacher-trainers travel to the rural areas, and the training session for a cluster of communities is hosted by one local Bahá'í council. This is far less expensive than bringing the trainees into the town of Bukavu, and it also gives responsibility for making the physical arrangements to a local Bahá'í council rather than to CREDESE staff in the town. Two-week training sessions, held at intervals, have been found to be effective.

Consultation is a primary method of instruction, in both teacher-training and the learning centers, as adult learners know many things that the teacher does not know. This method helps teachers and learners understand each other better, and creates unity among

Community learning centers in the Kivu region have stimulated other endeavors. Several communities have built local meeting halls in order to have a place to hold classes. The local council of Kaniola has propagated and distributed seeds of improved crop varieties to 57 other local councils; foods with higher protein content than the traditional manioc are also being adopted in some communities. Several local councils have joined together to rebuild and manage unused health centers, to build latrines in the region's markets, and to improve water supply through building water catchments. Cooperative income-generating activities are also common.

4.4. The Guaymi Cultural Center

The Guaymi Cultural Center promotes the education of the Guaymi Indians of Panama and seeks to recuperate and strengthen their culture. Located in Boca de Soloy and Boca del Monte and extending to other localities, the complex includes a training institute, a radio station, a facility for culture and folklore festivals, and outreach activities in approximately 50 communities. The Cultural Center's activities are mainly conducted by the Guaymi people. The idea for the Center was born in a series of intensive consultations among Guaymi Bahá'ís in 1982, and it has been established through their systematic implementation of that vision, with collaboration from their Panamanian Bahá'í compatriots.

The development strategies of the Guaymi Center are similar to those elaborated in the three programs cited above. A distinguishing feature of the Cultural Center is that education for service to others is seen as a means for the empowerment of an indigenous people.

Concepts

1. The fundamental concept motivating the Guaymi Cultural Center is that an indigenous people can use education to take their future into their own hands. Cultivating a unified vision of their destiny as a people, becoming literate, providing for the education of their children, transmitting and affirming their cultural heritage in language, dance, music and art—all are means by which the Guaymi people are rising above the recent historical circumstances of their lives. Through education, the potential that is latent in the people becomes manifest; through the acquisition of knowledge, the people are enabled to create new possibilities for themselves.

The work of the Cultural Center is reversing a period of cultural decline that has seen the Guaymi language and traditions gradually being forgotten, but the Guaymis do not follow this new path only for their own benefit. They believe that their actions can provide a valuable model to non-Indian society. This vision of the destiny of indigenous peoples is expressed in the Bahá'í writings:

*Attach great importance to the indigenous population of America... these Indians, should they be educated and guided, there can be no doubt that they will become so illumined as to enlighten the whole world.*

2. To achieve the goal of developing a progressive Guaymi culture, it is understood that the revival of the Guaymi language and cultural traditions is not in itself sufficient. Following their vision of the role of indigenous people in rehabilitating human society, the Guaymis are trying to create a new culture that will enable them to advance as a people and to help others. Thus, they are incorporating into their plans elements of other cultures which are useful to them, such as schools, a radio station and a number of other technologies. They are also eliminating certain aspects of their traditional culture which they have determined are not conducive to progress, such as assigning an inferior position to women.

3. Another fundamental concept is the belief that the unity of the Guaymi people is a source of strength and a cause of their progress. The evolution of a common vision of the destiny of the Guaymi people, involving greater and greater numbers in this discourse, is one purpose of the Cultural Center. The goal of this endeavor is the collective education of a people, which complements and enables the education of individuals.

Programs

Training programs enable people to follow a path of service as members of regional and local councils, as teachers, and as community helpers. Some
of these training programs, which have been held for more than five years, are actually adapted from the programs offered by the Ruhi Institute. As a result of a regular and consistent training process, almost all teachers, administrators, community workers and radio staff are Guaymis. Nine community learning centers are now functioning in the area, taught by individuals who were trained at the center. Regional and local affairs are also managed by men and women who received training for service at the Center.

Family education programs, which bring family units together to learn about child development, science, health, nutrition and agriculture, as well as spiritual and moral topics, are regular programs of the Institute which constitute an essential component of the total complex.

Radio, which has been seen as a high-technology instrument of cultural domination, has been transformed by the Guaymis into a means of affirming and strengthening their culture. The radio station, broadcasting at 1 kw from Boca del Monte, with feed-in from the substation at Boca de Soloy, serves as a voice for the people. It reinforces literacy and child education programs in the learning centers, and broadcasts news, folklore, legends and music in the Guaymi language.

Decisions about the establishment and progress of the Cultural Center have been the product of many months of serious and intense consultation. Hundreds of people have gathered from the entire Guaymi region to contribute to these discussions. Native councils, which seek to involve all the people in the area in consultation about their collective destiny, are held periodically. Folklore festivals bring people together and reinforce cultural traditions. Special festivals for children transmit cultural knowledge and skills to a new generation.

4.5 Radio Bahá’í Ecuador

Radio Bahá’í Ecuador broadcasts in Quechua and Spanish on medium wave and shortwave from Otavalo in the highlands of Ecuador. Serving primarily the indigenous Quechua communities in the area, the goals of the station are to promote education, the delivery of social services, and the dissemination of basic development information; to promote and maintain the traditional culture of the people, and to serve as a voice for the community, enabling villagers within a 50-mile radius to exchange information, make announcements and share news about important activities and events in the region.

Concepts
At Radio Bahá’í, radio technology and the methodology of participatory media are seen as highly effective means to achieve the goals for developmental education described in the previous case studies. The following concepts have been especially important in the evolution of Radio Bahá’í:

1. Recognizing the deep and pervasive effects of ethnic prejudice on economic and social life, Radio Bahá’í has sought to restore a sense of confidence and dignity regarding Quechua culture. The elimination of prejudice and its effects has been a goal and strategy in the work of Radio Bahá’í. The station has consistently presented a model of the Quechua community to counteract the subtle perceptions that seek to limit the capacity of indigenous people.

2. The preservation and promotion of indigenous culture is considered by Radio Bahá’í to be vital not only for the well-being of indigenous peoples, but also for the country as a whole. By supporting traditional art forms and emphasizing Andean music and the Quechua language, Radio Bahá’í lends stability and force to elements of culture that have been in decline. This is seen to be a significant contribution to the area; it also enhances the impact of the educational and developmental programming of the station.

3. Radio Bahá’í considers participation of the community as essential for its success as a communication medium. It seeks to make itself accessible to the community it serves, and actively solicits the participation of the people of the Otavalo area.

Programs
Radio Bahá’í broadcasts at least half of its programs in Quechua, the first Ecuadorian radio station to do so. The staff of the station are almost all drawn from the immediate area around Otavalo; many are Quechuans. All of the staff, women and men, literate and illiterate, are trained to use all of the station's equipment, and to prepare their own programs.

A high percentage of the programming of Radio Bahá’í is music. Traditional Andean music predominates. Some of the music is obtained from recordings of the station's annual festivals of traditional music, "Nucanchic Tono" (Our Music). This festival is now one of the largest festivals of indigenous music in all of South America. An annual children's cultural festival organized by Radio Bahá’í, "Guaguaman tag Guaguapag" (By the Children for the Children), develops an appreciation of the various Ecuadorian cultures among school children. Special events such as sports competitions are frequently sponsored.

News programs on Radio Bahá’í are designed to enable villagers to communicate important local events to one another. A typical local news program will include items about lost children, lost identification papers, lost livestock, community dances, and community work parties; more than 2,000 such personal messages are brought to the station each year. The news program serves many of the communication needs of the audience, and, because of its popularity, functions as an effective vehicle for the dissemination of development-oriented messages.

One of the most successful programs produced by Radio Bahá’í was "Tarquoyay" (The Thought of the Farmer), whose goal was to express the needs of the mountain farmers and herdsmen, and to provide answers to those needs. The project staff visited villages in the area and invited people to talk about their concerns, and their comments were tape-recorded. Farmers from a number of communities were thus able to share their ideas with one another. Two of the project staff, a village woman and an elderly farmer, moderated the discussions as they were taped in the villages and introduced the edited program when it was broadcast, incorporating answers supplied by agricultural extension experts.

Other programs of Radio Bahá’í promote the role of women in community life and the education of children. Another popular program, "Tulpa Muyundi" (Around the Hearth), deals with the home. In addition to information on environmental health, personal hygiene, nutrition and other topics, the program includes music and segments recorded in the villages.

October 1988
Who can buy or sell the sky, the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them?

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man.

The white man’s dead forget the country of their birth when they go to walk among the stars. Our dead never forget this beautiful earth, for it is the mother of the red man. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters; the deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadows, the body heat of the pony, and man—all belong to the same family.

So when the Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land, he asks much of us. The Great Chief sends word he will reserve a place so that we can live comfortably to ourselves. He will be our father and we will be his children. So we will consider your offer to buy our land. But it will not be easy. For this land is sacred to us.

The shining water that moves in the streams and rivers is not just water but the blood of our ancestors. If we sell you land, you must remember that it is sacred and that each ghostly reflection in the clear water of the lakes tells of events and memories in the life of my people. The water’s murmur is the voice of my father’s father.

The rivers are our brothers, they quench our thirst. The rivers carry our canoes, and feed our children. If we sell you our land, you must remember, and teach your children, that the rivers are our brothers, and yours, and you must henceforth give the rivers the kindness you would give any brother.

We know that the white man does not understand our ways. One part of the land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs. The earth is not his brother, but his enemy, and when he has conquered it, he moves on. He leaves his father’s grave, and his children’s birthright is forgotten. He treats his mother, the earth, and his brother, the sky, as things to be bought, plundered, sold like sheep or bright beads. His appetite will devour the earth and leave behind only a desert.

I do not know. Our ways are different from your ways. The sight of your cities pains the eyes of the red man. But perhaps it is because the red man is a savage and does not understand.

There is no quiet place in the white man’s cities. No place to hear the unfurling of leaves in spring, or the rustle of an insect’s wings. But perhaps it is because I am a savage and do not understand. The clatter seems only to insult the ears. And what is there to life if a man cannot hear the lonely cry of the whippoorwill or the arguments of the frogs around a pond at night? I am a red man and do not understand. The Indian prefers the soft sound of the wind darting over the face of a pond, and the smell of the wind itself, cleansed by a midday rain, or scented with the piñon pine.

The air is precious to the red man, for all things share the same breath—the beast, the tree, the man, they all share the same breath. The white man does not seem to notice the air he breathes. Like a man dying for many days, he is numb to the stench. But if we sell you our land, you must remember that the air is precious to us, that the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports. The wind that gave our grandfather his first breath also receives his last sigh. And if we sell you our land, you must keep it apart and sacred, as a place where even the white man can go to taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow’s flowers.

So we will consider your offer to buy our land. If we decide to accept, I will make one condition: the white man must treat the beasts of this land as his brothers.

I am a savage and I do not understand any other way. I have seen a thousand rotting buffaloes on the prairie, left by the white man who shot them from a passing train. I am a savage and I do not understand how the smoking iron horse can be more important than the buffalo that we kill only to stay alive.

You must teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of our grandparents. So that they will respect the land, tell your children that the earth is rich with the lives of our kin. Teach your children what we have taught our children, that the earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves.
The world

Queen praises Lesotho Bahá’ís on peace

About 75 people attended an award ceremony last June 25 honoring the winners of an essay contest for high school students co-sponsored by the Bahá’í community of Lesotho and the Lesotho Alliance of Women, both of whom received the United Nations’ “Peace Messenger” award for their work during the International Year of Peace, 1986.

The contest theme was “What Peace Means to Me.”

Queen ‘Mamohato of Lesotho spoke to those at the ceremony, praising the Bahá’ís for their contributions to world peace, mentioning Bahá’u’lláh by name, and quoting from “The Promise of World Peace.”

The Maseru Bahá’í children’s class then performed a play about barriers to peace, based on the peace statement. Their original song, “We Want Peace,” was well-received, and an encore was requested following the ceremony.

The children presented special necklaces made from origami “peace cranes” to Her Majesty the Queen and to the top three prize-winners.

They also presented bookmarks to each guest at the event. Each was decorated with one of the paper peace cranes and included a quotation from the Writings: “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.”

Zambia

Zambia’s head of state, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, accepts a copy of ‘The Promise of World Peace’ from a member of the Spiritual Assembly of Ndola during an International Trade Fair held recently in that city.

The event was covered in detail on Radio Lesotho and on the front page of the national English-language newspaper.

Brilliant Star from afar!

Bahá’í education is most often on the minds of young parents, but even if you are not a parent or if your children are grown, you can support education by giving Brilliant Star magazine to a Bahá’í school in Africa or Asia.

Brilliant Star presents Bahá’í teachings, history and belief through art, stories, song and poetry. It has a readership of children who live all across the world.

Many Bahá’í children in Africa and Asia learn English in school, but few have many books or magazines to call their own. And finding American dollars to purchase a magazine subscription is almost impossible.

Bahá’ís in the U.S. who want to obtain gift subscriptions to Brilliant Star for Bahá’í schools, teachers or libraries are connected by Bahá’í Subscriber Service from lists sent by National Spiritual Assemblies around the world. At the top of the current list are 10 regional libraries in Zaire whose National Spiritual Assembly writes: “We were most interested in your offer of (gift) issues of Brilliant Star and after having reviewed this magazine we feel that it can be of valuable use to our community.”

A one-year overseas subscription to Brilliant Star is $15 ($28 for two years). You can send your gift subscription to Subscriber Service, Bahá’í National Center, Wilmette, IL 60091, or phone 312-869-9039 for more information.
New Zealand

The Hon. Russell Marshall, New Zealand’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, convened a meeting on human rights last June 29 in Wellington to which were invited representatives from about 35 organizations including the Bahá’í Faith.

After expressing her appreciation for the meeting, the Bahá’í representative spoke about the need to raise human rights issues to the level of principle.

The meeting further enhanced the government’s awareness of the broad commitment of Bahá’ís to human rights and helped foster good relations with like-minded groups.

Others at the meeting included four members of Parliament, two representatives from the United Nations and Commonwealth divisions of Foreign Affairs, and the deputy secretary for Foreign Affairs.

India

Representatives from 13 State Bahá’í Councils and one State Teaching Committee gathered last August 29 in Lucknow, India, for an “emotion-filled” national conference.

All four Counsellors resident in India as well as eight members of the National Spiritual Assembly and 17 Auxiliary Board members were among the 98 people taking part in the conference, which was hosted by the Spiritual Assembly of Lucknow with help from the State Bahá’í Council of Uttar Pradesh.

An appeal was made by the National Assembly that more State Bahá’í Councils in India become financially self-sufficient. The response was a pledge by five Councils to provide for their own budgetary needs.

Now, in addition to the self-sufficiency states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Orissa and Gujarat, the States of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana have declared themselves financially independent of the National Assembly.

The State Bahá’í Council of India’s Madhya Pradesh State informed the National Spiritual Assembly in September that a mass teaching project in the Morena district had led to the enrollment of 10,000 new believers, the majority of whom are from the educated population such as doctors, engineers and school teachers.

Helping to carry out an extension teaching goal of the Bahá’í House of Worship in India, Mr. Gopi, a guide at the Temple, undertook a teaching trip last September to Kerala.

The 86 enrollments that resulted were especially significant in that half of that number were women, among whom were seven tourists from the Lakshadweep Islands, a territory off the southwestern coast of India comprised of 20 islands which had not yet been opened to the Faith.

Venezuela

One hundred-twenty people were enrolled in the Faith in Coro, Venezuela, the capital of Falcon State, during the first two days of a 20-day teaching campaign begun last August in response to the Ridván message from the Universal House of Justice.

Bophuthatswana

The planning and execution of an intensive teaching campaign in Lefaralikhile village in the Phokeng region of Bophuthatswana was managed entirely by the local Bahá’ís and is self-supporting.

So far, seven people have embraced the Faith and a “reawakening” is taking place among many Bahá’ís who have not taken an active part in the community in recent years.

The campaign was a result of consultation at a meeting last summer among Counsellor Lucretia Mancho Warren, the National Spiritual Assembly of Bophuthatswana, Auxiliary Board members, and the National Teaching Committee.

It was decided to make “entry by troops” the goal of the country’s teaching efforts, and four regions were chosen as target areas.

Phokeng, which has the largest Bahá’í population in Bophuthatswana, accepted the challenge and set about organizing the teaching campaign in its region.

As news of the campaign spread, Bahá’ís from many parts of the country came to pick up new ideas and relay them to their home communities.

Thailand

Pictured are some of the Bahá’ís in Thailand’s Site 2 North refugee camp who dressed in t-shirts and other colorful garments to celebrate the Chinese new year. They made a dragon and visited people’s homes and the Chinese Association office in the Site 2 South camp.
Australia

The Bahá'í Faith has been chosen as one of the religions to be permanently represented in a new multi-faith resource center in Melbourne, Australia.

The Bahá'ís of Melbourne have supported the center for the past two and one-half years, and were recently instrumental in drawing up a constitution to legally incorporate and register the center.

Based on a model set up by a Roman Catholic nun, Sister Mary Hall of Birmingham, England, the center is supported by a grant from the Office of Multi-Cultural Affairs of the Department of the Prime Minister.

Its aims include promoting an awareness and understanding of the religious communities within Australia, and reporting to the government strategies and options for promoting inter-faith understanding.

Eight faiths are presently represented: Aboriginal (Koori), Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh.

The Minister of Education in New South Wales has approved a request by the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia to offer special religious instruction in schools within that state.

A notice of the decision was published last June 9 in the Education Gazette.

The Bahá'ís of Wodonga, Victoria, Australia, planned a "Discover Bahá'í Day" at the local Continuing Education Center. The one-day course in the Faith was arranged at the request of the Center and was advertised in the newspaper, in schools and on notice boards.

Despite the fact that only two people wished to enroll, the course was held anyway. Within 18 months, both of those people had enrolled in the Faith.

International Community

The Bahá'í International Community took part last September 21 in a round table conference entitled "Together for Peace: An NGO Agenda for the Future" which was held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Bahá'í representative, Giovanni Ballerio, contributed ideas from the peace statement that were well-received.

That same day, at a ceremony commemorating the International Year of Peace, certificates were presented to the 1988 winners of the "Peace Messenger Award" which recognizes the contributions of organizations to the promotion of international peace.

Among those receiving the award was the Bahá'í community of Belgium. The award was accepted on its behalf by Mr. Ballerio.

Philippines

A teaching campaign begun last July among the Negritos tribes on the island of Guimaras in the Philippines has resulted in the enrollment of a chief, his wife, and 15 other members of the Aetas tribal group.

The ongoing campaign was planned by the Spiritual Assembly of Iloilo on the neighboring island of Panay, with help from the National Teaching Committee.

The four-member teaching team is supported by other Bahá'ís from Iloilo who visit Guimaras on a rotating basis.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Philippines has established six radio programs, thus achieving an important goal of the national community.

The programs, ranging in length from 30-45 minutes, are broadcast weekly to several areas of the country.

Panama

Students taking part in a drawing contest sponsored by Radio Bahá'í of Panama to commemorate the International Day of Peace work at their desks at a school in Chiriqui Province. This competition, along with another for painting, was conducted in all the schools in Chiriqui and has been added to the athletics competition this year as another event with which to celebrate the International Day of Peace.

On June 12, the 40th anniversary of the World Health Organization (WHO) was commemorated at the Guaymi Cultural Centre in Soloy, Panama.

The theme of the Bahá'í-sponsored day-long event was health, focusing specifically on nutrition and preventive medicine.

An article about the event appeared June 26 in La Estrella de Panama.
Fiji

Counsellors Violette Haake and Tinai Hancock of Australasia, representing the Bahá'í International Community, and 14 other Bahá'í women from 11 Pacific islands attended the fourth South Pacific Commission Women's Affairs Conference last September 17-23 in Suva, Fiji.

"For the first time," Counsellor Hancock reported, "Pacific Bahá'í women, each appointed by her National Spiritual Assembly, participated officially as representatives of their Bahá'í communities in a Pacific regional conference."

Counsellor Hancock was the only Bahá'í representative at the three previous conferences, attending on behalf of the BIC's South Pacific Commission.

Other official delegates to the conference were Pacific Island women representing governmental and non-governmental organizations. Nineteen Pacific countries were represented by 36 delegates.

Malaysia

A seminar entitled "Toward a Safer Society," held last June 4-5 in Malaysia, was organized by the National Bahá'í Women's Committee and Family Life Committee.

The seminar, aimed at increasing the awareness of problems of violence against women and children, drew praise from the National Council of Women's Organizations which hailed the Bahá'í Women's Committee as its most effective affiliate.

Ten new local Spiritual Assemblies have recently been formed in West Malaysia, raising the total number to 83.

These successes are a result of the inspiration of the Universal House of Justice's Ridván message which was read at a meeting last August of the West Malaysian National Committees, State Teaching Committees, and local Spiritual Assemblies.

A number of new localities have been opened to the Faith recently in the Song district of Sarawak, East Malaysia.

One hundred-fifty people have been enrolled and six new local Spiritual Assemblies have been elected.

Grenada

Pictured are many of the 62 Bahá'ís who took part in the second Regional Youth Conference for the Caribbean last August 12-14 in Grenada. Consultation centered on the progress of youth activities in the Caribbean, future plans, and reports from the 24 members of the "Sparks for Peace" youth teaching project.

Four young Bahá'ís, part of the Mona Teaching Project in Grenada, met recently with the country's governor-general (center) after presenting him with 10 copies of the peace statement for his office. Fifty Bahá'ís from 19 islands took part in the Mona project, the second inter-Caribbean Bahá'í Youth Campaign, last July and August.

Haiti

In a cable dated September 29, the National Spiritual Assembly of Haiti "joyously" announced the results of the first phase of its summer teaching campaign.

Included was the news that 2,371 adults, youth and children had declared their faith in Bahá'u'lláh.

The second phase was to emphasize consolidation of the new believers with an eight-day deepening institute planned for new Bahá'ís.
The Bahá'í Home in Wilmette, Illinois, observes its 30th anniversary.

India's House of Worship welcomes more than 200,000 in November.

Two perspectives on the Feast: one personal, the other descriptive.

How the United Nations works to combat drug use and illicit traffic.

Around the world: News from Bahá'í communities all over the globe.

Bahá'í News is published monthly 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 the Periodicals Office, Bahá'í National Center, Wilmette, IL 60091, U.S.A. Changes of address should be reported to Management Information Systems, Bahá'í National Center. Please attach mailing label. Subscription rates within the U.S.: one year, $12; two years, $20. Outside the U.S.: one year, $14; two years, $24. Foreign air mail: one year, $20; two years, $40. Payment in U.S. dollars must accompany the order. Second class postage paid at Wilmette, IL 60091. Copyright 1989, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States. World rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A.
United States

Bahá'í Home marks 30th year

Thirty years ago this month, on February 1, 1959, the Bahá'í Home for the Aged, “the first Dependency of the Mother Temple of the West in Wilmette, Illinois,” opened its doors to the public.

The building of the Home was designated a goal of the Ten Year Crusade by the beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, who died in November 1957, one month before construction was actually begun.

The cornerstone was laid in a formal ceremony on April 5, 1958, with more than 60 people present including the president of the Wilmette Village Board and William Campbell Wright, the architect of the Bahá'í Home.

On that occasion, the Hand of the Cause of God Horace Holley, who was at that time secretary of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly, said:

"The Bahá'í Home fulfills the meaning and power of divine worship in service to our fellow-men. For this institution is not restricted to members of the Bahá'í Faith but opens its doors to all persons, without any religious discrimination."

The Bahá'í Home, contemporary in design and primarily of brick with stone and wood trim, is situated on 3/4-acre of land about three blocks west of the House of Worship.

It is designed to provide living quarters for 18 residents and an administrative staff of three.

The building is essentially U-shaped, surrounding a private garden area open to the south which contains a number of oak trees in addition to space for formal landscaping and flower or vegetable gardening.

Landscaping was planned and overseen by Hilbert Dahl and L. Wyatt Cooper, who already had received praise for their design of the gardens surrounding the House of Worship.
Entrance to and exit from the building is made simple by numerous widely separated doorways at grade level. Off-street parking is provided for visitors, with direct entrance into the building.

All rooms are on one floor, slightly above sidewalk level. There are no stairs for residents to climb.

Sleeping rooms are arranged to accommodate 20 individuals. Each pair of rooms shares a connecting toilet room, and there is a lavatory in each room.

Two of the rooms have a private half-bath, with toilet and lavatory. Shower and tub facilities for men and women are provided in bathrooms off the main corridor.

Each of the living rooms reflects, through photographs, nicknacks and books, the life and tastes of its occupant.

A spacious lounge, or living-dining room, has windows facing south on the garden side. This room has a high-beamed ceiling and large fireplace, and is attractively and cheerfully furnished. A large-screen television is there for the enjoyment of residents.

Off the common room is a smaller lounge area that serves as both a library and a room for private meetings of residents and their guests.

A well-equipped kitchen adjoins the administrative offices which also face the entrance foyer.

Other features of the Bahá'í Home include a large hobby room and an open porch off the residents' private corridor.

To acquaint the residents of Wilmette and nearby communities with the purposes and services of the Home, an
Residents of the Bahá’í Home in Wilmette gather for dinner in the
"Open House" that was held January 25, 1959, one week before it began operations.

Despite a heavy snowstorm that made travel hazardous, nearly 200 people came that day to see and appreciate the Bahá’í Home.

At the ceremony the previous April, a copper box was placed within the concrete cornerstone. The box contains a number of documents and photographs relating to the Faith as well as sand from the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, quartz used in building the House of Worship in Wilmette, and an orange from a tree in the courtyard of the House of the Báb in Shiráz, Iran.

The land for the Bahá’í Home was purchased, and construction was carried out, by the Temple Trustees.

Since a home for the aged operates under special regulations, the Bahá’í Home is incorporated with a Board of Directors consisting of the nine members of the National Spiritual Assembly. This corporate body holds title to the land and building, operates the Home, and maintains its own records including a bank account in the name of the Bahá’í Home.

The general requirements for admission to the Home are that the applicant be older than 65 years, in reasonably good health and able to attend to his or her own personal needs.

Applicants must be of good character and able to integrate happily into the group that is living at the Home.

Residents are able to take part if they wish in a wide range of activities including exercise sessions, films, lectures, special classes, games, and field trips.

Residents are also encouraged to continue their social life with friends and family outside the Home.

As of December, two Bahá’ís—Sophie Loeding and Kay Walker—were living at the Bahá’í Home.

Miss Loeding, who will celebrate her 100th birthday in 1990 and has been at the Home for 24 years, became the first full-time employee at the Bahá’í National Center when she went to work as Mr. Holley’s secretary in 1941.

Over the years the Bahá’í Home has given hundreds of elderly persons from Wilmette and the surrounding area, most of whom were not Bahá’ís, a loving, caring and comfortable place in which to live.

As the National Spiritual Assembly said of the home in an article in Bahá’í News (October 1958):

“What the American believers are accomplishing in this unique project is to demonstrate to the public the Bahá’í principles of the oneness of mankind and humanitarian service.

“The Bahá’í Home makes no discrimination of race, religion or nationality. It is humanitarian in a profound meaning of that word, because it enables its guests to overcome the sense of loneliness and uselessness in this ruthless, materialistic age—forms of spiritual poverty no less grievous than lack of material wealth.

“...the Bahá’í Home, in essence, is a far-reaching humanitarian experiment. It is in no way to be compared with those institutions which give medical and other care including burial to inmates who have turned over their entire fortune.”

Concentration is the name of the game as residents of the Bahá’í Home enjoy Bingo, one of the many activities available to them on a regular basis.
Indi

Temple has a busy November

November 1988

Every day at the House of Worship was a busy day. As the gates opened at 9:30 a.m., a ceaseless flow of students, Indian and foreign tourists, and local visitors continued coming throughout the day to see the marvelous piece of architecture, and to learn of the purpose behind such a magnificent construction.

A significant development is that the number of youngsters and seekers is growing. This month we had more than 200,000 visitors, of which about 25,000 were students from 250 schools and nine colleges. More than 50,000 information pamphlets in Hindi, English, 10 regional languages of India and nine foreign languages were distributed and 25,000 students carried the prayer cards. Teachers and interested persons were given an additional pamphlet carrying the Bahá’í message.

A total of 236 seekers registered their names and addresses for further information. In fact, people in the hundreds have not only admired the beauty and cleanliness of the vast surroundings but have understood the purpose for which the House of Worship was built. Some of these visitors are repeating their visits with family members, and in a way they are themselves guiding members of their families, giving basic information which they received on their earlier visits. They now express their desire to hear about Bahá’u’lláh and His Teachings. To give one such example: An Indian reader in the Russian language at Varanasi University said that he had at last found the Faith which he had longed for since his younger days. He offered to reserve a room in his house at Varanasi for Bahá’í books including The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh for his daily reading.

The 171st anniversary of the Birth of Bahá’u’lláh was observed in a quiet but joyous atmosphere. The Muhájur Gate and the House of Worship itself were tastefully decorated with flowers of one color, which kept the happy spirit alive for several days. The enchanting rendering of prayers by the House of Worship choir touched the hearts of more than a thousand visitors who sat through the special 35-minute prayer service.

The choir also took part in an all-religion prayer meeting at Rajghat (Mahatma Gandhi’s memorial), where a volunteer organization had arranged a program dedicated to human unity and peace. More than 400 delegates including the Bahá’í delegates to the 15th International Human Unity Conference, which was held November 11-15 in New Delhi, visited the House of Worship on November 14. This was important because they represented various religions and demonstrated the unity of religions, the oneness of humanity, and the unity of God. On this occasion the Tibetan spiritual head, the Dalai Lama, was present. He sat meditating in the prayer hall for more than half an hour. Immediately afterward, the House of Worship choir chanted prayers in praise of the Almighty and for the unity of mankind.

A 27-member delegation of European Parliamentarians was accorded a warm welcome as they came to the House of Worship on a tour conducted by the government of India. They were received by all of the four Counsellors residing in India and by members of the National Spiritual Assembly of India who were meeting in New Delhi. A special prayer program and reception were arranged to mark the occasion.

The head of the European delegation, Mr. Giumarra of Italy, was moved by the warm reception given to its members, and remarked, “On behalf of the Parliamentary Delegation for Relations with South Asia, I would like to thank the director and administrators for the warm welcome to the Bahá’í Temple. As you know, the European Parliament is quite interested in the Bahá’í Faith. This movement of intense spirituality which we saw this morning and its preaching of universal brotherhood come from the deepest springs of human nature, and the ideas of brotherhood and solidarity are in our hearts and souls. The European Parliament itself is inspired by the same values. I would like to thank you once again, and I hope that your religion and Faith grows and spreads because of the harmony which you preach. And finally, I would like to give you a small token, a medal, a copy of the ancient Greek coin where the word ‘Europe’ appears for the first time.”

The delegates were then given copies of the peace message, an information kit, and a Temple souvenir of marble with bouquets of red roses as a token of love from the worldwide Bahá’í community.

The deputy foreign minister of the USSR, Mr. Petrovsky, accompanied by Madame Petrovskaya, arrived at the House of Worship at 6:30 p.m. on November 15 and were received by Sheriar Nooreyedzan, who took them around the building, explained the significance of the lotus concept, and provided them with data on the Faith.

Among other dignitaries visiting the House of Worship in November were Mah Bow Tan, minister of trade and commerce from Singapore; Kari Daehlen, the ambassador to India from Norway; Dr. Cynthia Shephard Perry, U.S. ambassador to Sierra Leone; A.S. Albertenis Senez from the Embassy of Cuba; Orlando Fundera, president of the World Peace Council; Kurt Seibt,
President of the Solidarity Committee of the German Democratic Republic; Miroslav Niki, deputy chairman of the Czechoslovak Committee for Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America; Jindrich Novak, counselor at the Embassy of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic; S. Odon, second secretary of the Hungarian Embassy; Masaaki Sato, leader of the Japanese delegation to the International Fisheries Conference in India; Sheila Bawji Hodoui, wife of the chief of Naval staff of the Seychelles; Lady Goodall, wife of the British High Commissioner in New Delhi (accompanied by five British women who are wives of high officials from the British High Commission offices in Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta); the wife of the Turkish ambassador to India; and C.A. Chipwaila, a high police official from Malawi. Also, the speaker of the Andhra Pradesh Assembly, Mr. G. Narayana, stayed at the House of Worship for quite some time and appreciated the principles of the Faith.

Russian diplomats, officials and tourists in large numbers visited the House of Worship. Three groups of Russian tourists were briefed through their interpreters and taken on guided tours. Another group of Russians, this one composed of ballet artists, came to visit, and the leader of the group was visibly moved by the peace and serenity inside the Temple. Also, a five-member Russian television crew came and stayed in the library for quite some time. One of them wrote in the visitors' book, "The temple is a symbol of a new era of our planet." Three of them bought copies of Baha'U'llah and the New Era in Russian. One member of the Russian ballet group from Leningrad, having bought all the titles in Russian that were available for sale, wished to have "at any cost" a copy of Nabil's Narrative in Russian, which was later given to him.

Along with the Russians, visitors from China have shown an interest in the Faith. Small family groups of Chinese visitors including some dignitaries keep coming to see the House of Worship. A camera crew from China Central Television in Beijing came twice in one day to shoot a documentary on India to be shown to the Chinese people during the forthcoming visit to China by India's Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi. Members of the TV crew were offered brochures in Chinese and taken around the Temple for their filming. One crew member was so attracted that he said he wished to have the Bahá'í Faith in China. He wrote in the visitors' book: "Hope, in China, we see the same Bahá'í (Faith)." Another Chinese delegation, led by Sun Baogang, senior correspondent of Radio Beijing, visited the House of Worship and was given the Temple pamphlet in Chinese.

On November 26, a Maori gift-giving ceremony was held in the House of Worship's library. Wallace Hetaraka, a Bahá'í from New Zealand who is a renowned Maori carver, formally presented the Maori gift, which he termed a "Maori treasure," to the House of Worship. This gift from the Bahá'ís of New Zealand is a lovely example of the tribal art of wood carving. Symbolically, it is significant because Mr. Hetaraka has converted a weapon (a taiaha) into an instrument for farming (a ko), an occupation through which peace and prosperity could be established. This symbolic conversion is in accordance with the well-known biblical prophecy that "swords shall be turned into ploughshares."

The ceremony turned out to be a cultural feast as Mr. and Mrs. Hetaraka, dressed in traditional Maori style and following the "elder," Mrs. Wainu George, entered the library, responding in the traditional way to a call given by the hosts. The function was attended and addressed by the acting High Commissioner of New Zealand, Graeme Waters, who was also Chief Guest. Also present were the High Commissioner of Singapore, members of the National and local Spiritual Assemblies, invited dignitaries, and members of the local Bahá'í community.

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Often I am overwhelmed by the realization of the privilege of being a Baha'i. A wonderful feeling of inner happiness, calm and peace overcomes my being. There are so many days during which I feel the joy of life, and am thankful to be alive. One such day is the day of the Feast.

The thought of meeting the friends in the loving atmosphere of the Feast carries me through the day, as if on the crest of a spiritual wave. I cannot hold my inner excitement; like a child preparing for his birthday party, I look forward to the evening.

Words of 'Abdu'l-Baha come to my mind throughout the day:

"As to the Nineteen Day Feast, it rejoiceth mind and heart. If this Feast be held in the proper fashion, the friends will, once in nineteen days, find themselves spiritually restored, and endowed with a power that is not of this world."

From the moment I finish work I cannot think of anything else but the Feast. I rush home, eat, and prepare myself to attend the Feast.

"If thou seekest after the light of the Kingdom, hasten undoubtedly to the meetings of the believers, in order that the rays of truth may reflect in thy heart."

There is plenty of time, but I want to be there early so that I can greet everyone as they walk in—to ask each and every one how they are, and what news they have of themselves.

As I drive to the Feast, I prepare myself mentally and spiritually:

"But when you present yourself in the meetings, before entering them, free yourselves from all that you have in your heart, free your thoughts and minds from all else save God, and speak to your heart. That all may make this a gathering of love, make it the cause of illumination, make it a gathering of attraction of the hearts, surround this gathering with the Lights of the Supreme Concourse, so that you may be gathered together with the utmost love."

"Allah'u'Abha, Allah'u'Abha, how are you?" Warm handshakes, loving smiles. I love the children; how smartly they are dressed, a credit to their parents, a credit to us all.

The hum of greetings and the sound of laughter fills the air. How I waited for this all day!

The host is busy distributing the devotional materials; we are asked to read, chant, pray.

Then there is a sudden peaceful quiet as the host begins to welcome us to the Feast. A moment of quiet readjustment as we make ourselves physically comfortable, preparing ourselves for the spiritual food we are about to receive. I close my eyes.

"When they gather in this meeting, all those present must turn their faces toward the Kingdom of Abhá, and from their hearts supplicate, invoke and entreat toward the lofty throne, beg of God's forgiveness for all shortcomings, read the teachings and arise to His service."

We partake of the heavenly food. The melody of the voices penetrates the air, and with it our very souls. The children pray. What beauty in the youthful voices of these little ones!

My spirit is refreshed by the melody of their sweet, soft voices, as if the sound originating from their lips emanates from the innermost of eternity and fills my heart with messages of love and rapture.

I do not really know where my thoughts are, but my mind is aware of the words reaching my ears. They sound as refreshing as the summer rain on my brow, as gentle as the morning breeze, as warm as the midday sun in winter.

And when a Persian prayer is chanted, tears of thankfulness gather in my eyes and my spirit is elated. I hear myself saying, "O my God, what have I ever done for you, that you remember me as you do, and have given me to drink from the ocean of your everlasting bounty?"

The Glory of Bahá'u'lláh reinforces my faith, enabling me to forget all my cares and worries, ever thankful to God. It is hard, so very hard to leave that state of peace that I do not feel I want to open my eyes. The prayers have ended but we sit motionless, wishing—if only that calm could last a little longer!

But we are called to reality by the voice of the chairman, who begins the period of consultation. The atmosphere is changed; we leave behind us the period of prayer and meditation.

"This Feast is a bringer of joy. It is the groundwork of agreement and unity. It is the key to affection and
fellowship. It diffuseth the oneness of mankind."

It is difficult at first to plunge into consultation, but gradually we warm up to it. Our burning questions are asked, topics important to our hearts are raised... we air our views, fears, hopes and plans.

The administrative part continues. The secretary patiently records the suggestions and takes notes; the chairman keeps order. At times it seems that no agreement is in sight, yet suddenly a positive motion is put, seconded, agreed upon; calm reigns.

The secretary gives his report, news is read and shared, plans are discussed: "Every meeting which is organized for the purpose of unity and concord will be conductive to changing strangers into friends, enemies into associates, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá will be present in his heart and soul with that meeting."

At last consultation has ended, and the refreshing sound of the kettle boiling is heard. The mood changes again, the end of consultation is called, and we are invited by the host to partake in refreshments.

"Each one of you must think how to make happy and pleased the other members of your Assembly, and each one must consider all those who are present as better and greater than himself, and each one must consider himself as less than the rest. Know their station as high, and think of your own station as low. Should you act and live according to these behests, know verily, of a certainty, that that Feast is the Heavenly Food. That Supper is the 'Lord's Supper;' I am the Servant of that gathering."

The room fills with the hum of chatting friends. We circulate, and everyone greets others, asking of each other's welfare, sharing news.

"The institution of the Nineteen Day Feast is unique and peerless amongst all the gatherings and the communal efforts of mankind. Its quality and the mode of its functioning show the health and virility of a Bahá'í community. From it can flow an incalculable and illimitable measure of spiritual power. The beloved Master once said that should the Bahá'ís make full use of the potentialities of the Nineteen Day Feast, they could thereby change the destinies of their town. He also said that He would be there in this gathering with the Bahá'ís.

And the converse is true. A Nineteen Day Feast held in a climate alien to the life of the Faith, divorced from the principles laid down for the conduct of such a Feast, shut out from its guiding light, becomes a venomous instrument and injures every individual Bahá'í as well as the community. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has repeatedly said that if religion becomes the cause of discord it is better to be without it. Medicine is to cure, to heal; should it aggravate a disorder, it becomes lethal. Similarly, a Nineteen Day Feast reduced to the level of a mechanical ritual or made the arena of cantankerous contention cannot but harm. It is better, far better, to be without it.

The more delicate and well-balanced an instrument, the more damaging will be the consequences of its failure. . . .

For us Bahá'ís, as stated by the Master, the Nineteen Day Feast is what the Holy Communion is for the Christian. Does a sincere Christian go to the Holy Communion to have a jolly time or to be insufferably bored? Of course not.

The Feast: a 'unique, peerless' occasion

The following article on the Nineteen Day Feast, which first appeared in the British Bahá'í Journal, is reprinted from Bahá'í News No. 413 (August 1965).

The institution of the Nineteen Day Feast is unique and peerless amongst all the gatherings and the communal efforts of mankind. Its quality and the mode of its functioning show the health and virility of a Bahá'í community. From it can flow an incalculable and illimitable measure of spiritual power. The beloved Master once said that should the Bahá'ís make full use of the potentialities of the Nineteen Day Feast, they could thereby change the destinies of their town. He also said that He would be there in this gathering with the Bahá'ís.

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Fellowship in Bahá'u'lláh

The Nineteen Day Feast, according to the direction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, is composed of three distinct parts, each one well-defined in its scope, and yet all so blended as to form one continu-
ous and unbroken process. In the art of the ballet, music, movement and decor each stands as a separate entity and yet completely merges into one indivisible unit. So are the component parts of the Nineteen Day Feast. The link and the keynote is fellowship in Bahá'u'lláh.

**Experience the unity**

Bahá’ís come to a Nineteen Day Feast not so much to partake in communal worship, to express and exchange views and ideas about the multifarious problems of their community, to associate lovingly with one another, but above all of these, supremely important and vital as they are, Bahá’ís come to a Feast in order to experience the unity unfolded by the Divine Hand of Bahá'u'lláh. A Nineteen Day Feast that fails to make this experience a blazing, throbbing reality is nothing but a mechanical performance that will serve only to blazon human frailties.

The conflicting tendencies of the world must be shed outside the doors of the Nineteen Day Feast. This does not mean either the assumption of an air of indifference or hiding behind a facade of spiritual pride and affected superiority. It only means emptying our hearts and minds to make room for the grace of Bahá'u'lláh. Otherwise a barrier wrought by our own hands will intervene between the communal character of the Feast and the Source which is to feed and sustain it.

*Must know intimately*

The first part of the Feast is devotional. Prayer must come from the depths of one's heart; otherwise it is not prayer. It is automation. The words that we use while we pray which are prayers revealed by the Founders of our Faith we must know intimately. We must be familiar with them not merely by an intelligent grasp of what they signify, but because of what they evoke from our innermost being, by the token of the deep longing response they command from our heart. When the Persian believers chant a prayer at a meeting, it is almost always a prayer that they have used in their own solitary devotions, with which they are well-acquainted. Thus their chanting is not simply giving utterance to a sweet and charming melody. They know the meaning, the import of the words. And the words take wing.

Distributing books a short while before the beginning of the devotional part of the Feast and then asking some of the friends present to read prayers or Tablets which they may never have set eyes on before is a practice which has oftentimes been followed. There are occasions, and abundant they have been, when in spite of this glaring defect, the spirit of the Feast and of those attending makes full compensation, and the devotional is raised to supreme heights. But this practice is fundamentally wrong. and there have been sad failures...

*With joy and gladness*

Another important point to bear in mind is the injunction of Bahá'u'lláh not to burden souls with lengthy recitations of scriptures. He has said: "To chant but one verse with joy and gladness is better for you than reading all the Revelations of the Omnypotent God with carelessness."

If a believer is giving a Feast, it is his or her privilege to arrange the devotional program. However, no local Spiritual Assembly is bound to observe the custom which has grown up of having one believer or more acting as hosts at a Nineteen Day Feast. The Assembly can take full charge of the devotional and have the cost of refreshments defrayed from the local funds at its disposal. There should be no rigidity of procedure in these respects.

*Creative consultation*

The second stage is usually termed "the business part" of the Feast, an appellation which can be misconstrued. It is the period of consultation. The secretary and the treasurer of the Assembly and various committees present report. The purpose of these reports is certainly not a mere enumeration of problems, resolutions and decisions. Otherwise the medium of a bulletin, a newsletter, would suffice. The underlying principle is consultation and creative consultation at that. It is a human oddity to cling to the trivial and talk ad nauseum about it. I remember a Nineteen Day Feast when a great deal was spoken about serving tea at a particular function, and tempers were frayed. A principle to uphold most conscientiously is the inalienable, the sacred right of every believer to express freely his views on questions and problems that are the topic of consultation, and to offer suggestions. But the opinions of one or two people, no matter how fervently held or how forcibly expressed, cannot be taken as the considered view of the whole Feast unless definitely voted as a recommendation that emanates from a Nineteen Day Feast. Should it fail to do so, it will have gravely compromised a fundamental principle of the Cause, and has much to answer to Bahá'u'lláh.

But the deliberations of the Nineteen Day Feast must rise above petty thoughts and obstinate hagglings. They must bypass small matters of little value. Certainly any subject that is related to the work of the Cause and the life of the community can be brought up at the Feast, but to make ponderous issues of trivialities is a grave betrayal of the purpose of the Feast. At all times this thought must be present in our minds, that consultation is a unique feature of our Faith, and that consultation is not argumentation. Creative indeed must be the consultation of a Nineteen Day Feast.

*Fellowship and love*

The third and concluding part of the Feast is of a social nature. When this stage is reached, the atmosphere of the Feast is well-established. It can be dismal and intolerably weighed down, or it can soar above the stars. And breaking bread together is an ancient and time-honored custom of mankind, symbolic of fellowship and love. In a Bahá’í Feast it transcends the flat level of custom and rite, and becomes a scintillating expression of unity.

—Hasan Balyuzi——
Combating drug abuse: a complex task

Combating drug abuse and illicit traffic is a complex task, encompassing efforts at the national, regional and international levels. The United Nations over the years has been deeply involved in those efforts, with some 20 of its bodies, programs and agencies working toward those goals.

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which has acted as the Preparatory Body for the 1987 Drug Conference (held June 17-26 in Vienna, Austria), is the central policy-making body in the United Nations system, dealing in depth with all questions relating to drug abuse control.

Established in 1946 as one of the six functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, the Commission consists of experts representing 40 Member States. It meets biennially, although in recent years it has held special sessions in alternate years. Observer Governments, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) regularly participate in its work.

The Commission helps the Economic and Social Council in supervising application of international conventions and agreements, and makes recommendations to strengthen international drug control activities, including formulation of new treaties.

The Commission has a Sub-Commission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East. Annual meetings of operational Heads of National Narcotic Law Enforcement Agencies, Far East Region (HONLEA), which coordinate mechanisms for drug law enforcement at a regional level and facilitate an exchange of information between nations, are held under its auspices.

The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), established under the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, aims to regulate the legal movement of both narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in order to limit the cultivation, production, manufacture and use of such drugs to medical and scientific purposes. To those ends, the Board administers a statistical control system for narcotic drugs and a mandatory estimates system. Data supplied by States parties and requested from other Governments enable it to ascertain that the drugs available in each country for medical purposes are accounted for at the main stages of production, manufacture and trade.

The Board’s 13 members are elected in their personal capacity by the Economic and Social Council, and must “command general confidence through their competence, impartiality and disinterestedness.” The Board maintains diplomatic dialogues with Governments, and sometimes undertakes special missions in agreement with Governments concerned. It also arranges training programs for drug control administrators from developing countries and regional training seminars. In an annual report, the Board analyzes the global drug situation, thus alerting Governments to existing and potential situations that may threaten drug control efforts.

The Board is serviced by its Vienna-based INCB Secretariat which implements Board decisions and policies, maintains a continuing dialogue between Governments and the Board, and represents the Board at meetings of United Nations organs, specialized agencies and international, regional or intergovernmental bodies.

Two other United Nations Secretariat units responsible for drug abuse control activities are also based in Vienna. The Division of Narcotic Drugs assists in the planning, implementing and coordinating of international drug control programs, and serves as a clearing-house for the dissemination and exchange of information on drug-related matters. It also advises Governments and specialized agencies on supply and demand reduction and other matters.

It also processes and drafts notifications under the international drug control treaties, publishes national legislation on drug control, and reports on information provided by Governments on the workings of the international treaties. Statistics on seizures from illicit drug traffic and on the extent, patterns and trends of drug abuse are published. Seminars on law enforcement and demand reduction approaches to drug control are organized.

Within the Division, the United Nations Narcotics Laboratory carries out and coordinates international chemical
research on drugs, identifying and analyzing substances of abuse. Scientists from developing countries are trained, and help is given to national laboratories in developing countries directly affected by the illicit drug traffic.

It has produced a portable drug identification kit—a rapid and simple color-test to identify the most commonly confiscated drugs—to assist customs and law enforcement officers. The Narcotics Laboratory also produces the Multilingual Dictionary of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances under International Control in the six official languages of the United Nations, as well as technical manuals on such topics as management of narcotics laboratories and methods for testing.

The third Secretariat unit in Vienna—the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control—was established in 1971 to aid Governments in combating the production, trafficking and use of illicit drugs by financing, through voluntary contributions, technical cooperation programs in various regions.

The programs deal with integrated rural development/crop substitution; treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts; preventive education and information; law enforcement assistance; and training and research. From 1971 through 1986 the Fund spent $182 million in 88 countries.

In its fund-raising efforts, UNFDAC ensures an early involvement of both potential donor and assistance-receiving countries in the identification of drug problems and in the formulation of projects needed for coping with them.

The Fund identifies needs and problems related to drug abuse control at the national, regional and interregional levels; establishes and maintains contacts with Governments and relevant inter- and non-governmental organizations in the enhancement of the international drug control programs; assists Governments in formulating general and specific drug control plans; and raises, from public and private sources, the resources required to carry out its program of activities.

The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs is concerned with the adverse effects of drug abuse on social development, including social disintegration and increasing criminality. The subject of drug abuse is examined every five years at United Nations Congresses on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, and is also regularly considered by the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, a standing committee of the Economic and Social Council.

The United Nations Social Defence Research Institute has carried out a four-year research survey financed by the Drug Abuse Control Fund on the interaction between criminal behavior and drug abuse and on control measures adopted in individual countries.

Other UN programs: The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is a key agent for projects financed by the United Nations Drug Abuse Control Fund in countries where serious drug problems exist. Projects deal with such problems as reducing demand for illegal drugs; crop substitution; alternative income sources; treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers; and law enforcement.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is concerned with drug abuse as it relates to the estimated 100 million "street children" worldwide. Most are in Latin America, where UNICEF is working to improve community environments and provide services for children in need.

The World Food Program (WFP) supports drug control programs through integrated rural development schemes aimed at substituting other agricultural products for the illicitly grown opium poppy. It also provides food assistance for farmers and their families in areas where crop substitution is under way.

Specialized agencies

United Nations specialized agencies are also involved in controlling drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

The World Health Organization (WHO), through its global drug dependence program, helps States in the prevention of drug-related problems, and helps determine which substances should be placed under international control. It assesses the therapeutic usefulness of particular substances in the context of public health and social problems related to their abuse. WHO also advises drug convention signatories on matters related to prescriptions, warnings on drug packages and advertising, and other measures to prevent drug abuse. It also develops guidelines and manuals on drug abuse for teachers and health professionals; compiles lists of essential drugs for basic health needs; and organizes interregional training courses for physicians on prevention of drug abuse and treatment of abusers.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) focuses on drug-related
problems in the workplace, vocational rehabilitation and social integration of drug-dependent persons. It is currently studying ways to help workers overcome drug problems. Together with WHO, the ILO is preparing a multimedia resource kit to help enterprises in developing effective responses to these problems. Through its Vocational Rehabilitation Branch, it has established a network of vocational rehabilitation advisers throughout various regions. ILO also holds training courses aimed at the vocational and social re-integration of drug-dependent persons.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) focuses on drug abuse control through public education, including teacher-training seminars, production of printed audio-visual materials, and working with media organizations to produce radio and television programs.

Increases in illegal drug traffic by sea are of major concern to the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which has worked with international organizations such as the Customs Co-operation Council and the International Chamber of Shipping to develop guidelines to combat illicit shipments. The IMO has recently compiled interim guidelines on the prevention of drug smuggling on ships engaged in international traffic, with the cooperation of the Government of the United Kingdom, the International Chamber of Shipping, and the Customs Co-operation Council.

Illegal international transport of drugs also takes place by air—in luggage, cargo, or concealed on passengers. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has determined that although the volume of drugs transported in that manner is significant, it is relatively small compared with other ways of transporting drugs. In connection with the elaboration of the new international convention on illicit drug trafficking, the ICAO is studying measures to ensure that commercial carriers are not used to transport illicit narcotics and psychotropic substances, including a system of sanctions.

Illicit transmission by mail has also increased in recent years. The Universal Postal Union (UPU) and the Customs Co-operation Council have studied measures to prevent such smuggling and encourage accession to the Nairobi Convention on the repression of customs offenses. In addition, UPU has studied procedures for national postal services to help detect the presence of narcotics or psychotropic substances in transit mail.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) crop substitution programs encourage opium and coca growers to use their land for legal crops. FAO also assists projects to raise the income level of farmers and reduce the incentive to cultivate narcotic crops. It is also studying the potential use of remote sensing and satellite-image techniques to detect illicit crops.

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is carrying out a number of drug control projects, mostly in Africa and Asia, to boost the technological capacity of developing countries to synthetically convert narcotic substances into legal pharmaceuticals. It has implemented two UNFDAC-funded agro-industrial projects aimed at providing alternative sources of income for coca farmers.

The UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs

The increasing difficulties encountered by law enforcement and other government agencies in coping with widespread and intensified illicit drug trafficking led the UN General Assembly in December 1984 (resolution 39/141) to call for a new international instrument to address "the various aspects of the problem as a whole and, in particular, those not envisaged in existing international instruments."

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs began work on the draft Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in February 1985. In February 1987, the Commission recommended that the Economic and Social Council, its parent body, establish an intergovernmental expert group to review progress so far in elaborating the convention, including proposals and comments by Governments. A progress report on the draft text was among the documents considered by the 1987 Drug Conference held in Vienna, Austria.

The draft Convention at present contains 14 articles addressing all aspects of illicit trafficking operations from clandestine production, manufacture, transportation and distribution of illegal drugs to the "laundring" of profits from illegal drug sales. The over-all objective of the new instrument is to strengthen international cooperation and coordination among customs, police and judicial bodies, providing them with guidelines to intercept illegal drug traffic at all stages.

Major innovations include draft provisions designed to facilitate the identification, tracing, freezing, seizure and forfeiture of illegal drug profits. It is expected that confiscation of drug monies would be a strong deterrent to traffickers.

The new instrument will also provide for the strengthening of extradition obligations and adequate sanctions for drug traffic offenses, as well as cooperation among countries in providing mutual legal and judicial assistance for prosecuting drug offenders.

Other provisions of the draft relate to prevention of drug smuggling through exchange of information on traffickers and a complex technique for intercepting illegal shipments, known as "controlled delivery," that involves joint efforts of countries to track a shipment along its trade route, then apprehend the parties involved in all phases of the transaction.

The draft Convention will also include measures to wipe out illegally cultivated narcotic plants and to monitor diversion of chemicals, solvents and precursors used in illicit processing or manufacture of drugs and psychotropic substances. Other provisions seek to prevent illicit traffic by sea, via commercial carriers, through the mails or through free trade zones and ports.
‘Singing Wind’ invigorates Europe

El Viento Canta (The Singing Wind), a Latin American Bahá’í music and dance group which toured Europe last summer, opened many doors to new teaching opportunities during a visit to the Netherlands in June and July.

In Amsterdam the group performed at a public concert series usually reserved for popular rock groups. After the concert, which attracted about 700 people, the director of the series said he had never thought to invite such a group, adding that the program would always be available for the Bahá’ís if they had other groups to offer.

El Viento Canta also performed in July for 250 young people at the International Bahá’í Youth School in De Poort. A report says, “They set the tone of warmth and spirituality that pervaded the school.”

In Portugal, the group performed for 200 Bahá’ís during the Iberian Conference at a Catholic school in Lisbon.

The support of the mayor was important to the success of another concert, this one in the south of Portugal, where they performed for an audience of almost 2,000.

During their stay in Portugal, El Viento Canta appeared on a popular television program. A member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Portugal also was on the program, and presented an explanation of the Bahá’í teachings.

Bahá’ís from many European countries gathered April 1-4 at de Poort, Netherlands, for the latest in a series of North Sea border conferences.

The European continent, with its unique geography and excellent transportation among the more than 20 countries within it, is enabling the Bahá’ís to develop cooperative ventures across national boundaries.

Australia

More than 600 guests attended the annual United Nations Day service last October 16 at the Bahá’í House of Worship near Sydney, Australia.

Among those taking part in the commemorative event were Robert Vincin, vice-president of the UN Association, and Annie Wilson, president of UNICEF for Australasia.

Guests included government officials, television and film producers, and representatives of a number of humanitarian organizations.

Following the service, Frank Braybrook, president of the Men of the Trees, helped with a tree-planting ceremony which honored the memory of the Bahá’í martyrs in Iran and of the late Richard St. Barbe Baker, a Bahá’í and world-renowned forester.

Kate Marsh, a Bahá’í who is the founder of the newly formed group, Children of the Trees, attended the ceremony with a group of children who performed dances.
Uruguay

A conference entitled "The Architecture of the Bahá'í Edifices," held last July 26 in Montevideo, Uruguay, attracted 55 people, 30 of whom were not Bahá'ís, including a member of the Faculty of Architecture of the eastern branch of the National University and several students of architecture.

After an introduction called "The Importance of Architecture in the Promotion of Humanitarian Ideals," there was an audio-visual presentation on the main topic of the conference.

Reporters from local radio and television stations interviewed the guest speaker, architect Neissan Monajem, a Bahá'í from Brazil.

He was asked by the Faculty of Architecture about the possibility of planning a similar event there in the near future.

More than 100 people, 12 of whom were Bahá'ís, attended an "open conference" in Montevideo, Uruguay, which was one of two scheduled as part of the country's Six Year Plan.

The theme, "New World, New Mankind, New Horizon for Peace," was addressed by teachers and other professionals who supported their talks with slides and other visual aids.

One result of the gathering was a list of 223 professionals, submitted by conference speakers, who are interested in peace-related efforts and who would like information about the Faith. Some of these people are now attending Bahá'í firesides.


A representative of the National Spiritual Assembly and members of the Bahá'í community of Montevideo accompanied the Bahá'ís of Florida on this occasion. Before the event, the Bahá'ís were interviewed on a local radio station.

Trinidad

Last November 28, the Spiritual Assembly of Port of Spain, Trinidad, held a candlelight dinner in observance of the 75th anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to the West.

Among the guests was Augustus Williams, the mayor of Port of Spain.

Included on the program were a presentation by Ganesh Ramsahai of the significance of the observance; slides of 'Abdu'l-Bahá presented by Ken and Ana Powers; and music by the North Area Singers.

Nigeria

The National Spiritual Assembly was represented by two of its members, Mrs. Nikou Amarsingh and Dr. M.H. Jamalabadi.

The candlelight dinner was held in marvelous weather on the front lawn of the Bahá'í National Center.

The Bahá'ís of Trinidad were thrilled last August by the enrollment in the Faith of a long-time friend, the distinguished former mayor of Port of Spain, Joseph Hamilton-Holder, and his 16-year-old son.

Pictured are members of the teaching team that took part last August in the Kaduna-Gwari Teaching Project in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Front row (left to right) Nastaran Ja'fari, Jonas Wahlstrom, Narcis Ja'fari; second row (left to right) Simon Anchu, E. William, Joseph Kwasau, Mina Ja'fari, Felix Itete, Mehrdad Ja'fari; back row (left to right) Robert Miessler, Ideed Ezion, Paula Wahlstrom, Sunny Egwu.

For the first time in 15 years, a mass teaching project has been held among the Gwari tribe in northern Nigeria's Kaduna State. Project Kaduna-Gwari was held last August 21-27.

The project was hosted by Bahá'í's Mehrdad and Mina Ja'fari, who live in Kaduna, and was supported and supervised by the National Spiritual Assembly of Nigeria.

Felix Itete, the coordinator, organized four teams of two to three people, each of which included one who spoke Hausa, the native language.

Three children—Nastaran Ja'fari, Jonas Wahlstrom and Narcis Ja'fari—took an active part in the teaching work.

After one week, enrollments totaled about 145 including 43 women. Seven new local Spiritual Assemblies were formed.

Follow-up visits began immediately with Bahá'ís from Kaduna offering tutorial schools in two villages to teach English and math and hold Bahá'í deepening classes.

Suriname

A copy of the Universal House of Justice's peace statement was recently presented to the secretary to the Ambassador of China residing in Suriname.

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Malaysia

The Malaysian Bahá'í Women's Committee helped organize the National Women's Day celebration, held last August 25.

The observance coincided with the Silver Jubilee of the National Council of Women's Organizations of Malaysia (NCWO). The Bahá'í Women's Committee is reported to be one of the NCWO's most active members.

Among the 1,000 guests at the Women's Day celebration were Her Majesty, the Queen of Malaysia, and several prominent women's leaders.

One of the seminars, entitled “Violence Against Women,” included a mock rape trial and a talk on that topic by Counsellor Shantha Sundram.

New teaching initiatives in various parts of Malaysia have resulted in many success stories.

Six people embraced the Cause during the Baling community's recent nine-day teaching campaign; in the Kuala Kangsar district, eight people including seven youth recently were enrolled; while a teaching trip to Lenggong by three Bahá'í youth led to declarations by five people.

India

The teaching campaign begun last September in Madhya Pradesh, one of India's most heavily populated states where thousands of professionals and academics have recently enrolled in the Faith, continued in October.

In the Morena District, about 20,000 new believers have been enrolled, among whom are two education officers of Jaora and Kailaras and the chief municipal officer of Baroda.

A seminar entitled “Casteism and Its Solution” was attended by the upper classes of the Jaora public.

Mass teaching is now under way in Bhind and in the Mandsaur district of western Madhya Pradesh.

A telex report dated September 15 from the State Bahá'í Council of Andhra Pradesh, India, contained news of a successful teaching campaign in three new tribal areas, opening 12 localities and enrolling 109 people in the Faith.

Other campaigns in that state have enrolled 189 people for a total of 298 new Bahá'ís in recent months.

As a result of recent projects organized by the Bahá'í Vocational Institute for Rural Women (also known as the Faizi Institute) in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India, women in that area are being taught to read, write and manage money, and are enjoying social relationships with those of other tribes and castes.

Projects were centered last April through June in Manpour and Indore in the Indore district and in Jhabua and Kalyanpura in the Jhabua district.

The projects took the form of a camp in which spiritual education and life skills become an integral part of a well-planned daily program.

Skills taught include machine knitting, working a hand loom, literacy, and finance management.

One woman who became literate and learned weaving skills was chosen by the government to be an adult literacy teacher in her village; three other women are now serving on the local Spiritual Assembly in their village.

Sri Lanka

A teaching campaign that was begun last July in Colombo, Sri Lanka, has resulted in the enrollment of 20 people.

Two full-time teachers, helped by the Bahá'ís of Colombo, spend their days meeting people and sharing the Faith, and their evenings staffing a book and poster exhibit. One evening each week, they organize a video show.

Results from a teacher training course held last July 30 at the Bahá'í National Center in Sri Lanka were seen less than a week later when one of the trainees, from Vavuniya, reported 17 enrollments in the new locality of Thandikulam.

Canary Islands

Young Bahá'ís in the Canary Islands recently were given permission to paint a mural on a wall in front of a university campus. The painting depicts the world and representatives of various races and includes the following statement: “Peace is not only possible but inevitable. The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens.”

Many people were attracted to the mural and asked questions about the Faith.
Thailand

The Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone and his wife, Madge Featherstone, visited Asia for two and one-half months last summer.

They spent the first three weeks touring schools and visiting local dignitaries, Bahá'ís in refugee camps, and Bahá'í communities in Thailand and Vientiane, Laos, near Thailand's northern border.

The Featherstones also traveled to other parts of Laos where they gave a number of public talks.

Afterward, they returned to Thailand and on September 10 visited a refugee camp where nearly 180,000 people, mainly Cambodians, live.

They met with the local Spiritual Assembly and the rest of the Bahá'í community in that camp, and also visited another camp which had recently formed an Assembly. About 100 people gathered there to see them.

After visiting the camps, the Featherstones journeyed to Chiang Mai in northern Thailand where they were able to help with the teaching work.

As a result of their meeting with the owner of a Thai newspaper, a large photograph and article about the Faith were published.

The Featherstones traveled as far north as Japan before returning to Australia in November.

A special thrust to reach Six Year Plan goals and enroll new believers from all strata of society was among the results of a National Teaching Conference held last October 11 in Thailand.

Fifty Bahá'ís including four members of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Asia were present at the conference to consult on teaching.

Plans were made to form local teaching teams for the northern, southern and northeastern areas of Thailand.

Twelve native Thais were enrolled in the Faith last July 28-31 during the national Bahá'í Summer School at Phatthalung, Thailand.

Bahá'ís from as far away as Malaysia took part in the school.

Peru

The unified efforts of Counsellor Mas'úd Khamsí of the International Teaching Centre, Counsellor for the Americas Isabel de Calderón, four Auxiliary Board members, and members of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Peru and Bolivia have combined to rekindle Peru's Lake Titicaca region.

A two-day mass teaching workshop attended by 60 Bahá'ís was followed by a five-day teaching campaign in which 1,764 new believers were enrolled in the Faith, 738 youth and 1,026 adults. These successes were achieved in spite of a strike last September 28 during which roads in the area were closed.

A highlight was the teaching work at a high school in Villa Quebrada where the principal and all the teachers and students embraced the Faith.

The campaign was capped by a two-day conference to evaluate the results and determine future directions. Ten volunteers offered to continue with the consolidation work.

More than 50 Bahá'í radio experts gathered last September in Lima, Peru, for the second Radio Bahá'í Seminar sponsored by the International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Centre and hosted by the Peruvian Bahá'í community.

Among those taking part were six members of the Continental Board of Counsellors, all the members of IBAVC, and representatives of seven Bahá'í radio stations, five of whom were indigenous people.

In all, participants came from 14 countries to share news of the victories achieved during the past year and to exchange experience and knowledge that was gained.

Among topics discussed were the development of Bahá'í communities in their listening zones, the ongoing spiritualization of the believers, their education, and their memorization of the Creative Word.

Luxembourg

Three Bahá'ís representing the Bahá'í International Community attended an International Symposium on "Man, Health, Environment" last March in Luxembourg.

The Bahá'ís contributed eloquently to the discussions and attracted further questions from participants following the conference.

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Vanuatu

The president of the local government council and a local pastor were among the 200 guests who came from as far away as the islands of Tanna, Malekuti and Efate to attend the opening last September 3 of the Luganville Bahá’í Center at Espiritu Santo, Vanuatu.

One report of the event reads: “The believers, men, women and children who came down from the inland villages enhanced the occasion with their radiant spirits, and their presence in the town has had a remarkable effect.”

Included in the celebration were a Bahá’í Expo and public meeting.

Alaska

Pictured with their Den leader, Robert Hawkins (left), and tutor, Hassan Shafiee, are two nine-year-old Cub Scouts, Bahji and Shiraz Nelson, of the Tanana Valley (Alaska) Bahá’í community, who were recently awarded the Bahá’í Religious Emblem for Scouting after completing a six-month program consisting of weekly Bahá’í classes, three comprehensive projects, and a variety of community service activities.

More than 110 people gathered last August at the Chilkat Valley Bahá’í School on the banks of the lovely Chilkat River in Haines, Alaska.

For five days they enjoyed the uplifting atmosphere and the inspiring classes presented by Auxiliary Board member Javidukht Khadem, Jack and Arden Lee, Omid Furutan and Stan Corbett.

The relaxed schedule provided ample time for fellowship as well as for spontaneous discussion groups on such topics as the Word of God, the Spiritual Transformation Program, Recovery Programs and Bahá’í education, and for sharing Bahá’í poetry and songs.

Uganda

The presentation of the peace statement last September 27 to President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda was followed by a 45-minute discussion about the Faith.

Three Bahá’í books were presented to the president: Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, the Kitáb-i-Áqán, and The Earth Is But One Country.

He asked his press officer to place the books in his private library, as he said he wished to study more about the Faith.

A three-member teaching team composed of an Auxiliary Board member, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, and a member of the National Teaching Committee launched a three-month project last June in Najambe, Mukono District, near Kampala, the capital of Uganda.

As a result, 32 people have so far embraced the Faith, a local Spiritual Assembly has been elected, and a Bahá’í Group has been formed in the nearby town of Kawolo, thus achieving all the main goals of the first phase of the project.

Kenya

A telex from the National Spiritual Assembly of Kenya dated September 19 relates news of an intensive teaching campaign in that country which achieved the formation of 15 new local Spiritual Assemblies and the enrollment of 448 new believers.

The first local Spiritual Assembly in the Marsabit District of northern Kenya was elected last Ridván. The Assembly, made up of Rendille and Samburu tribespeople, is in Sabambe village, Laisamis.

Another victory was the formation of an Assembly in Itheani, Kitui, in Kenya’s central region. A striking feature of this community is that it is comprised mainly of young married women, their children, and youth.

Turkey

An energetic youth committee, the friends’ commitment to regular firesides, and an active teaching committee have brought steady growth to the Bahá’í community in Turkey.

Recent teaching has centered on village areas around Ankara, where several villages have been opened to the Faith in the last year, and on reaching the leaders of thought.

Liberia

A special Teacher Training Institute was held last June 20-30 in Bomi Hills in northwestern Liberia.

Afterward, the Bahá’ís at the Institute took part in a teaching campaign, enrolling 500 new believers between July and September.
The Netherlands

Pictured are many of the 82 people from 18 European countries who gathered in 'De Poort' at Groesbeek in the Netherlands last September 8-11 for the first European Chinese Teaching Symposium. Among those present were two Counsellors, Mrs. Ursula Mühlschlegel and Mrs. Elisabeth Mühlschlegel; Paul Koh, representing the International Chinese Teaching Committee in Malaysia; and Charles Pau, representing the National Chinese Teaching Committee in Singapore. About 24 Baha’is arose to answer the call of the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum to support the teaching work in Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Rwanda

Last August, the Bahá’í community of Rwanda received permission to broadcast a Bahá’í news program each Monday on Radio Rwanda.

This major breakthrough for the Faith followed the visit in December 1987 by a Bahá’í delegation to the office of the Director of Information. At that meeting, the Bahá’ís presented information about the Faith and asked for permission to produce Bahá’í programs for Radio Rwanda.

Another breakthrough came last July when, for the first time, an item about the Faith appeared in the government newspaper, Imuvo, the most widely circulated of Rwanda’s three newspapers.

In February, a delegation of Bahá’ís met with the Director-General of Political Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to express gratitude to the government of Rwanda for its support of the United Nations resolution on human rights adopted last December by the UN General Assembly.

The 45-minute meeting was held in an atmosphere of mutual respect and friendship. The Director-General thanked the delegation for giving the government an opportunity to learn more about the Faith.

Hawaii

A three-credit university level course on the Bahá’í Faith is presently being offered at the University of Hawaii at Hilo.

Fifteen people were enrolled for the first semester of the course, which is entitled “A History of the Bahá’í Faith.”

Textbooks include The Bahá’í Faith: The Emerging Global Religion by William Hatcher and Douglas Martin, and The Babi and Bahá’í Religions, 1844-1944: Some Western Accounts, edited by Moojan Momen.

Switzerland

For the sixth year in a row, a World Peace Day celebration has been held in Geneva, Switzerland. As in past years, the Bahá’í International Community took part in an interfaith service held last September 20 as a part of the event.

In 1981 the UN General Assembly proclaimed the third Tuesday in September an International Day of Peace, coinciding with the annual opening session of the General Assembly, and invited all organizations and individuals to observe the occasion.

This year, the participation of the Bahá’ís was a collaborative effort on the part of the Bahá’í International Community and the Spiritual Assembly of Geneva.

We are delighted to reaffirm the continuing expansion of the teaching work as evinced by the news just received that, during the last three months in Bangladesh, 5,000 souls have embraced the Cause of God enabling the formation of 108 new local Spiritual Assemblies.

In its report, the National Assembly commented on a receptivity unexperienced in the past, saying, "all witness ripeness of time."

Our hearts are filled with gratitude to Bahá'u'lláh for the increasing efforts being devoted throughout the world to proclaiming, expanding and consolidating His precious Faith.

Universal House of Justice
January 27, 1989
Senior officers discuss external affairs

GREATLY PLEASED ANNOUNCE IMPORTANT CONSULTATIONS WORLD CENTRE PAST WEEKEND WITH SENIOR OFFICERS BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HOLY LAND, NEW YORK, GENEVA, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF FIVE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES. FAR-REACHING DELIBERATIONS CENTERED ON INCREASED EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ACTIVITIES FAITH. MUCH ENCOURAGED EVIDENCES EVER CLOSER TIES COLLABORATION WITH UNITED NATIONS, ITS AGENCIES AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS MANY LANDS, RESULTING EXPANDED SPHERE INFLUENCE FAITH FIELD INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES. HEARTENED BY REVIEW INDICATING INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES SHARE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S WORLD-REDEEMING MESSAGE VAST REGIONS CHINA, SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE. REJOICE IN MOUNTING PRESTIGE CAUSE GOD WORLD-WIDE. INVITE ALL FRIENDS JOIN IN OFFERING PRAYERS THANKSGIVING BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FOR HIS SUSTAINED ABUNDANT BLESSINGS.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
JANUARY 5, 1989

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I first met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá vicariously, so to speak, and it was this meeting that brought me into the Bahá’í Faith in the summer of 1906. It happened that being in the vicinity of Green Acre that summer I made a pilgrimage there to see what it was all about. My curiosity had been aroused by weekly articles in the Boston Transcript. At the time I was studying for the Unitarian ministry at the Harvard Divinity School.

It was a warm Sunday afternoon in August. The big tent on Green Acre’s lower level, where the lecture hall now is located, was filled to capacity to hear some famous sculptor from New York. I was not greatly interested in his lecture. It was not for the sake of art that I had come, but for the sake of religion.

At the end of the lecture I went up to speak to Sarah Farmer—who had been presiding in her own ineffable way, shedding a warm spiritual glow upon the whole affair. As I had previously met her in Cambridge at the home of Mrs. Ole Bull, I ventured to recall my memories of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Miss Farmer took my hand in hers and cordially held it while she looked into my eyes and asked, “Have you heard of the Persian Revelation?”

“No,” I answered.

“Well, go to that lady in a white headdress and ask her to tell you about it. I know by your eyes that you are ready for it.”

What had she seen in my eyes? I do not know. But what she had read there proved true. For within half an hour from that moment I became a confirmed Bahá’í and have remained so ever since.

We were ushered into a long study... I saw a large desk there, but no person sitting at it. Only a radiance of light. As we approached the end of the room, a majestic figure in Oriental garb became evident to me. It was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

But it is of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that I am writing, and not of myself. How did it happen that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, seven thousand miles away and a prisoner in ‘Akka, could at such a distance confirm me in such immediacy into the Bahá’í Faith? It happened in this way. The path had been prepared, so to speak. For in reviewing books for the Boston Transcript which dealt with the prevailing and rapidly increasing flaws in our present civilization, and the need of a better world order, I had begun to debate deeply with myself on this matter of such great universal concern.

It is true, I thought, that a new and better pattern of civilization needs to be devised. But even if such a pattern—an ideal pattern—were conceived, who could put it over? Could I, as a clergyman, hope to convert all my congregation to it? Much less could I hope to convert the whole country. And no human being could by any conceivable power of vision and of personality bring all humanity into such a kingdom of perfection.

I still vividly remember how I was taking a long walk in the beautiful suburb of Chestnut Hill, around the reservoir, when the solution to this problem flashed into my mind. Someone must appear with more than human authority, in order to win the allegiance of the whole world to an ideal pattern for humanity.

This was my general frame of mind when Mary Lucas, the “woman in white”—a singer just back from visiting ‘Abdu’l-Bahá—took me under an apple tree on the sloping lawn and proceeded to unfold to me the Persian Revelation. Her exposition was very simple. It consisted only of these four words: “Our Lord has come!”

The moment Mary Lucas uttered those words I felt, This is it! How did it happen that I felt that way? The “woman in white” had not discoursed to me upon the spiritual character and greatness of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, nor upon the principles of the Bahá’í Faith. How great is the power of speech, when one simple utterance could sweep me—mind, heart and soul—into that Faith!

But it was more than those four words that empowered Mary Lucas to so usher me into the Cause. It was more than speech itself. It was a unique spiritual vibration which Mary Lucas had brought from ‘Akka that convinced me. And it was the strange cosmic dynamism with which her words were charged that moved my soul.

If ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Himself had stood under that apple tree and addressed me, I could not have been more convinced. For what is distance on the plane of spirit? Mary Lucas had brought the spirit of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with her. I felt it, and I was convinced. Especially as my own soul had already sought out and found the answer to the world’s dire needs: Someone must appear with more than human authority.

So that was my first meeting with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá—strangely vicarious, perhaps predestined. The second meeting—with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in person...
while He was still a prisoner in ‘Akka— took place in the following way. In February 1908 I had the great privilege of visiting Him in company with Lua Getsinger, famous in the annals of Bahá’í history.

I accidentally (or was it by destiny?) ran into Lua on the steps of Shepard Hotel in Cairo, Egypt, where I had gone for a few days of travel during the mid-year holidays of Robert College (Constantinople), in which at that time I was a teacher of English and Latin.

“What are you doing here?” asked Lua in great surprise.

“What are you doing here?” I replied, in equal surprise.

It seems that Lua was on a pilgrimage to ‘Akka, and she urged me to leave off my travels in Egypt and join her. I explained that I had written ‘Abdu’l-Baha for permission to visit, but had been answered that at that time it was not advisable.

“But I have standing permission to take anyone with me,” urged Lua.

“But I have arranged a trip up the Nile with my friend, Hussein.”

“What is a trip up the Nile compared with the privilege of visiting the Master?”

Lua’s logic was convincing and her ardor compelling. Twenty-four hours later saw me ensconced in a room adjoining ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s in the historic “prison of ‘Akka,” in reality a large compound enclosed within walls.

My first actual meeting with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was bewildering. We were ushered into a long study, lighted by large French windows at the farther end. I saw a large desk there, but no person sitting at it. Only a radiance of light. As we approached the end of the room, a majestic figure in Oriental garb became evident to me. It was ‘Abdu’l-Baha.

Lua Getsinger, with the devotion of a Mary Magdalene, fell to her knees and fervently kissed His robe. But what was I to do? I am not one who can act insincerely. Should I merely shake hands with Him? As I stood in hesitation, ‘Abdu’l-Baha, fully realizing my predicament, saved me from it by taking me in His arms and embracing me.

“You are welcome!” he said.

Every evening at dinner ‘Abdu’l-Baha, Who did not eat at that time, helped to serve us. He went around from guest to guest, putting more food upon the plates. This is the height of Oriental hospitality, to serve an honored guest with one’s own hands.

When the meal was over, ‘Abdu’l-Baha would give us a brief talk on spiritual themes. I regret that I have not a memory sufficient to recall all that He said. But I do recall two of these messages of spiritual wisdom.

Once He said, “It is not enough to wish to do good. The wish should be followed by action. What would you think of a mother who said, ‘How I love you, my baby!’—yet did not give it milk? Or of a penniless man, who said, ‘I am going to found a great university!’”

On another occasion He spoke of the need for loving patience in the face of aggravating behavior on the part of others. “One might say, ‘Well, I will endure such-and-such a person so long as he is endurable.’ But Bahá’is must endure people even when they are unendurable!”

Three extraordinary qualities which characterized all of ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s utterances were to be found in these two brief conversations: His supreme logic; His delightful sense of humor; and the inspiring buoyancy with which He gave forth solemn pronouncements.

For instance, when He said, “But Bahá’is must endure people even when they are unendurable!” He did not look at us solemnly as if appointing us to an arduous and difficult task. Rather, He beamed upon us delightedly, as if to suggest what a joy to us it would be to act in this way!

I want to emphasize this important point—the joyousness with which ‘Abdu’l-Baha always depicted the spiritual life as He enjoined it upon us. And why not? Is man’s spiritual life not in reality more joyous than any other kind of life that he can lead?

This philosophy of joy was the keynote of all of ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s teaching. “Are you happy?” was His frequent greeting to His visitors. “Be happy!”

Those who were unhappy (and who of us is not at times!) would weep at this. And ‘Abdu’l-Baha would smile as if to say, “Yes, weep on. Beyond the tears is sunshine.”

And sometimes He would wipe away with His own hands the tears from their wet cheeks, and they would leave His presence transfigured.

On the occasion of this visit I had been under a severe strain at Robert College, due to disciplinary troubles. That was one of the reasons for my diversionary trip to Egypt. Also, I had been slowly recovering in previous years from a nervous depression due to overwork at Dartmouth College. I had been earning my way through Dartmouth, and also at the Harvard Divinity School. At times I would feel so depressed that I should have been glad to have found a hole in the ground, crawled into it, and pulled the hole in after me. I understood at such times the Hindu craving for extinction.

‘Abdu’l-Baha came into my room one morning without His translator. He sat beside me and took one of my hands in both of His and held it for a minute or two. He had not at any time inquired as to my health. He knew. From that moment on I found myself permanently relieved of these depressive moods. No matter how hard the going, I have always since then been glad to be alive.

At last, all too soon, the time came to go. The three days assigned for our visit had come to an end. I shall never forget how Lua Getsinger sobbed as if her heart would break as she slowly descended the long flight of steps, looking back frequently at ‘Abdu’l-Baha Who stood benignly at the top.

And I shall never forget how joyously ‘Abdu’l-Baha smiled at Lua’s tears, knowing that they were more precious than pure gold. For they were the complete offering, at that moment, of a penniless man, who had been earning his way through Dartmouth College, due to disciplinary troubles.

That was one of the reasons for my diversionary trip to Egypt. Also, I had been slowly recovering in previous years from a nervous depression due to overwork at Dartmouth College. I had been earning my way through Dartmouth, and also at the Harvard Divinity School. At times I would feel so depressed that I should have been glad to have found a hole in the ground, crawled into it, and pulled the hole in after me. I understood at such times the Hindu craving for extinction.

Needless to say, the ensuing spring at Robert College was one of the most glorious periods of my life. Never had the birds sung so sweetly, the flowers and shrubs bloomed so exquisitely, the golden sunshine seemed so intoxicating. As for my disciplinary troubles at the college, they vanished like mist which the sunshine dispels. My pupils, some of whom had been carrying knives and revolvers, loved me again and more than ever. Such was the...
Again it was my privilege to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the summer of 1910, and this time at His own invitation. I was given the privilege of spending a week there, in the Persian guest house on the slopes of Mount Carmel. 'Abdu'l-Bahá at this time was living in Haifa in the home built for Him by Mrs. Jackson, having been freed from His imprisonment by the Young Turks in the summer of 1908. The oppressive and cruel governor who had in vain sought graft from Him and had threatened to send Him to the malign dungeons of Tunis, had himself met the fate he had designed for 'Abdu'l-Bahá—the fate of death, and at the hands of the Young Turks. And 'Abdu'l-Bahá was enjoying, for the first time since His boyhood, the luxury of freedom.

He seemed to me more noble in countenance, more regal in bearing, more potent in the power of His presence than ever before. Every evening at sunset He met with the pilgrims, assembled in a large room, and gave a spiritual discourse.

One afternoon I found the pilgrims waiting outside at the gate for 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He had been making a call upon the Turkish consul and was expected soon. After a few moments we saw His carriage stop at the foot of the short hill, where He got out in order to walk the rest of the way for the sake of exercise. All of the Persian pilgrims stood in their customary reverential attitude, awaiting His approach with bowed heads and arms crossed upon their breasts. I alone, as an American, took the privilege of watching Him as He approached, enjoying the majesty of His movements and the nobility of His appearance. But as He neared me I involuntarily also bowed my head. Some power emanating from Him seemed to obligate this attitude. So had Professor E.G. Browne, the only westerner ever to visit Bahá'u'lláh, felt obligated to bow his head in the presence of the Prophet.

This power emanating from 'Abdu'l-Bahá was not expressed for the purpose of producing submission. It was a power which He never expressed to non-Bahá'ís. Let us say, rather, that it was a privilege He gave us, of seeing a little behind the veil; of experiencing the direct effect of that Cosmic Power which in this early period of our development seems supernormal, however normal it may become to us at some distant future age of our soul's development.

No, 'Abdu'l-Bahá never put forth any of His spiritual power to dazzle, persuade or over-awe skeptics or unbelievers. Of this fact I shall later give a vivid instance.

On the day I arrived at Haifa I was ill with a dysentery which I had picked up in the course of my travels. 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent His own physician to me, and visited me Himself. He said, "I would that I could take your illness upon Myself." I have never forgotten this. I felt, I knew, that in making this remark 'Abdu'l-Bahá was not speaking in mere terms of sympathy. He meant just what He said.

Such is the great love of the Kingdom, of which 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke so often and so much. This is a love that is difficult, almost impossible, for us to acquire—though we may seek to approximate its perfection. It is more than sympathy, more than empathy. It is sacrificial love.

Looking back, it seems strange that 'Abdu'l-Bahá did not employ His healing power directly upon me, as He had done on the occasion of my previous visit. He left me to the care of His physician and to the prescribed medications. It took three days for me to get on my feet again.

Why did He not restore me directly to health by means of spiritual healing? There is some deep spiritual lesson here. It was not 'Abdu'l-Bahá's province to go about healing physical diseases. It was His mission to expound the Teachings and express the spiritual potency of the world's Divine Physician. Physical events and conditions are of less importance in our lives than the development of our spiritual nature.

In regard to health in general, I will quote here a statement which 'Abdu'l-Bahá had made to me on my previous visit: that health is the expression of equilibrium; that the body is composed of certain elements, and that when these elements are in the right proportion, health results; and that if there is any lack or preponderance in these elements, sickness results.

Thus 50 years ago 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave in a simple statement to me all the truths which the new science of biochemistry is now discovering.

But there is still another cause of illness, 'Abdu'l-Bahá went on to say. Illness may be caused by nervous factors. Anything that shocks us or affects our nerves may also affect our health.

All that has been written to this point is a sort of introduction to the recording of my memories of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on the occasion of His visit to the U.S. in 1912. The purpose of this introduction is to show what sort of a personage it was that on April 11, 1912, landed at the port of New York for an extended visit and lecture tour in this country.

Here was an Oriental in Oriental garb, a man Who had been a prisoner most of His life, a character Whose life was for the most part lived on a spiritual plane so lofty as to be almost beyond our comprehension. How did this Servant of God meet, fit into and adjust to the objective, dynamic and materialistic life of America?

'Abdu'l-Bahá, upon landing in New York and being surrounded by alert and inquisitive reporters, was perfectly at home. And why not? Is there any limit to the power of the spirit? Was not 'Abdu'l-Bahá's universal spirit as capable of dealing with the fast-vibrating technological Occident as it had been in dealing with the mystic and more spiritual Orient? We shall see, as this narrative continues, how He was "all things to all men"; protean in His universality; thoroughly at home in every environment.

This majestic figure—in tarboosh, turban and flowing robes—drew the newspaper men into His aura and immediately won their favor.

"What do you think of America?" He was asked.

"I like it. Americans are optimistic. If you ask them how they are, they say, 'All right!' If you ask them how things are going, they say, 'All right!' This cheerful attitude is good." And so 'Abdu'l-Bahá won reporters' hearts and continued to do so throughout His stay in America. He never seemed to them, or was described by them, as a strange or exotic personality. He always received favorable and
The author, Dr. Stanwood Cobb, is pictured as he presented a talk in Atlanta, Georgia, shortly before his passing in 1982 at the age of 101.

It was the Greeks who taught the world how to think in logical terms, and they thereby laid the foundations for all Western thought and science. From the Greeks we have learned how to begin at ‘‘A’’ in order to get to ‘‘Z’’—or as in Greek, from ‘‘Alpha’’ to ‘‘Omega’’.

The Orientals do not think in quite this way. Their mentality has never been submitted to the Greek discipline. Their minds are more mystical, more immediate in perception. They do not have to begin at ‘‘A’’ to comprehend the station of ‘‘Z.’’ Through spiritual sensitivity, through rapid intuitional processes, they can often gain an immediate awareness or comprehension of the ultimate—of the ‘‘Omega’’ itself.

All Oriental seers and prophets speak oracularly. One sentence, one paragraph will contain a wealth which a lifetime of thought cannot exhaust. Christ spoke this way. Bahá’u’lláh spoke this way.

But ‘‘Abdu’l-Bahá, for the sake of the Western world, adopted the Greek mode of presentation, carefully elaborating His theses and developing them from known and admissible premises. In no place is ‘‘Abdu’l-Bahá ever obscure or recondite. If He wishes to present a great spiritual truth, He takes it up at an initial point where its truth will be acknowledged by all, and then develops it into a larger presentation such as can expand our very minds and souls.

And so, whatever else ‘‘Abdu’l-Bahá was and in the future will be realized to be, it is recognizable even today that He was God’s special gift to the Occident. He translated the oracular teachings of Bahá’u’lláh into a language and form easily comprehensible to the West. So that no one, having available these lucid pronouncements of ‘‘Abdu’l-Bahá, can say that the Bahá’í Faith is hard to understand. ‘‘Abdu’l-Bahá has set forth its Teachings with all the lucidity of daylight and the warmth of sunlight.

Regarding the countless personal interviews which the Master gave to Bahá’ís and non-Bahá’ís alike, volumes could be written. I will tell here only of the interviews which I personally was privileged to have.

When ‘‘Abdu’l-Bahá was in Boston, I seized the opportunity to take my father to see Him, from our home in the suburb of Newton. Father at that time was a venerable Boston artist, seventy-five years of age—an earnestly religious man, devout, spiritual and

constructive notices from the press.

For eight months ‘‘Abdu’l-Bahá traveled over the United States from coast to coast, giving addresses in churches, universities and lecture halls. Several of these addresses I was privileged to attend. As I look back on these occasions, I recall more vividly His platform presence than the contents of His addresses, which of course have all been published.

‘‘Abdu’l-Bahá did not, as a lecturer, stand still. His movements were very dynamic. He paced back and forth on the platform as He gave forth His spiritual utterances. I felt that the general atmosphere and the effect of His words were enhanced rather than diminished by the presence of a translator. For the techniques of translation gave ‘‘Abdu’l-Bahá a certain spiritual dignity, such as could not have been attained by a straight address in the language of His hearers.

The situation was as follows: ‘‘Abdu’l-Bahá would make a statement of a length within the power of the translator to render; then He would stand and smile as the translation was given, or He would nod His head to affirm important points. In other words, ‘‘Abdu’l-Bahá did not stand passive during the period of translation. He constantly illumined this translation with the dynamic power of His own spiritual personality.

And when He spoke, the Persian words—so beautiful and strong—boomed forth almost as musically as in operatic recitatives. While He spoke He was in constant and majestic motion. To hear Him was an experience unequaled in any other kind of platform delivery. It was a work of art, as well as a spiritual service. First would come this spiritual flow of thought musically expressed in a foreign tongue. Then, as the translator set forth its meaning to us, we had the added pleasure of watching ‘‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s response to the art of the translator. It was, all in all, a highly colorful and dramatic procedure.

The substance of ‘‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s talks, here and in London and Paris, has been published and is available for study. One can perceive in all of these addresses and discussions a peculiar adaptation to the Occidental mentality and way of thinking. They are, to sum it up in one word, supremely logical.
prayerful. He was sympathetic to my adherence to the Bahá’í Cause, but he had said, “Son, I am too old to change.” While I was in Constanti­nople, Father had at my request attended some of the Bahá’í meetings in Boston; and now he was glad to have the opportunity to visit with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

But what was my consternation to perceive that Father was taking the conversation into his own hands. It was an occurrence which I shall never forget. Father for some half-hour proceeded to lay down the law to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, or let us say, to enlighten Him on spiritual themes. Or to be more exact, let us say that Father took the opportunity to express to the loving, listening ear of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá the spiritual philosophy which had guided him in life.

I sat there quite shocked. But I didn’t need to be. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá plainly was not shocked by this reversal of the customary role—He now to be the listener and His visitor the discoursor. He sat there smiling, saying little, enveloping us with His love. And at the end Father came away feeling that he had had a wonderful interview. What a lesson in humility this was, that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá thus exemplified! There are so many times when we can help others best simply by being good listeners.

The last interview I had in this country with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was in Washington. Strange, that I don’t recall what He said. My heart was too full to take any notes! I can only recall how He embraced me at the end, kissed me, and said three times: “Be on fire with the love of the Kingdom!”

What is this “love of the Kingdom”? That is what humanity must henceforward spend a few thousand years to discover and apply to life. Did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá mean the love for the Kingdom or the kind of love that prevails in the Higher Kingdom? Or did He mean both these loves?

Here in these nine words ‘Abdu’l-Bahá summed up the gist of all His teaching, which was that love applied by means of the Holy Spirit is the one thing that will solve all problems, both of man as an individual and as a collective society.

The most important interview I had with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was in Paris in the spring of 1914. I was one of the staff of Porter Sargent’s Travel School for Boys. On my first visit He inquired about the school and asked me what I taught. I told Him that I taught English, Latin, algebra and geometry. He gazed intently at me with His luminous eyes and said, “Do you teach the spiritual things?”

The question embarrassed me. I did not know how to explain to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that the necessity of preparing the boys for college-entrance exams dominated the nature of the curriculum. So I simply answered: “No, there is not time for that.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá made no comment on this answer. But He did not need to. Out of my own mouth I had condemned myself and modern education. No time for spiritual things! That, of course, is just what is wrong with our modern, materialistic “civilization.” It has no time to give for spiritual things.

But ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s question and His silent response indicated that from His viewpoint spiritual things should come first. And why not? The material world, as the expression of man’s spirit, is subordinate to the spiritual world. Therefore, education should begin with that which is primary and causal; and not with that which, as the creation of man, is secondary to His creative spirit and to the Creative Spirit of the cosmos. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá kindly invited me to bring Porter Sargent and the pupils to see Him. Mr. Sargent gladly accepted the invitation, and four of the boys did. The others had excuses, like those people in the Bible who were invited to the wedding feast but did not go. One boy had to buy a pair of shoes; another had planned to take afternoon tea at a restaurant where a gypsy orchestra furnished music, etc. How many of life’s important opportunities thus pass us by, through our own unperceptiveness or neglect?

I was deeply interested and concerned to see what impression ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would make on the owner of the school. Porter Sargent, 10 years my senior, was a confirmed and positive atheist. He had been a biologist, and was suffering from that spiritual myopia which so often afflicts this type of scientist. But he was an idealist, a humanitarian, a man of great vision for humanity, and somewhat of a genius.

In one intimate discussion with me on the nature of existence, during a long hike we took together on the sunny island of Capri, he had outlined to me his concept of life and the universe. “What do you think of it?” he asked me, with some eagerness. Perhaps this was the first occasion on which he had so fully expounded his philosophy of life.

“It is splendid!” I said. “But it only covers half of existence.”

“What is the other half?”

“I accept always (‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s) statements with humility and with total conviction; not because of any assumption of authority, but because I always felt in the depths of my soul that what He said was the truth. It always rang true, so to speak.”

I said. “But it only covers half of existence.”

“What is the other half?”

But this other half did not exist for Porter Sargent. Idealist that he was, creative-minded, somewhat of a poet—I felt sad that not one ray of spirit could penetrate the pride of his intellect.

So when this golden opportunity came of an interview with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, I had great hopes. Now, in this intimate meeting with the Master, I thought, Sargent will be forced to realize the existence of spirit. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s spiritual potency will at last penetrate his shell of skepticism. And so, when we came out from the hotel after a half-hour conference with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, I eagerly asked, “Well, what do you think of Him?”

I have never forgotten the shattering disappointment at the answer: “He’s a dear, kind, tired old man.”

I was chagrined. But this experience taught me two spiritual lessons. The first was that skepticism must solve its own problems in its own way. The second truth, even more important, was that spirit never forces itself upon the individual. It must be invited.

Theologians have frequently made the observation that God could easily force us to reverence and to stand in awe of Him, if He wished. But He does not wish to win man’s reverence and
awe and love by any forceful means. The initiative must come from man himself.

And so in the case of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, I noticed on many occasions that He never expressed spiritual power for the purpose of dazzling people, or of winning them to a spiritual allegiance for which they were not inwardly prepared. The greater the receptivity of the individual, the greater was the revelation of spiritual potency which 'Abdu'l-Bahá displayed to them.

Thus Juliet Thompson, who painted 'Abdu'l-Bahá's portrait, has testified to the glorious revelations of Himself which her Subject at times made to her. In similar vein have testified the Kinneys, with whom 'Abdu'l-Bahá spent several days. And May Maxwell once told me that she had received, on one sacred occasion in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, such a revelation of Him that she would never attempt to describe it.

But materially-minded people 'Abdu'l-Bahá met upon their own plane, as He did Porter Sargent. And as I also saw Him do in Washington with the Turkish ambassador, on the occasion of Mrs. Parsons' reception. This being a social affair, 'Abdu'l-Bahá did not play the part of the Master, but the part of a guest amenable to the situation. And anyone who had looked into the large reception room, as I did, and had seen 'Abdu'l-Bahá sitting in a corner and exchanging humorous stories with the ambassador would have seen in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's facial expressions no trace of spiritual power. For He was not here primarily for spiritual purposes, but to play a social part.

'Abdu'l-Bahá was indeed "all things to all men." He was protean. If some were prepared only to see Him as the Old Man of the Sea, such He was to them. But if they were prepared to see Him as more than this, the degree of their receptivity was proportionately blessed.

In all my interviews with 'Abdu'l-Bahá I had an extraordinary feeling of receiving truth from a higher plane than that of the mere intellect. Man's intellect is an organ of discrimination, an instrument for analysis and attack. As we listen to others more learned than ourselves we are pleased to receive information, but we consciously reserve the right of judgment. Some of the things said to us we accept immediately; some with reservations; and some we inwardly oppose. No matter how wise, how learned the teacher, we reserve the right of our own judgment.

But with 'Abdu'l-Bahá it was different. I accepted always His statements with humility and with total conviction; not because of any assumption of authority, but because I always felt in the depths of my soul that what He said was the truth. It always rang true, so to speak. Let us say, as it was said of another great leader of men, that He spoke "with authority."

In the course of His lectures here and abroad, 'Abdu'l-Bahá discoursed on many topics. Where did He get His wide knowledge of things and of affairs? He had had but one year of schooling at the age of seven. He had been a prisoner all His life. He had few books, no scholarly library, no encyclopedias. Yet at Schenectady, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá was being shown around the General Electric Works by Steinmetz, this "wizard of electricity" was observed to be eagerly absorbing 'Abdu'l-Bahá's elucidation of electricity. The Rev. Moore, Unitarian clergyman who was present at the time, testified to me: "Steinmetz's jaw seemed to drop open as he drank in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's talk."

"'Abdu'l-Bahá, do You know everything?" Saffa Kinney is said to have asked.

"No, I do not know everything," He replied. "But when I need to know something, it is pictured before Me."

And so 'Abdu'l-Bahá, on the occasion of His tour of the General Electric Works, knew more about electricity than did Steinmetz.

Shoghi Effendi has said that intuition is a power of the soul. It was this power that was always available to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and available in its totality. He has spoken many times of this "immediate knowledge" — this knowledge attained without the means of books or other humans, this strange intuitive power which to some degree is available to us all.

And often, in closing an interview after answering some abstruse question, 'Abdu'l-Bahá would say, "Time does not permit of further answer. But meditate on this, and the truth will come to you."

And so — although 'Abdu'l-Bahá is no longer with us to answer our questions — the power of the Holy Spirit so strong in Him is still available to us, to guide, to fortify, to heal.

Uruguay

Pictured are some of the participants in southern Uruguay.

'Bahá'í children's classes in Florida,
Development

Review of activities around the world

The worldwide Bahá'í community is growing in size, in strength, and in capacity. One clear indication of this expansion is the attention that Bahá'í communities are now giving to social and economic development. Development activities are a natural part of the growth of the Bahá'í community; they are a visible demonstration of Bahá'í-ulláh's Teachings put into practice, and cause the community to advance both spiritually and materially.

Bahá'í development means using the tools of the Faith—consultation, the network of administration, and human qualities such as humility and self-sacrifice—to confront the challenges of growth, to solve problems, and carry the community forward. Every society has needs and problems that even the smallest Bahá'í community can begin to address. The following are some examples.

AFRICA

Development activities in the African continent have attracted public support because they address local needs and are implemented by local communities, creating a sound foundation for further growth.

Kenya

The youth of Jeberen have been attending poultry-farming seminars in Gisambai and Bukuru and have visited a small-scale farm in Maragoli to prepare for their own poultry-farming and pig-raising project.

Among the busy program of activities enjoyed by the Menu youth is a vegetable-growing project. (From "Arise," the newsletter of the National Youth Committee, December 1988)

Zaire

During September, a two-week health education training program in the village of Mubambio trained local Bahá'ís as leaders in health education focused on the role of the health educator in the village and involved practice teaching with groups of villagers.

To demonstrate to the trainees their broader role in social and economic development, a survey was conducted to evaluate the greatest needs of the village, and a project was chosen to fill that need. The survey took the form of a "village walk." Trainees visited each home, noting the problems of the village. As a result, they decided to help the local Assembly of Mubambio to plant seedlings along a path to the village—inadequate firewood is a daily concern for the villagers.

A report describing the project says in part: "On Thursday morning a community-wide meeting was held in the Bahá'í Centre. Sixty people came, including children and youth and three friends of the Faith. The importance of trees to the community was discussed and then an explanation of how to plant a tree was given. . . . Over 250 trees were planted in less than two hours. . . . Unity in spirit and action was manifest in this project, which was started by the community because they saw a problem and a way to potentially solve it. It was a project that was carried out by the community with virtually no outside help. . . . The result was a sense of pride and self-worth that was tangible." The report adds that when traditional dances took place that evening, "the friends in Mubambio danced longer than usual."

On the final day the hospital administrator gave a well-received talk at the closing ceremony, and while praising the work of the Bahá'ís, promised his support to the health educators in the area. (Report from an individual received November 10, 1988)

THE AMERICAS

Initiatives exemplifying consultation and unified action, directed through
the Baha'i administrative channels to
address current community needs,
have enriched the Baha'i community's
experience while strengthening bonds
with the public.

Alaska
A groundswell of involvement in ac-
tivities confronting problems related to
alcoholism is emerging among the Ba-
ha'is and the community at large.

Last June, the local Spiritual Assembly
of Oceanview and the Office of Teach-
ing and Consolidation worked
一起 to support the fifth annual
Rural Provider's Conference, sponsor-
ed by RurAL-CAP (a social service
organization operated by Native Amer-
icans in Alaska), at Glenn-allen in
the southeastern area of the country. One
of the paramount aims of RurAL-CAP is
to eliminate alcohol and drug abuse
from the native community by the year
2000. The Baha'is were invited to take
responsibility for feeding the 500 rural
health providers and villagers who
took part in the conference and to or-
ganize their bus and air transportation.

In the course of supporting this im-
portant social issue, the Baha'is were
able to share the Faith through action.
A letter received from the conference
coordinator expresses gratitude and the
hope of further collaboration: "On be-
half of RurAL-CAP Alcohol Depart-
ment I would like to take this opportu-
nity to express our gratitude to the Ba-
ha'is people... our program is look-
ng forward to a long working rela-
tionship with you in the future."

The Baha'is participants were equally
grateful for the chance to serve the
community in this way. (Report from
Alaska Baha'i News, August 1988)

ASIA
In many Asian countries the adminis-
trative network of the Baha'i Faith,
being based on a spiritual foundation
where the aim, above all, is the uplift-
ment and restoration of human digni-
ty, is acknowledged by the public as
praiseworthy, strong and enduring in
contrast to the community at large
which is often battered by opposing
forces.

The implementation of educational
and health projects in response to local
needs has, over a period of time, seen
significant changes in attitudes.

Philippines
The people of the Mawayan tribes in
Oriental Mindoro were first introduced
to the Faith during the mid-'60s. Soon
after, the first local Spiritual Assembly
was formed, and during the Five Year
Plan the first tutorial school was estab-
lished, fulfilling one of the Philippines'
goals.

Over the past two years a health pro-
ject among the Mawayan people has
been working to control and immunize
against an upsurge in the incidence of
malaria. The Baha'is' commitment to
this project, the manner in which they
operate, and the effectiveness of the
Baha'i network have won the trust and
support of government health authori-
ities who, a September report from the
National Spiritual Assembly states, are
now expressing "much eagerness and
enthusiasm to work with the Baha'is."

The report continues: "The medical
team sent by the Central Office and
provincial coordinator was very im-
pressed with the Baha'i group because
of the initiative, zeal and enthusiasm to
help the far-flung communities.

"A seminar given by the Provincial
Malaria Control Unit, attended by Ba-
ha'i tutorial school teachers and Mang-
yan local Assembly members, was very
successful." The Baha'is, it says, are
now considered volunteer workers.

"An encouraging development," a
report sent last July by the National
Spiritual Assembly, says, "has taken
place in these areas. Whereas before
when asked who their leader was, the
Mangyans would immediately point to
their teacher as the spokesman and
... protector of the community.
Now when asked ... they immediate-
ly say it is the local Assembly and all
decisions are made by the local ... As-
sembly."

In addition, on August 24 the Ba-
ha',s, the only religious group invited,
attended a meeting in Mansalay on the
topic of community development, at
the invitation of the local government
organizers.

AUSTRALASIA
Initiatives addressing local needs and
using available resources have demon-
strated the ability of Baha'is to coor-
dinate activities involving various peo-
ple from the public sector, and to pro-
vide practical measures with which to
meet those needs.

These projects are simple but effect-
ive, providing a solid foundation for
further development.

Papua New Guinea
A Child Education Teacher Training
and Regional Women's Institute held
last September 16-18 in Rabaul used a
lively program of demonstrations and
workshops on child education, talks,
and special presentations by three guest
speakers—all experts in community
health and education.

About 50 people from the northern
Solomons as well as New Ireland and
New Britain took part. Talks covered
an historical overview of the emancipa-
tion of women and principles for
peace.

The guest speakers, Diane Gold-
smith, provincial nutritionist; Rose
Porowai, senior inspector of commu-
ity schools; and Barbara Maira, presi-
dent of the Council of Women and a
former family welfare officer, gave
practical advice from their fields of ex-
pertise. (Report from the National
Spiritual Assembly of November 21,
1988)

A report from the Continental
Board of Counsellors of November 24
relays news of the active involvement
of women in the administrative chan-
els of the Faith and the full support
for women's initiatives demonstrated
by the men in this active community.

Last year, the report says, the per-
centage of women on national and re-
regional committees in Papua New Gui-
nea was close to 50 percent, and there
has been more than a two-fold increase
in the number of women appointed as
assistants to Auxiliary Board members.
Sustained women's activities are under
way in Port Moresby, Lae, Rabaul,
Goroka and several rural areas of the
country.

A three-day women's conference in
Mt. Brown, Central Province, one of
the most remote areas of the country,
which was organized by the village
women themselves, brought together
more than 50 participants. During the
conference, the men took charge of
child-minding, cooking, washing and
fucking water, thus giving their full
support to the conference. The report
notes that these events are novel and
are considered major achievements in
this part of the country.

A weekend women's conference held
last November at the National Baha'
Centre in Lae is reported to have drawn "an unexpected massive participation of women" who are not Bahá'ís. A report in "The Bahá'í Faith" (news from the National Office) for November adds that members of the Morobe (Province) Women's Association, which was holding its general meeting in Lae, attended the event, and "the women were most impressed with the Bahá'í men who supported the seminar by preparing and serving 'mumu' (a traditional food) on the Saturday evening."

Charts and videos were used as teaching aids, presenting a broad range of health-related topics with the help of experts in the field.

Two other women's conferences are reported to have taken place recently in the heart of the Highlands (Goroka and Lae), with 10 and 30 participants respectively. All of the above activities have resulted in radio and newspaper coverage on a national scale.

Fiji

A pioneer living in Fiji has begun a social development program while studying children's literature at a university. With her two small children and a university lecturer, she has initiated a weekly story-reading program at an orphanage that houses 60 children, a 20-minute drive from her home. The event begins with story-reading in a large group setting and is followed by smaller group readings with the older children reading to younger ones. Each week the children's library book displays are changed. (Report from an individual Bahá'í dated September 1988)

EUROPE

The Bahá'í communities in many parts of the world are realizing that they can reach and help heal the racial problems of their societies by presenting the Bahá'í vision of cultural harmony and the value of diversity, in contrast to the increasingly blatant racism and polarization developing in these countries.

The Netherlands

Responding to the racial tensions created by a lack of understanding between the immigrant populations and the Dutch people, the Bahá'ís in the Netherlands organized a conference on the theme of "The Multi-Ethnic Society of the Future," showing the public the positive enrichment that such diversity potentially offers.

An article in the September 27, 1988, issue of Bahá'í Berichten says that "about 600,000 foreigners" reside in the Netherlands, a country whose total population is about 14,568,000. The article continues, "In Amsterdam half of the elementary school children come from immigrant families.

"Many Dutch people have trouble defining their attitude toward these newcomers, and it appears that foreigners have difficulty finding their way in our complicated society.

"Are we able to integrate ethnic and religious minorities within our society while maintaining our own identity? Can Dutch people . . . experience another culture as an enrichment of their own world? . . . What is intercultural education?"

To address these questions and ways of eliminating discrimination, two days of workshops and talks were held last October at the De Poort conference center. Speakers and workshop facilitators were professionals with a wide range of experience and knowledge, derived from working in the field of inter-cultural relations.

A report in Bahá'í Berichten for November 4 says: "The participating Bahá'ís were able to experience how important it is to organize and attend such conferences, where we can clearly play an important, inspiring and conciliatory role."

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Thailand

Golbang Jaffari, an 11-year-old Bahá'í from Thailand, holding her Arc Fund project, is pictured with the Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone and Mrs. Madge Featherstone during their recent visit to Thailand. Golbang was inspired to begin a project to save money for the Arc Fund after hearing about it following the International Convention in Haifa, Israel.
The world

'Trail of Light' brightens 'Carib Week'

During September 1988, a four-member Carib (Garifuna Indian) Bahá'í music and dance team from the "Trail of Light" project in Belize and Honduras made a memorable week-long visit to their fellow Carib people in Dominica. The visit corresponded with the annual celebration of Carib Week.

The group was received at Roseau Airport by the Carib chief, Irvince Auguste, whose council acted as host to the group during its stay.

The team was interviewed by a crew from a local television station, and the interview was broadcast September 30 on a weekly cable TV news program.

The five-minute feature about the "Trail of Light" marked the first time a program about the Faith had been broadcast in that area.

On three occasions Dominica Broadcasting Service, the national radio station, mentioned the group as part of a news report, and on October 5 a radio interview with the team was aired as a special news feature.

An article and photograph of the group appeared in Dominica's weekly newspaper, The New Chronicle.

At the gala cultural show for Carib Week on October 2, the group presented a 20-minute dance and drum performance for 500 people. Afterward, gifts were exchanged between the Trail of Light team and Carib Council. In addition, presentations of the Universal House of Justice's peace statement were made to other officials and a copy of the Kitáb-i-Qáín was presented to the Carib chief.

Grenada

At a meeting last October 11 of the United Nations General Assembly, Grenada's Minister of External Affairs, Ben Joseph Jones, made a strong plea for that body to take steps to secure for the Bahá'ís in Iran "their God-given right to the sacred freedom to worship God in their own way."

The continuance of the problem in Iran, he said, will always be a hindrance to the attainment of peace and stability in that country, and, he added, "I call upon this august body to take such steps as would cause the Iranian government to grant to the Bahá'ís their God-given right...."
New Zealand

About 200 people gathered last September 16 to celebrate the dedication of a new Bahá'í Center in Onehunga, Auckland, New Zealand.

The date coincided with the anniversary of the passing of the Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga, in whose memory the Center is named. Mr. Olinga visited Auckland in 1958.

The ceremony was opened with a Maori welcome, speeches and music. Next came a talk by Ephraim Te Paa, a Maori elder from the far north of the country, who shared his recollections of Mr. Olinga.

Grace Olinga Manins, a daughter of the Hand of the Cause, then presented a talk dedicated to her father's memory.

Messages from several Bahá'í communities in New Zealand were read and gifts presented.

Zambia

The Bahá'ís of Zambia were given a pleasant surprise as they manned their booth at the annual Agricultural Show in Lusaka.

A group of young people, immaculately dressed in school uniforms, appeared with their headmaster, marching toward the booth and singing a popular Bahá'í song, “We Are Walking in the Light of Bahá'u'lláh.”

The Zambian Bahá'ís soon learned that the group was part of the government of Zimbabwe's formal participation in the show, and that the headmaster, a Bahá'í, and many of his students, who are also Bahá'ís, were pleased to see the booth and decided to surprise the Zambian Bahá'ís.

The Agricultural Show is visited each year by an estimated 100,000 to 200,000 people from Zambia and neighboring countries. Under the direction of the Spiritual Assembly of Lusaka, Bahá'ís have taken part regularly in the show by organizing a Bahá'í display.
The Netherlands

Twenty-eight Bahá'ís from 10 countries took an active part last July 23-30 in the 73rd Universal Esperanto Congress at the De Doelen Center in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

In all, 2,800 Esperantists from 61 countries attended the Congress.

Bahá'ís made two official presentations: the first, centered on the Bahá'í House of Worship in India, was by Pierre Daoust of Luxembourg; the second, an introduction to the Faith by Luc Feidangi of the Central African Republic, was the first talk ever given by an African at a Universal Esperanto Congress.

On behalf of the Universal House of Justice, the Bahá'í Esperanto-Ligo (BEL) presented a contribution to the worldwide Esperanto movement to help construct an Esperanto Cultural Center in Bialystok, Poland, the birthplace of Dr. Ludwig Zamenhof, who invented the international language in 1887.

The contribution was made in memory of Dr. Zamenhof's daughter, Lidia, who was a Bahá'í and an outstanding teacher of Esperanto.

One room in the Center, which is expected to be completed in 10 years, will be named for Lidia Zamenhof.

During the Tago de la Paco (Day of Peace), which has become a traditional part of the Esperanto Congress, Heinz-Dieter Maas, the chairman of BEL, presented the Bahá'í statement on nature, which was translated into Esperanto and published for the occasion.

Mr. Maas also represented the Faith during an interfaith meeting.

The next two Universal Esperanto Congresses will be held in Brighton, England (1989) and Havana, Cuba (1990).

Central African Republic

A Bahá'í conference in Salangar village, about 30 kms (18 miles) from Bimbo and Bangui in the southwestern area of the Central African Republic, drew about 70 people, among whom were the village chief, local dignitaries, and representatives of the Catholic and Apostolic churches. Also present was a representative of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Among those at the conference were 50 pygmies. Four Bahá'ís came on foot from Bangui while 15 traveled from Bimbo.

The event coincided with the anniversary of the introduction of the Faith in that locality. Topics discussed included the role of women, the Bahá'í law concerning alcohol, and the Bahá'í Funds.

Leeward Islands

A Caribbean Women's Conference, sponsored by the Bahá'ís of the Leeward Islands, was held last September 9-11 on the island of Antigua. Participants, half of whom were not Bahá'ís, came from 12 countries.

Bangladesh

A Bahá'í delegation presents a copy of The Bahá'í World, Vol. XVIII, to the vice-president of Bangladesh, Justice Nurul Islam (right), during a meeting last August 14. The Bahá'ís were warmly received by the vice-president who asked many questions about the Faith during an ensuing discussion.

A Women's Conference held last May 14 at Lota Village, Khulna, Bangladesh, drew 60 women and men, among them a representative of the National Women's Committee and a traveling teacher from Singapore.

As a result, 23 people including members of six families embraced the Cause.

The Spiritual Assembly of Dacca, Bangladesh, operated a free medical camp at the country's Bahá'í National Center last September 15-30 to care for victims of the recent flood disaster.

The service was advertised in the newspaper and by a banner fixed at the roadside near the Center.

A Bahá'í from Mymensingh, who is also a medical worker, received publicity in local papers for his services, rendered while traveling and teaching in the area.

Northern Ireland

Fifty-three people took part in a North-South Conference last September in Londonderry, Northern Ireland, whose purpose was to explore ways to promote the Faith within the Catholic community.

Representatives from the National Spiritual Assemblies of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland emphasized the need for collaboration in this common teaching goal.

On one afternoon a room was rented in Shantallow, a predominantly Catholic area of the city, and 26 participants gathered there to pray, after which they went out to meet the local people, putting into practice ideas generated during the conference.
Baha’i International Community

Last December 15, two representatives of the Baha’i International Community to the United Nations in New York City, Dr. Victor de Araujo and Mary Sawicki Power, met with the deputy Permanent Representative of the USSR to the UN, Victor Zvezdin, and the Counselor at the Mission, Semyon Dzakhayev, to express the sympathy of Baha’is around the world for the suffering experienced by the Armenian people as a result of the recent earthquake disaster.

The half-hour meeting included a discussion of the global nature of the Baha’i community and its involvement in peace-oriented issues and social and economic development.

CONGO is an umbrella group which ensures that all consultative NGOs have equal and direct access to the UN and have the opportunity to take part in the NGO dimension of UN programs and activities.

The board is elected every three years when the General Assembly of the conference convenes, on an alternating basis, in New York City or Geneva, Switzerland.

The BIC has been a member organization of CONGO since gaining consultative status in 1970. This is the first time it has been elected to serve as Secretary.

Yugoslavia

Nineteen young Baha’is from eight countries were among the 700 participants representing more than 40 countries at the 44th World Esperantist Youth Congress held last July 15-22 in Zagreb, Yugoslavia.

It marked the first time that a delegation of Baha’is was invited by the World Esperanto Youth Organization (TEJO) to attend the Congress.

Two lectures were given by Baha’is, one on the principle of consultation and the other accompanying a slide program about the Faith.

At an interfaith meeting during the Congress, Baha’is made up half of the audience.

An article in an issue of the Congress newspaper mentioned the newly founded youth section of the Baha’i Esperanto-Ligo (Baha’i Esperanto League).

Laos

An extensive teaching campaign which resulted from a meeting between Counsellor Hedi Ahmadiyyih and the National Spiritual Assembly of Belize is using the arts as a medium for teaching.

The campaign, aided by Robert Reneau, a Baha’i musician from Belize who now lives in the United States, has swept through the country, inspiring a renewed spirit of action, especially among the youth.

Mr. Reneau, who was invited by the National Spiritual Assembly to take part in the campaign, organized a group of youth, teaching them songs and dances. More items were added to the show that developed as the group moved from one district to another, finally covering all districts in Belize.

The highlight was a performance at the Bliss Institute auditorium in Belize City which was advertised on radio and television. Mr. Reneau was interviewed on radio about his visit to Belize.

A significant feature of the campaign is that many of the young people taking part are residents of Belize, whereas past teaching efforts were carried out mainly by traveling teachers.

West Malaysia

Twenty-three new local Spiritual Assemblies have been formed in West Malaysia since Ridvan 1988, raising the total to 95—the maximum possible for that region of the country.
Hong Kong

Two teaching institutes organized by pioneers from Taiwan have spurred teaching activity in Hong Kong, resulting in many new enrollments in the Faith.

The first of these institutes, which were planned by Jack Davis and Kazuo Honda, was for a teaching team, the second for members of the National Spiritual Assembly, Auxiliary Board members and members of the National Teaching Committee.

Both were highly successful in nurturing a strong feeling of love and unity between the believers and the institutions of the Faith, as well as leading to enrollments—70 new believers in less than two weeks.

Among the reported activities was a presentation of the Faith to 400 students and 20 teachers which was arranged by a school principal in Tai Po. A coffee shop manager gave the teaching team permission to speak to his patrons. A brief presentation and an invitation to those who were interested to hear more resulted in 15 enrollments.

Mr. Davis has begun a nine-day institute in Macau, raising the spirits of the Bahá’í community there with the prospect of teaching.

Puerto Rico

Pictured are those who took part in a course on Bahá’í International Service held last June 19-July 4 at the Amoz Gibson Training Centre in Arecibo, Puerto Rico.

Instructor Michael Stokes (right) consults with Nooshin Burwell, coordinator of Radio Bahá’í Ecuador, during one of last summer’s radio courses at the Amoz Gibson Training Centre for Bahá’í Media in Arecibo, Puerto Rico.

Uganda

Following persistent efforts by the Bahá’í community of Uganda, a delegation of three members of that country’s National Spiritual Assembly was given a 45-minute audience last September 27 in which to present the peace statement to President Yoweri Museveni.

Before that meeting, the delegation met with the Presidential Press Unit and answered many questions about the Faith. The briefing, which lasted well over an hour, attracted the interest of many State House staff members.

The meeting with the president evolved into a discussion of many aspects of the Faith. He had many questions about its history, its relationship to current world issues, and the persecution of Bahá’ís in Iran.

In addition to the peace statement, the president was given copies of Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, the Kitáb-i-Iqán, and The Earth Is But One Country.

The presentation ceremony was broadcast September 30 and October 1 in the country’s 11 major languages on Radio Uganda News.

Nigeria

Last September 19, the Bahá’í community of Nigeria was granted a license which authorizes them to hold marriage ceremonies at the National Teaching Institute in Oghara, Bendel State. The marriage license is a privilege granted to only some religions in Nigeria.
Papua New Guinea

Pictured are many of the 43 adult Baha’is and 17 children who attended the Baha’i Unit Convention last December 4 in Rabaul, Papua New Guinea. It marked the first time in which the Baha’is of East New Britain had gathered to elect a delegate to the Baha’i National Convention to be held next April in Lae. Most of the friends, who came from Watom Island, Kokopo, Wonga Wonga Plantation, Rahim Village, Balanataman and Rabaul, had heard about the meeting on the Toksale Program on Radio East New Britain.

Ecuador

Since June, Ecuador’s Radio Bahá’í has been sponsoring the annual Nucancho Tono Festivals, regional events for amateur musical competitions.

The first of these festivals was held last June in Pichincha Province. Its finale featured 21 amateur groups.

Some of the winners of previous festivals are presently touring Europe and America. All have publicly thanked Radio Bahá’í for opening the door to musical achievement; one group presented a plaque to the station in recognition of its work.

Last August, Radio Bahá’í was given another award for community service. The plaque, recognizing its work for children, was presented by the former First Lady of Ecuador, Mme. Febres Cordero.

India

The teaching successes last September in India’s Kerala State came as a result of a teaching campaign launched August 21 in the Cannamore district.

Hearing of a forthcoming arts festival, at which more than 500 artists from all parts of India and the Lakshadweep Islands were participating, the Spiritual Assembly of Cannanore seized the opportunity to present the Faith.

Within a week, 88 new believers had been enrolled and three new localities opened to the Faith, including the Lakshadweep Islands. Seven of the 20 artists from those islands returned home as Baha’is.

As of the end of November 1988, more than 300 new believers had been enrolled.

The first 15 days of an intensive teaching campaign last October in India’s Orissa State resulted in 2,600 enrollments. Fifty Bahá’ís have volunteered for two months of full-time service in the teaching effort.

Last October 8, the Hon. Shri Nar Bahadur Bhandari, chief minister of Sikkim, visited the Bahá’í House of Worship near New Delhi, India.

Thirteen Bahá’ís from seven localities attended the first Bahá’í Health Professionals’ Seminar held last September 3-5 at the New Era Development Institute in Panchgani, India.

Radio Bahá’í for opening the door to musical achievement; one group presented a plaque to the station in recognition of its work.

Last August, Radio Bahá’í was given another award for community service. The plaque, recognizing its work for children, was presented by the former First Lady of Ecuador, Mme. Febres Cordero.

Women from one of the five model villages of Panchayat Bammnouti in Uttar Pradesh, India, gather with visitors. The village, Rajja ka Purwa, which is an all-Bahá’í village, was visited by a group of nine people which included members of the Board of Counsellors, the National Spiritual Assembly, the Auxiliary Board, and local development projects.
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Taiwan

Visit brings ‘abundant blessings’

The following E-mail was sent to the Universal House of Justice on September 24, 1988, by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Taiwan:

Abundant blessings showered upon our community. Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum’s visit continues to enrich every aspect of our community life. All nine members National Assembly greeted beloved Khánum upon arrival evening September 7. Beloved Khánum was given VIP treatment at the airport courtesy of Foreign Minister’s high office. On September 8, 40-minute meeting with His Excellency Foreign Minister Mr. Lien at his office greatly enhanced prestige Faith eyes of high official. Mr. Lien said how “privileged” he was that Amatu’l-Bahá had given him this “audience.” He was presented a copy of The Hidden Words and was genuinely impressed.

That same evening Rúhíyyih Khánum met with more than 120 Bahá’ís from Taipei and surrounding community and was a tremendous source of inspiration to all attending. September 9 interview with the second most popular radio station on Taiwan, at Khánum’s hotel. The 30-minute interview will be aired September 26; more than four million listeners expected. Khánum’s invitation for lunch with a number of Bahá’ís whose services to the Faith had temporarily been lessened inspired each of them such that all have committed to go on pilgrimage in February 1989. The evening of September 9 marked Amatu’l-Bahá’s historic visit to Keelung, one of the newly established communities with more than 100 new believers. This meeting will never be forgotten!

The newly formed Spiritual Assembly planned and executed all activities for Khánum’s visit. She was received with a colorful banner with her name on it. A traditional firecracker welcoming ceremony was followed by many of the new believers with the entire membership of that Assembly respectfully presenting themselves to Amatu’l-Bahá. A traditional Chinese banquet was prepared by Bahá’í women and donated by the members of the Keelung Bahá’í community. Following dinner, Khánum was greeted by nearly 100 friends, and there was once again a traditional welcoming ceremony at the place she was to speak. More than 40 percent of the new believers attended that meeting. The mayor of Keelung, a large metropolitan city, opened the meeting, welcoming Amatu’l-Bahá with highly complimentary remarks. He said the Bahá’ís of Keelung are among the best citizens of that city. Wife of the senator from Keelung was present to welcome Khánum, as the senator was out of the country. All of the above arrangements were prepared by the new local Spiritual Assembly of Keelung.

On September 10, the National Spiritual Assembly was blessed with meeting with Rúhíyyih Khánum and sharing of her words of wisdom and inspiration. Counsellor Montazí and Mrs. Nakhjavání graced the meeting with their presence as well. Afternoon and evening, Amatu’l-Bahá addressed the Auxiliary Board member conference with three Counsellors, all members of the National Assembly and Auxiliary Board members from Asia. September 11, Rúhíyyih Khánum met with the Bahá’ís of Chiayi and surrounding community. Chiayi is an “entry by troops” area in southern Taiwan. More than 100 attended, about half of whom were new believers from the area. Upon arriving at her hotel after a four-hour drive, she was met by more than 50 Bahá’ís. Again she was received with a firecracker welcoming ceremony. On September 12, Amatu’l-Bahá, after a four-hour drive back to Taipei, flew to Taitung, another “entry by troops” area. At a meeting with some 80 Bahá’ís, the Magistrate of Taitung County welcomed Khánum and expressed his happiness to have had a chance to welcome her. A press conference was attended by nine reporters representing all the newspapers of the county. Eight members of the National Assembly gathered to bid farewell to Amatu’l-Bahá and Mrs. Nakhjavání. Foreign Minister’s office provided VIP room reserved for high-ranking diplomats, as well as sending its representative to assist through visa and customs section.

Only four days after Amatu’l-Bahá’s departure, the National Assembly met in a joint session with all members of National Teaching Committee and National Youth Committee, with two Auxiliary Board members present, sharing with them its decision, namely: We now confidently embark on teaching the masses with a minimum goal of 1 percent of the population (200,000) to have entered the Faith by Ridván 1992, and that the thrust of the campaign is to be reliance upon the power of the Holy Spirit and the Covenant. This determination is a small token of our gratitude to Bahá’u’lláh for having blessed us with the presence of Rúhíyyih Khánum. We are determined. We beseech your prayers.

With loving Bahá’í greetings,
National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Taiwan
1989 at the Bahá’í House of Worship in New Delhi began with a special prayer program on New Year’s day in memory of H. Borrah Kavelin, a former member of the Universal House of Justice who died in December. Ten days later, another occasion for such prayers arose when the sad news of the passing of Auxiliary Board member Meheraban Javanmardi from Panchgani was received. A memorial service was held on January 11.

Saturday mornings at the House of Worship belong to school children, with thousands in their varied and colorful uniforms visiting the Temple. With this in mind, a suggestion from the Spiritual Assembly of Delhi to organize a special prayer program for the children was taken up, and the first such program was held on January 7. Due to inclement weather that day, no school groups arrived, but the prayer program, comprised of songs by a choir and prayer readings by the Baha’i children, was enthralling.

On January 21, about a thousand students were present for another program, during which another thousand or so arrived, and the 15- to 20-minute program was extended to 40 minutes, during which time the students sat in absolute silence savoring the words of the prayers revealed by Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. The number of students visiting the Temple in January was 17,149. Each one of them was given a prayer card.

During January many foreign tourists visited the House of Worship. A group of 50 Russians comprising eminent film personalities, poets and intellectuals greatly appreciated the principle of the oneness of humankind. One of them suggested that we send Bahá’í literature through the Indian Embassy in Moscow so that Russians might acquire more information on the Bahá’í Faith. Visitors from various states in India also came to the Temple in great numbers. In particular, groups of youth who were in Delhi to take part in India’s Republic Day celebrations were able to visit, carrying back with them information leaflets in their regional language. On Republic Day itself, January 26, a crowd of more than 31,000 visited the Temple. The total number of visitors in January was 212,237.

Among the dignitaries from India and abroad who came to the Temple in January were the Home Minister of the State of Uttar Pradesh; the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church of Rumania; the Primate of the Armenian Church of Australia; the Deputy Minister of Aviation of the USSR; the Soviet Minister of the Coal Industry; a delegation of officers of the armed forces of Yugoslavia; high officials of the Royal Bhutan Army, and film personalities from Russia and China.
United States

Women’s Council honors Dr. Ellis

Dr. Wilma Ellis, administrator general of the Bahá’í International Community, was one of several honorees when the National Council of Women held its annual Woman of Conscience award dinner February 16 at United Nations headquarters in New York.

The event, attended by more than 200 guests, also celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The honorary chairman was Mrs. Desmond Tutu, wife of the Nobel laureate.

Winner of the 1988 Woman of Conscience Award was Margaret C. Snyder, director for the past 10 years of UNIFEM, the UN Development Fund for Women.

During the 1970s Mrs. Snyder worked as a consultant and regional adviser for social affairs for the UN Economic Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Her earlier career was spent in the academic field, during which she was for eight years dean of women at Le Moyne College in Syracuse. She has been tireless in her pursuit of women’s development.

Dr. Ellis was one of three other women, all of whom belong to membership organizations of the National Council of Women, who were honored as Women of Conscience for outstanding achievement in their respective fields.

The other honorees were Dr. Marcella Maxwell, chairman of the New York City Commission on the Status of Women, and Frances C. Sawyer, president of Women United for the United Nations.

Dr. Ellis, a featured speaker at the dinner, urged NCW members to “look past current particularisms and focus your conscious concern on the challenges of this day.”

Noting that many social problems demand solutions, she encouraged women to “learn peace” so that they can “teach peace.”

“Our job,” she said, “is to carry on the fine tradition of women like Mary McLeod Bethune and Eleanor Roosevelt, women who worked for peace and demanded equality.”

Preceding the dinner was a seminar on “Changing Attitudes Toward Women for the Year 2000.” Topics discussed were racism, economics and education relating to minorities, and women and the aging.

The Bahá’í National Committee on Women was one of five co-sponsors of the event, and Mary S. Power, representative of the Bahá’í International Community to the UN and a member of the executive committee of the NCW, served as program coordinator for the dinner.
As we mark the first anniversary of the opening of School of the Nations, we continue to be very much aware of how much there is yet to be accomplished. The further development of the specialized curriculum that must necessarily address our unique bi-lingual, multi-cultural situation; the acquisition of sorely needed resource materials and educational equipment; the ongoing effort to obtain another facility in order to cope with our expansion and to provide for the physical education of the children; the lack of adequate financial resources—all serve as constant reminders of the tremendous amount of work to be done.

Yet we cannot help but be pleased and grateful for the large strides that have been taken toward the accomplishment of the school’s most fundamental goal: to create a learning environment in which children from various national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds can work and play together—and in the process realize that they are truly “world citizens” in a global community.

The school was opened in January 1988 as a kindergarten with five students—two of whom were the children of Baha’is who were involved in the establishment of the school. We have since expanded through the Primary Six level, and at this writing we have 28 students. Applications and queries already received for future enrollment (after Chinese New Year) push the expected total enrollment for the second term to around 80. Besides children from Macau and Hong Kong, School of the Nations has accepted students from Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea, Madagascar, Pakistan, the Philippines, Portugal, Singapore, Taiwan, Tonga, the United Kingdom and the United States. This cultural diversity is coupled with the fact that our students come from a wide range of economic and social backgrounds; their parents, who include those with relatively little means, established professionals, university faculty, local residents and expatriates, have found the school to be a welcome and long-awaited educational alternative for their children.

School of the Nations has also managed to maintain the diversity of its staff, which includes educators from Canada, China, Finland, Hong Kong, Macau, Malaysia, the United Kingdom and the United States. Since last September, five teachers and the school secretary have declared their faith in Bahá’u’lláh. Now, all of the teachers in the school are Bahá’ís.

In addition to the kindergarten and primary school, School of the Nations has established the “Centre for Continuing Education”—an auxiliary institution which offers language and computer training courses for adults. Since its opening in May 1988, the Centre has provided a series of specialized courses in English and Mandarin, and the more recent opening of the Centre’s fully equipped computer training facility has allowed the school to provide excellent courses in a comprehensive range of computer skills for personal and business application.

Indeed, many positive developments have come about in recent months, developments that were no doubt sparked by the special blessing that was received when the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum officially inaugurated the school during a ceremony held in September 1988. That event, attended by a host of prominent community leaders including one of Macau’s most distinguished and revered Catholic priests, received extensive press coverage and did much to establish the public’s recognition of School of the Nations as an educational institution that warrants the community’s attention.

Another noteworthy event took place a month later, in October, when the staff and students of School of the Nations visited a kindergarten in Zhu Hai, China, on the official invitation of the Zhu Hai Department of Cultural Affairs. Zhu Hai television and the Macau press recorded the event as an example of the way in which the school fosters the students’ awareness of their identity as world citizens.

One year ago, when so few parents were willing to take the risk associated with enrolling their children in a new, unproven school, we were very much aware that one of our greatest challenges would be that of gaining the confidence of the local community—establishing ourselves in the eyes of the people of Macau as a reputable, viable educational institution. An indication of how far the school has come was given in January when a group of Form Two students from Sacred Heart, a Catholic girls’ school which ranks as one of the most prestigious schools in Macau, paid a formal visit to School of the Nations. The students were doing a research project on “the economics of international education,” and had been advised to study School of the Nations since our school is known as Macau’s “international school.” These students were struck, they said, by the diversity, and were clearly excited by the idea of having children from so many backgrounds come together under one roof. If they take that excitement back to their school, we will have made the sort of contribution that everyone associated with School of the Nations was determined to make from the beginning.

—Donald Tennant, Administrator
Bahá’í physician returns to Vietnam

Dr. Jim Turpin, a Bahá’í from Ashe­ville, North Carolina, who spent seven years as a physician in Vietnam, was recently invited back by the present Communist government to train local health workers in the techniques of child survival.

Dr. Turpin, who founded the non-profit medical organization Project Concern after working with the poor in Mexico in 1959, gave up a family practice in San Diego in 1960 and went to Hong Kong to practice medicine.

While there he met a young doctor from New Zealand who told him about large numbers of starving children in Vietnam.

Within weeks, Dr. Turpin was on a plane to Saigon.

He and other American doctors and nurses stayed until 1972, when conditions became too dangerous and they were forced to leave.

"We left reluctantly," Dr. Turpin said in a front-page article last November 28 in The Asheville Citizen. "We had been secure because everyone knew we were non-political. We treated anyone who came in, no questions asked."

Dr. Turpin, who is an occupational medicine consultant for several hospitals, learned last year that one of two hospitals established in Vietnam by Project Concern was still operating.

He also learned that the hospital was run by a villager who had trained under him in his Village Medical Assistance program in the '60s.

"It was time to go back to Vietnam," said Dr. Turpin, who became a Bahá’í in 1974 and has written two books about his experiences overseas, Vietnam Doctor and A Faraway Country.

"As bad as the situation was during the war, the Vietnamese government is willing to admit now that it's worse.

They're willing to say they need our help."

Dr. Turpin's goal is to train local workers in the latest techniques in child survival including ORT—oral rehydration therapy— which is used to treat children who are badly dehydrated.

"We built up a lot of trust during seven years (in Vietnam)," he said. "They (the government) know we don't spend government money and that we're a non-political organization with a multi-racial and international staff."

United States
Afnan Trust takes strides forward

The Afnan Trust was set up in response to instructions left by the late Hand of the Cause of God Hasan Balyuzi, the purpose of which was to preserve and maintain his collection of books and manuscripts and, in his words, to make them available "to all who seek knowledge."

The legal process necessary to establish the Trust and to get it registered as a charity was long and difficult. During this time the Trustees consulted with the Universal House of Justice and the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom, making every effort to ensure that the final Trust document would allow them as much scope as possible to widen the activities of the Trust as it grew and developed.

The charity was at last registered on June 20, 1985, with its purposes defined in its governing instrument as being:

"The furtherance of the Baha'i Faith in preserving and developing the collection which includes books, tablets, documents, material from diaries and books, manuscripts, photographs and newspaper cuttings; and which relate to the Baha'i Faith, European and world history, Middle Eastern studies in general and to comparative religion formed by the deceased in his lifetime, and generally to promote for the public benefit the study of the Baha'i Faith."

The Trustees have met regularly since the inception of the Trust, and have from the outset identified their first two targets as being the cataloguing of the collection and the necessity of finding suitable premises in which it could be housed and where scholars would be able to have access to it. However, as is the case with most charities in their early stages, the first and overriding consideration has been to try to raise funds with which to achieve these goals.

... the Trustees received an enormous boost, both spiritually and financially, when in November 1985 they received a donation from the Universal House of Justice of 5,000 pounds ...

To this end, the Trustees received an enormous boost, both spiritually and financially, when in November 1985 they received a donation from the Universal House of Justice of 5,000 pounds, followed by a letter in July 1986 giving the Trustees permission to make known to the National Spiritual Assemblies of the United States, Canada, Germany, Italy and Australia that the House of Justice attaches such importance to the Library that it had made the contribution to help promote its interests. The House of Justice expressed the hope that by reporting this fact to the friends they would be encouraged to lend their support to the project.

The Trustees' subsequent approach to these National Assemblies brought donations from almost all of them, with the largest contribution coming from Germany. Also received were a most generous donation from the local Spiritual Assembly of Hunter's Hill in Sydney, Australia, and individual donations from Baha'is in Australia, Japan and the U.S.

At the beginning of 1987 the Trust received a further boost, and a most important one, when the British National Spiritual Assembly generously offered the use of two of the rooms in its newly acquired administrative headquarters in Uckfield, Sussex, as a home for the library.

The rooms were made ready for occupancy in October 1987, and arrangements were made to transport the collection from the late Mr. Balyuzi's house to its new home. A van was hired, and on the Sunday chosen to make the move the house at Hampstead positively swarmed with cheerful and eager young people who, in seemingly next to no time, had the books packed away and the van loaded literally to its roof. Nor did their good humor and enthusiasm desert them when it was found that the van was lopsided and top-heavy, and all had to be removed and reloaded.

So the Library has a new home, and the Trustees have started to address the problems of cataloguing and providing suitable shelving for the books to be stored and displayed. Much valuable work has already been done by Mr. Balyuzi's widow, who, with the help of Mrs. Irma Forbes, has listed all of the English-language books; but a great part of the collection is comprised of material in Persian, and this still has to be catalogued. Much valuable preparatory work has been carried out by Abu' l Quasim Afnan, and more recently the Trustees have been helped by a professional librarian, J.T. Jasion.

It is hoped, therefore, that it will not be many more months before the Library has been so organized as to make it possible for the Trustees to "open its doors," and thus to fulfill Mr. Balyuzi's wish that it be made available "to all who seek knowledge."

Meanwhile, we cannot allow this opportunity to pass without appealing again to all Baha'is to lend their support to the Trust, in whatever way they can; and should anyone be interested, a brochure describing the aims of the Library Trust will be sent on request.

Write to 3 Lyndhurst Road, Hampstead, London NW3 5PX, England.

—Robert Balyuzi, Treasurer

August 1, 1988
United Nations

World Decade for Culture

The experience of the last two decades has shown that culture cannot be dissociated from development in any society, whatever its level of economic growth or its political and economic orientation.

Culture is an intrinsic part of the life and awareness-conscious and unconscious-of individuals and communities. It is a living fund of the creative activity, past and present, which has shaped over the centuries the system of values, traditions and tastes which defines the distinctive genius of a people. Thus culture is bound to make an imprint on economic activity and define the strengths and weaknesses of a society's productive processes.

These conclusions emerge from the experience, both positive and negative, of all countries. Whenever a country has set itself the target of economic growth without reference to its cultural environment, grave economic and cultural imbalances have resulted, and its creative potential has been seriously weakened. Genuine development must be based on the best possible use of the human resources and material wealth of the community. Thus in the final analysis the priorities, motivations and objectives of development must be found in culture. But in the past this has been conspicuously ignored.

From now on culture should be regarded as a direct source of inspiration for development, and in return, development should assign culture a central role as a social regulator.

This imperative applies not only to developing countries, where economic extraversion and cultural alienation have clearly and sometimes dramatically widened the gap between the creative and productive processes. It is also increasingly vital for the industrialized countries, where the headlong race for growth in material wealth is detrimental to the spiritual, ethical and aesthetic aspects of life, and creates much disharmony between man and the natural environment.

The same imperative applies to the relations between nations and between regions, at a time when the processes of social change are rapidly becoming worldwide in scope-a phenomenon which is encouraging a growing exchange of ideas, individuals and goods and is bringing people and nations closer together, but which is also leading to a dangerous uniformity of cultural values, and increasing the inequality of opportunities for progress at world level. As a consequence, human creative diversity may be impoverished and the domination of those who define these values may increase.

A skilfully managed linkage between culture and development can make it possible to strengthen creative identities, to inhibit standardization, and to encourage greater equality of opportunity for self-expression for different cultures, thereby promoting increasingly fruitful exchanges among them. Such a linkage must be based on the rejection of any discrimination, either between nations or between individuals, and on the assertion of the universal humanist values of democracy, justice and solidarity, without which no dialogue is possible. It must be based on the encouragement of freedom of research, invention and innovation which is the prime condition for any cultural life.

This article on the World Decade for Cultural Development was written by Federico Mayor, director-general of UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization) and first appeared in the November 1988 issue of UNESCO's monthly publication, The Courier.

Thus every effort must be made to allow creative diversity to prevail over the dead hand of standardization, the basic aspirations of mankind to prevail over the conflicts of interest groups, and human solidarity to prevail through the free self-expression of the individual.

As I remarked at the ceremony held to launch the World Decade for Development on January 21, 1988, the aim of the Decade is to promote awareness of the cultural imperative and to foster a new state of mind that will lead to the emergence of a variety of proposals devoted to "a diversity which unites, a creativity which brings together, and a solidarity which liberates."

The four major goals of the Decade constitute guidelines rather than a rigid framework:

- Acknowledgment of the cultural dimension of development: ways must be found in which production and creativity can be linked, and economics can be rooted in culture.
- Affirmation and enrichment of cultural identities: the encouragement of all individual and collective talents and initiatives.
- Broadening participation in cultural life: mobilizing the forces of freedom of expression and creativity in the individual and the community, in the name of human rights, free will and independence of mind.
- Promotion of international cultural cooperation: seeking, increasing and strengthening the means whereby a culture freely draws sustenance from others and in turn nourishes them, while respecting a nucleus of universally accepted truths.
Residents have been visiting localities for the Bahá’í teachings. A total of 10,500 new people have declared to believe in the Faith, including 5,000 in the Kannada language. Out of the total, 2,766 new people declared in the month of October, 1,511 in September, and 2,223 in August. Three Public Meetings were held, with 200 people attending each. In addition, 3,000 new people were converted during the month of October.

1. The late Mr. Misaq planned for 3 months.
2. Several Public meetings held.
4. Message was given to 20 people.
5. 2 declarations received.
6. The Bansad opened.
7. New LSAs formed.
8. The project was covered during the month of October.
9. A request to the N.R.T. was given.
10. The project was covered for 3 months.
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Dr UNDERWAY

Mr. Farzad Mass Teaching Project, Dabhol.  
Date: 15th December  
1. 85 new localities opened to the Faith  
2. 11 new LSAs formed  
3. 100 new localities opened to the Faith  
4. 300 new LSAs formed

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1. Mohan Mass Teaching Project, Dhikan  
   Date: 21st Dec.  
   Enrolled: 11,192 men, 14,442 women, 20,537 youths and 3356 children

2. Ms Noor. Munea Mass Teaching Project, Parbhakhar  
   Date: 3rd Jan.  
   Enrolled: 14,340 men, 24,242 women, 35412 youths and 43774 children

Dr Barn Mass Teaching Project, Kanpur  
Date: 25th Jan.  
Enrolled: 5554 men, 20,122 women, 14,425 youths and 50,801 children

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1. Mass Teaching Project, South Tripura Dist.  
   Date: 19th Sept to 18th Nov. 1988  
   1. 1 K new declarations  
   2. 17 new localities opened  
   3. 2 days Victory Conference held  
   4. 410 friends participated

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1. Mr. Tatabhoy Mass Teaching Project, Belgaum  
   Date: 15th Dec.  
   1. 100 new LSAs formed  
   2. 118 new believers enrolled  

2. Amatul Bahai Khamosh Khanum  
   Teaching Project, Kanyakumari  
   Date: October 1988  
   1. 2424 including 100 dignotes accepted the Faith  
   2. Birth Anniversary of Bahai Khamosh celebrated by several LSAs  
   3. Women gathering held at villages  
   4. New tribe, JHANA brought into the Faith  

3. Mr. Nikoo Mass Teaching Project, Cuttack and Puri  
   Date: November 1988  
   1. 2727 new believers enrolled  
   2. 15 new LSAs formed  
   3. 40 new LSAs formed  
   4. Several women gatherings held  
   5. Birth Anniversary of Bahai Khamosh celebrated by new LSAs
Probing nature of Covenant-breaking

Recent events make it appropriate to set down some aspects of the Teachings pertaining to Covenant-breaking. This article aims to provide a brief summary on this subject, with a more comprehensive account to be found in the booklet "The Power of the Covenant: Part Two" published by the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada.

The key to fulfillment of the promises in the Bahá’í Holy Writings, foreshadowing the establishment of world unity and world peace, with the consequent growth of world civilization, lies in the fact that the Bahá’í Revelation is unique in religious history.

Part of its uniqueness is that the fundamental provisions for the organization, authority and administration of the Bahá’í community have been specified clearly and explicitly in writing by Bahá’u’lláh Himself, through provision of a Covenant. The existence of this Covenant protects the Bahá’í Faith from the schism and division which has been so destructive to religion in past ages, and preserves its unity; through this unity, based on adherence to the provisions laid down by Bahá’u’lláh, the Faith retains its power to change the world and to unify mankind.

One of the essential features of the Bahá’í Administrative Order is that no individual can claim authoritative leadership over other Bahá’ís. The Administrative Order rests on the bedrock of the oneness of mankind; authority is vested in institutions elected by the believers, while institutions composed of appointed individuals exercise a counseling or advisory role.

The history of the Bahá’í Faith shows that, on several occasions, individuals have tried to take control of the Faith or to set themselves up as its authoritative leaders; this process involves attacking the central institution of the Faith, since the aim is to seize the authority of that institution. In some instances they were Bahá’ís who had been well-known or well-respected for their knowledge and service. History also shows that they failed to divide the Bahá’í community, succeeding only in causing a temporary breach through attracting a few followers for a limited period.

The prophecies of the ancient scriptures are that we are now living in the Day that shall not be followed by Night; our Teachings explain that this prophecy refers to the fact that the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh will protect the Bahá’í community from division.

When an individual who is a member of the Faith attacks its central institution, he is violating the Covenant; should he persist in doing this, despite all efforts to help him through education and counsel (sometimes over a long period of time), he is declared a Covenant-breaker and the believers are called upon to have no contact or association with him.

Why does an individual, who may be a knowledgeable Bahá’í with a record of service to the Faith, embark upon an attack on the central institution of the Faith? The Teachings clearly indicate that it is due to a consuming desire for leadership and power. This desire, born from egotism, is so great that the individual violates principles he knows to be true. It is incorrect to regard Covenant-breaking as being due to ignorance of the Teachings; on the contrary, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá tells us that Covenant-breakers “are perfectly aware and still they exhibit opposition.”

One can well understand the emphasis in the Bahá’í Teachings on humility, self-abnegation, and spiritual development when one sees the extreme condition to which unrestrained egotism can lead—a condition in which a Bahá’í who is well-informed of the Teachings will deliberately and willfully attack the institutions of the Faith, because the passionate desire for authoritative leadership has overcome all restraint.

A Covenant-breaker, seeking this authority and power, will naturally try to attract followers. Quite often, this is done through misrepresentation, taking advantage of the fact that some Bahá’ís are so trusting as to become naïve and vulnerable. For example, a Covenant-breaker might represent himself as having suffered a great injustice, thus appealing to a Bahá’í who has an emotional commitment to the support of the oppressed. He may represent himself as the possessor of secret knowledge about the Administrative Order, thus appealing to those who love secrets and are flattered at being able to share in them.

He might adopt the guise of being in need of discussing Covenant issues with a knowledgeable believer as a prelude to re-entering the Faith, thus flattering the believer and tantalizing him with the prospect of being the means of restoring a Covenant-breaker to the...
Faith. He may represent himself to a believer as being an heroic individual contesting valiantly with a faceless bureaucracy bent upon his suppression; this would aim to appeal to those who harbor a suppressed suspicion and resentment of all authority and who yearn for the simple life free from restrictions and social organization.

He may dazzle the believer with extensive quotations from authentic Bahá'í texts, skillfully taken out of context and juxtaposed to support the assumptions and unwarranted inferences he wishes to make. He may wrap himself in the garment of piety, expressing noble words and inspiring sentiments which are contradicted by his actions of attempting to subvert the authority of institutions ordained by Bahá'u'lláh Himself.

These are but a few examples of means used in an attempt to ensnare a Bahá'í, through the approach of feeding the ego of the believer or taking advantage of the believer's desire to help someone whom he perceives to be in need.

There are certain basic facts that clarify this issue. The first is the fact that anyone who has been a Covenant-breaker can approach the head of the Faith, now the Universal House of Justice, at any time by letter with a request for clarification of issues of the Covenant or for re-admission to the Faith; if the Universal House of Justice deems this compassion lead us into actions, such as contact with Covenant-breakers, which would only make a situation worse, and which would expose us to the danger of being infected with the spirit of Covenant-breaking. Remember, a Covenant-breaker who sincerely wants help can always write to the Universal House of Justice.

The best protection for any Bahá'í is to deepen himself, as fully as possible, in the Teachings on the Covenant. Through this deepening he will find growing within himself a great love for the Covenant, and a deep realization of its power to preserve the Faith in a pure and uncorrupted form, unified through the provisions laid down by Bahá'u'lláh, and free from the contamination of usurped leadership and self-appointed authority.

Covenant-breaking, as is evident from reading the history of the Bahá'í Faith, is a rare and unusual occurrence. The institutions of the Faith, functioning under the direction of the Universal House of Justice, are fully capable of protecting the Faith. The believers need have no fear that the Covenant-breakers will succeed in dividing the Bahá'í community. Promise upon promise, from the Central Figures of the Faith, as well as the authentic prophecies of all the major world religions, assure us that the Faith will proceed, united and indivisible, from victory to victory, until it succeeds in establishing a world civilization in which the generations to come will find contentment and fulfillment.

Papua New Guinea

Pictured are some of the children and their teacher at a Bahá'í Sunday school class at Kareeba Village in Papua New Guinea's East New Britain Province.

Thanks to the initiative of a friend of the Faith in Kareeba Village, near Keravat in Papua New Guinea's East New Britain Province, an empty classroom is being used each Sunday for Bahá'í children's classes.

Forty-eight children ages 3-18 now attend, with the older ones helping the younger learn to print letters, paste, cut, draw, etc. Bahá'í teachers travel 40 km (25 miles) each week from Rabaul to ensure that lessons are held.

One recent activity was to make mobiles in the shape of hearts with the word "peace" on one side and "mal-mal" (the Kuanua word for peace) on the other.
Peace Research conference in Rio

The National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil, which is a member of the International Peace Research Association, took part last August in that organization's 12th International Conference in Rio de Janeiro.

Copies of the peace statement were given to visitors and participants at a booth set up by the Bahá'ís at the cultural fair adjoining the conference.

Also, the Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Brazil displayed literature for adults and children on peace and the principles of the Faith. More than 60 people from 14 countries asked for literature and more information about the Faith and its views on world peace.

Helped by the local Youth Committee of Manaus, the Linda Tanure Home, a Bahá'í-sponsored orphanage in Brazil, organized a major celebration last October 12 for Children's Day.

With the cooperation of the Amazon Television station and the announcer on Rede Globo (local television), the event was publicized throughout the city. A report also appeared in A Critica, one of the most widely read newspapers in the area.

Through the efforts of several Bahá'í communities, two slide programs about peace are being distributed throughout Brazil. One of them, directed toward adult audiences and based on the peace statement, is entitled "From War to Peace." Recent estimates indicate that more than 100,000 people have seen the show.

The second show, entitled "The Peace Pigeon," was produced for children. Since its release last September, it has been shown at more than 20 schools.

The country's Ministry of Justice, through the Federal Council on Human Rights, has officially expressed its interest in supporting the "Peace Pigeon" program, opening ways to have it shown in all states in Brazil.

To commemorate Teachers' Day last October, the Bahá'í community of Brazil distributed to teachers all over the country 5,000 copies of a compilation of the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on education and extracts from the Universal House of Justice's peace statement.

Leeward Islands

Fifty young Bahá'ís from 19 islands took part in the second Inter-Caribbean youth event, the Mona Teaching Project, last July 17-August 14, traveling throughout the Caribbean area to teach the Faith.

The project, sponsored by the Bahá'ís of the Leeward Islands, began in Antigua with a week-long institute which included study of the Writings, the demonstration of techniques for "direct teaching" using a teaching book, and preparation for teaching through use of songs, sketches, games and performing arts.

Martinique and Guadeloupe each welcomed a new believer during the project, which ended at a Caribbean Youth Conference held August 12-14 in Grenada.

Afterward, a delegation of Bahá'í youth presented a copy of the peace statement to the Governor-General of Grenada.

Shown are some of the children who are studying the violin at Escola das Nações (School of the Nations) in Brasília, Brazil. The school, which has been in operation since September 1980, has received praise for its contributions to education, both in Brazil and worldwide.
Transkei

More than 50 people attended a women's conference last October 29 sponsored by the Bahá'ís of Umtata, Transkei, whose purpose was to discuss "The Role of Women in the New Age."

A featured speaker was the Minister of Health, Dr. M.N. Xaba-Mokoena, the highest-ranking woman in the government of Transkei. In addressing the morning session, she quoted from the Bahá'í writings while speaking about the role of women in promoting health in the family and in society.

Other speakers were the president of the Transkei Association of University Women and Yvonne Fitzpatrick, a Bahá'í pioneer to Venda who gave a presentation of the equality of men and women.

Radio Transkei broadcast Dr. Xaba-Mokoena's speech (in English and Xhosa), while an article including quotes from Mrs. Fitzpatrick's talk appeared in a widely read regional newspaper.

Chile

Francisco Amenabar, a well-known media personality who is a member of the Bahá'í community of Santiago, Chile, has created a radio program which has, over the past six months, resulted in unprecedented radio proclamation of the Faith there.

The program, which is broadcast from 10 p.m. to midnight Monday through Friday, is designed to accompany one's meditative time late in the evening with selected poems, stories, legends and writings from various sacred scriptures including the Bahá'í writings, along with specially chosen music to complement the over-all tone of peace and tranquillity.

As the program has progressed, Sr. Amenabar has been increasing the use of Bahá'í literature, always mentioning the source of the work and creating a wide public awareness of the Faith. Many people who are now attending local firesides and public talks first became aware of the Faith through the program, which has become quite popular with an audience each evening estimated at 10,000 to 15,000 listeners.

Tribute to its positive effects was paid by the Ministry of Telecommunications when it awarded the owner of the station a free frequency in the Valparaiso area "in recognition of the special program dedicated to peace and unity."

Two Mapuche Indian Bahá'ís, with members of other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), took part last November 3 in a Symposium on Rural Development at the United Nations national headquarters in Santiago, Chile.

The symposium, sponsored by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), focused on education, radio and health. It was the first time that representatives of the Mapuche people had attended a symposium of that nature.

Korea

Following a teacher training institute last July 2-10 in Pusan, South Korea, three of the 20 participants arose to take on full-time teaching.

Within three weeks, their efforts had led to the enrollment of 84 people in Korea.
Mariana Islands

Last September, six delegates from the Mariana Islands including one Bahá'í, Annette Donner Baumunk, attended the fourth South Pacific Commission's Regional Women's Affairs Conference in Suva, Fiji.

Ms. Baumunk, who represented the National Spiritual Assembly of the Mariana Islands, was official reporter for the Bahá'í International Community.

To promote the work of the conference, the Bahá'í Public Affairs Committee sponsored a post-conference forum at the Guam Hilton Hotel.

The forum was covered by the Pacific Daily News and Pacific Sunday News.

In February, two successful Chinese new year celebrations were sponsored by the National Chinese Teaching Committee of the Marianas.

On Guam, about 70 people attended an afternoon program of traditional and modern Chinese songs performed by two professional musicians, Duke Tang and Christine Chen.

Meanwhile, on Tinian, about 80 people including the mayor and director of the Airport Authority attended a program that included a clown, music, a magic show and grand fiesta.

Many non-Bahá'í guests attended both events.

Dr. William Zucker, a pioneer to Guam in the Mariana Islands, has received the prestigious Presidential Award for Excellence in Science and Mathematics.

The award is given annually to one teacher from each state and territory of the United States.

Teaching successes continue in Saipan, an island in the Marianas in the western Pacific. Since a teaching campaign was begun last July, 91 new believers have been enrolled.

Panama

Eighty people attended a Bahá'í-sponsored seminar on "World Unity for the Conservation of Nature" last August 15 in Santiago de Veraguas, Panama.


South Africa

Two traveling teachers from Mauritius recently spent three weeks visiting the Hindu people of Natal, South Africa, telling them about the Bahá'í Faith.

At least five Hindu schools welcomed the visitors, Vassu and Aboojam Mooten, as well as Hindu temples at which groups of up to 70 people were addressed.

As a result, several people invited the visitors to their homes to present firesides, among them a well-known philanthropist, Rauoe-Chandra Govender. They attended a service at Mr. Govender's Temple, where they spoke to an audience of about 25.

Their talks generally were about the education of children and achieving world unity through recognition of the oneness of God, religion and mankind.

Venezuela

Four hundred seventy-seven new believers were enrolled in the Faith during an intensive teaching campaign last August in Coro, Venezuela.

Consolidation activities have included four children's classes, a youth project called "Fuerza Joven" (Youth Power), and a deepening institute.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Venezuela has declared its amazement at the accomplishments of the Bahá'í community of Coro, as well as its confidence that other communities soon will be "ignited by this flame."

Belize

Activities are being rekindled and regular programs initiated throughout Belize as the teaching campaign begun last July continues.

In Belmopan, monthly public meetings, firesides and television programs are advertised in the local newspaper.

In other areas, activities for youth and children are being held regularly. In one area, all new Bahá'ís receive a correspondence course on the Faith.

One of the new believers has offered to leave his job for a year to devote his full time to service to the Cause.

A full-time teaching team continues the expansion and consolidation work, which includes training new Bahá'í teachers to pave the way for entry by troops.
Chad

Students at the Covenant School in Ngonkira, a sub-prefecture of Maro, Moyen-Chari, Chad, gather for a group photograph. The school is supervised by CBHSD (Bahá'í Committee of Humanitarian Service for Development).

Bolivia

More than 1,000 new believers were enrolled last November 26-December 4 during a special teaching project designed and implemented by the National Teaching Committee of Bolivia in collaboration with Counsellor Eloy Anello and the National Spiritual Assembly of Bolivia.

The project began with a two-day "spiritualization and training course" at the Firdawsi Institute.

Forty of the institute's 60 participants volunteered to visit communities within the listening range of Bolivia's Radio Bahá'í.

Also in Bolivia, the Samandari Project has brought more than 650 people into the Faith and opened more than 35 new localities.

The campaign, dedicated to the memory of Bahá'í martyr Faramarz Samandari, is an ongoing project initiated in November 1987.

Thailand

Kasinee Chiwapreecha, a Bahá'í from Aranyaprathet, Thailand, was given two awards for outstanding teaching by the Government District School Inspector at a ceremony last November.

She was honored for excellence in teaching mathematics and for materials preparation.

During his address, the inspector referred to Miss Chiwapreecha's involvement in Bahá'í activities. As a result, much positive interest in the Faith was displayed during a reception which followed the ceremony.

A Youth Camp held last October 21-23 in Thailand attracted 90 adults, youth and children including a number of Bahá'ís from Malaysia.

Inspired by the participation of Counsellor S. Nagaratnam of India, those at the Camp developed a six-month plan to teach in four areas of Thailand.

Three teams set out immediately for the Trad, Phanat Nikhom and Samut Songkram areas. By the end of October they had brought five new believers into the Faith.

The Bahá'ís of Aranyaprathet, Thailand, took part last November in a parade of floats celebrating "Loy Kratong," a traditional Thai festival.

The Bahá'í float, depicting the theme of peace with a central revolving globe, moved through the streets accompanied by Bahá'ís dressed in various national costumes. An estimated 20,000 people saw the float, for which the Bahá'ís were awarded third prize.
Taiwan

Accelerated efforts in both teaching and consolidation are following in the wake of victories in Taiwan’s Muhájir Project.

Since Ridván 1988 more than 2,000 new believers have been enrolled, 800 of whom declared their belief last November and December.

Well-attended gatherings for deepening and fellowship are being held in many places, and many of the new believers are actively involved in the project itself, which now boasts 25 full-time teachers.

One result of the teaching efforts has been a quadrupling in only six months of the Bahá’í National Center staff. Also, the National Office has been almost completely redecorated, thanks to contributions from local Assemblies and individual Bahá’ís.

Contributions to the National Fund doubled during the first six months of this Bahá’í year.

Southwest Africa/Namibia

David Shipanga, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of South West Africa/Namibia, amplifies a point on chastity made by pioneer Síncere Razávi during the 1988 Owambo-Bahá’í summer school held last October 1-3. Nearly 100 men, women, youth and children attended the school, which was held at the Regional Bahá’í Center in Ekolyamaambo.

Ivory Coast

A teaching campaign begun last summer in the village of Yaoundé, between Duekóu and Guiglo in the western part of Ivory Coast, included a meeting with the chief and about 20 villagers who were invited by the chief to listen to the Bahá’í teachers.

Following a presentation on the principles of the Faith and a question-and-answer session, the group of villagers all embraced the Faith.

The chief then strongly affirmed his wish that the whole village would become Bahá’í.

The chiefs of 10 other villages in the southwestern area of Ivory Coast have shown great interest in the Faith. Four new local Spiritual Assemblies have been formed in that area, bringing to 71 the total number of Assemblies in Ivory Coast.

Among the 60 people who attended the inauguration last July 17 of the local Bahá’í Center in Agboville, Ivory Coast, were three local dignitaries: the chief of Agboville, a representative of the police, and another from the hospital, each of whom was given a cassette tape of the peace statement recorded in the local dialect.

The ceremony included a brief history of the Faith in Agboville and of the building that now serves as the Bahá’í Center.

Togo

The recently formed Spiritual Assembly of Houngveke (Yoto), Togo, has organized a number of activities for the community.

Besides teaching events, deepenings are held once each week, land has been cleared to prepare for the building of a local Bahá’í Center, regular classes for children are being held, and literacy classes for adults have begun and are proving to be quite popular.
St. Vincent/Grenadines

The Bahá’í community of St. Vincent and the Grenadines recently received a visit from the Garifuna Carib “Trail of Light” teaching team from Central America.

The visit marked a homecoming for the team, which is composed of four Bahá’ís, two from Belize and two from Honduras, all of whom are descendants of the Carib Indians who were exiled by the British from St. Vincent to Central America almost 200 years ago.

The visit was welcomed by those on St. Vincent because, while the Carib people who remained in St. Vincent lost their cultural identity over the years, those in Central America, who are now known as Garifuna, preserved it (and still consider St. Vincent to be their homeland). Thus the team’s visit did much to help the people of St. Vincent appreciate their cultural heritage.

The Trail of Light, which visited Antigua, Dominica and St. Lucia as well, was a collaborative effort between the Continental Board of Counsellors and the participating National Spiritual Assemblies.

Dominica

Two members of the four-person ‘Trail of Light’ teaching team from Central America perform at the Red Cross Building in Roseau, Dominica. Their visit resulted in extensive media coverage, introduced the Faith to a cross-section of the public, and helped form many friendships among the Carib (Garifuna) people and the Bahá’ís.

Philippines

In Quirino province, north Luzon, in the Philippines, 501 new believers have recently been enrolled, 18 of whom are heads of local government in Barangay. Eighteen new local Spiritual Assemblies have been formed.

Meanwhile, in Ecija province, central Luzon, 711 have embraced the Faith and there are seven new local Assemblies.

In Isabela, Luzon, more than 500 have been enrolled and five new Assemblies have formed, bringing the totals to 1,963 new believers and 33 new Assemblies in one month.

In addition, a presentation of “The Promise of World Peace” to congressman Conrado Estrella of Pangasinan, Luzon, resulted in his offering a weekly 30-minute radio slot to the Bahá’ís, free of charge for an indefinite period until the peace statement has been disseminated throughout the province.

Bahá’í News/April 1989
Riḍván message to Bahá’ís of world from Universal House of Justice

A pictorial review of the 12 ‘Vision to Victory’ conferences in the U.S.

A review of Quantum Questions, the mystical writings of physicists

Around the world: News from Bahá’í communities all over the globe

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To the Bahá’ís of the World
Dear loved Friends,

The spiritual current which exerted such galvanic effects at the International Bahá’í Convention last Ridván has swept through the entire community, arousing its members in both the East and the West to feats of activity and achievement in teaching never before experienced in any one year.

The high level of enrollments alone bears this out, as nearly half a million new believers have already been reported. The names of such far-flung places as India and Liberia, Bolivia and Bangladesh, Taiwan and Peru, the Philippines and Haiti leap to the fore as we contemplate the accumulating evidences of the entry by troops called for in our message of a year ago. These evidences are hopeful signs of the greater acceleration yet to come and in which all national communities, whatever the current status of their teaching effort, will ultimately be involved.

We look back with feelings of humble gratitude and heightened expectations at the stupendous developments which have taken place in so brief a period. One such development has been the adoption of the architectural design conceived by Mr. Fariburz Sahba for the Terraces of the Shrine of the Bab, which launches a new stage toward the realization of the Master’s and the Guardian’s vision for the path along which the kings and rulers will ascend the slopes of Mount Carmel to pay homage at the resting place of Baha’u’llah’s Martyr-Herald.

Other developments include: the approval by the central authorities in Moscow of the application submitted by a number of Baha’is in Ishqabad to restore the local Spiritual Assembly of that city; the initiation of steps to open a Bahá’í Information Center in Budapest, the first such agency of the Faith in the Eastern Bloc; the establishment of a branch of the Bahá’í International Community’s Office of Public Information in Hong Kong in anticipation of the time when the Faith can be proclaimed on the mainland of China.

Also outstanding among these developments have been the successful co-sponsorship by the Bahá’í International Community of the “Arts for Nature” program in London held to benefit the work of the World Wide Fund for Nature; the signing of an agreement in Geneva establishing formal working relations between the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Bahá’í International Community; the official approval of a Bahá’í curriculum for public schools in New South Wales, Australia; the immense stream of visitors to the Temple in New Delhi, swelling to some four million since that edifice’s inauguration in December 1986, and including an unusual number of high government officials and other prominent persons from many lands, among them China, the Soviet Union and countries of the Eastern Bloc. These, added to numerous other highlights of this single year, merge with the over-all record of accomplishments thus far in the Six Year Plan, presenting a dynamic picture of accelerated activity throughout the Bahá’í world.

No reference to such marvelous progress could fail to acknowledge the spiritual and social impact effected by the decade-long episode of persecution inflicted with such cruel excesses on our Iranian fellow-believers. Only in the future will the full consequence of their sacrifice be known, but we can clearly recognize its influence on the extraordinary success in proclaiming the Faith and in establishing good relations with governmental authorities and major non-governmental organizations around the world.

It is therefore with profound thanksgiving and joy that we announce the release of the vast majority of Bahá’í prisoners in Iran. Even as we rejoice we cannot forget that there remain to be realized the full emancipation of the Iranian Bahá’í community and the assurance of the human rights of its members in all respects.

In the gladness of the moment, we extend a warm welcome to the two National Spiritual Assemblies being formed this Ridván: one in Macau in Southeast Asia, the other in Guinea-Bissau in West Africa.

Through the shadow of confusing deranging present-day society, there is a faint glimmer, yet so faint but discernible, of an approach, slow but definite, toward the culmination of the three collateral processes envisaged by the beloved Guardian, namely: the emergence of the Lesser Peace, the construction of the buildings of the Arc on Mount Carmel and the evolution of National and local Spiritual Assemblies. Indeed, throughout the Six Year Plan, during this fourth epoch of the Formative Age, and particularly during the year just ended, this glimmer, still so distant, has drawn closer.

For who could have imagined, even at the beginning of this Plan, the sudden changes of attitude moving political leaders in some of the most troubled spots on the planet to break away from seemingly intractable positions—changes which in recent months have prompted editorial writers to ask: “Is peace breaking out?” To any observer conscious of the divine Source of such occurrences, this development must certainly be encouraging, although the precise circumstances attending the establishment of the Lesser Peace are not known to us; even its exact timing is concealed in the
The two other processes, however, are directly influenced by the degree to which the followers of Bahá'u'lláh fulfill their clearly delineated tasks. There is good reason to take heart. For have not the architectural concepts for the remaining buildings on the Arc been adopted and the detailed specifications which will effect their realization as splendid monumental structures been undertaken? Have we not witnessed the increasing strength of National and local Spiritual Assemblies in their ability to conceive and execute plans, in their capacity to deal with governmental authorities and social organizations, to respond to public calls upon their services and to collaborate with others in projects of social and economic development? Are these Assemblies not reinforced by the alert, loving support of the Continental Counselors, the Auxiliary Board members and their assistants, all of whose burgeoning energies are being skillfully coordinated by the International Teaching Center—an institution whose augmented membership has already displayed a verve, a vision and a versatility evocative of warm admiration?

Tempting as it may be to dwell upon the positive features of our progress, better that we should be spurred on by them than that we should rest on our achievements. Let us continue, therefore, undeflected and confident, to seize the magnificent possibilities which the mix and blend of these ongoing processes and events allow for actualizing the immediate interest of our sacred Cause.

These interests, to be sure, are identified in the major objectives of the Six Year Plan, on the second half of which we are now embarked, fully conscious of the not-too-distant approach of the Holy Year, 1992-1993, and its significant commemorations.

In conjunction with the ever-widening thrust of teaching, we must proceed by every possible means with projects of the most critical importance. Work is continuing on the preparation for publication in English of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Mother Book of the Bahá'í Revelation. Arrangements must now be made for a befitting commemoration in the Holy Land of the Centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh.

The plans for the World Congress in 1992 in New York must continue to advance on schedule. Moreover, further systematic attention needs to be given to the eventual elimination of illiteracy from the Bahá'í community, an accomplishment which would, beyond anything else, make the Holy Word accessible to all the friends and thus reinforce their efforts to live the Bahá'í life. Similarly, assisting in endeavors to conserve the environment in ways which blend with the rhythms of life of our community must assume more importance in Bahá'í activities.

Regarding the projects on Mount Carmel, the Office of the Project Manager has been established, and a technical staff is being assembled. Geological testing at the sites of the designated buildings on the Arc is about to begin—a step preliminary to the ground-breaking anticipated by the entire Bahá'í world. Hence, we seize this opportunity to apprise you of the urgency for the required funds both to initiate construction and to sustain this work once it has begun.

All these requirements must and will surely be met through reconsecrated service on the part of every conscien-
From November through February 12, 'Vision to Victory' conferences were held under the auspices of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly to inaugurate a two-year period of personal sacrifice and commitment to the Cause of God in that country. Also begun were four large-scale teaching campaigns: in Atlanta, Georgia; Chicago; San Jose, California; and the greater Boston area. The main purposes of the conferences were to ignite teaching activities while underscoring for the friends the significance of the Arc project on Mount Carmel. We present on these pages a pictorial overview of the 12 'Vision to Victory' conferences.

Counsellor Robert Harris addresses the conference in Chicago.

Above: Those at the New York conference hear Dr. Peter Khan, a member of the Universal House of Justice. Below: In Chattanooga, the Hendersonville Baha’i Choir with Dash Crafts (in white turban) performs.
Friends in Houston, Texas, talk with Jack McCants, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Pulling a "rabbit" out of the hat in Chicago is Morris Taylor, an Auxiliary Board member and part-time magician.

Above: Some 500 Baha'is from the Atlanta area march in the annual parade honoring the memory of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

In Seattle, a display advertises a teaching campaign.

Do'ah entertains at the conference in Boston.
Pictured above are some of the nearly 1,500 Baha'is who attended Chicago's 'Vision to Victory' conference.

The Louis Gregory Institute Choir performs at the conference in South Carolina.

In Atlanta, Jack McCants (left) and Counsellor Wilma Ellis.

The Hand of the Cause of God William Sears speaks in Los Angeles.
Clockwise from top left: The children take their turn onstage, exemplifying 'unity in diversity' at the conference for the Washington, D.C., area; two tiny 'musicians' do their thing in Chicago; the friends enjoy a break between sessions in Los Angeles; Bahá'ís listen to Judge Dorothy Nelson, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, during the conference in Alexandria, Virginia, a suburb of Washington.
Mystical writings of leading physicists


This volume is a collection of the mystical writings of some of the world's greatest physicists, most of whom were Nobel Prize recipients. Included are essays by Werner Heisenberg, Erwin Schrödinger, Albert Einstein, Prince Louis de Broglie, Sir James Jeans, Max Planck, Wolfgang Pauli and Sir Arthur Eddington.

Many books have been written probing the possibilities opened by quantum physics for the exploration of a relationship between "physics, the hardest of sciences, and mysticism, the tenderest of religions." This book also addresses that topic by presenting the beliefs of those who were the pioneers of quantum mechanics. While the physicists whose writings are contained in Quantum Questions do not appear to have believed that modern physics could or should be used to support mystical beliefs, neither did they believe that physics in itself offered any objection to those beliefs. Some of them advocated the value of maintaining a separate mystical world view, free from dependence upon changing scientific paradigms and the threat of obsolescence. Yet all were eloquently mystical.

In delving into this phenomenon, editor Ken Wilber examines differences between Newtonian and quantum physics. In the Newtonian model, the universe was a "deterministic machine," wherein, if sufficient data were to be collected, all future events could be accurately predicted. This view was theoretically hostile to the ideas of God, free-will, divine intervention, and spirit. While Newtonian physics continues to explain macroscopic events, quantum physics refutes absolute determinism because in the sub-atomic realm only probabilities can be predicted with accuracy. But Mr. Wilber does not believe that this, or any other discrepancy between the two, constitutes the crucial difference that enables modern physics to be so much more conducive to mysticism.

Before quantum discoveries, scientists felt that they were dealing with reality—the world itself. But modern physicists cannot directly observe the sub-atomic realm that they explore; their observations depend upon abstractions, mathematical symbols of reality, bringing, in the words of Sir Arthur Eddington, "the frank realization that physical science is concerned with a world of shadows." As Sir James Jeans summarized it: "The essential fact is simply that all the pictures which science now draws of nature, and which alone seem capable of according with observational fact, are mathematical pictures. . . . Many would hold that, from the broad philosophical standpoint, the outstanding achievement of twentieth-century physics is not the theory of relativity with its welding together of space and time, or the theory of quanta with its present apparent negation of the laws of causation, or the dissection of the atom with the resultant discovery that things are not what they seem; it is the general recognition that we are not yet in contact with ultimate reality. We are still imprisoned in our cave, with our backs to the light, and can only watch the shadows on the wall."

Mr. Wilber believes it was this recognition of the shadowy nature of scientific enterprise that led so many scientists to explore beyond physics, into the metaphysical. He quotes Sir Arthur Eddington's explanation:

"We have learnt that the exploration of the external world by the methods of physical science leads not to a concrete reality but to a shadow world of symbols, beneath which those methods are unadapted for penetrating."

"We have learnt that the exploration of the external world by the methods of physical science leads not to a concrete reality but to a shadow world of symbols, beneath which those methods are unadapted for penetrating. Feeling that there must be more behind, we return to our starting point in human consciousness—the one centre where more might become known. There we find other stirrings, other revelations than those conditioned by the world of symbols. . . . Physics most strongly insists that its methods do not penetrate beyond the symbolism. Surely then that mental and spiritual nature of ourselves, known in our minds by an intimate contact transcending the methods of physics, supplies just that . . . which science is admittedly unable to give."

The collection contains several essays by Werner Heisenberg who, at age 24 and in the space of one day and night, invented what came to be known as matrix quantum mechanics. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in physics in 1932.
Dr. Heisenberg felt a compelling desire to ponder the relationships between science and religion, and believed that both points to aspects of reality that are vital components of civilization. He stressed the need for spiritual values in formulating goals to guide the development of science and technology; however, he felt that care should be taken to keep science and religion distinct and apart, thereby avoiding any weakening of their content. The correctness of tested scientific results, he wrote, “cannot rationally be cast in doubt by religious thinking, and conversely the ethical demands stemming from the heart of religious thinking ought not to be weakened by all too rational arguments from the field of science.”

In an essay entitled “Science and the Beautiful,” Dr. Heisenberg questions where we can meet the beautiful in the sphere of exact science,” and through this theme presents an eloquent discourse on the human capacity for intuitive recognition of connections, the basis for many momentous scientific discoveries. Dr. Heisenberg refers to a definition of beauty found in ancient philosophy which describes beauty as “the proper conformity of the parts to one another, and to the whole.” He compares that definition to the discovery that strings vibrating under equal tension sound together in harmony if their lengths are in a simple numerical ratio. Thus mathematical relationships are found to a source of the harmony which the human ear finds beautiful. Dr. Heisenberg writes: “Beauty, so the first of our ancient definitions ran, is the proper conformity of the parts to one another and to the whole. The parts here are the individual notes, while the whole is the harmonious sound. The mathematical relation can, therefore, assemble two initially independent parts into a whole, and so produce beauty.” He compares the experience of the perception of beauty to that of human understanding, which is also made possible by conceiving “the conformity of the parts to one another and to the whole.”

The question is then presented: what is it that makes these connections, the conformity of parts to one another and to the whole, shine forth and become recognizable, even before they can be rationally interpreted and understood? Dr. Heisenberg draws from several sources in response to the question, beginning with Plato’s theory of the origin of ideas:

“...the apprehension of ideas by the human mind is more an artistic intuition, a half-conscious intuition, than a knowledge conveyed by the understanding. It is a reminiscence of forms that were already implanted in this soul before its existence on earth. The central idea is that of the Beautiful and the Good, in which the divine becomes visible and at sight of which the soul is stricken. A passage in the Phaedras expresses the following thought: the soul is awe-stricken and shudders at the sight of the beautiful. For it feels that something is evoked in it that was not implanted in it from without by the senses but has always been already laid down in a deeply unconscious region.”

Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), was a German astronomer who, because of his conviction that God had created the universe according to an underlying mathematical harmony, formulated the three laws of planetary motion that became the basis for the principles of Newtonian physics. Dr. Heisenberg believed that Kepler’s keen awareness of the beauty of connections had guided him in the formulation of these laws. Kepler, he writes, compared “the revolutions of the planets about the sun with the vibrations of a string and spoke of a harmonious concord of the different planetary orbits, of a harmony of the spheres.” After completing his work on the harmony of the universe, Kepler cried out, “I thank thee, Lord God our Creator, that thou allowest me to see the beauty of thy work of creation.”

Kepler’s conviction of the accuracy of the Copernican concept of the solar system (which was essential to the development of his theories) apparently did not arise from any data obtained through astronomical observation. Kepler used an archetype, a mandala (graphic symbol of the universe), as a symbol for the Trinity. He perceived the center of the sphere as God, the prime Mover: the outer rim as the world, where the Son of God functions; and the beams radiating from the center to the rim as the Holy Ghost. He was drawn to the Copernican system because he saw the connections between it and the mandala.

Dr. Heisenberg also examines the essays of Wolfgang Pauli, who received the Nobel Prize for physics in 1945, and psychologist C.G. Jung, in addition to those of Kepler, all of whom agreed that the human soul contains “primordial images” or “archetypes” that are innate, as the number of seed chambers is innate within the apple. Pauli wrote: “The process of understanding nature, together with the joy that man feels in understanding, is then becoming acquainted with new knowledge, seems therefore to rest upon a correspondence, a coming into congruence of preexistent internal images of the human psyche with external objects and their behavior... Kepler speaks, in fact, of ideas, preexistent in the mind of God and imprinted accordingly upon the soul, as the image of God.”

In closing his essay on “Science and the Beautiful,” Dr. Heisenberg returns again to the ancient philosophical definition of beauty as the proper conformity of the parts to one another, and to the whole. This, he declares, is the most important source of illumination and clarity in the field of exact science, as well as in art.

Another essay, which may be of particular interest, was written by Prince Louis de Broglie, who was born in 1892 and received the Nobel Prize in physics in 1929 for his theory of “matter waves.”

In “The Mechanism Demands a Mysticism,” Prince de Broglie quotes from Henri Bergson’s work, The Two Sources of Morality and Religion, which points to the tremendous extension of power humanity has added to its being by harnessing the energies accumulating in the earth for millions of years. This power, disproportionate to the human spirit which has not grown and developed the capacity to direct it, he writes, now endangers the human species and all other life.

Although de Broglie recognizes the potential benefits to be derived from the fission of uranium, he also recalls with sorrow that this discovery was first used to create a weapon of immense destructive potential. Therefore, he feels the moral problem has acquired much greater significance, and concludes, “Confronted by the dan-
In another of de Broglie’s essays, he writes of the ever-increasing efforts of scientists to discover more of the extent of order and harmony in nature. He perceives “the divine joy of discovering such harmonies” as the raison d’être of many of these individuals, who otherwise may profit little from their time and labor. De Broglie claims that all sincere scientists recognize that it is this search for truth which justifies the efforts of pure science, and which constitutes its nobility.

Like Drs. Heisenberg and Pauli, Prince de Broglie believes that there are archetypes inherent in man that enable him to respond with recognition to the underlying harmony in nature: “... in reality, in order that humanity should have been able to adapt itself to live in the world which surrounds us, it would undoubtedly be necessary that there should be already between this world and our minds some analogy of structure...”

Erwin Schrödinger, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in physics in 1933, writes in several essays of the brotherhood of man, determinism and free-will, and the failure of science to provide answers to questions about the reality and purpose of human existence.

Also contained in Quantum Questions are two essays by Albert Einstein, who is widely regarded as the greatest physicist who ever lived. Dr. Einstein saw science, religion and art as distinctively separate endeavors, but he believed that wonder in the face of “the Mystery of the Sublime” was the motivating force behind all of them. In “Cosmic Religious Feeling,” Dr. Einstein writes: “The individual feels the futility of human desires and aims and the sublimity and marvelous order which reveal themselves both in nature and in the world of thought. Individual existence impresses him as a sort of prison and he wants to experience the universe as a single significant whole.”

In compiling these essays, Ken Wilber hoped to discourage the trend to confuse “temporal, relative, finite truth with eternal-absolute truth,” as well as the idea that physics and mysticism are two different approaches to the same reality and that all one need do to understand one is to learn about the other. The study of physics, Mr. Wilber writes, is the study of the realm of least-Being, which lies at the very bottom of the Great Chain of Being containing spirit, soul, mind, life and the material realm. He claims that the reason we have not (and indeed never will) find the “missing link” between man and animal also reveals why we find so few links between the levels in the Great Chain: each higher level contains but also transcends its predecessors, and as such is novel and emergent.

All of the physicists whose writings are included in this volume felt compelled to go beyond the analysis of the functioning and composition of the material order, and to explore the metaphysical reality. Their writings reflect their belief in dialogue among disciplines, as well as their interest in the exploration of the possibility of relationships between science and religion. According to Mr. Wilber, they were all successful in their aim of finding that physics was compatible with, not contradictory to, a mystical view of the world.

Mr. Wilber’s intended audience is not those who already are firmly convinced that quantum physics automatically supports or proves mystical views, but rather those men and women who believe that natural science can and will answer all of the important questions, those who “bow to science as if it were a religion itself.” All of the essays in this collection address themselves to Mr. Wilber’s central theme: “What does it mean that the founders of your modern science, the theorists and researchers who pioneered the very concepts you now worship implicitly, the very scientists presented in this volume, what does it mean that they were, every one of them, mystics?”

In presenting these eloquent examples of search and discovery, Mr. Wilber invites us to listen to “some of the finest dialogues between physics and philosophy and religion ever authored by the human spirit.”

Fiji

One of the chiefs in Rewa Province of Viti Levu, Fiji (left) is presented a copy of the peace statement during a three-hour proclamation event held last August 20 at the Nasilai community hall. Seventy copies of the statement in Fijian and two in English were presented to local dignitaries during the program.
South Africa reaches out to media

The first major media event in South African Bahá'í history was held January 15 in observance of World Religion Day.

The event was reported in prime time on three national television stations as well as on English-speaking and ethnic radio stations and Afrikaans and English-language newspapers, reaching at least 10 million people of all races.

The celebration was opened by David Neppe, the mayor of Johannesburg, who is Jewish. He said that diversity of religions in Johannesburg is welcome as people realize more and more that no one religion has a monopoly on truth.

His audience was a microcosm of the South African people including Zulu, Sotho, Tswana, Xhosa, Venda, Asian Indian, Malay, Chinese, Afrikaaner and English-speaking South Africans. An estimated 80 percent of those present were not Bahá'ís.

Included were many leaders of thought such as a professor of religious studies at Witwatersrand University, the president of the South African Wildlife Society, and the deputy-mayoral couple of Sandton as well as leading educators and artists.

Among the speakers were many widely known religious leaders: the head of the Catholic seminary of Pretoria; the chief rabbi of the Reformed Synagogue of Johannesburg; the prayer leader of the Saivait Hindu Temple; and the International Link (president) of the Co-Workers of Mother Theresa, and her deputy.

Two Bahá'í children, one black and one white, read the Golden Rule from each religion as its turn came on the program, stealing the hearts of the audience with their clear and earnest delivery.

Bahá'í passages were read by Councilor Daniel Ramoroesi, a black South African who was later interviewed about his responsibilities as a member of the Board of Counsellors.

Cook Islands

A steady flow of traveling teachers from New Zealand over the past six months has given encouragement to the Bahá'ís of the Cook Islands and helped consolidate relationships between the Bahá'í community, local residents and the media.

Teachers have visited the islands of Rarotonga, Mangaia, Aitutaki and Mauke, conducting firesides and deepenings, giving interviews on radio, visiting teachers and students at a center for the handicapped, and working with youth.

Paul Bennett, an entertainer from New Zealand who is well-known in the Cook Islands as a result of previous visits, was able to record some of his music during his most recent visit. The recording includes a Bahá'í prayer in the indigenous language, and verses from The Hidden Words. A report of his visit appeared in the Cook Island News which said that the songs would soon be heard on the radio.

Ken Zemke, a Bahá'í who is a filmmaker, presented talks at the Rotary Club and the University of the South Pacific (Cook Islands) Extension Center on the effects of society of violence in films and videos.
Kenya

In collaboration with the Canadian Public Health Association, the Baha'is of Kenya have begun a major long-term health program.

The program, the first that the Baha'is have undertaken with this association, involves the immunization of children under the age of five against major communicable diseases.

Dr. Ethel Martens, a Baha'i from Canada who is a well-known health professional, arrived in Kenya last December to help with the project.

Dr. Martens’ sister, May Townshend, an artist and expert in the use of local materials to create her art, also came to Kenya to help women there learn to make hand-crafted objects of art.

Young Baha'is throughout Kenya are taking a leading role in teaching and community development work in that community.

The youth of Menu are actively involved in arranging their own conferences, working at extension teaching goals, developing programs of music and drama, teaching weekly children’s classes, attending deepening sessions, and working on a small-scale economic development project.

The Baha'i Centre in Kimogoi, western Kenya, was filled to overflowing last November 12 as 908 people gathered to celebrate the anniversary of the Birth of Baha'u'llah.

The occasion included performances by eight choirs.

Dominica

As a result of the first translation of The Hidden Words into Creole, the National Spiritual Assembly of Dominica has received letters of appreciation from the Prime Minister, the President and the Minister for Community Development.

The translation was included in the Independence Day celebration and in Creole Week (Semenn Kweyol), and is recognized as having advanced the goal of preserving and developing Dominican culture.

The book is also available on cassette tape and was featured recently on the Dominican Broadcasting Service.

Hawaii

Last December 6-7, more than 200 delegates and observers representing a cross-section of Hawaii’s leadership met at the “Governor’s Congress on Hawaii’s International Role” convened by Gov. John Waihee.

Among the invited delegates was Florence Kelly, director of the Baha’i Office of External Affairs in Hawaii.

The meeting was called to consult on Hawaii’s role in the Pacific area and to explore the contributions Hawaii’s multi-ethnic society can make in the international arena.
Belgium

Dr. Niky Kamran, a Baha’i from Belgium, received the “Grand Prix de l’Academie des Sciences de Belgique,” the annual award of the Royal Science Academy of Belgium, during a ceremony held last December 17 at the Baha’i National Center in Brussels.

Dr. Kamran won the award for his work in mathematics, specifically for a paper entitled “Contribution to the study of the equivalence problem of Eli Cartan and its applications to partial and ordinary differential equations.”

The 120 guests at the award ceremony heard message of congratulations from the Universal House of Justice in which the Supreme Body said it would offer prayers for the 29-year-old scientist for “further success in his worthy endeavors field of science and Faith.”

Dr. Kamran, who received his doctorate in applied mathematics from the University of Waterloo, Canada, was a professor in the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton University, has published or co-published 43 scientific papers since 1983, and has lectured in Canada, Colombia, France, Italy and the United States. He has been the recipient of significant grants in mathematics from four sources including Princeton and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Colombia

A team of eight Baha’is including Auxiliary Board member Habib Rezvani and seven Baha’i youth completed last fall the initial three-month phase of an ongoing teaching campaign in Colombia. As of the end of December, 1,245 new believers had embraced the Faith.

The campaign took the team to 15 communities in the departments (states) of Atlantico, Bolivar and Sucre.

Two of its special aims were the formation of youth groups and finding youth who would be capable of conducting regular children’s classes.

After the first phase ended in December, one of the Baha’is returned to the community of Santa Catalina and found a youth group already holding children’s classes. They were teaching reading to a group of 30 children using the Baha’i literacy training booklet, “God Illumine Us.”

A forum entitled “Women, Equality, Development and Peace,” hosted by the Baha’is of Cali, Colombia, drew an audience of about 100 last December 12.

Presentations were made by Isabel Arenas, an economist; Mariello Carillo Bedoya, national vice-president of the Citizens Union program of Colombia; and Haleh Arbab de Correa, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Colombia and program coordinator of community development projects for FUNDEAC (Foundation for the Teaching and Application of Sciences).

One of the participants, a journalist, asked for an interview with the speakers for a radio program that is broadcast nationally.

Thailand

The Regional Baha’i Teaching Committee of Yasothon, Thailand, and the Santitham Baha’i School together planned and carried out Peace Week activities January 9-15, bringing extensive publicity to the Faith and to the cause of peace.

At its opening event, the education officer of Yasothon spoke to an audience of about 100 parents, teachers and students, praising the Baha’is and the Santitham School for their efforts to teach peace.

A special feature of Peace Week was a peace poster contest that involved about 150 students from eight schools.

In addition, the Baha’i kindergarten and children from the commercial school presented a performance to commemorate National Children’s Day, and two members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Thailand conducted a symposium on peace.

Following Peace Week, the Baha’is hosted a meeting for students, teachers and parents to consult on ways to continue to promote peace.

As a result, a peace club comprised of four students and a Baha’i pioneer was formed.

The Ben Vinai Hmong camp in Thailand recently opened a school to teach English, Hmong and the Baha’i Faith. One hundred thirty-eight students are enrolled, and a library soon will open. The Spiritual Assembly reports that teaching work is being actively pursued.

The first Spiritual Assembly of Yasothon, organized an exhibition on peace and the Baha’i Faith for the Cantaloupe Fair held last December 24-January 1.

During the fair the deputy Minister of the Interior, Sanoh Thienthong, was given a copy of the peace statement and a bouquet.

Two thousand peace pamphlets were given away, two people embraced the Faith, and the Baha’is were invited to present a lecture January 19 at the Aranyapratheb High School.

The first member of Thailand’s Karen people to embrace the Faith did so in January in Tha Kham Nua, Chiang Mai Province.

Five more of the Karen people were enrolled later in Amphur Om Koi.

A Baha’i winter school held January 13-15 in Chiangmai, Thailand, resulted in three enrollments, contributions to the Arc fund by all those in attendance, and the initiation of a Baha’i Children’s Arc Fund.
The Gambia

During her recent visit to The Gambia, Counsellor Beatrice Asare met with members of the National Spiritual Assembly and the Auxiliary Board, visited dignitaries, traveled to many villages, visited development projects, and took part in a three-day Winter School.

Following the school, an interview with the Counsellor was broadcast as a news item on Radio Gambia in English and all other local languages.

As a result, the religious affairs officer for the radio station offered to cover future Bahá'í events for the media.

Counsellor Asare visited the chief executive of the Women's Bureau, whom she encouraged in her vital work of bringing about the equality of women and men, and with whom she discussed the importance of prayer.

She also met a Gambian lawyer in the Ministry of Justice, and was instrumental in drafting a bill to revise the country's laws on the status of women.

United Nations Human Rights Day was commemorated last December 10 at the National Hazíratu'l-Quds in Banjul, The Gambia.

The opening address was given by Fatoumata Tambajang, assistant program officer of the UN Development Program in Banjul and president of the National Women's Council.

Following the keynote address by Auxiliary Board member Dale Robertson, who is principal of the Marina International School, closing remarks were offered by the Hon. Alkali James Gaye, a member of Parliament and secretary of The Gambia's Ministry of External Affairs.

Jamaica

A major breakthrough for the Caribbean Bahá'í communities came recently when the National Spiritual Assembly of Jamaica was asked to prepare a detailed curriculum for a chapter on the Faith to be included in the first-year compulsory Caribbean Examination Council course on comparative religion.

In their second year, high school students in Jamaica will be able to study in depth the religion of their choice.

India

Members of the volunteer 'Temple Brigade' work on a landscaping project in the gardens surrounding the Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi, India.

Sir David Goodall, the British High Commissioner in Delhi, is shown a booklet during his visit in January to the Bahá'í House of Worship in Baha'pur, New Delhi, India.

A special prayer service dedicated to the memory of those who died in the recent earthquake in Armenia was held last December 11 at the Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi, India.

Two days later, Counselor S. Konstantinov of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited the Temple, spending more than an hour in the library where he asked many questions about the Faith and requested several Bahá'í books.

A paper on "Science and Spirituality" was presented by a Bahá'í at the fifth International Conference Toward the Harmonic Convergence of Science, Culture and Consciousness.

The conference was held January 3-5 in India.

The paper, which was well-received, was to be published as a part of the conference proceedings.
Argentina

The Bahá'í Cultural Centre of Buenos Aires, Argentina, which has been named the May Maxwell Centre, presents a puppet show for the children of the district every 15 days.

The show is given by El Retablo de Mosquito (The Mosquito's Retable), a group composed of Bahá'ís and their friends. It is also taken to events arranged by other groups.

The performances at the Centre are open to the public, and an average of 15 children of non-Bahá'í families attend regularly.

More than 300 people attended a celebration last September 18 in Burzaco, Argentina, of the International Day of Peace.

The event, which was planned by a group of Auxiliary Board members and the entire Bahá'í community of Burzaco, included such activities as a children's drawing contest, judged by kindergarten and primary school teachers and one member of the local Spiritual Assembly; a peace conference that featured a United Nations film and presentations by many notables from the community; and a performance by the children based on the theme of peace.

Pakistan

An important goal of the Six Year Plan in Pakistan was achieved with the inauguration January 4-8 of a Teacher Training Institute at Lahore.

The aim of the institute was to prepare the Bahá'í community of Pakistan for entry by troops.

Forty-five participants from nine centers were cheered by the presence of Counsellor Sabir Afáqi and by a stimulating program of lectures, workshops, audio-visual presentations, a special session with the relatives of martyrs, and a public meeting entitled "Introduction to a World Religion."

Among recent visitors to the Office of the Coordinator of Persian Affairs in Lahore, Pakistan, have been government officials who are interested in becoming more closely acquainted with the Bahá'í refugee program and the Bahá'í Faith itself.

Visitors have included members of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in Islamabad and Lahore; an official from the Ministry of Justice of the Netherlands; a delegation from Finland that included the Ambassador from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ambassador of the Embassy of Finland in Tehran, and three senior officials of the Finnish government; and the Australian Immigration Officer from Canberra.

A public meeting organized last October 29 by the local Youth Committee of Peshawar, Pakistan, to commemorate United Nations Day was covered by two major newspapers, the Khyber Mail and the Frontier Post.

The chief guest for the occasion, Dr. Abdul Matin, vice-chancellor of the University of Peshawar, sent a letter of appreciation to the committee, commenting on the well-organized conference and wishing its members "great success in (your) noble mission."

Spain

An intensive teaching campaign in northern Spain has led to the formation of a local Spiritual Assembly in Logroño with the enrollment of three Basque believers, the opening of several new localities and the declarations of 13 Romani people.
Philippines

Last November, the Baha’is of the Philippines celebrated the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the Faith in that country. More than 150 people attended a commemorative lunch held by the Baha’i community in Manila. Members of the National Spiritual Assembly, the vice-governor of Luzon, the mayor of Sanary, and a number of other distinguished guests were present.

A two-week teaching project carried out during the period of celebration resulted in the enrollment of more than 400 new believers in Luzon, and the formation of 15 new local Spiritual Assemblies.

Also, 510 people (more than half of whom were not Baha’is) took part in a Baha’i-sponsored Children’s Festival in the Antipolo Bicol region despite the effects of a recent typhoon.

Following a fireside last October in the Negrito area of Oriental Mindoro in the Philippines, the President of the Philippines, members of his tribe embraced the Faith.

Another public meeting was requested, and the Chief Justice urged his entire tribe to attend.

Sundays Baha’i classes are being held in the Philippine Refugee Processing Centre. The two-hour classes are supported financially by President Baha’is who are a steady stream of visitors from other parts of the Philippines and overseas.

Nearly 30 Khmer, Lao, Chinese and Vietnamese friends regularly attend the classes.

A recent teaching campaign in the city of Santa Cruz, Philippines, involved in all its phases, it was marked out by Baha’is in Santa Cruz in six years.

Bermuda

The Baha’is of Bermuda were awarded a large ribbons of the Spirit of Unity and Love which they earned for their active efforts.

The theme of the teaching campaign was “Gather in Harmony” from the popular song by Stevie Wonder, written for the white keys.

Bolivia

One of the goals of the Baha’i community of Santa Cruz, Bolivia, was to set up 10 groups of Baha’i children’s classes before Ridvan 1989. As of mid-March, the community had nine functioning classes.

Eight are held in rural areas, and six are taught by Baha’is who live in the communities in which they are held.

One of the classes is taught by a Baha’i, Doña Eloina Montaño, who left school after the fourth grade and now, at age 53, teaches children who cannot afford to go even to the public school.

Some of her students, however, have gone on to the public school, entering at the second or third grade level instead of the first, and receiving honors as outstanding students.

When asked what difference education will make in the lives of these children, Doña Eloina says, “...if they learn to understand what they read and learn from the Baha’i books, then they’ll realize the difference themselves.”

Their teacher is Doña Eloina Montaño who has been teaching a children’s class for nearly two years.

Uruguay

The Baha’i community of Maldonado helped celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Faith in Uruguay last November by staging a two-day event entitled “Days of Peace.”

Among the various activities were slide shows, visits to a home for the aged and the Children’s Council, a youth gathering, a presentation on women and peace, and a “children’s encounter” that featured clowns and a theatre production.

Throughout the event, a visual display about the Faith, supported by a selection of books, was exhibited at the Baha’i Center.

A nine-day teaching project last December in Belén, Uruguay, led to the enrollment of 158 new Baha’is while raising proclamation of the Faith to a higher level among Baha’i youth and children.

The project, spurred on by the participation of Counsellor Custody Center, several Auxiliary Board members and traveling teachers, included a daily exhibition in the city’s main square and was supported by radio announcements.

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Nigeria

More than 400 new believers were enrolled in the Cause and 10 new local Spiritual Assemblies were formed as a result of the Behin Calabar-Mamfe Road Teaching Campaign launched last December in Nigeria.

Twenty-two communities were visited during the campaign. Ten of the 414 new Bahá'ís are village chieftains.

As a result of the visits, the spirits of the Bahá'ís were rekindled. Deepenings and children's classes were begun to consolidate these new and rejuvenated communities.

Farming is a major occupation in the area, and many Bahá'ís suspended their farming activities for two weeks to take part in the campaign.

The area was visited twice before the campaign to inform local communities of upcoming activities and encourage the Assemblies to meet.

A member of the State Teaching Committee arrived two months before the campaign got under way, lived in the Bahá'í Center, deepened the friends and began holding children's classes and dawn prayers.

An institute was held in two communities one month before the campaign began, and other teachers also arrived in advance to familiarize themselves with the area.

On January 18-22, the Bahá'ís of Nigeria celebrated World Unity Week at the Obafemi Awolowo University.

The Bahá'ís were welcomed to the participation of Counsellor Hizzaya Hassan, who met with university staff and students, visited a nearby village and conducted deepenings in addition to speaking at many of the week's events.

The major event was a Peace conference sponsored by the Spiritual Assembly of Ile.

In opening the conference, Prof. E. Lawal, representing the vice-chancellor of Obafemi Awolowo University, commended the Bahá'ís for choosing the theme "A Practical Approach to Peace," adding that the event was a testimony to the Bahá'í "pragmatic concern for the promotion of world harmony on earth."

He recommended study of the peace statement to help in examining practical measures for achieving universal peace.

Other activities during the week included the 13th annual Ile Book Fair, at which many people received information and bought books about the Faith, and a celebration of World Religion Day.

As a result of the Kaduna-Gwari Teaching Project held last year in northern Nigeria, 145 new believers embraced the Faith and seven new local Spiritual Assemblies were formed.

A report from the National Spiritual Assembly of Nigeria says, "The uniqueness of this project, the fifth such project in Nigeria in the past 14 months, is that it took place among a minority tribe (Gwari) which is mainly Muslim."

As part of the consolidation work in that area, two tutorial schools have begun operation.

Peru

Radio Bahá'í del Lago Titicaca in Puno, Peru, recently celebrated its eighth anniversary with two well-received events.

The first, a "mini-Olympiad," brought together 30 volleyball and soccer teams and 120 men and 50 women who took part in a marathon "chasqui."

The second, a folk music festival, drew 3,000 people to see performances by 40 well-known folk groups.

Many local dignitaries congratulated Radio Bahá'í for its great success.

Last December, at a ceremony organized by the Association of Radio Announcers to mark Announcers' Day, Radio Bahá'í del Lago Titicaca was one of two stations praised as being the only radio stations fulfilling the goals of developing the culture and advancing the progress of the city of Puno, Peru.

At that same event, a Bahá'í youth, Rufino Paredes Lipe, who speaks on Radio Bahá'í and is fluent in Quechua, Aymara and Spanish, was given the title "Star Speaker 1988."

Radio Bahá'í is being accorded further recognition as high school teachers assign students tasks involving research of the Bahá'í Faith and refer to the station as a resource.

Naliphine Zenani (center), a 12th grade student from St. John's College in Umtata, Transkei, won first prize in an essay contest, sponsored by the Spiritual Assembly of Umtata, whose theme was "A World Without Prejudice." In all, 44 essays were judged by two lecturers from the English department of the University of Transkei and by Mrs. Jan Bassari of the Bahá'í community of Umtata. Also pictured are (left to right) Tammy Mxo and Jan Bassari, representing the Spiritual Assembly of Umtata; Mrs. Mtoba, an English teacher at St. John's College; and G. French, headmaster at St. John's.
**Australia**

The Farhangi Teaching Project in Western Australia, which began with two days of prayer, study and planning, resulted in 85 enrollments.

The seven-member team helped conduct a Bahá’í funeral, attended a meeting with 300 Aborigines from the Pilbara region, and were embraced as members of the Aboriginal family.

The Aboriginal people are reported to be excellent Bahá’í teachers.

Successful teaching efforts continued in northern Australia last October, especially among Aborigines.

Twenty new believers were enrolled in Onslow, Western Australia, and 20 more during an Aboriginal Conference in mid-October in Normanton, Queensland.

The remote Croydon Shire in Northern Australia, with a population of only 320, is now 10 percent Bahá’í.

An Australian bicentennial publication, *Dunolly, Yesterday and Today*, mentions Effie Baker, who in 1923 became the first woman in Australia to accept the Bahá’í Faith.

The booklet refers to her internationally recognized talent as a photographer.

Miss Baker, who was born in the area of Dunolly, Bet Bet Shire, Victoria, produced the photographs used to illustrate Shoghi Effendi’s translation of Nabil’s classic history of the early years of the Faith, *The Dawn-Breakers*.

The Rainbow Dancers, a 20-member theatre group composed of Aboriginals, Australians, Chinese, Maoris, Persians and Tongans, which began a teaching tour performing ethnic songs and dances in towns throughout New South Wales following Australia’s recent National Youth Conference and Teaching Conference, have completed their itinerary after pleasing many audiences and receiving extensive publicity on television and radio and in the press.

The most enthusiastic audiences were reported in two Aboriginal communities, one in the interior of New South Wales and the other on the north coast.

In late December, a National Youth Conference in Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia, was followed by a National Teaching Conference in Sutherland, NSW.

A special guest speaker at the Teaching Conference was the Hand of the Cause Collis Featherstone. The Hand of the Cause William Sears addressed the conference from overseas via telephone, as did Counsellor Joy Stevenson of the International Teaching Centre in Haifa.

Also sharing news from their communities via telephone link-ups were members of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Japan and New Zealand.

Aboriginal Bahá’ís from the far north of the country brought news of recent victories. The National Assembly of New Zealand sent two Maori Bahá’ís to join a multi-cultural theatre group, the Rainbow Dancers, which is now traveling throughout New South Wales after attending both conferences.

On February 5, more than 350 people attended an observance at the Bahá’í House of Worship in Sydney, Australia, of the Chinese New Year.

The service, conducted in English, efforts among the aboriginals of northern Queensland, despite a limited knowledge of English, have led to great teaching successes.

Korean, Vietnamese and Chinese, was followed by a presentation on the basics of the Bahá’í Faith, in English and Mandarin, at the Information Centre.

More than half of those attending were of Asian descent, among them Helen Shan-ho, a member of the legislative council of the state parliament for New South Wales, who was given copies of the peace statement in English and Chinese.

Following the recent visit of a teaching team of Bahá’ís to the north of Western Australia, a new local Spiritual Assembly was formed at Three Mile Reserve, near Port Hedland, and 19 people were enrolled in the Faith in Onslow, Roeburne and Three Mile.

**Tanzania**

The three-week-long Dorothy Baker teaching campaign, held in the Same area of Tanzania, resulted in about 105 primary and high school teachers learning about the Faith.

Fourteen of these teachers were among the 46 people who embraced the Faith during the course of the campaign.
On the cover: On May 21 a memorial service in honor of the Hand of the Cause of God Zikru'lláh Khádem was held at Memorial Park in Skokie, Illinois. The gathering, sponsored by the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly in cooperation with Mr. Khádem's family, was held to mark the occasion of the placement of a monument over the grave of the Hand of the Cause of God who died in November 1986. Special remembrances of Mr. Khádem were offered by Counsellor Wilma Ellis; two members of the National Spiritual Assembly, Robert Henderson and Firuz Kazemzadeh; and Mr. Khádem's widow, Auxiliary Board member Javidukht Khádem. The service was followed by a reception at the Khádem's home in nearby Winnetka.
‘World Peace: A Bahá’í Perspective’

In January 1988 I enrolled in Chemeketa Community College in Salem, Oregon, with the idea of obtaining a few more credits toward a Human Services degree. On the first day of class, one of the instructors mentioned that a course on peace studies was being introduced on a trial basis, and although it was a Humanities course, it would count as an elective for the Human Services program.

After class I presented him with a copy of “The Promise of World Peace.” As he leafed through it, he commented that he had the greatest respect for the Bahá’ís whom he had met through his involvement in the Beyond War organization. He then suggested that the peace studies course might be of interest to me. I subsequently enrolled in the course, seeing in it a possibility to teach the Faith.

As it turned out, the response to the course was overwhelming. After limiting the class to 50 students, many others had to be turned away, an unusual situation in that this is a very conservative area of the country. Several weeks into the course it became obvious that the slant was more toward the elimination of nuclear weapons rather than a study of the underlying causes of war. At the same time, we were given a chance to choose a special project for extra credit. The project that I selected was an essay entitled “The Establishment of World Peace: A Bahá’í Perspective.”

After submitting the essay I was approached by the teaching staff and asked if they might reproduce it as a handout to the class for home study, and also if I would address the class and offer some background information on Bahá’u’lláh and the Bahá’í Faith.

On the second to last evening of the course, each student and seven faculty members was given a copy of the essay and a copy of “The Promise of World Peace,” and I was given an opportunity to present a discourse on the Cause. The following week, which was the final session of the class, I had the opportunity to further discuss the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh, the response to which was spontaneous applause from students and faculty alike, for the wisdom and hope that Bahá’u’lláh offers the world. Following that class I was approached by Joel Martin, one of the faculty members who had worked to establish the course. He smiled as he held up his copy of “The Promise of World Peace” and said, “This will help serve as an outline for this course next year!”

As I gathered my books and papers to leave I was approached by a number of students and faculty members with questions about the Faith and expressions of appreciation for a sense of renewed hope for the future of humanity. Walking out of the building that evening, I couldn’t help thinking of the change in receptivity toward the Faith that I had experienced—and the words of the Universal House of Justice to the effect that “now is the time to teach!”

The Establishment of World Peace: A Bahá’í Perspective

The establishment of world peace, as those of the Bahá’í Faith envision it, goes far beyond the elimination of nuclear or chemical weapons. It goes even beyond the cessation of open hostilities played out on battlefields and in warrooms across the face of our planet. These considerations, however important and necessary, are but a cosmetic approach in the treatment of superficial symptoms of the underlying problems afflicting the human race.

In the words of the Universal House of Justice, the world administrative body of the Bahá’í Faith, in its open letter to the peoples of the world entitled “The Promise of World Peace”:

“Banning of nuclear weapons, prohibiting the use of poison gases, or outlawing germ warfare will not remove the root causes of war. However important such practical measures obviously are as elements of the peace process, they are in themselves too superficial to exert enduring influence. People are ingenious enough to invent yet other forms of warfare, and to use food, raw materials, finance, industrial power, ideology, and terrorism to subvert one another in an endless quest for supremacy and dominance. Now can the present massive dislocation in the affairs of humanity be resolved through the settlement of specific conflicts or disagreements among nations. A genuine universal framework must be
adopted."

The Bahá'í Faith, which was founded in early 19th century Persia (Iran), is the youngest of the major religions of the world and has its own laws, institutions, calendar and scriptures, and is the first religion with the primary goal of promoting the establishment of world peace and understanding, harmony and justice among the varied religions and political and social philosophies and the re-education of mankind with the purpose of the permanent elimination of the barriers of discrimination based on race, nationality, gender, social and economic differentiation as well as religious misunderstanding and intolerance that have historically been the cause of suffering and death to vast portions of humanity.

Among the basic tenets of the Bahá'í Faith are:

*The essential harmony of science and religion*

Science and religion must be seen as two facets of the same reality, as the two wings that carry forward an ever-advancing civilization. If either wing should be allowed to weaken, civilization will falter. In the words of Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith:

"To acquire knowledge is incumbent on all, but of those sciences which may profit the people of the earth..."

"The possessors of sciences and arts have a great right among the people of the world."...Indeed, the real treasury of man is his knowledge...

This concept is further explained by His son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in the following passages: "...the religion of God is the promoter of truth, the founder of science and knowledge; it is full of goodwill for learned men; it is the civilizer of mankind, the discoverer of the secrets of nature, and the enlightener of the horizons of the world..."...

"...knowledge is the most glorious gift of man and the most noble of human perfections. To oppose knowledge is ignorant; he who detests knowledge and science is not a man, but rather an animal without intelligence. For knowledge is light, life, felicity, perfection, beauty and the means for approaching the Threshold of Unity. It is the honor and glory of the world of humanity, the greatest bounty of God. Knowledge is identical with guidance, and ignorance is real error."

Our history books demonstrate clearly how, when science and reason are abdicated in favor of religious doctrine, we become sunk in an abyss of superstition and ignorance, as evidenced by the period referred to as "the Dark Ages of Europe," and the world of today is more than sufficient to demonstrate what can happen when knowledge and science become uncoupled from the morality and ethics born of religious belief. True science and true religion complement each other. The inspiration for both is received from the same Source. We are taught, however, that should religious understanding and science conflict, religion should defer to science and reason, and religious understanding will eventually become manifest.

To exemplify how science can bring about unity and understanding among peoples, we have only to point out how the science of genetics has proved conclusively in this century, through unraveling the genetic code, that humanity is indeed one species, that every human being on the planet is quite literally related to every other.

It will be, in part, through the recognition of the validity of the sciences by the followers of various religious communities that the beginnings of understanding, and therefore unity, will be established.

*A spiritual solution to the economic problem*

We have seen in this century how communications technology has enabled mankind to view the entire planet; how, instantaneously, the billionaire can, with but a flick of a finger, turn on a television set from the comfort of his boardroom, luxury penthouse or mansion, and see the face and hear the cries of a dying African child—before that child's tears have had time to roll down his face into the dust. Conversely, the electronic miracle of television allows millions of people in famine-wracked countries to stare into appliance-store windows and watch in quiet desperation as peoples of other nations consume seemingly unlimited quantities of goods, food, and natural resources in an orgy of self-satisfaction, without considering for a moment how their demand on the limited resources of a finite planet drives prices farther and farther from the reach of whole populations, thus destroying, in many instances, the limited chances for their continued survival.

That entire generations have been raised to view this disparity as acceptable is a commentary on the moral and ethical shortcomings of the combined political and spiritual leadership of our world. That the practice of self-advancement over consideration for the needs of others has been variously condemned by the founders of all of the world's religions is beyond question.

"The inordinate disparity between rich and poor, a source of acute suffering, keeps the world in a state of instability, virtually on the brink of war. Few societies have dealt effectively with this situation. The solution calls for the combined application of spiritual, moral and practical approaches. A fresh look at the problem is required, entailing consultation with experts from a wide spectrum of disciplines, devoid of economic and ideological polemics, and involving the people directly affected in the decisions that must urgently be made. It is an issue that is bound up not only with the necessity for eliminating the extremes of wealth and poverty but also with those spiritual verities the understanding of which can produce a new universal attitude. Fostering such an attitude is itself a major part of the solution."

(The Universal House of Justice, October 1985)

*Equality of rights and privileges between men and women*

"Since the Bahá'í Faith, whose teachings, principles and laws guide the Bahá'í International Community, is the first religion to proclaim unequivocally the principle of the equality of rights, privileges and responsibilities for men and women, worldwide Bahá'í programs are always concerned, within their own community and in society at large, with the advancement of women." (Bahá'í International Community, 1975)

The establishment of the equality of rights and privileges between men and women will be, Bahá'ís believe, another major part of the foundation of a just and lasting peace on earth. Women must be recognized as the primary educators of the human race, as it is at the knee of the mother that humanity
receives its first instruction. It is there, also, that the barriers between peoples are either constructed or destroyed. It is in part because of this—the greatest of all human responsibilities—that woman should receive the fullest education and instruction available. It is also because without her complete interaction in the construction of society, and the full influence of her moderating effect on the affairs of humanity, neither harmony among nations nor true justice will ever prevail.

"Improvement in the status of women in the Bahá’í world community rests securely on several interrelated concepts which lend it added strength and support. In the Bahá’í view, the good of any one part of society is essential to the happiness and well-being of the whole. The role of women in society must, therefore, always be seen in the light of the organic oneness of humanity. All principles and actions which strengthen the bonds uniting members of the human race will in turn advance the position of women. For this reason, Bahá’í communities strive to attain unity in diversity—not uniformity—through the abolition of all forms of discrimination, whether of sex, race, creed, nationality or class. The advancement of women among Bahá’ís springs, therefore, not only from the motivation which their Faith inspires, but also from an assumption of responsibility for action on the part of every person in his individual life, and in his family and community relationships." (Bahá’í International Community, report to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women)

"Inasmuch as human society consists of two factors, the male and female, each the complement of the other, the happiness and stability of humanity cannot be assured unless both are perfected. Therefore the standard and status of man and woman must become equalized." (From the Bahá’í scriptures)

A universal auxiliary language

The necessity for the establishment of a universal means of communication for all peoples is another prerequisite established by Bahá’u’lláh for the promotion of understanding and the elimination of suspicions generated by the inability of peoples to directly communicate with one another. In His own words:

"... The day is approaching when all the peoples of the world will have adopted one universal language and one common script. When this is achieved, to whatsoever city a man may journey, it shall be as if he were entering his own home. These things are obligatory and absolutely essential."

Bahá’u’lláh’s son, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, stated the following:

"... a universal language would make intercourse possible with every nation. Thus it would be needful to know two languages only, the mother tongue and the universal speech. The latter would enable a man to communicate with any and every man in the world!"

A world monetary system

Another consideration for the establishment of world peace will be the establishment of a world monetary system to enhance the stability of a global economy and further the concept that the economic well-being of all nations is in the best interest of every individual nation on earth. In the words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

"... it is apparent that whenever the ties between nations become strengthened and the exchange of commodities accelerated, and any economic principle is established in one country, it will ultimately affect the other countries and universal benefits will result."

It is also obvious that the more interdependent the various economies become, the more that nations invest in the internal industries of other nations, the less likely are the chances that nations will purposely attempt to rise up and try to harm or destroy one another, for to do so would be to harm themselves.

Universal education

The need for universal education was recognized by Bahá’u’lláh as a requirement for the establishment of a peaceful world, in that He recognized that the more informed people become, the more they are able to recognize the validity, history and beauty of the diverse cultures of our species. The more informed humanity becomes in the sciences, the more able we will be to respect our planet and our universe. True education is more conducive to balance and harmony, understanding and enlightenment of the heart and mind of man. In the words of Bahá’u’lláh:

"... the Pen of Glory counselleth everyone regarding the education and instruction of children...

"... bend your minds and wills to the education of the peoples and kindreds of the earth..." And from the pen of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: "... the primary, the most urgent requirement is the promotion of education. It is inconceivable that any nation should achieve prosperity and success unless this paramount, this fundamental concern is carried forward... "... the education and training of children is among the most meritorious acts of humankind and draweth down the grace and favor of the All-Merciful, for education is the indispensable foundation of all human excellence...

The recognition of the unity of religion

No discussion of the topic of world peace can be complete without touching on the theme of religion, for it is religion through the ages that has been both the guiding light of civilization and, through intolerance and misunderstanding, has caused the greatest strife and sorrow in the world of humanity.

Bahá’ís see hatred and strife among conflicting religious ideologies as a concept that is at best hypocritical and at worst blasphemous and destructive to the spirit of man. Any unbiased consideration of the social and spiritual teachings of all of the major religions, when stripped of the ages-old accumulation of doctrine and dogma introduced by man, cannot help but reveal that an ancient and consistent thread of commonality runs through them all.

As a unifying force, the inspiration of religion has brought about a universality of ethical, moral and spiritual belief as well as social vision and, therefore, comprehension and motivation to
peoples of previously diverse standards and concepts.

As a destructive force, we can easily see how, when humanity has allowed pride of religious conviction rather than aspiration to understanding to become the focus, arrogance, self-agrandizement, and an assumed exclusivity of righteousness have turned the creative, dynamic and unifying force of religion into a source of hatred and disunity among the various peoples, leading more to anarchy than to harmony. It is toward the purpose of eliminating such misunderstanding and conflict that we believe all true religion is directed.

Referring to the different beliefs of mankind, Bahá'u'lláh says this:

"That the diverse communions of the earth, and the manifold systems of religious belief, should never be allowed to foster the feelings of animosity among men, is, in this Day, of the essence of the Faith of God and His religion. These principles and laws, these firmly-established and mighty systems, have proceeded from one Source, and are the rays of One Light. That they differ one from another is to be attributed to the varying requirements of the ages in which they were promulgated. The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light is these words: Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship. He Who is the Day Star of Truth beareth me witness! So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth."

"Know thou assuredly that the essence of all the Prophets of God is one and the same. Their unity is absolute."

In another reference to these Divine Educators of mankind, He says: "We recognize in the manifestation of each one of them, whether outwardly or inwardly, the manifestation of none but God Himself, if ye be of those that comprehend. Every one of them is a mirror of God, reflecting naught but His Self, His Beauty, His Might and Glory, if ye will understand." "These Mirrors will everlastingly succeed each other and will continue to reflect the light of the Ancient of Days."

The establishment of a world assemblage

That the nations have evolved to a point where the need to establish a world consultative body to attend the affairs of all mankind is another concept laid down more than a century ago by Bahá'u'lláh, as evidenced in the following passage:

"The time must come when the imperative necessity for the holding of a vast, an all-embracing assemblage of men will be universally realized. The rulers and kings of the earth must needs attend it, and, participating in its deliberations, must consider such ways and means as will lay the foundations of the world's Great Peace amongst men."

In a further reference to the need for this supreme body, 'Abdu'l-Bahá continues:

"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 insure the stability and permanence of this Most Great Covenant. In this all-embracing Pact the limits and frontiers of each and every nation should be clearly fixed, the principles underlying the relations of governments toward one another definitely laid down, and all international agreements and obligations ascertained. In like manner, the size of the armaments of every government must be strictly limited, for if preparations for war and the military forces of any nation should be allowed to increase, they will arouse the suspicion of others. The fundamental principle underlying this solemn Pact should be so fixed that if any government later violates any of its provisions, all the governments on earth should arise to reduce it to utter submission, nay the human race as a whole should resolve, with every power at its disposal, to destroy that government. Should this greatest of all remedies be applied to the sick body of the world, it will assuredly recover from its ills and will remain eternally safe and secure."

Peace—the promise

Together with the social and spiritual guidance that religion has provided, there is an ancient promise that has transcended time—and the barriers of continents and seas. It is a promise that has permeated our history as a race on this planet—a promise that is shared by all major religions and countless tribal traditions from all continents. It is a promise that is at once so ancient that its first whispers are shrouded in the mists of pre-history, and so new as to encompass all of our tomorrows. That promise is of the day when, in the words of the prophet Isaiah:

"They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

It is the day foretold in the Eskimo tradition of the story of creation:

"... The reason for our existence is the dawning of that Great Day, and the Light that will fill the world. . . ."

The promise of that day was reiterated in the prayer and prophecy of Jesus Christ when He uttered the words:

"... Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. . . ."

It is a day also foreseen by poets as witnessed by the following lines from the pen of Walt Whitman (1819-92):

"Lo, Soul! Seest not God's purpose from the first
The earth to be spanned, connected by network,
The people to become brothers and sisters,
The races, neighbors, to marry and to be given in marriage
The oceans to be cross'd, the distant brought near
The lands to be welded together."

And again from the pen of Alfred Lord Tennyson (1802-92):

"For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see, saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be; Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails, Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales; Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew
from the nations' airy navies
grappling in the central blue;
Far along the world-wide whisper
of the southwind rushing warm,
with the standards of the peoples
plunging thro' the thunder-storm;
Till the war-drum throb'd no longer,
and the battle-flags were furl'd
In the Parliament of Man,
the Federation of the world.
There the common sense of most
shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
and the kindly earth shall slumber,
lapt in universal law."
The world-wide community of the
Baha'i Faith believes that that day has,
at long last, arrived. Humanity has
progressed through its childhood and is
now emerging from its turbulent youth
into adulthood.
Humanity, in our view, stands at the
threshold of an era that is staggering in
its portent, all-pervasive in its range,
and unlimited in its scope. We are, we
believe, witness to the dawn of an age
in which the full potential of the reality
of man will be revealed.
In reference to the conflicts which
have wracked this century, Baha'u'llah
stated a century and a half ago:
"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!'"
"The day is approaching when its (civi-
lization's) flame will devour the cities,
when the Tongue of Grandeur will pro-
claim: 'The Kingdom is God's the Al-
mighty, the All-Praised!'" However,
He went on to state: "The purpose
underlying all creation is the revelation
of this most sublime, this most holy
Day, the Day known as the Day of God
in His books and scriptures—the Day
which all the Prophets, and the Chosen
Ones, and the holy ones, have wished
to witness.'" "This is the Day in which
God's most excellent favors have been
poured out upon men, the Day in
which His most mighty grace hath been
infused into all created things." "Great,
immeasurably great is this Cause! Mighty, inconceivably mighty
is this Day!"
The conflicting ideologies that have
been raised up in this century—indeed,
the very weapons that we fear most—
serve only, in our view, as temporary
catalysts aimed by a higher Power at
forcing humanity to come to terms
with itself. We see the conflicts that
have convulsed humanity throughout
this century as the birth-pangs of a new
world order.
We are told, as Baha'is, that as this
century draws to a close, peace will be
established. In the words of Baha'-
'ullah, this is "the Century of Light." This
message was repeated by 'Abdu'l-
Baha during His visit to New York in
1912: "... This is the century of New
and Universal Brotherhood..."
"... the century of Universal
Peace..." "... the Century of Ra-
diance..."
Might we visualize for a moment the
eventual and inevitable establishment
of world peace. Consider how the free-
ing of national treasuries from the need
for arms-making could, almost over-
night, enable the nations of the world
to feed, clothe, shelter and educate
every man, woman and child on this
planet!
Imagine the scientists and engineers
of the world who now work indepen-
dently from, and in hostile competition
with one another, uniting in a vast con-
course of the greatest minds of our
species, to work collectively toward the
solution of problems and the curing of
diseases which have plagued humanity
from the beginning of time. Imagine
the possibilities for new, as yet un-
dreamed-of sciences that must be born
of such an endeavor. How fast our
progress might be under conditions of
such a concerted effort is a matter that
can scarcely be comprehended from
our perspective in history.
As humanity embarks on its journey
into tomorrow, it is our hope that we
all may become more aware of the un-
seen Hand which has guided the des-
tiny of mankind and lifted us toward
this day.
Somewhere in our distant past,
someone stood alone on an ancient
savannah and looked toward the heav-
ens, and for the first time was inspired
to ask, "Who am I, and why am I
here?" As Baha'is, we can't help but
feel that in the years that lie ahead the
answer will become abundantly clear.
—Ken Francisco
A most rewarding visit

The photographs on these two pages were taken during a tour of five Far Eastern countries undertaken in November 1987 by a group of 36 Bahá'ís from the United States. The friends visited Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Thailand and China, teaching and proclaiming the Faith in each country.
through their example of love and unity. In Taipei, Taiwan, their first stop, they were told that more than 900 people had recently embraced the Cause in that country, about 70 percent of whom were youth. Since then even those numbers have grown significantly. In Bangkok, Thailand, they were greeted by about 30 Baha'is with a banner welcoming them (see photo on page 6). As these photos show, the friends were able to mix freely with residents of each country, eating, dancing and praying with them while cementing the bonds of universal brotherhood. Everywhere they went, the Baha'is were told of the great need for more traveling teachers to help consolidate the recent gains in enrollment. Most members of the group are shown in the photograph at the bottom of this page.
The place for the poet

The poet receives intimations from the spiritual world and translates them into words that can be understood by others. This inspiration can stimulate others to a higher resolve and nobler aims, thus changing themselves and society.

In its message describing the Six Year Plan, the Universal House of Justice lists drama and singing as tools that should receive greater use by the Bahá’í community in the teaching and deepening work. This appears at first glance to leave out poets and the poetry they create. But in looking further into the nature of drama and the source of songs, one finds that both stem from foundations in poetry. What is drama but poetry given physical form? And what are songs but poetry set to music? Thus the House of Justice is calling on the Bahá’í community to stimulate the development of all these forms of the arts.

Why should poetry be so fundamental to these other arts? ‘Abdu’l-Bahá once told Shanaz Waite, one of the earliest poets in the American Bahá’í community, to “endeavor your utmost to compose beautiful poems to be chanted with heavenly music; thus may their beauty affect the minds and impress the hearts of those who listen.” 1 It is this effect that will attract the hearts of mankind to the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh. Hearts will be attracted through beautiful poetry; without developing and using the arts, we cripple our teaching efforts.

Not only will people be drawn to the Revelation, but even those who are not will be changed in ways that are beneficial. “If the writer has done a valid job,” Roger White said about the role of poets in society, “the act of writing a poem has changed the writer, and we in reading it are put in touch with a power that transforms us—if only by reminding us that transformation is possible.” 2 It is the power of transformation that lies in poetry. And transformation is the goal of the religion of God—to transform this world into another world. We are to transform our lives, and those whom we teach; and poetry, by its very nature, can be a powerful assistant.

How can poetry effect this transformation? Part of the answer lies in the nature of the poet and his/her art. “The poet is individual and subjective, but he is mankind’s conscience,” said Geoffrey Nash. “Mystically initiated to the divine order of things, he registers man’s departure from his nobler nature and his higher ideals.” 3 It is in this sphere, of the spiritually inclined individual, that transformation can take place as the poet elucidates the spiritual experience. Poetry is especially effective at describing spiritual realities because the poet deals with emotions: the non-physical, spiritual side of life. But how is this possible?

In His second letter to George Townshend, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá touched on the receptivity of spiritual individuals, saying, “these heavenly susceptibilities of thine form a magnet which attracts the confinements of the Kingdom of God: and so the doors of realities and meanings will be open unto thee, and the confinements of the Kingdom of God will envelop thee.” 4 It is through this process that spiritual progress occurs in human society. The poet receives intimations from the spiritual world and translates them into words that can be understood by others. This inspiration can stimulate others to a higher resolve and nobler aims, thus changing themselves and society.

Reflecting on this process, the author of an article on the presence of the arts in the Bahá’í community wondered, “Is it not possible, then, that the arts can serve at this time a twofold purpose: to help bring about a change in mankind and to help tell mankind that a change is happening?” 5 It is this twofold awareness that the poet can bring about. If poets and other artists do not raise the consciousness of humanity, who will? It is part of the poet’s responsibility to speak, and to speak clearly.

This does not mean that poetic devices such as similes and metaphors should not be employed, for they can often be used to convey truth in a clearer form, and in this we have the example of the Prophets to guide us, but the work should be understandable to the audience for whom it is intended. Sometimes this purpose is missed by those with a poetic calling. “His (the poet’s) aim should be to speak with the tongue that whispers in the bones and arteries of his audience, in such a way that the isolated and speechless elements in the community find their voices in his harmony.” 6

Without communication there can be no transformation. This is one special function of the poet in helping to transform society. Thoughts unspoken cannot be acted upon; ideals unarticulated cannot be realized. Poets give expression to those thoughts and feelings that have not yet been realized by the mass of humanity. Poets can help their community of fellow humans by speaking the unspoken thoughts, forming the unformed hopes. This unity of poet and au-
dience, linked by the Kingdom of God, creates and releases power to achieve those goals toward which we are striving.

The possibilities of this transformation are limitless. The transformation will take us into the future. Dr. Glen Eyford, until recently a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, expressed the process this way: "The poet will lead mankind into the future by giving expression to hopes and visions that are often poorly articulated and little understood by most men. Poets serve as interpreters and prophets by giving definite shape to feeling, to thoughts only dimly perceived by others. They provide the images by which man moves into the future." Without some stepping stones, the path to the future will take longer and be more circuitous. We need all the help we can get.

But where in our community life does the poet fit? Are poems to be reserved for infrequent and special "poetry readings"? Or is there a particular place in our regular activities where poetry can fit, or is presently missing and we are unaware of its loss? The Guardian was asked a similar question years ago. His answer then applies to this question as well:

"With regard to your question concerning the use of music in the Nineteen Day Feasts, he wishes to assure all the friends that not only does he approve of such a practice, but thinks it even advisable that the believers should make use, in their meetings, of hymns composed by Bahá'ís themselves, and also of such hymns, poems and chants as are based on the Holy Words." 9

Hymns, poems and chants based on the Words of God and composed by the believers themselves, these we are to use in our Feasts and other meetings. Here is a place to begin. How often do we see this in practice? Why not start now? They will undoubtedly add a new dimension to our Feasts. They could serve as a bridge from the spiritual opening to the consultation, or as an opening to the social part of the Feast. Or they might even be a prelude to the devotions, to help everyone clear his heart and mind prior to the Feast.

In the loving acceptance of our communities the fledgling poets, children and youth included, could practice and refine their craft. Eventually there would be a reservoir of scripture-based devotional literature that could be used in presenting the Faith to the public.

Shoghi Effendi expressly stated through his secretary, "It is through such (dramatic) presentations that we can arouse the interest of the greatest number of people in the spirit of the Cause. That day will the Cause spread like wildfire when its spirit and teachings are presented on the stage or in art and literature as a whole. Art can better awaken such noble sentiments than cold rationalizing, especially among the masses of the people." 9

The sooner we begin to allow our poets and other artists a place in our community events, the sooner will that day come. The House of Justice is calling on us to work toward that day now. Can we sit silent, or will we let our poets sing?

"O thou dear one! Impoverish thyself, that thou mayest enter the high court of riches; and humble thy body, that thou mayest drink from the river of glory, and attain to the full meaning of the poems whereof thou hast asked."—Bahá'u'lláh, from the Valley of Unity

NOTES
United Nations

A convention on children’s rights

On the 10th anniversary of the International Year of the Child—and the 30th anniversary of the UN General Assembly’s Declaration of the Rights of the Child—the United Nations is heading toward completion of a convention on children’s rights.

The convention will redefine as children’s rights the rights and freedoms proclaimed for “the entire human family,” but the General Assembly is also seeking to lend strength to its 1959 declaration that children require “special safeguards and care” because of their “physical and mental immaturity.”

To do so, a Working Group has pulled together from various human rights documents all the obligations that have already been assigned to parents and states on behalf of children—spelling them out and establishing the international machinery for overseeing their implementation. A final draft document is expected to be adopted during the General Assembly’s 44th Session next fall and will then be opened for government ratification.

Many of the present draft’s 54 articles set out various rights (to life, to a name and nationality, to participate in one’s own culture and religion, to health and parental care, to family unification, to an adequate standard of living, to leisure and recreation) and freedoms (of opinion, information, conscience, association, privacy).

Two relatively long articles dealing with education and its aims are intended to reinforce these rights and freedoms; “the child,” says the document’s preamble, “should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society, and brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity.”

Still other articles affirm the necessity for measures that protect children (from physical or mental violence, economic and sexual exploitation, drug abuse) and measures that promote the care of refugee children, children in need of rehabilitation, and children deprived of family, temporarily or permanently. The drafters have included a separate article dealing with adoption per se—one that, The New York Times noted as the General Assembly began debating a first draft in November, “breaks new ground” by “extending international legal protection to the process of adoption.”

A single article—on armed conflict—has garnered most of the publicity the convention has received in the U.S. daily press. This was occasioned by the U.S. objection to a provision that discourages a combat role for those under 18.

A single article—on armed conflict—has garnered most of the publicity the convention has received in the U.S. daily press. This was occasioned by the U.S. objection to a provision that discourages a combat role for those under 18.

"Proponents of the higher age limit," reports the Times, "say that such an international standard is needed to oppose the widespread use of children in some conflicts, like the Iran-Iraq war." Debate will continue at the next meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva in February and March.

Receiving only passing notice—but likewise running afoul of U.S. practice—is a provision outlawing the execution (or lifetime imprisonment without the possibility of release) of those who have committed a punishable crime before their 18th birthday. The statutes of some of our 50 states currently permit the execution of children for capital crimes; the U.S. is one of the few countries in which such executions may take place.

Two articles deal explicitly with penal law. Article 40, on juvenile justice, attempts to provide the heralded “special care and assistance” by promoting “specific laws, procedures, authorities and institutions” for children within each state’s justice system, as well as providing the obligatory guarantees of prompt trial, competent counsel, and the like.

Article 37, on capital punishment, is also concerned with such extrajudicial matters as torture and arbitrary detention—still common practice in many countries. Indeed, according to a recent Amnesty International report, “in at least a third of the world’s nations, men, women and even children are tortured.”

In both Article 40 and in an article on rehabilitative care, governments are asked to take measures that foster the health, self-respect and dignity of the
child for the purpose of reintegrating him in society after incarceration.

The final articles first direct "states parties" to publicize the convention among adults and children alike, and go on to establish the machinery for overseeing the convention's implementation and set the rules for amendment.

A 10-member Committee on the Rights of the Child ("experts of high moral standing and recognized competence in the field covered by this Convention (who) shall serve in their personal capacity, consideration being given to equitable geographical distribution as well as to the principal legal systems") will examine the progress made "in achieving the realization of the obligations undertaken" by states that ratify the convention, reporting to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) every two years.

Within two years of the convention's entry into force, and every five years thereafter, ratifying states will report to the committee on the measures they have taken to realize their obligations.

To encourage this process, the drafters have made a place for the UN's Specialized Agencies with particular competence in one or more of the areas covered by the convention, naming the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) specifically. The committee can contemplate inviting such bodies to provide advice and to submit reports on implementation, and it can call on them to render technical advice or assistance to countries that request it.

Children's rights advocates, while acknowledging that such conventions are intended merely to set minimum standards, have commented that the present articles leave something to be desired. Some point to a lack of provisions for educating the officials who will be involved with juvenile detention and criminal proceedings. Some go on to note that children are excellent candidates for rehabilitation and that they—and society—would benefit if experts in childhood development were cited as integral to the rehabilitation process. (According to an officer of one non-governmental organization privy to the deliberations, such a provision was discarded because it was considered a stumbling block to passage—requiring "the need to agree on what 'experts' would be needed as well as on a definition of 'expert.'")

Still others call attention to the phrases that now temper some of the convention's declarations: "Every child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child's best interest not to do so"; and (in the convention's definition of its own constituents), "a child means every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier." Nearly all agree, however, that the convention constitutes a significant step forward, and that it is a fitting gift to the world's children in this anniversary year.
Dignitaries visit the Temple in India

During February, dignitaries from Bhutan, Canada, China, Colombia, Haiti, Hungary, Malaysia, Poland, Sikkim, Sweden, the USSR and Vietnam were among the many visitors to the Bahá'í House of Worship in India. Among them was the Russian Ambassador to India, Victor K. Isakov, who was accompanied by his wife and daughter.

Also visiting was a delegation of professors of medicine headed by the vice-rector of the First Moscow Medical Institute in the USSR; Madame Malgorzata Niepokulezycka, a member of the Parliament of Poland and president of the Polish Consumer Federation; Madame Grazyna Rokiacka, secretary of the Polish National Council; the premier of Saskatchewan, Canada, Madame Chantal Divine; and a group of officials from the Malaysian High Commission.

In addition, the Temple was visited by a delegation of Chinese, a group of 20 Brazilians, and 36 young people from Germany, Japan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and the United States who came together through "Religious Youth Service," an interfaith organization whose purpose is "... to serve the ideal of a God-centered world culture, a culture that is nurtured by different races, nationalities and religious traditions."

Thirty-two Bahá'í tutorial schools from three districts in Uttar Pradesh, India, recently held their seventh annual fair, involving almost 600 students and 53 teachers in the two-day event.

Among the special guests were Counsellor Farzam Arbáb from the International Teaching Centre in Haifa; his wife, Laurie Arbáb; Counsellor Zena Sorabjee, and members of the National Spiritual Assembly of India.

The program included music and dance, gymnastics displays, drama, a written test (in which all students excelled far beyond expectations), and a prize-giving ceremony.

A report from the State Bahá'í Council recounted some of the changes taking place in villages in the region as a result of the introduction of the Faith and its tutorial schools. Whereas formerly the main source of income in one village was illegal, the report says, these activities have been discontinued.

The completion of an 18-day teaching campaign whose members toured the lower Punjab in India found 95 persons enrolled in the Faith and 12 new localities opened.

A new campaign has been launched in a district of Muslim villages near Multan. To date (February), 22 new believers have embraced the Faith there.

The campaign was organized by Counsellor Rouhollah Momtazi with help from an Auxiliary Board member and two youth from Sind.

Iceland

Fourteen people have embraced the Faith in Iceland since last Ridván, almost twice the number of declarations for the previous year.

Considering Iceland's population of about 247,000, the growth rate is, according to a report from the Auxiliary Board, "approaching entry by troops."

"Firesides are held every night," the report continues, "and the receptiveness of the Icelandic people is at a level not reached since the early '70s."
Mariana Islands

The 40th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights was observed in the Mariana Islands with an evening of music at the Plaza de España, the historic center of the capital of the island of Guam.

It was a significant place for the National Spiritual Assembly of the Mariana Islands to choose to commemorate the signing of a human rights document, as this is the traditional site for consultation between the indigenous inhabitants of the Mariana Islands, the Chamorro people.

The program began with classical music and welcoming remarks by a Bahá’í representative, Annette Donner, after which Governor Joseph Ada gave the keynote address.

Representatives of various religions read passages from their holy writings and, to the music of bagpipes, candles and torches were lit and distributed for the closing of the event.

The ceremony was covered by local cable television and two major newspapers.

Bangladesh

Medical camps operating through the devoted efforts of Bahá’í physicians and traveling teachers in Bangladesh have led to a large number of enrollments in addition to carrying out a valuable public service.

Last November 19, the Ruhi Camp, named after a recent martyr in Iran, treated 150 patients, 54 of whom embraced the Cause.

Four days later, the Faizi Camp treated more than 100 patients and enrolled 35 of them.

The Farhangi Medical Camps, initiated early last year, are still functioning; the most recent was reportedly held last November 21.

Also in November the Haqiqi Medical Project, also named after a recent martyr, treated more than 200 patients and enrolled 110 new believers including the residents of one entire village.

As of the end of November 1988, three special teaching plans in Bangladesh had resulted in the enrollment of more than 2,500 new believers in that country and helped establish 40 new local Spiritual Assemblies.

The formation of the first local Spiritual Assembly among members of the Khashia tribe was one of the exciting results of a recent teaching campaign in the Sylhet district of Bangladesh.

Turkey

The enrollment of four new believers was among the highlights of Turkey’s first Winter School, held February 2-5 in Iskenderun.

An enthusiastic group of 125 including one newspaper reporter took part in the school, and several other reporters asked for information about the event.

Germany

About 220 Bahá’ís from Germany and neighboring countries gathered February 25 at the Bahá’í House of Worship in Langenhain for a memorial service for Edna M. True and H. Bor­rah Kavelin, both of whom died last December.

The service was held at the closing of a National Teaching Conference.

During a meeting at the National Bahá’í Center which followed the service, Counsellor Hartmut Grossmann spoke of the lives and services of Miss True and Mr. Kavelin and extolled their example of dedication and service to the Cause.

In January, the music duo “Parrish and Toppano” from the United States released their second album, “The Shores of This Great Ocean,” in Germany.

The album, which sold 24,000 copies in its first 10 days, includes two songs based on the Bahá’í Writings.

The two musicians received considerable publicity during their promotional tour including an appearance on one of German National Television’s most popular Saturday evening programs, which holds a 50 percent audience rating (20.1 million viewers), and radio interviews in which they were asked about the Faith.

They conducted a fireside for 60 people in Langenhain and established good relations with various prominent German recording artists.

Thirty-eight Bahá’ís from 19 countries met last December 25-28 for the Langenhain III Conference in Germany.

The friends were summoned to the meeting by the Universal House of Justice to consult on the formation of a Bahá’í International Community for European Affairs.

Such a body would contribute to the expansion and unified action of external affairs agencies and help mobilize the European communities for the further development of the Cause.

Brazil

“Prejudice—Throw Out This Weapon” is the theme of a major campaign begun last September by the Bahá’ís of Curitiba, Brazil. The campaign has reached thousands of people in the State of Parana with its message.

So far, more than 83 institutions, factories, associations, unions and government agencies have been contacted, and more than 10,000 pamphlets, 600 books, 2,000 posters, 1,000 stickers, and hundreds of buttons and T-shirts describing the message of the unity of mankind have been distributed to employees, businessmen and directors of those entities.

The campaign has been supported by three television stations, one radio station and the Media Association of Curitiba, which helped with the publication of ads introducing the campaign and the Bahá’í Faith in some 14 newspapers.

A teaching campaign launched in January in the State of Tocantins, Brazil, has led so far to 20 declarations, the first ever in that State.

Malawi

The Bahá’í women of Masiyaya, Malawi, are helping in their community by making regular visits to the sick, gathering every Friday evening to help children memorize prayers, tending a garden, and helping a widow in a nearby village.

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Swaziland

A student at the Mbabane Baha'i preschool in Swaziland receives her graduation certificate and a gift from Dr. Ben Dlamini, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly, during the preschool's recent graduation ceremony.

France

A celebration of the 75th anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Baha's visit to Marseilles, France, led to extensive proclamation of the Faith and opportunities for the Baha'is to strengthen relations with the general public.

After an official observance at the "Palais du Faro," which was offered to the Baha'is by the mayor for use on this occasion, a public meeting was held at the Odeon Theatre. That event was announced on radio and television and in the local newspaper; in addition, about 11,000 posters were distributed throughout the city.

Some 160 people attended the celebration, enjoying a program based on the theme of peace that included a variety of music and a slide presentation.

A concert was given by pianist Mark Ochu, a Baha'i from the United States, who accompanied his performance with comments about the Universal House of Justice's peace statement.

A film about the Baha'i Faith made by Andre Brugiroux, a Baha'i from France, has drawn large audiences to recent showings and has resulted in many people being introduced to the Faith.

Last October, nearly 500 people saw the film at four showings in France.

In addition, several articles in the press have favorably reviewed the film.

During the past year the Baha'is of Toulouse, France, began receiving invitations to talk about the Faith on local radio programs. For each program, a topic is chosen and discussed, and questions are asked by the program host.

The most recent program was titled "Carmel, the Mountain of God."

Mauritius

Several visitors from the Indian Ocean region, Madagascar, Reunion and the Seychelles traveled to Mauritius to help in a recent teaching campaign in which 205 people were enrolled in the Faith.

A consolidation program is underway, and the visiting teachers have left Mauritius eager to begin similar campaigns in their home communities.
Taiwan

The presence of more than 60 young people from all areas of Taiwan and Korea as well as from Japan, India, Sri Lanka and a number of other countries helped make the first Bahá'í National Youth Conference in Taiwan an overwhelming success. The majority of those taking part in the three-day event, held April 6-8, were Taiwanese youth who had enrolled during the past two years through the Muhajir Teaching Campaign.

Sri Lanka

World Religion Day observances in January in Jaffna and Vavuniya, Sri Lanka, drew large gatherings and brought together representatives of the country's major religions in spite of the continuing unrest in that country.

The theme of both events was “The Role of Religion in Bringing About Unity.”

In Jaffna, more than 200 people including lecturers and students from the University of Jaffna, where the observance was held, attended the program with Chief Guest V. Sabanayagam, regional director of education, and Prof. A. Shanmugadas of the university, who served as chairman.

The commissioner for rehabilitation, S. Thillainadarasa, chaired the observance in Vavuniya, at which more than 300 were present including Honorary Guest T. Lankanesan, the government agent for Vavuniya, and Chief Guest U. P. Piyasena, assistant government agent.

Representatives of various religions spoke on the theme of the day, and each program ended with cultural presentations by the participating religious groups.

Of the 35 people who attended a recent public meeting in Vavuniya, in northern Sri Lanka, 16 have since embraced the Faith.

Zimbabwe

A recent teaching campaign in Zimbabwe's Rusape area led to the enrollment of 300 new believers. Teaching is continuing in other areas as interest in the Faith grows.

Guinea Bissau

The government of the west African state of Guinea Bissau has officially recognized that country's National Spiritual Assembly.

An official document of recognition has been signed by the government of the former Portuguese colony, which lies on the Atlantic coast of Africa between Senegal and Guinea.

Audio-visual programs proved to be an effective means of teaching during a recent four-month trip through Guinea Bissau by two Bahá'ís, Robert Miessler of Brazil and Tony Parker Danso of Ghana.

The visit resulted in a number of enrollments, the formation of new local Spiritual Assemblies in Mansoa and Nhaora, and extensive proclamation of the Faith to people in all strata of society.

The two main audio-visual programs were an adaptation of a program entitled “God Speaks Again” and another entitled “From War to Peace” based on the Universal House of Justice's peace statement and produced in Brazil.

Mr. Danso has taken a year's leave of absence from his position as an English teacher to serve the Faith full-time.

Uganda

Seven journalists and representatives of Radio Uganda and Uganda Television met last November 11 with a Bahá'í delegation at the House of Worship in Kampala.

The meeting, planned by the Bahá'í Public Relations Committee, was attended by Counsellors Oloro Epyeru and Edith Senoga and by members of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Among the results were an announcement regarding the anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, broadcast in all local languages on Radio Uganda, and an extensive newspaper article about the Faith with a photograph of the House of Worship in Financial Times for November 14.

Another article and photograph appeared November 11 in The New Vision.

Kenya

Seventy women representing most provinces of Kenya took part February 9-12 in the sixth annual National Bahá'í Women's Conference at the Nakuru Bahá'í Centre.

Among the highlights were a presentation by Mandelo Wana Wake on income-generating projects, and a visit to a district hospital in Nakuru where Judith Soita presented a talk entitled “Spiritual Life, Immunization and Nutrition” to an audience that included the patients and staff of the hospital's maternity wing.

An interview with a panel of Bahá'í women was recorded with highlights of the conference for later broadcast on the program “Women and Development” on Voice of Kenya Television.

Andaman/Nicobar Islands

A week-long teaching campaign began January 7 in the Andaman/Nicobar Islands resulted in 43 enrollments and the re-formation of two local Spiritual Assemblies.
Sweden

Extensive teaching activities in the Eskil Ljungberg Teaching Campaign, based in Uppsala, Sweden, have led to a positive reception of the Faith by the public and generated within the Baha'i community a new nationwide enthusiasm for teaching.

Two recent major events were a World Religion Day observance and a Cultural Evening, both of which received extensive newspaper coverage and much public support.

Relationships have been developed with various humanitarian associations and student groups at the University of Uppsala, while almost all high schools and junior high schools have welcomed visits by Baha'is.

Weekly meetings at a rented Baha'i Center are drawing a steady flow of new seekers.

Philippines

Three thousand, eight hundred forty-seven new believers and 46 new local Spiritual Assemblies are among the results of teaching campaigns in the Philippines from November 1988 to February 1989.

In Bauio and Dagupan, the Muhajir Teaching Campaign led to the enrollment of 166 new Baha'is.

Activities in those cities included presentations on the Faith in schools, at universities, businesses, and on radio; firesides, public meetings, deepenings and a peace symposium at one of the universities.

A recent visitor to the Bahá'ís of Samar-Leyte, who have been isolated for a number of years, reported finding the friends steadfast and active.

The renewed contact resulted in the enrollment of 161 new believers, regularly scheduled children's classes, and the holding of dawn prayers.

The friends there have organized a local Teaching and Administrative Committee with the goal of re-establishing the lapsed local Assemblies.

Grenada

During the United Nations Year of the Homeless, the Bahá'ís of Grenada set a goal of financing the repair of the home of a person in need each year until the end of the Six Year Plan.

As a result of the devastation caused by Hurricane Gilbert, the Bahá'í community of Grenada sent its contribution for 1988 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Jamaica to help rebuild the home of one of the victims, who is a Bahá'í.

Australia

The United Nations International Women's Day was celebrated March 5 by about 400 people at a special service at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Sydney.

The event helped strengthen friendships with the general public while reflecting the Bahá'í commitment to the principle of the equality of the sexes.

Among the readers at the service were Elizabeth Mattick, president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF); Stella Cornelius, vice-president of the United Nations Association (UNA) of Australia; and the Hon. Helen Sham-Ho, a member of the Legislative Council of New South Wales and holder of the highest public office of any member of the Chinese community in Australia.

Following the service, special guest Thelma O'Con-Solorzano, director of the UN Information Centre, gave a brief address on the purpose of International Women's Day. Sitarih Ala'i, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia, responded on behalf of the Bahá'ís.

The Bahá'í community of Doncaster Templestowe in Victoria, Australia, has begun an "adopt a Vietnamese family" program with the help of the Bahá'í Vietnamese Teaching Committee.

Each of the community's participating families adopts a Vietnamese family to help its assimilation into the community by visiting, offering friendship, and inviting family members to social gatherings.

In December, the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia received a letter from the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (ACSJC) expressing its concern over the continuing persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran, conveying its support, and pledging prayers for the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in that country.

The ACSJC is a council of the Bishops of the Catholic Church in Australia.

Members of the 'Wildfire' youth theatre group perform during one of their many successful recent shows in New South Wales, Australia. The group is composed of African, Australian, Persian and Samoan artists who presented song and dance routines in 11 large cities and drew coverage on radio and television and in newspapers.
Papua New Guinea

The Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum Teaching Campaign, which began last December in the Balimo district of the Western Province of Papua New Guinea, has achieved further success in two other provinces, East Sepik and West Sepik, with a total of 214 new believers and several new local Spiritual Assemblies in the three provinces as of the end of February.

Another bounty of the campaign has been the increased confidence and steadfastness of the older believers, a result of their perseverance in spite of opposition to the Faith.

The campaign is being extended to cover the remaining 16 provinces in Papua New Guinea during the remainder of this year.

One woman’s dedication and determination led recently to the enrollment in the Faith of an entire village in Papua New Guinea along with many people from nearby areas.

Stirred by a dream in which she was encouraged by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to go and teach, and in spite of a well-advanced pregnancy, Veronica Ruh began her one-woman teaching campaign, asking and receiving permission from the Spiritual Assembly of Madang to travel up the Ramu River to the villages where her father had been raised.

Midway in her travels, after having taught in many villages, she gave birth to a son. Two months later she returned to those same villages, this time with members of her family and a small group of Bahá’ís.

At one point their motorized canoe ran out of fuel and they were forced to stop at a village called Mugil. As a result, everyone there learned about Bahá’u’lláh and the entire village embraced the Cause of God.

A health-care seminar held last January at Papua New Guinea’s Rabaul International Primary School and hosted by the Bahá’í Women’s Committee was tape-recorded and later broadcast by the local radio station.

About 40 people attended the seminar whose speakers included a medical sister from the Rabaul Town Clinic, a dentist, a nutritionist, and a medical doctor.

Fathers supervised the children so that mothers could attend the lectures.

The Bahá’í community of Papua New Guinea recently achieved representation on the country’s National Council of Women, thus fulfilling one of its goals of the Six Year Plan.

The Bahá’ís collaborated with other women’s groups in East New Britain in preparing for a Peace Music Festival that was held April 12, Women’s Day in Papua New Guinea.
On the cover: Pictured are symbols of the world’s eight major religions that are included as participants in the International Sacred Literature Trust, one of the most ambitious interfaith projects ever undertaken. The Trust, which will bring together, for the first time, scholars and literary figures from the world’s major religious communities in an effort to produce the most accurate new English translations of their faiths’ key texts, was introduced May 22 at United Nations headquarters in New York City by one of its originators, HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. From left to right, top to bottom, in alphabetical order, the symbols represent the Bahá’í Faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikkism and Taoism. An article about the Sacred Literature Trust is on page 1.

Faith is one of eight major religions in new Sacred Literature Trust
‘Trail of Light’ teaching team spends three weeks in Bolivia, Peru
Around the world: News from Bahá’í communities all over the globe
The Sacred Literature Trust

The Bahá’í Faith is one of eight major world religions taking part in the International Sacred Literature Trust, one of the largest and most ambitious interfaith projects ever undertaken.

The Trust was introduced May 22 at United Nations headquarters in New York City by HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

Its establishment was inspired by an initiative of Prince Philip, in his capacity as president of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), when he launched its international network on conservation and religion during an interfaith conference at Assisi in 1986.

"The Sacred Literature Trust," said Prince Philip, "will make a significant contribution to interfaith dialogue and, hopefully, to a better understanding among followers of different faiths."

Under a single publishing imprint, the Trust will bring together, for the first time, scholars and literary figures from the world’s major religious communities in an effort to produce the most accurate new English translations of their faiths’ key texts.

"I think it is highly appropriate that this event should be taking place at the headquarters of the United Nations," said Prince Philip.

"This building symbolizes the yearning of all people of goodwill for a more peaceful and cooperative world. This can only be achieved when the great political and religious movements learn to be more tolerant and understanding of each other."

As a publishing venture, the Trust is unique in its involvement with all the major world faiths—Bahá’í, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and Taoism.

The Trust will also research and work to translate oral traditions and/or literature from the faiths of indigenous cultures such as the Australian Aborigines, the Yanamamo of South America, and the Japanese Shinto.

"Each faith or culture will have its own distinct series under the Trust’s imprint. . . . To ensure that the ‘voice’ of the original text survives the translation, the best of English literary talent will work with the scholars of that faith."

Following the ceremony at the UN, more than 50 of the dignitaries involved were luncheon guests of the Trust at the Bahá’í International Community’s UN Office. The BIC was the liaison organization that facilitated Prince Philip’s visit to the UN on behalf of the Sacred Literature Trust.

To date, the Trust is negotiating agreements for a new translation of the Bhagavad-Gita, the first-ever English translation of the Orthodox Bible, a library of post-Biblical Jewish classics, and the first-ever standard English translation of the Hindi version of the Ramayana.

"Each faith or culture will have its own distinct series under the Trust’s imprint," said Trust officer Martin Palmer. "To ensure that the 'voice' of the original text survives the translation, the best of English literary talent will work with the scholars of that faith."

The Sacred Literature Trust was established by and will operate under the auspices of ICOREC (International Consultancy on Religion, Education and Culture), a worldwide interfaith group specializing in cross-cultural education and publishing ventures.

In addition to the Duke of Edinburg, a number of well-known world figures have confirmed their support for the Trust, among them:

The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu’l-Bahá Rūḥiyyih Khánum; Edgar Bronfman and Prof. Arthur Hertzberg, president and vice-president, respectively, of the World Jewish Congress; British poet laureate Ted Hughes; and His Excellency Dr. Karan Singh, former Maharaj of Kashmir.

The Duke of Edinburgh also announced the establishment of a new international award for literature, to be presented annually for the English-language novel, play or poem deemed to have made the greatest contribution that year to religious thought and understanding.

Two new works of art—a calligraphic illustration and a bronze sculpture—were created especially for the launch of the International Sacred Literature Trust.

The illustration, executed by The Jersey Scriptorium based on the Isle of Jersey, expresses the significance of each of the world’s major religions by containing symbols from each along with quotes from their sacred texts.

It was presented by Prince Philip to UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuellar.

The sculpture, a pair of open hands in an attitude of prayer created by British sculptor Dr. Neil Lawson Baker, will serve as the symbol for the Trust’s annual Religion and Literature Award.

Packets of information complete with mailing envelopes on the International Sacred Literature Trust are now available for mailing to religious leaders, interfaith groups and others. To order, send $1.50 (U.S.) per packet to the Office of Public Information, Bahá’í National Center, Wilmette, IL 60091, U.S.A.
This diary of a visit last August 13-September 5 to Bolivia and Peru by a "Trail of Light" (Camino del Sol) teaching team was kept by one of the team members, Counsellor for the Americas Jacqueline Delahunt, a Lakota Indian from Washington state. Others taking part in the three-week journey were (from Bolivia) Counsellor Eloy Anello, Athos Costas, Julian Ugarte and Sabino Ortega, and (from North America) Randy Chipps (Nootka Indian), Philip Lane Jr. (Lakota), Kevin Locke (Lakota) and Patricia Locke (Lakota). Other Baha'is also traveled with the team from time to time, as did a photographer.

August 13
The North American Trail of Light members (except Philip Lane) met in Miami, Florida, and proceeded to Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

August 14
We visited a Bahá'í Sunday school in a village near the city, where about 40 children sang and danced for us, and we made a brief presentation for them; visited the University of Nur; and had dinner with local Bahá'ís.

August 15
We met with local Bahá'ís; were taken on a brief tour of Santa Cruz; were joined by Philip Lane; were interviewed by reporters from a newspaper and television station; and took part in a fireside in a local Bahá'í home.

August 16
The team was interviewed by additional newspaper and television reporters, and by individuals who had read the article in the first paper; we set aside time to deepen and to formulate a program for team presentation; we were joined by Counsellor Anello; we made our first major presentation in a public theatre in the city, and received additional television coverage and other interviews. Seekers approached team members after the presentation, as did many of the local Bahá'í community.

The preparation on the part of the local Bahá'ís for the public presentation was evident in posters throughout the city. The theatre had standing room only. A number of Bahá'ís including several youth joined us for a late evening dessert and presented a gift of appreciation to us.

August 17
We were visited at breakfast by a young man who worked for a cultural organization, had read about the Trail of Light in the papers, and had attended the presentation the evening before. He asked us to come to his village a few miles from town. We spent about an hour with him, but because we were leaving, had to decline his invitation. However, our flight was delayed and we did not arrive in Sucre around noon, as planned, but in the early evening. After keeping an appointment with the director and several staff members at "Masí," a cultural preservation center in Sucre, we went to the Bahá'í Center and exchanged warm greetings with the 60 or so Bahá'ís who had been waiting for us all day. This was the beginning of the interchange we had been looking forward to with much prayer—what we felt to be the real purpose of our journey.

Late that evening the men in the group went to visit a well-known elderly Bahá'í who was suffering from a terminal illness.

August 18
This was a full day in Sucre. Our presentation was part of the wedding festivities of a couple who had waited
Above: The village of Pasto Grande, Bolivia, as seen from a nearby hillside.

Below: Patricia Locke (right) and a Grande pause to deepen the bonds of young Bahá’í woman from Pasto fellowship.

several months for the visit of the Trail of Light; we met with representatives of the local Spiritual Assembly for lunch, and made three presentations during the day—at the Center, at a school, and in a small community just outside Sucre. It was also a good day for simply spending time visiting with the Bahá’ís who had walked some distance to be with us at the Center. That evening we made a presentation in a public theatre that was nearly packed. We put forth extra effort that evening, and the spirit in the theatre seemed to be especially high, perhaps because so many of the indigenous Bahá’ís from the institute attended the presentation.

The Trail of Light team then went to the Masi cultural center to take part in an exchange of cultural performing arts. Various groups of students studying at the center performed for us. There was standing room only at this exchange; many non-Bahá’ís attended.

August 19

Before leaving Sucre for Jatun Mayo in southern Chuquisaca province, we stopped at a market to purchase food. Patricia Locke’s wallet was stolen, and our departure was delayed for several hours by the need to make the necessary reports. We arrived at Jatun Mayo too late to make a presentation, but were warmly greeted and fed. We were treated to a sharing of the beautiful songs and dances of the region, and we drank tea and visited before bedtime.

August 20

In the morning we helped clear the
threshing floor for our presentation, and found that 70 or so people had come to watch. I followed the women to a little stream where we washed and braided our hair. The Baha’is from the area first performed for us, and then asked us to dance with them. It was a wonderful exchange, with relatively little Spanish or English spoken, but with much language of the spirit. After we made our presentation, we left with sunburned noses and happy hearts to return to Sucre. This visit, as was the case with other visits to the campos, combined a proclamation and deepening—deepening for both the North American team as well as for those who were being visited. It emphasized the valuable role that the arts play in spiritual expression and communication, as well as the potential unity of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, and of all people everywhere.

Our program, with some variation, was as follows:

- Usually a “grand entrance dance” by the team in pow-wow style, to taped music, and introduction of team members by a translator.
- Song of greeting; song and dance in praise of the Creator; song and dance to call the spirits of our ancestors to be with us—in a Nootka language and dance, by Randy Chipps, in traditional dress, using rattle and drum, with team members usually singing in the background. A dramatic opening. Depending on the mood of the audience, we sometimes switched this with the flute songs played by Kevin Locke.
- Indian sign language prayer (23rd Psalm of the Bible) by Patricia Locke, who wore her “jingle” dress, and also described how it was made. She showed her corn-husk purse, and talked about the origin of corn. In some places we followed this with teaching the children a Baha’i prayer in sign language, by Kevin. Of course, the adults learned it too.
- When Philip Lane was with us, he gave a talk about a variety of things including his family background, the role of the earth mother for all Indian people, his time spent in Bolivia, the strength of the Inca empire—and he gave stones to selected people in the audience. This was the longest part of the program, and unpredictable. On occasion Philip would decide to sing part of the song used in the pipe ceremony, for example, or to show the items he used in the sun dance. This was well-received in the campos, but did not keep the attention of the people in the towns.
- Flute music was next. The number of songs depended on how long Philip talked or on the general feeling of the group, and was sometimes omitted in a need to enliven the audience. The flute songs usually included the Lakota anthem, which was followed by a victory song. Patricia and I danced during this song, as it includes an honoring of women. Other songs included one, sometimes told with an enchanting story of submission to God’s will, about a bird (on two occasions eagles, hawks or condors circled overhead as these songs were played by Kevin, to the astonishment of the crowd). The group usually consulted briefly and discreetly on how many stories could/should be added to tell along with the playing of the songs to help deepen the believers and promote unity and mutual appreciation.
- Next was the hoop dance—a performing arts expression of the unity of
all people—by Kevin Locke. The narrative describing the dance was presented by Eloy Anello or Sabino Ortega. This dance was, without exception, the part of the presentation that captured the attention of everyone—children, youth, adults, elderly. Patricia and I danced behind Kevin to add to the celebratory nature of the dance.

- A short talk summarizing the message of the Trail of Light—a message of love and unity, expressed through the arts to remind us of our common heritage and future and the joy of living in the day of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, by me, as a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors. The talk usually ended with an invitation to dance with the Trail of Light team. This ending was upbeat. We kept it short to leave people in a happy, but not exhausted, frame of mind. All members of the Trail of Light took part in this dance. We used a tape recording of drum music to possible.

After the presentation we joined the Bahá'ís for prayers and a meal and then walked the mile or so back down to the jeeps, and returned to Sucre. On the way back, we stopped at a school that had asked us to visit, but the district governmental body was meeting, so we couldn't make the presentation. Instead, we were introduced to the members of the syndicate, and Julian Ugarte gave a short but eloquent speech. After arriving in Sucre we took time for a late supper.

August 21

A day's drive, over roads unlike any to which the North American members of the team were accustomed, brought us to Meski Pampa, northwest of Sucre. The greeting extended to us on our arrival was undoubtedly the spiritual highlight of the entire journey. We heard, at some distance, the music of the altiplano—flutes and drums, softly playing, and as we came closer we saw, standing in the moonlight along the road in the chill evening air, a long line of Quechua, each waiting to extend to us a most loving Bahá'í greeting. The soft exchange of many "Alláh'u'Abhá, hermanos(as)" in the moonlit night was deeply impressed in our hearts, perhaps more profoundly because of the time it had taken us to reach them and the knowledge that the path to these beautiful Quechua had been walked for many years by such people as Athos Costas, and steadfast Bahá'ís now awaited us.

We were fed, and some of us gathered around a fire in a courtyard to sing and listen to the flute songs; others visited in the warm room provided for our comfort.

August 22

The dawn was greeted by the quiet laughter and conversation of the many people gathered to be with us for the presentation of the Trail of Light. Again we cleared a threshing area, exchanged songs and stories, and danced together. It was especially difficult to leave the people and the spiritual climate of Meski Pampa. We traveled that day to Cochabamba, stopping along the way to visit the home of a Bahá'í family who had walked to Sucre to be with us some days before.

August 23

The day in Cochabamba was a good one for proclamation, with television interviews and a public performance at the Bolivian-American Cultural Center. The outdoor space made available to us was overflowing with people, and the presentation was well-received. Afterward, we had the opportunity for many teaching conversations. The evening was spent with the local Bahá'í
community and a few guests. We said goodbye that evening to Philip Lane, who had decided to return to Canada.

August 24

We traveled to Orurro, with a visit of several hours in Pasto Grande. Although there was some difficulty among the local Bahá'ís, the visit was a happy and memorable one for the Trail of Light members. A fiery speech by Julian highlighted the afternoon, and our interaction with the women and children was especially delightful.

The altitude and chill of the altiplano began to slow us down a little, but the addition of two Bahá'ís from Cochabamba as traveling companions, and the prospect of being at the Bahá'í radio station in Caracollo kept our spirits high. Randy continued to carry out his responsibility as leader of the daily deepening.

August 25

We arrived at the Bahá'í radio station early enough in the day to watch a crowd of 400-500 people gather, and wondered how Kevin would be able to dance in such a high altitude. The presentation of the Trail of Light was translated into Quechua and Aymara by radio station volunteers with impressive poise and skill. We all suffered a little from the altitude that day, but again, the company and the opportunity for proclamation and for uniting hearts was so great that we were continually energized by it.

The director and staff of the nearby rural normal school asked to meet with us, and Sabino Ortega arranged a luncheon that gave us a wonderful opportunity to "talk shop" with other Indian educators. We were given a tour of the school and exchanged addresses and promises to share educational materials.

Ready to leave Caracollo for Puno, we returned to the radio station to find a large group of children waiting for us, hoping to see our presentation. Wondering if dancing again in that altitude would be wise, we nonetheless decided that we couldn't disappoint the children, so we danced with them—an amazing feat only those present could appreciate, as joyful order emerged out of wide-eyed chaos. We won't soon forget the white-coated children as they vied to be the first to learn the Indian sign-language prayer ("O God! Guide me . . .") taught by Kevin, and watched Randy share a Nootka prayer/dance. Again, we left with full hearts and more sunburn on our noses.

We arrived that evening in La Paz, dusty and weary, and were greeted with the warm hospitality of the Ouladi family.

August 26

Television proclamation seemed to be the opportunity to take advantage of in La Paz. Getting to three or four interviews took most of the day, and we made a presentation at the Bahá'í Center in the evening. It was our last evening in Bolivia, and we were somewhat reluctant to be leaving, though we still had several days of travel ahead of us in Peru.

August 27

We exchanged vehicles, said goodbye to our intrepid Bolivian driver, and were met at the Peruvian border by Auxiliary Board member Boris Handel. The trip to Puno was highlighted by a brief but delightful visit to the Bahá'í Center in the little town of Juli, where the Bahá'í community shared its first harvest of potatoes with us. This particular custom, with fish or corn, is common to many North American tribes, and we were especially pleased to be so honored. We met that evening with a small group of Bahá'ís in Puno, one of whom was a new pioneer to the area, and another a new Bahá'í. (What growth they were to see within the month!)

August 28

Most of the day was given to the performance at the Bahá'í radio station. Despite problems with a gasoline shortage, an audience of several hundred gathered, and with them two local music/dance groups who shared their talents with us and the crowd. We made a full presentation, and felt that it was a successful day of proclamation and interaction with local Bahá'ís, especially as the presentation was broadcast live. The beauty of the setting was also appreciated by the team, who had heard much of the fabulous Lake Titicaca, and Boris Handel seemed very pleased.

August 29

We said goodbye to Counsellor Angello as we boarded the train for Cuzco. Sabino Ortega was to be our translator, and this change in the team's make-up proved to bond us even closer to the indigenous people of Bolivia, as we met the challenge of different languages. We arrived in Cuzco in the early evening and were met by members of the local Bahá'í community who continued to help us with transportation throughout the week.
August 30

Our presentation in a community near Cuzco was preceded by a tour of the ruins. In the evening we made a presentation in the Bahá’í Center, which was followed by a question-and-answer period. It was one of the highlights of the trip for us because, I believe, we were able to do more direct teaching than is possible in proclamation situations, even though the questions and answers sometimes had to go through two or three translations.

August 31

This was the "day off" for the Trail of Light team, and one that we had all been eagerly anticipating, as it had been set aside for our visit to the ruins at Machu Picchu. The trip was memorable, and as wonder-filled as we had anticipated. Perhaps one of the strongest impressions was the sound of Julian's lovely flute music echoing through the ruins and the mountains. He had carried the flute with him on the whole trip, but hadn't played it much, even though we asked him on occasion to do so. It was worth the wait to hear him play for several hours among the mystical ruins.

That evening we said tearful goodbyes, as the team would leave early on September 1 for Arequipa, I would return to speak at the U.S. Conference on Growth on September 2, and Julian and our photographer, Rubin, would return to Bolivia. By this time we were very much a family, reluctant to leave one another, entrusting each other to God's care. Without anyone to translate between us, perhaps the goodbyes were even more tender because of the effort needed to express each heart's love.

September 1

Patricia, Kevin and Sabino left for Arequipa, where the group made two presentations. I am uncertain about the details of the places and audiences for the presentations.

September 3

Unable to leave Lima for the U.S. due to canceled flights, I was still at the airport when the Trail of Light arrived in Lima. It was by then too late to get to Wilmette for the closing session of the conference, so I decided to stay in Lima and rejoined the Trail of Light for its last two days. That evening we had dinner with a number of Bahá’ís who had arrived in the city for a meeting of the International Bahá’í Audio-Visual Centre (IBAVC) and the Bahá’í Radio Conference. Randy Chipps left that evening to return to Canada.

September 4

The Bahá’ís of Lima had prepared a program for several musical groups to be presented in one of the town's plazas, and the Trail of Light was the final presentation on the program. It drew a large crowd, and the program was well-received. It was a final proclamation effort for the Trail of Light, and a pleasure to have Counsellors Mas’ud Khamisi and Ruth Pringle in the audience.

September 5

The Trail of Light had been invited to share its cultural presentation at a school in one of the cities that spring up quickly near Lima. This particular city's government is progressive, and apparently very concerned about build-
ing a hopeful future for its people. Our presentation seemed to be not so much a proclamation as a sharing of the arts with the children in an attempt to support the efforts of the community's leaders and to win friends for the Faith.

Late that afternoon we said goodbye again, as Patricia and Kevin wanted to leave Lima for the U.S. and I boarded the bus for the Radio Conference. The commotion of many Baha'is just arriving for the conference made discussion about the Trail of Light effort impractical at that time. However, after having had time to reflect about it, I do have some suggestions for future Trail of Light efforts. It also seems appropriate to share some reflections on how the North American team members were affected by the experience. Here are my perceptions:

Perhaps the most profound experience was a deepened understanding of the size and the potential of the indigenous populations of South America. Accustomed to being "islands" of Indian people in an ocean of non-Indians in North America, and living in a state
of puzzlement about the words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá regarding the Indians of America, the experience of being among so many indigenous Bahá’ís, and seeing the hundreds of thousands of potential (indigenous) Bahá’ís, their beauty and strength, we were able to be more confident, encouraged and clear about what needs to be done in the teaching efforts among Indian people, both north and south.

We were continually reminded of the common heritage and the relationship of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, to our great joy and wonderment. We felt that, even though we were all specialists/educators in Indian culture, there was far more to be learned from what we had to give our relatives in the south. As with any travel undertaken to help increase understanding, the bonds of love and unity between the team and those we encountered were most certainly strengthened, and this sense of belonging to one another will be conveyed as we speak and write about our experience.

Another confirmation during the trip was the success that each of the city proclamation efforts attained with the use of the arts to share some of the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh.

Our favorite and most meaningful times were with the people in the campos. We felt at home, that we belonged there, and at the same time that it was an inestimable privilege to be offered hospitality in these homes.

The help of Eloy Anello and others in translating as much as possible all conversations to keep the team informed of all that was going on around us helped immeasurably. The opportunities that various situations present can be taken full advantage of only with such assistance. It also helps to keep the interest and attention of the team members alive, to make the smiles more genuine.

Finally, as with any teaching trip, the Trail of Light gave us an opportunity to live each day much as we would like to live all of our days, with a mission and focus for all of our actions. That experience influences the rest of our days.—Jacqueline Delahunt
‘Wildfire’blazes in Macau

Thousands of people in Macau have heard about the Bahá’í message of peace recently through the Wildfire Theatre Group, which consists of young performers from Australia, England, Iran, New Zealand and the United States.

The project is taking expansion of the Faith in Macau into a new phase, using music and dance as the medium for teaching.

Performances incorporate a blend of music, dance and comedy, all of which emphasize the Bahá’í teachings on peace and urge other young people to work for peace.

Following the group’s first appearance, which was part of the Macau Bahá’í community’s Naw-Rúz celebration, many people wanted to hear more about the Faith, and some expressed a desire to become Bahá’ís.

The second performance, at Leal Senado Square in the center of Macau, drew an audience of 2,000. At the end of the evening, a number of people asked to enroll in the Faith.

The following day, an article about the group and a photograph appeared in Macau’s leading newspaper. The Macau Daily.

Zimbabwe

A National Women’s Conference held last November 5-6 at the National Institute in Christon Bank, Zimbabwe, brought together 71 Bahá’ís from at least 10 communities.

Besides a number of talks, there were presentations on dress-making and cooking as well as a presentation on mental health and drug abuse by guest speaker Unice Takawira from the Ministry of Health.

South Africa

On March 21, a dedication ceremony for a Peace Garden planted in the center of Geelong West, Australia, was held, sponsored by the Spiritual Assembly of Geelong West.

Among those attending was the mayor of the city who praised the Bahá’í community for its efforts toward peace and mentioned the good relationship that had developed between the Bahá’ís and city council during the months of planning and preparation for the Peace Garden.

Each of those at the ceremony planted a rose in the garden. Afterward, a bronze plaque bearing a quote from Bahá’u’lláh and the name of the Geelong West Bahá’í community was unveiled.

The Bahá’í Group of Barossa, South Australia, recently had a visit from an enthusiastic group of young Bahá’ís who asked that community service projects be organized for them.

The youth painted wooden toys at the local kindergarten, weeded a local park, supported a Family Holiday Concert and an international luncheon organized by the Bahá’ís of Barossa, conducted firesides, and heightened respect for the Faith among the people in this small country town.
Canada

Joan Moore, a Bahá’í from Ontario, Canada, has been given Air Canada’s “Heart of Gold” award which is presented to those who have contributed significantly to the life of the community.

An article about the award in Niagara Advance says in part, “...rarely a day goes by that Joan doesn’t put her Bahá’í Faith into practice, with friends and strangers alike being the recipients of her thoughtfulness.”

The Bahá’í Center in Montreal, Canada, was the recent site of a Red Cross blood donor clinic.

About 20 Bahá’í youth went door-to-door to recruit donors, distributed flyers about the project, and made many phone calls to remind people of their pledge to give blood.

Said one of the nurses working on the project: “Today I saw people who were truly radiant universal love.”

Several residents in the neighborhood were introduced to the Faith for the first time as a result of the donor clinic, while the March 5 edition of a widely distributed Montreal newspaper carried an article about the project.

One hundred-thirty Bahá’ís from all parts of French-speaking Quebec, Canada, took part last November in a conference for unity, protection and teaching.

Special guests included the Hand of the Cause of God ‘Ali-Muhammad Varqá and Counsellor David Smith. Also attending were a representative of the National Spiritual Assembly and members of the Auxiliary Board.

New Zealand

After seven years as participants in the annual Christmas float parade, the Bahá’ís of Clifton County, New Zealand, are now a central part of the event.

Having been awarded the winning trophy for the past four years, and having developed a friendly relationship with the public, the Bahá’ís now consult with the organizers about the event. Three newspaper articles resulted from last year’s participation while an estimated 20,000 people saw the winning Bahá’í float.

Paraguay

Children at the new Bahá’í tutorial school in Cerrito, Chaco, Paraguay, gather with their teacher, Charlotte Krestchmer (back row, right), during the school’s inauguration ceremony March 1. The school is named the ‘Miki Rutan Bahá’í Institute’ in memory of a Bahá’í pioneer to Paraguay who donated the property. It will operate as a Montessori school.

Publication

Herald of the South, a magazine produced by the Bahá’ís of Australia and New Zealand, announces “Write Time,” a contest for ambitious young writers between the ages of 15 and 25.

The purpose is to encourage young authors, giving them an opportunity to have their work published while competing for cash prizes and free subscriptions to Herald of the South.

Entrants may submit one or more original articles on any topics that fit into the magazine’s format. Articles must be no more than 3,500 words. Fiction or non-fiction is acceptable. All entries should be in English, typewritten and double-spaced. Entries will not be returned.

To enter, one must be at least 15 years of age and no older than 25 as of April 30, 1989. The closing date for entries is October 1.

Entries should include one’s full name and address, date of birth, and a signed statement that the entry is one’s original work. Send entries to:

Write Time, 4 Glenn Avenue, Mosman Park, Western Australia 6012, Australia.

Six winning entries will be published in Herald of the South. First prize in each age group (15-18 and 19-25) is $100 (Australian), and the two runners-up in each group will receive a one-year subscription to Herald of the South.

Solomon Islands

Gertrude Blum, a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh to the Solomon Islands, has been awarded the MBE (Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) for “service to the community” as a part of the 1989 New Year Honors and Awards offered by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

In a letter from the private secretary to the Governor-General of the Solomon, Mrs. Blum was congratulated on his behalf for “the well-deserved award for your long and dedicated services to the Bahá’í Faith and to the community.”

Mrs. Blum arrived in the Solomons with her late husband, Alvin, and their family in 1954.
Papua New Guinea

Pictured is the Bahá’í singing group, ‘The Dawn-breakers,’ from New Ireland, Papua New Guinea, who won first prize after performing April 12 at the Peace Music Festival in Rabaul.

On April 12, a Peace Music Festival was held in Rabaul, Papua New Guinea, to celebrate National Women’s Day and mark the Women’s Day of Prayer.

Opening prayers were read by representatives of the Faith along with Catholics, Mormons and Lutherans.

After an address of welcome from the provincial secretary, 13 groups performed in a special music and drama competition. First prize was won by “The Dawn-breakers,” a Bahá’í singing group from New Ireland.

Also included in the festival were a Bahá’í bookshop, and videos and special hand-outs with Bahá’í songs, prayers and quotes from the Writings printed on them.

During the closing ceremony the president of the Papua New Guinea Council of Women, Mrs. Bungtabu Brown, who is also the wife of the premier, thanked the Bahá’ís and commended their teachings on women, equality and social development.

The all-Bahá’í village of Kautru recently celebrated the opening of their new Bahá’í Center on their island in the Western Province of Papua New Guinea.

The secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Papua New Guinea, accompanied by another Bahá’í, chartered a small plane to attend the event.

The Center was decorated with flowers, bamboo fronds and deer antlers, and the friends were dressed in the traditional costumes of the village to perform traditional songs and dances.

The ceremony was followed by a large feast, and during the next three days nearly 300 people came to the village to attend a special Bahá’í Institute.

As a result of a recent teaching trip by Bahá’ís, the entire village of Sram, near Vanimo in Sandaun Province, Papua New Guinea, including even the pastor of the local church, embraced the Faith.

A local Spiritual Assembly has been formed, and the community recently observed its first Nineteen Day Feast, calling it “Makam, Makam” (joyous gathering).

The new Bahá’í Center of Sesenaro village in the mountain region of Milne Bay Province, Papua New Guinea, recently opened its doors for its first conference. The entire population of the village is Bahá’í.

Five hundred-forty Bahá’ís from 14 communities made the arduous trip through the mountains to attend this memorable event.
Alaska

On April 8, the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska held the seventh annual Honor Kempton Service to Humanity Award ceremony at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage.

Receiving this year's award was Dr. Ted Mala, director of the University of Alaska-Siberia's Medical Research Program.

The award, designated for work done for the promotion of peace, was presented to Dr. Mala for his work in supporting intercontinental cooperation between Alaska and the Soviet Union.

A citation given to Dr. Mala by the Alaska legislature states in part, "... he negotiated with the USSR the first medical research agreement ever made by Siberia with any Western nongovernmental institution. He also negotiated an agreement with the Soviet Far East Region of Magadan for a medical research program, which represents the first agreement the Magadan region has entered into with the West. . . ."

"The fact that this award is of a spiritual nature sets it apart from any other that I have received," Dr. Mala said in a letter. "This recognition certainly ranks among the most important and difficult challenges that one must continue to face up to in the course of one's journey on this planet. . . . Your board has honored and challenged us all to live up to the high standard of excellence Honor Kempton has left us in her legacy."

The award was presented to Dr. Mala by Tod Jones, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska.

Speakers during the evening included John Schaeffer, adjutant general of Alaska; Glen Olds, president of the Fetzer Foundation; Mary Core, Dr. Mala's coordinator of the Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies Program; Dr. Donald O'Dowd, president of the University of Alaska-Fairbanks; Willy Hensley, president of the NANA Regional Corp.; and Dr. B.D. Postl, president of the Canadian Society for Circumpolar Health.

Entertainers included Windflower, an Alaskan Bahá'í musical group; the Karavan Dancers, a well-known folk dance group from Anchorage; and Lori Rodgers, a jazz singer also from Anchorage.

Mary Anne Navitsky, a Tlingit/Haida Indian from Sitka, Alaska, and a Bahá'í since 1965, is the first native Alaskan woman to become a dentist.

In 1984 Ms. Navitsky took part in a student exchange program between the University of Iowa College of Dentistry, where she was studying, and the Royal College of Dentistry in Arrhus, Denmark. While there she observed dental care practices and visited several dental care facilities in Greenland serviced by the Danish health care system.

She also was the first Alaskan woman to attend Harvard Summer School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Falkland Islands

W.H. Fullerton (center), the new governor of the Falkland Islands, receives copies of 'The Promise of World Peace' and the book A Crown of Beauty from members of the Spiritual Assembly of Stanley, Sharon Middleton (left) and Margo Smallwood. The governor asked many questions about the Faith, mentioned that he had known a university professor in the United States who was a Bahá'í, and said he looked forward to renewing and increasing his knowledge of the Faith.

Taiwan

Music is proving to be an effective medium for teaching the Faith in Taiwan, drawing Bahá'í youth to the teaching field and attracting seekers to the Faith.

Following a recent two-hour concert in Tainan, Taiwan's fourth largest city, 278 of the 500 young people in attendance embraced the Cause.

A broad-based teaching plan emerged from a recent meeting in Taiwan whose participants were Counsellors Bijan Farid, Rouhollah Momtazi and Rose Ong; the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Taiwan; and Farzam Arbáb, a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre in Haifa.

The plan involves a teaching team working directly under the guidance of the National Spiritual Assembly; local Spiritual Assemblies working with the National Teaching Committee to inaugurate ongoing teaching projects; the training and deepening of individual believers via teaching institutes; and the raising of a substantial number of new Bahá'í Centers for teaching.
Republic of Ireland

Many teaching opportunities have arisen from the affiliation of the Baha'i Women's Committee of the Republic of Ireland with the Council for the Status of Women.

Recently, a Baha'i representative was chosen as one of seven workshop facilitators from throughout the country to conduct a workshop during a training day organized by the Council.

Other activities have included participation in the World Women's Day of Prayer in Dublin, and in a reception at the National Baha'i Center for the visiting president of the International Alliance of Women.

Baha'i marriages are now recognized in the Republic of Ireland.

On August 17, the National Spiritual Assembly received confirmation that the National Haziratu'l-Quds was registered as a place at which civil marriages may take place in the presence of the Registrar of Marriages.

The recognition paves the way for new dialogue with authorities in the Catholic Church to develop a greater understanding and to resolve difficulties encountered in the past with respect to marriages between Baha'is and Catholics.

Japan

A teaching project in Kyushu, southern Japan, has been named the "family teaching project" because of the distinctive nature of the teaching work.

As one member of a family enrolls, he or she teaches other members of the family, taking them to meetings that are held regularly at the Noguchi Farm.

As of mid-April, about 40 new believers had embraced the Faith.

A Peace Festival, held last October 9-10 in Sendai, Japan, was sponsored by the teaching committee of the Tohoku Baha'i community and supported by the Baha'is of the Kanto region.

Among the highlights was an address by the Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone entitled "Peace: Hope for Mankind and the Road to Tomorrow."

Janet Maloney, a Baha'i who is a well-known television personality, sang and moderated a panel discussion.

One hundred twenty-eight adults, youth and children from all part of Japan and overseas gathered last August 5-7 at the Baha'i Summer School in Shonen Shukuhaku Kenkyusho.

The goal was not only to deepen their knowledge of the Faith and to enjoy fellowship, but to learn how to teach the Faith and to practice what was learned.

Austria

Through the initiative of an individual Baha'i, copies of "The Promise of World Peace" have been given to some 5,000 physicians in and around Vienna, Austria. The weekly newspaper Physician's Week also carried an announcement about the peace statement.
Africa

A 56-day teaching trip covering nine countries in southern Africa undertaken by Auxiliary Board member Choughi Rouhani and Amal Rouhani to deepen believers on the development of the Arc on Mount Carmel and its relationship to the Ark of the Covenant was successful in arousing the enthusiasm of the friends in some of the most remote parts of the region.

The method of teaching included slide shows and talks based on the Bahá’í Writings.

During the course of the trip copies of the peace statement were presented to a number of dignitaries while interviews were conducted by Radio Malawi, Radio Zambia, and a women’s magazine in Malawi.

“Bahá’ís spread message of hope” was the cover story in the March 18 issue of African Concord, a pan-African weekly magazine.

The article, written by a Bahá’í, Philip Hainsworth, includes photographs of Bahá’ís in Africa and the House of Worship in Kampala, Uganda.

The magazine’s editor, Tunde Agdabiaka, who is also a Bahá’í, said the staff was keenly interested in the role the Bahá’ís are playing in Africa.

Swaziland

Crispin Pemberton-Pigott, a Bahá’í who is managing director of New Dawn Engineering, recently traveled through six southern and eastern African countries training local people in the manufacture of several kinds of fence-making machines and in the transfer of other appropriate technologies in building, agriculture and water programs.

The 10-day training courses were organized by the National Spiritual Assemblies in each of the six countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

New Dawn Engineering, a private venture based in Manzini, Swaziland, is dedicated to the development of labor-intensive manufacturing processes and other technologies that employ and empower the rural poor.

Norway

More than 500 people attended a program entitled “Faith for a Common Future” held last November at the University Hall in Oslo, Norway.

The event was initiated by the Bahá’í community and developed by a committee composed of members of the Lutheran Church (the official church of Norway), and the Bahá’í, Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic and Jewish faiths and Worldwide Fund for Nature.

Included was musical entertainment and a theatre performance.
Trinidad/Tobago

Dr. A.M. Ghadirian, a Bahá'í psychiatrist from Canada who is the author of In Search of Nirvana, visited the Bahá'í community of Trinidad and Tobago for a few days in April.

While there, he was able to meet with the president of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Noor Hassanali; the country's minister of foreign affairs; the Archbishop of Port of Spain; the chairman and secretary of the south branch of the Trinidad and Tobago Medical Association; the chief medical officer of the Ministry of Health; the office of the prime minister and permanent secretary; two major radio stations; Trinidad and Tobago Television; and two newspapers, the Trinidad Guardian and Trinidad Express.

Dr. Ghadirian's visit coincided with Alcohol Awareness Week in Trinidad and Tobago, which offered opportunities to express the Bahá'í point of view on alcohol and drug dependence.

Dr. Ghadirian, accompanied by two members of the National Spiritual Assembly, met with President Hassanali for an hour.

After receiving a copy of In Search of Nirvana from its author, the president consented to a photograph and asked about the meaning of nirvana.

The resulting discussion extended to include the nobility of man and his spiritual nature, the fear of God, and the harmony of science and religion.

The president praised the Bahá'í community for its contribution to the well-being of the country, and indicated that the Bahá'ís are now recognized members of the Inter-Religious Organization of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Bahá'ís in turn praised the president for being a good example for his people by not using alcohol and for not allowing it to be used at ceremonial events.

The national Bahá'í Media/Public Relations Committee of Trinidad and Tobago held its annual public Naw-Rúz celebration March 20 at the Bahá'í National Center in Port of Spain, Trinidad.

The program included a performance by the Bahá'í choir, a talk about Naw-Rúz and the Faith, a poem, "Dear Bahá'í Flower," recited by Maryam Rahimi, and two songs by the Bahá'í children of Curepe.

Also shared with the public was the video tape, "Peace . . . The Promise," which was being seen for the first time by those present and was quite well received.

On March 21, the Bahá'ís of Port of Spain presented a Naw-Rúz program and dinner for more than 60 Bahá'ís and their guests.

The Bahá'ís of Trinidad and Tobago participated March 22 in a worship service for the nation's Week of Prayer, held at the National Anglican Cathedral in Port of Spain.

Two Bahá'í members of the national Interreligious Organization, Dr. Hamid Farabi and Laurence Coward, helped organize the national unity service.

The Bahá'í choir presented two songs, "God Is One" and "Peace Will Come."

A.N.R. Robinson, the prime minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, took part in the program, as did Patrick Manning, leader of the opposition. Many other national dignitaries were present in the audience.

El Salvador

More than 800 new believers have embraced the Faith in El Salvador since May 1988.

Of these new Bahá'ís, 80 percent have entered the Faith during the past six months as a result of an intensive teaching campaign supported by the Continental Board of Counsellors.

A significant aspect of the campaign is that nearly all of the new believers live in disturbed areas in the eastern part of the country. New teachers have actively reinforced the teaching work as the campaign has progressed.

As a part of that support, eight regional and local deepening institutes and three regional conferences have recently been held.

In addition, a 15-minute weekly television program about the Faith resumed broadcasting in February.

St. Vincent/Grenadines

"Peace Through Unity" was the theme of a Bahá'í-sponsored program broadcast live last November by St. Vincent's national radio station.

It marked the third time that Bahá'ís had taken part in the popular government-sponsored "Divine Worship Service" program which broadcasts a different religious service each Sunday morning.
Bolivia

Fifty-five participants from seven Departments and three countries took part March 24-26 in Bolivia's National Bahá'í Women's Conference.

Among those attending were Counsellors Eloy Anello and Isabel P. de Calderón.

The high-spirited event led to a renewed awareness of the position of women in the Faith and in enthusiastic offers to prepare audio-visual materials, conduct children's classes, initiate direct teaching efforts, and organize 10 literacy classes.

A special teaching project begun last November in Bolivia had attracted and confirmed more than 2,000 new believers by the end of February, the majority of whom reside within the listening range of Radio Bahá'í.

In addition, 50 new communities were opened to the Faith, some of which are now entirely Bahá'í.

Systematic deepening courses for the new Bahá'ís have begun at the Firdawsí Institute, and plans to maintain the teaching and deepening momentum are being implemented throughout the country.

Peru


Barbados

Pictured are some of the Bahá'ís who attended a Women's Conference held last April in Barbados. The conference theme was 'Women on the Pathway to Peace.' Rouhi Huddleston's keynote address, 'Woman, You Are the Key to Peace,' was followed by a television interview and a fireside for some 60 adults, one of whom embraced the Cause on the spot, and many children.

Transkei

About 250 people from many cultural backgrounds attended this year’s Naw-Rúz celebration given by the Bahá'ís of Umtata, Transkei, in southern Africa.

Among those taking part were Xhosa people, Europeans, Americans, Persians, South Africans of all races, Africans from other countries, Christians and Zionists, young people and elders, and those from a wide range of social, professional and economic backgrounds.

The celebration began with prayers offered in many languages.

The Cicira Teacher Training College Choir presented songs in Xhosa and English, and a traditional song and dance group, also from Cicira College, showed that, as educated Xhosa youth, they are proud of their cultural heritage.

Thozi Nomvete, a lecturer at the University of Transkei, presented a talk on peace, which was followed by more traditional dancing and singing, fellowship and prayer.

Philippines

As of February, an urban teaching campaign launched January 17 in the universities and high school of Baguio city, Philippines, had resulted in 77 enrollments.
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Hand of Cause Dr. Giachery dies

Deeply grieved loss valiant, indefatigable, dearly-loved, distinguished Hand Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery. His passing in course historic visit Samoa adds fresh laurels to crown already won during ministry beloved Guardian, and reinforces spiritual distinction vast Pacific region, already blessed by interment four other Hands.

His magnificent accomplishments as member at large of International Bahá'í Council in connection raising superstructure Shrine of the Báb, which prompted Guardian to name one of the doors of that noble edifice after him, his painstaking efforts in promoting on the local, national and international levels paramount interests of the Faith, his notable achievement in establishment Italo-Swiss National Spiritual Assembly on eve launching Ten Year Crusade, his outstanding qualities of zeal, fidelity, determination and perseverance, which characterized imperishable record his arduous labors—all combine to richly adorn annals Faith over period his superb, assiduous exertions, and undoubtedly assure him bountiful reward in Kingdom on High.

Advise all National Spiritual Assemblies hold befitting memorial gatherings his name, particularly in Mashriqu’l-Adh-kárs in recognition his unique position, splendid services.

*Universal House of Justice*
*July 6, 1989*
‘Lifestyle Choices’ exhibit fights drugs

On June 7, former First Lady Nancy Reagan and recently appointed federal drug czar William Bennett were in Los Angeles to help dedicate a unique substance abuse exhibit, “Lifestyle Choices,” at the California Museum of Science and Industry.

The nation’s first permanent exhibit designed to educate children and adolescents about the consequences of drinking, drug use and smoking, “Lifestyle Choices” was conceived some two and one-half years ago by David Langness, a Baha’i from Los Angeles who has worked for many years in the health-care field.

The exhibit is co-sponsored by the National Health Foundation, of which Mr. Langness is executive director, and ARCO, who contributed $750,000 to its $1.3-million cost. Twenty-seven other private-sector contributors have also supported the project, which was built solely with donations from corporations, foundations and individuals and using no taxpayer funds.

It features computer-driven interactive video stations where viewers take part at various decision-making points in realistic peer-pressure situations and can then see the results of their decisions.

“Lifestyle Choices” also houses a specially-designed drunk- and drugged-driving simulator where participants can test their ability to drive under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

Many other stationary and interactive exhibits fill the hall, delivering factual, honest information about substance abuse and its consequences.

“The ‘Lifestyle Choices’ exhibit,” said Mrs. Reagan, “represents a new approach in preventing the tragedy of drug use among our young people.

“It is so important that children learn to make good decisions about alcohol and drug use. For them to ‘just say no’ isn’t always an easy thing to do. And that’s why the ‘Lifestyle Choices’ exhibit is a vital part of the learning process.”

Following her remarks Mrs. Reagan, who serves as honorary chairman of the new drug abuse prevention project, hung a plaque that reads “In the spirit of substance abuse prevention, I dedicate this exhibit to all those whose lives have been hurt by drugs.”

The dedication ceremony, which formally opened “Lifestyle Choices” and honored Mrs. Reagan for her efforts in drug abuse prevention, was presided over by Mr. Langness and attended by a host of the country’s most well-known figures in the war on drugs.

After praising Mrs. Reagan’s anti-drug campaign, Mr. Bennett said, “I have been in this job (as head of the government’s anti-drug operations) for three months, and the clearest and most important signal we can send in this issue of illegal drugs is to stand up and say loudly and clearly that drugs are wrong.”

“Lifestyle Choices” will be seen by an estimated five million visitors a year, about half of them school children, and has been incorporated into the Los Angeles Unified School District’s and Los Angeles Police Department’s DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) curriculum.

Los Angeles Police Chief Daryl Gates, other DARE program officials, the leaders of many of California’s largest hospital drug treatment centers, some 400 business and community leaders, and many media representatives were among those who attended the event.

Immediately after the dedication Mr. Langness, joined by ARCO chairman and chief executive officer Lodwick M. Cook; National Health Foundation board chairman Dickinson Ross, and a visiting group of school children from Los Angeles, escorted Mrs. Reagan on a tour through the exhibit.

“This exhibit is very important,” the former First Lady said, “because it has already reached and will continue to reach thousands of teen-agers with a strong message about the dangers of drug abuse.”

“I want to thank Mrs. Reagan for her support,” Mr. Langness told the assembled guests, “because her initial involvement, when she was still in Washington, and her efforts here today mean visibility for ‘Lifestyle Choices’—and visibility means more kids will visit this important exhibit.”

Designed by a consortium of health professionals, education and prevention specialists, museum curators, the Boston exhibit design firm of Wetzel and Associates, and a specially formed national task force of substance abuse experts, “Lifestyle Choices” is constructed to develop and hone decision-making skills in young people from ages eight through 18.

“The decision to experiment with drugs, alcohol or tobacco is potentially the most long-lasting and devastating lifestyle choice a young person can make,” said Mr. Langness, “so the message here is ‘choose not to use.’

“This was a labor of love for me,” he continued, “in which I tried to combine the two Baha’i ideals of freedom from addictive substances and a commitment to telling the truth.

“I wanted ‘Lifestyle Choices’ to be straightforward, factual and devoid of scare tactics. If we tell kids ‘drugs will kill you,’ and their friends demonstrate to them that this isn’t always true, they won’t believe anything we say.

“So this exhibit, in the spirit of the Baha’i principle of independent investigation of truth, says, ‘here are the
Former First Lady Nancy Reagan is congratulated by Los Angeles Chief of Police Daryl Gates during the dedication ceremony June 7 of 'Lifestyle Choices,' an anti-drug exhibit for children ages 8-18 at the California Museum of Science and Industry in Los Angeles. David Langness (standing at right), a Bahá'í from Los Angeles who conceived the idea for the exhibit, chats with federal drug czar William Bennett while ARCO chief executive Lod Cook (left) and Dickinson Ross (seated at right), chairman of the National Health Foundation, look on.

facts—make up your own mind.’ 

The ‘Lifestyle Choices’ exhibit is the second phase in a plan to take drug abuse prevention services to each large urban area in the country.

Beginning with the opening of general health and nutrition exhibits at the museum during the 1984 summer Olympics in Los Angeles, the first phase of the project, called ‘Health for Life,’ won the President’s Private Sector Initiative Award in 1985 and has been termed the country’s finest general health exhibit.

The third phase, now in the planning stages, will include a mobile version of ‘Lifestyle Choices’ capable of visiting cities and towns across America.

Besides his work with the non-profit National Health Foundation and his work on the ‘Lifestyle Choices’ exhibit, Mr. Langness serves as president of the board of directors of the Los Angeles Homeless Health Care Project, is chairman of the American Heart Association’s Public Policy Committee, and is a member of the executive committee of the Coalition for a Healthy California.

He has also been involved with several social and economic development projects, most notably as the founder of Project HELP (Hospital Emergency Airlift, Philippines) in 1987 and as a participant in an ongoing effort to build an internationally-supported hospital for civilian wounded in El Salvador.
Language is a fascinating topic, and equally intriguing is the quest for an international language referred to so many times by Bahá’u’lláh in His Writings as one of the principles for the future Bahá’í Commonwealth.

For those with the motivation and the time to spare, a study of The Loom of Language by Frederick Bodmer [edited and arranged by Prof. Lancelot Hogben], first published in 1944, would be of great interest. As it says on the cover of the most recent paperback edition: “This is a richly rewarding treasure-chest of a book to be read and re-read, dipped into again and again and kept as company for a lifetime.”

However, Bahá’ís, being the extremely busy people they are, with clearly defined goals, might well turn to the last two chapters—“Pioneers of Language Planning” and “Language Planning for a New Order”—which record the history of constructed languages over the last 300 years, and, finally, as a result of the many lessons learned over the years, enumerate the necessary requirements for “a common medium for people who speak (so many) mutually unintelligible tongues . . . a world—or at least federations of what were once sovereign states—where people of different speech communities would be bi-lingual. Everyone would still grow up to speak one or other of the existing national languages, but everyone would also acquire a single auxiliary for supra-national communication.” (p. 481)

This is even more important today than when the book was written since modern technology has given everyone in the world the means to communicate, to speak with and see any other individual anywhere; yet sadly, many people are unable to share their information because of the barrier of thousands of competing languages, of which even the simplest is difficult to learn. The Global Village requires a Global Language!

If anyone today were asked to name a constructed language, they would immediately answer (if they knew one at all) “Esperanto,” which was invented by Dr. Ludwig Zamenhof in Poland and which celebrated its centenary in 1987. Esperanto is, in fact, only one of several hundred languages constructed during the years from the latter half of the 17th century following the decline of Latin as a medium of scholarship.

One cannot elaborate here on all the fascinating experiments of those intervening years, so fully described in Mr. Bodmer’s book. The immediate precursor of Esperanto was Volapük (1880), the first constructed language which human beings actually spoke, wrote and printed. It had many drawbacks, and its success was short-lived, to be followed by Esperanto in 1887.

According to Mr. Bodmer’s book, Esperanto, although based on the desire to “reconcile racial antagonisms by getting people to adopt a neutral medium of common understanding,” has several defects, “the most glaring of which (is) that it is not consistently international.” The unfamiliar aspect of the five accented consonants is also criticized. It is indeed easier to learn, however, at least in its initial stages, than any of the natural languages, and has a considerable and devoted following of some millions all over the world including China, which, with several other countries, broadcasts in Esperanto.

The book offers a list of requirements deemed necessary for a constructed international language, paying due regard to the criticisms of all the efforts that have gone before:

1. It would be an isolating language (that is, the word would be an unalterable unit). Its rules of grammar would be rules of word-order, and as uniform and as few as possible.

2. It would be essentially a language with Latin-Greek word-material, so chosen that the beginner could associate items of the basic word-list with syllables of internationally current words.

3. It would have word-economy at least as great as that of basic English.

4. It would have regular spelling, without accents which reduce the speed of writing and add to the cost of printing.

“A language purged of irregular spelling, irregular and irrelevant grammar, unusual word collocations (i.e., idioms), and redundant word-forms, would take its place unobtrusively in a program of general elementary instruction in semantics and etymology. Learning it would be learning to associate roots common to different words and to gain facility in the art of definition. Proficiency would thus come with little effort in a small fraction of the time now devoted to the teaching of foreign languages.” (pp. 509-10)
So much for the conclusions of the book. As Bahá’ís, we know that the international auxiliary language will be chosen by a Council of all countries and must contain words from different languages. It will be governed by the simplest rules and there will be no exceptions; neither will there be gender, nor extra and silent letters. Everything indicated will have but one name. In Arabic there are hundreds of names for the camel! In the schools of each nation the mother tongue will be taught, as well as the revised Universal Language.” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London, p. 95)

So we know that whichever language is chosen, it will need to be revised by the Council of experts. It would seem that if there were a language in existence that conformed as nearly as possible to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s statements and the conclusions drawn in The Loom of Language, the simpler would be the task of the Council when the time came to work out a universal language. I should now like to tell you about what I think is such a language.

Prof. Lancelot Hogben has already been mentioned as the editor and arranger of The Loom of Language. He was a biologist and linguist, and had already come to the conclusion, as he later stated in The Vocabulary of Science (published in 1970), that

“The world-wide vocabulary of Western Science is the nearest thing to the lexicon of a truly global auxiliary language that mankind has yet achieved. It derives its stock-in-trade almost exclusively from two dead languages (Latin and Greek).”

In 1943 he published Interglossa (Pelican Books) which attempted to provide a framework that could make use of this global “lexicon.” Owing to the fact that it was wartime, and for other reasons, the book made little impact at the time. In 1978, Ronald Clark and Wendy Ashby, the present authors, who had long since seen the potential of Interglossa, received Prof. Hogben’s approval to take on the task of its propagation. Prof. Hogben died soon afterward, and after much translation into Interglossa, it was felt advisable to introduce a few minor alterations, and as Prof. Hogben was no longer available to approve the changes, it was thought proper to change the name to Glosa, thus stressing the fact that double letters are unnecessary (Glossa is Greek for “tongue, language”).

Glosa seems to conform quite closely to the principles laid down by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and to the conclusions reached in The Loom of Language. It is an isolating language, it practices word economy, the words are brief, there is regular spelling. It is therefore governed by the simplest of rules with no exceptions. There is no gender, nor any extra or silent letters; each word in Glosa stands for only one concept, and any word can act as any part of speech. Always the context provides the precise meaning. As with all good translation, it is the meaning rather than the individual words that is translated.

Glosa has two vocabularies: a Central Vocabulary of only 1,000 words, carefully chosen from the already long-established International Scientific Vocabulary, and so generally useful that any kind of intelligent conversation can be carried on by means of them; and, for those who prefer a larger vocabulary, Mega-Glosa, which is enormous, certainly larger than English. In the course of its evolution as an international language, Glosa has recently adopted phonetic spelling which, it is felt, will simplify it for many people.

As for pronunciation, the rules are as follows:

Vowels are pronounced as in “fAther,” “hEy,” “machine,” “mOre” and “lUnar.”

A Glosa C is always pronounced like “ch” in “ChurCH.” A hard C is always represented by K. The Greek CH (as in “CHaracter”) is pronounced (and spelled) as K.

G is always hard, as in “Gland.” Greek PH as in “PHilosophy” is pronounced (and spelled) as F. TH as in “THEatre” is pronounced (and spelled) as T, while J is pronounced like the Y in “Yes.”

R should always be pronounced, and preferably trilled. An initial X is pronounced like Z.

Every letter is pronounced, i.e. “HABE—hahbab.” The accent is gently on the vowel before the last consonant. There are no double letters in Glosa; it makes no difference to the pronunciation.

Here are a few internationally known words of which the Glosa content is in capital letters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Glosa Word</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KARDio-GRAPH</td>
<td>heart-write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLUTO-KRATiC</td>
<td>(wealth(y)-govern)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTER-NATIONaL</td>
<td>(between-nations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEO-GRaPHY</td>
<td>(earth-write)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TELE-PHONe</td>
<td>(far-sound)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTO-BIO-GRaPHY</td>
<td>(self-life-write)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mechanics of Glosa are simple, as there are no genders or inflection. Instead of an inflection, a functional word is used, in the same way as English uses “shall” and “did” to form the future or past tense of a verb.

FU forms the FUTURE tense in Glosa and PA the PAST tense. For example, MI SKOPE (I look); MI PA SKOPE (I did look; I looked); MI FU SKOPE (I shall look).

The plural is formed by the word PLU. “The” or “a” is U(N). A bird in Glosa is AVI, as in AVLary (a place for birds) and AVIation (flying like a bird). So, UN AVI (the bird); PLU AVI (the birds).

Twenty functional words from Glosa 1000 do all the work of the grammars of the older languages: PA, FU, NU and DU are four of these 20 words, NU meaning “now” and DU (DURATION) being used for constructing continuous tenses. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Glosa Word</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MI NU AKTI ID</td>
<td>(I am doing it);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI FU AKTI ID</td>
<td>(I shall be doing it);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI PA AKTI ID</td>
<td>(I was doing it);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI NU-PA AKTI ID</td>
<td>(I have just done it);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI NU-FU AKTI ID</td>
<td>(I am just going to do it).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here are a few sentences as examples to give you the flavor of Glosa:

Mi grafo poesi (I write poetry).
Mi sporta tenis (I play tennis).
Mi amo skope televisio (I like watching television).
Mi lektu e grafo (I read and write).
Mi pa akusti u radio (I listened to the radio).
Mi patri ne sporta tenis (My father doesn’t play tennis).
An es minus ergo (He is unemployed).
Mi patriarchi soni u piano (My grandmother plays the piano).
Mi fratri eko in Paris (My brother lives in Paris).
An es u medika-pe (He is a doctor).
Tu sororii eko extra Paris (Your sister lives outside Paris).
Fe nima es Margretta (Her name is Margaret).

Mi habe deka anua (I am 10 years old).
Papua New Guinea

Fifteen young Bahá'ís ages 9-15 gathered April 1-2 at the Bahá'í Center in Rabaul, Papua New Guinea, for a deepening program sponsored by the Bahá'í Child Education Committee. Participants made teaching posters and enjoyed a variety of sports, music, videos and fellowship. Lessons were held on teaching the Faith, living a Bahá'í life, and learning prayers. Discussions were held that enabled those present to learn how others had reached the important decision to become Bahá'ís.

On March 23, the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Rabbie Namaliu, received a three-member delegation of Bahá'ís who presented him a copy of “The Promise of World Peace” and material about the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran.

After a cordial discussion about the principles of the Faith, Mr. Namaliu graciously thanked the Bahá'ís.

A newspaper article and photograph appeared on March 27 and 31 in the Niugini News, while National Radio also carried news of the presentation.
United States

School strengthens bonds of friendship

Friendship among all the people of the world is the common concern of Bahá'ís and the School for International Training (SIT) in Brattleboro, Vermont.

Another common theme is world peace through international cooperation, and through unity in diversity.

The School has successfully served hundreds of Bahá'ís by giving them the practical skills to carry out their religious goals.

“Our highest aspiration is for a more peaceful world, achieved through improved intercultural understanding, environmental and population balance and economic and social development,” says the mission statement of The Experiment in International Living.

Its academic arm, the School for International Training, has become a natural training and degree center for Bahá'ís.

While dedicating their lives to social change, Bahá’ís have found a common bond with SIT, which offers degree-earning programs in international administration, world issues, and language teaching.

“The Experiment’s purpose,” says Peter Hayward, a Bahá’í who runs the Professional Development Resource Center at The Experiment’s School, “is to educate people toward global understanding, whether through exchange, development, training, or in academic programs.

“For Bahá’ís,” he says, “attending SIT is a natural progression—you have the international community aspect, and a shared philosophy which is bringing about understanding and peaceful coexistence among people.

“It’s a place where you can get the international training and skills you need to work successfully in developing countries.”

SIT prepares students at the undergraduate and graduate levels for international careers in management, teaching, and dealing with contemporary world issues.

Graduates work abroad or with multi-cultural populations in the U.S. and hold responsible positions worldwide with major international development and service organizations, educational institutions, community service agencies and international corporations in law, business, and health care.

For those attending two-year colleges who may wish to transfer in their junior year, SIT offers the World Issues Program, a two-year, upper-level undergraduate degree program that features a seven-month internship in another culture.

After junior year classroom work covering the environment, Third World concerns, social development and global peace studies, students are required to go into the field and apply in an international internship the theory they’ve learned.

The World Studies Program, a four-year collaborative undergraduate program offered by the School in cooperation with nearby Marlboro College, is another option. It focuses on international studies and includes a six- to eight-month internship in another culture.
In its Riḍván message this year, the Universal House of Justice says that “assisting in endeavors to conserve the environment in ways which blend with the rhythm of life of our community must assume more importance in Bahá’í activities.” To better understand how we can blend conservation into the rhythm of our community life, it would be useful to explore some of the many insights the Bahá’í Faith has to offer on the topic of environment.

It is important for Bahá’ís to expand the vision of environmental activists so they can recognize the full dimensions of the environmental problem. Sometimes people who are deeply concerned about disasters in the environment develop a kind of “tunnel vision” which keeps them from seeing the interrelatedness of the environment to other social and spiritual problems. These people see only one symptom of mankind’s sickness and try to treat it as a disease in itself; they want a simple and immediate solution. Such an approach is reminiscent of the boy who stuck his finger in the dike to plug the hole and thus saved the community. The problem today is that the dike has many, many leaks, and it wastes time and energy to try to plug the holes on a dike that cannot be repaired. Social problems are not simple; they are complex and interrelated.

Bahá’ís believe that the application of spiritual principles will solve every social problem including the problem of man’s mistreatment of the earth. This does not mean that Bahá’ís should only sit and pray for the environment and hope that things will get better. What is first required is that Bahá’ís have a deep understanding of the root causes of environmental problems. At the most essential level, the environment will improve when we eliminate poverty, ignorance, disunity, materialism and sexual inequality, to name but a few of the illnesses afflicting mankind today. The second requirement is for Bahá’ís to transform this understanding into effective action.

Environmental protection requires unity. Bahá’u’lláh wrote, “The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established.” As environmental groups courageously speak out against the dumping of toxic wastes and other harmful materials in the environment, companies motivated only by profits have found a callous, ingenious new way to solve the problem of wastes: dumping in the Third World countries. Thus, companies comply with the law but do not solve the problem; rather, the spreading of these deadly wastes to a new part of the world compounds the damage to the environment. In like manner, the adoption of stringent environmental laws in one country now increasingly causes companies to simply move their polluting industries elsewhere. Desperate for employment and foreign currency, many governments will turn a blind eye to the harm such industries will cause.

Most environmentalists recognize that pollution is an international problem. Contaminated rivers pose a water source problem for many countries, and air pollution respects no national boundaries. A unified, universal solution is imperative. First of all, world unity in thought is necessary to begin to formulate and enforce laws that will help to eliminate the problem. Without a world government we have our present status quo: a world body that passes resolutions but cannot enforce them while the environment continues to deteriorate. A universal recognition of the dignity and worth of all people, not only those who live in the privileged West, will reveal the moral bankruptcy of those who do not wish to soil their own environment but have no qualms about polluting the lands of Third World peoples.

Bahá’u’lláh says that the present order is “lamentably defective.” We see evidence of this in the destruction of the environment by people in the underdeveloped countries who are forced by the unfair distribution of wealth to ravage the land they live on in order to survive. Destruction of the environment comes as well from ignorance of basic scientific principles of farming and land use. If we want to improve the environment, we must address the question of the disparity between rich and poor, and we must be involved in programs of universal literacy and education.

People can protect the environment by working to establish the equality of the sexes. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says that, unlike the past, this age will be a time imbued with more feminine qualities. The qualities of nurturing and protecting have not been valued by the decision-makers of society in the past. Should it be any surprise that we are now faced with the consequences? Yet as women become more educated and are accepted as equal partners, their voices will be heard in society, and the priority women give to nurturance will influence decisions regarding care of the earth.

Materialism and greed are the primary causes of environmental destruction. The Universal House of Justice tells us that “the working of the material world is merely a reflection of spiritual conditions and until the spiritual conditions can be changed there...
can be no lasting change for the better in material affairs." The grey, fouled rivers, the withering forests, and the fetid, choking air bear horrifying, striking witness to the reality of these words.

Once Bahá'ís have a clear understanding that materialism, inequality of the sexes, ignorance, disunity and economic injustice are among the root causes of the degradation of the environment we can proceed confidently with the task of blending concern for the environment into the rhythm of our community life.

The experience of Bahá'í social and economic development, with its emphasis on the application of spiritual principles to material problems, can serve as a model for our involvement in environmental issues. In Bahá'í development we are concerned with using methods that will increase human dignity, not demean it. These methods, of course, are to be found in spiritual principles such as purity of motive, consultation by all members of the community regardless of sex, education or economic standing, and unified action. Bahá'í development takes place at the grassroots level; it is not imposed from above. Thus when people are able to define problems for themselves, consult on them and take unified action, it will result in (1) a deeper commitment to the problem being addressed; (2) material well-being (the material goal of the effort, such as the digging of a well, literacy, or the clearing of a piece of land); and (3) greater unity among members of the community. This last result is by far the most important of the three, for when a community uses spiritual principles, and is united, there is no problem it cannot overcome.

Bahá'í development plans are now being carried out worldwide as part of the organic growth of our communities. Although the projects may at present be small, they are nonetheless important, for they give us practice in using the tools and guiding principles that can change society. Bahá'í communities can use the same tools—the institutions of the local Spiritual Assembly and the Nineteen Day Feast, and their ability to consult and work together—to help preserve the environment.

Thus Bahá'ís can plan projects to help the environment that will be of immediate and practical value while demonstrating the value of using spiritual principles to solve material problems. For example, Bahá'ís can take part in or initiate recycling drives, as this will have a good effect on the environment, but if we do it according to guidelines for Bahá'í development, the activity will have far greater impact than the mere recycling of several tons of glass, aluminum or paper. We will be showing the world how to effect social change using spiritual principles. If our tree-planting projects are carried out in a spirit of consultation among equals, with purity of motive and unified action at the grassroots level, we are planting far more than trees—we are sowing the seeds of a new understanding of what will truly heal the ills of mankind.

Every Bahá'í can search within himself to identify habits of overconsumption and materialism in his own life. Curbing our own excesses will not only benefit us spiritually, but will have an effect on the distribution of resources in a world where one-fifth of the people are hungry all the time. Deepening classes, summer schools and Bahá'í children's classes can help raise our awareness of the environmental crisis and help us to see the problem in both its spiritual and material dimensions.

Nature is a reflection of the glory and splendor of God. Unfortunately, under our stewardship nature has become a grotesque reflection of mankind's spiritual relationship with the One Who created it and then placed it in our keeping. It is our challenge, as Bahá'ís, to revitalize the spiritual life of all mankind so that our material world can live and flourish.—Eileen Tyson
Environmental issues high on agenda

Twenty-one years ago, Malta’s chief delegate to the UN proclaimed the resources of the seabed to be the “common heritage of mankind,” setting in motion the events that led to the Law of the Sea treaty. Now, at the initiative of Malta once again, the General Assembly is being asked to proclaim the earth’s climate too as part of that “common heritage.” In making the proposal at the most recent General Assembly session, Maltese Ambassador Alexander Borg Olivier called for a major UN study of threats to climatic stability, which would lead to a global strategy for dealing with climatic change. The result could very well be a Law of the Air.

A coordinated inquiry into climatic change appeals strongly to Assembly delegates. And although the idea of applying the “common heritage” concept to the wind, the rain, the sunshine, and the seasons has raised questions among Western delegates, they voted with the rest of the General Assembly to take up Malta’s proposal.

Borg Olivier’s timing was obviously right. During the Assembly’s general debate, minister after minister expressed deep concern about the increase in greenhouse gases, global warming, rising seas, and damage to the ozone layer. Proposals for urgent UN action have come from all over the world. Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar has called for an international agreement to coordinate government policies that have an impact on the climate. Canada offered to host an international conference that would address laws to protect the atmosphere.

Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar has called for an international agreement to coordinate government policies that have an impact on the climate. Canada offered to host an international conference that would address laws to protect the atmosphere. Cyprus proposed a special session of the General Assembly on the environment. Britain declared that the UN must not leave a problem of this magnitude to technical bodies but must conduct a serious debate on it. The Soviets called for three UN emergency meetings on different levels and for the establishment of a UN Environment Council “capable of taking effective decisions to ensure ecological security.” Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze also suggested that Soviet-American cooperation was especially important in this field, recalling the memoirs of the fable about the two elephants: ‘‘Whether they make war or love, it is the grass that suffers.’’

This explosion of demands for UN action on the climate is new, but the issue has been on the General Assembly’s agenda for many years. The first UN Conference on the Environment took place in 1972, giving birth to the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). Since then, while UNEP has drawn criticism for not doing enough, governments have been stingy in their contributions to it. Despite this, UNEP has several achievements to its credit.

The most significant of these is the Montreal Protocol, scheduled to come into force on January 1, 1989, which requires a 50 percent cut in the production of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) within the next decade. CFCs, commonly used in refrigerants, plastic foam, and many aerosol sprays, destroy the ozone that protects the earth from lethal radiation. However, the ink had hardly dried on the agreement before there was new scientific information to indicate that the protocol, dramatic as it is, does not go far enough. To prevent further ozone depletion, CFCs must be cut by 75-80 percent.

UNEP, together with the World Meteorological Organization and the International Council of Scientific Unions, has also been studying the phenomenon of the global warming with a view to providing governments with an authoritative assessment of the seriousness of the threat and the kind of action it requires.

Many other groups, national as well as international, have been studying the causes and consequences of climatic changes. The Brundtland Commission, headed by the Prime Minister of Norway, drafted a vast report on “sustainable” economic growth, meaning growth that does not degrade the environment or injure the climate. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is monitoring food supplies affected by climatic instability. The British Antarctic Survey identified damage to the ozone layer; the U.S. Department of Energy has done vital research on carbon dioxide; the Russians, Canadians and Americans have programs on the dynamics of Arctic ice. Universities, scientific institutes and other organizations all over the world are investigating different aspects of climatic change.

Under Malta’s proposal to the General Assembly, the first step would be to coordinate all the findings of all these groups. “The Secretary-General
should establish an inter-agency mechanism," Borg Olivier says, "to give us a report on what has already been done, what information is available, what are the areas in which action is possible, and what kind of strategies should be adopted in order to save the world’s climate."

Borg Olivier expects that once the information is available, political leaders would begin to frame "a global response, a global ethic. Obviously," he says, "no one country has the right to alter the climate in ways that could be detrimental to others." While Western delegates agree, they anticipate a battle over Borg Olivier's insistence that climate is "the common heritage of mankind."

Britain’s Ambassador, Sir Crispin Tickell, is an expert on climate and the author of the highly praised book, *Climatic Change and World Affairs.* "We certainly don’t regard climate as a common heritage," he says. "It’s not a resource like seabed minerals. Moreover, the use of that phrase raises hackles all over the place because of the way in which it was used during the Law of the Sea negotiations." Many of the industrialized countries feel that the non-aligned majority used "common heritage" as a weapon to restrict legitimate national activities having to do with the seabed and to extract concessions. "‘Common heritage’ is a non-aligned war-cry," said an American diplomat.

But Borg Olivier doesn’t see it that way. Malta has "a very strong sentimental attachment to the concept of common heritage and a sincere interest in expanding it," he notes. "As far as climate is concerned, 'common heritage' means it must be managed for the benefit of all mankind."

To that end, some delegates are already talking about an international treaty to prevent global warming along the lines of the Montreal Protocol on ozone depletion. Such a treaty might provide for a 10 percent reduction in consumption of fossil fuels by the year 2000 or 2010. Since the developing countries could not afford either to reduce their energy consumption or to switch to cleaner technologies, the industrialized countries would be expected to provide the necessary aid.

Further down the road many scien-
Donation aids New Era Foundation

The New Era Foundation for International Development has received a generous donation of land and property in Stamford, Connecticut.

The donation has not only given the Foundation a major asset for its balance sheet, but will serve as its future administrative headquarters.

The New Era Foundation, which was formed by the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly in response to the Six Year Plan's emphasis on social and economic development, has already funded projects in such diverse areas as Bolivia, Brazil, India, the Philippines and on American Indian Reservations.

While the Foundation will be seeking its principal funding from other charitable institutions, Bahá'ís can help in its growth by becoming member supporters for a moderate membership fee of $9, thereby helping to expand its membership base.

The Foundation's address is 866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 120, New York, NY 10017 (212-752-5738).

Uganda

Lauretta King (standing second from right), a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre, is shown with some of the Bahá'ís of Kampala, Uganda, at the Bahá'í National Center next to the House of Worship in Kampala. During her two-week visit to Uganda, the Counsellor met with the National Spiritual Assembly and members of the Auxiliary Board.

Trinidad/Tobago

On May 21, the National Chinese Teaching Committee of Trinidad and Tobago held its first National Chinese Teaching Conference.

Topics discussed included becoming familiar with the Chinese culture, becoming closer to the Chinese people in our communities, and understanding general cultural differences that exist between eastern and western societies.

Workshops were held on use of the media in reaching the Chinese population, teaching methods, and the proper use of teaching materials.

It was recommended that more Chinese traveling teachers be requested, and that Bahá'ís reach out to the Chinese population of students at the University of the West Indies.
Cameroon

During “Youth Week” last February at the Higher Teachers Training College in Yaounde, Cameroon, the Baha’i University Club held a roundtable conference on “The Role of Youth in a World in Search of Peace.”

This is the second year in which the Baha’i Club has sponsored such a conference as a public forum for consultation on an issue related to youth. Last year’s theme was “African Youth Facing the Challenges of Modern Society.”

This year’s speakers included Dr. Ekema Agbaw, lecturer at the University of Yaounde; Dr. Boyomo Assala, sub-director of the Ministry of Information and Culture; Dr. Peter Agvor Tabi, director of the Institute of International Relations; and Dr. Dion Ngute, deputy general manager of the National Center for Administration and Magistracy.

Besides helping to develop relations with these and other prominent members of the community and educating the public about this important issue, the conference resulted in the publication of two newspaper articles.

Guinea Bissau/Macau

Two more National Spiritual Assemblies, those of Macau and Guinea Bissau, were formed at Ridván, bringing to 151 the total number of National Assemblies worldwide.

In Macau, the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum represented the Universal House of Justice; in Guinea Bissau, the Supreme Body was represented by Counsellor Rolf von Czekus.

Also present in Macau were representatives of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Hong Kong, Australia, Japan and Malaysia.

The celebration included a dinner in honor of Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum which was also attended by the chief of the Cabinet of the Governor of Macau, representing the governor; officials of the Xinhua News Agency; and other government officials and community leaders.

In Guinea Bissau, Counsellor Husayn Ardekani represented the Board of Counsellors in Africa while a member of the “mother” Assembly of the Gambia was present with one Auxiliary Board member for Guinea Bissau, 15 delegates and 26 guests.

The seat of the new National Spiritual Assembly is in Bissau.

Western Samoa

Two students at the Montessori School in Apia, Western Samoa, are involved in their studies. The school, which is adjacent to the Bahá’í House of Worship, operates under the direction of a board appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly. Students come from diverse cultural backgrounds; many are from families that are not Bahá’í.

Ecuador

To help celebrate Naw-Rúz this year, Radio Bahá’í in Ecuador sponsored a “Marathon for Unity.” In the spirit of the ancient Inca empire, runner-messengers left the Bahá’í radio station to spread the message of unity.

Eight messengers started, each carrying copies in Quechua of a summary of “The Promise of World Peace” and a booklet in Spanish entitled “El Camino Grande de Bahá’u’lláh” (Bahá’u’lláh’s Great Path).

The runners passed through 45 communities, and in each one they were joined by more runners. By the end of the marathon the group was 200 strong.

Progress of the marathon was broadcast throughout the day on Radio Bahá’í. The program ended at 8 p.m. with a performance by eight local folk music groups.

Fiji

The second phase of Fiji’s Olinga Teaching Project resulted in 48 people embracing the Cause in May including representatives of the Indian, Fijian and Chinese communities.
Italy

The National Spiritual Assembly of Italy recently reported the acceptance of the Faith by an Italian from the Albanian minority living in Sicily, the first of his people to embrace the Cause.

The new believer, Pietro Pandolfini, from Gela, Sicily, speaks ancient Albanian as his mother tongue and comes from an orthodox Byzantine religious background.

The Albanian minority emigrated to Sicily almost 500 years ago after resisting conversion to Islam during the conquest of Albania by the Ottoman Empire.

Belize

A full-time teaching team spent December and January in Belize City and Corozal, Belize, where 53 new believers embraced the Faith. Significantly, a large number of the new Bahá'ís are young Garifuna Indians.

Further teaching efforts in January and February were dedicated to the memory of two Bahá'í martyrs in Iran, Dr. 'Alímurád Dávúdí and 'Abdu'l-Husayn Taslímí.

Nightly meetings have drawn many seekers in Belize City. Many of the new Bahá'ís have been deepened at these meetings, and are now actively engaged in the teaching work.

The new Bahá'í youth have formed a youth club which meets once a week.

During the first few months of this year the team's activities were aided by Bahá'ís from Canada whose presence made possible the initiation of new and successful projects.

More than 100 new believers were enrolled in Belize City, and follow-up deepening visits are made regularly. Classes and other activities for children were begun, and the team helped new believers as they began to hold firesides in their homes.

Nigeria

The Marian Crofford/South Plateau Teaching Campaign, carried out last January 29-February 12 from the IpaA Bahá'í Center in Plateau State, Nigeria, resulted in 323 enrollments, the formation of seven new local Spiritual Assemblies, the opening of 10 localities to the Faith, visits to 46 communities, the holding of 10 children's classes, and the presentation of copies of the peace statement to the headmaster of the Adabu Tudun School and the Emir (chieftain) of Lafia.

The campaign, centered in the rural bushland home of the Tiv people, required considerable work to maintain daily living requirements including a 30-minute drive to Lafia to collect clean drinking water.

The Tiv people had been introduced to the Faith over the past 20 years, especially since the arrival of Marian Crofford, a pioneer from Canada who lived in Lafia from 1976-83.
Honduras

"Project Muhájir," which began in January in Honduras, has so far visited five Garifuna Bahá’í communities to teach, deepen and proclaim the Faith. At the end of the week the aim in each community is for the team to have enrolled new Bahá’ís, established children’s classes, ensured the observance of the Nineteen Day Feasts, and trained several key people to carry on its activities. Return visits are planned to reinforce the efforts and continue the process of consolidation.

Conditions are physically arduous, with all transportation on foot or by dugout canoe, and food is scarce even for the indigenous population. New enrollments, however, are more than 100, and team members feel that a firm foundation is being established for entry by troops.

Australia

Bahá’ís took part early this year in a World Assembly in Melbourne, Australia. The conference, sponsored by the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP), brought together 600 delegates and observers from 60 countries representing 10 religions to discuss peace issues from the perspective of their various cultural and religious backgrounds.

Representing the Faith were John Davidson of the Bahá’í International Community; Graham Hassall, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia; Tahana Waipouri-Voykovic from the National Spiritual Assembly of New Zealand and WCRP of New Zealand; Martin and Barbara Kleyne and their daughter Chantal from the WCRP of Holland; and Miguel Gil and Vafa Payman from the Multi-Faith Resource Center in Melbourne.

The World Assembly in Melbourne was the fifth such gathering held by the WCRP since its formation in the late 1960s. Its theme was "Building Peace Through Trust: The Role of Religion."

Madagascar

Individual initiative is resulting in an average of 40-50 new believers each month in Madagascar.

In Antsirabe, an exhibit about the Faith is on display in each neighborhood. More than 10,000 people have visited the exhibit, and by the end of February, 26 had embraced the Faith.

The Bahá’ís of Fianarantsoa, with the help of Counsellor Roddy Dharma Lutchmaya, placed a similar exhibit in Manazura and plan to repeat it in all towns within a 200-mile radius of Fianarantsoa.

More than 700 people visited the exhibit in Manazura, four of whom enrolled in the Faith.

Hong Kong

Juana Conrad, a member of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly, and her husband, Sam Conrad, visited Hong Kong in April.

During that time Mrs. Conrad gave a 90-minute radio interview, spoke at a luncheon for 25 guests, and presented a fireside talk to about 40 others at Bahá’í Hall.

During the radio interview she spoke about Women for International Peace and Arbitration, a non-governmental organization based on Bahá’í principles of which she is a co-founder.

At the fireside, Mrs. Conrad showed slides and spoke about her two trips to the Soviet Union, the first as guest consultant for International Women’s Day, the second as a member of the U.S. delegation to the World Congress of Women held in June 1987 in Moscow.

A total of 120 new believers in Hong Kong and another 280 in Macau was reported as of the end of November 1988.

The enrollments were a direct result of teaching institutes held in October, after which full-time teaching teams were formed for each territory.

Barbados

Thirteen new believers were enrolled in the Faith during a mid-January teaching campaign in St. Philip Parish, Barbados.

Pakistan

Pictured are members of the Bahá’í community and local Spiritual Assembly of Muzaffarabad, Pakistan. The recently elected Assembly is the first to be formed in the disputed territory of the Azad Kashmir region of Pakistan. There are 19 Bahá’ís in the community including two doctors who have opened a clinic as a socio-economic project.
United Kingdom

Major breakthroughs in teaching resulted from a month-long visit to the United Kingdom this spring by Donald Rogers, a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre.

Mr. Rogers spent two days in each of eight communities. His purpose was to embolden the Baha'is, making them more audacious in their approach to teaching and inviting others to enter the Faith.

The approach led to enrollments at each meeting held during his stay, indicating the readiness of people in the United Kingdom to embrace the Faith in greater numbers.

During a weekend project in Liverpool, about 80 Baha'i youth from throughout the country invited 2,000 people from various parts of the city to a series of public meetings. The theme of these gatherings, "The Remaining Years of the Twentieth Century and the Baha'i Faith," challenged those attending to recognize Bahá'u'lláh and to join with the Baha'ís in completing the work of the Faith which is outlined for this century.

Six enrollments followed, with each person representing a different element of the city's population, thus providing an opening for teaching the diverse strata of society in the area.

Following last year's successful Anglo-French Baha'i Weekend on the Channel Island of Guernsey, a four-day reunion called "Cross-Channel Co-operation" was organized March 24-27 by the Spiritual Assembly of Guernsey. More than 40 people from Belgium, England, France, Guernsey and Jersey took part.

Included was a devotional program that featured a reading of the first Baha'i prayer to be translated into Guernsey French. Its translation fulfilled a goal of the Six Year Plan.

Other features included a public meeting; a graveside memorial service for Florent Hanafi, a youth who collapsed and died while waiting to return to France after last year's event; and the participation of the friends in the "World Aid Walk," a major event in Guernsey held to raise funds for Oxfam, the Save the Children Fund, and Christian Aid.

Many of the Baha'is, wearing their "One Planet, One People . . . Please" T-shirts, completed the 20-mile walk and received the thanks and admiration of its organizers.

The day before the reunion, a creative arts exhibit called "Free Expression," planned by the Baha'i youth of Guernsey and sponsored by the Spiritual Assembly, was held, drawing many artists, the media and visitors.

The exhibit ended with performances by four of the island's youngest music groups. Proceeds from the performance were donated to the Comic Relief Fund.

The April 2 issue of The Universe, the leading Roman Catholic newspaper in the United Kingdom, mentions the Baha'i House of Worship in India. The article, submitted by a Catholic monk who visited India in January, describes the Baha'i House of Worship as "one of the most elevating places of worship I have had the privilege to visit."

Members of 14 Baha'i communities took part last September in a "Weekend for Peace and Community Service" in the goal town of Southend-on-Sea, Essex.

Included was a presentation of "The Promise of World Peace" to a representative of the mayor, a clean-up project, an entertainment and fund-raising program, an interfaith peace service, and slide programs about the Faith.

A National Teaching Conference last October drew 850 adults and about 100 children to Hull in Humberside, England.

The conference, which was preceded by a week of organized Baha'i activities in Hull, was followed by a program that included a wide selection of activities and workshops.
Chile

Radio Bahá'í in Chile has been chosen as the primary vehicle for publicizing a government-sponsored development project.

The project consists of bi-lingual literacy classes for adults in Spanish and Mapuche. It is a joint effort between the station and the regional Ministry of Education. While the Ministry will provide materials, scripts and planning, Radio Bahá'í is responsible for taping and transmitting the broadcasts.

Ten schools in five districts in the area will serve as liaisons between the station and students. Two rural Mapuche Bahá'í schools are among those chosen to take part in the project.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Chile feels that being invited to help with this project is an indication of the recognition accorded by the Ministry of Education to the capacity of Radio Bahá'í and the two Mapuche Bahá'í schools.

Two hundred seventy-five young Bahá'ís from 15 countries took part in a recent five-day conference in Chile.

Inspired by a taped keynote message from the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears entitled "Toward a New World Order," seven of the youth offered to give a year of service to the Faith while 40 others volunteered to take part in seven satellite teaching projects following the conference.

Benin

The five-day Lerche Uniben Teaching Project, called for by the National Spiritual Assembly, was the first large-scale teaching and proclamation campaign at the University of Benin and had as its primary goal the enrollment of one academic staff member in each of its colleges.

As a result, a lecturer in sociology, a librarian, seven students and four non-academic staff were enrolled in the Faith, while more than a dozen senior academic staff members who expressed their sympathy with the teachings were given enrollment cards and are investigating the Faith.

Copies of the peace statement were given to 90 staff members, 39 of whom expressed such interest that more information about the Faith was presented to them through use of a teaching booklet.
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Panama

Display features Houses of Worship

On January 18, an exhibit of Bahá'í Houses of Worship around the world was officially opened at the Museum of the National Bank of Panama in Panama City. Temples pictured in the exhibit were those in Australia, Germany, India, Panama, Samoa, Uganda and the United States. In addition, the following buildings from the Holy Land were displayed: the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, the International Archives, the Shrine of the Bab, and the Mansion of Bahji. The event was sponsored by the Spiritual Assembly of Panama City which gave a warm welcome to distinguished guests who attended the inauguration of the exhibit. One local television station gave complete coverage to the exhibit while another broadcast a special invitation to the public to attend. Also, a widely read newspaper, The Star and Herald, published an article about the event. In general, invitations were sent to cultural, social and educational institutions including the Association of Architects and Engineers, where the Bahá'í community held a conference during the 12 days in which the exhibit was displayed. Pamphlets from several of the Houses of Worship were given out containing information on the Temples and the Faith; also, a complete range of Bahá'í literature was displayed. As a result of the exhibit, a representative of the Museum of the National Bank invited the Bahá'í community to provide Bahá'í literature for the bank's newly inaugurated library as a part of its contribution to the culture and education of residents of Panama.
As a child I was encouraged to think my own thoughts, to keep an open but skeptical mind and to learn from others without blindly accepting their opinions. The discovery of truth by my own effort, I was told, was not only my right but my responsibility—especially in matters of religion.

I learned, for example, that it was not enough for me to believe in God; it was necessary that I investigate the question of God's existence and find out whether He was real. Likewise, if any person or book claimed to reveal the Will of God, I was entitled—or rather, obligated—to ascertain for myself whether there existed reasonable grounds for such a remarkable claim. It was a question for evidence and verification, not mindless obedience.

This cautious attitude toward religion was not, as one might expect, something I acquired from agnostic relatives, secular teachers or materialist friends. It did not come from anyone wishing to undermine my spiritual convictions. It was a part of my religious training as a member of the Bahá'í Faith.

Taking this training to heart, I questioned everything including the validity of the religion that first taught me to ask awkward questions. During my college years I, like many others, became something of a doubting Thomas. I challenged my own reasons for believing in God, in an unseen spiritual world, in life after death, in divine revelation. For me this was a period of intense soul-searching and digging for answers.

Eventually, I found answers that satisfied me. My faith had survived its ordeal and was, if anything, stronger and more resilient as a result. The point, however, is that the process left me with an abiding interest in the "first principle" of the Bahá'í Faith: the independent investigation of truth.

Although the search for truth forms a major theme of the Bahá'í sacred texts, it is tempting to dismiss the precept as too simple and obvious to warrant much comment. Its very straightforwardness tends to mask a variety of intriguing implications. Perhaps for that reason, it has drawn less attention than many other Bahá'í ideals such as the harmony of science and religion, equality of the sexes, world peace through world government, a universal auxiliary language, appreciation of racial and cultural diversity, and the like.

This essay represents one person's investigation into the Bahá'í principle of search for truth—a turning of the practice inward upon oneself, one might say. After presenting some background information and opening thoughts, it will explore five concepts that seem to me implicit in this teaching, indicating how each one challenges commonly held notions or attitudes. It will, in the process, attempt to show that there is far more to the principle than may at first meet the eye—that it not only carries a mandate for taking charge of one's own spiritual destiny, but offers a practical method for testing the claims of religion in general and the Bahá'í Faith in particular.

The role of faith

Critics of religion often view it as being, by its very nature, hostile to a free and open search for truth. Such hostility is certainly a key aspect of religious fanaticism, which in the minds of many is synonymous with religion itself. Before proceeding, therefore, let us see what Bahá'ís believe about the nature of religious truth and the meaning of faith.

The Bahá'í Faith "proclaims unequivocally the existence and oneness of a personal God, unknowable, inaccessible, the source of all Revelation, eternal, omniscient, omnipresent and almighty." 2 God created all humanity "to know Him and to love Him" 3 and "to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization." 4 This dual purpose is something man cannot achieve by his own unaided effort, since he has no direct access to the knowledge of God or His will. God therefore intervenes periodically in history (at intervals averaging roughly a thousand years), providing mankind with guidance through a chosen Messenger or Christ-figure—Jesus, Moses, Muhammad, Buddha, Krishna, Zoroaster and the other founders of world religions.

These Messengers—"Manifestations of God," as Bahá'u'lláh terms them—"are one and all the exponents on earth of Him Who is the central Orb of the universe, its essence and ultimate purpose. From Him proceed their knowledge and power; from Him is derived their sovereignty." 5 "He hath manifested unto men the Day-Stars of His divine guidance... and hath or-

This essay on the independent investigation of truth, "The Searching Eye," was written by Gary L. Matthews, a Bahá'í who is presently serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in Grenada, where he works as an information specialist for the Grenada Cocoa Association.
dained the knowledge of these sanctified Beings to be identical with the knowledge of His own Self. ... Every one of them is the Way of God that connecteth this world with the realms above, and the Standard of His Truth unto every one in the kingdoms of earth and heaven.

Since these Divine Educators all speak for the same God, there can never be any true conflict among the religions they have revealed: "These principles and laws, these firmly-established and mighty systems, have proceeded from one Source, and are the rays of One Light. That they differ one from another is to be attributed to the varying requirements of the ages in which they were promulgated." Each Manifestation of God updates the laws of His predecessor to reflect the changing needs and growing capacity of an evolving world, and each promises that God will send additional Revelations in the future. Bahá'u'lláh identifies Himself as the latest, but not the last, in this eternal series of Manifestations Who progressively reveal God's will.

It follows that Bahá'ís—followers of Bahá'u'lláh—do not regard their Faith as having a monopoly on truth. They see all the great world religions, including their own, as successive chapters in a single continuous book. This universality, however, in no way dilutes the fact that they also believe without reservation in the divine authority of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. If Bahá'u'lláh says something, they will accept it as true simply because He says it. I believe many things on this basis, even when they are things I could not possibly investigate for myself.

At first glance this attitude may seem contrary to the principle of independent investigation of truth. Nevertheless, we can easily resolve the apparent contradiction. Bahá'u'lláh asks us to take His word for many things, but not for the most basic claim of all—namely, that He is the unerring "representative and mouthpiece" of the Creator of the universe. Instead, He marshals a host of compelling reasons—both logical and intuitive—to support the claim, inviting individuals to "consider His clear evidence" and to verify that "This thing is not from Me, but from One Who is almighty and all-knowing." He notes that a child typically adopts the religion of his parents as a matter of mere custom, not because "he has investigated reality and proved satisfactorily to himself" that it is right.

There is a well-known experiment in psychology in which a number of individuals are asked to make an obvious visual judgment: for instance, whether a given shape is round or oblong. Only one participant, however, is really the test subject—the others, unknown to him, have been instructed to lie in their answers. All of them may seem to agree that the figure is perfectly round, even though it is plainly oblong. What will the subject do? This experiment has been repeated many times, with disturbing results: most people so tested will not only change their answers to conform with what they think the others see—they will actually change their perceptions. Often they will see the shape as perfectly round, despite its obvious distortion. We apparently have a strong tendency to see things in whatever way we think most others see them.

Bahá'u'lláh tells us to "see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others." If this is difficult in connection with something as simple as a geometric figure, how much harder must it be with deeply felt emotional issues—especially if we have spent our lives in the company of people who may hold mistaken opinions about them? That this often happens should be clear to anyone who thinks about the pervasiveness of prejudice based on race, gender, nationality and the like (not to mention religion itself).

This knack for swimming against the

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current of conformity appears to be a learned skill, an acquired habit—one that must be consciously cultivated and exercised before it becomes second nature. Fortunately, opportunities abound for practice. Many of these are trivial; a few, possibly, quite crucial. God’s attitude toward blind imitation, as interpreted by Bahá’ís, is graphically expressed in this symbolic passage from Bahá’u’lláh:

“If, in the Day when all the peoples of the earth will be gathered together, any man should, whilst standing in the presence of God, be asked: ‘Wherefore hast thou disbelieved in My beauty and turned away from My Self?’ and if such a man should reply and say: ‘Inasmuch as all men have erred, and none hath been found willing to turn his face to the Truth, I, too, following their example, have grievously failed to recognize the Beauty of the Eternal,’ such a plea will, assuredly, be rejected.” 2

Now, what are some specific implications of the Bahá’í principle of individual search for truth?

A question of justice

The first implication is that independent investigation of truth is a moral necessity based on justice. The habit of personal search is depicted in Bahá’í texts as a responsibility or duty, a spiritual obligation, an essential ingredient of good character—just as honesty, kindness, dependability and many other traits are essential to good character.

In The Hidden Words—Bahá’u’lláh’s foremost ethical work4—we read: “The best-beloved of all things in My sight is justice; . . . By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behoveth thee to be.” 19 “The essence of all that We have revealed for thee,” He writes elsewhere, “is Justice, is for man to free himself from idle fancy and imitation, discern with the eye of oneness His glorious handiwork, and look into all things with a searching eye.” 20

‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “The first teaching of Bahá’u’lláh is the duty incumbent upon all to investigate reality.” 21 “. . . every individual member of humankind is exhorted and commanded to set aside superstitious beliefs, traditions and blind imitation of ancestral forms in religion and investigate reality for himself.” 22 The Bahá’í teachings further state that the Faith “enjoins upon its followers the primary duty of an unfettered search after truth.” 23

By emphasizing the ethical importance of investigation, Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá present it in a new light. Independent search is widely accepted as a convenient right, an option to be exercised or neglected at one’s discretion. The Bahá’í teachings, however, go considerably further in treating it as a moral imperative.

While investigation of reality applies with special force to religious faith, it—like religion itself—is seen by Bahá’ís as a continuing approach to all of life. Bahá’u’lláh’s admonition to “look into all things with a searching eye” is applied, in other passages from His works, to journalism24 and judicial inquiry25 (to cite only two examples).

The impact on unity

A second implication is that independent investigation of truth powerfully promotes the unity of mankind. Of all the insights one can find in the Bahá’í writings on this topic, this one, it seems to me, is both the most strongly emphasized and the most contrary to prevailing attitudes. Whatever else modern man believes about the search for truth, he does not believe this.

Popular expressions used in connection with the search for truth almost always bring to mind its supposedly disruptive nature rather than any unifying influence it may exert. For example, the term “free-thinker” suggests for many people (aside from its connotation of atheism) a moral anarchist, someone who disturbs the composure of others by attacking cherished ideals and traditions. Even those who strongly advocate, and commit themselves to, the individual quest for reality typically see themselves as “rocking the boat,” “doing their own thing” while “marching to the beat of a different drummer.”

But this is a short-sighted view. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá teaches that in the long run, it is the truth-seeker who fosters unity, while the conformist blocks it: “. . . all souls should consider it incumbent upon them to investigate reality. Reality is one; and when found, it will unify all mankind.” 26 “. . . by investigating (reality) all will find love and unity.” 27 “The greatest cause of bereavement and disheartening in the world of humanity is ignorance based upon blind imitation. It is due to this that wars and battles prevail; from this cause hatred and animosity arise continually among mankind.” 28

In every Revelation, according to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, “the light of Divine Guidance has been focused upon one central theme. . . . In this wondrous Revelation, this glorious century, the foundation of the Faith of God and the distinguishing feature of His Law is the consciousness of the Oneness of Mankind.” 29 This oneness, He says, is “the pivot round which all the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh revolve” 30; promoting it is “the object of life for a Bahá’í.” 31

For years I wondered why, if the teaching of oneness is so central to this Revelation, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá almost always described the investigation of truth as the “first principle” of the Faith. To put it another way, how can it be my “object of life” to promote the oneness of mankind if my “primary duty” (as quoted above) is “an unfettered search after truth”? There really is no conflict here, of course. The paradox is dispelled by seeing that the most effective way in which to promote the oneness of mankind is to base one’s life on the independent investigation of truth. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá flatly predicts that “all religions and nations of the world will become one through investigation of reality.” 32

This promise of eventual world unity is nothing new—it is found in the scriptures of all the great religions. In the Bible it is expressed as the “Kingdom of God on earth,” 33 the day of “one fold and one shepherd,” 34 when “nation shall not lift up sword against nation” 35 because “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the
Baha'u'llah states that He is the promised Redeemer Whose mission is to usher in this long-awaited age of peace, and that His Revelation has set in motion the forces that will gradually bring it into being.

The nature of this unity, and the process by which Baha'is expect it to come about, are addressed in some detail in the sacred writings of the Faith. There is no need to dwell on these details (which, in any event, are likely to be convincing only to those who already accept Baha'u'llah as divinely inspired). But if one seeks to understand what Baha'is believe about the search for truth, it is essential to understand a few points about Baha'u'llah's vision of the future.

According to Baha'i prophecies, the unity of mankind will be established in two stages—the first political, the second spiritual. These stages are referred to, respectively, as the "Lesser Peace" and the "Most Great Peace." The first stage—a world government or federation of nations—will be the direct result of events taking place "in this century." 37 This preliminary unity will be established, out of sheer necessity, by nations that are still unaware of Baha'u'llah's healing Revelation. Although it will be a vast improvement over the present international chaos, the "Lesser Peace" will be a fragile and limited unity, unable of itself to heal the deeper divisions afflicting mankind.

The long-term solution, or "Most Great Peace" (which may take centuries to reach) is defined in these words of Baha'u'llah: "That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician." 38

While this passage states that world unity cannot be achieved without divine aid, other Baha'i texts indicate that humanity itself, through its own free will, must take an active part in the unifying process. It is in this context that search after truth becomes—in the Baha'i view—not merely a personal concern but a pressing social issue. 'Abdu'l-Baha explains: "We are considering the divine plan for the reconciliation of the religious systems of the world. Baha'u'llah has said that if one intelligent member be selected from each of the varying religious systems, and these representatives come together seeking to investigate the reality of religion, they would establish an interreligious body before which all disputes and differences could be presented for consideration and settlement. Such questions could then be weighed and viewed from the standpoint of reality and all imitations discarded. By this method and procedure all sects, denominations and systems would become one." 39

I remember how astonished I felt when reading this for the first time, because to me it did not sound at all practical. 'Abdu'l-Baha's next words then hit me: "Do not be astonished at this, or question its practicability." He cites as one model the Baha'i community itself, with its success in recruiting and harmonizing members from an amazing variety of seemingly irreconcilable religious backgrounds: "This is a proof of the possibility of unification among the religionists of the world through practical means." 40

In today's world, polarized as it is by religious warfare and fanaticism, it is indeed difficult to imagine Baha'u'llah's proposal being taken seriously. Yet the Baha'i writings foreshadow a future state of society, sometime after the arrival of the Lesser Peace, in which "the clamor of religious fanaticism and strife will have been forever stilled." 41 If—as Baha'is believe—the world is evolving toward this destiny, may there not come a time when most
of mankind is ready to investigate truth, sincerely and without prejudice? In such a world, could not the Council of Investigation proposed by Bahá'u'lláh prove effective in bridging the chasms that separate today's contending faiths?

This proposal clearly does not mean that individuals should delegate their independent search for truth to a committee, whose conclusions they would accept blindly. That would negate everything else the Faith teaches about individual conscience. But an interreligious investigating body, offering its findings for independent verification by the masses of humanity, could facilitate and stimulate the efforts of countless private seekers. These combined efforts, in turn, could pave the way for that planetary spiritual unification that is the ultimate goal not only of the Bahá'í Faith but of all revealed religion.

The oneness of truth

To say that investigation has a unifying effect presupposes a third major implication, namely, that truth is one; it cannot contradict itself. This means that different people, seeking the truth along different paths, can eventually find the same truth because they share a single coherent reality. The Bahá'í teachings are filled with statements such as: "No one truth can contradict another truth." 42 "... oneness is truth and truth is oneness which does not admit of plurality." 43 "Reality does not accept multiplicity, nor is it subject to divisibility." 44 "... outside of reality there is naught but superstition and imagination." 45

Of course, the Bahá'í Faith recognizes the existence of paradoxes—statements that appear to contradict but in reality do not. Such seemingly divergent truths are reconciled as one gains a fuller understanding of their meaning.

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anyone the self-sacrificing commitment needed for spiritual and social progress.

And yet, we should not, according to the Bahá’í teachings, be content with an intuitive conviction. Relying solely on intuition at the expense of other human faculties is risky, says ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, for “When we apply but one test, there are possibilities of mistake.” He describes a more balanced approach:

“Day and night you must strive that you may attain to the significances of the heavenly Kingdom, perceive the signs of Divinity, acquire certainty of knowledge and realize that this world has a Creator, a Vivifier, a Provider, an Architect—knowing this through proofs and evidences and not through susceptibilities, nay, rather, through decisive arguments and real vision. . . . You must come into the knowledge of the Divine Manifestations and Their teachings through proofs and evidences. . . . We must be able to prove Divinity from the standpoint of reason so that no doubt or objection may remain for the rationalist. Afterward, we must be able to prove the existence of the bounty of God—that the divine bounty encompasses humanity and that it is transcendental.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses dismay at the lack of attention paid to this topic: “If you should ask a thousand persons, ‘What are the proofs of the reality of Divinity?’ perhaps not one would be able to answer. If you should ask further, ‘What proofs have you regarding the essence of God?’ ‘How do you explain inspiration and revelation?’ ‘What are the evidences of conscious intelligence beyond the material universe?’ ‘Can you suggest a plan and method for the betterment of human moralities?’ ‘Can you clearly define and differentiate the world of nature and the world of Divinity?’—you would receive very little real knowledge and enlightenment upon these questions. . . .

“The intellectual proofs of Divinity are based upon observation and evidence which constitute decisive arguments, logically proving the reality of Divinity, the effulgence of mercy, the certainty of inspiration and immortality of the spirit. This is, in reality, the science of Divinity.”

Reason, according to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, can do more than support and supplement one’s intuitive conviction—it can be the route through which one attains such certitude in the first place: “If thou wishest the divine knowledge and recognition, purify thy heart from all else beside God, be wholly attracted to the ideal, beloved One; search for and choose Him and apply thyself to rational and authoritative arguments. For arguments are a guide to the path and by this the heart will be turned unto the Sun of Truth. And when the heart is turned unto the Sun, then the eye will be opened and will recognize the Sun through the Sun itself. Then man will be in no need of arguments. . . .”

The “proofs and evidences” of which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá speaks are set forth in a number of Bahá’í sources, notably Bahá’u’lláh’s Book of Certitude. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Himself discusses them at length in Some Answered Questions and The Promulgation of Universal Peace; in His well-known letter to Dr. Auguste Forel, the Swiss entomologist; and in many other places.

Most of these logical arguments strike me as simple and straightforward; others, as requiring deep thought. A few of the latter, I freely admit, still are not clear to me after years of reflection; however, I do not need to understand clearly every argument before being convinced by what I see as the obvious soundness of the others.

As the Bahá’í Faith becomes better known, these arguments are bound to attract attention, both friendly and skeptical. In my opinion, Bahá’ís would do well to study them, so that we will be better prepared to understand and explain them when the need arises, as it surely will. (Also, I would hope, someone with a quicker mind than I have will help me to understand the ones I am still working on.)

Especially significant is ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s statement (quoted above) that such proofs are based on “observation and evidence” constituting “the science of Divinity.” Although most of the detailed arguments are beyond the scope of this brief essay, we can, through this and other statements, gain enough clues about their general nature to understand at least some of the reasoning whereby one can test the claim of Bahá’u’lláh. This theme is developed in the following section.

Scientific method

A fifth implication from the Bahá’í teachings is that the search for spiritual truth must take place in accordance with scientific method.

This touches on another vital Bahá’í teaching, that of the harmony of science and religion. True science and true religion, according to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, are alike in that “both are founded upon the premises and conclusions of reason, and both must bear its test.” He explains that “science is the discoverer of realities. It is of two kinds: material and spiritual. Material science is the investigation of natural phenomena; divine science is the discovery and realization of spiritual verities.” Moreover, the Bahá’í writings explicitly describe the Faith as “scientific in its method.”

These statements are important for many reasons, one being the light they shed on what ‘Abdu’l-Bahá means by “proofs and evidences.” Before discussing this, we must clarify two popular misconceptions. First is the notion that scientific method deals exclusively with material realities; second, that it can produce some sort of absolute knowledge.

Concerning the first misconception, many non-scientists assume that scientific method means nothing more than the use of physical instruments to study and measure physical things. If this were true, no religion could sensibly claim to be scientific in its method of investigating spiritual reality. One can hardly place God or the soul under a microscope for direct examination.

The problem with this idea is that it confuses the starting point of science with its end result. It is true that science, for its raw data, relies on direct observation. Knowing this, one may be tempted to assume that science itself is the study of directly observable phenomena—i.e., physical or material things. But no such inference is warranted. Scientists begin with directly observable evidence; but they are able (by using reason and mathematics) to deduce from such evidence its conclusions about all sorts of realities that are not directly observable or measurable.
and which in many cases are not material things at all.

Psychologists, for example, study such phenomena as imagination, memory, self-awareness and other mental faculties. None of these—whatever one may believe about their nature—is detectable by any physical instrument, although they exist and can be investigated.

Even in those sciences most directly concerned with physical reality, research into intangibles takes on great importance. Consider the proposition that “space is curved,” which is important in astronomy and cosmology. The curvature of space is deduced from physical evidence, but it is not a physical thing—it cannot be inspected through a telescope or analyzed with a spectrograph. It is an abstract aspect of reality, beyond observation and yet known by its observable effects. There is no obvious reason why at least some spiritual questions, such as the existence of God or the soul, could not be investigated in a similarly indirect manner.

The second misconception is that the scientific method produces “absolute knowledge” or “absolute proof.” This is entirely incorrect. Even the most rigorously verified explanations of science are called “theories”—a term intended to suggest that they could be revised in the light of new evidence.

A collection of scientific observations, however large, can always be explained in more than one way. There is no infallible method for choosing which way is correct. Given a range of competing explanations, each of which fits the available evidence, a scientist will prefer the simplest and most economical choice, that is, the one that does the most explaining with the least theorizing. This rule of thumb is called Occam’s Razor, or the law of parsimony. It is not a law at all, of course—merely a realization that unnecessary complexity provides a greater arena for error. A more elaborate explanation may actually turn out to be the correct one.

Newton’s theory of gravitation, for example, perfectly explained all of the observable data available in his day. Einstein later developed a different, more complex theory to accommodate new evidence—observations that Newton could not have anticipated. Now suppose a scientist in Newton’s time, knowing no more or less than Newton himself knew, had been presented with both the Newtonian and Einsteinian conceptions of gravity. Using Occam’s Razor, he would undoubtedly have chosen Newton’s model simply on the grounds of economy. Moreover, his decision would have been entirely rational, even though Einstein’s theory was, as we now know, more correct.

What this indicates is that no amount of evidence can provide “absolute proof” of any scientific theory. Scientific “proof” is relative, a matter of high probability only. There is always an alternative explanation which, however improbably, may turn out to be right. In practice, however, a theory may acquire such high probability that we are justified in acting as if it were absolutely certain. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, while recognizing that “All human standards of judgment are faulty, finite,”¹⁴ points out that a statement tested by all methods at our disposal, and supported by overwhelming evidence, “can be adjudged and relied upon as perfectly correct.”¹⁵ We need not harbor illusions about the absoluteness of our knowledge in order to act upon it with a high degree of faith.

While this relative uncertainty of human knowledge is no cause for alarm, it is essential that we understand and accept it. By so doing, we give ourselves a powerful incentive to continually test, refine and expand our understanding of reality (whether in science or religion) and stay open to new information. Without such recognition of our limitations, we tend to become fanatical and narrow-minded.

With this background, we can give the following (admittedly sketchy and oversimplified) description of scientific method: A scientist, in seeking to understand something, constructs a tentative explanation (or “hypothesis”) that accounts as simply and neatly as possible for all observations known to him. He then decides what consequences should follow if the explanation is true, and tests these systematically, with a view to disproving the hypothesis. A scientist reasons, “If hypothesis X is true, then such-and-such must also be true”—then he tests the such-and-such. If observation does not bear out his prediction, he rejects the hypothesis. If it does, he must decide (more or less subjectively) how much it strengthens the probability that his explanation is correct. A hypothesis that is strengthened enough times, in enough ways, eventually becomes a “theory” and is accepted as verified (subject always, however, to later findings). This is the meaning of “scientific proof,” insofar as the expression has any meaning.

This procedure of inquiry is available to each of us, not merely to scientists. It is useful in evaluating any proposition, not only those that describe physical reality. It systematically uses all our faculties (including reason, intuition and common sense), not just sense perception. Scientific method enables us to determine the credibility of an explanation through repeated and varied attempts to discredit it. If we learn from such attempts that a theory is a reliable guide to experience, that its implications match earlier observations and accurately foretell later ones, then we can judge it worthy of acceptance and faith.

Now suppose we wish to test—as a scientific hypothesis—Bahá’u’lláh’s claim that He is a flawless Channel of communication from an all-knowing, infallible Supreme Being. It is admittedly hard to imagine any single-purpose test that could verify such a hypothesis to everyone’s satisfaction.

On the other hand, the hypothesis, if untrue, should be fairly easy to disprove. Bahá’u’lláh’s recorded utterances fill more than 100 volumes, of which He states: “Out of My mouth proceedeth naught but the essence of truth, which the Lord your God hath revealed.”¹⁶ Such a claim entails consequences that anyone can test using observation and reason. This suggests many ways of investigating the Bahá’í hypothesis.

Here are a few indications that one
might consider: Bahá'u'lláh made many detailed prophecies. Have these been fulfilled, or have any been contradicted by subsequent events? He described scientific facts that were unknown in His lifetime. Have these been verified, or have any been decisively refuted during the past century? He says His words have a unique creative power to facilitate spiritual growth. Can we, by reading and reflecting on those words, experience such a power? A divinely perfect Being, we might expect, should make an extraordinary impression on those with whom He comes in contact. What effect did Bahá'u'lláh have on those around him? He dictated His books and letters at high speed, never pausing to revise or meditate, and often with no chance for premeditation. Was He able spontaneously to create finished works of the highest excellence, as revelation logically should be? Or do these writings (however brilliant they may be over-all) show the wide variations in quality one would expect of a human author composing extemporaneously? What opportunities did He have to acquire the knowledge He displayed? How well-documented are the circumstances of His life and writing? With a little imagination, one can find countless ways of testing Bahá'u'lláh's claim.

For the sake of scientific argument, suppose we find that His many prophecies and scientific assertions check out with perfect accuracy (except for a few that remain open); that His words and life show a profound transforming effect on others; that His spontaneous compositions consistently display extraordinary literary beauty and depth of content; that His prescriptions for social and spiritual regeneration work; that any other tests we devise show the results we should expect if Bahá'u'lláh's claim were true. One failure to disprove such a claim is not, in itself, proof of its validity. But if we take a scientific approach, using repeated attempts to discredit the Bahá'í hypothesis, we may eventually find that it explains the observed evidence with far greater economy and predictive power than any of the alternatives. In this sense, the claim of Bahá'u'lláh is as open to scientific testing and verification as any physical assumption or theory.

Unlike many scientific hypotheses, however, this question holds more than theoretical interest for anyone seeking its answer. Fortunately, any individual can make such an investigation; and no one, without having done so, can fairly prejudge what its outcome will be.

Summary

'Abdu'l-Bahá has said that "nothing is of greater importance to mankind than the investigation of truth." 57 This Bahá'í principle wins ready assent from persons of almost every persuasion; however, it is rich with implications that are not necessarily obvious or universally accepted. Among them are:

1. Individual search for truth is a moral necessity based on justice; (2) it is a powerful way in which to promote the unity of mankind; (3) this unifying influence derives from the fact that truth is one, that all human beings share a single consistent reality; (4) an investigator can discover and verify spiritual truth by means of logical arguments based on evidence; and (5) this evidence must be evaluated in accordance with scientific principles and method.

These insights form the basis for a uniquely independent outlook on life—an outlook in which the individual accepts full responsibility for his or her own perceptions and beliefs. They also provide a sound framework for evaluating the claim of Bahá'u'lláh to divine knowledge and authority, and challenge every earnest seeker to undertake such an evaluation.

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Andaman/Nicobar Islands

A week-long teaching project held in January in Rangat and five surrounding villages in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands reached people from a wide range of social strata. Among the 43 people who embraced the Cause during the effort were two police officers and a school principal.

Belize

A resident Bahá’í teaching team is active in Belize, its efforts dedicated to the memory of a martyred member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran.

During the first few months of this year the team’s activities were aided by Bahá’ís from Canada whose presence made possible the initiation of new and successful projects.

More than 100 new believers were enrolled in Belize City, and follow-up deepening visits are made regularly. Classes and other activities for children were begun, and the team helped new believers as they began to hold firesides in their homes.

Bolivia

A report from this year’s Bahá’í National Convention in Bolivia states that more than 3,000 new believers were enrolled in that country during the past year, and that the continuing momentum “gave a special radiance” to the Convention.

Brazil

During the planning stages of a teaching campaign launched recently in the state of Bahia, Brazil, 239 people embraced the Faith, and within 18 days of its official beginning, the number had risen to 360.

The campaign is being coordinated by the local Spiritual Assembly of Salvador with support from three Auxiliary Board members and the State Teaching Committee.

Burkina

Motivated by the Ridván 1988 message from the Universal House of Justice, the Spiritual Assemblies of the Zecco region in Burkina are experiencing a renewal of energy and activity. About 30 Bahá’ís from eight local Assemblies in the area began a teaching project in the village of Nibrogo, near the Ghanaian border.

On the third visit to Nibrogo, 100 villagers embraced the Faith and a local Assembly was formed. Another project was begun in the area of Ziou, which at one time had an active Bahá’í community. It has led to the reactivation of many Bahá’ís and the enrollment of others.

Canada

A teaching project was begun last summer in the Fort Vermillion area of northern Alberta, Canada, in memory of Mrs. Gol Aidun, a Bahá’í who led a life of devoted service to the Faith until her untimely death in India in 1986.

The project, which lasted for two months, resulted in 27 new believers and opened the way for further teaching opportunities by introducing the Faith to the elders and traditional spiritual leaders of the area.

Central African Republic

Between October 1988 and April 1989, 657 people embraced the Faith in the Central African Republic. Intensive teaching work has opened 26 localities, while 14 new local Spiritual
Assemblies have been formed.

According to a telex from the National Spiritual Assembly, rigorous plans for consolidation have been put into place.

More than 200 people including a district chief and a village chief were enrolled in the Faith during a recent teaching campaign in Sibut and Ndoukou, Central African Republic.

Some 30 new localities were opened to the Faith during the campaign while six new local Spiritual Assemblies were formed.

The campaign was organized by the National Teaching Committee. As a part of the effort, the Mobile Bahá'í Institute traveled to five selected towns and villages, showing slides to more than 5,000 people. A hundred copies of the peace statement and 200 Bahá'í pamphlets were given out to local authorities in the goal areas.

**Fiji**

More than 1,000 people have embraced the Faith since the beginning of May in Fiji's Olinga Teaching Project.

In recognition of the need for consolidation, a special three-day institute was held in July to train teachers in how to deepen new believers.

The gathering marked the opening of the third phase of the project, during which a 10-member teaching team will concentrate primarily on expansion while a dozen others will work mainly on consolidation of the new Bahá'ís and the formation of local Spiritual Assemblies.

**Guyana**

In May, 878 new believers were enrolled in the Faith in Guyana, where extensive teaching is being carried on all over the country in response to a goal set by Guyana's Bahá'í community to enroll at least 10,000 new believers between May 1, 1989, and 1990.

**Hong Kong**

As of mid-February, more than 600 people had embraced the Faith as a result of the Martha Root Teaching Campaign, which was begun last October following a “Spiritualization Institute” in Hong Kong.

A four-member teaching team has been working full-time in the campaign, in addition to a number of individuals who have participated on a part-time basis.

**India**

In June, 97,342 people were reported to have enrolled in the Faith in Uttar Pradesh, India. These remarkable victories are due in large part to the work of some 120 volunteers who revisited 350 Assembly areas in three districts where intensive teaching activities were carried out last year.

Mass consolidation is going hand-in-hand with teaching, and some 2,000 of the new believers are said to have memorized Bahá'í prayers and some of The Hidden Words.

**Japan**

Since April, more than 100 people have embraced the Faith in the Kyushu area of Japan as a result of regular meetings held on the farm of Mr. and Mrs. Noguchi.

Also, a growing number of enrollments in the Tokyo area has resulted from the work of an active corps of youth who bring friends to firesides, hand out copies of the peace statement, and plan various activities in which their friends can take part.

**Kiribati**

The first phase of a teaching campaign in North Tarawa, Kiribati, has been completed with 70 new believers enrolled, which is three percent of the population of that community.

The campaign, named for the late Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'lláh Muhájjir, began last December on the heels of a National Youth Conference.

Consolidation activities are under way, and the plan is to continue the expansion efforts after a short respite.

**Marana Islands**

Seven new believers embraced the Faith during an evening meeting held in conjunction with the 12th Bahá'í National Convention of the Mariana Islands.

A telex from the Convention said that a 39 percent increase in membership had been experienced during the past year.

**Mexico**

The first week of a teaching campaign launched on the eve of Naw-Rúz in the state of Quintana Roo, Mexico, resulted in the enrollment of 94 adults, 47 youth and 79 children.

A significant element of the teaching work has been the leading role played by Mayan believers. The enthusiastic teachers are now carrying the campaign to other areas of the Yucatán peninsula.

**Nigeria**

The Marian Crofford/South Plateau Teaching Campaign, carried out last January 29-February 12 from the Ippa Center in Plateau State, Nigeria, resulted in 323 enrollments, the formation of seven new local Spiritual Assemblies, the opening of 10 localities to the Faith, visits to 46 communities, the holding of 10 children's classes, and the presentation of copies of the peace statement to the headmaster of the Adabu Tudun School and the Emir (chief of the Tiv people), Lafia.

The campaign, centered in the rural bushland home of the Tiv people, required considerable work to maintain daily living requirements including a 30-minute drive to Lafia to collect clean drinking water.

The Tiv people had been introduced to the Faith over the past 20 years, especially since the arrival of Marian Croffor, a pioneer from Canada who lived in Lafia from 1976-83.

As a result of an afternoon teaching program at Oghara Junction, Nigeria, during a recent week-long Bahá'í school, 67 people embraced the Faith.

In addition, an intensive teaching project following the school session resulted in 85 enrollments.

**Peru**

Expansion of the Cause continues in Peru with 101 enrollments reported in the Peruvian high plateau area as a result of a recent teaching campaign.
Sao Tome/Principe

A recent six-week teaching trip to Sao Tome and Principe, two remote islands in the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean, by Auxiliary Board member Kobina Amissah Flynn resulted in the opening of new localities, the formation of Groups and a local Spiritual Assembly, and the enrollment of many new Bahá'ís.

Among the new believers are members of all three tribal groups on the islands—Foro, Angolar and Nonkor.

Senegal

A seven-day teaching project dedicated to the memory of the first African Bahá'í martyr, Eduardo Duarte Vieria (1921-66), and based in the Ziguinchor region in Bignona, Senegal, has resulted in 19 localities being opened to the Faith and 219 new enrollees including five village chiefs.

The project was planned by the National Spiritual Assembly of Senegal in collaboration with the Continental Board of Counsellors.

A significant feature was the sincerity and enthusiasm with which villagers greeted the Bahá'í teachers who were often asked, “Why did you not come earlier to bring us this wonderful Message?”

Each village was visited twice, and a group of teachers returned a month later to deepen new believers and help in the formation of local Spiritual Assemblies.

Seven Assemblies were formed on the return trips and 180 more new believers were enrolled. One village, Boulighoe, is now entirely Bahá'í.

Singapore

The impact of a nine-day “Spirit in Action” Institute conducted by two pioneers from Taiwan, Jack Davis and Kazuo Honda, led to more than 90 enrollments in Singapore.

The institute, similar to several conducted by the same teachers in Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau, was held at the request of the National Spiritual Assembly as a prelude to the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference last December.

It drew more than 40 participants including Counsellor Rose Ong, members of the Auxiliary Board and National Spiritual Assembly, and a large number of women, youth and children.

Thailand

From May 20-June 10, more than 575 people were enrolled in the Faith in Thailand, whose National Spiritual Assembly has set high goals for the community and has seen the friends arise to meet the challenge.

A teaching campaign involving 43 Bahá'ís including six Auxiliary Board members, five members of the National Spiritual Assembly, and five youth and pre-youth was held in Thailand in March.

By the ninth day of the campaign, 86 new believers had embraced the Cause.

Trinidad/Tobago

The “Borrah Kavelin Teaching Team” has announced the enrollment of 450 new Bahá'ís during a three-week campaign in May and June on the island of Tobago.

Venezuela

More than 225 people embraced the Faith in Bolivar, Venezuela, as a result of a teaching campaign carried out by 50 young Bahá'ís from all parts of the country who named the campaign “We cannot fail them” in honor of the Bahá'ís of Iran.

In the morning the youth visited new Bahá'ís to deepen them; afternoons were spent teaching, while evenings included public meetings featuring talks on various aspects of the Faith. Announcements of the public meetings were broadcast on local radio.

Zambia

More than 250 people were enrolled in the Faith during the first three months of 1989 in various regions of Zambia.

The Spiritual Assemblies of Ntambu, Museli and Saigilunga organized a teaching campaign in that area during which 44 people accepted the Faith. A new Assembly was formed in Kawazhaika.

From December 25, 1988, to January 20, 1989, the number of new believers in the Mumbwa area was increased by 119, and more recently the Area Teaching Committee has been so busy teaching that its members haven't had time even to report their successes.

A teaching team whose members completed the advanced course at the William Masehla Bahá'í Institute traveled March 21 to Kaoma and returned with the news of 28 enrollments.

Another Bahá'í, Dominic Kalulu, reported that after his recent transfer to Mhala he found some long-time Bahá'ís in that area. Teaching activities soon began, and the number of believers has grown to 13.

In April, a campaign organized by the Spiritual Assembly of Bangwe, with help from five Bahá'ís from Ndola and one from Chingola, led to the enrollment of 49 new believers in villages visited by the teaching team.

Hawaii

A Bahá'í-sponsored Community Assistance Program (B-CAP) is in its second year of service in Hawaii.

Spearheaded by Zabine Linkins under the supervision of the secretary of Hawaii's National Spiritual Assembly, B-CAP includes deepening and counseling on marriage and re-marriage, help with family problems, a food bank, and a program for the elderly.

Built into the B-CAP program are three essential parts. The first is reliance on the Bahá'í Writings for an approach to personal problems; second is referral to professional agencies, doctors or social workers to handle particular problems; and third is involvement of the local Spiritual Assembly in each program.

B-CAP is sponsored by the National Assembly in recognition of the fact that Bahá'ís are subject to and affected by the problems of society as a whole. It represents an attempt by the Bahá'í community to take care of its own members, and to train a cadre of volunteers to work with Bahá'ís who are willing to change their lifestyles in response to their belief in the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh but who need help to make those changes.

12 September 1989/Bahá'í News
Guinea Bissau/Macau

Two more National Spiritual Assemblies, those of Macau and Guinea Bissau, were formed at Riḍván, bringing to 151 the total number of National Assemblies worldwide.

In Macau, the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum represented the Universal House of Justice; in Guinea Bissau, the Supreme Body was represented by Counsellor Rolf von Czekus.

Also present in Macau were representatives of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Hong Kong, Australia, Japan and Malaysia.

The celebration included a dinner in honor of Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum which was also attended by the chief of the Cabinet of the Governor of Macau, representing the governor; officials of the Xinhua News Agency; and other government officials and community leaders.

In Guinea Bissau, Counsellor Husayn Ardekani represented the Board of Counsellors in Africa while a member of the “mother” Assembly of the Gambia was present with one Auxiliary Board member for Guinea Bissau, 15 delegates and 26 guests.

The seat of the new National Spiritual Assembly is in Bissau.

Samoa

A special service was held May 28 at the Bahá’í House of Worship in Apia, Samoa, to commemorate the 27th anniversary of that country’s independence.

The service was dedicated to World Environment Day and was attended by more than 300 people of whom more than 200 were not Bahá’ís.

Special guests included Cabinet ministers, members of Parliament, the diplomatic corps, and heads of various governmental departments.

Following the devotional service, Marco Kappenberger, a Bahá’í who was visiting from Switzerland, addressed the audience, pointing out that the major threats to the global environment are manifestations of a worldwide sickness of the human spirit.

This is marked, he said, by “an over-emphasis on material things and a self-centeredness that inhibits our ability to work together as a global community.”

The head of the government’s Environmental Program, Forestry Division, spoke about the need to make people aware of this important topic, and thanked the Bahá’ís for their contributions to the effort.

Tafaese Lautua, a member of Parliament, also thanked the Bahá’ís on behalf of the minister of Lands and Survey/Park Preservation.
Luxembourg

Nassim Toloui, an 11-year-old Bahá'í from Diekirch, Luxembourg, recently won first prize in a contest for elementary school students sponsored by the European Community.

Each entrant was to answer the question, "How can you, as a child, contribute to peace?"

Nassim's essay was chosen as the best paper from Luxembourg. First prize was a trip to New York City with her teacher, where she was named from among the winners to read her paper before a meeting of the United Nations.

"Peace is only possible," she wrote, "if each human being is conscious of his or her deeds and is willing to contribute his or her part for the establishment of peace.

"It may even start in a small school. If, as pupils, we are kind to each other and make no difference of race, if we make no difference between rich and poor, we have already made a contribution to peace. And that is not difficult at all. To bring about peace, we must not leave the main responsibility to more powerful people...."

Mauritius

The National Spiritual Assembly of Mauritius used the occasion of its 25th anniversary to proclaim the Faith to all strata of society in that country. A press conference was held to announce the occasion, and the event was reported in two newspapers and on National Television news.

Representatives from the National Assembly paid visits to explain the significance of the anniversary to the governor-general of Mauritius, the deputy prime minister, attorney general, minister of justice, minister of external affairs and emigration, the lord mayor of the city of Port-Louis, and other dignitaries.

Three talks about the Faith were given at secondary schools by Gilbert Robert and José Moutou with an average attendance of 70.

An exhibit tracing the development of the Faith in Mauritius over the past 25 years was presented at the Bahá'í Institute in Quatre-Bournes. It was opened by the mayor before an audience of about 100 including dignitaries and media representatives.

National Television also covered this event on its news programs.

The celebration was ended with a National Conference in the auditorium of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute. Attending were 600 Bahá'ís, the prime minister of Mauritius, the leader of the opposition, the ambassador from France, representatives from several religious groups, and other well-known persons.

In an address to the conference, the prime minister mentioned Bahá'í principles and thanked the Bahá'í community for its commitment to and involvement in the promotion of peace in Mauritius. His talk was covered by National Television and by the press.

Thailand

In March, about 43 Bahá'ís attended a nine-day institute in Thailand with two pioneers from Taiwan, Jack Davis and Kazuo Honda.

In one district, Aranyaprathet, the Bahá'í population increased from 17 members to 75 in one month, due largely to inspiration imparted by the institute.

A feature of recent teaching successes has been the enrollment of many families. For example, 16 members of an extended family in a Vietnamese area of the community have enrolled. While parents are often busy, they encourage their children to take part in Bahá'í activities. As a result, youth have brought their peers to learn about the Faith, and these youth in turn are becoming Bahá'ís.

Deepening classes are in progress and children's classes are planned.

On March 5, a two-hour program organized by the Bahá'ís of Bangkok to commemorate International Women's Day was held at a popular shopping mall in Ramkhamhaeng.

The program consisted of readings from the Bahá'í writings about women, a performance by a group of Taiwanese who work at the Thai-Chinese Refugee Service Agency, and songs by a group of young people. Many pamphlets on peace and women were distributed. As a result, at least two people embraced the Cause.
India

Through the efforts of a local Bahá'í, farmers in the Rajja Ka Purwa village in Uttar Pradesh, India, are learning updated farming techniques to help them in their work.

Mahendra Singh, a member of the local Spiritual Assembly of the village, has found a way to be of special service to the community even though he is paralyzed from the waist down.

Each day he listens to the radio and reads magazines, looking for information about agriculture that might be useful to the farmers, then each evening he shares that knowledge with residents of the community.

The villagers have shown great interest in his news and have gathered at his home in great numbers. As a result, farmers have modernized their methods and the villagers have become more prosperous in their work.

During April a record number of people—309,145—visited the Bahá'í House of Worship in India.

The record total was due primarily to the presence in the neighborhood of a "Navratri Mela" (nine-day fair). The last day of the fair was April 14, and on that day alone nearly 50,000 people visited the Temple.

Among the dignitaries who toured the building in April were Yang Hyong Sop, chairman of the Supreme Peoples Assembly of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (Speaker of the North Korean Parliament); Mr. Setiawan, consul for the Indonesian Embassy; and Alf Arne Ramslien, assistant resident representative for the Royal Norwegian Embassy who wrote in the visitors' book: "We have felt a special peace and love by visiting this place. . . ."

Various groups visited the Temple as well including more than 400 participants in a Conference of the American Society of Travel Agents.

Also visiting were 66 Chinese Buddhists from Taiwan and 32 people from African countries including Kenya and Zimbabwe.

Also during April, Bahá'ís from all over India attending the National Bahá'í Convention were present at the House of Worship for an observance of the Ninth Day of Rívdán.

Also attending that program were Mahendra Singh, a Bahá'í from the village of Rajja Ka Purwa, Uttar Pradesh, India, provides an important service to his community despite a physical handicap. He is shown listening to the radio, gathering timely information about agriculture to share with farmers in his area.

Dr. Farzam Arbá, a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre; Continental Counsellors B. Afshin and Zena Sorabjee; and members of the National Spiritual Assembly of India.

A group of Australian journalists on a nationwide tour at the invitation of the government of India chose as one of their tour stops the Bahá'í House of Worship at Bahapur (New Delhi).

During a lengthy visit, they were fascinated to learn that a fellow Australian had traveled all the way to India to volunteer at the Temple for no personal or monetary gain, but only because she is a Bahá'í. The volunteer, Maria Cox, was interviewed extensively for the Australian media.

The New Era Development Institute, an agency of the National Spiritual Assembly of India, trains Bahá'ís from villages to be community health workers. These newly trained Bahá'ís are now bringing health education to their home areas.

From January through March 1989, Bahá'ís presented health education programs to about 3,000 people in eight villages in India.

Programs include talks, films and songs about health, specifically on the prevention of disease, individual responsibility for one's own health, the importance of mothers knowing how to take care of their children's health, and the importance of good nutrition, hygiene and sanitation.

The Bahá'í Mobile Deepening Institute in the State of Uttar Pradesh moves from village to village on a bullock cart and has become known as the "Bahá'í Shanti Rath," which means "Bahá'í Peace Chariot."

The Peace Chariot teaches mainly through videos that depict aspects of the Faith and Bahá'í community life.

Twenty-nine Auxiliary Board members from seven Asian countries and 11 states of India met February 5-15 at the 12th annual Auxiliary Board conference in Panchgani, where they consulted on ways to continue the teaching victories and to achieve the remaining goals of the Six Year Plan.
United Kingdom

Major breakthroughs in teaching resulted from a month-long visit to the United Kingdom this spring by Donald Rogers, a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre.

Mr. Rogers spent two days in each of eight communities. His purpose was to embolden the Bahá’í’s, making them more audacious in their approach to teaching and inviting others to enter the Faith.

The approach led to enrollments at each meeting held during his stay, indicating the readiness of people in the United Kingdom to embrace the Faith in greater numbers.

During a weekend project in Liverpool, about 80 Bahá’í youth from throughout the country invited 2,000 people from various parts of the city to a series of public meetings.

The theme of these gatherings, “The Remaining Years of the Twentieth Century and the Bahá’í Faith,” challenged those attending to recognize Bahá’u’lláh and to join with the Bahá’ís in completing the work of the Faith which is outlined for this century.

Six enrollments followed, with each person representing a different element of the city’s population, thus providing an opening for teaching the diverse strata of society in the area.

A group of five Bahá’í youth, pre-youth and children from Castlereagh, Northern Ireland, has begun a fundraising project.

The young people offer a catering service which on two occasions has served four-course meals, and they have won a reputation for courtesy and excellent service as well as for the originality of their uniforms.

The Bahá’í Faith has been placed with mainstream religions by a leading anti-cult organization in the United Kingdom. The Family Action Information and Rescue Organization (FAIR) is well-regarded by the establishment and has extensive information banks on cults and their activities. It is to FAIR that many people turn to learn whether a given group is a cult or cult front.

In FAIR’s spring 1989 newsletter, the editor writes, “In the course of our work we often have to decide whether or not a group enquirers want us to investigate fits into FAIR’s brief. We do have some firm guidelines. For example, orthodox world religions such as Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and the Bahá’í Faith are clearly outside our brief, as are mainstream Christian denominations. When it comes to break-away groups of either of these, the situation is not quite so straightforward.”

Three segments of the radio program “Words of Faith,” broadcast by the BBC’s World Service in January, paid tribute to the life and writings of a Bahá’í, the late renowned potter, Bernard Leach.

The presentations were by the assistant curate of the Church of St. Mary, Redcliffe, Bristol, England, who some 50 years ago had read A Potter’s Book, written by Mr. Leach and now used as a ceramics textbook all over the world.

Besides being impressed by the technical information in the book, he said, he was moved by the spiritual implications of the author’s work and by “the sheer humanity of the writing.”

Guilda Walker, liaison officer for the Bahá’í Office of Public Information in London, England, attended a conference on the environment March 5-7 sponsored by the British government.

Mrs. Walker, attending as a member of the Foreign Press Agency (FPA), was able to develop further relations with some of the 140 ministers of the environment attending from various countries; with the media, answering their questions about the relationship of the Faith to the environment; and with members of the United Nations Environmental Program.

Bahá’í International Community

“Health for All by the Year 2000 Through Primary Health Care” is the challenging goal adopted by the World Health Organization (WHO), an agency of the United Nations, for the remainder of the last decade of the 20th century. The Bahá’í International Community has agreed to undertake a number of programs in collaboration with WHO toward achieving this goal.

Programs to be undertaken by the Bahá’ís include:

- promotion among Bahá’í communities worldwide of the 40th anniversary of the World Health Organization and the 10th anniversary of the Alma-Ata Declaration on Primary Health Care;
- encouragement to Bahá’í communities to incorporate primary health care in their educational efforts to promote WHO’s global strategy for health for all;
- support by the seven Bahá’í radio stations for WHO’s global strategy for health for all and the global program on AIDS;
- co-sponsorship with WHO of a public health association in Burkina Faso;
- the promotion, translation, publication and dissemination of health education materials;
- assistance by Bahá’í community health workers in carrying out the program of immunization of the Ministry of Health of Kenya.

At the end of 1991 a joint assessment will be made of the collaboration between the Bahá’í International Community and the World Health Organization.

Nicaragua

The National Bahá’í Youth Committee of Nicaragua recently organized an Arts Festival to raise money for the pediatrics ward of a hospital in the city of Jinotepe.

About 300 people attended the three-hour festival which featured performers from a variety of backgrounds. The event received considerable coverage from local radio, television and newspapers.

Thailand

Seventy-seven people attended this year’s Bahá’í summer school at Lam-pam Resort, Phattalung, Thailand.

Following the sessions, a four-member teaching team from Malaysia found and enrolled 11 new Bahá’ís.
Chile

Radio Bahá'í in Chile has been chosen as the primary vehicle for publicizing a government-sponsored development project.

The project consists of bi-lingual literacy classes for adults in Spanish and Mapuche. It is a joint effort between the station and the regional Ministry of Education. While the Ministry will provide materials, scripts and planning, Radio Bahá'í is responsible for taping and transmitting the broadcasts.

Ten schools in five districts in the area will serve as liaisons between the station and students. Two rural Mapuche Bahá'í schools are among those chosen to take part in the project.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Chile feels that being invited to help with this project is an indication of the recognition accorded by the Ministry of Education to the capacity of Radio Bahá'í and the two Mapuche Bahá'í schools.

Representatives of the National Spiritual Assembly of Chile were among 123 participants at a recent workshop on Health and Sexuality organized by CEPAL (Economic Commission for Latin America).

Bahá'ís were able to mention the principles of the Faith, and their participation was noted in a report by ASONG (an association of non-governmental organizations). Eight Bahá'ís attended the workshop.

Dominican Republic

The Olinga Institute was opened March 18 in the Dominican Republic as groups of youth came for deepening institutes. One group of eight is studying to become future teachers at the institute while another group of about 20 is preparing to become teachers of Bahá'í children's classes.

The institute came about after intense consultation between Counsellor Ruth Pringle, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Dominican Republic, and members of the Auxiliary Board.

Auxiliary Board member Jennifer Soldi has been chosen to serve as director of the Institute, and classes are presently being held in the home of Mrs. Heribertina Camacho Vda. Viñas in the town of Moca.

The community of Moca and its Spiritual Assembly are working closely with the Institute, for example by arranging housing for students in the homes of local Bahá'ís.

Eloy Anello and Shapoor Monadjem, seven members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Chile and all five of that country's Auxiliary Board members. Seven satellite teaching projects received the services of 40 young people following the conference, nine of whom have remained to complete a year of service in Chile.

Sri Lanka

Nearly 1,300 people from rural areas of Sri Lanka received free dental care last May at dental camps run by Bahá'í volunteers. The camps were organized by the Office of Social and Economic Development in Sri Lanka in cooperation with a Bahá'í dental team from abroad.

Dr. Faramarz Yiganeh, a dental surgeon, and his wife, a dental nurse, worked with local Bahá'ís in each area in which a camp was opened.

Publicity about the camps was provided by four local newspapers. They were also mentioned on the Rupavahini television station and SLBC Radio.
Bahá'í News

Bahá'í Year 146  October 1989

PEACE
'89
FEST
Israel's President, Chaim Herzog, and his wife visit the World Centre
South Carolina's Louis Gregory Bahá'í Institute hosts Peace Fest '89
Dr. Zimarian S. Walker leaves rich legacy of service to Cause of God
Guyana's prime minister addresses 3rd Caribbean Youth Conference
Nearly 800 attend 14th Conference of Association for Bahá'í Studies
Around the world: News from Bahá'í communities all over the globe

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Israel's President Herzog pays visit

To National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá’í Friends,

The Universal House of Justice is pleased to share with the Bahá’í communities around the world news of the successful visit of the Head of State of Israel. His Excellency Chaim Herzog, President of the State of Israel, accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Aura Herzog, paid an official visit to the Bahá’í World Centre on May 25, 1989. The President and his wife came at the invitation of the Universal House of Justice and were received by the nine members at 10 a.m. on the steps of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice. This was Mrs. Herzog's first visit. Due to illness she had not accompanied her husband on his visit in October 1984, when he was the first Head of State to be received by the Universal House of Justice in its new Seat.

After the President's party was greeted by the Hand of the Cause of God Ali-Akbar Furutan, tea was served in the Concourse of the Seat. The President was escorted to view models of the Arc and terraces and received an explanation of plans for future developments on Mount Carmel from Fariburz Sahba. Both the President and Mrs. Herzog showed keen interest in the projects.

A few weeks earlier, on May 7, Mrs. Herzog, as international President of the Council for a Beautiful Israel, had presented one of the 1989 Magshim Awards to the Bahá’í World Centre for its contribution to the beautification of the country, in a gathering held at the residence of the President. The President himself attended the function. This was historic recognition of the distinctive features of the beautiful gardens designed by Shoghi Effendi.

At that time President Herzog addressed the Bahá’ís in the presence of the other prize winners and more than 200 guests, saying, “every place where the Bahá’í(s) step you brought with you a special feeling and sensitivity for beauty and aesthetics. The Centre in Haifa, which shortly I will visit again . . . is one of the examples of the spirit of your Faith.”

After viewing the models at the Seat, the President and his party, accompanied by the members of the House of Justice, walked through the Monument Gardens and visited the Shrine of the Báb. They then proceeded to Bahjí, visited the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh, the Mansion, and sections of the gardens. The President and Mrs. Herzog, together with the mayor of ‘Akká, Eli de Castro, and Mrs. de Castro, who joined the party at the Mansion, as well as the members of the Universal House of Justice, the secretary-general and deputy secretary-general of the Bahá’í International Community and their spouses, had lunch together under the arches of the Mansion.

Admiration for the beauty of the Bahá’í gardens and buildings, compliments on the community service of the Bahá’ís, and gratitude for greetings received from Bahá’í communities in the countries the President and Mrs. Herzog have visited were repeatedly expressed. A gift of a Persian miniature painting was given to the President and his wife, after which a special presentation of 50 Araucaria trees was made to Mrs. Herzog for the use of the Council for a Beautiful Israel.

In his concluding speech at the Mansion prior to his departure, the President particularly reiterated the pleasure of the State for the existence of the Bahá’í World Centre here, and conveyed the good-will of the people of the country to Bahá’ís everywhere.

Universal House of Justice
Department of the Secretariat
June 1, 1989
United States

**Peace Fest '89: wow!**

As a part of their ongoing response to the Six Year Plan goal to increase the involvement of the Faith in the life of society, the Louis Gregory Bahá'í Institute and WLGI Radio Bahá'í in South Carolina warmly embraced the local community September 15-17 with Peace Fest '89, a dynamic program of music, fellowship and prayers for peace.

As has been the case since the first Peace Fest four years ago, the centerpiece was a Peace Concert that featured a heart-stirring performance by the 18-member Bahá'í Peace Orchestra.

The concert, held Saturday evening at the new state-of-the-art Myrtle Beach High School auditorium, also included:

- the presentation of the 1989 Peace Award to Dr. William F. Gibson of Greenville, chairman of the National Board of Directors of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the Ambassador Award for Humanitarian Service to Mrs. Juanita Dawes;
- performances by the Greater Inspirational Mass Choir of Horry County and the Bahá'í musical duo “Swan.”

Peace Fest '89 began Friday evening with a Gospel Jubilee in Hemingway at which 10 of the best gospel choirs and singers in the area shook the rafters at the Mitchelon Community Center for more than four hours.

Even before the official opening, however, the Peace Orchestra and Swan were in action, presenting a workshop Friday afternoon at Myrtle Beach High School for some 1,500 young students from throughout the area.

Other components of this year's Peace Fest were a Talent Showcase held Saturday afternoon at the Mitchelon Center in Hemingway; an interfaith worship service, “Peace in the World,” and the traditional closing picnic and barbecue, both held on Sunday at the Gregory Institute.

In honor of Peace Fest '89, the week of September 11-17 was proclaimed “South Carolina Peace Week” by Gov. Carroll A. Campbell Jr.

Despite heavy afternoon rains that caused flooding, disrupted power and held attendance to about 200, the Saturday evening concert was a memorable event from any standpoint with the Peace Orchestra in top form on its own and in a rousing gospel-flavored finale with the Horry County choir.

The concert was opened in marvel-
ous style by vocalist Suzanne Swan and her husband, guitarist/vocalist Kingsley Swan, who recently moved from Rhode Island as homefront pioneers to Griffin, Georgia.

The Peace Award, given to an individual or group to honor a significant contribution to constructive social progress and the peace and well-being of this nation and the world, was presented to Dr. Gibson by Dr. William Smith, a Bahá'í who is president of Comtel Communications, a video production company in Massachusetts.

Dr. Smith, a native of Greenville, is a long-time friend of Dr. Gibson.

In accepting the award, Dr. Gibson said, "I have been very fortunate to have received a number of honors and awards in my lifetime.

"Tonight I say to you, and not merely for the occasion, that I am more honored to receive this award than all the others I have received before."

Dr. Gibson also spoke at the Sunday morning worship service, recalling the visit by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the fourth annual Convention of the NAACP ("friends, it took a lot of heart to visit the NAACP Convention in 1912") and praising the Bahá'ís for their devotion to the ideal of world peace.

"Today," Dr. Gibson said in closing, "I believe that these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the Most Great Peace shall come."

The Ambassador Award, given to a local person or group for community service, was presented to Mrs. Dawes for her exemplary work with children. Since 1980 she has welcomed more than 40 foster children into her home.

Appearing Friday evening at the Gospel Fest were Sister Sylvia Brown, the Andrews Community Choir, The Gospelettes, the District No. 1 Youth Choir, the True Peace Singers, the Temple Tones, the Singing Disciples of Manning, Sam and the Exciting Linen Singers, the Rev. Gene Linen and the Dynamic Tones of Harmony, and the Sensational Brown Brothers.

The Talent Showcase, which spotlighted such local performers as the Upstage Children's Theatre, Rico and the Educators, and King Clyde, also featured performances by the South Carolina Bahá'í Youth Workshop and by Ladjamaya Green and her son, Akeem, from the Green Acre Bahá'í School.
The Peace Orchestra, which performed in August at the Bahá'í Center in Los Angeles and is trying to raise money for an appearance in December at the West African Bahá'í Music Festival in Monrovia, Liberia, was led by baritone saxophonist Marvin (Doc) Holladay.

Other members were saxophonists Jay Corré, Ernest Hensley, Roger Hogan and Pat Longo; trumpeters Dean Betts, George Graham, Greg Ives, Roger Lewis and Paul Seaforth; trombonists Brian Lambeth (bass), Charlie Lee, Harry Massoth and Vincent Winnie; pianist Bob Rozario; drummer Sherman Ferguson; bassist Frank Esposito; and guitarist Kingsley Swan.

Above: Taking solo turns with the Peace Orchestra are (left to right) Dean Betts, Jay Corré and George Graham. Below left: Trumpeter Roger Lewis gives some pointers to an aspiring young musician at the Louis Gregory Bahá'í Institute. Below right: The Peace Orchestra and Greater Inspirational Mass Choir of Horry County combine to present a foot-stomping gospel/jazz finale to the Peace Concert.
This brief biographical sketch of Zimarian Jeane Stoakley Walker, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil who died last July of cancer, was written for Bahá’í News by her father-in-law, James Walker.

Zimarian Jeane Stoakley Walker’s list of accomplishments was long—and it was lifelong.

At the age of 12 she pioneered with her family to Mississippi, at a time when it was dangerous merely to be black—and to be there. Her parents, Robert and Charles Ella Stoakley, began teaching her, even at that tender age, how to love her way through the many kinds of difficulties she would face in life. In other words, they taught her how to be a Bahá’í.

She was a big sister to all of her younger brothers, but the important thing was that they were all Bahá’ís together. They were truly a family of Bahá’ís.

Social and academic accomplishments? She had many, and from many places in the world. Perhaps most interesting to the reader would be her teaching trip through the Bolivian Andes—high in the Andes mountains—for research on his master’s degree, and while there they planned to attend a conference at which Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum was to speak. The bus went only as far as the town where Bob and Zl lived, so Mme. Rabbani blazed the trail the rest of the way in her Land Rover. Zl was unable to attend, but Bob walked the remaining distance. Mme. Rabbani, sorry that Zlmarian had been unable to go, stopped on her way back and invited Zl on a two-week teaching trip through the Bolivian Andes. Zl accepted, thus beginning a friendship that lasted until Zl’s death of cancer last July 9. Mas’úd Khamsi of the International Teaching Centre sent a cable on behalf of himself and Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, recalling that teaching trip and expressing their sorrow at Zl’s passing.

Bob earned his doctorate at about the same time as Zl, and since both of them were invited to teach graduate university courses in their respective educational specialties in Brazil, it became the perfect opportunity to pioneer abroad for the Faith. So they began pioneering in Brazil in the spring of 1974.

The pioneer experience evolved into many different kinds of things for the Faith. Zl continued in her capacity as a school teacher, in recent years at the well-known and well-respected Escola das Nações (School of the Nations) in Brasília. This led, among a great many other things, to her becoming a widely recognized expert on the teaching of peace in the schools of the world.

Both before and after she was elected to serve on the National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil, she traveled far and wide, talking and teaching about peace and how to imbue our young people with the many and serious abilities to deal with building it. “The Promise of World Peace” provided a platform from which she spoke often, and several cables from peace organizations around the world, sorrowing at her passing, attest to the universality of her work.

A member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil pointed out that usually messages of condolence from the Universal House of Justice are addressed to the family, but that its message regarding Dr. Walker sorrowed for the loss sustained by all of Brazil.

Those who knew Zl well marveled at her great ease with life. Nothing ever ruffled her. She might have six people coming for a lunch-fireside, and a Bahá’í committee meeting in the morning, and a Bahá’í conference somewhere for which the plane left at 4:30 that afternoon, but she still found time to help someone with a little job that needed doing right now, or to listen sympathetically to one of her children—or someone else’s—and to be so relaxed about it that it seemed as though that were the only thing in the world that mattered at that moment.

In Paris Talks, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “This is worship: to serve mankind and to minister to the needs of the people. Service is prayer.”

At the time of her death in July, Zl’s agenda was full through the end of October. As Phil Cantor, one of her Bahá’í friends, said, “She lived until she died.”

Dr. Zimarian Walker. We all loved her very much.

DR. ZIMARIAN S. WALKER

Brazil

Zl Walker: ‘We all loved her very much’
Third Caribbean Youth Conference

August 11-14 was an historic time for the Bahá’í youth in the Caribbean as more than 220 people gathered at President’s College, Golden Grove, Guyana, for the third Caribbean Bahá’í Youth Conference.

Young people from Guyana and 18 other countries took part in the conference whose special guests included Counsellors Robert Harris, Peter McLaren and William Roberts.

The conference theme was “We can make a difference, we can make a change.” Among the many activities were dawn prayers, talks, discussions, workshops, teaching, and a memorial service for the Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery who passed away in July.

On Sunday, August 13, the main address was given by the Prime Minister of Guyana, the Hon. Hamilton Green.

“You who have gathered here on this beautiful Sunday morning under the Bahá’í banner,” he said, “have shown not only an awareness of what is taking place around you, but in a conference such as this, you signal, I believe, a desire and a determination to discuss these issues and hopefully to be active participants in seeking solutions to the many problems which afflict mankind today.

“In Guyana,” the prime minister added, “we have... become accustomed to the many laudable and worthwhile projects sponsored by the Bahá’ís, and this conference is certainly a forward and welcome step for the youth of the Caribbean.”

There is, he said, “still too much fighting and conflict (in the world) and not enough love and regard for one’s neighbors...”

“The Bahá’ís, of course, see all the peoples of the world as belonging to one family.

“You believe that all mankind are participants and members of a single family. For the solutions to all the problems I have identified, we need, I believe, to start with that excellent concept that we are all one family...”

“I find sometimes that people who do good,” said Mr. Green, “who believe in this concept that you have, tend not to want to proselytize—not to want to sell themselves. Good must also sell itself.

“Every one of you young people must set as your target, as a goal at the end of this conference, each day, each week, each month to persuade some of your colleagues, friends, workmates or those you come in contact with to move in the direction you have found.

“I believe that thought and good ideas must lead to action. We must not be weak and stop at knowing what is good.”

Young people, the prime minister said, “have an urgent and enormous responsibility in discussing and suggesting solutions to the many problems which face us in an increasingly selfish and difficult world. I have a suspicion that this group will lead us in the right direction.

“I urge that your deliberations be as practical as possible with workable plans and solutions coming out of those suggestions. And indeed if out of your proposals there is anything that this government or my ministry can do to further those ideas, I invite you to discuss them so that we can convert a paper into practical and purposeful resolution.

“I wish your conference great success, and hope that the conclusions you reach will be applied in order to improve our region and the lives of not only our young people but those in every corner of the globe.”
Pictured are some of the more than 200 young people from 18 countries who attended the third Caribbean Bahá'í Youth Conference last August 11-14 at President's College in Guyana. Among the highlights of the historic event was an address by the Hon. Hamilton Green, prime minister of Guyana. Special guests included Counsellors for the Americas Robert Harris, Peter McLaren and William Roberts.

Responding to the warm welcome he received, the prime minister invited about 20 of the youth to dinner at his home after the conference. The youth responded enthusiastically, and enjoyed an evening of dinner, discussion and a tour of the prime minister's private art collection.

Conference participants sent a cable to the Universal House of Justice and received one in return. Other messages were received from Shridath S. Ramphal, secretary-general of the British Commonwealth, and Roderick Rainford, secretary-general of the Caribbean.

Countries other than Guyana represented at the conference were Antigua, Barbados, Brazil, Canada, the Dominican Republic, Guadeloupe, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom, United States, Virgin Islands, and Venezuela.

For the 16 members of the Caribbean “Sparks of Peace” program, the conference represented the final leg of a teaching effort that began July 18 in Antigua, and they taught for a few days in Guyana before the event began.

The conference inspired others from Guyana and other countries to take part in similar teaching efforts in communities throughout Guyana.

Several of the young people took an active role as featured speakers at the

To the Universal House of Justice
MORE THAN 200 BAHÁ'IS FROM 21 NATIONS SEND WARMEST LOVING GREETINGS FROM THIRD ANNUAL CARIBBEAN YOUTH CONFERENCE HOSTED BY DEARLY-LOVED GUYANESE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY. THEIR HOSPITALITY, MUSIC AND 'CARMEL MINSTRELS' LIFTED SPIRITS TO GREAT HEIGHTS. ALL PARTICIPANTS DEEPLY GRATEFUL OUTPOURING OF LOVE, ENCOURAGEMENT, SUPPORT IN YOUR CONFERENCE MESSAGE. COUNSELLORS HARRIS, McLAREN, ROBERTS INSPIRED YOUTH TO WALK PATHS OF TEACHING AND SERVICE WHILE THEY ARE YET YOUNG.

IN HISTORIC, MOVING ADDRESS GUYANA'S PRIME MINISTER, MR. HAMILTON GREEN, ELECTRIFIED CONFERENCE BY STRONGLY URGING YOUTH TO CARRY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S MESSAGE TO GREATER NUMBER OF CARIBBEAN YOUTH. QUOTING THE HOUSE OF JUSTICE HE STRESSED THE GREAT NEED FOR RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE, UNITY, MORALITY, AND PEACE, PLEDGING HIS GOVERNMENT'S PARTNERSHIP IN OUR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE SOCIETY.

THE MOVEMENT OF YOUTH IN SPARKS OF PEACE PROJECT PRODUCED POWERFUL BONDS AFFECTION AND ENDURING FRIENDSHIPS. WE PRAY THIS MAY SERVE AS A MODEL OF HOPE AND OPTIMISM TO ENTIRE REGION—BREAKING BARRIERS OF SUSPICION AND PREJUDICE—OPENING WAY FOR MANY COOPERATIVE PROJECTS AMONG THESE NATIONS.

AS WE OFFER OUR SOLEMN PLEDGES OF SERVICE TO BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, WE BEG YOUR PRAYERS THAT EACH ONE OF US WILL HELP THIS GENERATION ACHIEVE ITS DESTINY. THAT WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND CHANGE THE FUTURE FOR MASSES OF CARIBBEAN YOUTH.

Youth Conference, Guyana
August 11-14, 1989
Office of the Commonwealth Secretary-General
Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London
Message to the Third Caribbean Bahá'í Youth Conference on World Peace

The quest for peace is age-old, but today there are special opportunities for peace which young people in particular can help the world to grasp. The closer relations which have developed recently between East and West, and the disarmament agreements which have followed, hold out the prospect of ultimate removal of the threat of nuclear destruction which has held the whole of humankind to ransom. The prospects for peace throughout the world are thereby immeasurably improved. At the same time, there is a growing passion for democracy within many countries, met in some cases with accommodation but in others with renewed repression. The strength of the thirst for freedom is a cause for hope, but so long as it is unsatisfied, there can be no enduring peace.

For, as the teachings of the Bahá'í community rightly proclaim, we live in one world, and share one common, inseparable humanity; and peace, like humanity, is indivisible. There can be no true peace while the evil of racism, institutionalized by the apartheid regime of South Africa, mocks the reality of our common humanity. There can be no true peace while, in a world of plenty enjoyed by the few, so many millions of the world's people are oppressed by absolute poverty and haunted by the spectres of disease and starvation. There can be no true peace while the thoughtless destruction of our global environment impedes all progress toward sustainable development.

True peace, though it will come, can come only with great and continuous human effort. The answer to these problems is surely a world order of global management and collective security founded on the rule of enforceable law world-wide. A start has been made toward the establishment of this new order, but such a profound change will only come about if first there is a change in human hearts. The governance of our global affairs must be based not on old instincts of selfishness and separation but on a new ethic—an ethic of human solidarity. In achieving this, the influence of the world's religious leaders and thinkers is crucial.

The many obstacles to world peace are not reasons for despondency but rather calls for action—especially to young people everywhere. We have urgent need of their energy and their faith. They know better than their elders that the world is one and how much it yearns for peace. They must help us all to join in a partnership to save it. Only thus can the gift of peace be secured and handed on to their world of the 21st century and beyond, the world of tomorrow.

Shridath S. Ramphal
Secretary-General of the Commonwealth
June 8, 1989

Conference including Enrique Beust of Brazil ("The conditions of the world and how we can influence or change them"); Ganesh Ramsahai of Trinidad ("Youth as agents of change"); Juliana Auguste Day of St. Lucia ("The Covenant and the youth"); Shane Etzenhouser of the U.S. ("What is the Bahá'í youth movement"); and Terrance Simmons of Guyana ("The time is now—can we afford a moment's hesitation").

In smaller groups the young people discussed such topics as moral challenges facing youth, substance abuse, marriage and family life, employment and careers for youth, and prayer and teaching.

Evenings were given over to entertainment and special events such as the showing of a slide program on construction of the terraces and Arc on Mount Carmel.

Leisure-time activities included dance sessions conducted by Rena Robinson, aerobics classes led by Frank Robinson, and non-competitive games introduced by Carl Henlow, all of whom are from the U.S.

Youth representatives from the Caribbean Islands extend warm greetings to the Hon. Hamilton Green, prime minister of Guyana (second from left), who spoke on Sunday, August 13, at the third Caribbean Bahá'í Youth Conference at President's College, Golden Grove, Guyana.

October 1989/Bahá'í News
"Full Partnership: An International Conference on the Equality of Women and Men" was the theme of the 14th annual Conference of the Association for Bahá'í Studies.

The Conference, which drew nearly 800 people including many scholars and artists who are striving to promote Bahá'u'lláh's message of the equality of the sexes, was held September 15-17 at the Irvine Hilton and Towers in Irvine, California.

In her welcoming address, Counsellor for the Americas Jacqueline Delahunt reminded her audience that the equality of women and men already exists, because, she said, "Bahá'u'lláh decreed that they are equal; however, the realization and establishment of this equality in our evolving social order remains to be achieved.

"The purpose of achieving the recognition of equality (of the sexes) is that humankind cannot reach its full potential without it."

Co-chairing the Conference with Counsellor Delahunt was Judge Dorothy W. Nelson, chairman of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly.

In her opening statement, Judge Nelson gently prompted those present to remember that the worldwide Bahá'í community is a workshop in which men and women from diverse backgrounds strive to put the concept of equality into practice.

The keynote address, "Full Partnership: Prerequisite to Human Progress," was given by Dr. Robert C. Henderson, secretary of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly.

"Let us dedicate this weekend," he said, "to the furtherance of our understanding of all the ways in which we can make advances in this struggle. . . . Let us open our minds and our hearts to new possibilities, explore new alternatives, so that this conference is productive of more than expanded intellectual understanding, but will produce changes in our lives that will lead to . . . full partnership."

Other speakers at the plenary sessions included Riane Eisler, co-founder of the Center for Partnership Studies; Louise Profeii-Leblanc, chairman, and Dr. Hossain Danesh, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada; and Bahá'í scholar/authors Bahiyyih Nakhjavání and Dr. Gwen Ester-Lewis.

Also, Dr. David Young of Grants Pass, Oregon, presented a paper by Dr. John Hatcher of the University of South Florida who was unable to attend the Conference.

In her talk, "Equal Partnership Between Women and Men: Foundations for a World Peace," Mrs. Eisler explored the human potential for partnership relations in society, especially
among women and men, contrasting it with the "dominator mode" from which humanity is slowly emerging.

"The way a society structures the most fundamental of all relationships, that between women and men," she said, "not only impacts directly our personal lives but impacts everything about a social system—institutions, family, politics—determining whether that system is peaceful or warlike ...

Dr. Etter-Lewis' talk, "Early Black Women in the Professions: A Model for Full Partnership," illustrated the inspirational effect of Bahá'í principles on some of the first black Bahá'í women in America.

Plenary sessions included performances by a number of talented artists including dramatists Deborah Chicurel Conow, Susan Lyons, Muhtadia Rice and Freddie deGruy, and musicians Kelly Khademi, Lorenzo Tappano, Jamie Heath, Kiu and Keely Haghighi, Farhang Sharif and Tim McClain.

A wide variety of workshops looked at the issue of sexual equality from many angles, some in group discussions and some by the presentation of papers on the topic.

Also included were special programs for the more than 30 children and 30 youth who attended the Conference.

Before the official opening of the Conference on Friday evening, September 15, a full day of professional interest seminars was held.

Meeting at those seminars were members of the Bahá'í Agricultural Institute, Bahá'í Institute for the Arts, and Bahá'í Institute for Environmental Design.

Other seminars covered business and economics, consultation and conflict resolution, education, intercultural issues, marriage and family, the study of religion, and science and technology and the philosophy of science.

On Thursday, a day-long meeting of the Bahá'í International Health Agency was focused on "Women's Issues in Health."
Among the speakers at the Association's 14th annual Conference were Bahá'íyih Nakhjavání (left photo) and Dr. Gwen Etter-Lewis.

On Saturday evening, recognition was made of those who had won the Association's annual essay contest. This year's winners were:

- Ann Bayliss, for her essay "The Quest for Order in the Development of Wisteria".

The conference ended Sunday with a children's festival followed by the annual meeting of the Association for Bahá'í Studies.

Canada's second Festival of Arts a great success

"Invitation '89," Canada's second Bahá'í National Festival of the Arts held August 10-13 at Bishop's University in Lennoxville, Quebec, was labeled an outstanding success by that country's National Spiritual Assembly.

With featured appearances by Seals & Crofts, Doug Cameron, Jack Lenz, Bernard Gosselin, Nancy Ward and other well-known performers, the conference included many other artists in the fields of music, drama, dance, gymnastics, architecture, fashion design and the visual arts.

Performances were held simultaneously in several theatres; exhibits were presented in a number of buildings; and a crafts fair and book store were set up at the Festival.

Presentations, which were made in English and French, drew a number of non-Bahá'í guests. A children's festival was also held, and children took part in some of the events on the main stage.

Other highlights included presentations by American Indians, a panel of artists speaking on the creative process, and "Mid-Summer Noon," a drama about the life of the Bab.

As an expression of appreciation to the university, the Bahá'ís planted a peace garden consisting of a circle of nine crabapple trees with a row of day lilies on an axis marking the points of sunrise and sunset.

A number of Bahá'ís from the U.S. attended and/or performed in the Festival, which is sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly and Bahá'í Arts Council of Canada as a part of the country's Six Year Plan.

Next summer's event will be held in one of Canada's Central or Western provinces.
Peace Moves '89 Conference in Madrid

The third "Peace Moves '89 Regional European Youth Conference" was held last July 20-23 in Madrid, Spain, with about 700 people from 26 countries on four continents present to make this the largest gathering of Bahá'ís ever held in that country.

Among the special guests were Counsellor Sohrab Youssefian, members of three National Spiritual Assemblies, and six Auxiliary Board members.

The gathering was spiritually charged by a message to Bahá'í youth in Europe from the Bahá'í youth of Iran which expressed the longings of the youth in the Cradle of the Faith to serve the Cause and included a gift and message to those at the conference. The gift was their "hope for divine confirmations," their message that their "hopeful eyes are fixed on you and we are eagerly waiting the glad tidings emanating from your efforts to spread the Divine Civilization in this turbulent world. . . ."

Seven new believers were enrolled during the conference, after which volunteers traveled to about a dozen cities to help projects organized by the National Teaching Committee of Spain.

Cameroon

During "Youth Week" last February at the Higher Teachers Training College in Yaounde, Cameroon, the Bahá'í University Club held a roundtable conference on "The Role of Youth in a World in Search of Peace."

This is the second year in which the Bahá'í Club has sponsored such a conference as a public forum for consultation on an issue related to youth. Last year's theme was "African Youth Facing the Challenges of Modern Society."

This year's speakers included Dr. Ekema Agbash, lecturer at the University of Yaounde; Dr. Boyomo Assala, sub-director of the Ministry of Information and Culture; Dr. Peter Agbot Tabi, director of the Institute of International Relations; and Dr. Dion Ngute, deputy general manager of the National Center for Administration and Magistracy.

Besides helping to develop relations with these and other prominent members of the community and educating the public about this important issue, the conference resulted in the publication of two newspaper articles.

Baha'is in 61 communities in Cameroon are holding regular children's classes. As a result, 714 children have been registered as Baha'is with the National Education Committee.

Singapore

Representatives of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia met June 17-18 in Singapore to consult on Chinese teaching in that area.

Also taking part were Counsellors Rose Ong and Shantha Sundram as well as representatives of the International Chinese Teaching Committee and the Continental Pioneer Committee for Asia.

A message from the meeting read in part: "Now is the time to intensify and unify our efforts. We are resolved to unleash a new spiritual energy in our region."

More than 700 Baha'is from 26 countries took part July 20-23 in the third "Peace Moves '89" regional European Youth Conference in Madrid, Spain.

The young people shown here were among the many talented youth who had a chance to entertain and serve at the conference.

The young people shown here were among the many talented youth who had a chance to entertain and serve at the conference.
Macau/China

At Ridván the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum represented the Universal House of Justice at the first National Bahá’í Convention in Macau. Following that historic event she made a special trip to mainland China where she visited a number of cities, including Beijing; Ulan Bator, capital of the People’s Republic of Mongolia; Shanghai, and Dalian.

While in Beijing, the Hand of the Cause showed slides of her “Green Light Expedition” to South America to 27 prominent Chinese guests.

In Ulan Bator, she gave lectures about her travels and about world peace to students of English at a university. She later remarked that “Mongolians are a singularly fine, very impressive, talented and upright, distinguished people.”

On May 22 Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum traveled to Shanghai where she stayed for five nights, dining in the home of the dean of the Department of Foreign Languages at a prominent university and attending a concert that included a performance by one of China’s better-known vocalists. Afterward the Hand of the Cause met the singer, whom she was happy to see again during another part of her journey.

She was in Beijing on June 4 when a student demonstration for democracy created considerable turbulence in the area. Continuing on to Dalian, she again presented slides of the “Green Light Expedition” and met with a number of prominent people from the area before returning on June 14 to Macau via Hong Kong.

The Hand of the Cause met with the National Spiritual Assemblies of both countries to discuss the teaching work there.

Republic of Ireland

On March 24-27, more than 65 young people from the Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom, other European countries and the Bahá’í World Centre attended the first All-Ireland Youth Spring School in Closkelt, Northern Ireland.

In anticipation of the establishment of the European Bahá’í Youth Council, and stirred by the new vision enkindled by a growing European identity, the youth enthusiastically considered the role of their generation in the unfolding Plan of God, and many pledged to take part in summer teaching projects.

The spirit of the occasion was raised by the presence of representatives from the Continental Board of Counsellors and the National Spiritual Assembly of the Republic of Ireland.

St. Vincent/Grenadines

Songs and prayers were among the highlights of a “Teen Teacher” training institute held last July 22-23 at the Bahá’í National Center in St. Vincent.

Twelve junior youth attended the institute, which was designed to prepare them to teach Bahá’í children’s classes. Half of those attending have volunteered to help start children’s classes in their communities.
India

A recent teaching campaign in O'Velly, Tamil Nadu, India, has led to the enrollment of 400 new believers in that area. Meanwhile, in Karaikal, further teaching and consolidation has resulted in the enrollment of 237 new believers.

The National Spiritual Assembly of India sent representatives to two gatherings in New Delhi that were held to observe World Environment Day. The first, held June 3 at the CSIR Science Centre, was organized by the Indian Institute of Environmental Studies and was chaired by Pram Kirpal, former secretary of the Ministry of Education and present chairman of the executive board of UNESCO. The Baha’i representative was Mrs. Rashmi Dhindsa.

The other observance, held June 5 at the India National Centre, was planned by the United Nations Office in Delhi and the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage.

The Baha’i representative at this meeting, whose topic was deforestation, was Ali Merchant who presented an outline of Baha’i-sponsored afforestation projects at the Rabbani School in Gwalior and the New Era Development Institute in Panchgani.

After the meeting, several journalists approached Mr. Merchant for information about the Baha’i projects for inclusion in their articles.

Despite hot and humid weather, the Baha’i House of Worship in Bahapur, India, drew more than 200,000 visitors in June. During weekends the number of visitors ranged from 10,000 to 15,000 a day.

An officer in the Indian Peace Keeping Force serving in Sri Lanka learned about the Faith while working with some United Nations officials. During his visit to the Temple he said, “For a man who is always living under gunfire, this breeze of peace, although experienced for a few moments only, has touched my heart. I have to go back, but now I must find out what this new Teacher has brought for an ailing humanity.”

He carried back with him a Baha’i prayer book and a copy of Baha’u’llah and the New Era.

United Kingdom

![Image of children](image)

This photograph appeared in a local newspaper following a clean-up project last May along a main road on the edge of Londonderry by young Baha’is from all over Northern Ireland. The youth later received a letter of thanks from the city’s mayor.

Members of the Baha’i community of Northern Ireland were instrumental in forming a local chapter of “Men of the Trees,” an international society for the planting and protection of trees that was founded by a Baha’i, Richard St. Barbe Baker.

The Northern Ireland branch of the society took an immediate decision to offer to plant trees on school properties and follow up with classroom visits.

Alaska

Carol Krein, a Baha’i from Anchorage, Alaska, was honored recently for her work with the Anchorage School District as “Carol Krein Day” was celebrated at Elmendorf Air Force Base where she began an enrichment program for school children last year. The program, which consisted of a series of Saturday morning mini-courses which she organized for students from three schools on the base once every nine weeks, was so successful that 250 children chose to take part.

Ms. Krein has been recognized for her volunteer work on many fronts. For example, she won a trip to Washington, D.C., for her work as Volunteer State Coordinator of the National Energy Education Development (NEED) project which involves enlisting school districts and teachers to develop leadership training and energy conservation programs for students.

While in Washington she received further recognition for her work as volunteer coordinator of NEED when Alaska won an award as the “Most Improved Program” in energy conservation education due largely to her efforts.

Western Caroline Islands

After several unsuccessful attempts to air Baha’i video tapes on local television, Baha’is in the Western Caroline Islands finally obtained permission to show “Mona with the Children.” Since it was broadcast, four more Baha’i-sponsored programs have been shown, all of which have received favorable response from the public.
Guyana

Dr. Abdul-Missagh Ghadirian visited Guyana in April as part of a seven-country tour of Central and South America he undertook in cooperation with the Continental Board of Counsellors in the Americas.

Dr. Ghadirian, a professor at McGill University and senior psychiatrist at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal, Canada, is a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, author of the book In Search of Nirvana and a consultant to the Bahá’í International Community at the United Nations.

In Guyana, his itinerary was planned by Bahá’ís appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly with help from the National Coordinating Council on Drug Education, which is the government’s appointed agency concerned with all issues relating to the prevention of drug abuse.

Dr. Ghadirian visited with Prime Minister Hamilton Green; the Guyanese Minister of Health, Dr. Noel Blackman; and Chief Medical Officer Dr. W. Gobin, all of whom expressed their appreciation for Bahá’í efforts in the field of medicine and drug abuse.

From April 7-11, Dr. Ghadirian presented six lectures on topics that included “Drugs and the Mind,” “Drug and Alcohol Abuse Among Children and Teen-Agers,” and “Stress and Substances Abuse Among Professionals.”

His visit was covered by the press, and a 30-minute interview was broadcast on the national radio station.

Cayman Islands

Pictured are some of the Bahá’ís from Canada, the Caribbean and the United States who attended the first Bahá’í summer school in the Cayman Islands. Among the topics studied at the school, which was held June 30-July 3, were: The Majesty of the Faith, the Covenant, Living the Life, Consultation, and Marriage and Family Life.

Switzerland

A memorial exhibit in honor of Dr. Auguste Forel, a Swiss physician and social reformer who was one of the first Bahá’ís in that country, was displayed April 10-May 12 at Geneva’s Centre Medical Universitaire.

The exhibit was organized under the auspices of the University of Zurich.

Among the items displayed was a Tablet from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to Dr. Forel. Another was Dr. Forel’s will, in which he affirmed his belief in the Bahá’í Faith. The explanatory notes in the display case read:

“In 1921, Auguste Forel wrote that the Bahá’í Faith is the real religion for the good of mankind, and it is devoid of all dogmas, clergy and priests. It brings together all the peoples who live on this small planet Earth. I have become a Bahá’í, and I hope that this religion will endure, and be victorious. This is my highest wish.”
Philippines

As a part of her recent visit to the Far East, the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum made a 33-day stop in the Philippines. Her itinerary there included interviews with the news media, meetings with government officials, lectures at universities, and five regional Bahá'í conferences.

She arrived in Manila on July 8 and spent about two weeks in the capital city discussing issues related to peace with women's groups and university students. She also presented a talk, "Peace and Ecology," at the World Peace Congress in Manila.

Also in the capital, she was received by the Chief Justice of the Philippines, Marcello Fernan, and the Speaker of the Senate, Jovito Salonga.

More than 1,000 believers from almost 100 localities joined the Hand of the Cause at five regional conferences held in San José, Mindoro; Cagayan de Oro, Mindanao; Cebu City, Baguio, and Manila.

In Cagayan de Oro, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum was met by the mayor and governor of the state and held a large press conference attended by 27 journalists and publishers. The meeting lasted for three hours and included an exceptionally friendly discussion of the Faith.

Ecuador

To help celebrate Naw-Rúz this year, Radio Bahá'í in Ecuador sponsored a "Marathon for Unity." In the spirit of the ancient Inca empire, runner-messengers left the Bahá'í radio station to spread the message of unity.

Eight messengers started, each carrying copies in Quechua of a summary of "The Promise of World Peace" and a booklet in Spanish entitled "El Camino Grande de Bahá'u'lláh" (Bahá'-u'lláh's Great Path).

The runners passed through 45 communities, and in each one they were joined by more runners. By the end of the marathon the group was 200 strong.

Progress of the marathon was broadcast throughout the day on Radio Bahá'í. The program ended at 8 p.m. with a performance by eight local folk music groups.

The Raul Pavón Bahá'í School in Otavalo, Ecuador, continues to uphold its reputation for providing an excellent education. The number of students increased by 28 over the past year, bringing the total enrollment to 130. Most notable was an increase in the number of Indian students.

Jamaica

The Bahá'ís of Jamaica recently celebrated the 14th anniversary of their radio program, "Bahá'í World Unity," which is broadcast every Thursday at 11 p.m. on Radio Jamaica.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Jamaica commended the committee that is largely responsible for this important achievement.

Zaire

Three conferences on "The Mission of Bahá'u'lláh" were held last July in Zaire to discuss the empowerment of women and their spiritual destiny.

In Fizi, nearly 5,000 people, some of whom had to walk 800 kilometers to attend, joined representatives of 174 local Spiritual Assemblies at the conference. In Mwanga, 1,600 Bahá'ís from 35 Assemblies gathered, while in Bukavu the conference was covered by four radio and newspaper reporters and attended by dignitaries including the mayor, the regional secretary for women's affairs, and other high-ranking local government officials.

The conferences were organized by Counsellors Beatrice Azare, Edith Senoga, Lally Warren and Hizaya Hissani. Other topics covered besides the Mission of Bahá'u'lláh included the Rúhí message from the Universal House of Justice, the Covenant, the Administrative Order, the equality of men and women, youth and service, and the Arc Fund.

Italy

About 600 young people from 20 countries gathered last July 13-17 at the European Bahá'í Youth Conference in San Marino, Italy.

Among those attending were Counsellor Sohrab Youssefian and members of the National Spiritual Assemblies and Auxiliary Boards from Italy and the United Kingdom. Especially appreciated was the participation of 43 young Bahá'ís from Turkey.

The conference was co-sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Culture in San Marino in collaboration with the State Tourist Bureau and was officially opened by the Minister of Education and Culture. Another special guest speaker was the Minister of Transport and Culture, Tourism and Sports. The opening ceremony was carried on San Marino state television.

Six newspaper articles were published in San Marino's most popular newspaper before and during the conference, augmenting the 7,700 invitations sent to heads of families residing in the Republic. Also, a number of copies of the peace statement were distributed during a joyful afternoon that began with the release of 500 balloons from San Marino's main square.

Consultation at the conference was centered on the individual's commitment to teaching.

In the name of the late Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery, the Italian youth announced the initiation of an Arc Fund Project designed to motivate participants at the conference to return home as ambassadors of the Cause in order to obtain outstanding success for the Arc Fund and to spearhead campaigns for the maturation of Bahá'í communities.

During the conference, five young people were inspired to enroll in the Faith.

Chile

A recent teaching campaign among the Mapuche Indian people of rural Chile resulted in the enrollment of 68 people in only 20 days.
Australia

Baha'is took part early this year in a World Assembly in Melbourne, Australia. The conference, sponsored by the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP), brought together 600 delegates and observers from 60 countries representing 10 religions to discuss peace issues from the perspective of their various cultural and religious backgrounds.

Representing the Faith were John Davidson of the Baha'i International Community; Graham Hassall, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia; Tahana Waipouri-Voykovic from the National Spiritual Assembly of New Zealand and WCRP of New Zealand; Martin and Barbara Kleyne and their daughter Chantal from the WCRP of Holland; and Miguel Gil and Vafa Payman from the Multi-Faith Resource Center in Melbourne.

The World Assembly in Melbourne was the fifth such gathering held by the WCRP since its formation in the late 1960s. Its theme was "Building Peace Through Trust: The Role of Religion."

A special prayer service for China and world peace was held June 11 at the Baha'i House of Worship in Sydney, Australia.

Prayers were recited in English and Chinese. Of the more than 250 people who attended, about 60 were of Chinese origin.

Among the special guests were Joy Stevenson, a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre in Haifa; Counsellors Kamran Eshragian and Violette Haake; and Helen Sham-Ho, a member of the New South Wales legislative council.

All of the Chinese guests were given copies of the peace statement.

The service was announced in two Chinese-language newspapers, the Australian Chinese Daily and Sing Tao, resulting in at least 10 inquiries afterward.

Mrs. Ann Stark, representing the Baha'i community of Tasmania, attended a civic reception given last May 26 by the city of Hobart, Tasmania, to welcome the newly appointed governor-general of Australia, Bill Hayden.

Venezuela

'Play Jazz for Peace' was the theme of a free outdoor concert/exhibit held last June 18 in Caracas, Venezuela. Chris Keller, a pianist and Baha'i traveling teacher from the United States, brought together a group of professional musicians who performed music inspired by the concept of peace. More than 400 people attended the concert (above) held in conjunction with a peace exhibit by the Baha'i community of Caracas. The display (below) featured photographs illustrating the peace theme as well as posters with quotations from the Sacred Writings. One hundred-seventy of those who saw the display signed a document entitled 'My Promise for Peace' which expresses one's personal commitment to the process of achieving world peace.

Zimbabwe

Almost 125 children attended a conference last June 4 hosted by the Baha'is of Windsor Estate, Zimbabwe. The purpose of the event was to introduce children from different to one another. Included on the program were stories, songs, games and a quiz.
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To the Followers of Bahá’u’l-Áá

Dear Bahá’í Friends,

The Nineteen Day Feast, its framework, purpose and possibilities, have in recent years become a subject of increasing inquiry among the friends. It occupied much of the consultation at the sixth International Bahá’í Convention last year, and we feel the time has come for us to offer clarifications.

The World Order of Bahá’u’l-Áá encompasses all units of human society; integrates the spiritual, administrative and social processes of life; and canalizes human expression in its varied forms toward the construction of a new civilization. The Nineteen Day Feast embraces all these aspects at the very base of society. Functioning in the village, the town, the city, it is an institution of which all the people of Bahá are members. It is intended to promote unity, ensure progress, and foster joy.

“If this feast be held in the proper fashion,” ‘Abdu’l-Áá states, “the friends will, once in nineteen days, find themselves spiritually restored, and endowed with a power that is not of this world.” To ensure this glorious outcome the concept of the Feast must be adequately understood by all the friends. The Feast is known to have three distinct but related parts: the devotional, the administrative, and the social. The first entails the recitation of prayers and readings from the Holy Texts. The second is a general meeting where the local Spiritual Assembly reports its activities, plans and problems to the community, shares news and messages from the World Centre and the National Assembly, and receives the thoughts and recommendations of the friends through a process of consultation. The third involves the partaking of refreshments and engaging in other activities meant to foster fellowship in a culturally determined diversity of forms which do not violate principles of the Faith or the essential character of the Feast.

Even though the observance of the Feast requires strict adherence to the threefold aspects in the sequence in which they have been defined, there is much room for variety in the total experience. For example, music may be introduced at various stages, including the devotional portion; ‘Abdu’l-Áá recommends that eloquent, uplifting talks be given; originality and variety in expressions of hospitality are possible; the quality and range of the consultation are critical to the spirit of the occasion. The effects of different cultures in all these respects are welcome factors which can lend the Feast a salutary diversity, representative of the unique characteristics of the various societies in which it is held, and therefore conducive to the upliftment and enjoyment of its participants.

It is notable that the concept of the Feast evolved in stages in relation to the development of the Faith. At its earliest stage in Iran, the individual friends, in response to Bahá’u’l-Áá’s injunctions, hosted gatherings in their homes to show hospitality once every 19 days and derived inspiration from the reading and discussion of the Teachings. As the community grew, ‘Abdu’l-Áá delineated and emphasized the devotional and social character of the event. After the establishment of local Spiritual Assemblies, Shoghi Effendi introduced the administrative portion and acquainted the community with the idea of the Nineteen Day Feast as an institution. It was as if a symphony, in three movements, had now been completed.

But it is not only in the sense of its gradual unfoldment as an institution that the evolution of the Feast must be regarded; there is a broader context yet. The Feast may well be seen in its unique combination of modes as the culmination of a great historic process in which primary elements of community life—acts of worship, of festivity and other forms of togetherness—over vast stretches of time have achieved a glorious convergence. The Nineteen Day Feast represents a new stage in this enlightened age to which the basic expression of community life has evolved. Shoghi Effendi has described it as the foundation of the new World Order, and in a letter written on his behalf, it is referred to as constituting “a vital medium for maintaining close and continued contact between the believers themselves, and also between them and the body of their elected representatives in the local community.”

Moreover, because of the opportunity which it provides for conveying messages from the national and international levels of the administration and also for communicating the recommendations of the friends to those levels, the Feast becomes a link that connects the local community in a dynamic relationship with the entire structure of the Administrative Order. But considered in its local sphere alone there is much to thrill and amaze the heart. Here it links the individual to the collective processes by which a society is built or restored. Here, for instance, the Feast is an arena of democracy at the very root of society, where the local Spiritual Assembly and the members of the community meet on common ground, where individuals are free to offer their gifts of thought, whether as new ideas or constructive criticism, to the building processes of an advancing civilization. Thus it can be seen that aside from its spiritual significance, this common institution of the people combines an array of elemental social

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disciplines which educate its participants in the essentials of responsible citizenship.

If the Feast is to be properly experienced, beyond an understanding of the concept must also be the preparation of it and the preparation for it. Although the local Spiritual Assembly is administratively responsible for the conduct of the Feast, it often calls upon an individual or a group of individuals to make preparations—practice which is consonant with the spirit of hospitality so vital to the occasion. Such individuals can act as hosts and are sometimes concerned with the selection of the prayers and readings for the devotional portion; they may also attend to the social portion. In small communities the aspect of personal hospitality is easy to carry out, but in large communities the local Spiritual Assemblies, while retaining the concept of hospitality, may find it necessary to devise other measures.

Important aspects of the preparation of the Feast include the proper selection of readings, the assignment, in advance, of good readers, and a sense of decorum both in the presentation and the reception of the devotional program. Attention to the environment in which the Feast is to be held, whether indoors or outdoors, greatly influences the experience. Cleanliness, arrangement of the space in practical and decorative ways—all play a significant part. Punctuality is also a measure of good preparation.

To a very large extent, the success of the Feast depends on the quality of the preparation and participation of the individual. The beloved Master offers the following advice: "Give ye great weight to the Nineteen Day gatherings, so that on these occasions the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful may turn their faces toward the Kingdom, chant the communes, be-seech God's help, become joyfully enamored each of the other, and grow in purity and holiness, and in the fear of God, and in resistance to passion and self. Thus will they separate themselves from this elemental world, and immerse themselves in the arords of the spirit."

In absorbing such advice, it is illuminating indeed to view the Nineteen Day Feast in the context in which it was conceived. It is ordained in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas in these words: "It hath been enjoined upon you once a month to offer hospitality even should ye serve no more than water, for God hath willed to bind your hearts together, though it be through heavenly and earthly means combined." It is clear, then, that the Feast is rooted in hospitality, with all its implications of friendliness, courtesy, service, generosity and conviviality. The very idea of hospitality as the sustaining spirit of so significant an institution introduces a revolutionary new attitude to the conduct of human affairs at all levels, an attitude which is critical to that world unity which the Central Figures of our Faith labored so long and suffered so much cruelty to bring into being. It is in this divine festival that the foundation is laid for the realization of so unprecedented a reality.

That you may all attain the high mark set for the Feast as a "bringer of joy," the "groundwork of agreement and unity," the "key to affection and fellowship" will remain an object of our ardent supplications at the Holy Threshold.

With loving Bahá’í greetings,

_The Universal House of Justice_

_August 27, 1989_

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**THE NINETEEN DAY FEAST**

1. **General Statements**

*From the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*

It hath been enjoined upon you once a month to offer hospitality, even should ye serve no more than water; for God hath willed to bind your hearts together, though it be through heavenly and earthly means combined. (From the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, provisional translation) (1)

*From the Writings and Utterances of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*

O thou steadfast in the Covenant!

Thou hast written . . . concerning the Feast. This festivity, which is held on a day of the nineteen-day month, was established by His Holiness the Báb, and the Blessed Beauty directed, confirmed and warmly encouraged the holding of it. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance. You should unquestionably see it with the greatest care, and make its value known, so that it may become solidly established on a permanent basis. Let the beloved of God gather together and associate most lovingly and spiritually and happily with one another, conducting themselves with the greatest courtesy and self-restraint. Let them read the holy verses, as well as essays which are of benefit, and the letters of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá; encourage and inspire one another to love each and all; chant the prayers with serenity and joy; give eloquent talks, and praise the matchless Lord.

The host, with complete self-effacement, showing kindness to all, must be a comfort to each one, and serve the friends with his own hands.

If the Feast is befittingly held, in the manner described, then this supper will verily be the Lord's Supper, for its fruits will be the very fruits of that Supper, and its influence the same. (From a Tablet to an individual believer, translated from the Persian) (2)

As to the Nineteen Day Feast, ye must give this your most careful attention, and firmly establish it. For this Feast bringeth bliss and unity and love to the lovers of God. (From a Tablet to an individual believer, translated from the Persian) (3)

Ye have written of the Nineteen Day festivities. This Feast is a bringer of joy. It is the groundwork of agreement and unity. It is the key to affection and fellowship. It diffuseth the oneness of mankind. (From a Tablet to an individual believer, translated from the Persian) (4)

O ye loyal servants of the Ancient Beauty! In every cycle and dispensation, the feast hath been favored and loved, and the spreading of a table for the lovers of God hath been
considered a praiseworthy act. This is especially the case today, in this dispensation beyond compare, this most generous of ages, when it is highly acclaimed, for it is truly accounted among such gatherings as are held to worship and glorify God. Here the holy verses, the heavenly odes and laudations are intoned, and the heart is quickened, and carried away from itself.

The primary intent is to kindle these stirrings of the spirit, but at the same time it follows quite naturally that those present should partake of food, so that the world of the body may mirror the spirit’s world, and flesh take on the qualities of soul; and just as the spiritual delights are here in profusion, so too the material delights.

Happy are ye, to be observing this rule, with all its mystic meanings, thus keeping the friends of God alert and heedful, and bringing them peace of mind, and joy. (Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, rev. ed., Haifa: Bahá’í World Centre, 1982, sec. 48, pp. 90-91) (5)

Thy letter hath been received. Thou didst write of the Nineteen Day festivity, and this rejoiced my heart. These gatherings cause the divine table to descend from heaven, and draw down the confirmations of the All-Merciful. My hope is that the breathings of the Holy Spirit will be wafted over them, and that each one present shall, in great assemblies, with an eloquent tongue and a heart flooded with the love of God, set himself to proclaiming the rise of the Sun of Truth, the dawn of the Day-Star that lighteth all the world. (Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, rev. ed., sec. 49, p. 91) (6)

Give ye great weight to the Nineteen Day gatherings, so that on these occasions the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful may turn their faces toward the Kingdom, chant the communes, beseech God’s help, become joyfully enamored each of the other, and grow in purity and holiness, and in the fear of God, and in resistance to passion and self. Thus will they separate themselves from this elemental world, and immerse themselves in the arduous of the spirit. (From a Tablet to the local Spiritual Assembly of Spokane, Washington, translated from the Persian) (7)

I beg of God, out of His endless bounties, that many such gatherings will be held, and that the Nineteen Day festivity will also be observed, so that men and women believers will occupy themselves with making mention of God, and praising and glorifying Him, and guiding the people aright. (From a Tablet to the Bahá’ís of Stuttgart, Germany, translated from the Persian) (8)

O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant!

Your detailed letter hath been received, but because of the press of work a brief answer must suffice. You have asked as to the Feast in every Bahá’í month. This Feast is held to foster comradeship and love, to call God to mind and supplicate Him with contrite hearts, and to encourage benevolent pursuits. That is, the friends should there dwell upon God and glorify Him, read the prayers and holy verses, and treat one another with the utmost affection and love. Should trouble arise between two of the friends, let both be invited in and efforts made to compose their differences.

Let all discussion center on the doing of charitable acts and holy deeds, that laudable results may be the fruit thereof.1 (From a Tablet to an individual believer, translated from the Persian)

As to the Nineteen Day Feast, it rejoiceth mind and heart. If this feast be held in the proper fashion, the friends will, once in nineteen days, find themselves spiritually restored, and endued with a power that is not of this world. (Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, rev. ed., sec. 51, p. 91) (10)

Vigorous steps must be taken to establish the Nineteen Day reception throughout the whole community. Since this Feast is confined to believers only, conclusive proofs must there be set forth as to the people of the Bayán, so that newcomers, unaware of the situation, may be made aware of it. (From a Tablet to an individual believer, translated from the Persian) (13)

Thou hast written of that meeting held in the quarter

2. The Nineteen Day Feasts.
3. The agape or “love-feast” of the early Christians.

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where standeth the city gate of ‘Abdu’l-Azim. Do not call it a meeting. Call it a confluence of holy souls; a convocation of those who love the Lord; a retreat for the people of the All-Merciful; a palace-hall for all who sing His praise. For the members of that gathering are each one a lighted taper, and that council a mansion of the moon and stars. It hath been blessed by the Lord of all mankind, and hath made current the Feast as set forth in the Most Holy Book. (From a Tablet to an individual believer, translated from the Persian) (15)

And thou, O my dear daughter, stay thou at all times in close touch with my honored daughter, Mrs. ......, and be thou her friend. Rest you assured that the breathings of the Holy Spirit will loosen your tongue. Speak, therefore; speak out with great courage at every meeting. When you are about to begin your address, turn first to Bahá'u'lláh and ask for the confirmations of the Holy Spirit, then open your lips and say whatever is suggested to your heart; this, however, with the utmost courage, dignity and conviction. It is my hope that from day to day your gatherings will grow and flourish, and that those who are seeking after truth will hearken therein to reasoned arguments and conclusive proofs. I am with you heart and soul at every meeting; be sure of this.4

Hold you the Nineteen Day Feasts with utmost dignity. (From a Tablet to an individual believer, translated from the Persian) (16)

You must continue to keep the Nineteen Day Feast. It is very important; it is very good. But when you present yourselves in the meetings, before entering them, free yourselves from all that you have in your heart, free your thoughts and your minds from all else save God, and speak to your heart. That all may make this a gathering of love, make it the cause of illumination, make it a gathering of attraction of the hearts, surround this gathering with the Lights of the Supreme Concourse, so that you may be gathered together with the utmost love.

O God! Dispel all those elements which are the cause of discord, and prepare for us all those things which are the cause of unity and accord! O God! Descend upon us Heavenly Fragrance and change this gathering into a gathering of Heaven! Grant to us every benefit and every food. Prepare for us the Food of Love! Give to us the Food of Knowledge! Bestow upon us the Food of Heavenly Illumination!

In your hearts remember these things, and then enter the Unity Feast.

Each one of you must think how to make happy and pleased the other members of your Assembly, and each one must consider all those who are present as better and greater than himself, and each one must consider himself less than the rest. Know their station as high, and think of your own station as low. Should you act and live according to these behests, know verily, of a certainty, that that Feast is the Heavenly Food. That Supper is the “Lord's Supper”! I am the Servant of that gathering. ("Star of the West," vol. IV, no. 7, July 13, 1913, p. 120) (17)

The Nineteen Day Feast was inaugurated by the Báb and ratified by Bahá'u'lláh, in His Holy Book, the Akdás (sic), so that people may gather together and outwardly show fellowship and love, that the divine mysteries may be disclosed. The object is concord, that through this fellowship hearts may become perfectly united, and reciprocity and mutual helpfulness be established. Because the members of the world of humanity are unable to exist without being banded together, cooperation and mutual helpfulness is the basis of human society. Without the realization of these two great principles no great movement is pressed forward...

In brief, this is my hope: that the Nineteen Day Feast become the cause of great spiritual solidarity between the friends, that it may bring believers into the bond of unity, and we will then be so united together that love and wisdom will spread from this center to all parts. This Feast is a divine Feast. It is a Lord's supper. It attracts confirmation of God like a magnet. It is the cause of the enlightenment of hearts.

Every day great feasts and banquets are being spread with the object of material enjoyment and relish of food. People partake of certain delicacies and waters from various fountains, that they may have a good time. Balls and dances follow. All these are for the body, but this fellowship is of the enjoyment of God, for the partaking of spiritual food, for the elucidation of spiritual subjects, for the discussion and interpretation of the teachings and counsels of God. It is absolute spirituality.

It is my hope that the Nineteen Day Feast may become firmly established and organized so that the holy realities which are behind this meeting may leave behind all prejudices and conflict, and make their hearts as a treasury of love. Even if there is the slightest feeling between certain souls—a lack of love—it must be made to entirely disappear. There must be the utmost translucency and purity of intention.

They must enjoy the love of God, acquire the power for the promotion of the happiness of mankind and the Word of God. With such high mention must this Feast become an established institution. When they gather in this meeting, all those present must turn their faces toward the Kingdom of Abhá, and from their hearts supplicate, invoke and entertain toward the lofty throne, beg of God’s forgiveness for all shortcomings, read the teachings and arise to His service.

Then spread the feast and give refreshments. Assuredly great results will be the outcome of such meetings. Material and spiritual benefits will be assured. All who are present will be intoxicated with the breezes of the Love of God, and the Breath of the Holy Spirit will with tremendous power inspire the hearts.

If this meeting be established on such a rock, it will become a power which will attract heavenly confirmations, be the means of the appearance of the Light of God, and the reality of every subject will become unfolded. Such a meet-

ing will be under the protection of God. It is my hope that you will continually hold these meetings and that each time it will become more and more the center of all the virtues, the point for the effulgence of God.

May your hearts be enlightened!
May your faces become radiant!
May your spirits be illumined!
May your thoughts find wider range of vision!
May your susceptibilities be increased!
May the realm of God surround you, and may your hearts become the treasury of heaven!

This is my hope. (From a talk by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá given at a Nineteen Day Feast in London, England, December 29, 1912, quoted in “Bahá’í News Letter” no. 33, July 1929, pp. 1-2) (18)

2. The Threefold Feast Celebration

From the Writings of Shoghi Effendi

Still other factors promoting the development of that Order and contributing to its consolidation have been the systematic institution of the Nineteen Day Feast, functioning in most Bahá’í communities in East and West, with its threefold emphasis on the devotional, the administrative and the social aspects of Bahá’í community life. . . . (God Passes By, rev. ed. Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1987, p. 342) (19)

From Letters Written on Behalf of Shoghi Effendi

Regarding the nature of the Nineteen Day Feasts, the Guardian feels that the excellent statement on their nature, function and purpose published in one of the recent issues of the “News Letter” is so comprehensive and faithful in its presentation that he does not find it necessary to restate and enlarge upon the matter. He has no objection, however, if you feel the need to elaborate the thought expressed in that statement, stressing particularly the spiritual, administrative and social aspects of this vital Bahá’í institution. (Letter of September 6, 1933, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the U.S. and Canada, published in Bahá’í News no. 79, November 1933, p. 3) (20)

As to your question concerning the Bahá’í Feasts, Shoghi Effendi strongly feels that on such occasions the friends should emphasize both the spiritual and the administrative elements. For these are equally essential to the success of every Bahá’í festival. To maintain the right balance between them is, therefore, the duty and responsibility of every individual Bahá’í or group. Until the believers learn to combine the two, there can be no hope of their gaining any real and permanent benefit from such religious celebrations. A good part of the Feast must of course be devoted to the reading of the Holy Words. For it is through them that the friends can get the inspiration and the vision they need for the successful accomplishment of their work for the Cause. (May 27, 1934) (21)

With regard to your question concerning the Nineteen Day Feasts: These gatherings are no doubt of a special importance to the friends, as they have both a social and an administrative significance, and as such should be regularly attended by all confirmed believers. They should also be observed according to the Bahá’í calendar every nineteen days. (April 12, 1955) (22)

Concerning the nature of the Nineteen Day Feast: In the Aqdas, Bahá’u’lláh has clearly revealed the spiritual and social character of this institution. Its administrative significance, however, has been stressed by the Guardian in direct response to the growing needs of the Bahá’í community in this formative period of the Bahá’í Era for better training in the principles and practices of Bahá’í administration. (July 29, 1935, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the U.S. and Canada) (23)

Regarding the Nineteen Day Feast: in a previous letter to the National Spiritual Assembly the Guardian had made it clear that, although not a binding ordinance, this Feast has from the Guardian and the National Assembly. The third part is the material feast and social meeting of all the friends. Only voting believers are invited to attend the Nineteen Day Feasts, but young people of less than twenty-one years of age, who are declared believers, especially when members of a Bahá’í family, can also be present. These meetings may be regarded as the very heart of our Bahá’í community life. When properly conducted, and attended by a Bahá’í community which fully appreciates their importance, the Nineteen Day Feasts serve to renew and deepen our spirit of faith, increase our capacity for united action, remove misunderstandings and keep us fully informed of all important Bahá’í activities, local, national and international in scope. (Statement of the National Spiritual Assembly of the U.S. and Canada, published in Bahá’í News no. 75, July 1933, p. 8)
been regarded by Bahá'u'lláh as highly desirable and meritorious. In the *Aqdas* He has specially emphasized its spiritual and devotional character, and also its social importance in the Bahá'í community as a means for bringing about closer fellowship and unity among the believers. The administrative significance of this Feast has been stated by the Guardian in view of the increasing need among the friends for better training in the principles and methods of Bahá'í Administration.

The significance of the Nineteen Day Feast is thus threefold. It is a gathering of a devotional, social and administrative importance. When these three features are all combined, this Feast can and will surely yield the best and the maximum results. The friends, however, should be on their guard lest they overestimate the significance of this institution created by Bahá'u'lláh. They should also take care not to underrate or minimize its importance. (October 2, 1935, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the U.S. and Canada) (24)

He was very glad to know you are holding the Feasts, as these form a rallying-point for the friends and help to unite them and deepen them in the Faith. (March 5, 1946) (25)

*From Letters Written by or on Behalf of the Universal House of Justice*

A group, of course, is not an administrative body and there is no objection to the members of a group making decisions within their scope on any occasion when all of them happen to be together, even if this should be at a Nineteen Day Feast. The Nineteen Day Feast can only be an official administrative occasion where there is a local Spiritual Assembly to take charge of it, present reports to the friends, and receive their recommendations. But groups, spontaneous gatherings of the friends, and even isolated believers should certainly remember the day and say prayers together. In the case of a group, it may well hold the Feast in the manner in which a local Spiritual Assembly would do so, recognizing of course that it has no official administrative standing. (October 31, 1972, written by the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland) (26)

Regarding changing the order of the Feast, it is clear from Shoghi Effendi's instructions that the Nineteen Day Feast program should start with the spiritual part, and not with the social part, which includes refreshments, or breaking bread together. . . . However, if it is found that some sort of association among the friends or the serving of food and refreshments will be helpful, if this takes place at the outset, there is no objection to this practice, provided it is clear that it is not part of the Feast. (January 23, 1985, written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer) (27)

3. Feast Times

*From Letters Written on Behalf of Shoghi Effendi*

As to your question relative to the Nineteen Day Feast, Shoghi Effendi sees no objection if the friends choose to celebrate it on one of the intercalary days. They may also celebrate it during the month of fasting, provided they abstain from food. (August 2, 1934, to an individual believer) (28)

Your third question concerns the day on which the Feast should be held every month. The Guardian stated in reply that no special day has been fixed, but it would be preferable and most suitable if the gathering of the friends should be held on the first day of each Bahá'í month. (December 1, 1936, to an individual believer, translated from the Persian) (29)

Regarding the time for the holding of the Nineteen Day Feasts and elections: the Guardian would advise your Assembly to urge the friends to hold such gatherings on the prescribed day before sunset. If impossible, then it is permissible to hold them on the preceding day. In connection with the nine holy days, however, the friends should consider it obligatory to celebrate them on the prescribed day before sunset. (December 24, 1939, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the U.S. and Canada) (30)

The Naw-Rúz Feast should be held on March 21 before sunset and has nothing to do with the Nineteen Day Feast. The Nineteen Day Feast is administrative in function whereas the Naw-Rúz is our New Year, a Feast of hospitality and rejoicing. (July 5, 1950, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the U.S. and Canada) (31)

*From a Letter Written by the Universal House of Justice*

As to your questions concerning the times for Feasts and Holy Days: The Bahá'í Day is from sunset to sunset, therefore if in summer the sun sets too late to enable the Nineteen Day Feast to be held on the preceding evening, it should be held on the day itself. As long as the meeting begins before sunset it is considered to be held on the day which comes to an end with that sunset. Naturally, Nineteen Day Feasts should be held on the first day of the Bahá'í month if possible, but if it should be difficult to do so, for example if it coincides with a regular public meeting evening, it is permissible to hold it on the following day, i.e. on a succeeding day of the Bahá'í month. (June 23, 1964, to the National Spiritual Assembly of Finland) (32)

4. Feast Locations

*From Letters Written on Behalf of Shoghi Effendi to Individual Believers*

There is no objection to holding meetings in the open air as long as they are conducted with dignity. (November 22, 1941) (33)

Each city will have its own Spiritual Assembly, not a number of district ones. Naturally, district Nineteen Day Feasts can be held where there are very many Bahá'ís in one city. (March 31, 1949) (34)

The matter of where the Nineteen Day Feasts should be held is certainly one for the Spiritual Assembly to decide; but the Hazíratu'l-Quds seems the logical place on most occasions. Until the friends have a place of worship in ....... this building will also be used for devotional meetings, as well as for administrative purposes.

If, under some circumstances, some special Feast is of-
ferred in the home of one of the believers, with the approval of the Spiritual Assembly, there can be no objection; but, generally speaking, he feels it is better to use the Haziratu'l-Quds. (February 18, 1954) (35)

From Letters Written by or on Behalf of the Universal House of Justice

We understand and appreciate the problems involved in the holding of Nineteen Day Feasts in the large cities such as New York and Los Angeles, and we have no objection to your Assembly authorizing the local Assembly to provide for the holding of the Feast in different localities as an experiment, if the local Assembly so wishes, bearing in mind the following precautions:

The tendency in metropolitan areas is toward segregation, and therefore the local Assembly should be alert to prevent a similar pattern developing in Bahá’í meetings by reason of the location of the Feast.

The local Assembly should be watchful that neither the unity of the community nor control by the local Assembly is dissipated by this practice. (January 23, 1967, written by the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States) (36)

Your letter of August 9th posing the problem of holding Nineteen Day Feasts and other Bahá’í activities in the two communities... which have grown so large that it is impossible to conduct such activities in homes is welcomed by us, and we hope you will meet this problem before long in other communities.

We leave it to your discretion as to whether these large communities should purchase adequate facilities to accommodate the believers at Feasts and other Bahá’í activities, rent facilities, or hold several simultaneous Feasts, still utilizing homes. (Written by the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska, August 21, 1972) (37)

Difficulties of traveling to the Nineteen Day Feasts, and other occasions, which may be met in certain parishes can generally speaking, he feels it is better to use the Haziratu'l-Quds. (February 18, 1954) be overcome by your authorizing the local Assembly in such a parish to hold more than one Feast within its area. There is no need to establish rigid boundaries for such a purpose, and the friends should be allowed to attend the Feast in their parish most convenient to them; but all should note that every Feast in the area is a portion of the same Feast under the jurisdiction of the local Spiritual Assembly. Occasions should be provided for the entire Bahá’í community of the parish to meet together, and Feast days need not be excluded from such occasions. (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Barbados and the Windward Islands, January 14, 1980) (38)

As to the question of holding meetings to commemorate Bahá’í Holy Days on a regional basis, the House of Justice has ruled that it may be desirable in certain areas for the believers in neighboring localities to join together with other communities in observing Holy Days and certain events. Such matters should be referred to and determined by National Spiritual Assemblies. Observance of the Nineteen Day Feasts and other local activities, however, should be held in the respective civil areas. (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, March 20, 1986) (39)

The problems implied by your inquiry are not insurmountable. For instance, the local Spiritual Assembly could be authorized to appoint an administrative committee in each of a number of sub-units of the city; and these committees could deal with the urgent needs of the friends in these areas on behalf of the Assembly; and if found desirable, the Spiritual Assembly could authorize the holding of separate Nineteen Day Feasts in several sub-units. In such a decentralized system, the local Spiritual Assembly would have to provide for the over-all coordination of the efforts of the friends in all sub-units of the city.

The sub-division of the city should be seen merely as an administrative necessity meant to serve the good of the whole community; in this sense, the Assembly should guard strenuously against creating too many sub-units, contenting itself with the minimum action in this respect. Given the racial and social stratification of large cities, the Spiritual Assembly would also have to exert the utmost care not to allow the Bahá’í community of... to become, in effect, racially or socially fragmented, even though one race or stratum of society may be dominant in a sub-unit of the city. One of the questions that should remain uppermost in the minds of the Assembly, the committees and the individual friends is how to uphold at all times, through their functions and deeds, the primary principle and goal of our Faith, namely, the unity of the human race. (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, December 20, 1987) (40)

5. Attendance of Believers at the Feast

From Letters Written on Behalf of Shoghi Effendi

In regard to the Nineteen Day Feasts, Shoghi Effendi is of the opinion that the believers should be impressed with the importance of attending these gatherings which, in addition to their spiritual significance, constitute a vital medium for maintaining close and continued contact between the believers themselves, and also between them and the body of their elected representatives in the local community.

No radical action, such as the expulsion of any believer from the community, should... be taken in case anyone fails to attend these Feasts. It is for every individual believer to realize what the Cause requires from him in this matter. Any threat or menace can be of no avail, unless it is based on an appeal to individual conscience and responsibility. (December 22, 1934) (41)

7. To individual believers except where noted.
Also regarding the Nineteen Day Feasts: these are not strictly obligatory, but the believers should endeavor to regularly attend them, mainly for the following two reasons: first, because they foster the spirit of service and fellowship in the community and secondly, in view of the fact that they afford the believers a splendid opportunity to fully discuss the affairs of the Cause and to find ways and means for continued improvement in the conduct of Bahá’í activities. (November 30, 1936) (42)

Attendance at Nineteen Day Feasts is not obligatory, but highly desirable, and effort should be made by the friends not to deprive themselves of this spiritual and communal rallying-point once in every Bahá’í month. (December 23, 1948) (43)

The Guardian has never heard of any ruling by which a believer who does not attend three consecutive Nineteen Day Feasts can be deprived of his voting rights. He does not consider that such action is justifiable at all. The whole question is whether a person considers himself a Bahá’í or not, and is willing to adhere to the principles of the Faith and accept the authority of the Guardian and the Administration—whether that individual is able, or always in a condition psychologically to attend Feasts and Bahá’í meetings is an entirely different subject. If a person makes it quite clear that they do not wish to be considered an active member of the Bahá’í community and be affiliated with it and exert their voting right, then their name should be removed from the voting list; but if a person considers himself or herself a Bahá’í, and for various reasons is not able to be active in the affairs of the community, then they should certainly not be removed from our voting list, least of all at present, when the number of the Bahá’í community is so small. (To the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany and Austria, March 2, 1951) (44)

He fully appreciates the difficult position your Assembly will be placed in if you adhere to the principle that the members of an Assembly and voting members of a community must live within the civic limits. However, he feels that Paris can be no exception to this general rule which he wishes the Bahá’ís to adhere to ALL OVER THE WORLD, in spite of any temporary inconvenience it may cause.

This does not mean that the Bahá’ís of Paris living outside the civic limits should not attend the Nineteen Day Feast and the Bahá’í Holy Days; on the contrary, they should take an active part in the affairs of the community in the sense of assisting with the teaching work, while at the same time not being active in the administrative work. He feels sure that in the end you will find that, far from having been weakened, your community will grow and be strengthened by this adherence to principle. (To the local Spiritual Assembly of Paris, France, February 20, 1953) (45)

It is inconceivable and wholly inadmissible that any Bahá’ís in a community should be permitted to hold a Feast in their home and refuse admission to another believer; and your Assembly should write accordingly in very strong terms to the .... Assembly, pointing out that the Guardian is not only surprised to learn of this situation, but disapproves of it in the strongest terms.


From Letters Written by or on Behalf of the Universal House of Justice

In reply to your letter of November 8th we feel that all friends, whatever their circumstances, should be encouraged to observe the Nineteen Day Feast. Obviously it can only be an official administrative occasion where there is a local Spiritual Assembly to take charge of it, present reports to the friends, and receive their recommendations. But groups, spontaneous gatherings of friends, and even isolated believers should certainly remember the day and say prayers together. In the case of a group it may well hold the Feast in the manner in which a local Spiritual Assembly would do so, recognizing of course that it has no official administrative standing.

As to visitors to a Nineteen Day Feast, Bahá’ís from anywhere in the world should of course be warmly welcomed, and may take part in consultation. However, only members of the local community can vote on recommendations to the local Spiritual Assembly. (Written by the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles, December 1, 1968) (47)

It is not quite correct to say that a Nineteen Day Feast is changed into a Unity Feast as a result of the presence of non-Bahá’ís. What can happen is that the consultative portion of the Feast has to be postponed . . .

If it is decided to postpone part or all of the consultative portion of the Feast, the House of Justice states that it is within the discretion of the local Spiritual Assembly to decide whether another meeting should be held during the Bahá’í month to complete it, or whether it can be postponed until the following Nineteen Day Feast. (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany, September 5, 1983) (48)

A Bahá’í who is visiting another community may participate fully in the consultation of the Nineteen Day Feast, but has no right to vote on recommendations being made to the local Spiritual Assembly. Out of courtesy, however, a visitor would normally refrain from taking too much time of the consultation.

Any Bahá’í, whether an isolated believer or a member of a local community or group, may convey his suggestions and recommendations to the National Spiritual Assembly at any time and thus take part in the consultative aspect of Bahá’í community life. Isolated believers and the members of groups may also, of course, attend the Nineteen Day Feasts of communities when they wish to. (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, July 23, 1985) (49)

With respect to your question asking whether a local Spiritual Assembly may cancel its Nineteen Day Feast in order
to attend Feast in another community, the House of Justice advises that the Nineteen Day Feast should not be canceled. However, there is no objection to two or more local communities holding a joint Nineteen Day Feast occasionally, although it is not proper to allow such joint Feasts to be held on a regular basis. If members of a community find that the plan to hold such a joint Feast would produce inconvenience to them, they should take the matter up with their local Spiritual Assembly. (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, April 26, 1987) (50)

6. Restrictions Upon Feast Attendance

From Letters Written on Behalf of Shoghi Effendi

As regards your question concerning the Nineteen Day Feasts: this is really a matter of secondary importance, and should be decided by the Assembly; meetings which have been publicly advertised for a certain date cannot, obviously, be canceled. As to non-Bahá’ís attending: this should by all means be avoided, but if non-believers come to a Nineteen Day Feast, they should not be put out, as this might hurt their feelings. (September 21, 1946, to two believers) (51)

The beloved Guardian has instructed me to write you concerning an action recently taken by your National Assembly, as published in your January-February Bahá’í News, that non-Bahá’ís may attend the Nineteen Day Feasts if “the earnestness of their interest in the Faith” is vouched for by a declared believer.

The Guardian wishes me to direct your attention to the fact that none of the institutions of the Faith nor its cardinal principles may be changed under any circumstances.

The Nineteen Day Feast is an institution of the Cause, first established by the Bab, later confirmed by Bahá’u’lláh, and now made a prominent part of the administrative order of the Faith. These Nineteen Day Feasts are for the Bahá’ís, and the Bahá’ís exclusively, and no variation from this principle is permitted.

Thus the Guardian feels you should rescind the action taken by your Assembly in opening the Feasts to “near Bahá’ís,” as it is not consistent with the spirit of the administrative order for non-Bahá’ís or near Bahá’ís. (To the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany and Austria, May 28, 1954) (52)

From Letters Written by or on Behalf of the Universal House of Justice

The principle universally applicable is that non-Bahá’ís are not invited to the Nineteen Day Feast. If in Persia it has happened that non-Bahá’ís are present at a Nineteen Day Feast this is an exception and not a rule.

It is well understood in Persia that if a non-Bahá’í should inadvertently attend a Nineteen Day Feast he would be treated courteously. However, it is equally important for the friends to understand that they should refrain from inviting non-Bahá’ís to these special gatherings, ordained by Bahá’u’lláh not only for spiritual refreshment and unity, but also for consultation between the Spiritual Assembly and the body of believers on the domestic affairs of the community. (Written by the Universal House of Justice to a local Spiritual Assembly, February 4, 1974) (53)

In reply to your memorandum of November 16, 1975, requesting elucidation of a statement from the Guardian published on page 367 of Volume IV of “Amr va Khaliq,” . . . later instructions of the beloved Guardian clearly forbid attendance at the Nineteen Day Feast by those deprived of their voting rights. (Written by the Universal House of Justice to the International Teaching Centre, November 24, 1975) (54)

The main thing to remember is that a group is not an administrative institution within the Bahá’í Administrative Order; it is, however, the embryo of a local Spiritual Assembly while remaining under the direct authority of the National Spiritual Assembly should obviously be encouraged to prepare itself for the time when it will establish that divine institution. There is no objection whatever to its electing officers such as a secretary, chairman and treasurer, holding Nineteen Day Feasts and observances of the Holy Days, undertaking teaching and extension work, so long as it is always understood that the directive authority is the National Spiritual Assembly and not the group itself. (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Paraguay, June 13, 1974) (55)

It can be explained, in a friendly manner, that the Nineteen Day Feast is an entirely private religious and domestic occasion for the Bahá’í community when its internal affairs are discussed and its members meet for personal fellowship and worship. No great issue should be made of it for there is certainly nothing secret about the Feast but it is organized for Bahá’ís only. (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Belgium, November 4, 1976) (56)

Regarding the Nineteen Day Feast, the principle universally applicable is that non-Bahá’ís are not invited to attend, and if you are asked about this you can explain that the nature of the Feast is essentially domestic and administrative. During the period of consultation the Bahá’ís should be able to enjoy perfect freedom to express their views on the work of the Cause, unembarrassed by the feeling that all

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they are saying is being heard by someone who has not accepted Bahá'u'lláh and who might thereby gain a very distorted picture of the Faith. It would also be very embarrassing for any sensitive non-Bahá'í to find himself plunged into the midst of a discussion of the detailed affairs of a Bahá'í community of which he is not a part. A non-Bahá'í who asks to be invited to a Feast will usually understand if this matter is explained to him. (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, August 12, 1981) (57)

The following guidance on this subject was sent to a believer on March 24, 1970, by the House of Justice:

... when a non-Bahá'í does appear at a Feast he should not be asked to leave; rather the Assembly should omit the consultative part of the Feast, and the non-Bahá'í should be made welcome. . . .

No doubt you are familiar with this instruction. Likewise, occasionally if the Feast is held in the home of the family where the spouse is not a Bahá'í, it would be discourteous not to allow the non-Bahá'í member of the family to attend at least the social and spiritual parts of the Feast. (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia, January 8, 1985) (58)

... if a non-Bahá'í does appear at a Nineteen Day Feast he should be made to feel welcome, but a Bahá'í should certainly not invite a non-Bahá'í to attend.

From all of the foregoing it can be seen that, basically, the resolution of this difficulty is a matter of loving education. (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, January 23, 1985) (59)

7. Youth and Children at Feasts

From Letters Written by or on Behalf of the Universal House of Justice

Concerning your inquiry asking if children under 15 of non-Bahá'í parents could attend Nineteen Day Feasts or other events held exclusively for Bahá'ís when the children consider themselves as Bahá'ís, such children may be permitted to attend Bahá'í functions provided their parents have given their consent. This applies only, of course, to children under the age of 15 years. (Written by the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Nicaragua, August 4, 1970) (60)

Concerning the declaration of young people under the age of 18, . . . we can accept a child of the age of 15 and over as a Bahá'í even if his parents do not consent and this remains true even though according to the law of Finland they cannot be officially transferred to the Bahá'í register. You should not, therefore, exclude such believers from the Nineteen Day Feasts. However, although such young believers should not be swayed from their belief by their parents' objections, they should, in view of the stress that the Teachings place upon the respect due to parents and in view of the law in Finland, obey their parents as far as taking part in Bahá'í activities is concerned. Their aim should be to gradually awaken in their parents' hearts the same love for Bahá'u'lláh that has fired their own and not to antagonize their parents needlessly or contribute in any way to disharmony in their families at this crucial point in their development. (Written by the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Finland, March 1, 1972) (61)

The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of October 11, 1976, inquiring whether children placed in the home of Bahá'ís for temporary or prolonged care are permitted to attend Bahá'í functions, and we have been asked to inform you that such children may be permitted to attend the Nineteen Day Feasts and other Bahá'í functions, and that no distinction should be made between them and the children of Bahá'ís in this regard. (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a Bahá'í group, October 31, 1976)

... the House of Justice has instructed us to say that children should be trained to understand the spiritual significance of the gatherings of the followers of the Blessed Beauty, and to appreciate the honor and bounty of being able to take part in them, whatever their outward form may be. It is realized that some Bahá'í observances are lengthy and it is difficult for very small children to remain quiet for so long. In such cases one or other of the parents may have to miss part of the meeting in order to care for the child. The Spiritual Assembly can also perhaps help the parents by providing for a child's observance, suited to their capacities, in a separate room during part of the community's observance. Attendance at the whole of the adult celebration thus becomes a sign of growing maturity and a distinction to be earned by good behavior.

In any case, the House of Justice points out that parents are responsible for their children and should make them behave when they attend Bahá'í meetings. If children persist in creating a disturbance they should be taken out of the meeting. This is not merely necessary to ensure the properly dignified conduct of Bahá'í meetings but is an aspect of the training of children in courtesy, consideration for others, reverence, and obedience to their parents. (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, October 14, 1982) (63)

It would not be administratively proper for a Bahá'í youth under 21 years of age to act as chairman of the Nineteen Day Feast. However, no great issue should be made of this as it is a purely minor matter. (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Italy, February 22, 1984) (64)

In response to the question you have raised in your letter of October 18, 1984, concerning the place of children in the community, especially with regard to Nineteen Day Feasts, we are asked to share with you the following quotation from a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Assembly on the subject:

"Since children of Bahá'í parents are considered to be Bahá'ís, they are to be encouraged to attend all Feasts, there to share the reading of the Writings and prayers and be bathed in the spirit of the community. It is the hope of the House of Justice that every Feast will be a feast of love when the children will give and receive the tangible affection of the community and its individual members."
The House of Justice noted the suggestion you have made about holding Feasts on a weekend close to the first day of the Bahá’í month to facilitate the attendance of children and their parents. This is a matter for the local Assembly to discuss and decide upon. . . . (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, November 22, 1984) (65)

8. The Feast Celebration: Prayers and Scriptural Readings

From Letters Written on Behalf of Shoghi Effendi 8

With regard to your question concerning the use of music in the Nineteen Day Feasts, he wishes you to assure all the friends that he not only approves of such a practice, but thinks it even advisable that the believers should make use in their meetings of hymns composed by Bahá’ís themselves, and also of such hymns, poems and chants as are based on the Holy Words. (April 1935) (66)

Regarding your questions: the devotional part of the Nineteen Day Feast means the reading of prayers by Bahá’u’lláh and the Master. If, after this, there is a period of reading of the teachings, his (the Guardian’s) writings may be included, but this does not form part of the devotional aspect of the meeting. (December 15, 1947) (67)

Regarding the question you asked him about the Bahá’í sacred writings: these should be regarded as the writings of the Báb, Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and only these should be read during the purely devotional part of the Feast. (May 11, 1948, to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand) (68)

During the devotional part of the Nineteen Day Feast any part of the writings of the Báb, Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and only these are sacred scriptures. This part of the meeting need not be confined to prayers, though prayers can and should be read during it. (October 18, 1948) (69)

The question regarding the devotional part of the Feast has been obscured because once he used the term “devotional” in its strict sense, which of course means prayer, and once loosely, in the sense in which the Bahá’ís usually understand it, and that is the meeting together and reading from the teachings which precedes the administrative—or consultative—aspect of the Nineteen Day Feast. The two statements in no way change the method of holding this part of the Feast which, in the East at any rate, is always opened during it. (October 18, 1948) (70)

Music is permitted during the spiritual part—or any part—of the Nineteen Day Feast. (June 30, 1952, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States) (71)

If an individual has a teaching appointment on the same evening as a Nineteen Day Feast, it is left to the individual to judge which is the most important.

Regarding the questions you raised in your letter:

First, he feels that, although in principle there is certainly no reason why excerpts from other Sacred Scriptures should not be read in the spiritual part of our Feasts, as this is particularly an occasion when Bahá’ís get together to deepen their own spiritual life, it is, generally speaking, advisable for them to read from their own holy Writings in the spiritual part of the Feast. (February 18, 1954) (72)

The Writings of the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh can certainly be read at any time at any place; likewise the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá are read freely during the spiritual part of the Feast. The Guardian has instructed that during the spiritual part of the Feast, his own writings should not be read. In other words, during the spiritual part of the Feast, readings should be confined to the Writings of the Báb, Bahá’u’lláh and, to a lesser extent, of the Master; but during that part of the Feast the Guardian’s writings should not be read. During the period of administrative discussion of the Feast, then the Guardian’s writings may be read. Of course during the administrative part of the Feast there can be no objection to the reading of the Writings of the Báb, Bahá’u’lláh or ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. (April 27, 1956) (73)

Instrumental music may be used at the Bahá’í Feasts.

There is no objection to showing appreciation by the clapping of hands.

If an individual has a teaching appointment on the same evening as a Nineteen Day Feast, it is left to the individual to judge which is the most important. (August 20, 1956) (74)

From Letters Written by the Universal House of Justice

We have noted in your Minutes of 27 December, page 1, a statement, “It was agreed to advise the friends in .... that it was not correct to sing a song composed by a Bahá’í at the devotional part of the Nineteen Day Feast.”

It is not clear what your framework of reference for consultation happened to be, nor if a direct question was referred to your National Assembly for decision. However, we feel it will be helpful to you to know that songs whose words are the primary Writings of the Báb, Bahá’u’lláh or ‘Abdu’l-Bahá are all quite fitting for the devotional portion of the Feast. Indeed, the Persian chants are such songs, out of a different tradition; they are a way of giving music to the Holy Word, and each person who chants does it in a way which mirrors his feeling and expression of the Words he is uttering. As for songs whose words are poetic and the composition of persons other than the Figures of the Faith, these may be desirable but in their proper place, for, as you know, “music is the language of the spirit.”

Inasmuch as the spirit of our gathering is so much affected by the tone and quality of our worship, of our feeling and appreciation of the Word of God for this day, we would

8. To individual believers except where noted.
hope that you would encourage the most beautiful possible expression of the human spirits in your communities, through music among other modes of feeling. (February 22, 1971, to the National Spiritual Assembly of Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana) (75)

Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the Persian writings of Shoghi Effendi are unique in nature, and many of them, unlike his English letters and messages addressed to the western believers, are interspersed with supplications, prayers and homilies of a devotional character which are suitable for the spiritual part of Bahá'í Feasts. (October 15, 1972, to an individual believer) (76)

(See also extract 70, referring to the use of the Guardian's Persian writings in the devotional portion of the Feast in Eastern Bahá'í communities.)

9. The Feast Celebration: Consultation

From Letters Written on Behalf of Shoghi Effendi

The main purpose of the Nineteen Day Feasts is to enable individual believers to offer any suggestion to the local Assembly, which in its turn will pass it to the National Spiritual Assembly. The local Assembly is, therefore, the proper medium through which local Bahá'í communities can communicate with the body of the national representatives. The Convention should be regarded as a temporary gathering, having certain specific functions to perform during a limited period of time. Its status is thus limited in time to the Convention sessions, the function of consultation at all other times being vested in the entire body of the believers through the local Spiritual Assemblies. (November 18, 1933, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada) (77)

The chief opportunity which the friends have for discussion on administrative questions is during the Nineteen Day Feasts, at which time the members of the Assembly can meet with the body of the believers and discuss in common the affairs of the Cause, and suggest new policies and methods. But even then no reference to individuals should be made. (March 27, 1938, to an individual believer) (78)

Now with reference to your last dear letter in which you had asked whether the believers have the right to openly express their criticism of any Assembly action or policy: it is not only the right, but the vital responsibility of every loyal and intelligent member of the community to offer fully and frankly, but with due respect and consideration to the authority of the Assembly, any suggestion, recommendation or criticism he conscientiously feels he should in order to improve and remedy certain existing conditions or trends in his local community, and it is the duty of the Assembly also to give careful consideration to any such views submitted to them by any one of the believers. The best occasion chosen for this purpose is the Nineteen Day Feast, which, besides its social and spiritual aspects, fulfills various administrative needs and requirements of the community, chief among them being the need for open and constructive criticism and deliberation regarding the state of affairs within the local Bahá'í community.

But again it should be stressed that all criticisms and discussions of a negative character which may result in undermining the authority of the Assembly as a body should be strictly avoided. For otherwise the order of the Cause itself will be endangered, and confusion and discord will reign in the community. (December 13, 1939, to an individual believer) (79)

The Bahá'ís must learn to forget personalities and to overcome the desire—so natural in people—to take sides and fight about it. They must also learn to really make use of the great principle of consultation. There is a time set aside at the Nineteen Day Feasts for the community to express its views and make suggestions to its Assembly; the Assembly and the believers should look forward to this happy period of discussion, and neither fear it nor suppress it. Likewise the Assembly members should fully consult, and in their decisions put the interests of the Cause first and not personalities, the will of the majority prevailing. (June 30, 1949, to the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany and Austria) (80)

From Letters Written by or on Behalf of the Universal House of Justice

As you no doubt realize by this time, enrolling large numbers of new believers in a short period of time brings with it many problems of consolidation, but we are certain that you will be able to handle these problems and move on to even greater achievements.

We note from reading your minutes that the enthusiasm of some of the new believers is being tested by the reading of long, wordy letters at Nineteen Day Feasts, and we think that something should be done about this. While it is important that the believers be informed about important messages from the Holy Land and other important items, it is true that the reading of messages at Nineteen Day Feasts can become a very boring and trying experience particularly for new believers not acquainted with many aspects of Bahá'í administration. We think you should consider other ways and means by which believers could be informed of vital and necessary information, such as through bulletins, institutes and other meetings. (Written by the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands, September 6, 1971) (81)

As cited in Article IV of the By-Laws of a Local Spiritual Assembly, “While retaining the sacred right of final decision in all matters pertaining to the Bahá'í community, the Spiritual Assembly shall ever seek the advice and consultation of all members of the community, keep the community informed of all its affairs, and invite full and free discussion on the part of the community of all matters affecting the Faith.”

The actual voting on recommendations made at Nineteen Day Feasts to decide whether they should be forwarded to the local Assembly is a secondary matter which may be left for decision by the local Spiritual Assemblies themselves. It is not prohibited that the local Assembly secretary record suggestions made at Nineteen Day Feasts for consideration by the Assembly. The important point to keep in mind is the provision made in the By-Laws as mentioned above.
either adopt a uniform procedure for local Assemblies to follow, or leave the matter to the discretion of the local By-Laws and is a secondary matter left to the discretion of the representative of the Spiritual Assembly presides during the period of consultation. However, this is not specified in the Spiritual Assembly of Argentina, July 25, 1984) (86)

See the roles of the chairman and vice-chairman for meetings of the Assembly. (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom, September 16, 1979) (83)

As a local Spiritual Assembly is responsible for the organization of Nineteen Day Feasts, and is expected to make a report of its activities to the community at the Feast, in addition to responding to suggestions submitted to it, a local Assembly should meet at least once a Bahá’í month. However, the Universal House of Justice does not wish to draw hard and fast rules in this matter, and prefers to leave this question to the discretion of each National Assembly.

If a local community, under the direction of its local Assembly, observes Nineteen Day Feasts regularly, and it occasionally has a joint Feast with one or more other communities, you may credit in your statistics each Assembly for having held its own Nineteen Day Feast. You, of course, realize that joint Feasts do not fulfill the purpose of the Nineteen Day Feast in its strict sense, and should not become a regular practice among the friends. (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Transkei, February 15, 1982) (84)

If the friends at a Nineteen Day Feast agree with a recommendation, either unanimously or by a majority, it constitutes a recommendation from the Feast to the Assembly. On the other hand, if an individual believer makes a suggestion that other friends do not take up, it may still be considered by the Assembly. . . . (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany, July 27, 1982) (85)

There are a number of factors involved in understanding the nature of appropriate interaction between a believer and his or her local Spiritual Assembly during the consultative part of the Nineteen Day Feast. Chief among these is an appreciation of the purpose of this most important Institution of the Cause. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá described the Feast in these terms:

“This Feast is a bringer of joy. It is the groundwork of agreement and unity. It is the key to affection and fellowship. It diffuseth the oneness of mankind.” (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Argentina, July 25, 1984) (86)

(See also extract 4)

The By-Laws of a Local Spiritual Assembly clearly imply the roles of the chairman and vice-chairman for meetings of the Assembly. For Feasts, the chairman or an appointed representative of the Spiritual Assembly presides during the period of consultation. However, this is not specified in the By-Laws and is a secondary matter left to the discretion of the National Assembly in each country; that Assembly may either adopt a uniform procedure for local Assemblies to follow, or leave the matter to the discretion of the local Assembly itself. . . . (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, December 23, 1986) (87)

10. The Feast Celebration: Socializing

From a Memorandum Written by the Universal House of Justice

We can understand the desire of some of the friends to provide a warm welcome at the Feasts to newly declared believers and particularly youth, and we see no objection to the Assembly giving a reception before the actual Feast to achieve this purpose. As the Feast is frequently held in the evening, the Assembly might consider it desirable to arrange for the believers to have a light evening meal together before the Feast is held or it could, for example, arrange for social activities of an appropriate kind while the friends are gathering prior to the actual commencement of the Nineteen Day Feast. This should not, however, take the place of the social part of the Feast itself. (January 21, 1973, to the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land) (88)

11. The Blending of Cultures in the Feast Celebration

From Letters Written by or on Behalf of the Universal House of Justice

We have considered your letter of March 11, 1970, concerning the difficulties you are experiencing in getting the Indian believers on reservations to hold regular Nineteen Day Feasts.

In applying instructions about Nineteen Day Feasts, as well as other matters of administration, to indigenous believers it is important that the process of weaning them away from the old forms should be accomplished gradually so as not to destroy their spirit, and your Assembly should not be too rigid in these matters. (Written by the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, April 3, 1970) (89)

The International Teaching Centre has sent us a copy of your letter of 10 October 1982 asking about language problems brought about by the influx of Iranians who do not understand English. It is important that the Iranian friends be encouraged to make the effort to learn the language used in the country and become integrated into the life and activities of the community. The Nineteen Day Feasts and other official gatherings of the friends should be conducted in whatever is the conventional local language. This does not mean, of course, that at such gatherings some of the readings could not be in the language of the immigrants, or that, if these friends so wish, some classes and conferences may not be held and conducted in their own language for their benefit. The essential thing is, as stated above, to promote the integration of the immigrants into the community and avoid feelings of estrangement or disunity on account of language. (Written by the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, November 10, 1982) (90)

The local Spiritual Assembly of . . . . is correct in its decision to conduct the Nineteen Day Feasts in Spanish and not translate the proceedings in Persian, especially in view
of the fact that some of the Spanish friends are becoming alienated from the community. Although the Iranian believers should make every effort to attend the Nineteen Day Feasts, they should not expect such meetings to be conducted in Persian. They should try to learn Spanish, particularly if they are planning to make their home in Spain. There is no objection, however, to Persian friends if they so wish having special meetings for fellowship and deepening conducted in Persian. (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Spain, February 6, 1983) (91)

You have asked for suggestions regarding the preparation of the handbook on Bahá’í Holy Days which you are planning to publish. It is important that notwithstanding whatever details you set forth therein, it be made clear that the contents do not constitute procedures that must be rigidly adhered to. Dignity and reverence befitting the occasion should obviously characterize observances of Bahá’í Holy Days by the friends, but this does not mean that cultural traditions which do not contravene Bahá’í principles may not, and cannot, find expression in the local observances and meetings of the friends. (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, August 1, 1983) (92)

In answer to your question about the presence of pets during Bahá’í meetings in homes in Europe, the House of Justice asks us to explain that the European attitude to pets is very different from that of the people of, for example, North Africa, and that this is a minor matter of which no issue should be made. (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, August 29, 1983) (93)

Whatever linguistic problems exist, the House of Justice welcomes the holding of special classes and gatherings for the Iranian friends in addition to the regular community meetings, so that they will have the opportunity to study the Holy Writings in their own language and will be kept informed of what is going on in the Bahá’í community of Canada. Nineteen Day Feasts and local Spiritual Assembly meetings should be conducted in English or French, as the case may be, since these are the languages of your country. If, however, it is possible to make arrangements for the Iranians who have not yet learned the language to benefit in some way from the topics discussed at such meetings without interfering with the smooth running of the meetings, this factor could be taken into consideration. (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, February 7, 1984) (94)

The House of Justice has given the advice to Spiritual Assemblies faced with questions of possible conflict between tribal practices and Bahá’í law, that such Assemblies should distinguish between aspects of tribal community life which are related to fundamental laws (such as monogamy) and matters of lesser importance, from which the friends can and should extricate themselves gradually. Furthermore, the House of Justice has offered the advice that:

“‘The institutions of the Faith should be careful not to press the friends to arbitrarily discard those local traditions which are harmless and often colorful characteristics of particular peoples and tribes. Were a new Bahá’í suddenly to cease following the customs of his people, it is possible that they might misunderstand the true nature of the Bahá’í Faith, and the Bahá’ís could be regarded as having turned against the traditions of the land . . . .” (Written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to two believers, October 25, 1987) (95)
Update on the availability of ‘The Promise of World Peace’ to the peoples of the world

In the less than four years since the Universal House of Justice addressed “The Promise of World Peace” to the peoples of the world, this statement of assurance and challenge has been extensively disseminated throughout the world to incalculable numbers of people at all levels of society, from Heads of State to individuals in the farthest reaches of the planet.

Today, “The Promise of World Peace” is available to the peoples of the world in no less than 93 languages, through printed publications in at least 87 languages, and audio cassettes in at least 12 languages. The diversity of the world’s population has required that, for the message of the peace statement to be understood, it must be conveyed in a form that is suited to the capacity of each recipient. This process is well under way, as indicated by the various language editions of “The Promise of World Peace” which have been received at the Bahá’í World Centre and which appear in the summary listing below:

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Special editions of “The Promise of World Peace” are generally bound and of a quality appropriate for special presentations. Audio-visual versions based on extracts of the peace statement are available in video format. A slide/tape version has also been produced in Spanish. Some publications of the peace statement have been prepared for specific audiences, such as children or youth, for dissemination through commercial book dealers. Several editions include supplemental material, such as quotations, a study guide, an index or information about the Bahá’í Faith.

Bahá’í World Centre, Department of Statistics, September 1989
Women's Conference in Australia

"Finding Common Ground" was the theme of a conference for indigenous women held last July 7-12 in Adelaide, Australia.

Six Bahá'í women attended including Heather Pym and Safoura Chittleborough who had helped to organize the event through their involvement as Bahá'í appointees to South Australia's United Nations Committee on the Status of Women.

The conference itself, funded by UNESCO, served as a sequel to the forum on the End of the Decade for Women held in 1985 in Nairobi, Kenya. Its main purpose was to provide an arena for consultation in which women could develop strategies to address their common needs and concerns.

More than 1,000 people attended the conference, the majority of whom were Australian Aboriginals. Also attending were indigenous women from the Torres Strait Islands, New Zealand, the Pacific islands, the Soviet Union, Sweden, Norway, Northern Ireland, the Philippines, Japan, and North and South America.

The National Bahá'í Women's Committee of Australia, represented at the conference by Madge Williams, sent flowers and a message which was read to the delegates. Both the flowers and message were warmly received.

The Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone and his wife, Madge, were among those attending the first intensive teaching institute ever held for Aboriginal people in Australia.

Fifty-five people attended the recent gathering, of whom 25 were of Aboriginal and Islander descent while the rest included Indians, Persians and Maoris as well as other Australians. The indigenous friends took an active part, asking many questions.

Pakistan

A free medical camp, organized by the Bahá'í Youth Committee of Rawalpindi, was held last June 30 in the village of Khakree Slaktheer, near Murree, Pakistan.

Helping at the camp were Dr. Farhad Mashreqi, nurses Surraya and Parveen Ghani, Auxiliary Board member Iqbal Imani, and Dr. Muneer, a non-Bahá'í physician from Holy Family Hospital.

The camp opened with prayers and readings from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá concerning service to humanity, after which some 60 patients were given free medical treatment.

The service is provided every two weeks under the sponsorship of the Spiritual Assembly of Karachi.

Dr. Zeeba Faroughi prescribes medicine for a patient she has examined during a free Bahá'í-run medical camp on Bhit Island near Karachi, Pakistan.

Honduras

"Project Muhájir," which began in January in Honduras, has so far visited five Garifuna Bahá'í communities to teach, deepen and proclaim the Faith. At the end of the week the aim in each community is for the team to have enrolled new Bahá'ís, established children's classes, ensured the observance of the Nineteen Day Feasts, and trained several key people to carry on its activities. Return visits are planned to reinforce the efforts and continue the process of consolidation.

Conditions are physically arduous, with all transportation on foot or by dugout canoe, and food is scarce even for the indigenous population. New enrollments, however, are more than 100, and team members feel that a firm foundation is being established for entry by troops.
Netherlands

More than 100 people attended a European Bahá’í Youth Conference held last July 11-17 at De Poort in the Netherlands. They came from 15 countries including some from North Africa.

Sessions focused on the writings of Shoghi Effendi with speakers addressing the topic including David Hofman, retired member of the Universal House of Justice; Counsellor Agnes Ghaznawi; and guest speaker Prof. Soheil Bushru.

A memorial service was held for the Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery who died July 5 while visiting Western Samoa.

In honor of their fellow Bahá’ís in Iran who are unable to render the services they so desire to perform, the conference participants committed themselves to initiating personal teaching and proclamation on an unprecedented scale. Commitments were made in regard to pioneering, travel teaching, proclamation, deepening and study, contributions to the Fund, the youth year of service, consolidation and prayer.

Nearly 200 people representing almost all European communities gathered July 1-2 at DePoort, the Netherlands, for the first European Bahá’í Women’s Conference.

Among the distinguished guests was Dr. Magdalene Carney, a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre in Haifa.

It was reported that the friends were inspired and determined to develop specific plans of action to achieve equality of the sexes.

The Bahá’í community of Amersfoort, the Netherlands, was asked by its city’s broadcasting station to help put together a radio program about the Faith.

Nearly 200 people representing almost all European communities gathered July 11-17 for the European Youth Conference in the Netherlands. Young people from 15 countries were drawn to this first of five regional conferences to be held in Europe this past summer. The theme was ‘Emerging from Obscurity.’

The program, which was broadcast last March 29, included discussions about the persecutions in Iran, the relationship between the Faith and the United Nations, the Bahá’í teachings on racism, and the Faith’s approach to child education.

It was enhanced by prayers in Persian, a Hidden Word that was sung, a song by Gregory Paul, and several songs by Nadiheh.

The program lasted for one hour.

Guinea

An analysis of Bahá’í principles concerning world peace was the topic of a thesis written this year by Parivash Ardei, a student at Conakry University in Guinea. Professors and fellow students filled the room where Ms. Ardei defended her thesis before eight jurors.

At the outset the jury contested some Bahá’í concepts; in response to her answers, however, the atmosphere changed completely. Many questions were then asked out of curiosity about the Bahá’í Faith itself.

After three hours the jury asked for privacy to deliberate. A few minutes later they announced that they had judged the thesis “excellent,” which is the highest mark possible and one that is seldom given at the university.

Almost all of the students and professors of the School of Social Science heard about the Faith; as a result, many asked for copies of the thesis. In addition, the director of the school and the deans of the departments of philosophy and history were presented with copies of “The Bahá’í Faith and World Peace.”

Dominica

A recent five-day teaching trip in which puppets were used as the medium for teaching drew audiences of up to 60 children in Dominica. The puppets were created by Oscar and Winnie Merritt of Barbados, who comprised half of the four-member teaching team.

Canada

Traveling teachers Debra Olafson and Nina Kaczmarek recently visited Sandy Bay Reservation in Manitoba, Canada, to show the film, “Through the Eyes of Young Bahá’ís.”

Of the native people who attended, three were especially entranced by the film including one who had never heard of the Faith. They were especially interested in the segments of the “Mona” video that are a part of the film.

Many of their questions centered on the martyrdom of the Báb and the reasons for Mona’s execution. The “first-timer” then asked how to become a Bahá’í, not only enrolling but setting the stage for the enrollments of two others.
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*Published by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States*

A compilation of approximately 450 pages designed to give Spiritual Assemblies access to Bahá’í writings (many of which are published for the first time) on topics relevant to their needs and goals. Its twenty chapters include extracts on topics such as The Organization of the Assembly, Community Membership, Feast, Marriage, Divorce, and Relationship with Government.

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Bahá'í News is published monthly 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 the Periodicals Office, Bahá'í National Center, Wilmette, IL 60091, U.S.A. Changes of address should be reported to Management Information Systems, Bahá'í National Center. Please attach mailing label. Subscription rates within the U.S.: one year, $12; two years, $20. Outside the U.S.: one year, $14; two years, $24. Foreign air mail: one year, $20; two years, $40. Payment in U.S. dollars must accompany the order. Second class postage paid at Wilmette, IL 60091. Copyright 1989, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States. World rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A.
A charter for Bahá'í schools

Prepared by Dr. Stephen H. Waite, head of the Department of Social and Economic Development and Education, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The teachings of the Bahá'í Faith include many principles whose application will offer us new patterns for education. Yet it is premature for us to surmise the directions which may evolve. The following statement is therefore only a brief summary, for our current reference, of some of the essential features to be considered by Bahá'í educators. Festering these characteristics in our educational efforts will help us to perceive and explore further features as our awareness and capacities increase.

The synthesis of some of the teachings of the Faith represented here in a charter for Bahá'í schools has been influenced by the experience of working to develop the Rabbani School under the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India. Of greatest import during the Rabbani years has been the guidance from the Universal House of Justice relating to the development of the school. Further, this synthesis was enhanced by consultations held during a National Education Conference called for the purpose of consulting on the "distinguishing characteristics of Bahá'í education and Bahá'í schools." The conference was held January 23-26, 1988, at the New Era School in Panchgani, Maharashtra, India. In the four days that were spent, the proposed list of principles of Bahá'í education was discussed in detail and several new ones were added. It was agreed during the conference that the process of adjusting each of our existing school's programs to more fully reflect Bahá'í characteristics can best be assisted by a simple, straightforward statement or definition of the Bahá'í school. A school's governing body and administration can first come to understand the main principles. These can then be shared with the faculty, the students and the parents. Once all concerned persons understand the ultimate goal, the process of change in that direction can begin.

We look forward with anticipation to many discoveries and insights as we put Bahá'í educational principles into practice. In the last century, in Iran, schools such as the Persian Tarbiyat Schools became potent instruments for progress and development of the nation, communities in general, and improvement in the status of women. A similar capacity for the dynamic transformation of society now exists in India. That is, in our schools — through the application of spiritual principles derived from the sacred Writings of the Bahá'í Faith — is now presented a unique opportunity for social advancement. It is hoped that this document will help us accelerate the process.

INTRODUCTION

What is a Bahá'í school? What are its primary and distinguishing characteristics? The answer to these questions is a matter of urgent and fundamental importance to the almost 300 emerging schools in India. The Bahá'í Writings do not detail a system which can simply be adopted and put into practice; rather, a Bahá'í educational system will gradually evolve as a result of the involvement of Bahá'í scholars and educators concentrating on this question. The first step in the process is the identification of the basic principles and teaching ideals which are reflected in the Bahá'í Writings. Second, a dynamic and creative process of interaction will occur as these principles are implemented in culture; there will even be interaction among the principles themselves. The implementation of broad philosophical principles will engender unique solutions depending upon the persons, culture, circumstances and efforts of each school. From this process gradually will emerge what will be accepted as a Bahá'í system of education.

The function of education

The role that has been given to education in the Bahá'í Writings is a most important one. Education is critical to the development of both the individual and society at large. When speaking of the individual, Bahá'u'lláh states: "Education can, alone, cause it (man) to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom." In this regard ʻAbdu'l-Bahá states: "Education is the indispensable foundation of all human excellence and alloweth man to work his way to the heights of abiding glory." As regards civilization, Bahá'u'lláh says that the greatest means provided for 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 . . . is the education of the child." ʻAbdu'l-Bahá adds that "... learning and the use of the mind" is the "mightiest" of the "pillars" and "unshakable supports of the faith of God." In another place ʻAbdu'l-Bahá says, "... in this New Cycle, education and training are recorded in the Book of God as obligatory and not voluntary." "All must receive training and instruction . . . universal education is a universal law." "You must attach the greatest importance to the education of children, for this is the foundation of the Law of God, and the bedrock of the edifice of His Faith." "This school is one of the vital and essential institutions which indeed support and bulwark the edifice of mankind . . ."
Responsibility for education

The Bahá’í Writings assign responsibility for the education of children to various groups and individuals in the community. They are, respectively (1) the individual; (2) the mother; (3) the father; (4) the parents; (5) the family as a unit; (6) the community through its elected institutions; (7) the schools; and (8) the teacher. Each has a specific and important role to play as a function of the relationship to the child to be educated.

To the individual, Bahá’u’lláh says: “Strain every nerve to acquire both inner and outer perfections, for the fruit of the human tree hath ever been and will ever be perfections both within and without. It is not desirable that a man be left without knowledge or skills, for he is then but a barren tree. Then, so much as capacity and capability allow, ye needs must deck the tree of being with fruits such as knowledge, wisdom, spiritual perception and eloquent speech.”

And ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “O loving friends! Exert every effort to acquire the various branches of knowledge and true understanding. Strain every nerve to achieve both material and spiritual accomplishments.”

To mothers, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “Let the mothers consider that whatever concerneth the education of children is of the first importance. Let them put forth every effort in this regard, for when the bough is green and tender it will grow in whatever way ye train it. Therefore it is incumbent upon 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, love of the Beloved of the worlds, and all good qualities and traits.”

In another place He states: “The mother is the first teacher of the child. For children, at the beginning of life, are fresh and tender as a young twig, and can be trained in any fashion you desire. If you rear the child to be straight, he will grow straight, in perfect symmetry. It is clear that the mother is the first teacher and that it is she who establisheth the character and conduct of the child.”

To fathers, Bahá’u’lláh says: “Unto every father hath been enjoined the instruction of his son and daughter in the art of reading and writing and in all that hath been laid down in the Holy Tablet.”

To schools and teachers, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “According to the explicit divine Text, teaching the children is indispensable and obligatory. It followeth that teachers are servants of the Lord God, since they have arisen to perform this task, which is the same as worship. You must therefore offer praise with every breath, for you are educating your spiritual children.”

To the local Spiritual Assembly, the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, writes: “They must promote by every means in their power the material as well as the spiritual enlightenment of youth, the means for the education of children, institute whenever possible Bahá’í educational institutions, organize and supervise their work, and provide the best means for their progress and development.”

“‘To assist the children of the poor in the attainment of these accomplishments, and particularly in learning the basic subjects, is incumbent upon members of the Spiritual Assemblies, and is counted as one of the obligations laid upon the conscience of the trustees of God in every land.”

Further, the Universal House of Justice has confirmed that the Bahá’í schools which are operated by the institutions of the Faith are social and economic development projects, to be developed in accordance with the principles and guidelines it has provided. Accordingly, those schools operating under the jurisdiction of Bahá’í institutions should strive for self-sufficiency and self-reliance.

The Mashriqu’l-Adhkar and the school

Eventually every locality will have its own Mashriqu’l-Adhkar. The Mashriqu’l-Adhkar is not simply a temple for worship, but rather is a concept combining worship and service in a dynamic relationship. Worship is through the central edifice while service is through the dependencies.

The Universal House of Justice, in its letter of October 20, 1983, to the Bahá’ís of the world, states: “The oneness of mankind, which is at once the operating principle and the ultimate goal of His Revelation, implies the achievement of a dynamic coherence between the spiritual and practical requirements of life on earth. The indispensability of this coherence is unmistakably illustrated in His ordination of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár, the spiritual centre of every Bahá’í community round which must flourish dependencies dedicated to the social, humanitarian, educational and scientific advancement of mankind.”

Our schools will eventually become one of these dependencies of local or national Mashriqu’l-Adhkárs. The school as a dependency of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár is an agency to utilize spiritual forces emanating from the House of Worship. Prior to the actual construction of a local house of worship, our schools must still reflect this basic concept and base themselves in this dynamic relationship linking worship and service. Education and training provide the skills whereby a person can offer service to the community, and worship provides the energy or spiritual power.

Summary

Education is understood to be one of the cornerstones upon which the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh is being constructed; it is a key to the regenerative and restorative processes urgently required. Bahá’í schools already have served as effective instruments for such fundamental social change. An outstanding contribution was made to the development of society in Iran by schools, along with other Bahá’í development efforts. So must our schools in India begin to understand their vital role to help transform society.

The evolution of mature educational institutions able to make a significant contribution to the establishment of the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh is a process that will depend on understanding the role which they can play. This role is based upon what Shoghi Effendi, calls “certain basic principles” or “teaching ideals.” These principles will be identified from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, the Báb, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the Guardian. Presented herein are a number of such principles in the form of articles of the charter. Some of these principles have been identified by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in one reference where it is stated: “All schools and colleges should have these three foundations... First, they should be sincere in the service of training the souls (Article II). Second, training in morality is necessary (Article I). Third, service to the world of humanity should be obligatory (Article V).”
The charter structure of this document, it is hoped, will at once set a clear direction in which our schools must begin moving, and will also stimulate, through the isolation of major and distinguishing characteristics of Bahá'í education, the production of appropriate curricula and teacher training materials and methodologies.

ARTICLE I

Spiritual Development Is the Basis for Human Development

The essential basis of human development is the nurturing of spiritual capacities. 'Abdu'l-Bahá states:

"And from amongst all creatures He hath singled out man, to grant him His most wondrous gift, and hath made him to attain the bounties of the Company on high. That most precious of gifts is attainment unto His unfailing guidance, that the inner reality of humankind should become as a niche to hold this lamp; and when the scattering splendor of this light do beat against the bright glass of the heart, the heart's purity maketh the beams to blaze out even stronger than before, and to shine in glory on the minds and souls of men.

"The attainment of the most great guidance is dependent upon knowledge and wisdom, and on being informed as to the mysteries of the Holy Words. Wherefore must the loved ones of God, be they young or old, be they men or women, each one according to his capabilities, strive to acquire the various branches of knowledge, and to increase his understanding of the mysteries of the Holy Books, and his skill in marshaling the divine proofs and evidences." 20

It is evident from the Bahá'í Writings that attainment unto this unfailing guidance is a process that begins from the very moment life begins. In this regard Bahá'u'lláh states:

"That which is of paramount importance for the children, that which must precede all else, is to teach them the oneness of God and the Laws of God." 21

"As to the children: We have directed that in the beginning they should be trained in the observances and laws of religion; and thereafter, in such branches of knowledge as are of benefit, and in commercial pursuits that are distinguished for integrity, and in deeds that will further the victory of God's Cause or will attract some outcome which will draw the believer closer to his Lord.

"We beg of God to assist the children of His loved ones and adorn them with wisdom, good conduct, integrity and righteousness." 22

'Abdu'l-Bahá states in this regard:

"Instruction in the schools must begin with instruction in religion. Following religious training, and the binding of the child's heart to the love of God, proceed with his education in the other branches of knowledge." 23

"These schools for academic studies must at the same time be training centers in behavior and conduct, and they must favor character and conduct above the sciences and arts. Good behavior and moral character must come first, for unless the character be trained, acquiring knowledge will only prove injurious." 24

Further, 'Abdu'l-Bahá states that children must receive such spiritual training directly from their mothers. In this spiritual training lies "the beginning of the process; it is the essential basis of all the rest." 25

"O thou servant of God! Thou didst ask as to the education of children. Those children who, sheltered by the Blessed Tree, have set foot upon the world, those who are cradled in the Faith and are nurtured at the breast of grace—such must from the beginning receive spiritual training directly from their mothers. That is, the mother must continually call God to mind and make mention of Him and tell of His greatness, and instill the fear of Him in the child, and rear the child gently, in the way of tenderness, and in extreme cleanliness. Thus from the very beginning of life every child will be refreshed by the gentle waftings of the love of God and will tremble with joy at the sweet scent of heavenly guidance. In this lieth the beginnings of the process; it is the essential basis of all the rest." 25

Spiritual training for the child should begin with the education of the prospective mother in terms of her preparation for this most important role. Schools must develop training programs for girls that will prepare them for this very special responsibility. This training should be based upon the elements of the process which 'Abdu'l-Bahá has identified in the above citation.

This process for training the child, begun from the very moment of the beginning of life, should continue in appropriate ways throughout childhood and into adulthood. 'Abdu'l-Bahá states in this regard: "The indispensable basis of all is that he should develop spiritual characteristics and the praiseworthy virtues of humankind." 26 The development of praiseworthy virtues will be accomplished through effective spiritual education combined with a balanced exposure to and training in academics, vocations, arts, crafts, music, and in effective service to the world of humanity. Our goal is to train persons in possession of the requisite skills, eager to attain the highest station to which an individual can attain, namely, service to the world of humanity.

Schools must contribute their rightful share to the spiritual training a child will receive. Curricula need to be developed to accomplish this goal. 'Abdu'l-Bahá states that "training in morality" should be one of the three main components of all schools and colleges:

"Training in morality is necessary, so that the pupils' good conduct may remain unchanged and so that they may progress in a most befitting manner, become possessed of lofty ideals, lovers of the world of humanity, and so that they will hold fast to the spiritual perfections and to that which does not displease God." 27

Training in morality should include developing the child's understanding of the law of God regarding reward and punishment, the "Promise and the Threat." Understanding the relationship between reward and punishment will lead the child to respect and to fear God. We must fear God, not "because He is cruel, but we fear Him because He is just, and if we do wrong we deserve to be punished, then in His justice He may see fit to punish us. We must both love God and fear Him." 28

Bahá'u'lláh states: "Schools must first train the children in the principles of religion, so that the Promise and the Threat, recorded in the Books of God, may prevent them from the things forbidden and adorn them with the mantle of the commandments; but this in such a measure that it may not injure the children by resulting in ignorant fanaticism and bigotry." 29

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ARTICLE II

A Praiseworthy Character: Sincerity Is Essential for Teachers and Schools

Sincerity must distinguish our schools, says ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Sincerity implies being genuine, straightforward, truthful, honest, and free from deceit or hypocrisy. When this virtue is truly reflected by our institutions and their teachers, then will we be successful in eliminating “ignorance and the lack of knowledge” and witness how “the lights of science and knowledge shine forth from the horizon of the soul and heart.” Regarding the role that the teacher and the institution can play in this process, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá states:

“First, they should be sincere in the service of training the souls. They should discover the mysteries of nature, and extend the circle of art, commerce, etc., so that ignorance and the lack of knowledge will pass away and the lights of science and knowledge shine forth from the horizon of the soul and heart. In all schools and universities, a general rule for training should be made.”

One can understand the importance of sincerity when one reflects on the reputation of an institution sincerely dedicated to the service of training people vs. one that is not. There may be many motivations for either a school or a teacher to become involved in education. According to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, sincerity must be at the root of any of these.

Institutions are made up of the individuals who comprise the administration and faculty. The embodiment of sincerity must therefore be those same administrators and teaching faculty. Institutions in and of themselves cannot reflect virtues. The power of virtue is expressed through the life of these persons and what they lead the institutions to represent through their policies. It is our deeds, conduct and character which, according to Bahá’u’lláh in the following passages, “can ensure the victory of Him Who is the Eternal Truth.”

“Say O people of God! That which can ensure the victory of Him Who is the Eternal Truth, His hosts and helpers on earth, have been set down in the sacred Books and Scriptures, and are as clear and manifest as the sun. These hosts are such righteous deeds, such conduct and character, as are acceptable in His sight. Whoso ariseth, in this Day, to aid Our Cause, and summoneth to his assistance the hosts of a praiseworthy character and upright conduct, the influence flowing from such an action will, most certainly, be diffused throughout the whole world.”

Trustworthiness is a synonym for sincerity. Bahá’u’lláh refers to it as the greatest portal leading to the tranquility and security of the people.

“Trustworthiness is the greatest portal leading unto the tranquility and security of the people. In truth the stability of every affair hath depended and doth depend upon it. All the domains of power, of grandeur and of wealth are illumined by its light.”

Shoghi Effendi says that the transforming potential of the Faith can only be demonstrated by the lives we lead:

“Not until we live ourselves the life of a true Bahá’í can we hope to demonstrate the creative and transforming potency of the Faith we profess.”

In exalted language, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá gives the teacher his/her charge:

“Wherefore, O loved ones of God! Make ye a mighty effort till you yourselves betoken this advancement and all these confirmations, and become focal centers of God’s blessings, daysprings of the light of His unity, promoters of the gifts and graces of civilized life. Be ye in that land vanguard of the perfections of humankind; carry forward the various branches of knowledge, be active and progressive in the field of inventions and the arts. Endeavor to rectify the conduct of men, and seek to excel the whole world in moral character. While the children are yet in their infancy feed them from the breast of heavenly grace, foster them in the cradle of all excellence, rear them in the embrace of bounty. Give them the advantages of every useful kind of knowledge. Let them share in every new and rare and wondrous craft and art. Bring them up to work and strive, and accustom them to hardship. Teach them to dedicate their lives to matters of great import, and inspire them to undertake studies that will benefit mankind.”

ARTICLE III

Development of an ‘Unshakable Consciousness of the Oneness of Mankind’ Is Fundamental to the Process of Bahá’í Education

Bahá’í schools must help the community at large establish an “unshakable consciousness of the oneness of mankind” in the hearts and minds of all persons.

“Acceptance of the oneness of mankind is the first fundamental prerequisite for reorganization and administration of the world as one country, the home of humankind. Universal acceptance of this spiritual principle is essential to any successful attempt to establish world peace. It should therefore be universally proclaimed, taught in schools, and constantly asserted in every nation as preparation for the organic change in the structure of society which it implies.”

Our Bahá’í schools should teach the love of humanity as a whole, as well as legitimate forms of patriotism which recognize the wholesome value of pride in our own culture, traditions, foods, music, dress, language, etc. Understanding unity in diversity enables the consciousness of the oneness of mankind, and is therefore an essential concept in the child’s education. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá states in this regard:

“Consider the flowers of a garden; though differing in kind, color, form and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increases their charm and addeth unto their beauty. How unpleasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruits, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and color? Diversity of hues, form and shape, enricheth and adorneth the garden, and heighteneth the effect thereof. In like manner, when diverse shades of thought, temperament and character are brought together under the power and influence of one central agency, the beauty and glory of human perfection will be revealed and made manifest. Naught but the celestial potency of the Word of God, which ruleth and transcendeth the realities of all things, is capable of harmonizing the
divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas, and convictions of the children of men." 37

In another place, 'Abdu'l-Bahá clearly delineates the role that education must play in terms of the elimination of barriers which separate mankind and preclude the realization of the oneness of mankind:

"Baha'u'llah has announced that inasmuch as ignorance and lack of education are barriers of separation among mankind, all must receive training and instruction. Through this provision the lack of mutual understanding will be remedied and the unity of mankind furthered and advanced. Universal education is a universal law." 38

ARTICLE IV
Education Should Provide a Balance of Academic, Spiritual and Vocational Training (Head—Heart—Hand)

Because the potential of each human being is unlimited, and we all have been endowed with a unique, wide set of talents and faculties, Bahá'í education must be structured in a properly balanced way to develop or uncover what we inherently possess.

Baha'u'llah states: "The Great Being saith: Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom." 39

'Abdu'l-Bahá adds: "In the school of realities they educate these sons and daughters, according to the teachings from God, and foster them in the bosom of grace, so that they may develop along every line, show forth the excellent gifts and blessings of the Lord, and combine human perfection; that they may advance in all aspects of human endeavor, whether outward or inward, hidden or visible, material or spiritual, until they make of this mortal world a widespread mirror, to reflect that other world which dieth not." 40

"In this new and wondrous Cause, the advancement of all branches of knowledge is a fixed and vital principle, and the friends, one and all, are obligated to make every effort toward this end, so that the Cause of Manifest Light may spread abroad, and that every child, according to his need, will receive his share of the sciences and arts—until not even a single peasant's child will be found who is completely devoid of schooling." 41

"Not all, however, will be able to engage in these advanced studies. Therefore, such children must be sent to industrial schools where they can also acquire technical skills. And once the child become proficient in such a skill, then let consideration be given to the child's own preferences and inclinations. If the child hath a liking for commerce, then let him choose commerce; if for industry, then industry; if for higher education, the advancement of knowledge; if for some other of the responsibilities of humankind, then that. Let him be placed in that field for which he hath an inclination, a desire and a talent." 42

It is clear from these references that both for the individual and for humankind as a whole, it is important that each person be enabled to develop whatever talents he/she has been given. For this we must offer children training in a balance of academic, spiritual and vocational skills and knowledge. The sciences, arts, crafts, music and the vocations all should be studied: "Arts, crafts and sciences uplift the world of being and are conducive to exaltation... The knowledge of such sciences, however, should be acquired as can profit the peoples of the earth, and not those which begin with words and end with words." 43

Further, because the amount of knowledge and skill areas continues to expand, there is a need to seek the more profound interrelationships and integrations among the widening content areas that we have to master. One interrelationship is between the theoretical and the practical. Many fields of study are more clearly understood when both the practical and the theoretical are understood. In the following reference from the Office of Social and Economic Development of the Universal House of Justice, an aspect of this is explored:

"The potential of each human being is unlimited. By offering a curriculum of academic subjects and practical experience in trades and crafts, a student will have a better learning opportunity toward finding and cultivating his/her natural talents and inclinations. In developing practical skills as well as learning theoretical knowledge in an environment devoid of prejudice toward any occupation, a person will not be confined by the basic tasks required of him in life but can continue the process of lifelong learning as a motivated and radiant human being." 44 (See Appendix A)

Other integrations occur in Bahá'í education as a result of combining service to the world of humanity, spiritual training, and vocational training. Through vocational training students learn skills that can be used in service to others, which allows them to put into practice praiseworthy virtues.

Our teachers need to be competent in teaching methodologies designed to help uncover the students' talents. Special training should be designed to help them master this orientation and the skills to facilitate this objective.

ARTICLE V
Service to the World of Humanity: Is a Foundation of the School Program

Because service to the world of humanity is the highest station to which a person can aspire, 'Abdu'l-Bahá says that all schools must have as a foundation of their program, service to the world of humanity:

"Service to the world of humanity should be obligatory. Every student should know, with perfect certainty, that he is the brother of the people of all religions and nations and that he should be without religious, racial, national, patriotic or political bias, so that he may find the thoughts of universal peace and the love of humankind firmly established in his heart. He should know himself as a servant of the human society of all the countries of the world. He should see God as the Heavenly Father and all the servants as His children, counting all of the nations, parties and sects as one family. The mothers in the home, the teachers in the schools, the professors in the universities, and the leaders in the lofty gatherings, must cause these thoughts to be penetrating and effective, as the spirit circulating in the veins and nerves of the children and pupils, so that the world of humanity may be delivered from the calamities of fanaticism, war, battle, hate and obstinacy, and so that the other world..."
may become the paradise of heaven." 45

In another place, 'Abdu'l-Bahá says: "One of the most important undertakings is the education of children, for success and prosperity depend upon service to and worship of God, the Holy, the All-Glorified." 46

A communication from the Office of Social and Economic Development of the Universal House of Justice explains the specific role that Bahá’í schools are to play as regards development of the function of service, particularly as it relates to spiritual training and the development of the attitudes that 'Abdu'l-Bahá has referred to above. Interesting, also, is the idea that service is linked with the practice of skills that are vocational in nature. (See Appendix A for the full text of this statement)

"In the Bahá’í community and in the Bahá’í school the attitude of service will be taught, its example carried out, its effectiveness demonstrated and its true value nurtured." 47

It is clear that a Bahá’í school must incorporate a service program for children from an early age, as it is through the process of building attitudes of service to others that a child will have the opportunity to put into practice those praiseworthy virtues learned in class; hence, service is the practical expression of spiritual training.

Training in the vocations also helps the child acquire the attitude of service. Vocational skills will provide the child with a means to offer service to others. Further, training in the vocations allows the child to discover the full breadth of his/her God-given talents, such that these talents can be further perfected.

**ARTICLE VI**

Vocational Education Will Be Integrated into the Curriculum

"The acquisition and exercise of those practical skills often associated with the term vocational education, and heretofore isolated as a separate curriculum, must become fundamental to the process of education and to the development of the whole person and ultimately the local community." 48 The reasons for this are: first, the acquisition and exercise of those practical skills learned through vocational education will become fundamental to the program of service and spiritual training. Second, they are necessary to enable the education of the whole person, where, without prejudice for or against any occupation, the ethic "all work performed in the spirit of service is equal in the sight of God" can be propagated. Third, there is a need to extend theoretical study to both the practical application of theory and the execution of these applications. Such a pragmatic curriculum is felt to be superior to either of the extremes, the purely theoretical or the purely vocational. It is expected that benefits will accrue to the learner as new, more easily understood, and possibly more profound inter-relationships are found.

"If a student actually raises a crop, makes a garment, prepares a nutritious meal, or builds a cabinet as part of the educational experience, the student has not only acquired the rudiments of a skill that will allow him/her to begin to function independently, but has also greatly improved the possibility of successfully applying underlying theoretical knowledge in new ways." 49

**ARTICLE VII**

Bahá’í Schools Must Give Priority to the Education of Girls and Women

Special opportunities and programs for girls and women must be provided by our schools. The emancipation of women and the consequent achievement of full equality between the sexes is critically needed for the future of mankind. Bahá’í schools have a special role and responsibility in this regard.

The priority given to the education of girls and women can express itself in the actual establishment of schools for girls, or in an emphasis on the recruitment of girls, with special support programs for their continuation and completion of school. Special programs need to be designed and implemented to train girls and women for their future role and responsibilities as mothers. Both boys and girls in school might receive training in preparation for marriage, with particular emphasis on the distinctive qualities of the Bahá’í family and the special needs and responsibilities of each family member. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has explained:

"The school for girls taketh precedence over the school for boys, for it is incumbent upon the girls of this glorious era to be fully versed in the various branches of knowledge, in science and the arts and all the wonders of this pre-eminent time, that they may then educate their children and train them from their earliest days in the ways of perfection." 50

"Devote ye particular attention to the school for girls, for the greatness of this wondrous Age will be manifested as a result of progress in the world of women." 51

That is not to say, however, that boys should not also receive an education, but only that our schools should recognize a special responsibility toward girls.

"The first duty of the beloved of God and the maidservants of the Merciful is this: They must strive by all possible means to educate both sexes, male and female; girls like boys; there is no difference whatsoever between them. The ignorance of both is blameworthy and negligence in both cases is reprovable. Are they who know and they who do not know equal?

"The command is decisive concerning both. If it is considered through the eye of reality, the training and culture of daughters is more necessary than that of sons for these girls will come to the station of motherhood and will mold the lives of the children. The first trainer of the child is the mother. The babe, like unto a green and tender branch, will grow according to the way it is trained. If the training be right, it will grow right, and if crooked, the growth likewise, and unto the end of life it will conduct itself accordingly." 52

'Abdu'l-Bahá makes a number of curriculum suggestions:

"And further, those present should concern themselves with every means of training the girl children; with teaching the various branches of knowledge, good behavior, a proper way of life, the cultivation of a good character, chastity and constancy, perseverance, strength, determination, firmness of purpose; with household management, the education of children, and whatever especially applyth to the needs of girls—to the end that these girls, reared in the stronghold of
all perfections, and with the protection of a goodly character, will, when they themselves become mothers, bring up their children from earliest infancy to have a good character and conduct themselves well.

"Let them also study whatever will nurture the health of the body and its physical soundness, and how to guard their children from disease. When matters are thus arranged, every child will become a peerless plant in the gardens of the Abhá Paradise." 53

ARTICLE VIII
A Supportive Affective Environment Should Distinguish the Bahá’í School

The creation of a properly supportive classroom environment is an important part of Bahá’í educational methodology. It is a task that primarily depends upon the skills of the teacher. Providing a child with a positive and loving environment, in which encouragement and praise are the primary pedagogical tools of a teacher, is our aim. A letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi explains: "Love and kindness have far greater influence than punishment upon the improvement of human character." 54 And ‘Abdu’l-Bahá instructs: "Rear the child gently, in the way of tenderness, and in extreme cleanliness." 55 He describes the teacher as a "loving gardener" who cares for the growth of "young plants."

‘Abdu’l-Bahá describes the environment needed to support gentleness, encouragement, love and kindness:

"It followeth that the children’s school must be a place of utmost discipline and order, that instruction must be thorough, and provision must be made for the rectification and refinement of character; so that, in his earliest years, within the very essence of the child, the divine foundation will be laid and the structure of holiness raised up.

"Know that this matter of instruction, of character rectification and refinement, of heartening and encouraging the child, is of the utmost importance, for such are basic principles of God." 56

In another place, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá defines more extensively the goals of encouragement:

"The children must be carefully trained to be most courteous and well-behaved. They must be constantly encouraged and made eager to gain all the summits of human accomplishment, so that from their earliest years they will be taught to have high aims, to conduct themselves well, to be chaste, pure and undefiled, and will learn to be of powerful resolve and firm of purpose in all things." 57

‘Abdu’l-Bahá further explains the importance of encouragement and praise in the following two specific situations:

"The children who are at the head of the class must receive premiums. They must be encouraged and when any one of them shows good advancement, for further development they must be praised and encouraged therein." 58

"If a pupil is told that his intelligence is less than his fellow-pupils, it is a very great drawback and handicap to his progress. He must be encouraged to advance." 59

The Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, in two letters written on his behalf, states that, even for more complex children and situations, wise handling, love, patience and encouragement are what is required.

"Very few children are really bad. They do, however, sometimes have complicated personalities and need very wise handling to enable them to grow into normal, moral, happy adults." 60 "He feels that nothing short of your motherly care and love and of the counsels which you and the friends can give her, can effectively remedy this situation." 61

In this regard, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says:

"The child must not be oppressed or censured because it is underdeveloped; it must be patiently trained." 62

‘Abdu’l-Bahá speaks to mothers in the following passage, describing a methodology: to praise the child for doing well; to counsel him if a mistake is made; to choose a punishment based on reason, if ever necessary. These guidelines are equally useful for the teacher.

"Whenssoever a mother seeth that the 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 perverted if he be subjected to blows or verbal abuse." 63

ARTICLE IX
The Responsive Relationship Between the School and the Community

The local Spiritual Assembly is assigned, in the Bahá’í Writings, the responsibility for responding to the needs of the community and for ensuring the education of its members. The schools should initiate and coordinate programs to respond to these needs according to the recommendations of the local Assembly. The schools thereby become potent environments for social progress. This responsive relationship between the school and the community requires our understanding of several important concepts:

First, the type of education prescribed by Bahá’í principles is one in which education is based partly upon the child’s understanding of service. In this context both in “the Bahá’í community and in the Bahá’í school the attitude of service will be taught, its example carried out, its effectiveness demonstrated and its true value nurtured.” 64 Service programs and opportunities will be within the real-life situations provided by the community, i.e., through these programs students will take an active role in the affairs of the community as part of their education.

Second, the dynamic coherence between worship and service, between the spiritual and the practical, as prescribed within the concept of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkar, will require the harmonization of worship with service as a part of the total life of the community, including the school.

Third, the integration of the school into the affairs of real life will help the school maintain the pragmatic character of the curriculum. Education in this sense will be more “relevant” for both students and society. Also, the practical application of theory will provide the student with the “rudiments of a skill that will allow him/her to begin functioning independently.” It will also greatly improve the possibility of successfully applying underlying theoretical knowledge in new ways. 65

In short, the “compulsory” nature of service training, the dynamic coherence between worship and service, and the
desirability of a pragmatic "relevant" curriculum all suggest a much closer integration between the school and the community.

Other dimensions, both suggested by the Baha'i exhortation to the individual to continually investigate truth and to increase one's knowledge, and also by the evolving nature of society, which requires the individual to continually update skills and knowledge, require that education be viewed as a life-long process that people of all ages will enjoy. This "new" concept of education suggests that new ways will be found to "open up" schools to permit a new relationship with the members of the community. This process should foster a responsive and dynamic relationship between the school and the needs of society.

ARTICLE X
Excellence Is the Goal, Volition Is the Means

The exhortation to develop our God-given potentialities, our "talents and faculties," to the highest degree of perfection is a clear and persistent requirement of Baha'u'llah. It is equally clear that the development of these faculties depends upon the exercise of will or volition by the individual. He states: "Strain every nerve to acquire both inner and outer perfections, for the fruit of the human tree hath ever been and will ever be perfections both within and without." 66 In another place Baha'u'llah states: "Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom." 67 Education is not a passive process, however; it is a process whose final outcome depends upon the exercise of volition by each individual.

"Unto each one hath been prescribed a pre-ordained measure, as decreed in God's mighty and guarded Tablets. All that which ye potentially possess can, however, be manifested only as a result of your own volition. Your own acts testify to this truth." 68 (emphasis ours)

"Abdu'l-Bahá says that although knowledge of principles is required it is not sufficient; in addition, the exercise of will and volition is required to accomplish anything: "Mere knowledge of principles is not sufficient. We all know and admit that justice is good but there is need for volition and action to carry out and manifest it. For example, we might think it good to build a church, but simply thinking of it as a good thing will not help its erection. The ways and means must be provided; we must will to build it and then proceed with its construction." 69

The training of the human will through an understanding of the Will of God provides the force needed for the attainment of perfections or treasures which we inherently possess. "Abdu'l-Bahá states:

"Will is the center or focus of human understanding. We must will to know God, just as we must will in order to possess the life He has given us. The human will must be subdued and trained into the Will of God. It is a great power to have strong will, but a greater power to give that will to God. The will is what we do, the understanding is what we know. Will and understanding must be one in the Cause of God. Intention brings attainment." 70

Affirming this relationship between making a mighty effort and the goal of excellence, 'Abdu'l-Bahá states:

"Make ye then a mighty effort, that the purity and sanctity which, above all else, are cherished by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, shall distinguish the people of Bahá; that in every kind of excellence the people of God shall surpass all other human beings; that both outwardly and inwardly they shall prove superior to the rest: that for purity, immaculacy, refinement, and the preservation of health, they shall be leaders in the vanguard of those who know. And that by their freedom from enslavement, their knowledge, their self-control, they shall be first among the pure, the free and the wise." 71

We must, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "constantly encourage" and make children "eager to gain the summits of human accomplishment' so that children will have "high aims," "to conduct themselves well," "to be chaste, pure and undefiled," and most important, to "learn to be of powerful resolve and firm of purpose in all things." Schools have a key role in the process.

"They must be constantly encouraged and made eager to gain all the summits of human accomplishment, so that from their earliest years they will be taught to have high aims, to conduct themselves well, to be chaste, pure and undefiled, and will learn to be of powerful resolve and firm of purpose in all things." 72

APPENDIX A


Vocational Elements in Education

In its broadest sense the process of education is part of the growth and development of a community. The community's aspirations and activities should be reflected in its schools. Each Manifestation of God has brought new social teachings for the improvement of peoples and a concern for the well-being of societies which become natural channels for translating the principles of faith into action. As the Cause of Baha'u'llah continues its emergence from obscurity, more emphasis is being given to the continued application of social teachings through social and economic development of communities.

Academic training is only a part of the educational function, and must be supported by a spiritual and moral training as well. Effective spiritual education combined with training in the sciences, arts and crafts will spontaneously produce the desire to serve the community. And, since service to others is the highest station to which a Bahá'í can aspire, the function of community service will be held in the highest esteem in every Bahá'í community.

One distinctive feature of this view is that in the Bahá'í community and in the Bahá'í school the attitude of service will be taught, its example carried out, its effectiveness demonstrated and its true value nurtured. The acquisition and exercise of those practical skills often associated with the term vocational education, and heretofore isolated as a separate curriculum, will become fundamental to the process of education and the development of the whole person and ultimately the local community. Far from the current practice of according varying degrees of rank and prestige to certain professions over others, the Bahá'í school should incorporate
and demonstrate the ethic that all work performed in the spirit of service is equal in the sight of God.

In many countries in the developing world, the spirit and function of service will be realized through teaching those practical skills most needed in the development of rural communities, initially in such broad areas as basic literacy training, agriculture and health-related fields. Community service by Bahá’í students in Bahá’í schools is not considered an appendage of the curriculum, but rather it is a primary focus meeting the current needs of the local community. The following points are offered as examples of the implications that can be drawn from this view of education and its relationship to the community as applied to the specific situations of local communities and their educational requirements.

1. The potential of each human being is unlimited. By offering a curriculum of academic subjects and practical experience in trades and crafts, a student will have a better learning opportunity toward finding and cultivating his/her natural talents and inclinations. In developing practical skills as well as learning theoretical knowledge in an environment devoid of prejudice toward any occupation, a person will not be confined by the basic tasks required of him in life but can continue the process of lifetime learning as a motivated and radiant human being.

2. Theoretical study must be extended to both the practical application of theory and the execution of these applications. If a student actually raises a crop, makes a garment, prepares a nutritious meal, or builds a cabinet as part of the educational experience, the student has not only acquired the rudiments of a skill that will allow him/her to begin to function independently, but has also greatly improved the possibility of successfully applying underlying theoretical knowledge in new ways.

3. A pragmatic curriculum is that which wed theory with practice and is superior to both the purely literary or the purely scientific.

FOOTNOTES


5. Ibid., pp. 126-127.

6. Ibid., p. 128.


8. Ibid., p. 60.


10. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in Bahá’í Education, pp. 43-44.


12. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in Bahá’í Education, p. 82.


24. Ibid., p. 62.

25. Ibid., p. 66.

26. Ibid., p. 70.


28. From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in Bahá’í Education, pp. 120-21.


36. Ibid., pp. 13-14.


38. Ibid., p. 128.


41. Ibid., p. 64.

42. Ibid., pp. 69-70.


47. “Vocational Elements in Education.”

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.


51. Ibid., p. 58.


53. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in Bahá’í Education, pp. 81-82.


56. Ibid., pp. 37-38.

57. Ibid., p. 72.

58. Ibid., p. 123.

59. Ibid., p. 126.


61. Ibid., p. 104.


63. Ibid., p. 84.

64. “Vocational Elements in Education.”

65. Ibid.


67. Ibid., p. 5.

68. Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings, p. 149.


71. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 130.

72. Ibid., p. 135.

Bahá’í News/December 1989 9
For the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears, the highlight of his appearance September 15-17 at the 30th annual Green Lake (Wisconsin) Bahá'í Conference was the chance to greet each one of the 450 children who were there.

Mr. Sears made a personal commitment to make contact with every young person at the conference, and all of them had a chance to hug him, or to shake his hand or sit on his lap.

Mr. Sears, who was accompanied by his wife, Marguerite, reminisced about past visits to Green Lake, his voice full of laughter, eyes full of joy, always adding a light note.

Ever-present were his two favorite "props": large photographs of 'Abdu'll-Bahá and the Universal House of Justice.

Despite a recent illness that affected his sight, Mr. Sears carried on, supported by Mrs. Sears and the love of the friends.

Having stayed up most of Saturday night to rewrite his notes, he had trouble reading them on Sunday, even after pulling out a magnifying glass the size of a dinner plate.

The friends, seeing this, roared with laughter, at the same time realizing that this was no prop or joke. It was real—and it represented for everyone the sacrifices the Hand of the Cause would make to be among the people he loved.

Throughout his talks, which ranged from reminiscences of the beloved Guardian to the teaching victories of a handicapped person in India, the audience roared and cried with laughter.

There was something different, however, in the tone of his talks and in the dynamics of the listeners—something that touched deep inside, that awakened the feeling that we must listen now—and act now—and treasure now—the presence of one of the few remaining Hands of the Cause while the chance yet remains.

Prior to Mr. Sears' talks, momentum had been building as various aspects of the theme, "Coming of Age... Rights of Passage," were developed. Talent poured from the believers in the form of songs and instrumental performances, dramatic readings and visual art.

The showing of a video about the Arc, "The Seat of God's Throne," brought many of the participants to tears and led to a greater personal commitment to contribute to the Fund.

Rounding out the agenda were representatives of the National Spiritual Assembly, the Auxiliary Board, and the Huqúqu'lláh Trust.

Auxiliary Board member Javidukht Khadem spoke movingly about her late husband, the Hand of the Cause of God Zikrullah Khadem, describing in tender terms a life dedicated to serving the Cause, assisting the beloved Guardian, helping to develop the American Bahá'í community and, more specifically, the Green Lake Conference itself.

Jack McCants, a member of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly, gave an impassioned appeal to the American Bahá'í community to arise and teach as never before.

At least three people are known to have declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh during the conference. And for everyone, its effect was to reinforce the significance of the time in which we live: a time of crucial change in an adolescent world...

His voice thundered and broke as he pounded the podium and begged the friends to sacrifice and rededicate themselves to the Cause.

A new addition to this year's conference was a day-long Friday Forum whose focus was on the arts.

The introductory talk by Tom Kubala of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, infused the following workshop discussions with Bahá'u'lláh's vision for artists, as embodied in the words, "In this great dispensation, art is identical with an act of worship...."

On Saturday, Nick Hockings of the Lac du Flambeau (Wisconsin) Indian Reservation led the friends in dawn prayers.

He lit a ceremonial peace pipe that has been used for generations and tapped each person present on the shoulders with it, symbolically passing on mankind's ancient wish for peace.

Later on Saturday, a variety of classes and workshops for children, youth and adults filled the day with an interchange on such topics as "Individual Rights and Freedoms" and "Bringing Up Parents."

Youth had deepening sessions and took part in a service project at a nearby nursing home, while children learned about the Faith and created music with Red Grammer.

At least three people are known to have declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh during the conference. And for everyone, its effect was to reinforce the significance of the time in which we live: a time of crucial change in an adolescent world, when humanity is coming of age and desperately needs the Message of Bahá'u'lláh and the institutions necessary to carry on an ever-advancing civilization.
The Hand of the Cause William Sears greets children at the 30th Green Lake Bahá’í Conference in Wisconsin.
Travels of the Hands of the Cause

In October the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum completed a 17-day journey through China—her fourth visit to that country, during which she traveled with Bahá’í Kevin Locke and his daughter who were visiting China to perform traditional Native American hoop dances.

The Hand of the Cause visited Chongquing, Chengdu and Guiyang, in Guizhou Province, where she was taken on an all-day excursion to a town where Buyi and Miao tribal people live. In Chongquing, where the Lockes were to dance for five consecutive nights, she was received by the vice-mayor, who welcomed her to the city on behalf of its 14,000,000 inhabitants.

Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum spent seven nights in Guiyang where she was escorted by two officials from the city’s Cultural Bureau and chairman of the Board of Arts Planning in Guizhou; and a member of the Council of the Chinese Traditional Opera Society.

Following her visit to the Philippines in August, the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum made a five-week tour of Taiwan.

During that time she traveled about 1,200 miles, driving around the entire island to visit key centers of intensive Bahá’í teaching activity.

The Hand of the Cause spent about three nights in each of six cities on Taiwan: Taichung, Kaohsiung, Tainan, Taitung, Chiai and Hualien.

Meetings were also held in Tsaoiton and Keelung; and at local Bahá’í Centers in those cities, she met many new Bahá’ís, most between the ages of 17 and 25 years. All told, she met about 1,700 Bahá’ís on Taiwan with almost 100 new believers enrolled during her visit.

In each of the six cities she visited, as well as in the capital city, Taipei, Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum was cordially received by the mayors in their offices.

She also called upon a number of high government officials, to each of whom she presented a lovely Chinese-English edition of the peace statement.

Of her many meetings, the most important were interviews with the Minister of the Interior for Taiwan and the Secretary-General of the National House of Representatives. She also held six press conferences which resulted in favorable publicity for the Faith.

From Taiwan the Hand of the Cause traveled to Hong Kong where she was the guest of honor at a large meeting with the local believers and visited a number of centers in the New Territories, meeting with local Assembly members and many new believers.

While in Hong Kong, Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum had two radio interviews and shared the platform with the head of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees during a celebration of the International Day of Peace.

In August, the Hand of the Cause of God ‘Alí-Akbar Furútání visited the United Kingdom, speaking at the “Peace Moves ’89” Bahá’í youth conference, then meeting with Bahá’ís across the country.

Mr. Furútání spoke with hundreds of the friends during meetings in London, Liverpool and Edinburgh, addressing two vital topics: the Huqu’ílláh and the privilege and obligation of every Bahá’í to teach the Faith.

He also attended a national memorial service August 20 for the Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery who died in July while visiting Western Samoa. He shared personal memories of his dear friend, illustrating Dr. Giachery’s spirit of devotion and total dedication to the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh and especially to his beloved Shoghlí Effendi.
**Finland**

Twenty-six Bahá'ís from Finland took part last July 26-28 in a Peace and Environmental Festival in Murmansk, Russia, the largest city north of the Arctic Circle.

The festival’s basic purpose was to promote the idea of an Arctic region without borders, without war, and with an environment protected from abuse.

The event was organized mainly by Finns with participation by people from Norway and Sweden.

The Bahá’í exhibit drew many visitors who were so interested in finding out more about the Faith that they hand-copied some of the Bahá’í literature on display.

Soviet visitors came from as far away as Siberia, Sverdlovsk, and the Ukraine.

During the festival the Faith was mentioned on radio and television in Murmansk. The mayor expressed an interest in the Faith and accepted a copy of the peace statement.

**Haiti**

The enrollment process has begun for the 12,000 inhabitants of the island of Cayemite in Haiti which recently became an all-Bahá’í community.

The island was opened to the Faith by Counsellor Ruth Pringle, Auxiliary Board member Linda Neufeld, and three other Bahá’ís.

They met with community leaders and about 60 other Haitians who listened to a talk about Bahá’u’lláh, His life and sufferings, the Covenant, the new World Order, Bahá’í laws and principles, the spiritual impact and transforming effects of His Revelation, and the importance of unity. They were then invited to become Bahá’ís.

The island people had said that they are a united community, and that everyone agrees with whatever the leaders decide. So when the leaders said they would like to become Bahá’ís, Counsellor Pringle asked if this meant that all 12,000 of the islanders could be considered Bahá’ís. The reply was yes.

In October, Counsellor Pringle met with the National Spiritual Assembly of Haiti, Auxiliary Board members and members of the National Teaching Committee. Plans were made to spend four to six weeks living in the community teaching and enrolling the new believers, holding children’s classes, setting up a Bahá’í library, helping the believers learn prayers, and deepening them in the Writings.

During a recent visit to Haiti, Carol Smith, an Auxiliary Board member in the Bahamas, was interviewed for a broadcast on Radio Antilles. The interview was aired three times.

Miss Smith was joined by Auxiliary Board member Laurence Bosschaart for interviews with TeleHaiti and Radio Télévision National de Haiti, both of which were aired twice, while Radio Haiti taped an interview with both of them for future broadcast.
Japan

Baha’is and guests from Tokyo and Utsunomiya, Japan, attended a weekend deepening last July 16-17 in Utsunomiya sponsored by the National Teaching Committee of Japan. The lecturer was Nozomu Sonda (center row, far right). Also attending was Auxiliary Board member Daryoush Yazdani (front row, far right).

Singapore

Kuek Yi Hsing, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Singapore, and Auxiliary Board member Anula Samuel represented that country's Bahá'í community at a session of the government's Parliamentary Committee on Education whose purpose was to discuss the future direction of religious and moral education in Singapore.

One suggestion made by the Bahá'í representatives was to replace religious education with secular moral education.

"The fact that most religions have a number of denominations or sects," they said, "makes it impossible to create a curriculum that treats any one religion in great detail and yet satisfies every sect.

"Instead, a curriculum should be developed that discusses the teachings of the various religions, the social milieu under which each was founded, and their impact.

"Through such a curriculum, the students would gain an appreciation of the common origins of religions, and much of the animosity and misunderstanding that are the result of ignorance would be dissipated."

A significant part of the Bahá'í statement was quoted in the Straits Times newspaper.

Papua New Guinea

The Milne Bay Teaching Conference, held recently in Tua village in the Daga area of Milne Bay was the largest Bahá'í meeting ever held in Papua New Guinea.

Friends from 44 villages came to celebrate the opening of their new Bahá'í Center and to consult on teaching the Faith throughout the country.

At noon on the second day of the conference, a commemoration of the martyrdom of the Bab was held.

An article in the Nineteen Day Feast Newsletter reported, "A nearby cargo chief had threatened to prevent the gathering, and when it poured rain in the morning some people thought his intervention had caused the rain. But no one left, and in the pouring rain more than 900 people stood praying, turning to Haifa and remembering the sorrow of the Bab. The rain turned out to be a blessing—like tears."

A National Women's Conference co-sponsored by the Bahá'í community and the Morobe Women's Association was held last July at the National Bahá'í Center in Lae, Papua New Guinea.

Topics of consultation included the equality of men and women, education, literacy, women in development, the environment, and peace.

Special guests included Margaret Nakikus, the wife of the prime minister; Bungtabu Brown, president of the National Council of Women; Funke Samana, president of the Morobe Women's Association; and Utula Samana, regional member for Morobe Province in the national Parliament.

More than 100 people attended the opening ceremony with about 50 taking part in plenary sessions and workshops held throughout the rest of the week.

Media coverage was extensive with newspaper articles and reports on radio and television.

Through efforts by teaching teams in Papua New Guinea who have visited Western Province, East New Britain, East and West Sepik, West New Britain, Morobe, and Central and North Solomons Provinces, 380 people in those areas have recently embraced the Faith.

Sri Lanka

A recent teaching project in the Nuwara Eliya District of Sri Lanka resulted in 65 enrollments. Meanwhile, in the Kegalle District, a talk by Auxiliary Board member Mona Bayly resulted in the enrollment of 23 others.
Switzerland

On August 19, the Landegg Academy in Switzerland was host to Prince Alfred von Liechtenstein, founder and chairman of the board of the Vienna Academy for the Study of the Future.

Other guests, who came to discuss plans for an International Seminar on Transition to a Global Society, which is to be held at Landegg in September 1990, included Prof. Ervin Laszlo, director of the Vienna Academy; Prof. Augusto Forti, director of UNESCO's East West Centre of Science and Technology, and their spouses.

The seminar is to be jointly organized and sponsored by the Landegg Academy, the Vienna Academy, and the Center for International Development and Conflict Resolution at the University of Maryland.

It will be further supported by the participation of other institutions including the Club of Rome University Centre, the Center for the Study of International Governance, the European Culture Impact Research Consortium, and the General Evolution Research Group.

During the meeting in August, Prince Alfred asked for a copy of The Hidden Words and said that the Bahá'ís he has met in London and at Landegg had made a very positive impression on him.

Trinidad/Tobago

Five hundred people embraced the Faith during a three-week teaching campaign last summer in Trinidad and Tobago held as part of the ongoing Covenant Project, carried out in memory of the late H. Borrah Kavelin, who was a member of the Universal House of Justice.

Afterward, a special teaching team assigned to Chaguanas in the central part of the country, aided by three members of the National Teaching Committee, two full-time teachers, one traveling teacher and other Bahá'ís, enrolled 850 new believers during a five-week effort in June and July.

In July and August, five Area Teaching Committees developed their own regional teaching plans, as a result of which many other new believers were enrolled.

A Chinese Teaching Conference was held last September 23 at the Palmyra Bahá'í Center in Palmyra Village, Trinidad.

Held to plan and raise the level of activity in the Chinese teaching work, the conference drew about 20 people including three members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Trinidad and Tobago and Auxiliary Board members Mansingh Amarsingh and Shahnaz Jalmalabadi.

Consultation centered on exploring opportunities for teaching Chinese in South Trinidad and developing a workable plan for achieving the enrollment of the masses of Chinese in Trinidad including those of Chinese heritage, visitors, those who work or go to school in Trinidad and Tobago, and Chinese diplomats.

Among the ideas were making an appeal to the Bahá'í community about the urgency of reaching this population, perhaps using the National Assembly's Feast letter or newsletter; developing a special pamphlet for the Chinese friends; preparing guidelines for teaching Chinese; and holding a special Chinese deepening institute.

As Bahá'ís in Trinidad and Tobago continued intensive teaching efforts, the National Spiritual Assembly reported the enrollment of 843 people between May and July.

Zaire

Shown are some of the 4,800 people who attended a recent Bahá'í conference in the Fizi zone of Zaire. Among those attending were Counsellors Beatrice Asare, Hizzaya Hisani, Edith Senoga and Lally Lucretia Warren. The event was one of four held in Zaire and Tanzania to consult on the spiritual empowerment of women.

Senegal

Dr. Pierre Daoust, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Belgium, recently made a teaching trip to Senegal during which he provided free primary dental care to people in the regions of Pikine and Bamblylor.

His work was carried out with the cooperation of the local Bahá'í communities and health authorities.

One result of Dr. Daoust's volunteer services was good contact with the director of the dental faculty of the University of Dakar and with the medical staff working in connection with the Pikine dispensary.
Bolivia

Radio Bahá'í Bolivia celebrated its fifth anniversary last July with a "Chaski" race from Caracollo to Oruro, 40 kilometers (about 25 miles) away. A Chaski race is in the tradition of the Incas of the region; 30 runners covered the 40km in three hours.

Reporters from national radio, television and newspapers covered the race, after which the entire group of runners was invited to the office of the mayor of Oruro who praised Radio Bahá'í and was given a copy of the peace statement on behalf of the radio station.

A three-day festival followed, with 27 groups providing music. Eight of them were dressed in native costume and played the traditional instruments of Bolivia.

Seventy Bahá'ís representing nine indigenous groups came together last July to take part in a Seminar for Indigenous Believers in Sucre, Bolivia.

A significant number of the participants, who came from eight countries, were women.

Seven Counsellors took part in the consultation including Dr. Farzam Arbab from the International Teaching Centre in Haifa. Also attending were members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Bolivia and eight Auxiliary Board members.

A major area of consultation was the participation of indigenous peoples in the construction of an ever-advancing civilization. Examples were brought forth of peoples who are drawing on the Creative Word to strengthen the positive aspects of their culture.

Time was given to identifying some of the cultural characteristics of each indigenous group that mirror Bahá'í teachings and should therefore be preserved or further developed as elements of a "Bahá'í culture."

Discussions also centered on how to foster literacy among indigenous people. It was noted that this could be a way of reaching people with the Message of Bahá'u'lláh because the Bahá'í concept of literacy is much more complete than simply being able to read and write, as it involves study of the Creative Word of God.

Teaching was another major element of consultation. The growth of the Faith in Latin America has been strong; many indigenous people have become Bahá'ís. But, it was pointed out, the time has now come for entire Indian tribes and peoples to find their path toward Bahá'u'lláh.

It was appropriate, therefore, that the Seminar was followed by a National Teaching Conference at which there were more than 200 Bahá'ís including many of those from abroad who had traveled to Bolivia for the seminar.

Afterward, 19 teaching teams took part in a week-long teaching project that resulted in 500 enrollments and the opening of 10 new localities to the Faith.

Sikkim

A vocational training course to help rural development was held last July in Tadong, Sikkim. Participants were Bahá'í youth from rural areas in Sikkim and students from the Tadong Bahá'í School.

Courses in domestic electricity, plumbing, and jeep and motorcycle maintenance were given by instructors from the New Era Development Institute in Panchgani, India.

The courses were designed to provide training for Bahá'ís who can work toward development in rural communities.

Ninety-two people were enrolled including 38 young Bahá'ís from nine rural communities and 54 students from the Tadong School. Eighteen of the trainees were women.

On July 27 certificates were awarded to all of the graduates. George Menezes, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, spoke at the ceremony of the spiritual and practical knowledge gained by the graduates and its benefits to society.

The event closed with students chanting prayers they had memorized during the course.
India

Many visitors came to the Bahá’í House of Worship in Bahapur, India, in August including tourists from France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom as well as large groups from India.

A report from the House of Worship recounts the stories of two special visits:

“One morning it looked as if the Temple had stretched its long white arm along the main pathway leading to its prayer hall. On closer look, we could distinguish it to be the orderly approach of young girls clad in white with heads covered, followed by young boys, also in white. There were about 350 students accompanied by 20 teachers from Sri Guru Hari Singh Maha Vidyalaya, Sirsa, in the State of Haryana.

“All were accompanied to the conference hall where in pin-drop silence they heard about the Faith and its principles for the first time.”

Another story is that of the chief engineer of a government project who “found himself in a dilemma over a project involving millions of rupees. One day as he sat in his office, confused and depressed, he felt as if something was beckoning him in a particular direction. In a moment of instant decision, he left the office and soon found himself at the Bahá’í Temple.

“It was time for the evening prayer program, so he decided to sit back and take in some spiritual food. As he listened, he found the chanting of prayers creating an impact on him which he could not immediately understand. As he came out of the prayer hall, he approached a volunteer who explained to him the principles of the Faith. As he later put it, to enable himself to analyze the strange feeling the Bahá’í prayers evoked, he returned again and again.

“Three weeks after he first came to the Temple, he accepted Bahá’u’lláh as the Manifestation of God for this age.”

Gisou Behrouzi, a Bahá’í student in India, won first prize in a speech competition among colleges on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the birth of Swami Vivekananda, a leading spokesman for modern Hinduism in the late 19th century. She delivered a four-minute talk for an audience of 500 students and parents at Rama Krishna Mission.

The talk was based on the need for the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh and paid tribute to Swami Vivekananda’s contributions to peace.

One of the goals of the Six Year Plan in the Indian State Council of Maharashtra is to establish and develop a number of Bahá’í kindergartens in villages where there are local Spiritual Assemblies and where the residents ask for a kindergarten through their Assembly.

At present, 11 kindergartens have been set up in various villages in Maharashtra State. Bahá’í and non-Bahá’í children ages three to five attend for three hours a day, six days a week. The total number of children enrolled in the kindergartens is nearly 300.

Supervision is the responsibility of the Social and Economic Development Committee of Maharashtra; villagers provide a suitable place and capable teacher for each school. The funds for establishing and managing the schools and for paying the teachers is generally provided through voluntary contributions of the friends to the State Council Fund. The schools are monitored to ensure good hygiene and provision of the needs of the children.

An encouraging fact is that the schools have not only provided an education for village children but have contributed to the consolidation and development of local Bahá’í communities. The local Spiritual Assemblies have been strengthened and attendance at Nineteen Day Feasts has risen significantly in villages with Bahá’í kindergartens.

Representatives of the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sikkim and Sri Lanka met September 8-10 in Pune, India.

Topics of consultation included creating a “unified vision” of the Faith, developing human resources, “entry by troops,” and spiritual transformation aimed at an intensification of teaching efforts throughout the subcontinent.

The Counsellors residing in India also attended the meetings, as did 48 Auxiliary Board members and members of 18 State Bahá’í Councils.
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Waging war on illiteracy

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Baha’i Friends,

The Holy Word has been extolled by the Prophets of God as the medium of celestial power and the wellspring of all spiritual, social and material progress. Access to it, constant study of it and daily use of it in our individual lives are vital to the inner personal transformation toward which we strive and whose ultimate outer manifestation will be the emergence of that divine civilization which is the promise of the World Order of Baha’u’llah.

The blessings which flow from the Word of God are implicit in this instruction of Baha’u’llah in the Kitab-i-Aqdas, the Mother Book of His Revelation: “Immerse yourselves in the ocean of My words, that ye may unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie hid in its depths.” Again in the same book. He bids us recite the “verses of God every morning and evening.” An astonishing insight as to the sublime influence of the revealed Word is conveyed in this further instruction gleaned from one of His Tablets: “Intone, O My servant, the verses of God that have been received by thee, as intoned by them who have drawn nigh unto Him, that the sweetness of thy melody may kindle thine own soul, and attract the hearts of all men. Whose reciteth, in the privacy of his chamber, the verses revealed by God, the scattering angels of the Almighty shall scatter abroad the fragrance of the words uttered by his mouth, and shall cause the heart of every righteous man to throb. Though he may, at first, remain unaware of its effect, yet the virtue of the grace vouchsafed unto him must needs sooner or later exercise its influence upon his soul.”

The most immediate access to the dynamic influence of the sacred Word is through reading. The ability to read is therefore a fundamental right and privilege of every human being. Baha’u’llah promotes this right in His command to parents to ensure the instruction of their sons and daughters in the “art of reading and writing.” For this essential reason, in our last Ridván message we called attention to the need for systematic attention to be given to eventually eliminating illiteracy from the Baha’i community. This matter must assume its proper importance as a continuing objective of that community.

Let each National and local Spiritual Assembly, according to necessity and circumstance, address itself to this objective, conscious that even where total achievement is not immediately possible, opportunities must be sought to make steady progress. Let each be confident that the shining example set by Iran, the mother community of the Baha’i world, under the inspiration of Baha’u’llah’s teachings and the urging of ‘Abdu’l-Baha and Shoghi Effendi, upholds a standard all can follow. In the earliest years of this century, when no systematic, over-all plan of education existed in Iran, the Baha’is seized their chance and organized a widespread program of education. Its teachers were distinguished for their ability to foster child, youth and adult education, which led to significant self-improvement among the Iranian Baha’is. The emergence of a literate Baha’i community was an outstanding result.

Some local or national Baha’i communities may wish to follow the example of those who have already instituted their own literacy projects and are achieving notable success; others may wish to participate in literacy programs organized by governmental or non-governmental organizations. Each community will have to determine whether to engage in one or the other, or to do both. Progress will depend not only on the initiatives of Baha’i institutions in relation to children, but also on the active interest of adult believers who want to learn to read. Such friends should definitely be encouraged and assisted to achieve, with dignity, their heart’s desire. Certainly, the willing participation of the friends in an undertaking of such importance to the upliftment of individuals and the consolidation of the Baha’i community as a whole will attract divine favors and confirmations.

The United Nations has declared 1990 to be International Literacy Year so as to mobilize an all-out, ongoing effort to eradicate illiteracy around the world. The literacy projects already in progress in the Baha’i community, and those which are yet to be adopted, will surely lend support to this noble and necessary effort. Therefore, we commend the purpose of this special year to the attention of the entire Baha’i world. The Baha’i International Community’s United Nations Office will send National Assemblies information concerning activities associated with International Literacy Year and how Baha’i communities may become involved. Moreover, agencies at the Baha’i World Centre having a special interest in literacy programs will offer helpful advice as necessary, but Spiritual Assemblies need not wait to hear from them before proceeding with their own plans.

We look forward with confident expectation to your achievements toward the ultimate fulfillment of this objective which is so essential to the progress of the Baha’i community and indeed all humanity. And we assure you, as ever, of our continuing prayers at the Holy Shrines for your success.

With loving Baha’i greetings.

The Universal House of Justice
July 10, 1989
Conserving our natural resources

CONSERVATION OF THE EARTH'S RESOURCES
Compiled by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice

1. FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES
The approach of the world-wide Bahá'í community to the conservation and protection of the earth's resources is based on a number of fundamental principles derived from the Bahá'í Writings. These include:

1.1 Nature as a reflection of the Divine
Nature is held in high regard. Bahá'u'lláh states that the contemplation of nature creates an awareness of the "signs" and "tokens" of God and constitutes proof of His existence. Thus:

"...whatever I behold I readily discover that it maketh Thee known unto me, and it remindeth me of Thy signs, and of Thy tokens, and of Thy testimonies. By Thy glory! Every time I lift up mine eyes unto Thy heaven, I call to mind Thy highness and Thy loftiness, and Thine incomparable glory and greatness; and every time I turn my gaze to Thine earth, I am made to recognize the evidences of Thy power and the tokens of Thy bounty. And when I behold the sea, I find that it speaketh to me of Thy majesty, and of the potency of Thy might, and of Thy sovereignty and Thy grandeur. And at whatever time I contemplate the mountains, I am led to discover the ensigns of Thy victory and the standards of Thine omnipotence." 3

Nature reflects the "names and attributes of God." It is the expression of "God's Will...in...the contingent world." 4 Bahá'u'lláh writes:

"Say: Nature in its essence is the embodiment of My Name, the Maker, the Creator. Its manifestations are diversified by varying causes, and in this diversity there are signs for men of discernment. Nature is God's Will and is its expression in and through the contingent world. It is a dispensation of Providence ordained by the Ordainer, the All-Wise." 5

1.2 The earth one country
Bahá'u'lláh expounds a world view which acknowledges that "the earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens" and He calls for the promotion of "the best interests of the peoples and kindreds of the earth." 6

'Abdu'l-Bahá draws attention to the increasing interdependence of the world and the fact that "self-sufficiency" is no longer possible. He envisages that the trend toward a united world will increase and will manifest itself in the form of "unity of thought in world undertakings" and in other important realms of existence. One critical area for unified action is that of preserving the resources of the planet.

1.3 Man's station and responsibility
'Abdu'l-Bahá indicates that man, "by reason of the ideal and heavenly forces latent and manifest in him," occupies a station that is "higher and nobler" than nature, that "man is ruler over nature's sphere and province." 7

"It is evident, therefore, that man is ruler over nature's sphere and province. Nature is inert; man is progressive. Nature has no consciousness; man is endowed with it. Nature is without volition and acts perforce, whereas man possesses a mighty will. Nature is incapable of discovering mysteries or realities, whereas man is especially fitted to do so. Nature is not in touch with the realm of God; man is attuned to its evidences. Nature is unformed of God; man is conscious of Him. Man acquires divine virtues; nature is denied them. Man can voluntarily discontinue vices; nature has no power to modify the influence of its instincts. Altogether it is evident that man is more noble and superior, that in him there is an ideal power surpassing nature. He has consciousness, volition, memory, intelligent power, divine attributes and virtues of which nature is completely deprived and bereft; therefore, man is higher and nobler by reason of the ideal and heavenly force latent and manifest in him." 8

Man, possessed of an inner faculty which plants and animals do not have, a power which enables him to discover the secrets of nature and gain mastery over the environment, has a special responsibility to use his God-given powers for positive ends. The Universal House of Justice indicates that "the proper exercise of this responsibility is the key to whether his inventive genius produces beneficial results, or creates havoc in the material world." 9

1.4 Approach toward the physical world—interaction of spiritual and material
'Abdu'l-Bahá stresses that the development of the physical world and the happiness of mankind are dependent on both the "call of civilization, of the progress of the material world" and the "soul-stirring call of God, Whose spiritual teachings are safeguards of the everlasting glory, the eternal happiness and illumination of the world of humanity." He states:

"However, until material achievements, physical accomplishments and human virtues are reinforced by spiritual perfections, luminous qualities and characteristics of mercy, no fruit or result shall issue therefrom, nor will the happi-
ness of the world of humanity, which is the ultimate aim, be attained. For although, on the one hand, material achievements and the development of the physical world produce prosperity, which exquisitely manifests its intended aims, on the other hand dangers, severe calamities and violent afflictions are imminent.

"Consequently, when thou lookest at the orderly patterns of kingdoms, cities and villages, with the attractiveness of their adornments, the freshness of their natural resources, the refinement of their appliances, the ease of their means of travel, the extent of knowledge available about the world of nature, the great inventions, the colossal enterprises, the noble discoveries and scientific researches, thou wouldst conclude that civilization conduced to the happiness and the progress of the human world. Yet shouldest thou turn thine eye to the discovery of destructive and infernal machines, to the development of forces of demolition and the invention of fiery implements, which uproot the tree of life, it would become evident and manifest unto thee that civilization is conjoined with barbarism. Progress and barbarism go hand in hand, unless material civilization be confirmed by Divine Guidance, by the revelations of the All-Merciful and by godly virtues, and be reinforced by spiritual conduct, by the ideals of the Kingdom and by the outpourings of the Realm of Might...

"Therefore, this civilization and material progress should be combined with the Most Great Guidance so that this nether world may become the scene of the appearance of the bestowals of the Kingdom, and physical achievements may be conjoined with the effulgences of the Merciful. This in order that the beauty and perfection of the world of man may be unveiled and be manifested before all in the utmost grace and splendor. Thus everlasting glory and happiness shall be revealed." 18

Bahá'u'lláh describes the fate of those whose lives demonstrate a heedlessness of spiritual values and a failure to act in conformity with such values. He comments:

"... ye waik on My earth complacent and self-satisfied, heedless that My earth is weary of you and everything within it shuneth you...." 19

Shoghi Effendi asserts that man's negligence contributes to the decline of the "present-day Order" 20 and impacts on the environment in a practical way:

"The violent derangement of the world's equilibrium; the trembling that will seize the limbs of mankind; the radical transformation of human society; the rolling up of the present-day Order; the fundamental changes affecting the structure of government; the development of infernal engines of war; the burning of cities; the contamination of the atmosphere of the earth—these stand out as the signs and portents that must either herald or accompany the retributive calamity which, as decreed by Him Who is the Judge and Redeemer of mankind, must, sooner or later, afflict a society which, for the most part, and for over a century, has turned a deaf ear to the Voice of God's Messenger in this day—a calamity which must purge the human race of the dross of its age-long corruptions, and weld its component parts into a firmly knit world-embracing Fellowship—a Fellowship destined, in the fullness of time, to be incorporated in the framework, and to be galvanized by the spiritualizing influences, of a mysteriously expanding, divinely appointed Order, and to flower, in the course of future Dispensations, into a Civilization, the like of which mankind has, at no stage in its evolution, witnessed." 21

2. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN AND NATURE

The relationship between man and nature is very complex. An appreciation of the dimensions of this subject requires consideration of some of the characteristics of nature described in the Baha'i Writings and an awareness of certain values and attitudes that guide individual behavior and the establishment of priorities.

2.1 Characteristics of nature

2.1.1 A unified system

'Abdu'l-Bahá indicates that the "temple of the world" 22 has been "fashioned after the image and likeness of the human body." 23 He explains that:

"By this is meant that even as the human body in this world, which is outwardly composed of different limbs and organs, is in reality a closely integrated, coherent entity, similarly the structure of the physical world is like unto a single being whose limbs and members are inseparably linked together.

"Were one to observe with an eye that discovereth the realities of all things, it would become clear that the greatest relationship that bindeth the world of being together lieth in the range of created things themselves, and that co-operation, mutual aid and reciprocity are essential characteristics in the unified body of the world of being, inasmuch as all created things are closely related together and each is influenced by the other or deriveth benefit therefrom, either directly or indirectly.

"Consider for instance how one group of created things constituteth the vegetable kingdom, and another is the animal kingdom. Each of these two maketh use of certain elements in the air on which its own life dependeth, while each increaseth the quantity of such elements as are essential for the life of the other. In other words, the growth and development of the vegetable world is impossible without: the existence of the animal kingdom, and the maintenance of animal life is inconceivable without the co-operation of the vegetable kingdom. Of like kind are the relationships that exist among all created things. Hence it was stated that co-operation and reciprocity are essential properties which are inherent in the unified system of the world of existence, and without which the entire creation would be reduced to nothingness." 24

In another passage 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes the interconnectedness of "every part of the universe" 25 and the importance of maintaining balance in the system:

"Reflect upon the inner realities of the universe, the secret wisdoms involved, the enigmas, the inter-relationships, the rules that govern all. For every part of the universe is connected with every other part by ties that are very powerful and admit of no imbalance, nor any slackening whatever. . . ." 26

2.1.2 Subject to law and organization

'Abdu'l-Bahá states that "The phenomenal world is entirely subject to the rule and control of natural law." 27 He contrasts nature's "absolute organization" 28 and its lack of
"intelligence" 29 and "will" 30 with man's ability to "(command) the forces of Nature" 31 through discovery of "the constitution of things". 32

"This Nature is subjected to an absolute organization, to determined laws, to a complete order and a finished design, from which it will never depart—to such a degree, indeed, that if you look carefully and with keen sight, from the smallest invisible atom up to such large bodies of the world of existence as the globe of the sun or the other great stars and luminous spheres, whether you regard their arrangement, their composition, their form or their movement, you will find that all are in the highest degree of organization and are under one law from which they will never depart.

"But when you look at Nature itself, you see that it has no intelligence, no will. For instance, the nature of fire is to burn; it burns without will or intelligence. The nature of water is fluidity; it flows without will or intelligence. The nature of the sun is radiance; it shines without will or intelligence. The nature of vapor is to ascend; it ascends without will or intelligence. Thus it is clear that the natural movements of all things are compelled; there are no voluntary movements except those of animals and, above all, those of man. Man is able to resist and to oppose Nature because he discovers the constitution of things, and through this he commands the forces of Nature; all the inventions he has made are due to his discovery of the constitution of things. For example, he invented the telegraph, which is the means of communication between the East and the West. It is evident, then, that man rules over Nature.

"Now, when you behold in existence such organizations, arrangements and laws, can you say that all these are the effect of Nature, though Nature has neither intelligence nor perception? If not, it becomes evident that this Nature, which has neither perception nor intelligence, is in the grasp of Almighty God, Who is the Ruler of the world of Nature; whatever He wishes, He causes Nature to manifest." 33

2.1.3 Change and motion

Change is a law governing the whole of physical creation. It is seen in the passage of the seasons. 'Abdu'l-Baha writes:

"The earth is in motion and growth; the mountains, hills and prairies are green and pleasant; the beauty is overflowing; the mercy universal; the rain is descending from the cloud of mercy; the brilliant Sun is shining; the full moon is ornamenting the horizon of ether; the great ocean-tide is flowing every little stream; the gifts are successive; the favors consecutive; and the refreshing breeze is blowing, wafting the fragrant perfume of the blossoms. Boundless treasure is in the hand of the King of Kings! Lift the hem of thy garment in order to receive it." 34

"Soon the whole world, as in springtime, will change its garb. The turning and falling of the autumn leaves is past; the bleakness of the winter time is over. The new year hath appeared and the spiritual springtime is at hand. The black earth is becoming a verdant garden; the deserts and mountains are teeming with red flowers; from the borders of the wilderness the tall grasses are standing like advance guards before the cypress and jessamine trees; while the birds are singing among the rose branches like the angels in the highest heavens, announcing the glad-tidings of the approach of that spiritual spring, and the sweet music of their voices is causing the real essence of all things to move and quiver." 35

'Abdu'l-Baha states that "absolute repose does not exist in nature," 36 that "movement is essential to existence." 37 In relation to existence He describes the processes of "composition and decomposition": 38

"... consider the phenomenon of composition and decomposition, of existence and non-existence. Every created thing in the contingent world is made up of many and varied atoms, and its existence is dependent on the composition of these. In other words, through the divine creative power a conjunction of simple elements taketh place so that from this composition a distinct organism is produced. The existence of all things is based upon this principle. But when the order is deranged, decomposition is produced and disintegration setteth in: then that thing ceaseth to exist. That is, annihilation of all things is caused by decomposition and disintegration. Therefore attraction and composition between the various elements is the means of life, and discord, decomposition and division produce death. Thus the cohesive and attractive forces in all things lead to the appearance of fruitful results and effects, while estrangement and alienation of things lead to disturbance and annihilation. Through affinity and attraction all living things like plants, animals and men come into existence, while division and discord bring about decomposition and destruction." 39

He also explains that, in the physical world, the course of evolution is in the direction of increasing levels of complexity:

"In the physical creation, evolution is from one degree of perfection to another. The mineral passes with its mineral perfections to the vegetable; the vegetable, with its perfections, passes to the animal world, and so on to that of humanity. ..." 40

2.1.4 Diversity

'Abdu'l-Baha describes diversity as "the essence of perfection and the cause of the appearance of the bestowals" 41 of God, and He states:

"Consider the flowers of a garden: though differing in kind, color, form and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm, and addeth unto their beauty. Thus when that unifying force, the penetrating influence of the Word of God, taketh effect, the difference of customs, manners, habits, ideas, opinions and dispositions embelliseth the world of humanity. This diversity, this difference is like the naturally created dissimilarity and variety of the limbs and organs of the human body, for each one contributeth to the beauty, efficiency and perfection of the whole. ..."

"How unpleasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruits, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and color! Diversity of hues, form and shape, enricheth and adorneth the garden, and heighteneth the effect thereof. ..." 42

The extent of the diversity of the "world of created beings" 43 is underlined in the following passage:

"... the forms and organisms of phenomenal being and existence in each of the kingdoms of the universe are myriad.
and numberless. The vegetable plane or kingdom, for instance, has its infinite variety of types and material structures of plant life—each distinct and different within itself, no two exactly alike in composition and detail—for there are no repetitions in nature, and the augmentative virtue cannot be confined to any given image or shape. Each leaf has its own particular identity—so to speak, its own individuality as a leaf...

2.1.5 Serves the human world

'Abdu'l-Bahá describes the "causes and circumstances" of the "perfection" of the mineral, vegetable and animal worlds, and He distinguishes this from their "real prosperity," which conduces to the honor of the various kingdoms.

"The honor and exaltation of every existing being depends upon causes and circumstances.

"The excellency, the adornment and the perfection of the earth is to be verdant and fertile through the bounty of the clouds of springtime. Plants grow; flowers and fragrant herbs spring up; fruit-bearing trees become full of blossoms and bring forth fresh and new fruit. Gardens become beautiful, and meadows adorned; mountains and plains are clad in a green robe, and gardens, fields, villages and cities are decorated. This is the prosperity of the mineral world.

"The height of exaltation and the perfection of the vegetable world is that a tree should grow on the bank of a stream of fresh water, that a gentle breeze should blow on it, that the warmth of the sun should shine on it, that a gardener should attend to its cultivation, and that day by day it should develop and yield fruit. But its real prosperity is to progress into the animal and human world, and replace that which has been exhausted in the bodies of animals and men.

"The exaltation of the animal world is to possess perfect members, organs and powers, and to have all its needs supplied. This is its chief glory, its honor and exaltation. So the supreme happiness of an animal is to have possession of a green and fertile meadow, perfectly pure flowing water, and a lovely, verdant forest. If these things are provided for it, no greater prosperity can be imagined. For example, if a bird builds its nest in a green and fruitful forest, in a beautiful high place, upon a strong tree, and at the top of a lofty branch, and if it finds all it needs of seeds and water, this is its perfect prosperity.

"But real prosperity for the animal consists in passing from the animal world to the human world, like the microscopic beings that, through the water and air, enter into man and are assimilated, and replace that which has been consumed in his body. This is the great honor and prosperity for the animal world; no greater honor can be con-
ceived for it." 48

2.1.6 Imperfection of nature

Two views of nature are contrasted—one which holds that the "world of nature is complete," 46 and one which declares that it is "incomplete" 50 because "it has need of intelligence and education." 51 'Abdu'l-Bahá states that the "mineral, vegetable, animal and human worlds are all in need of an educator." 52

"The materialists hold to the opinion that the world of nature is complete. The divine philosophers declare that the world of nature is incomplete. There is a wide difference between the two. The materialists call attention to the perfection of nature, the sun, moon and stars, the trees in their adornment, the whole earth and the sea—even unimportant phenomena revealing the most perfect symmetry. The divine philosophers deny this seeming perfection and completeness in nature's kingdom, even though admitting the beauty of its scenes and aspects and acknowledging the irresistible cosmic forces which control the colossal suns and planets. They hold that while nature seems perfect, it is, nevertheless, imperfect because it has need of intelligence and education. In proof of this they say that man, though he be a very god in the realm of material creation, is himself imperfect because it has need of an educator. Man undeveloped by education is savage, animalistic, brutal. Laws and regulations, schools, colleges and universities have for their purpose the training of man and his uplift from the dark borderland of the animal kingdom." 53

When we consider existence, we see that the mineral, vegetable, animal and human worlds are all in need of an educator.

"If the earth is not cultivated, it becomes a jungle where useless weeds grow; but if a cultivator comes and tills the ground, it produces crops which nourish living creatures. It is evident, therefore, that the soil needs the cultivation of the farmer. Consider the trees: if they remain without a cultivator, they will be fruitless, and without fruit they are useless; but if they receive the care of a gardener, these same barren trees become fruitful, and through cultivation, fertilization and engraving the trees which had bitter fruits yield sweet fruits. . . ."

"The same is true with respect to animals: notice that when the animal is trained it becomes domestic, and also that man, if he is left without education, 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. . . ." 54

2.2 Attitudes and values

The Bahá’í Writings articulate certain spiritual values and attitudes that guide the relationship of man toward nature. These include:

2.2.1 Appreciation

An awareness of the fact that the earth is the "source" 55 of man's "prosperity" 56 is tempered by the realization that "the honor and exaltation of man must be something more than material riches." 57 Thus:

"Every man of discernment, while walking upon the earth, feeleth indeed abashed, inasmuch as he is fully aware that the thing which is the source of his prosperity, his wealth, his might, his exaltation, his advancement and power is, as ordained by God, the very earth which is trodden beneath the feet of all men. There can be no doubt that whoever is cognizant of this truth, is cleansed and sanctified from all pride, arrogance, and vainglory. . . ." 58

"What is it of which ye can rightly boast? Is it on your food and your drink that ye pride yourselves, on the riches ye lay up in your treasuries, on the diversity and the cost of the ornaments with which ye deck yourselves? If true glory were to consist in the possession of such perishable things, then the earth on which ye walk must needs vaunt itself over you, because it supplieth you, and bestoweth upon you, these very things, by the decree of the Almighty. In its bowels are contained, according to what God hath ordained, all that ye possess. From it, as a sign of His mercy, ye derive your riches. Behold then your state, the thing in which ye glory! Would that ye could perceive it!" 59

"Then it is clear that the honor and exaltation of man must be something more than material riches. Material comforts are only a branch, but the root of the exaltation of man is the good attributes and virtues which are the adornments of his reality. These are the divine appearances, the heavenly bounties, the sublime emotions, the love and knowledge of God; universal wisdom, intellectual perception, scientific discoveries, justice, equity, truthfulness, benevolence, natural courage and innate fortitude; the respect for rights and the keeping of agreements and covenants; rectitude in all circumstances; serving the truth under all conditions; the sacrifice of one's life for the good of all people; service in the Divine Kingdom; the guidance of the people, and the education of the nations and races. This is the prosperity of the human world! This is the exaltation of man in the world! This is eternal life and heavenly honor!" 60

2.2.2 Moderation

The Bahá’í Writings encourage detachment from "this world and the vanities thereof," 61 since "attachment" 62 distracts the individual from awareness of God. This does not, however, constitute a form of asceticism or imply a rejection of life's pleasures. Bahá'u'lláh explains:

"Should a man wish to adorn himself with the ornaments of the earth, to wear its apparel, or partake of the benefits it can bestow, no harm can befall him, if he alloweth nothing whatever to intervene between him and God, for God hath ordained every good thing, whether created in the heavens or in the earth, for such of His servants as truly believe in Him. Eat ye, O people, of the good things which God hath allowed you, and deprive not yourselves from His wondrous bounties. Render thanks and praise unto Him, and be of them that are truly thankful." 63

The standard is moderation:

"In all matters moderation is desirable. If a thing is carried to excess, it will prove a source of evil. . . ." 64

2.2.3 Kindness to animals

Bahá'u'lláh calls for man to "show kindness to animals" 65 and He warns against "hunting to excess." 66 'Abdu'l-Bahá writes:

"Briefly, it is not only their fellow human beings that the
beloved of God must treat with mercy and compassion, rather must they show forth the utmost loving-kindness to every living creature. For in all physical respects, and where the animal spirit is concerned, the selfsame feelings are shared by animal and man. Man hath not grasped this truth, however, and he believeth that physical sensations are confined to human beings, wherefore he is unjust to the animals, and cruel.

"And yet in truth, what difference is there when it cometh to physical sensations? The feelings are one and the same, whether ye inflict pain on man or beast. There is no difference here whatever. And indeed ye do worse to harm an animal, for man hath a language, he can lodge a complaint, he can cry out and moan; if injured he can have recourse to the authorities and these will protect him from his aggressor. But the hapless beast is mute, able neither to express its hurt nor take its case to the authorities. If a man inflict a thousand ills upon a beast, it can neither ward him off with speech nor hale him into court. Therefore is it essential that ye show forth the utmost consideration to the animal, and that ye be even kinder to him than to your fellow-man.

"Train your children from their earliest days to be infinitely tender and loving to animals. If an animal be sick, let the children try to heal it, if it be hungry, let them feed it, if thirsty, let them quench its thirst, if weary, let them see that it rests.

"Most human beings are sinners, but the beasts are innocent. Surely those without sin should receive the utmost kindness and love—all except animals which are harmful. . . . But to blessed animals the utmost kindness must be shown, the more the better. Tenderness and loving-kindness are basic principles of God's heavenly Kingdom. Ye should most carefully bear this matter in mind." 57

The Bahá’í Writings also assert that the consumption of meat is not a prerequisite to health:

"Regarding the eating of animal flesh and abstinence therefrom, . . . he (man) is not in need of meat, nor is he obliged to eat it. Even without eating meat he would live with the utmost vigor and energy. . . . Truly, the killing of animals and the eating of their meat is somewhat contrary to pity and compassion, and if one can content oneself with cereals, fruit, oil and nuts, such as pistachios, almonds and so on, it would undoubtedly be better and more pleasing." 58

2.2.4 Development of nature

In the Bahá’í view, physical creation is dynamic and evolving from "one degree of perfection to another." 59 It is, however, "incomplete," 70 since it lacks "intelligence and education." 71 It stands in need of development by man in order to create not only a higher degree of order and beauty, which are standards upheld in the Bahá’í teachings, but also to increase its fertility and productivity. In relation to the creation of order and beauty in the realm of nature ‘Abdu’l-Bahá writes:

"Nature is the material world. When we look upon it, we see that it is dark and imperfect. For instance, if we allow a piece of land to remain in its natural condition, we will find it covered with thorns and thistles; useless weeds and wild vegetation will flourish upon it, and it will become like a jungle. The trees will be fruitless, lacking beauty and symmetry. . . ." 72

"And if, as thou passest by fields and plantations, thou observest that the plants, flowers and sweet-smelling herbs are growing luxuriantly together, forming a pattern of unity, this is an evidence of the fact that that plantation and garden is flourishing under the care of a skillful gardener. But when thou seest it in a state of disorder and irregularity thou inferrest that it hath lacked the training of an efficient farmer and thus hath produced weeds and tares." 73

‘Abdu’l-Bahá also mentions the contribution of cultivation as a means of increasing the fertility of the earth and its productivity. He states:

"If we should relegate this plot of ground to its normal state, allow it to return to its original condition, it would become a field of thorns and useless weeds, but by cultivation it will become fertile soil, yielding a harvest. Deprived of cultivation, the mountain slopes would be jungles and forests without fruitful trees. The gardens bring forth fruits and flowers in proportion to the care and tillage bestowed upon them by the gardener. . . ." 74

"A grain of wheat, when cultivated by the farmer, will yield a whole harvest, and a seed, through the gardener's care, will grow into a great tree. . . ." 75

While the world of nature stands in need of development, man's approach to such development must be tempered by moderation, a commitment to protecting the "heritage (of) future generations," 76 and an awareness of the sanctity of nature that pervades the Writings of the Bahá’í Faith. For example, Bahá’u’lláh states:

"Blessed is the spot, and the house, and the place, and the city, and the heart, and the mountain, and the refuge, and the cave, and the valley, and the land, and the sea, and the island, and the meadow where mention of God hath been made, and His praise glorified." 77

2.2.5 Importance of agriculture

Bahá’u’lláh states that "Special regard must be paid to agriculture." 78 He characterizes it as an activity which is "conductive to the advancement of mankind and to the reconstruction of the world." 79 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá asserts that

"The fundamental basis of the community is agriculture,—tillage of the soil. . . ." 80

He describes agriculture as "a noble science" 81 whose practice is an "act of worship," 82 and He encourages both women and men to engage in "agricultural sciences." 83 He indicates that should an individual "become proficient in this field, he will become a means of providing for the comfort of untold numbers of people." 84

In relation to the economic and social development of the nations, the Universal House of Justice underlines the importance of "agriculture and the preservation of the ecological balance of the world." 85

2.2.6 Use of science

Science is described as "the governor of nature and its mysteries, the one agency by which man explores the institutions of material creation": 86

"... man through the exercise of his scientific, intellectual power. . . . can modify, change and control nature according to his own wishes and uses. Science, so to speak, is the breaker of the laws of nature.
"Consider, for example, that man according to natural law should dwell upon the surface of the earth. By overcoming this law and restriction, however, he sails in ships over the ocean, mounts to the zenith in airplanes and sinks to the depths of the sea in submarines. This is against the fiat of nature and a violation of her sovereignty and dominion. Nature's laws and methods, the hidden secrets and mysteries of the universe, human inventions and discoveries, all our scientific acquisitions should naturally remain concealed and unknown, but man through his intellectual acumen searches them out of the plane of the invisible, draws them into the plane of the visible, exposes and explains them. For instance, one of the mysteries of nature is electricity. According to nature this force, this energy, should remain latent and hidden. but man scientifically breaks through the very laws of nature, arrests it: and even imprisons it for his use.

"In brief, man through the possession of this ideal endowment of scientific investigation is the most noble product of creation, the governor of nature. . . ." 87

'Abdu'l-Bahá links scientific endeavor with the implementation of a noble goal. He states:

"This endowment is the most praiseworthy power of man, for through its employment and exercise the betterment of the human race is accomplished, the development of the virtues of mankind is made possible and the spirit and mysteries of God become manifest. . . ." 88

And He enumerates the general principle that

"... any agency whatever, though it be the instrument of mankind's greatest good, is capable of misuse. Its proper use or abuse depends on the varying degrees of enlightenment, capacity, faith, honesty, devotion and highmindedness of the leaders of public opinion." 89

3. PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

A number of issues pertinent to the protection of the environment are addressed in the Writings of the Bahá'í Faith. Several of these are set out below.

3.1 Preservation of resources

Shoghi Effendi links the preservation and reclamation of the earth's resources with both the "protection (of the) physical world and (the) heritage (of) future generations." 90 He affirms that the work of such groups as the Men of the Trees and the World Forestry Charter is "essentially humanitarian," 91 and he applauds their "noble objective" 92 of reclaiming the "desert areas (of) Africa." 93

It is interesting to note that among the "powers and duties" 94 of the Universal House of Justice are "the advancement and betterment of the world" 95 and "the development of countries." 96

3.2 Control of natural resources

The Bahá'í Writings envisage that the protection, exploitation and exploration of the earth's "unimaginably vast resources" 97 must, inevitably, in the long term, come under the jurisdiction of a "world federal system." 98 Such a system, based on recognition of the "unity of the human race," 99 will not only exercise "unchallengeable authority" 100 over the earth's resources, but will also ensure economic and social justice. Shoghi Effendi writes:

"The unity of the human race, as envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh, implies the establishment of a world commonwealth in which all nations, races, creeds and classes are closely and permanently united, and in which the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that compose them are definitely and completely safeguarded. . . . In such a world, society, science and religion, the two most potent forces in human life, will be reconciled, will cooperate, and will harmoniously develop. . . . The economic resources of the world will be organized, its sources of raw materials will be tapped and fully utilized, its markets will be coordinated and developed, and the distribution of its products will be equitably regulated.

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

"A world federal system, ruling the whole earth and exercising unchallengeable authority over its unimaginably vast resources, blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and the West, liberated from the curse of war and its miseries, and bent on the exploitation of all the available sources of energy on the surface of the planet, a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice, whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation—such is the goal toward which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving." 101

3.3. Approaches to protecting the environment

The conservation and protection of the environment must be addressed on the individual and societal levels. Shoghi Effendi, in a letter written on his behalf, states:

"We cannot segregate the human heart from the environment outside us and say that once one of these is reformed everything will be improved. Man is organic with the world. His inner life moulds the environment and is itself also deeply affected by it. The one acts upon the other and every abiding change in the life of man is the result of these mutual reactions.

"No movement in the world directs its attention upon both these aspects of human life and has full measures for their improvement, save the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. And this is its distinctive feature. If we desire therefore the good of the world we should strive to spread those teachings and also practice them in our own life. Through them will the human heart be changed, and also our social environment
provides the atmosphere in which we can grow spiritually and reflect in full the light of God shining through the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh."

And, with regard to the solution of the world's problems, he indicates that:

"We need a change of heart, a reframing of all our conceptions and a new orientation of our activities. The inward life of man as well as his outward environment have to be reshaped if human salvation is to be secured."

On a governmental level, the Universal House of Justice calls for "global cooperation of the family of nations in devising and adopting measures designed to preserve the ecological balance this earth was given by its Creator." The House of Justice asserts:

"Until such time as the nations of the world understand and follow the admonitions of Bahá'u'lláh to whole-heartedly work together in looking after the best interests of all humankind, and unite in the search for ways and means to meet the many environmental problems besetting our planet, the House of Justice feels that little progress will be made toward their solution..."

The Universal House of Justice sets out the role of the individual Bahá'ís and of Bahá'í communities in relation to saving "the wildlife and natural condition of the world" as follows:

"...the best way in which you can help save the wildlife and natural condition of the world is to exert every effort to bring the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the attention of your fellow-men and to win their allegiance to His Cause.

"As the hearts of men are changed, and they begin to work in unity in the light of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, they can begin to implement many practical improvements to the environment. This is already beginning in the efforts at social and economic development in those areas where large Bahá'í communities have been founded. Of course, you can also assist those with whom you come into contact who have an interest in improving the environment, but the fundamental solution is the one that Bahá'u'lláh has brought."

In addition to addressing the issue on a fundamental spiritual level, collaboration with individuals and groups interested in improving the environment is encouraged. The Bahá'í communities are called upon to make the conservation of the environment an integral part of their ongoing activities by 

"...assisting in endeavors to conserve the environment in ways which blend with the rhythm of life of our community."

4. PROSPECT FOR THE FUTURE

'Abdu'l-Bahá sketches the following picture of the future state of life on earth:

"The Lord of all mankind hath fashioned this human realm to be a Garden of Eden, an earthly paradise. If, as it must, it findeth the way to harmony and peace, to love and mutual trust, it will become a true abode of bliss, a place of manifold blessings and unending delights. Therein shall be revealed the excellence of humankind, therein shall the rays of the Sun of Truth shine forth on every hand."

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Hurricane Hugo: the aftermath

On September 22, 1989, Hurricane Hugo struck the southeastern United States, wreaking its heaviest damage along the eastern coast of South Carolina. On September 28 Bahá'ís from Columbus County, North Carolina, and members of the state's Central District Teaching Committee loaded a van with supplies and drove to the hurricane disaster area in South Carolina to help. "We had no idea what we would encounter," they reported, "so we prepared for almost anything. We carried tools, hammers, nails and a ladder. We also took clothing, shoes and socks, pillows and blankets, bread and milk, ice, canned juices, eggs, bottled water, baby supplies and personal hygiene products. We met and gave supplies to a number of homeless people. They were very much surprised when we gave them ice for free since others had been buying bags of ice for 79 cents and going there trying to resell it to them for $3 a bag. On Friday, September 29, we were asked if we would mind taking another load (of supplies) on behalf of Hallsboro Elementary School, and we were asked for documentation on where their supplies went and who they helped."

Following is an account of that second visit to South Carolina:

Dear students, faculty, families and friends of Hallsboro Elementary School:

We thought you would like to know where the food you collected went and how it helped.

We carried it personally by van to the disaster areas hit first. One of these areas hardest hit by Hurricane Hugo was a place named Awendaw and a mobile home park named Copahee View which is 30 miles this side of Charleston.

The center of the hurricane, called the eye, is relatively calm while the raging winds circle around it, first in one direction, then another. While the calmer eye was over Charleston, other areas along with Awendaw and the trailer park got only the rampaging winds.

Hurricane Hugo first hit an island named the Isle of Palms, then struck land along the coastline and devastated Copahee View. Out of 100 trailers there, only three remained standing and even resembled trailers. The rest were torn in pieces. Everyone's furniture, clothing, cars, everything was scrambled together for miles.

Our first stop was to offer help to a young woman standing by a pile of debris that used to be her home and holding a baby girl while her husband sifted through wood, metal and mud to find a few pots, pans or unbroken dishes. She said she needed baby bottles, so we gave her some and moved on, past more piles of house parts, broken furniture and broken trees.

To let everyone know we had supplies, we had signs on the sides and back of the van that read "Hurricane Supply Van from Hallsboro and Whiteville, North Carolina, Your Border Friends."

We had two families stop us needing candles, matches, flashlights, batteries and men's socks. One man said Hugo took his workplace as well as his house so he doesn't even have a job to go to anymore, but he had been helping clear streets so the people could get in and out of homes to see if they could find any of their belongings. He said he had worn the same socks for three or four days. We've never seen anyone so happy to see clean socks! He said he would even wear women's or mismatched ones, he didn't care as long as he could change.

We had two men ask for shoes. We just happened to have two pairs of men's tennis shoes that someone sent and they turned out to be the exact sizes that were needed.
On the way there, we had seen such sights as a large boat in the middle of a highway, and miles of trees snapped like match sticks. Now we were seeing such things as a pick-up truck thrown inside a trailer, a trailer upside down so the wheels appeared to be on top, and refrigerators, sinks, bath tubs and other objects sitting in strange places. We saw many foundations where houses used to be. We rounded a curve near the water and saw what once was a two-story house with the whole lower level gone. The upper part remained, balanced on the framework like someone standing on stilts, only the floor was missing so all the furniture had fallen downstairs and was blown away. The man who lived there said he had a pool table and a piano but couldn't find them anywhere. We're sure they are in many pieces, wherever they are.

At our next stop we saw two families who had lived next door to one another in trailers. They were standing in front of what appeared to be a partially damaged house. One said, "I lived here and had a house trailer here, but Hugo took it away and put a house here. I don't know whose house this is." They needed pillows, blankets, milk and water, for which they thanked us wholeheartedly and asked that we tell everyone else thank you, too.

We saw a woman digging a blanket out from under some debris and asked if she needed anything. She said, "No, we're fine. We're alive and we're fine!" She had no house, yet she said she was fine. "This makes you know you shouldn't put your trust in material things, because they don't last," she said as we continued our mission. We were amazed by her ability to cope with the situation. One thing we noticed about all of these people we were helping was that they were very caring and concerned about each other, unfailingly of race, etc., and they always told us about someone else who needed help, in the next yard or on the next street, so no one would be left out.

We talked to a young couple who couldn't find their cat when they were leaving to stay somewhere during the storm. On their return, they found their home gone but their cat had managed somehow to survive. We'll never know how he survived along with many other animals we saw. A tiny cat was sitting on top of a dresser, with no drawers in it, in the middle of a street. and he was so hungry that he began crying loudly when he saw us, so we gave him part of a sandwich. The dogs we saw had no hair left on them, either from the extremely hard winds or the rushing mud, water, bushes and debris, or perhaps from a combination of it all. The animal shelter truck brought food for the pets who were wandering around. They fed them and left big bags of food for them. We even saw a pig and a goose eagerly eating dog food.

A family with children were seated around an old table outside, about to eat their meager dinner, when we stopped and asked if they needed anything. They took ice, flashlights, batteries and juice for the children. Their trailer was one of the three still there but it had no doors, and part of the roof was gone. One of us saw the porch out by the road and asked, "Is this your porch?" "Yes," the mother replied, "and we have two other porches in our back yard!" We remarked that the trailer was still standing, and she said, "Yes, it looks good from the outside but you should see the inside." Climbing on a kitchen chair to look inside, we were shocked to see what used to be a large console color TV set sitting in mud and debris in the middle of the living room. A telephone that looked like someone had dug it out of a boggy swamp was sitting on an end table covered with mud. Clothing was pasted to the floor with mud, and it all smelled like sewage. Now this family is living in their yard in a tiny camper.

Keep in mind that there is no power or water in this subdivision, yet the people there are optimistic and say things like, "The worst is over now!"

Some have even kept their sense of
humor through it all. We saw a sign in one yard that said “Landscaping by Hugo,” and another that said “Hugo can break our house but not our spirit—we'll be back!”

The mood, however, ranged from optimism to despair; one man could only sit and stare at what used to be his home and everything he had worked for all his life. Another woman said she was finding some of her things in a three-block radius. A brick house had been taken off its foundation and no one had seen a trace of it since. Some; pecula;~ :: ::ad beer~

Some displaced people are staying with friends or relatives, but there are some who have nowhere to go. These are the ones your supplies have helped.

We found four more such families close to curfew time. An elderly couple, a family with one daughter, another with three little girls and one with teen-age children. We divided the remaining food, batteries, flashlights, candles, water and ice among these people. We gave nails to a man making repairs. We said goodbye, wished them well, and began our journey home. During the drive we had mixed feelings. It made us realize how fortunate we are to have a home to come back to. We thank God we were spared, but most of all, we thank God for people like you who arise to help others since it could have been us.

**Bahá’ís in Virgin Islands help in recovery efforts**

With no electricity, no telephone service, no public water supply, and with their houses and belongings scattered, for the most part, in disarray, the Bahá’ís of St. Croix, Virgin Islands, arose to make every attempt to meet the needs of the people there in the wake of Hurricane Hugo, which struck with tremendous force last September 16-17 leaving devastation and death behind it.

As doors and windows were being boarded up for the approach of the giant storm, the National Spiritual Assembly contacted the Bahá’ís of the islands with instructions to gather for prayers, and assured them of the prayers being said in their behalf at the World Centre. When Hugo struck, carrying winds of more than 140 miles an hour and in some places more than 200, radio and television stations went off the air, leaving radio WSTA as the only communication link for the islands. During the next two weeks, WSTA served as the message center and source of news from the outside world. Throughout this time regularly scheduled Bahá’í spots were being broadcast by the station.

A few days later, National Spiritual Assembly members from St. Thomas and St. John met to consult on ways of giving practical help and spiritual guidance to the friends. Local Assemblies were asked to meet and make plans to help those needing assistance in their communities.

The storm passed directly over St. Croix; 90 percent of the houses there were lost as well as all electrical power and phone service. Several Bahá’í families lost their homes, and two lost everything. The National Spiritual Assembly sent boxes of food and supplies, some of which came from the friends in nearby Puerto Rico and the United States. At least 15 of the Bahá’ís on St. Croix gathered for the Feast of Mashiyyat to give thanks, for not even one injury was reported in the Bahá’í community.

The Bahá’ís have been busy in the recovery effort, helping not only one another but also taking part in the rebuilding work of the community at large. Some are involved as professionals, while others have volunteered to distribute food, help put up temporary roofing for the elderly and infirm, and even manage a shelter. The Bahá’í Center in Frederiksted was made available to a homeless family, and the Spiritual Assembly of Kingshill has been meeting regularly to keep abreast of the situation and to offer help wherever it is needed.
Ecuador’s Radio Bahá’í a busy host

Ecuador’s Radio Bahá’í hosted two national events and covered an international seminar last summer.

After two months of anticipation and six regional preliminary festivals, Radio Bahá’í held its sixth annual Music Festival last August in Otavalo.

People came from each of the country’s six regions, and the more than 5,000 participants overflowed the coliseum, spilling out into the streets.

During the festival, the radio station launched its new recording which introduces the peace statement.

Three winners were chosen from among the 25 entrants in the festival. Each was given a trophy imprinted with the insignia of Radio Bahá’í: Ecuador: gold for first place, silver for second, bronze for third.

In July, the Ecuadorian Association of Radio Broadcasting, with Radio Bahá’í the host, held its 16th regular General Assembly at Ibarra. More than 150 Ecuadorian radio broadcasting groups were represented at the event, which proved to be a good opportunity to introduce Radio Bahá’í and to present copies of the peace statement to many interested persons.

Also in July, Radio Bahá’í covered the 13th Latin American Social Work Seminar in Quito, during which station personnel were pleased to hear Father Juan Vives Suria, president of the Human Rights Commission for Latin America, mention the Bahá’í teachings and quote from the peace statement, which he had received in Venezuela.

Bangladesh

As a result of the Quddús Teaching Project in Bangladesh, more than 6,000 people entered the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh between November 1988 and September 1989.

In September another 1,500 people accepted the Faith, raising to 7,500 the total number of new believers in Bangladesh.

Among the highlights of the Quddús campaign was the enrollment of members of the Monda and Arakan tribes. More than 200 of the Monda people were enrolled, forming two local Spiritual Assemblies. The total number of Assemblies in the region has more than doubled, from 100 to 211.

During the mass teaching campaign four villages learned about the Cause of God, and in each of them the majority of the population is now Bahá’í.

Throughout the region women are arising to teach along with the men, and whole families are becoming Bahá’ís together.

Uganda

The Bahá’í Club at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, has received official recognition from the university. The club has about 37 members including Bahá’ís and non-Bahá’ís.
Trinidad/Tobago

The first Bahá'í-sponsored Chinese Cultural Exhibit in Trinidad and Tobago was held last August 16 at the Progressive Educational Institute in Port of Spain.

The principal of the institute, Hamilton Holder, a former mayor of Port of Spain and former member of the Senate of Trinidad and Tobago, is now a member of the Bahá'í community of Port of Spain.

The exhibit was planned by the Bahá'ís in collaboration with the embassy of the Peoples Republic of China. Featured were 20 16-by-20-inch color photographs from the embassy's library, showing many aspects of life in China, as well as several pieces of Chinese ceramics and five examples of Chinese embroidery.

A Chinese "tea" was held at which genuine Chinese tea was served, a cassette tape of Chinese music was played, and a speaker offered insights into Chinese culture as well as Chinese life in Trinidad and Tobago.

Panama

Personnel at Radio Bahá'í's transmitter link in Boca de Soloy, Panama, took part recently in a bi-lingual (Spanish-Guaymi) education and literacy seminar held at the Guaymi Cultural Centre in Soloy.

Staff members also played an active role in a teaching campaign in the Guaymi area of Tolé, and helped with the election of local Spiritual Assemblies in the area.

The director of education for Panama's Chiriqui Province recently asked help from Radio Bahá'í in broadcasting "Book-a-Thon '89," a three-hour presentation of folk music with no commercial interruptions. The Bahá'ís agreed to do so, and the program was quite successful.

The director later sent a certificate of appreciation to the station.

Radio Bahá'í in Boca del Monte, Panama, recently received visitors from the Professional and Technical Institute of Eastern Chiriqui Province. Three professors and 15 students from the electronics department of the Institute visited the station for some practical reinforcement of their course lectures by viewing the studio's technical equipment and how it is used.

During the visit the students asked many questions about the Faith and were given Bahá'í literature.
Australia

Baha'i communities throughout Australia took part last June 18-24 in National Refugee Week, sponsored by the Refugee Council of Australia and Austcare.

The Baha'is became involved as a result of a letter from the National Spiritual Assembly to local communities suggesting a wide range of projects the friends might initiate to help support the event.

The active role taken on by the Baha'i community in support of Refugee Week resulted in mention of the Faith in 30 newspaper articles, 20 radio interviews and 10 television programs.

Activities included:
- A special service at the Baha'i House of Worship in Sydney at which representatives of the Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs; UNICEF; the National Refugee Council; Austcare; the Australian Council of Churches, other non-governmental organizations and academics were present.
- A public meeting in Cairns attended by 80 people including about 40 non-Baha'is.
- A dinner in Canberra attended by 180 including 80 non-Baha'is, among whom were representatives of local organizations and government officials.
- A seminar in Glenorchy which drew 120 people including speakers from the Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs. The event received excellent media coverage.
- A "Persian evening" in Harvey whose special guests included members of Parliament, the President of the Shire, and representatives of Burnby Council.
- A public meeting in Perth that drew many non-Baha'is. Media coverage included lengthy articles in three newspapers and interviews on ABC National Radio.

Pakistan

Eleven schools in Baluchistan Province, Pakistan, took part last August 26-31 in a "Student Week" program sponsored by the Baha'i community of Quetta.

Each day a different competition was held for students, beginning with a speech competition on the topic "The Elimination of Prejudice," in which Miss Nelofar Roshani, a Baha'i, won first prize.

Other competitions included a national songs contest, a quiz, a game called "Bait Bazi," and a drama competition. On the final day, a prize distribution ceremony was held. Riaz Ahmad Shirazi, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Pakistan, presided, with a guest appearance by Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, Chief Minister of Baluchistan.

Nearly 250 non-Baha'is attended the prize distribution ceremony during the Baha'i-sponsored 'Student Week' last August 26-31.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Pakistan recently presented a copy of the Universal House of Justice's peace statement, "The Promise of World Peace," to Pakistani Prime Minister Muhtarama Benazir Bhutto.

The presentation was made during a ceremony in which the Prime Minister received an honorary Doctor of Science degree from the Zoroastrian community in Karachi.

More than 3,000 people attended the ceremony including the Chief Minister of Sind, the Chief Justice of Pakistan, federal and provincial ministers, members of Parliament and many other prominent figures.

Uruguay

About 300 people from 12 countries took part in a Baha'i International Women's Conference last October 6-8 in Montevideo, Uruguay. Among those attending were four members of the Continental Board of Counsellors.

The night before the conference opened, the "Peace Department" of the National Spiritual Assembly expressed its appreciation for support of the International Year of Peace by holding a banquet for 58 dignitaries and members of the press, among whom were a state senator, the director of the state television station, and the sub-director of two popular newspapers.

Messages of support for the conference and its goals were received from various government officials, Baha'i institutions, and women's associations from other countries. The gathering was covered extensively by the media.
Brazil

More than 1,500 people became Bahá'ís last summer in the state of Bahia, Brazil, as a result of a teaching campaign which began in January.

The campaign was launched after almost a year of efforts to establish a unity of vision among the Bahá'ís of Bahia. As a result of consultation, teaching efforts were directed mainly toward women, youth and children.

Weekly deepening sessions are being held for women and youth while classes for children have also been established.

In August, the Bahá'ís held a music festival in an area of Salvador City called Pau da Lima. About 600 people came to hear 11 musical presentations all based on the theme "Mankind Is One."

A permanent teaching team has been active in Canoas, a small town near Porto Alegre in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

Concentrating its efforts on students and professors, the team has reached them through free showings of a 20-minute slide program, "From War to Peace." Following each showing an introduction to the Faith is given, followed by a discussion. To date, more than 1,000 people have attended the programs.

A second group of Bahá'ís in Canoas has begun to offer services including free English classes, a basic health course, prayer meetings, a correspondence course, and firesides. The local newspaper has carried several articles about the Bahá'ís and their services to the city, while local radio has broadcast a 15-minute interview with a member of the Bahá'í community.

Last June, two Bahá'ís met with the mayor of Canoas to present him with a copy of the peace statement. The friends have also contacted the vice-mayor, the chief medical officer, the secretaries of Human Rights, Treasury and Education, and other leaders of thought in Canoas, all of whom have received them warmly.

Canoas recently elected its local Spiritual Assembly and is now a 20-member community.

During a hearing at the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Federal Chamber in Brazil, the commission approved a request from the Bahá'ís to express its concern at the United Nations for the plight of Bahá'ís in Iran. It marked the National Spiritual Assembly's first official contact with the highest legislative body in Brazil.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil has announced the purchase of a boat for teaching work in the Amazon.

A family has offered to serve on the boat for a year in the area of Itacoatiara, where much teaching and more than 150 enrollments have taken place since the beginning of 1989.

The boat has been named "Green Light II" after the first Green Light Expedition led by the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum.

As of September, preparations for the teaching project were under way.

Mauritius

Roddy Dharma Lutchmaya, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa, died last September 24 in Mauritius. Mr. Lutchmaya was appointed to the Board of Counsellors on November 26, 1985. In response to this unexpected loss, the Universal House of Justice cabled the National Spiritual Assembly of Mauritius: 'Deeply grieved sudden untimely death devoted promoter Faith Roddy Lutchmaya. His incessant efforts teaching field Mauritius from early years establishment Faith that island, his long record administrative services on National Spiritual Assembly, culminating in his membership on the Board of Counsellors in Africa, will always be lovingly remembered. His reward Abhd Kingdom undoubted bounty. May rising generation Bahá'ís islands Indian Ocean follow his noble footsteps.'
Ishqábád: the first House of Worship
With its capital under siege, Bahá'ís of El Salvador hold a celebration...
In New Zealand, Bahá'í burial law passes a stern and emotional test...
A tribute to Ishqábád, 'City of Love' and site of first Mashriqu'l-Adhkar...
Around the world: News from Bahá'í communities all over the globe...

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Amid the chaos, a celebration

This report of recent events in El Salvador was written by Auxiliary Board member Quentin Farrand.

What a weekend! At the same time the Bahá'í community of El Salvador was set to celebrate the anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh and the 50th anniversary of the Faith in El Salvador with the presence of the earliest pioneer to that country, John Eichenauer, several thousand armed guerrillas made a surprise attack on the capital city, San Salvador. Would the labors and plans of weeks and even months be laid to waste? Would all the publicity come to naught?

The Salvadoran National Spiritual Assembly had been coordinating since mid-August the carefully made plans for this double commemoration, and had invited some of the most outstanding past pioneers to attend. Of these, only John Eichenauer, from Phoenix, Arizona, was able to come. As a 17-year-old student in 1939, he introduced the Faith to El Salvador. (He was joined later by Clarence Iverson, a musician and employee for several years at the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador, who is deceased.)

The principal celebration was to take place Sunday, November 12, at the Instituto Bahá'í Jamaliyyih, a deepening school and farming property about 35 kilometers (22 miles) west of the capital.

Publicity was excellent; three daily newspapers ran press releases, and the Sunday editions of two of them had full-page paid ads consisting of appropriate verses from the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh for the orientation of the unity-starved, peace-hungry people of El Salvador. These editions came out Saturday noon, before the shooting began, and were in hundreds of thousands of homes during the weekend.

The most important interview program, 'Punto de Vista,' gave us two full hours to expound on the Bahá'í approach to peace, with generally helpful and friendly questions from the moderator, Dr. Gonzalez Sibrian, and the audience.

Television coverage was unprecedented. The TV Committee was able to secure important exposure in the preceding weeks in addition to our regular Saturday night Bahá'í program. The most important interview program, "Punto de Vista," gave us two full hours to expound on the Bahá'í approach to peace, with generally helpful and friendly questions from the moderator, Dr. Gonzalez Sibrian, and the audience. Four panelists, Ana Hilda de Lemus, Mario Lemus, Martha Farrand de Zeledón (visiting from Costa Rica) and Quentin Farrand were able to focus on themes from "The Promise of World Peace" including Bahá'í principles relating to the condition of the world, the Bahá'í concept of human reality, peace and youth, consultation, and our vision of the future and of the stages of world unity and peace. Although the moderator tried at several points to have the panelists comment on the crisis in Central America, they were able to avoid doing this, stressing instead the global nature of the crisis and its solutions, as well as the changes that man must make within himself and in his relationship to humankind as a whole.

This live program was on Thursday, October 5. In two hours a fair and balanced presentation of the Faith and its teachings on peace was made to a large and well-educated audience, and many positive comments were heard during the following week. During a second showing, the following Sunday evening, Dr. Gonzalez Sibrian phoned one of the panelists to say that it was one of the most significant programs he had ever produced and to ask whether the Bahá'ís, although removed from the political contention, could possibly teach the adversaries in El Salvador the spirit and methods of Bahá'í consultation.

A few days before the planned celebration in November, Pedro Rivas and Quentin Farrand were interviewed on a popular morning TV show, "Entrevista del Dia," for about 20 minutes. Questions were about the Faith in general and the commemoration in particular. This, too, came out well before a large audience and was repeated in the evening in prime time. The Bahá'ís were able to show to the cameras a copy of the peace message and a large color photograph of the World Centre.

Meanwhile, our regular Saturday night Bahá'í TV program, "Rumbo al Futuro" (The Way to the Future), had been filmed on Thursday, November 9, and was to be shown on Saturday—the eve of the commemoration. In this show, four of the surviving members of the first National Spiritual Assembly of El Salvador, elected in 1961, were interviewed. The four were José María Padilla, Gabriel Torres (now an Auxiliary Board member), Jeanne de Farrand and Quentin Farrand. (Rafael Garcia, the other member of that first National Assembly who is still living, was away on a teaching trip). Also interviewed was Amanda Mena, the earliest surviving Salvadoran believer. The program presented an impressive review of the Faith, its present world extension, history, and World Centre. The program came on after the siege.
John Eichenauer (holding the Greatest Name), the first pioneer to El Salvador, returned last November to help had begun, and almost everyone was glued to their sets seeking information and instructions from the government-sponsored national emergency radio and TV network, so it must have had quite a large audience.

On Friday, November 10, the Bahá'ís secured an appointment to present a copy of the peace statement to El Salvador's new President, Alfredo Cristiani. The Minister to the Presidency, Martinez Varela, the highest cabinet officer in the country, was designated to receive the statement on behalf of the president. He was especially warm and cordial, extending the visit longer than planned, and was pleased to receive his own copy of the statement as well. He mentioned that he had a good impression of the Bahá'ís from a previous encounter with them.

John Eichenauer arrived on November 10 and was taken to several press interviews. He has kept his Spanish well-honed in Arizona, and is articulate and dynamic, so his talks and interviews were quite effective. Amid the feverish preparations Friday night and Saturday, another planned activity was under way Saturday evening: a fund-raising dinner and program dedicated to the Arc on Mount Carmel and held at the home of Bahá'ís in the neighboring city of Santa Tecla. In spite of the general disorder and gunfire, many went and saw the video on the Arc, now well-dubbed in Spanish by Tracy Dreyer and Sara de Shahidinejad. The friends also saw the Bahá'í TV program, heard informal talks by the guest of honor, John Eichenauer, and the national Treasurer, Parviz Shahidinejad, and raised more than $1,300 for the Arc through the sale of many donated articles.

As the evening went on it became evident that the friends from the capital could not return, so lodging was improvised in Santa Tecla. The next morning there was a prayer-breakfast at the home of Gabriel and Jaleh de Torres, and all the stranded friends met there with the Bahá'ís from Santa Tecla. We had no way of knowing how safe traveling to the Institute would be, so we waited as John again spoke of his memories of El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and of such early pioneers as Louise Caswell, Cora Oliver, Artemus Lamb, Mathew Kaszab and others. He also told of his pilgrimage in 1956 and his impressions of Shoghi Effendi. At this point the resident "mother" of the Institute, Mahbubeh Shahidi, arrived by bus to say that there were already more than 100 friends at the Institute and that the highway was relatively safe. We said prayers before setting out in a caravan.

The program at the Institute was inspiring. Although planned for a larger number, more than 200 did attend including a busload of 35 from Oriente and another bus carrying 80 from Sonsonate. As many of the friends in El Salvador who had worked so hard to prepare the program could not leave their homes, we had to proceed with a revised agenda. The beauty of the grounds, the decorations, the spirit and unity of the friends made the violence seem very far away, and the spirit of the Faith very strong.
After prayers, Gabriel Torres introduced John Eichenauer who mentioned that (the Hand of the Cause of God) Amelia Collins had once told him that on a trip in 1920 her ship had stopped in La Libertad, the old port of San Salvador, and that she and her husband had gone to the capital city where she walked the streets repeating the Greatest Name. We don’t know if she was able to interest anyone there in the teachings, but the story helped John decide to come here as a pioneer. He came as a student living on a $50-a-month allowance donated by Margery McCormick. Having enrolled in the Garcia Flamenco School, he taught the Faith to anyone who would listen, getting newspaper coverage and writing letters to the editor about this new religion. Many of us have since come across dozens of people who say, “Oh yes, I have a Baha’i book at home given to me by a young man many years ago.” On hearing John’s name, they say, “Yes, he’s the one who gave me the book.”

John couldn’t stay more than two years, as World War II began and he was obligated to begin military service. Clarence Iverson did stay for about four years. One of John’s classmates, Dr. Salvador Chevez, was able to attend the commemoration, and their reunion was an especially happy one. Dr. Chevez spoke warmly of his friendship with John, and recounted a spiritual odyssey that has brought him close to the Faith (his son is an active believer).

Quentin Farrand then told of the trials and triumphs of the work in El Salvador since the Farrands came to pioneer with Artemus Lamb in Santa Ana in 1956. Appreciations were made for the devoted work of Mr. Lamb, Marjorie Stee (de Waddell), Margaret Mills (de Leonard), Marcia Stewart (de Matamoros), Dee Worth (de Lamb), Rafael and Elsa de Garcia, Jaleh de Torres, Gayle Woolson, Susan Leich (de McLaren), Marvin and Jan Dreyer, Naomi Dreyer, Mahbubeh Shahidi and others among the earlier pioneers. Mention was also made of the earliest Salvadoran believer, Marco Antonio Martinez Sandoval, now deceased, and many anecdotes and facts were shared which show how far the Faith has come in this land. The program also consisted of music by a trio composed of Valdieh de Quintana, Manuel Ortiz and Farnoush Elahian. All agreed that it was a special day, and the friends prayed and looked forward to the coming victories of the work in this anointed but beloved and special country.

The decorations included a four-foot scale model of the threshold of the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh and a striking mural of the Shrine of the Báb, both prepared with skill and dedication by four of the youth, Vafa Mobasher, Regina Salazar, Carlos Herrera and Rebecca de Rouhani. The work on the grounds, buildings and food was evident and deeply appreciated by all.

We had to return to our homes by the six o’clock curfew, and we believe everyone made it safely. It was an amazing day with a very special spirit.

Comparing these wonderful activities, the unprecedented television and press coverage and the two full pages of powerful and pertinent words of Bahá’u’lláh that couldn’t help but be noticed by literally thousands who were forced to remain in their homes for the entire weekend, with the gunfire and bombs heard throughout the city must, we feel, have made November 12 a day with a message to remember.

The possibilities are great. In the Nine Year Plan (1964-73) this community began with three local Assemblies. The goal for that Plan was nine, and this seemed most difficult at the time. The Plan ended with 55 Assemblies; we now have 126, and more than 12,000 believers in 331 localities. We face conditions now that make it seem as if we are walking out on a springboard for a much greater leap forward. This weekend, though fraught with danger, risks and tragedies, with gunfire in the background, may been seen as a watershed in the Bahá’í history of El Salvador.

As a coda to the proceedings, our dear Gina Garcia de Mobasher, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, gave birth early Monday morning to twins, a boy and a girl.

—Quentin Farrand

Tonga

Last August, this team of Baha’is, five adults and one youth, traveled by boat to the northernmost islands of Tonga, namely Niuafo’ou and Niutatoputapu. They remained on the islands through September, teaching in several villages where they found the people quite receptive. Many new believers were enrolled, and two local Spiritual Assemblies were formed.
A stern test for Bahá'í law

The following letter to the Bahá'ís of New Zealand from their National Spiritual Assembly arose from a situation last August in which the Bahá'í burial law was challenged after the sudden death at the Auckland airport of Te Pakaka Tawhai, a Bahá'í who was well-loved and respected not only within the Bahá'í community but also by his people, the Ngati Porou, who insisted that his body be taken to his homeland, Ruatoria, in the far eastern area of the country, for burial. The response of the National Assembly to this challenge, and the steadfastness of Pakaka Tawhai's wife, Pam, serves as a reminder of the way in which Bahá'í law must be respected and upheld even in the face of opposition, no matter how well-intentioned it may be.

To the Bahá'ís of New Zealand
Dearly-loved friends,

The National Spiritual Assembly has become aware that there is confusion among some of the believers concerning the recent tangi (wake) of our dear friend Pakaka Tawhai.

There have been many expressions of loving support and condolences to the Assembly. There have also been some communications to the National Assembly expressing concern about the handling of the events surrounding the funeral.

The purpose of this letter is to clarify any misunderstandings, present the correct facts, and convey the spiritual principles involved.

As many of the friends will be aware, Pakaka's tribal family, the Ngati Porou, contacted the Bahá'ís during the tangi, demanding to take his body back to Ruatoria. Pakaka's wife and the Bahá'ís who had gathered to say farewell to Pakaka were subjected to hostility and virulent verbal abuse. Despite these attacks, Pam, supported by the Bahá'ís, remained steadfast in the face of the opposition, refusing to agree to the removal of his body. Finally the Ngati Porou left empty-handed and did not attend the Bahá'í (funeral) service.

The secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly received verification of the sudden death of Pakaka at Auckland airport just an hour after he had passed away. From that time, right up to burial three days later, the members of the National Assembly were in frequent contact and consultation.

The decision to return Pakaka's body to Palmerston North was made by his wife, Pam, in consultation with the National Assembly members, having established that it was possible to do this within the Bahá'í law of burial—that is, within one hour's journey.

The Bahá'í law in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas stipulates that the body must not be transported more than one hour's journey from the place of death to the place of interment. The Universal House of Justice has stated the following about the application of the law:

"The spirit of Bahá'u'lláh's law is to be buried near where one dies. The House of Justice has decided that the place of death may be taken to be the city or town in which the believer passes away, and therefore the hour's journey may be calculated from the city limits to the place of burial."

Further, in a letter dated December 2, 1984, to the National Spiritual Assembly of New Zealand, the Universal House of Justice quoted the following statement of Bahá'u'lláh from “Questions and Answers”:

"The law applieth to transportation by land as well as by sea, whether it be an hour's distance by boat or train. The purpose is the time-limit of one hour, no matter what means of conveyance is employed. However, the sooner the burial taketh place, the more fitting and preferable."

The National Spiritual Assembly had established that the flight to Palmerston North was under one hour by jet plane. It had also established that the journey to Ruatoria would take well over an hour by plane or helicopter, there being no jet air service to the closest town. Therefore, burial in Ruatoria was discounted as an option.

The debate generated by the Ngati Porou people about the return of Pakaka's body to Ruatoria started in the early evening of the first day of the tangi and continued without resolution until 2:30 a.m. During the debate Pam Tawhai gave a courageous speech about Pakaka's standing as a Bahá'í and his desire to have a Bahá'í burial. Some Bahá'ís explained the law of burial, but all these efforts had no effect.

By the early hours of the morning, when the discussions were halted for sleep, some of the Bahá'ís were, among themselves, expressing their view that we should submit to the Ngati Porou and allow the body to be transported to Ruatoria, in view of the disunity that existed. It was being stated by these Bahá'ís that unity with the Ngati Porou people, and Maoridom in general, was of greater importance than adhering to the Bahá'í burial law.
At 3 a.m., in view of the uncertainty, confusion and even fear that existed, the National Spiritual Assembly members held a meeting and decided to telephone the Universal House of Justice for guidance.

A comprehensive account of the situation, which included the full implications of not allowing the body to be returned to Ruatoria, was written out by three members of the National Assembly. This complete account was read over the telephone to the Universal House of Justice. The answer received from the Universal House of Justice was repeated by the secretary, as it was being conveyed, so it was heard by another National Assembly member.

The National Assembly feels it is necessary to explain these details because there have been expressions of concern that the situation may not have been fully related to the Universal House of Justice, or that the full implications of the effects on Maori teaching had not been explained.

The Universal House of Justice gave the guidance that there could be no compromise on the Bahá'í law. It explained that we must assert the independent nature of the Bahá'í Faith, and that what at first appeared to cause disunity would ultimately bring about a greater unity. It also pointed out that the cultural conflict being experienced was not unique, as there had been many similar instances in other parts of the world, such as Africa, where the Bahá'ís had to uphold the Bahá'í burial law in the face of opposition. Further, it was explained that if the family, in this case the widow, insisted on having the body taken to the tribal home, there was nothing that the National Assembly could do to prevent this.

The above guidance was conveyed to Pam Tawhai. She made the decision to remain firm and would not agree to having the body removed.

The National Assembly held a further meeting at 4:30 a.m. and made the decision that if the Ngati Porou people tried to remove the body forcibly, the police would not be called and no preventive action would be taken by the Bahá'ís. Retaining dignity was paramount. Pam was happy to abide by this decision. Further, the National Assembly members decided to sit with Pam until dawn as a measure of institutional support.

As it happened, the Ngati Porou did not make any attempt to take the body at dawn as had been feared, but resumed the debate in the early morning.

There had been no opportunity for the National Assembly to address the Bahá'ís as a group about the decision of the Universal House of Justice, but individual Bahá'ís were told and asked to convey the information to the rest of the Bahá'ís gathered there. The National Assembly had made the decision to have its Maori members address the entire gathering when the proceedings recommenced in the morning, to explain that it had sought guidance from the highest authority of the Faith at the Bahá'í World Centre regarding the burial law. Unfortunately, however, when the Ngati Porou reopened the discussion, they put up one speaker after the other in rapid succession, not allowing the Bahá'ís a speaker in accordance with usual Maori custom. It was for this reason that the Ngati Porou walked out of the meeting house without having heard the views of the Bahá'ís.

Despite the very real pain being experienced by the Bahá'ís, particularly the Maori Bahá'ís, the National Assembly perceived a unity among the friends in standing as one body to defend the right of the Bahá'í Faith to adhere to its laws.

After the departure of the Ngati Porou, there was relief that the Rangitane, the people of the marae complex, had remained in the meeting house. The chairman of the National Assembly was then able to address the gathering and explain the whole sequence of events, giving the reasons for the obedience to the Bahá'í law. This, coupled with the moving and beautiful service which followed, left an indelible impression on the Maori people who had stayed. There has been confirmation of this with verbal and written expressions of warmth and admiration for the Bahá'ís being extended by the Rangitane, including the kaumatua (elder) who had held the paepae (council) with such dignity and who had shown such support and sensitivity toward the Bahá'ís.

On one further matter, the National Assembly wishes to assure the believers who felt disquiet about the silence of the National Assembly members during the debate. First, it is important to understand that the confrontation we experienced was not a unique occurrence in Maoridom. Second, we were guided by the paepae, which consists of the people of the marae who are in control of the proceedings. The responsibility of any function on the marae is controlled by the paepae, which is acting as an impartial adjudicator. While it is true that at normal marae gatherings anyone may speak, this was not a normal marae gathering in that it was a confrontational cultural issue. To be able to read the subtleties of what is taking place on the paepae requires an insight and knowledge of Maori culture. On these cultural matters, the National Assembly was guided by its Maori members. The most effective course of action in this event was to maintain silence, not only from the point of view of what was taking place in Maori terms, but also from the Bahá'í point of view. It should also be noted that at no time did the paepae ask for the Bahá'í response. Our silence was not a default, but a definite and positive statement—so much so that the senior kaumatua on the paepae expressed his admiration for the way in which the Bahá'ís conducted themselves. This admiration was echoed by other members of the Rangitane.

Such evidences of goodwill and support illustrate that despite the opposition from the Ngati Porou which appeared to cause great disunity, the situation had in fact become one of harmony and warmth through the obedience of the Bahá'ís.

We hope that the foregoing facts will clarify for the friends what actually happened at the tangi and serve to correct misunderstandings.

The National Assembly is deeply conscious of the pain and uncertainty experienced by some of the Bahá'ís who attended the tangi. It understands this. Nevertheless, the National Assembly feels that it is now very important for the spiritual principles which apply to be understood by the believers.

We convey our abiding love to all the believers and assure you of our loving encouragement and earnest prayers for your endeavors.

Warmest Bahá'í greetings,

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of New Zealand
October 6, 1989

Bahá'í News/February 1990 5
Ishqábad, the ‘City of Love’

The numerous curves of the rock-strewn pathway lessened noticeably as the weary traveler finally descended into the foothills 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 Bahá’ís. 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: Ishqábad (meaning City of Love), a mecca of peace and safety for all Bahá’ís. As he gazed across the desert plain of western Turkistán, 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 Bahá’u’lláh’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 Ishqábad as a refuge of serenity. The year was 1910.

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

Then tragedy struck as a group of Muslims, fearing the steady growth of the Faith, hired two assassins who brutally murdered a prominent and learned Bahá’í in the middle of the bazaar. 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 Bahá’ís had magnanimously interceded for the murderers, who were banished to Siberia. Bahá’ís 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-Bahá. Oxford: George Ronald, 1971, p. 109)

During the early years of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ministry, interest in building the first Mashriqu’l-Adhkar was renewed. As a tribute to the memory of that glorious Edifice, we reprint here “City of Love: Ishqábad and the institution of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkar,” by Bruce Whitmore, which first appeared in Bahá’í News No. 532 (July 1975).

Last April the local Spiritual Assembly of Ishqábad, Russia, was elected, marking the first such election since the Faith was proscribed in that country in the early years of this century. Ishqábad is perhaps best known to Bahá’ís as the site of the first Mashriqu’l-Adhkar ever constructed. As a tribute to the memory of that glorious Edifice, we reprint here “City of Love: Ishqábad and the institution of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkar,” by Bruce Whitmore, which first appeared in Bahá’í News No. 532 (July 1975).
bors 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 countrysidewhile 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 Ishqabad.

Located in the heart of the city, the Temple sat amid luxurious gardens bordered 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 Haziratu'l-Quds was located near the Temple while farther back lay a utilities building and the residence of the groundskeeper.

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 not only in Ishqabad but in 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 Russians from Bolshevism to their own religion and beliefs (and) consequently their efforts should be stopped." 2

Although some inconveniences were experienced following the appearance of the article, little open hostility occurred until 1926 when Bahá'ís 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 Ishqabad 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 the 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 in Russia. In 1933 the lease was renewed on the Temple; two years later the government announced that religious structures would only be turned over 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 many repairs needed on the Temple. The work was completed before the deadline and ownership was transferred back to the Bahá'í community.

Public meetings were resumed in Ishqabad and soon were being conducted twice each week. 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 Haziratu'l-Quds again overflowed with Bahá'ís on Holy Days and other special occasions 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 Ishqabad, 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." 3

For the final time the Temple was seized. A Soviet law, requiring that a religious community must number 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 numbered 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 Ishqabad." 4

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

"On August 25, 1963, the Universal House of Justice announced to the Ba-
há’í world that the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár in Ishqábád, 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 Ishqábád to accomplish far more than 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-Adhkár (the Dawning Place of the Mention of God) to a degree never before attained, thereby giving the Bahá’í world a foundation of experience that is 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-Adhkár.

Significant strides were made in other countries as well. For example, Kunjajungo, a small village nestled in the jungles of Burma where the Faith was embraced by hundreds of villagers shortly after the turn of the century, quickly achieved 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 Ishqábád, 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-Adhkárs in the future.

The institution of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár, ordained by Bahá’u’lláh, is the practical expression of the spiritual reality of our Faith. He revealed that God’s purpose for man is “to know Thee and to worship Thee” 6 and declared that knowing and loving God is “the generating impulse and the primary purpose underlying the whole of creation.” 7 He called upon each individual to be of service to humanity and emphatically stated that work done in the spirit of service to others 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 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 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.” 8

It is the institution of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár that Bahá’u’lláh has provided specifically to support each individual in his 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-Adhkár 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 one’s 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.” 9

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.” 10 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.” 11 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 . . . .” 12

“The believers . . . should therefore fully realize the necessity of praying. For prayer is absolutely indispensable to our inner spiritual development, and this . . . is the very foundation and purpose of the religion of God.” 13

It is the “central Edifice” of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár, 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, was emphatic in saying:

"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-Adhkár, as designed by Bahá’u’lláh, is destined to play in the organic life of the Bahá’í community. Divorced from the social, humanitarian, educational and scientific pursuits centering around the Dependencies of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár, 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 into that dynamic and disinterested service to the cause of humanity which it is the supreme privilege of the Dependencies of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár to facilitate and promote."

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..." 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-Adhkár, embodying the physical application of our spiritual principles, guides and supports us individually in these efforts.

Further, the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár, 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" 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 inevitable 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 relentlessly forward.

The institution of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár is the “necessary agency capable of removing the ills that have so long and so grievously afflicted humanity..."; 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."

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

Many Bahá’í communities in Canada are reaping a bountiful harvest from a series of recent teaching campaigns in various parts of the country. The Bahá’í community of Vancouver, British Columbia, reports 62 new believers since Ridván 1989. Also in British Columbia, 5,500 copies of “The Promise of World Peace” were sent to residents of 19 villages with an invitation to attend a week of peace activities organized with the help of eight other peace-oriented groups.

In Sudbury, Ontario, a summer-long event led to the enrollment of 24 people. These new believers have been actively teaching and are taking part in recently formed teaching institutes with a goal of 300 enrollments by the end of this Bahá’í year.

In Rankin Inlet, Northwest Territories, four people have recently been enrolled, one of whom has already declared her intention to pioneer to a nearby community.

And in Yellowknife, also in the Northwest Territories, a fireside-oriented teaching campaign has drawn substantial numbers of inquirers with four enrollments reported so far.

In Toronto, Ontario, intensive teaching has led to seven enrollments. Busesloads of Bahá’ís from other cities have gone to Toronto to take part in the teaching work.

Meanwhile, the success of a musical group called “Groundwork” is evidenced by its role in bringing 20 young people into the Faith in southern Ontario.

Following the arrival of two traveling teachers in South Indian Lake, Manitoba, 16 adults and two youth embraced the Cause in less than a week.

The increase in this northern native area has more than doubled the size of the Bahá’í community, resulting in an adult population that is more than three percent Bahá’í and a public school system in which more than 20 percent of the children are Bahá’ís.

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The recent enrollments in Vancouver, some of which followed the opening by Bahá’ís of a Chinese Friendship Center, have included a number of Chinese including one visitor from mainland China.

One of the friends in Vancouver has begun a network of correspondence with a number of seekers in China, teaching them the Faith by letter.

A one-woman play about the life of Martha Root is attracting the attention of non-Bahá’ís in Canada.

The play, written by Ann Boyles and performed by Susan Lyons, both of whom are Canadian Bahá’ís, is entitled “The Passing of Exquisite Music.”

On seeing it, a drama critic for the Regina (Saskatchewan) Post-Leader wrote: “The dynamic personality of Martha Root, American journalist, lecturer, spiritualist, woman extraordinaire came to life . . . the moment Susan Lyons stepped on stage . . .

Lyons’ portrayal of Root at Invitation ’88, the first National Bahá’í Festival of the Arts, won critical acclaim, and justifiably so.”

The Bahá’ís of Regina hosted three performances of the play last October at the University of Regina before an audience which was about two-thirds non-Bahá’í.

More than 200 people gathered recently in Nimpkish Village, near Alert Bay, Canada, for a peace symposium. Guest speakers included native people who spoke of peace on a variety of levels including family, local community, national and international.

The Bahá’í group “Let It Be This Generation” performed, as did traditional native dancers, Fijian dancers, and musician Shawani Campbell. The event ended with a traditional “peace dance.”
India

A group of five adult Bahá'ís and two children recently traveled to the village of Panathur, India, to teach the Faith. They rode a bus from Karnataka as far as it would go, then walked the remaining three kilometers (nearly two miles) to Panathur where local Bahá'ís had arranged meetings for them.

Sixteen people embraced the Faith that weekend, and follow-up visits were planned.

Another group of Bahá'ís visited the village of Horamavu Agara, concentrating on deepening the friends there in the hope that they would be inspired to begin their own teaching project.

One person was enrolled, and weekly deepening classes for the village Bahá'ís were scheduled.

The Sinnar Teaching Project in India's Nasik District has surpassed its goal of 500 new believers while nine new local Spiritual Assemblies have been formed.

Transkei

The State Bahá'í Council has decided to continue the project for one full year to assure consolidation in the area.

Ivory Coast

In the village of Kouadinionikro, Ivory Coast, where every member of the community has embraced the Bahá'í Faith, two young Bahá'ís who knew how to read and write arose two years ago to do something about the problem of illiteracy in the community.

The village had a Bahá'í Center but no public school, so the youth decided to hold classes at the Center to give the children of the village a basic education. After two years, their 25 students are attending schools in other villages. The teachers in this Bahá'í-run school are now planning literacy classes for adults.

The Bahá'ís of Kouadinionikro, Ivory Coast, are using their local Bahá'í Center as a primary school. Thirteen students are enrolled in first grade there and 12 in second grade.

In a separate project in Danana, the Spiritual Assembly is cultivating rice with profits going to the local Bahá'í Fund. This marks the third year that the Bahá'ís of Danana have worked in their fields for the Fund.

Pictured is a bicycle-built-for-two that was made to facilitate travel teaching in Uttar Pradesh, India. Since it is considered inappropriate for women to travel alone in that area, the bicycle will make it possible for two women, as well as husband-and-wife teams, to travel and teach the Faith together.

The Baha'is perform for an audience of 150 during a Baha'i Music Festival held last September in Umtata, Transkei. The purpose was to choose a group to represent the Baha'i community of Transkei in the All-Africa Music Festival in Botswana. Seven communities formed choirs who performed in the choir competition. There were winners in five other categories as well: best soloist, best new Baha'i song, best traditional song, best dramatic sketch, and best tribal dancing.
Ecuador

In Ecuador, Bahá'ís are taking part in a national seminar on "Interactive Radio."

The Ministry of Education is developing long-distance education courses for those in rural areas who are unable to attend regular medium-level schools. Lessons are carried on radio during the week; on Saturdays, students attend in person a centrally located school to ask questions and receive course materials. The courses, known as "interactive radio," are part of a pilot project coordinated by the government in cooperation with Radio Bahá'í Ecuador.

Bahá'ís were invited to attend a recent seminar on Interactive Radio in Quito. Also present were the directors of National Education, Long Distance Education, Rural Education, and Attention to Marginal Rural Education along with a representative of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Evaluations of the experimental program were given by course supervisors from each province. Generally, the courses were seen as quite successful; new teaching materials are being prepared as a result of suggested modifications including a recommendation from the Bahá'í community that spiritual education be included in the curriculum.

Two newspapers in Ecuador recently published splendid articles about the Faith.

The first, in Diario del Norte, was entitled "The Bahá'í Faith" and outlined the history and teachings of the Faith, emphasizing its international character and its relationship to the United Nations.

The second, in La Verdad, was entitled "Bahá'ís in the Struggle for World Peace." A group of young Bahá'ís, it said, had visited the newspaper's offices, and their explanation of the Faith was recounted in the article.

Virgin Islands

A five-member team of Bahá'í youth spent 17 days last summer teaching in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The young Bahá'ís were from Antigua, St. Lucia, the Dominican Republic, Montserrat, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Team members had met in Antigua during the "Camp Tabarsi Bahá'í Youth Camp-Out" which was attended by 50 students from 18 countries.

While in the Virgin Islands, the "Sparks of Peace" team visited St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix, teaching through service—cleaning and repairing a hospital; sorting bundles of clothing at a shelter for the homeless; clearing grass for a volleyball court; and performing maintenance work in a park for children.

The youth spoke at firesides, taught the Faith at a shopping mall, in parks and the territorial prison, and were interviewed by newspapers and on radio.

From the Virgin Islands, the team traveled to Guyana to reunite with other teams from the youth camp-out and take part in the Caribbean Youth Conference.

Uganda

At the invitation of the National Spiritual Assembly of Uganda, members of the Department of Religious Studies at Makerere University recently visited the Bahá'í House of Worship in Kampala.

The purpose of the visit was to familiarize staff members with the Faith, its institutions and how they function.

The need for the relationship arose from interaction between the agencies of the Faith and the university which is implementing two new courses designed and taught by a Bahá'í, Dr. Tim Rost—one on "Peace and Justice" and another on "Religion and Development."

The visitors heard a brief history of the Faith, toured the Temple grounds, saw the meeting room of the National Assembly, the National Archives and Statistics Office, heard a prayer for peace, and signed the Temple's guest book.

Last August 29, Counsellor Friday Ekpe and Lois Goebel, a visitor from the Bahá'í World Centre, were interviewed by Radio Uganda at the National Bahá'í Office in that country.
The Bahá'í primary school in Yikandor (Freetown), Sierra Leone, has been in existence since 1987. Despite its youthfulness, the splendid performance of its students has blazoned the name and popularity of the Faith throughout the country, and educational authorities and parents are eagerly poised to see the result of the school's first selective entrance examinations under the West African Examinations Council in May 1990. Pictured are the school's seven candidates for the public examinations with (middle row center) class teacher O.S. Ibrahim and (bottom row center) the school's first head teacher and manager, A.S. Momodu. The students are (top row left to right) Lansana Koroma, Aminata Lusenig, Amara Murahah; (middle row left to right) Borbor Minah, Bockarie Swaray; and (bottom row left to right) Safia Saffa, John Musa. The Bahá'ís in Sierra Leone have high hopes and plans of establishing a secondary school within the next few years.
Costa Rica

“Seeking the True Meaning of Peace” was the theme of an international conference in San José, Costa Rica. About 30 Bahá’ís from eight countries attended the event, which was sponsored by the University for Peace and the government of Costa Rica.

Kenya

“Social Mobilization for Immunization” is an ongoing health program that was begun by the Bahá’ís of Kenya in collaboration with the Canadian Public Health Association. As of last June, the project trainers and coordinator had received training from AMREF (African Medical and Research Foundation) and had met with a representative of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Local seminars were held in Manawanga and Lugula at which members of the local community interested in improving health shared information and ideas. Participants included health professionals, traditional healers, local officials and invited guests.

It is hoped that as open dialogue continues, communities will begin to work together to overcome the many barriers to successful immunization of the population.

Andaman/Nicobar Islands

During the National Convention last April, the Bahá’ís of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands decided to hold a teaching campaign in the name of the late Durgaprasad Khedla, who was the first Bahá’í of Great Nicobar.

On May 12, the friends began an intensive week of teaching on that island. As a result, 73 people embraced the Faith including 25 women. Consolidation efforts are under way.

Bulgaria

Rabotnichesko Delo, the most widely circulated daily newspaper in Bulgaria, published an article and photograph about the Bahá’í House of Worship in India in its January 15 issue.

It is reported to be the first newspaper article related to the Faith to be published in that country in six years.

Republic of Ireland

“Mike Ryan (second from right) and his fiancée, Geraldine, pictured with Mike’s parents in the garden of the Bahá’í National Center in Dublin, had the first Bahá’í marriage ever formalized in the Republic of Ireland. Not only are Bahá’í marriages now given official recognition in Ireland, but the National Hazíratu’l-Quds is registered as a place where civil marriage ceremonies can take place in the presence of the Registrar of Marriages.”

Botswana

“A New Spirit, A New Generation—Peace” was the theme of a Bahá’í International Youth Conference held recently in Mochudi, Botswana.

More than 120 people from 13 countries attended including special guests Counsellor Lally Warren, seven members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Botswana, and Auxiliary Board members Gerald Warren and Ntsiki Mashologu.

Eighteen indigenous youth embraced the faith during the conference, while the National Youth Committee reported that participants became “charged” with the spirit of the Cause and “committed to go forth, firm in the Covenant, and be the lighters of unlit candles.”
Transkei

These young women from Sugarbush were among the finalists in a competition last November among seven Bahá’í choirs in Transkei. The winners were to represent the Faith at an All-Africa Music Festival in December.

Italy

A teaching campaign in Portici, Italy, has led so far to the enrollment of 80 new believers, most of whom are already involved in teaching activities in Portici and other nearby communities.

Everywhere these new Bahá’ís go they kindle a new enthusiasm in the friends, and there are reports of more enrollments from the places they have visited.

Systematic deepening is an important element of the Portici campaign, in which Auxiliary Board members have been actively involved.

Canary Islands

A fund-raising project conducted by the Bahá’í youth of the Canary Islands surpassed its goal of raising one million pesetas for the Arc in one year.

The “Arcmillion Project” raised 1,122,000 pesetas.

The National Youth Committee began the project by opening a bank account and inviting all of the friends to help meet the goal. The bank account earned 25,000 pesetas in interest during the year.

Nigeria

Nigeria’s Federal Ministry of External Affairs has sent a sympathetic letter to that country’s National Spiritual Assembly regarding the suffering of the Bahá’ís in Iran.

The letter says, in part, “Nigeria has been following with keen interest developments in Iran with regard to the Bahá’ís’ plight for a long time now.” It goes on to explain that the government of Nigeria “has been participating actively in the prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities everywhere in the world, in line with its human rights policy.”

The letter was a response to the National Assembly’s request for the government to support at the upcoming meeting of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights a resolution in support of the Bahá’ís in Iran.

The National Assembly noted that it marked “the first time we have had such a positive statement” from the Nigerian government.

The Elizabeth Njang/Afikpo Teaching Campaign, held last May in the Afikpo area of Imo State, Nigeria, exceeded all goals, with 615 new believers enrolled and 26 new local Assemblies formed. The National Spiritual Assembly reported that the goals assigned to the campaign were to enroll 300 and form at least 19 new Assemblies.

The campaign, named for the late wife of Auxiliary Board member Oscar Njang, who was an active teacher of the Faith during her lifetime, was planned and carried out by local Bahá’ís without help from any pioneers.

Mr. Njang and two of his children took an active part in the campaign.

Burkina

The National Spiritual Assembly of Burkina has received permission from the Higher School of Law at Ouagadougou University to begin holding courses on “The Program of Bahá’u’lláh for Peace,” thus completing one of the Assembly’s goals for the Six Year Plan.

Noufou Gnampa, a Bahá’í jurist from Burkina, has already presented two courses on the topic of the Bahá’í Faith and peace.
Hawaii

Bahá’ís in Hawaii held a proclamation event September 30 in memory of the Hand of the Cause of God Martha Root who passed away in Honolulu 50 years ago.

The event, hosted at the Bahá’í National Center by the Spiritual Assemblies of Honolulu and Koolaupoko, also launched the Martha Root Teaching Project.

The program, entitled “Perspectives on World Peace,” featured “a look at the life of a courageous woman who traveled alone around the world in the early decades of this century—by ship, train, across the Andes by mule (carrying a message) of world peace and world unity that is still vital and important today.”

On the anniversary of her passing, prayers were recited at Miss Root’s resting place at four separate hours.

Some 200 scholars attended a meeting last July of the International Society for Chinese Philosophy in Hilo, Hawaii. The Spiritual Assembly of South Hilo offered help in hosting the final reception, and a Bahá’í, Diana Hudson, presented a paper on the evolution of Chinese and Western philosophies toward a universal philosophy for world peace and unity.

As a result of their involvement, the Bahá’ís were given permission for a book and pamphlet display, and conference officials asked that sufficient copies of the peace statement be made available for each participant to receive one at registration.

South Africa

About 200 Bahá’ís from six neighboring national communities joined Bahá’ís from South Africa last summer for an intensive teaching campaign in Orange Free State. The friends came from Bophuthatswana, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland and Transkei.

The campaign, whose theme was “The Three Onenesses,” continued through the summer. More than 100 were enrolled during the first six weeks, and on the weekend of August 5-6, 47 more embraced the Cause.

A National Teaching Conference last November 11-12 in Bloemfontein, South Africa, drew Bahá’ís from 27 localities who enjoyed the company of Counsellors Daniel Ramoroesi and Lally Warren, three members of the Auxiliary Board, and seven members of the National Spiritual Assembly.

During the conference the anniversary of the Birth of Bahá’u’lláh was observed with 12 local guests and music by the Botshabelo Bahá’í Choir, which was to take part in December in a music festival in Botswana.

Participants learned that the National Assembly had recently concluded negotiations for a beautiful 42-acre Temple site, which includes a house that can be used as a national teaching institute.

The Southern African Bahá’í Association for the Advancement of Women was formed last October during a women’s conference in Johannesburg. Among the more than 70 participants in the conference were Counsellors Lally Warren and Daniel Ramoroesi and former Counsellor Bahiyyih Winckler.

Nicaragua

The recent “International Book Festival Nicaragua ’89” boasted the participation of some 400 publishing houses from 42 countries. Editorial Bahá’í Indo Latinoamericana (EBILA) displayed more than 50 titles at the Festival, presented 80 copies of the peace statement, and distributed more than 150 pamphlets to visitors to the Bahá’í booth.

Attending the Festival’s opening ceremony were the President of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega Saavedra, and members of the State Cabinet.

During the six-day event copies of “The Promise of World Peace” were given to the vice-president of the Republic, the minister of the interior, and the president of the National Council of Culture.
India

J.H. Armstrong, president of the Institution of Structural Engineers in the United Kingdom, said in his address to the Institution last October that the Bahá’í House of Worship in India is an example of elegant structural engineering in the tradition of such other historic structures as the Hagia Sophia, the Cathedral of Amiens, the Forth Bridge, and the works of Robert Mallett.

"The Bahá’í Temple in New Delhi," he said, "... must be one of the most elegant buildings of the last half-century. It demonstrates most clearly the elegance resulting from a sympathetic relationship between the engineer, the architect, and the client. There is no doubt as to the continuous professional application and patience required to achieve this quality of building."

Last year, the Institution gave its prestigious special award for architecture to the House of Worship. This year it has chosen the Temple for its New Year's greeting card, which is being sold in large numbers around the world.

Pakistan

Young Bahá'ís in Pakistan model the T-shirts which commanded much attention during a teaching campaign last summer. The campaign, entitled 'Bahá'í Summer 1989,' enabled thousands of people in 25 communities to learn about the Faith.

Thailand

The prize-winning artifact made by a Bahá'í during Thailand's National Youth Week last September is presented to the Crown Prince. The National Spiritual Assembly of Thailand was invited to make the presentation to the Prince who is shown here receiving the gift from the Assembly's youth representative.

The Netherlands

Last September 17, at an ecumenical service organized by two Christian churches in Veldhoven, the Netherlands, a local Bahá'í was asked to say a prayer for unity revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Receiving such an invitation has been a rare experience for Bahá'ís in the Netherlands. In this case, the planning committee for the otherwise all-Christian gathering intended to offer a "banner of peace" to each of the participating churches. When they saw among the submitted prayers and readings the phrase "upraise the standard of the oneness of humankind," the Bahá'í who submitted the prayer was immediately asked to recite it.

Bahá'ís in other parts of the Netherlands are having similarly surprising successes. In Rotterdam, the friends received a surprisingly warm reception from the Rev. Mr. Visser to whom they presented a copy of the peace statement on the occasion of "International Prayer for Peace Day."

And in Amsterdam last September, the local Bahá'ís presented the peace statement to the mayor who, they learned, had been to 'Akka and had visited the gardens and Shrines in Haifa, Israel.
Bahá'í Chair for World Peace established at University of Maryland
Cover: Judge Dorothy W. Nelson, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, presents a check for $300,000 to Dr. James A. Norton (left), chancellor of the University of Maryland system, and Dean Murray Polakoff of the University of Maryland's School of Social and Behavioral Sciences to begin endowment of the Bahá'í Chair for World Peace at the university's Center for International Development and Conflict Management. On January 28, the National Spiritual Assembly and University of Maryland signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish the Bahá'í Chair. (See article and photographs on pages 8-9.)
Plan for Arc wins Haifa city approval

TO ALL NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

KINDLY CONVEY ALL BELIEVERS NEWS PROGRESS HISTORIC MOUNT CARMEL PROJECTS.

FOLLOWING STRENUEOUS DETAILED NEGOTIATIONS TOWN PLANNING SCHEME ESSENTIAL FOR INITIATION OF PROJECTS WAS OFFICIALLY APPROVED BY LOCAL TOWN PLANNING COMMITTEE AND CITY COUNCIL OF HAIFA ON 11 OCTOBER 1989, CONFIRMING GOOD WILL TOWARD PROJECTS EXPRESSED BY CITY COUNCIL AT TIME INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION. SCHEME IS NOW BEFORE DISTRICT TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION FOR FINAL APPROVAL. THIS PLAN INCLUDES CANCELLATIONS TWO ROADS PREVIOUSLY APPROVED TO CROSS BAHÁ'Í LANDS, AND LOWERING LEVEL MAIN THOROUGHFARE HOUSING CONSTRUCTION TERRACES LINKING GARDENS SURROUNDING SHRINE BÁB WITH THOSE ADJACENT ARCHIVES BUILDING. GRANTING OF APPROVALS INVOLVES OUR COMMITMENT IMMEDIATELY START WORK.

GEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS ANNOUNCED RIVÁN MESSAGE, REQUIRED FOR DESIGN FOUNDATIONS BUILDINGS ARC, NOW COMPLETED.

BUILDING PERMIT DRAWINGS FOR ARCHIVES BUILDING EXTENSION AND CENTER FOR STUDY OF THE TEXTS SUBMITTED, ENABLING CONSIDERATION APPLICATION BUILDING PERMIT RUN CONCURRENTLY LAST STAGE APPROVAL TOWN PLANNING SCHEME.

OF $50,000,000 CALLED FOR AS ESSENTIAL RESERVE FOR INITIATION CONSTRUCTION, APPROXIMATELY $26,000,000 SO FAR CONTRIBUTED. REMAINING SUM NOW URGENTLY NEEDED.

EXECUTION STUPENDOUS COLLECTIVE UNDER- TAKING GATHERING MOMENTUM, PARALLELING EXTRAORDINARY DEVELOPMENTS WORLD SCENE, ACCELERATION CONVERSION PEOPLES CAUSE GOD, WIDER DIFFUSION MESSAGE BAHÁ'-U'LLÁH REMAINING AREAS GLOBE. SUPPLI- CATING BLESSINGS ALMIGHTY REINFORCE EVERY EFFORT HIS DEVOTED FOLLOWERS ACCOMPLISHMENT VITAL TASKS.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
JANUARY 23, 1990

Bahá'í News/March 1990 1
FAR-REACHING EVENTS BEING ENACTED WORLD STAGE, PARTICULARLY IN EASTERN EUROPE AND SOVIET UNION, ON THRESHOLD FINAL FATE-LADEN DECADE CENTURY OF LIGHT, PROVIDE FURTHER DRAMATIC EVIDENCE RESISTLESS OPERATION OF GOD’S MAJOR PLAN FOR TRANSFORMATION OF HUMAN SOCIETY. RAPID UNFORESEEN DEVELOPMENTS NECESSITATE CORRESPONDING PARALLEL ACCELERATION IN LIFE-GIVING ENTERPRISES BEING PURSUED BY INHERITORS BAHÁ’U’LLAH’S RESPLENDENT REVELATION.

REJOICE THEREFORE ANNOUNCE LAUNCHING AT RIDVán OF SUBSIDIARY TWO-YEAR TEACHING PLAN FOR VAST REMAINING REACHES EASTERN EUROPE AND ASIA. MOMENTOUS STEP INVOLVES FURTHER SYSTEMATIC UNFOLDMENT PROVISIONS TABLETS MASTER-PLAN OF ‘ABDU’L-BHÁ’ ALREADY IN ADVANCED STAGE OF OPERATION OTHER AREAS PLANET. REGIONAL ENTERPRISE, CONCEIVED IN CONSULTATION INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE, DESIGNED SIGNIFICANTLY REINFORCE CURRENT SIX YEAR GLOBAL PLAN. OBJECTIVES INCLUDE ATTRACTION NUMEROUS NEW SUPPORTERS FAITH, GREAT INCREASE TRANSLATION, PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION BAHÁ’I LITERATURE IN REQUISITE LANGUAGES ENTIRE AREA, AND EXTENSION BENEFICENT INFLUENCE DIVINELY APPOINTED ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER THROUGH ERECTION FRAMEWORK LOCAL NATIONAL BAHÁ’I INSTITUTIONS IN AS MANY EASTERN COUNTRIES AS POSSIBLE UP TO AND INCLUDING RIDVÁN 1992.

CALLING UPON THOSE NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES EUROPE, ASIA AND AMERICA WHICH BEAR PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR INDIVIDUAL NATIONS INVOLVED, TO CONSULT WITH COUNSELLORS AND FORMULATE DETAILS SPECIFIC GOALS INCORPORATING AND SUPPLEMENTING THOSE ALREADY ADOPTED AND IN PROCESS ACCOMPLISHMENT UNDER SIX YEAR PLAN. MOVED PAY TRIBUTE PRESENT HOUR REMARKABLE UNUNG ACHIEVEMENTS THOSE INSTITUTIONS AND INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS PRESENTLY LABORING ADVANCEMENT CAUSE IN EASTERN EUROPE AND SOVIET UNION, ACHIEVEMENTS WHICH HAVE BLAZED TRAILS FOR COMING LARGE-SCALE INITIATIVE. CALL UPON BAHÁ’I WORLD ARISE SUPPORT DIFFUSION WORLD-REDEEMING MESSAGE FAITH GOAL AREAS THROUGH SETTLEMENT PIONEERS AND THROUGH DISPATCH STEADY FLOW TRAVELING TEACHERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WITH KNOWLEDGE LANGUAGES COUNTRIES EASTERN BLOC.

CONCOMITANT THESE MEASURES, VITAL ONGOING PROCESS CHINESE TEACHING RECEIVING FURTHER IMPETUS.

BROAD VISTAS NOW OPEN TO FAITH GOD PROVIDE UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITIES WIN FRESH VICTORIES AS WORTHY OFFERING SACRED THRESHOLD BLESSED BEAUTY OCCASION COMMEMORATION FIRST CENTENARY HIS ASCENSION COMING HOLY YEAR. IMPLORING ABUNDANT OUTPOURING DIVINE CONFIRMATIONS PARTICIPANTS ALL FACETS HISTORIC SIX YEAR CAMPAIGN.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
FEBRUARY 8, 1990
New compilation on Bahá’í elections

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá’í Friends,

The Universal House of Justice feels it is timely to release a compilation on Bahá’í elections as a useful tool to help National Spiritual Assemblies to increase the understanding of the believers regarding the nature and sanctity of these elections, and to prepare themselves for the expected rapid increase in the number of believers. A compilation entitled “The Sanctity and Nature of Bahá’í Elections” has been prepared by the Research Department, and a copy is enclosed.

The study of this compilation will require careful and sustained planning by the National Spiritual Assemblies and local Spiritual Assemblies, and it should become part of the ongoing program for the deepening of the friends in the fundamentals of Bahá’í administration. The House of Justice urges all National Spiritual Assemblies to discuss the implementation of such a program with the Counsellors, so that the rank and file of the believers, with the wholehearted support of the Auxiliary Board members and their assistants, will appreciate the importance of adhering to Bahá’í principles in this regard, and carry out all Bahá’í elections, on the national as well as the unit and local levels, in an exemplary manner, in full harmony with the spirit of purity and sanctity which must characterize them.

The Universal House of Justice wishes to stress at this point how important it is for all delegates allocated to the National Convention to be elected and the desirability of having all the elected delegates attend this vital national event. It has been noticed that, although attendance at most National Conventions is gradually improving, in several countries every year not all delegates are being elected, and in numerous instances, even when elected, they do not participate either in person or by sending in their ballots.

Be assured of ardent prayers in the Holy Shrines that your resolute efforts to improve the record of devoted and enthusiastic participation in delegate elections, National Conventions and local Assembly elections will attract the assistance and blessings of the divine Concourse.

With loving Bahá’í greetings,

Universal House of Justice
Department of the Secretariat
December 19, 1989

The Sanctity and Nature of Bahá’í Elections

1. Fostering a spiritual attitude toward elections

From letters written by or on behalf of Shoghi Effendi

"On the election day, the friends must whole-heartedly participate in the elections, in unity and amity, turning their hearts to God, detached from all things but Him, seeking His guidance and supplicating His aid and bounty." (February 27, 1923, written by Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá’ís of the East; translated from the Persian)

"Again I earnestly appeal to every one of you, and renew my only request with all the ardor of my conviction, to make before and during the coming Convention yet another effort, this time more spontaneous and selfless than before, and endeavor to approach your task—the election of your delegates as well as your national and local representatives—with that purity of spirit that can alone obtain our Beloved’s most cherished desire. . . ." (February 23, 1924, written by Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá’ís of America, published in Bahá’í Administration: Selected Messages 1922-1932, rev. ed. Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1980, p. 65)

"In discharging this sacred function no influence whatever, no pressure from any quarter, even though it be from the National Assembly, should under any circumstances affect their views or restrict their freedom. The delegates must be wholly independent of any administrative agency, must approach their task with absolute detachment and must concentrate their attention on the most important and pressing issues." (August 12, 1933, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, published in The National Spiritual Assembly,” compiled by the Universal House of Justice. Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1972, p. 24)

"Such a rectitude of conduct must manifest itself, with ever-increasing potency, in every verdict which the elected representatives of the Bahá’í community, in whatever capacity they may find themselves, may be called upon to pronounce. . . . It must be exemplified in the conduct of all Bahá’í electors, when exercising their sacred rights and functions. . . ." (December 25, 1938, written by Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá’ís of the United States and Canada, published as The Advent of Divine Justice. Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1984, p. 26)

From communications written by the Universal House of Justice

"The conditions of limited manpower, of difficulties in traveling and of illiteracy among the local people are found in varying degrees in other countries of the world, and we have always and everywhere urged the National Spiritual Assemblies concerned to guide and teach the friends in proper Bahá’í administrative procedures, not only during the weeks immediately preceding local elections but indeed
throughout the year, so that the friends would await the advent of Riḍván with anticipation and determine to observe and uphold correct principles of Bahá’í administration.” (From a letter dated September 24, 1973, to a National Spiritual Assembly) (5)

“The aim should always be so to educate the friends during the year that they consider their participation in Bahá’í elections not only as a right they exercise, but as a spiritual obligation which, when discharged in the proper Bahá’í spirit, contributes to the health and growth of the Bahá’í community.” (From a memorandum dated June 18, 1980, to the International Teaching Centre) (6)

2. Qualifications of those to be elected

From letters written by Shoghi Effendi

“Due regard must be paid to their actual capacity and present attainments, and only those who are best qualified for membership, be they men or women, and irrespective of social standing, should be elected to the extremely responsible position of a member of the Bahá’í Assembly.” (In the handwriting of Shoghi Effendi, appended to a letter dated December 27, 1923, written on his behalf to the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma, published in Dawn of a New Day. New Delhi: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1970, p. 4) (7)

“Let us recall His explicit and often repeated assurances that every Assembly elected in that rarefied atmosphere of selflessness and detachment is in truth appointed of God, that its verdict is truly inspired, that one and all should submit to its decision unreservedly and with cheerfulness.” (February 23, 1924, to the Bahá’ís of America, published in Bahá’í Administration, p. 65) (8)

“It would be impossible at this stage to . . . overestimate the unique significance of the institution of the National Spiritual Assembly. . . . Supreme is their position, grave their responsibilities, manifold and arduous their duties. How great the privilege, how delicate the task of the assembled delegates whose function it is to elect such national representatives as would by their record of service ennoble and enrich the annals of the Cause! . . . it is incumbent upon the chosen delegates to consider without the least trace of passion and prejudice, and irrespective of any material consideration, the names of only those who can best combine the necessary qualities of unquestioned loyalty, of selfless devotion, of a well-trained mind, of recognized ability and mature experience. . . .” (June 3, 1925, to the delegates and visitors of the National Convention of the Bahá’ís of the United States and Canada, published in Bahá’í Administration, pp. 87-88) (9)

“. . . the elector . . . is called upon to vote for none but those whom prayer and reflection have inspired him to uphold. . . .” (May 27, 1927, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, published in Bahá’í Administration, p. 136) (10)

“. . . I do not feel it to be in keeping with the spirit of the Cause to impose any limitation upon the freedom of the believers to choose those of any race, nationality or temperament who best combine the essential qualifications for membership of administrative institutions. They should disregard personalities and concentrate their attention on the qualities and requirements of office, without prejudice, passion or partiality. The Assembly should be representative of the choicest and most varied and capable elements in every Bahá’í community. . . .” (In the handwriting of Shoghi Effendi, appended to a letter dated August 11, 1933, written on his behalf to an individual believer, published in Bahá’í Institutions. New Delhi: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1973, pp. 71-72) (11)

“If any discrimination is at all to be tolerated, it should be a discrimination not against, but rather in favor of the minority, be it racial or otherwise. . . . every organized community enlisted under the banner of Bahá’u’lláh 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. So great and vital is this principle that in such circumstances, as when an equal number of ballots have been cast in an election, or where the qualifications for any office are balanced as between the various races, faiths or nationalities within the community, priority should unhesitatingly be accorded the party representing the minority, and this for no other reason except to stimulate and encourage it, and afford it an opportunity to further the interests of the community. . . .” (December 25, 1938, published as The Advent of Divine Justice, p. 35) (12)

“The electors . . . must prayerfully and devotedly and after meditation and reflection elect faithful, sincere, experienced, capable and competent souls who are worthy of membership. . . .” (July 1, 1943, to the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia; translated from the Persian) (13)

From letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi

“. . . concerning the qualifications of the members of the Spiritual Assembly: there is a distinction of fundamental importance which should be always remembered in this connection, and this is between the Spiritual Assembly as an institution, and the persons who compose it. These are by no means supposed to be perfect, nor can they be considered as being inherently superior to the rest of their fellow-believers. It is precisely because they are subject to the same human limitations that characterize the other members of the community that they have to be elected every year. The existence of elections is a sufficient indication that Assembly members, though forming part of an institution that is divine and perfect, are nevertheless themselves imperfect. But this does not necessarily imply that their judgment is defective. . . .” (November 15, 1935, to individual believers, published in “The Local Spiritual Assembly,” compiled by
"A believer has the right to vote for himself during the election time, if he conscientiously feels the urge to do so. This does not necessarily imply that he is ambitious or selfish, for he might conscientiously believe that his qualifications entitle him to membership in a Bahá’í administrative body, and he might be right. The essential, however, is that he should be sincere in his belief, and should act according to the dictates of his conscience. Moreover, membership in an Assembly or committee is a form of service, and should not be looked upon as a mark of inherent superiority, or a means for self-praise." (March 27, 1938, to an individual believer, published in Dawn of a New Day, pp. 200-201)

"There is no objection in principle to an Assembly being re-elected, whether in toto or in part, provided the members are considered to be well-qualified for that post. It is individual merit that counts. Novelty or the mere act of renewal of elections are purely secondary considerations. Changes in Assembly membership should be welcome so far as they do not prejudice the quality of such membership. Once Assembly elections are over, the results should be conscientiously and unquestionably accepted by the entire body of the believers, not necessarily because they represent the voice of truth or the will of Bahá’u’lláh, but for the supreme purpose of maintaining unity and harmony in the community...." (July 10, 1939, to an individual believer, published in "Directives from the Guardian," compiled by Gertrude Garrida. New Delhi: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1973, p. 23)

"In regard to your question about qualifications of delegates and Assembly members: the qualifications which he outlined are really applicable to anyone we elect to a Bahá’í office, whatever its nature. But these are only an indication, they do not mean people who don’t fulfill them cannot be elected to office. We must aim as high as we can. He does not feel the friends should attach so much importance to limitations—such as people perhaps not being able to attend Assembly or Convention meetings, because if they do, then the fundamental concept of everyone being willing to do Bahá’í service on administrative bodies will be weakened, and the friends may be tempted to vote for those who because of independent means or circumstances in their lives are free to come and go but less qualified to serve." (October 24, 1947, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles, published in Unfolding Destiny: The Messages from the Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith to the Bahá’í Community of the British Isles. London: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1981, p. 207)

3. The non-political character of elections

From letters written by or on behalf of Shoghi Effendi

"Beware, beware lest the foul odor of the parties and peoples of foreign lands in the West, and their pernicious methods, such as intrigues, party politics and propaganda—practices which are abhorrent even in name—should ever reach the Bahá’í community, exert any influence whatsoever upon the friends, and thus bring all spirituality to naught...." (January 30, 1923, written by Shoghi Effendi to a Spiritual Assembly; translated from the Persian)

"One’s vote should be kept confidential. It is not permissible to make any reference whatsoever to individual names. The friends must avoid the evil methods and detestable practices of the politicians. They must turn completely to God, and with a purity of motive, a freedom of spirit and a sanctity of heart, participate in the elections...." (January 16, 1932, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a Spiritual Assembly; translated from the Persian)

"Let them exercise the utmost vigilance so that the elections are carried out freely, universally and by secret ballot. Any form of intrigue, deception, collusion or compulsion must be stopped and is forbidden." (March 8, 1932, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a local Spiritual Assembly; translated from the Persian)

"The strength and progress of the Bahá’í community depend upon the election of pure, faithful and active souls. . . . Canvassing is abhorred. . . ." (April 9, 1932, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a local Spiritual Assembly; translated from the Persian)

From a memorandum written by the Universal House of Justice

"Also relevant to this question is the statement made by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in one of His Tablets to the effect that a voter should make his choice from among those whose good name has been widely diffused.

"Inevitably, in any form of election, worthy individuals fail to be elected simply because they are not widely known. This is true in the system that uses nominations and electioneering as it will be in the Bahá’í system. However, this is not the point. Election to an Assembly, from a Bahá’í point of view, is not a right that people are entitled to, or an honor to which they should aspire; it is a duty and responsibility to which they may be called. The purpose is that those who are elected to an Assembly should be the most worthy for this service; this does not and cannot mean that all those who are worthy will be elected.

"It is expected that in the future . . . there will be very large numbers of individuals who have the qualities which make them fit for service on Spiritual Assemblies. Of these only a few can be elected at any one time. It is also expected that, through training and experience in the process and spirit of Bahá’í elections, the members of the electorate will have raised their consciousness of their responsibility to vote for only those who satisfy the requirements that the Guardian has outlined. They will, therefore, see it as their continuing duty to familiarize themselves with the character and abilities of those who are active in the community so that, when the time for an election comes, they will already have some idea of the people from among whom they must make their choice."

(November 16, 1988, to the International Teaching Centre)
chief will abound and the confirmations of God will be cut off from that Bahá'í community. In view of these grave warnings, the utmost care must always be exercised so that the purity and spiritual character of Bahá'í elections are maintained and preserved.

"When one sees some inexperienced or immature Bahá'ís indulge in electioneering, either openly or secretly, far from being tempted to imitate them, one should resolutely arise and through proper administrative channels and procedures assist in eradicating such tendencies and cleansing the Bahá'í community from such evil influences." (December 6, 1971, to an individual believer) (23)

"... the Bahá'ís, particularly prominent Bahá'ís, should avoid doing anything which might create a wrong impression and give rise to accusations by uninformed Bahá'ís of electioneering." (April 15, 1986, to a National Spiritual Assembly) (24)

4. The absence of nominations

From letters written by or on behalf of Shoghi Effendi

"I feel that reference to personalities before the election would give rise to misunderstanding and differences. What the friends should do is get thoroughly acquainted with one another, to exchange views, to mix freely and discuss among themselves the requirements and qualifications for such a membership without reference or application, however indirect, to particular individuals. We should refrain from influencing the opinion of others..." (May 14, 1927, written by Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Akron, Ohio, published in the U.S. "Bahá'í News Letter," no. 18, June 1927, p. 9) (25)

"... the practice of nomination, so detrimental to the atmosphere of a silent and prayerful election, is viewed with mistrust inasmuch as it gives the right to the majority of a body that, in itself, under the present circumstances, often constitutes a minority of all the elected delegates, to deny that God-given right of every elector to vote only in favor of those whom he is conscientiously convinced are the most worthy candidates. . . ." (May 27, 1927, written by Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, published in Bahá'í Administration, p. 136) (26)

"As to the practice of nomination in Bahá'í elections, this the Guardian firmly believes to be in fundamental disaccord with the spirit which should animate and direct all elections held by the Bahá'ís, be they of a local or national character and importance. It is, indeed, the absence of such a practice that constitutes the distinguishing feature and the marked superiority of the Bahá'í electoral methods over those commonly associated with political parties and factions. The practice of nomination, being thus contrary to the spirit of Bahá'í administration, should be totally discarded by all the friends. For otherwise the freedom of the Bahá'í elector in choosing the members of any Bahá'í Assembly will be seriously endangered, leaving the way open for the domination of personalities. Not only that, but the mere act of nomination leads eventually to the formation of parties—a thing which is totally alien to the spirit of the Cause.

"In addition to these serious dangers, the practice of nomination has the great disadvantage of killing in the believer the spirit of initiative, and of self-development. Bahá'í elec-
toral procedures and methods have, indeed, for one of their essential purposes the development in every believer of the spirit of responsibility. By emphasizing the necessity of maintaining his full freedom in the elections, they make it incumbent upon him to become an active and well-informed member of the Bahá'í community in which he lives. To be able to make a wise choice at the election time, it is necessary for him to be in close and continued contact with all of his fellow-believers, to keep in touch with all local activities, be they teaching, administrative or otherwise, and to fully and whole-heartedly participate in the affairs of the local as well as national committees and Assemblies in his country. It is only in this way that a believer can develop a true social consciousness, and acquire a true sense of responsibility in matters affecting the interests of the Cause. Bahá'í community life thus makes it a duty for every loyal and faithful believer to become an intelligent, well-informed and responsible elector, and also gives him the opportunity of raising himself to such a station. And since the practice of nomination hinders the development of such qualities in the believer, and in addition leads to corruption and partisanship, it has to be entirely discarded in all Bahá'í elections." (February 4, 1935, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, published in The Light of Divine Guidance: The Messages from the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith to the Bahá'ís of Germany and Austria, vol. 1. Hofheim-Langenhain: Bahá'í-Verlag, 1982, pp. 67-68) (27)

"The elections, especially when annual, give the community a good opportunity to remedy any defect or imperfection from which the Assembly may suffer as a result of the actions of its members. Thus a safe method has been established whereby the quality of membership in Bahá'í Assemblies can be continually raised and improved. But, as already stated, the institution of the Spiritual Assembly should under no circumstances be identified with, or be estimated merely through, the personal qualifications of the members that compose it." (November 15, 1935, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to individual believers, published in "The Local Spiritual Assembly," pp. 9-10) (28)

From a memorandum written by the Universal House of Justice

"The fundamental difference between the system of candidacy and the Bahá'í system is that, in the former, individuals, or those who nominate them, decide that they should be placed in positions of authority and put themselves forward to be voted into it. In the Bahá'í system it is the mass of the electorate which makes the decision. If an
individual ostentatiously places himself in the public eye with the seeming purpose of getting people to vote for him, the members of the electorate regard this as self-conceit and are affronted by it; they learn to distinguish between someone who is well-known as an unintentional result of active public service and someone who makes an exhibition of himself merely to attract votes.” (November 16, 1988, to the International Teaching Centre) (29)

5. Participation in elections
From letters written by Shoghi Effendi

“...These local Spiritual Assemblies will have to be elected directly by the friends, and every declared believer of 21 years and above, far from standing aloof and assuming an indifferent or independent attitude, should regard it his sacred duty to take part, conscientiously and diligently, in the election, the consolidation, and the efficient working of his own local Assembly.” (March 12, 1923, to the Bahá’ís of the West, Japan and Australasia, published in Bahá’í Administration, p. 39) (30)

“It would also appear to me unobjectionable to enable and even to require in the last resort such delegates as cannot possibly undertake the journey to the seat of the Bahá’í Convention to send their votes... It should, however, be made clear to every elected delegate—who should be continually reminded—that it is a sacred responsibility and admittedly preferable to attend if possible in person the sessions of the Convention, to take an active part in all its proceedings, and to acquaint his fellow-workers on his return with the accomplishments, the decisions, and the aspirations of the assembled representatives of the American believers.” (October 24, 1925, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, published in Bahá’í Administration, pp. 91-92) (31)

“I feel I must reaffirm the vital importance and necessity of the right of voting—a sacred responsibility of which no adult recognized believer should be deprived... This distinguishing right which the believer possesses however does not carry with it nor does it imply an obligation to cast his vote, if he feels that the circumstances under which he lives do not justify or allow him to exercise that right intelligently and with understanding. This is a matter which should be left to the individual to decide for himself according to his own conscience and discretion...” (In the handwriting of Shoghi Effendi, appended to a letter dated April 28, 1935, written on his behalf to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, published in Messages to America: Selected Letters and Cablegrams Addressed to the Bahá’ís of North America 1932-1946. Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Committee, 1947, pp. 3-4) (32)

From communications written by or on behalf of the Universal House of Justice

“In the matter of attendance of delegates at Conventions, the desirability of the friends themselves being self-supporting should be pointed out by the National Assembly. If a delegate cannot pay his own expenses in attending the Convention, the local Assembly or the believers in the electoral unit from which the delegate comes should be encouraged by the National Assembly to defray such expenses, so that only when funds are unavailable from those sources, the National Assembly is approached to consider offering financial assistance...” (From a letter dated February 9, 1967, written by the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, published in Lights of Guidance: A Bahá’í Reference File, compiled by Helen Hornby. New Delhi: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1983, p. 143) (33)

“There is no minimum of ballots required for an election to be considered valid, either in the case of a local Spiritual Assembly or of delegates to the National Convention. Nevertheless, it is desirable that every eligible voter take part, and your Assembly should encourage all believers to do so...” (From a letter dated July 10, 1980, written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly) (34)

“In general, if a delegate to the National Convention is unable to pay his own travel expenses, the believers from the electoral unit from which the delegate comes should be encouraged by the National Spiritual Assembly to defray such expenses. If funds are unavailable from this source, the National Spiritual Assembly may be approached to consider offering financial assistance. The National Assembly is not under obligation to do so. It may choose to pay only a portion of the travel expenses of a delegate, such as the return portion of the transportation cost...” (From a memorandum dated November 14, 1988, written by the Universal House of Justice to the International Teaching Centre) (35)

6. The role of the National Spiritual Assembly
From letters written by or on behalf of Shoghi Effendi

“...The seating of delegates to the Convention, i.e. the right to decide upon the validity of the credentials of the delegates at a given Convention is vested in the outgoing National Assembly, and the right to decide who has the voting privilege is also ultimately placed in the hands of the National Spiritual Assembly...” (January 29, 1925, written by Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, published in Bahá’í Administration, p. 80) (36)

“He considers that the National Spiritual Assembly has every right to examine the ballots if there is some doubt as to the election having been properly conducted. By ‘preservation’ of the ballots is meant that they are preserved in the national files.” (March 14, 1947, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand, published in Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, 1923-1957. Sydney: National Spiritual-Assembly of Australia, 1970, p. 66) (37)
United States

Maryland U. to have Bahá’í Peace Chair

On January 26, the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly met with representatives of the University of Maryland in College Park to sign an historic Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Bahá’í Chair for World Peace at the university’s Center for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM).

Representing the university were Dr. Abdel R. Oman, acting director of the CIDCM; Dean Murray Polakoff of the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences; and Dr. Soheil Bushrui, a Bahá’í who is a visiting professor at the CIDCM and director of the Bahá’í Chair.

The Chair for World Peace, the first Bahá’í Chair to be established at any university, is “dedicated to the advancement of knowledge in matters of conflict resolution and the promotion of peace and prosperity throughout the world.”

Its purposes, as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding, are:

1. to conduct and publish research, design courses and conduct seminars in the field of Bahá’í studies and world peace within an interdisciplinary context;

2. to initiate public forums for discussing the issues proposed in the Universal House of Justice’s peace statement, “The Promise of World Peace”; and

3. to establish academic relations with and provide technical assistance to Bahá’í institutions in the fields of peace education and international development.

The establishment of the Bahá’í Chair requires an endowment of $1.5 million. The U.S. Bahá’í community, aided by the CIDCM, will raise the necessary funds to enable the Chair to become operative no later than July 1, 1991.

Following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, the National Spiritual Assembly and CIDCM hosted a luncheon for some 115 Bahá’ís and their guests at the university’s Center for Adult Education.

Dean Polakoff presided, explaining in his opening remarks the vital need for the spiritual perspective the Chair will provide in the study of world peace and conflict resolution.

Other speakers were Dr. James A. Norton, chancellor of the University of Maryland System; Judge Dorothy W. Nelson, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly; Dr. William F. Gibson, chairman of the National Board of Directors of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); Dr. Firuz Kazemzadeh, the National Assembly secretary for External Affairs; and Dr. Bushrui.

“These highly important governments hold great promise for helping achieve world peace tomorrow. Through the sort of academic discourse made possible by the Bahá’í Chair, we at the University of Mary-
Signing the Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Bahá'í Chair for World Peace at the University of Maryland's Center for International Development and Conflict Management are (left to right) Judge Dorothy W. Nelson, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States; Dean Murray Polakoff of the University of Maryland's School of Social and Behavioral Sciences; and Dr. Abdel R. Omran, acting director of the CIDCM. Looking on are other members of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly.

land can be active partners in this evolving process."

After noting the historic significance of the occasion, Judge Nelson presented the National Assembly's check for $300,000 toward endowment of the Chair to Chancellor Norton and Dean Polakoff.

She then made the surprise announcement that another $50,000 had been contributed anonymously by a couple in the audience.

In his keynote address, Dr. Gibson related racism and ethnic conflicts to themes outlined in the peace statement.

"Prejudice and war," he said, "have been expressions of the immature stages in a vast historical process.

"As a civil rights leader who has seen America grow up, to some extent, and develop through similar stages of infancy and childhood in its race relations, I have faith, despite the many trials and tribulations we've faced in the 'movement,' that this nation and this world community will ultimately mature."

Dr. Kazemzadeh spoke about the purpose of the Chair, after which Dr. Bushrui closed the proceedings with a tribute to Dr. Edward Azar, director of the CIDCM, who first proposed the idea of a Bahá'í Chair for World Peace at the university in a letter to the Universal House of Justice.

Dr. Azar's letter was a response to the House of Justice's statement in "The Promise of World Peace" offering the Bahá'í community as "a model for study" of the way in which people of diverse backgrounds can learn to live together in peace.

Dr. Azar, who was too ill to attend the signing, was given nine red roses by the National Assembly and CIDCM as a token of their appreciation for his work on behalf of the Chair.

Before the signing, Judge Nelson had received from Dean Polakoff two beautifully framed paintings commissioned by the CIDCM, entitled "Dawn of the Dove," as gifts from the university to the Universal House of Justice and the National Spiritual Assembly.

Keynote speaker at the luncheon was Dr. William F. Gibson, chairman of the National Board of Directors of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).
We often hear that ours is a growing, evolving, organic Faith, and yet, being so close to the beginnings of so many things (the Universal House of Justice, the International Teaching Centre, the building of the Arc, and so on), it can be hard to see the entire growth process. There is, however, one brief chapter in recent Bahá’í annals where the process of growth can be seen in its full sequence, from embryonic seedling to mature institution, and that is in the history of the International Bahá’í Council.

The Bahá’í Council had a life-span of only 12 years and some months, but in that brief time it grew and changed dramatically and bore its mature fruit: the Universal House of Justice.

From the time of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá the intention existed to form the international governing body that Bahá’u’lláh had ordained for His Faith. This goal was one of the first concerns of Shoghi Effendi during his early years as Guardian of the Faith. As he learned that the Bahá’ís (in the 1920s) had an insufficient understanding of the form and nature of Bahá’u’lláh’s Administrative Order, he realized that the creation of an international body could not be an early accomplishment. First, he had to teach the Bahá’í world how to build and operate the Administrative Order so that a firm foundation on which to rest would be ready for the Universal House of Justice. The process took some 30 years.

In February 1951, the Bahá’í world was stunned to read this headline in Bahá’í News: “Epoch Making Decision Formation First International Bahá’í Council.” The Council’s functions were threefold: (1) to build a positive relationship with the authorities in the newly formed state of Israel; (2) to help the Guardian finish erecting the superstructure of the Shrine of the Bab; and (3) to negotiate matters of personal status with the authorities. In an area where the court system was organized along religious lines, there was no court system for Bahá’ís. To these responsibilities others would be added in the future.

Concerning the future of the Council, the Guardian referred to “its transformation into (a) duly elected body, its efflorescence into (the) Universal House of Justice, and its final fruition through (the) erection of manifold auxiliary institutions constituting (the) world Administrative Centre...” We see the fulfillment of this expectation today as plans for the remaining buildings on the Arc are set in motion.

The Hand of the Cause of God Amatu’l-Bahá Ruhiyyih Khánum indicates in The Priceless Pearl that the first members of the Council were drawn from Bahá’ís living in the Holy Land and others summoned by the Guardian for that purpose: “...when Lotfulláh Hakim (the first to arrive), Jessie and Ethel Revell, followed by Amelia Collins and Mason Remy were all gathered at table one day in the Western Pilgrim House, with Gladys Weeden and her husband Ben who were already living there, the Guardian announced to us his intention of constituting, out of that group, an International Council, we were all overcome by the unprecedented nature of this step he was taking and the infinite bounty it conferred upon those present as well as the entire Bahá’í world.” The announcement was as much a shock to them as the later cable was to the Bahá’í world. The cable the Revell sisters received summoning them to Haifa had read simply: “Welcome your presence Haifa—Shoghi.”

The members of the Council were immediately involved in the work at the World Centre, and new responsibilities were added almost daily. In June 1951, Bahá’í News included a lengthy letter from the Council concerning work on the Shrine of the Bab and other accomplishments. The opening paragraph explains that “he (the Guardian) has given us the privilege and joy of keeping our fellow Bahá’ís informed...” The letter gives historical and current details of the construction of the Shrine of the Bab and the extension of its terraces, and visits of members of the Council with the Israeli Minister for Religious Affairs, the mayors of Haifa and ‘Akká, the military governor of Galilee, and the U.S. ambassador to Israel.

The creation of the Council itself made news in Israel, and its establishment helped the authorities there to understand more clearly that the Faith was an independent world religion. These were side benefits of immense value. During the first months of the Council’s existence, without any initiative on the part of the Bahá’ís, the keys to the cell where Bahá’u’lláh was incarcerated in the Most Great Prison of ‘Akká were given to the Bahá’ís, indicating that it was to be a Bahá’í Holy Place.

Amatu’l-Bahá Ruhiyyih Khánum provided a glimpse of the manner in which the Council functioned in its early years: “Its members received their instructions from him (the Guardian) individually, in the informal atmosphere of the dinners at the Pilgrim House table, and not formally as a body; its meetings were infrequent as all its members were kept constantly busy with the many tasks allotted to them.” It was not a consultative body as we understand the term, but consultation was not its purpose. The Guardian did not need to consult. The Council was instead the administrative
device used by the Guardian for the operation of the World Centre.

The Council also educated the non-Bahá'í public in the nature of the World Centre and the Administrative Order. “Skillfully, Shoghi Effendi used this new institution to create in the minds of government and city officials the image of a body of an international character handling the administrative affairs at the World Centre.” This has borne fruit in the present cordial relations enjoyed by the Faith with the city of Haifa and the state of Israel.

The Council’s membership was altered slightly the next year, and its international character was expanded. In March 1952, Ugo Giachery and Leroy Ioas were added to the Council. The officers remained essentially the same: Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum, liaison to the Guardian; Mason Remey, president; Amelia Collins, vice-president; Jessie Revell, treasurer; Lutfullah Hakim, eastern secretary; Ethel Revell, western secretary; and now, Ugo Giachery, member-at-large, and Leroy Ioas, secretary-general. Five of the eight were Hands of the Cause of God. Council membership would remain steady until 1955 when Sylvia Ioas was appointed, raising the number of members to nine.

Among the tasks given to Council members by the Guardian was that of representing him at various international conferences. In 1952, Mason Remey, Ugo Giachery and Leroy Ioas were sent to conferences in New Delhi, Stockholm and Kampala, Uganda. At the same time, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum and Amelia Collins were sent to the international conference and dedication of the House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois. They brought with them a copy of the portrait of Bahá'u'lláh, a gift from the Guardian to the House of Worship.

In a letter to the American Bahá'í community dated July 19, 1956, the Guardian listed some of the accomplishments of the International Bahá'í Council. They included “‘stupendous work’” for “‘the expansion and consolidation of the international institutions of the Faith... The erection of the International Archives... the extension of the international Bahá'í endowments on the slopes of Mount Carmel; the formation of several Israel branches of Bahá'í National Spiritual Assemblies; the embellishment of the precincts of the resting-places of both the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh; the purchase of the site of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkar of the Holy Land; the preparation of the designs for the International Bahá'í Archives on Mount Carmel, and the Mother Temples of Persia and Africa; the inauguration of the preliminary steps for the eventual construction of Bahá'u'lláh’s Holy Sepulchre; the measures adopted, with the assistance of various officials of the State of Israel, for the eviction of the Covenant-breakers from the immediate precincts of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh...”

Needless to say, this work was a tremendous help to the Guardian.

After the passing of Shoghi Effendi in November 1957, the Council continued to carry out its duties at the World Centre under the direction of the body of the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land, nine of whom had been elected by the rest of the Hands to oversee the affairs of the Bahá'í world in carrying on the work of the Guardian. The Hands of the Cause did this because they ranked directly below the Guardian, whereas the Council had no authority of its own. After consultation, the body of the Hands wrote on November 26, 1957, reaffirming to the Bahá'í world the purpose of the International Council: “As to the International Bahá'í Council... that body will in the course of time finally fulfill its purpose through the formation of the Universal House of Justice.”

Two years later the Hands of the Cause wrote: “The members of all the National and Regional Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'í world, duly constituted in Rídvan 1960, will take part in a postal ballot to elect nine members to the International Council. (It would) serve a two-year term of office, and cease to exist upon the occasion of the election of the Universal House of Justice.” This election would serve as a forerunner of the impending election of the House of Justice. All members of the Bahá'í world were eligible for election to the Council, but the Hands of the Cause excluded themselves in a remarkable act of self-abnegation.

On April 29, 1961, the Hands of the Cause sent a cable from the Holy Land proclaiming the results of the election of the International Bahá'í Council: “Joyfully announce membership: Jessie Revell, Ali Nakhjavání, Lutfullah Hakim, Ethel Revell, Charles Wolcott, Sylvia Ioas, Mildred Mottahedeh, Ian Semple, Borrah Kavelin.” This was indeed historic news, the first international, democratic election in the history of mankind. The Council had taken another large step toward its destiny to evolve into the Universal House of Justice.

The newly elected Council continued its former duties with the addition of those necessary to ensure the establishment of the Universal House of Justice and others deemed necessary by the Hands of the Cause, one of which was the publication of a newsletter from the World Centre. Seven issues of this newsletter were published on behalf of the Hands during the next two years.

The last months in the life of the Council were devoted to preparations for the first International Bahá'í Convention. Members of National Spiritual Assemblies would arrive from all over the world, with 288 of the 504 individual members able to attend. Charlotte Linfoot, long-time assistant secretary of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly, later recollected, “This was the greatest mass pilgrimage ever to have been made to the World Centre of our Faith.” Before the Convention, all were given an opportunity to pray at the Holy Shrines.

On the morning of the first day of Rídvan B.E. 120, 100 years after Bahá'u'lláh had announced His Revelation to mankind, ballots were cast to elect the first Universal House of Justice. The purpose and life of the Bahá'í Council had come to an end; the intention of the Guardian, the hopes of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and the Plan of Bahá'u'lláh had been fulfilled. The Supreme Body of the Faith, “the source of all good and freed from all error,” had become a physical reality.

NOTES
5. The Priceless Pearl, p. 253.
6. ibid.
62 young Bahá’ís visit Soviet Union

A group of Youth Ambassadors from eight countries toured the Soviet Union last November 29-December 9 under the auspices of Youth Ambassadors International (YAI) of Washington state and the Foundation for Social Innovation (FSI) in Moscow.

Sixty-two Bahá’ís were among the group which sought to further the two agencies’ goal of bridging cultural gaps through youth and teacher exchanges.

In 1988, when 14 young Soviets were hosted by the Bahá’ís at a summer camp in Hawaii, YAI and FSI were introduced to the Universal House of Justice’s peace statement, found it to be supportive of their mission, and invited the Bahá’ís to come and share it with Soviet youth.

The members of the “Promise of World Peace” tour spent five days in Moscow and four in Kazan, capital of the Tatar ASSR.

The group was invited to a youth congress held to launch a Moscow branch of the School for Planetary Thought. During that event the peace statement was briefly examined, and Bahá’u’lláh was named as Author of its fundamental principles. The talk received a standing ovation.

The young ambassadors visited the Home for Children of Dysfunctional Families near Moscow, and presented a copy of the peace statement to its director.

Copies of the statement were also presented during a visit to the Pushkin estate and new Pushkin Museum outside Moscow. In return, the group was invited to develop a summer work-study program whereby western youth could “earn rubles” working side by side with Soviet youth in crafts, archaeological and restoration projects.

Among a number of “firsts” enjoyed by the visitors was the invitation to visit Kazan, where they spent four days touring schools and visiting private homes.

They were the first group from outside the Soviet Union ever invited to address the problem of youth gangs in Kazan. At a meeting with gang members a documentary on youth gangs was shown, after which copies of the peace statement were given out.

Another first was a forum at Kazan University where the Student League arranged for the Bahá’ís to speak to 250-300 students. After the talk, the students spontaneously formed 20 small discussion groups, eager to discuss the ideas they had heard. The students accepted hundreds of copies of the peace statement.

Media coverage of the nine-day tour included three television interviews with Bahá’ís who introduced the peace statement and spoke freely about the Faith. One newspaper printed an editorial about the peace statement, and another in Moscow printed a brief article about the meeting with the youth congress.

Tour T-shirts, which read “Youth Ambassadors Peace Tour” on the front and “World Peace Is Not Only Possible But Inevitable” on the back, in Russian and English, proved quite popular, and 86 were given away along with many Peace Tour and Bahá’í buttons and the contents of nine boxes of Bahá’í literature which included 3,000 copies of the peace statement.
Paraguay

Two hundred-eight participants, mostly Lenga and Toba people, gathered last November 12 for a Regional Teaching Conference in Cerrito, in the Chaco area of Paraguay. During the conference, one youth was enrolled in the Faith.

Philippines

The Bahá'í community of the Philippines, in cooperation with the Ra Kendra Peace Circle, the Focolare Movement, and the Centre for Peace Asia, sponsored a "Week of Prayer for World Peace" last October.

The first prayer meeting, held October 22 at the Bahá'í National Center, was attended by about 40 people, among whom were the Philippine president of the World Conference for Religion and Peace, a Roman Catholic priest who is involved in community relations between Christians and Muslims in Mindanao, the principal of the International School, two officers of the Integrated National Police, the founders of the Ra Kendra Peace Circle, and Counsellor Vicente Samaniego.

During the rest of the week Bahá'ís attended a number of meetings hosted by their co-sponsors of the "Week of Prayer for World Peace."

In November, the islands of Leyte and Cebu in the Philippines reported that 808 new believers had been enrolled, 169 new localities opened to the Faith, and five new local Spiritual Assemblies formed.

Australia

The "Wildfire" theatre group recently completed a four-country tour of Asia, performing more than 100 times at schools, universities, shopping centers, refugee camps and public parks.

In Macau, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Thailand the group reached more than 12,000 people with the Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

Wildfire is composed of young Bahá'ís from places as diverse as South Africa, Samoa, Australia, Papua New Guinea and the United States. The group toured Australia a year ago with resounding success.

The group took part in mass teaching efforts in Macau, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Thailand, and attended a three-day teaching institute in Taiwan. They were also able to meet the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Ruhiyyih Khánum, "whose loving spirit," they reported, "was a great inspiration to us."

Among the highlights of the tour:
• Performances in refugee camps in Hong Kong, which led to extensive media coverage.
• A 17-city tour of Taiwan including a performance for a group of tribal people that resulted in the enrollment of two daughters of the chief of the Beinan tribe.
• A six-day tour of the south of Thailand, performing primarily in schools and colleges which, in close cooperation with teaching teams from Malaysia, led to the enrollment of 815 new believers.

More than 700 guests attended a cultural event last October sponsored by Australia's National Chinese Teaching Committee.

Of those present, 450 were from mainland China with others coming from as far away as Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, Taiwan and Korea.

The speaker was Mrs. Helen Shan-Ho, the first Chinese ever elected to the State Parliament of New South Wales. She praised the Bahá'ís for their efforts in promoting world peace and unity.

During the evening two people declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh.

Nigeria

The Kay Wilson Teaching Campaign in Anambra State, Nigeria, last November 22-December 6 surpassed its goals with 759 new Bahá'ís enrolled and 24 new local Spiritual Assemblies formed.
India

The Bahá'í House of Worship in India drew a record 400,000 visitors last October, many of whom came from a nearby fair which attracts many people from the states of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and the area surrounding Delhi.

On October 2, a national holiday honoring the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, more than 50,000 people visited the Temple.

Also in October, delegates from several international conferences visited the Temple. A group of neurosurgeons from Italy came one day, and another from Spain the next. Also visiting were about 150 delegates from 21 countries attending a conference of the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Among the dignitaries visiting in October were Lin Tiang, a minister from the People's Republic of China, and the Ambassador of Panama to India who has been to the House of Worship in Panama several times and is well-acquainted with the Bahá'ís.

The fifth meeting of the International Task Force on Literacy (ITFL) was held last October 1-7 in New Delhi, India. The Bahá'í International Community, which joined the ITFL in December 1988, was represented by Daniel Wegener.

Laltita Ramdas, a member of the National UNESCO Commission of India, approached Mr. Wegener and asked for information about the Faith. Counsellor Zena Sorabjee and the National Spiritual Assembly of India have since been in contact with Mrs. Ramdas, which has led to the National Assembly's hosting a meeting at the Bahá'í National Center of the World Conference for Education for All.

A special highlight of the ITFL conference was a visit to the Bahá'í House of Worship at Bahapur, near New Delhi.

The ongoing Javanmardi Teaching Campaign in Orissa State, India, continues to enroll new believers at an accelerating rate with some 4,300 embracing the Cause last October and November.

With so many new believers, a consolidation program has begun in earnest. So far 15 local Spiritual Assemblies have been formed and are functioning.

A mobile deepening institute, which travels from village to village, has given three deepenings in the area, and a three-area conference has been held.

Ghana

Twenty-five Bahá'ís introduced the Faith to the people of the Gonja district in Ghana despite a heavy rainfall that not only flooded the area but burst a dam, taking many lives and rendering hundreds homeless while making travel a major undertaking.

The project continued from July 27 through September 19, resulting in the enrollment of more than 140 people, the formation of seven new local Spiritual Assemblies, and the establishment of four village communities.
China

"The Green Light Expedition," a filmed record of the historic journey by the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Ruhiyyih Khánum along the Amazon River in South America, has been shown on television in Guangzhou, China. Its presentation was well-advertised both on television and in a TV guide.

The film, dubbed in Cantonese, was scheduled for broadcast in five segments, three of which had been seen by four to five million viewers by early November.

Later, the film was shown again in its entirety, and plans included circulating a second version of the film, in Mandarin, to TV stations throughout China.

Colombia

Two hundred-eighty Bahá’ís, organized into 19 teams of 19 members each, recently visited 98 communities in Colombia. Besides enrolling 3,405 new believers, the teams worked with 273 pre-youth and 164 youth in teaching and deepening the new enrollees.

Argentina

Traditional Toba music is performed by this Toba elder at the Tirol Bahá'í Teaching Institute in Argentina's Chaco region. He was invited to speak to the Toba people about their history and to sing the traditional songs of their culture which have been largely lost to the younger generation.

The Gambia

The Non-Formal Education Services Unit of the Department of Education in The Gambia recently invited the Bahá'í community to exhibit materials on literacy during a week-long series of events at the unit's offices and to attend a series of planned events including a seminar on local language literacy.

The Bahá'í exhibit consisted of a large sign that read: "The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of The Gambia," posters of quotations from the Bahá'í Writings on education, a set of "A Bahá'í Programme for Mothers," a flip chart made from illustrations from the "Mothers" series, and issues of "One Country" and the International Task Force on Literacy bulletin.

The unit's director commented favorably on the Bahá'í International Community's involvement in the International Task Force on Literacy, and was impressed by the grassroots approach used by the Bahá'ís.
Botswana

A Bahá'í choir from Transkei performs at the Bahá'í International Music Festival held last December 1-3 in Gaborone, Botswana. Groups of singers from many African localities competed in the event.

New Zealand

More than 400 young people from 15 countries gathered last December in Auckland, New Zealand, for a Pacific Youth Conference.

Special guests included the Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone, Counsellors Kamran Eshragian and Tinai Hancock, members of the National Spiritual Assembly, and three Auxiliary Board members.

At the close of the conference, Bahá'í youth, eager to teach, resolved to initiate or accelerate entry by troops in their home countries, and several were inspired to commit themselves to a year of service.

Paddy Payne, a Bahá'í from Wellington, New Zealand, has been elected president of New Zealand's National Committee for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Mr. Payne, who sees his work with the committee as a way of serving the Faith, has been involved with UNICEF for the past five years and is well-known for his efforts on behalf of the committee to promote a better world for children.

Germany

Proclamation activities have proliferated in West Germany with the recent influx of East German visitors. Each weekend, dozens of Bahá'ís distribute tens of thousands of pieces of literature while more and more are having in-depth meetings and interviews with seekers.

A total of 150,000 copies of a shortened version of the peace statement and about 20,000 other pieces of material, as well as hundreds of books, have been given to visitors from East Germany since the border between the two countries was opened last November.

At some locations the friends are providing hot tea on crowded streets, and one local Assembly, in cooperation with the city council, organized a lunch and dinner for East Germans that resulted in 70 people coming to the Bahá'í Center. Fifteen left their names and addresses to be notified of future Bahá'í meetings to be held in East Germany.

The National Spiritual Assembly has received more than a dozen written inquiries from East Germany. A typical one read, “Your teachings give strength and support to me and others. Please send more.”

The local Bahá'ís are being helped by friends from France, Norway and the United Kingdom.

Swaziland

Following a successful initiative with pre-schools, the National Spiritual Assembly of Swaziland has decided to open a Bahá'í primary school as well.

There is a great need in that country for primary schools, and the Bahá'ís have begun this new endeavor to help answer that need.

The Bahá'ís of Swaziland have founded a Bahá'í Pre- and Primary School Scholarship Fund, which subsidizes fees for the education of those Bahá'í children whose parents cannot afford to send them to school.

They have also established a Building Fund that is urgently needed for the construction of the primary school building.
Cameroon

An “entry by troops” campaign is under way in several areas of Cameroon. More than 150 people including whole families are involved in the campaign, which was preceded last spring by a three-day training institute in Batouri.

At the institute about 45 teachers arose to serve in the endeavor, which is named for the late Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga, while more than 100,000 francs in cash or in kind was contributed to help defray expenses.

The Hasan Balyuzi team enrolled 214 new believers within two weeks, forming one new Spiritual Assembly and opening three new localities.

Meanwhile, in Bitamyen, the Ruhyyih Khânüm team enrolled 21 new believers in two weeks, formed one Assembly and opened three localities.

Following widespread teaching organized by the Provincial Teaching Committee North West, 62 new believers were enrolled with two new Assemblies formed and three localities opened to the Faith.

In the South West area, the first public Bahá’í conference in Muyuka led to several declarations and the teaching of the Faith to large numbers of people.

An intensive six-week teaching campaign in Cameroon’s Eastern Province has led to 578 enrollments and the formation of 11 new local Spiritual Assemblies.

Reports from Yokadouma list 395 new believers including 277 Pygmy men and women, while four new Assemblies have been formed and five localities opened in North West Province.

More than 90 people from five countries attended Cameroon’s National Spiritual Assembly of Nigeria.

The government of Nigeria has recognized the Bahá’í Faith as an institution authorized to issue marriage certificates. The recognition fulfills a long-standing goal of the National Spiritual Assembly of Nigeria.

Conditions required by the government before issuing the marriage certificate include:

- registration by the intending bride or groom with the government office at least three weeks before the marriage and the payment of a small fee;
- a monogamous marriage;
- consent of parents;
- signing of the registry book on the day of the ceremony by two witnesses and a registrar.

Bahá’í marriages satisfy the conditions set by the government, and the National Bahá’í Center in Lagos has been accepted as a suitable place in which to house the Marriage Registry, an important government document.

Also, the National Teaching Institute in Bendel State is certified as a place where any Bahá’í can be married officially, and the Bahá’í Center in the Calabar District is authorized as a place for Bahá’í weddings in Cross River State.

Nigeria

The government of Nigeria has recognized the Bahá’í Faith as an institution authorized to issue marriage certificates. The recognition fulfills a long-standing goal of the National Spiritual Assembly of Nigeria.

Youth Conference in August including Counsellor Mihdi Samandari, four members of the National Spiritual Assembly and four Auxiliary Board members.

The theme was “Dare to Be Different.” Talks centered on the responsibilities of youth in today’s society.

During the conference six young people embraced the Faith.
An anniversary tribute to poet Robert Haydân.
DEEPLY GRIEVED ANNOUNCE PASSING STAUNCH TIRELESS PROMOTER FAITH
HAND CAUSE GOD JALAL KHAZEH. HIS STRENuous ENDEAVORS CRADLE FAITH
HOLY LAND LATIN AMERICA AND WORLDWIDE TRAVELS AFTER PASSING BELOVED
GUARDIAN SET SHINING EXAMPLE OF UNSHAKEABLE DEDICATION AND COURAGE,
OF UNDEVIATING LOYALTY AND PERSEVERANCE. IMPERISHABLE RECORD HIS
STERLING SERVICES AS GIFTED TEACHER DEFENDER CAUSE NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN.
HIS NOBLE SPIRIT NOW ABHA KINGDOM WILL UNDOUBTEDLY INTERCEDE BEHALF PERSIAN BAHÁ’Í COMMUNITY WHOSE VITAL INTERESTS HE SERVED WITH
SUCH HIGH DISTINCTION OVER SEVERAL DECADES. FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY
SHRINES FOR PROGRESS HIS ILLUMINED SOUL IN REALMS ON HIGH. ADVISE
FRIENDS EVERYWHERE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS HIS HONOR
PARTICULARLY ALL HOUSES OF WORSHIP.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
FEBRUARY 22, 1990
To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá’í Friends,

EXTEND HEARTFELT GREETINGS INTERNATIONAL GATHERING COMMEMORATING 50TH ANNIVERSARY PASSING MASTER’S BELOVED HANDMAID DISTINGUISHED DISCIPLE MAY MAXWELL. SOLEMN OCCASION EVOKES MEMORIES MAGNETIC INFLUENCE EXERTED UPON HER BY ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ COURSE HER VISIT ‘AKKÁ COMPANY FIRST GROUP WESTERN PILGRIMS. BRILLIANT RECORD HER UNFORGETTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS CROWNED PRICELESS HONOR MARTYR’S DEATH DESTINED REMAIN FOREVER IDENTIFIED WITH SPIRITUAL AWAKENING LATIN PEOPLES BOTH OLD AND NEW WORLDS. HER GLORIOUS SACRIFICE FORGED VITAL IMPERISHABLE LINK BETWEEN CHIEF EXECUTORS DIVINE PLAN IN LAND HER BIRTH, THEIR PRINCIPAL ALLY IN HER ADOPTED CANADIAN HOMELAND, AND THEIR RIGHTFUL ASSOCIATES IN LATIN AMERICA, SCENE OF HER FINAL EXPLOITS. HOPE EXPRESSED BY SHOQHI EFFENDI THAT HER NOBLE EXAMPLE WOULD INSPIRE OTHERS ARISE FOLLOW IN HER FOOTSTEPS AND THUS GLADDEN HER SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM ABUNDANTLY REALIZED BY DYNAMIC EPOCH-MAKING SERVICES BELIEVERS WESTERN HEMISPHERE DURING FIVE DECADES SINCE HER PASSING. SINGULAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS LATIN AMERICAN BELIEVERS BOTH AT HOME AND IN FOREIGN FIELDS CONSTITUTE MEMORABLE CHAPTER HISTORY THIS PERIOD FORMATIVE AGE FAITH. THEIR PRESENT GROWING INVOLVEMENT WITH TEACHING VICTORIES IN AFRICA AND EASTERN EUROPE AS WELL AS WORTHY SERVICES OF SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICAN BELIEVERS WORLD CENTRE FAITH FURTHER ENHANCE THEIR NOTABLE CONTRIBUTION ADVANCEMENT CAUSE LORD OF HOSTS. MAY CONFERENCE HELD CLOSE PROXIMITY HER ILLUMINED RESTING-PLACE AND BLESSED THROUGH PRESENCE AND INSPIRATION MRS. MAXWELL’S HIGHLY ESTEEMED DAUGHTER HAND CAUSE GOD AMATU’L-BAHÁ RÚHÍYYIH KHÁNUM RELEASE NEW WAVES SPIRITUAL ENERGY CHARGE PARTICIPANTS FULLER VISION IMPLICATIONS MOMENTOUS WORLD MISSION LATIN AMERICAN BAHÁ’IS AS IMPLIED BAHÁ’U’LLÁH’S CALL TO PRESIDENTS AMERICAN REPUBLICS IN HIS MOST HOLY BOOK. ARDENTLY SUPPLICATING HOLY SHRINES FRESH OUTPOURINGS SUSTAINING GRACE ENABLE FRIENDS WIN EVER GREATER PRIZES REMAINING MONTHS SIX YEAR PLAN.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
February 21, 1990
Iran

More resolutions condemn persecutions

The last weeks of winter witnessed an intense period of activity concerning the human rights of Bahá'ís in Iran. After several months of effort, four events, in the U.S. and in Geneva, Switzerland, took place within three weeks.

On February 21, the U.S. State Department released its annual "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices" for 1989 which documents the continuing repression of Iranian Bahá'ís and describes in detail Iranian government actions against the Bahá'ís there.

The report notes that no Bahá'ís were executed last year and that the number of Bahá'ís held in prison fell to fewer than 15. This is in contrast to the record of the previous eight years, during which more than 200 Bahá'ís were executed and thousands were imprisoned on account of their religious belief.

In oral testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Human Rights, Ambassador Richard Schifter said, "Countries that engage in similarly severe repression include Iran, which does it in the name of religion, and Iraq and Syria, which do it in the name of secular political ideology. In the case of Iran, religiously motivated repression continues to single out the Bahá'ís for the most serious victimization."

On February 26, the United Nations Human Rights Commission, meeting in Geneva, released the report on Iran of the Special Rapporteur, Galindo Pohl, that includes reports of abuses toward the Bahá'ís.

The special report is based on the first on-site investigation of Iran's human rights practices and examines a wide variety of violations. It quotes a directive from Iran's Prime Minister stating that Bahá'ís are not allowed to practice or teach their religion.

"While the report states correctly that individual Bahá'ís are treated somewhat better than in recent years," said Dr. Firuz Kazemzadeh, the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly's secretary for External Affairs, "it confirms that the Bahá'í community is denied the basic rights guaranteed by international law."

Dr. Kazemzadeh expressed concern that Bahá'ís, whom Iran considers "unprotected infidels," are not allowed to elect their leaders, educate their children, or carry on normal activities of a law-abiding religious group.

The report also notes that most Bahá'ís continue to be deprived of their pensions and that most are refused passports. In addition, Bahá'ís experience problems in connection with the right of inheritance; they cannot obtain inheritance certificates because they do not belong to one of the four recognized religions in Iran.

"The Iranian government fights hard to defeat these UN resolutions," said Dr. Kazemzadeh, "especially any resolutions mentioning the Bahá'ís.

"But thanks to international pressure, no Bahá'ís have been executed for two years, and fewer than 20 remain in prison."

On Tuesday, February 27, the day after the release of the Special Rapporteur's report, the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed (404-0) House Concurrent Resolution 8 calling for "the emancipation of the Bahá'í community in Iran."

The resolution was co-sponsored by more than 140 congressmen. Since 1982, Congress has passed four resolutions regarding the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran.

This latest resolution calls on the President to continue to emphasize the need for improvement in the government of Iran's human rights record and to cooperate with other governments at the UN and in other joint efforts to protect the religious rights of the Bahá'ís, and to provide for humanitarian assistance for those Bahá'ís who are forced to flee their homeland.

During his statement prior to the vote, Rep. Gus Yatron noted that "although Bahá'ís constitute the largest religious minority in Iran, their religion is not recognized and their places of worship have been destroyed. Their marriages are not sanctioned and their children are denied college education."

"Bahá'ís have systematically been denied the normal benefits of society, such as access to education, the right to travel, the ability to inherit property, and even (on occasion) the right to purchase food," said Rep. Doug Bereuter.

"Bahá'ís are still not a legally recognized religion in Iran," added Rep. John Porter, "and are still imprisoned for their religious beliefs, denied the right to organize, choose their leaders, acquire and maintain places of worship, operate religious schools or conduct religious activities."

"For more than a decade we have pleaded for equal rights in the religious arena for members of the Bahá'í Faith," said Rep. Tom Lantos. "We are sending word to the government in Iran that we will not go away. We will continue to raise the Bahá'í issue year after year after year..."

Statements were also entered into the

"The action of the House today reflects the deeply felt concern of the U.S. Congress and the American people with the situation of the Bahá'í community in Iran today," House Speaker Tom Foley noted in a statement released after passage of the resolution. "All Americans share the hope that the Bahá'í community will enjoy the freedoms that all of us consider basic to human dignity and progress."

Following these events, the National Spiritual Assembly held a press briefing on March 1 in Washington to publicize recent developments. Speaking at the briefing were Dr. Kazemzadeh and Reps. Gilman and Porter, who spoke for himself and on behalf of Sen. John Heinz of Pennsylvania.

The briefing highlighted the news that 16 congressmen had signed a letter to UN Commission Chairman P. Valera Quisumbing stating that firm resolutions have proven to "help persuade the Iranian regime to mitigate its most repressive actions against the Bahá'ís."

The briefing resulted in an article in The Washington Times and coverage on the Voice of America.

Finally, on March 2, the UN Commission on Human Rights passed a resolution welcoming the decision of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to allow a further visit to Iran and asked the Special Rapporteur to present an interim report to the UN General Assembly on "the human rights situation of minority groups, such as the Bahá'ís," in Iran, and a final report to the Commission at its 47th session.

Pictured on the front steps of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice on Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel, are members of the security staff at the Bahá'í World Centre. With them (front row fourth from right) is a member of the Universal House of Justice, 'Ali Nakhjavání. The chief responsibility of the Security Department is to serve the House of Justice by protecting and preserving the spiritual and administrative centers of the Faith in Haifa and 'Akka. In this photograph, which was taken in October 1989, are security guards and members of the administrative staff (in dark suits). Security personnel include many young Bahá'ís who have come to the World Centre from such faraway places as Cameroon, Sweden, Germany, Botswana, France, Australia, Zaire, New Zealand, Austria, Switzerland, England, Guyana and the United States. If you are considering service at the World Centre in any capacity and would like more information about what is needed and how you may apply, please write to the Personnel Department, Bahá'í World Centre, P.O. Box 155, Haifa 31 001, Israel.
United States

Bahá’ís lead way in King Week events

More than a thousand Bahá’ís from at least 30 states capped a week of activities honoring the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by marching January 15 in Atlanta’s annual King Day parade behind a 35-foot banner proclaiming that “The Bahá’í Faith Teaches the Oneness of Mankind.”

The sentiment expressed by the banner could be seen in the Bahá’ís themselves as young and old, rich and poor, black, brown, yellow, red and white marched arm-in-arm past the estimated 200,000 onlookers along the parade route.

The marchers were followed by a Bahá’í float on which rode children of all races with Bahá’í entertainers Red Grammer and “Swan.” Nearly 40 members of the Atlanta Bahá’í Youth Workshop walked behind the float.

Some of the Bahá’í marchers held placards bearing the names of their home states while others carried signs with Bahá’í beliefs and principles written on them in English or Spanish.

The nationally televised event was the centerpiece of a week of activities that began January 7 with an interfaith service at St. Philip’s Cathedral attended by more than 700 people.

Two Bahá’ís served on the planning committee for the service and were on stage with 25 members of the clergy to help read the litany to Dr. King.

Before the service about 20 young people including eight Bahá’ís attended a meeting to discuss current world issues and local racial issues.

On Tuesday, January 9, Bahá’ís from Gwinnett County, Decatur and Covington took part in a service for “Rededication to Peace and Justice” at Ebenezer Baptist Church.

On January 12, the Spiritual Assembly of North Fulton County sponsored a Business and Professional Luncheon at the Marriott Hotel. About 25 people including 10 seekers heard the keynote speaker, Deloria Bighorn, a Bahá’í from Salem, Oregon, address the need for racial harmony and the Bahá’í concept of oneness.

Before the luncheon she and Gary McDaniel, a Bahá’í from Acworth, attended a meeting of the Cobb County Human Services Coalition and helped plan a day-long seminar on race relations for that group.

On January 13, Jack McCants, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, was the speaker at a metropolitan fireside attended by more than 300 people.

Red Grammer performed at the fireside and later for the children while Studio East, an East Indian jazz group, entertained after Mr. McCants’ talk.

The following day, 25 American Indians including two Bahá’ís consulted with representatives of the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Non-Violent Social Change about ways in which the Center could provide support for their concerns.

Bahá’ís in the Atlanta area had raised $20,000 to provide transportation and hospitality for the visiting American Indians among whom were members of the Sioux, Winnebago, Poarch Creek, Mohawk, Cherokee, Ute, Iroquois, Seneca, Navajo, Chippewa, Shoshone, Cree and other tribes.

In their ranks were three prominent Native Americans: Peter Catches, a medicine man revered as a holy man; Arvol Lookinghorse, the 19th generation keeper of the Sacred Calf Pipe given to the Sioux nation (Lakota and Dakota) by the White Buffalo Calf Woman, looked upon by those tribes as a messenger from God; and Ruben Snake, head of the Native American Church.

On January 14, Auxiliary Board member Soo Fouts emceed and other Bahá’ís took part in a public meeting, “Prayers Around the World for Peace and Justice,” at the King Center.

The service was co-sponsored by the King Center, the Catholic Council for Interracial Justice, and the Bahá’ís. Among its highlights was a Lakota pipe ceremony performed by Mr. Catches.

Later that day, Bahá’ís were in the audience as Dr. King’s widow, Coretta Scott King, delivered the annual “State of the Dream” address at Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Also speaking at that event were the Rev. Jesse Jackson and Chinese student leader Chen Tong who was chosen to lead this year’s King Day parade.

Among the performers at the “Salute to Greatness” reception that evening was a Bahá’í, Phil Morrison.

On the morning of the federal holiday honoring Dr. King, which this year coincided with what would have been his actual 61st birthday, Mrs. Fouts recited a part of the litany to Dr. King during a televised ecumenical service at Ebenezer Baptist Church.

After introducing to the audience Mr. Catches and Mrs. Locke, two of the American Indians brought to Atlanta by the Bahá’ís, Mrs. King remarked that this was the first time that all of the races under the sun had gathered to observe King Day.

Mrs. Locke, who is not a Bahá’í, paid tribute to Dr. King, spoke of the great Indian leaders such as Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull and Chief Joseph who also had dreams of a united humanity, and closed with a Bahá’í prayer.

In the audience were such dignitaries as Georgia Gov. Joe Frank Harris; Jack Kemp, secretary of Housing and Urban Development; and former Atlanta mayor Maynard Jackson.

On the reviewing stand with Mrs. King for the parade later that day were two members of the National Spiritual Assembly, Alberta Deas and Robert
Henderson; Mrs. Fouts; and Carole Miller of Roswell, a Bahá’í who is co-chairman of the Committee for Religious Involvement of the Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Holiday Commission.

That evening Mrs. King invited several of the American Indians and a number of Bahá’ís to a special dinner. Meanwhile, a fireside sponsored by the Spiritual Assembly of Atlanta was held at the Bahá’í Center with about 20 people present.

Besides appearing in the parade, the Bahá’í group “Swan” performed at a “Birthday Bash” at the King Center and at a reception which followed the “State of the Dream” address.

Also during King Week, several young Bahá’ís attended a College and University Conference on Non-Violence.

In all, the Bahá’í community provided outstanding support for King Week events with more than 150 of the friends directly involved in tasks to support the many activities.

The King Center staff recognized the dedication and spirit brought by the Bahá’ís and were delighted with the participation of the American Indians, which would not have been possible without the sponsorship of the Bahá’í community.

Atlanta’s celebration of Dr. King’s birthday was but one of a number of such events throughout the U.S. in which Bahá’ís were involved. For instance:

- In Los Angeles, more than one-third of those marching in the King Day parade were Bahá’ís wearing T-shirts with Bahá’í slogans and carrying banners proclaiming the oneness of mankind.
- In Seattle, Washington, about 400 people, mostly students and faculty, attended a Bahá’í-sponsored public meeting at the University of Washington. The speaker was Dr. Firuz Kazemzadeh, the National Assembly secretary for External Affairs, who traced the history of the civil rights movement from a Bahá’í perspective based on his observations since arriving in the U.S. as a young college student.
- In Eugene, Oregon, Bahá’ís joined forces with the NAACP to plan and carry out a number of programs honoring Dr. King including a public tribute at the City Council chambers; a Human Rights Fair; and a public meeting whose keynote speaker before an audience of more than 4,000 was Dr. King’s daughter, Yolanda.
- In Boston, Bahá’ís co-sponsored the Harvard-Radcliffe United Ministry’s annual Martin Luther King Jr. service at Memorial Church, and took part in many other commemorations of the holiday.
- In Albuquerque, New Mexico, Bahá’ís co-sponsored a birthday tribute to Dr. King that drew an audience of more than 300, about 60 of whom were Bahá’ís. Also sponsoring was the NAACP’s College Division at the University of New Mexico. The keynote speaker was Harold Gibson, an African-American Bahá’í from Espanola.
- In Glenwood Springs, Colorado, the three-member Bahá’í Group sponsored the community’s King Day activities which included a potluck supper and a walk to a local cemetery to honor early black settlers who played an important role in Glenwood Springs some 100 years ago. The events received widespread media coverage.
- In Conway, South Carolina, the local Spiritual Assembly took the lead when local churches decided not to plan an observance of Dr. King’s birthday, presenting a public program that drew an audience of more than 200, was covered by four television stations and broadcast live on WLGJ Radio Bahá’í.
- In New Orleans, 25 Bahá’ís from six communities took part in the annual King Day parade which ended with a rally at a local gymnasium.
- In Speedway, Indiana, the Bahá’ís sponsored an observance that included songs, film footage of Dr. King’s life including the march on Washington, D.C., and his famous “I have a dream” speech, and a discussion of various aspects of race prejudice and the need for unity.
- In Greenfield, Massachusetts, Bahá’ís co-sponsored “The Dream Continues,” a public Martin Luther King Day observance at a local Unitarian church. About 50 people attended.
- In Redding, California, Bahá’ís joined a number of interested groups to plan the King Day observance and provided the keynote speaker, Roger Hogan. Also on the program, which drew an audience of about 150, was a jazz dance by two Bahá’í youth, Danielle Hogan and Joyanna Kessler.
- In Pendleton, Oregon, Bahá’ís co-sponsored the King Day observance with the local chapter of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. The keynote speaker was Leonard Bell, a member of the Spiritual Assembly of Portland.

Bahá’ís from a number of states prepare to march behind their colorful banners in Atlanta’s annual Martin Luther King Day parade.
Poets, writers honor Robert Hayden

About 600 people including a number of the country's leading poets and writers attended "Words in the Mourning Time," a conference to celebrate the poetry of the late Robert Hayden, February 22-24 at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

The conference, co-sponsored by the Association for Bahá'í Studies and the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Michigan, was followed February 25 by a memorial service that marked the 10th anniversary of Mr. Hayden's passing.

Mr. Hayden, a native of Detroit, was a world-renowned poet and the first black to be named consultant in poetry to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

For more than two decades he taught English and creative writing at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, and at the time of his death was a professor of English at the University of Michigan.

Mr. Hayden authored more than a dozen books of poetry including American Journal (nominated for the National Book Award in 1978), Angle of Ascent, The Night-Blooming Cereus, Words in the Mourning Time, Heart-Shape in the Dust, Figure of Time and A Ballad of Remembrance (winner of the grand prize at the first World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar, Senegal, in 1966).

A Bahá'í for many years, Mr. Hayden served for more than a decade as poetry editor of World Order magazine.

The conference provided a forum for scholars, poets, poetry lovers and the general public to explore Mr. Hayden's poetry, which so eloquently reflects human conditions in a changing world.

Special guests included Gwendolyn Brooks, poet laureate of Illinois and the first black American to win the Pulitzer prize in poetry (in 1950, for Annie Allen); Rita Dove, associate professor of English at Arizona State University and the second black American to win the Pulitzer (in 1987, for Thomas and Beulah); Michael Harper, a critically acclaimed poet who is Kapstein professor of English at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island; and Sherley Anne Williams, a poet and editor of Callaloo magazine.

The guest poets shared their insights and understandings of Mr. Hayden's poetry and offered readings of their own works.

The keynote address, "The Achievement of Robert Hayden," was given by Darwin Turner, a poet and literary critic who is a leading expert on black American literature.

Among the speakers who took part in three panel discussions on Mr. Hayden's life and work were two Bahá'ís: Dr. John Hatcher, professor of English at South Florida University in Tampa and author of From the Auroraal Darkness, a book on the life and poetry of Robert Hayden; and Xavier Nichols, who is working on a book about Mr. Hayden.

Other panelists were writer/poets Melba Boyd, Laurence Goldstein, Lemuel Johnson, Eugene Redmond, Richard Tillinghast, Alen Wald and Pontheolla Williams.

Each session had a focused topic for discussion. The first was "Robert Hayden: His Evolution as an Artist." The others were "Robert Hayden: Blues Poet or Modernist?" and "The Tension Between Belief and Ideology in the Work of Robert Hayden."

Following each session, the floor was opened for discussion between
Saturday evening's program, "'Angle of Ascent,"' was a dramatic presentation of Mr. Hayden's work by guest artists including jazz saxophonist Marvin (Doc) Holladay; dancer/choreographer Linda Spriggs; composer Stephen Newby; and Biza Sompa and the Bichinis Bia Congo dance troupe.

In spite of a winter storm that paralyzed much of the city, the well-advertised program drew an audience of more than 300.

Among the 600 people at the conference were 125 high school students who attended workshops in poetry conducted by Gwendolyn Brooks, Michael Harper and Sherley Anne Williams.

During a luncheon Saturday afternoon, certificates were presented by Ms. Brooks to those students who displayed promise as young poets.

The program for students was arranged by William Diehl, administrator of the Louhelen Bahá’í School near Davison, Michigan, and adjunct faculty member in reading education at the University of Michigan.

Also during the conference, the Robert Hayden Memorial Lounge was dedicated at the university's Center for Afro-American Studies (CAAS). Dr. Lemuel Johnson, director of the CAAS, presided.

Other features included an exhibit on Mr. Hayden and black American poetry that featured selections from the National Bahá’í Archives and the University of Michigan's collection, and the presentation of two films: "Robert Hayden" by Donald Hall, and "Detroit's Hayden: America's Poet Laureate" by Ronald Scott.

John Hatcher (left photo), a Bahá’í from Florida who is author of a biography of the late poet Robert Hayden, makes a point during a panel discussion of Mr. Hayden's work at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. A number of well-known poets and writers paid tribute to Mr. Hayden on the 10th anniversary of his passing including Pulitzer Prize winner Gwendolyn Brooks (right photo), the poet laureate of Illinois.
UNIFON: Answer to ‘alphabet soup’?

As a part of our continuing response to the United Nations International Literacy Year 1990 we present the following article about UNIFON, a way in which to simplify the English alphabet, written by Susan C. Gilman, a Bahá’í from Cardiff, California.

Unless one chooses to play “ostrich,” hardly a day can go by without hearing or reading something about the problem of illiteracy. Some time ago, the playwright George Bernard Shaw had this to say about it: “The waste of war is negligible in comparison to the daily waste of trying to communicate with one another in English through an alphabet with 14 letters missing. That must be remedied come what may.”

The cycle of illiteracy is devastatingly painful and traumatic for those caught in it. Poor reading skills can lead to unemployment, welfare, and, in some cases, crime—as the economy shifts toward a high-tech, service-oriented society and the number of jobs requiring only a limited education declines.

And yet limited education persists for many. It seems that our educational system promotes non-achievers. There are illiterates who, within crowded classrooms, can go undiscovered for years. Many have even been clever enough to fool the system by devising complex coping mechanisms such as copying notes written by others and focusing on oral communication.

There are illiterates who, within crowded classrooms, can go undiscovered for years. Many have even been clever enough to fool the system by devising complex coping mechanisms such as copying notes written by others and focusing on oral communication.

Now is the time for educators everywhere to abandon the myth that some students simply can’t learn. We must wake up and admit that English is the most difficult language to learn to read and write.

Let it be common knowledge that our present ABCs are, more than likely, hazardous to students; that the students aren’t stupid... the alphabet is stupid.

Stanley Sharp, author of The REAL Reason Why Johnny Still Can’t Read, states: “If you know the facts, you are not surprised to learn that a computer programmed with 308 rules was unable to spell correctly half of the 17,310 most frequently used words. That explains why all English-speaking countries have such high illiteracy rates. Many Johnnies can’t cope with our illogical spelling of words.”

John Culkin, author of three articles on a reformed English alphabet (two of which were the most popular articles ever published in Science Digest), enlightens us further:

“Standard spoken English has 30 to 50 discrete sounds, currently spelled 200-800 different ways, giving our language an efficiency rating of 20 percent. . . . You wouldn’t fly an airplane with a 20 percent efficiency rating. Is human communication any less important?”

Now is the time for those seeking joy (or even ecstasy) in education to realize that the process of growth involves going beyond one’s comfort zone, or, in this case, his discomfort zone. Now is the time to embrace the most practical, innovative changes available. John Culkin writes:

“Have I got an alphabet for you!

One hundred percent efficient, it is related to the existing alphabet and compatible with all computer technologies. It works as a reading system; it fits most other languages. Called UNIFON, the alphabet was devised 28 years ago by John Malone, a Chicago economist.

“UNIFON (single sound), a totally consistent 40-character alphabet, maps and matches the 40 sounds of standard spoken English. It is an isomorphic (one-for-one) system of 24 consonants and 16 vowels. One and only one letter stands for each sound. One and only one sound corresponds to each letter. Students need learn only one rule for its use: Spell everything as it sounds; sound everything as it is spelled. No silent letters or double letters exist.”

(See UNIFON alphabet on next page.)

Having been created by an economist, UNIFON is economical, taking up 14 percent less space with consequent savings in labor, storage, ink and paper. And then there is the emotional economy: monster words like “through,” “though” and “tough” are nicely tamed forever.

The UNIFON system has been successfully tested in public schools in Chicago; Indianapolis and Hammond, Indiana; New Orleans, and Washington, D.C. At the private Howalton School in Chicago, first-graders who learned to read and write with the UNIFON alphabet tested at the 3.8 grade level.

Our present alphabet and the reading thereof involve a “sort of” phonetic base, yet school children must learn some words, like “one” and “eight,” as if they were Chinese symbols. Imagine the adoption of a truly efficient set of symbols... imagine the expansion of creativity and fun.

It would open the world of competent, confident and joyful reading, not only to American children but to those in some 90 other countries for whom
English is required. English is, in fact, the lingua franca of the modern world.

We can install a phonetic alphabet as our official alphabet. It has been done before, in Russia, Japan, Turkey and Yugoslavia. Nine years ago, one area of China adopted a 50-character Romanized alphabet to handle the 50,000 characters of the ideographically written Chinese language.

Adaptable to other languages, though designed for English, UNIFON could benefit people everywhere with its unifying power.

Two helpful books on UNIFON are soon to be released: Reading for the TV Child, and a dictionary that shows exactly how to transpose from old spellings to new ones.

In choosing UNIFON, we could choose to liberate the (roughly) 30 million functional illiterates in this country, giving them (what may be for some) a life-saver.

Mark Twain once said: “The English alphabet is pure insanity. It can hardly spell any word in the language with any large degree of certainty.”

I see reading and writing and spelling as inmates of Marat Sade’s asylum, singing: “Marat, we’re poor and the poor stay poor. There must be more... of this we are sure. We want our rights, and we don’t care how. We want a revolution... NOW!”

United States

The past 11 years of activities by Baha’is throughout the world and at the United Nations on behalf of their persecuted co-religionists in Iran was the topic of a recent lecture given at the Human Rights Program Speaker Series at Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

On February 15, Katharine Bigelow, deputy director of the National Spiritual Assembly Office of External Affairs in Washington, spoke on the topic “Can World Opinion Affect Human Rights Violations? The Case of the Baha’is in Iran.”

“The experience of the Baha’is,” Ms. Bigelow said, “has been that national governments care very much about their reputation in the global arena.

“We believe that the support of the United Nations, the U.S. Congress and other national governments in repeatedly urging the Iranian government to grant the Baha’is their basic human rights has contributed to the decision to release several hundred Baha’is from prison and has prevented any recent executions. It is difficult to persecute others in the broad daylight of publicity.”

Ms. Bigelow explained that four resolutions citing Iranian persecution of Baha’is have been passed in the U.S. Congress since 1982, and that a concurrent resolution in the Senate is pending.

The latest resolutions note that although no Baha’is in Iran have been executed because of their religious belief since 1987, the Baha’i community remains an oppressed minority deprived of basic human rights.

Uganda

Counsellor Edith Senoga (second from left) visits Baha’i communities in western Uganda near the Ruwenzori Mountains (Mountains of the Moon). The communities are nearly inaccessible; during the rainy season, the roads are closed and the area can be reached only on foot.
The world

‘Cultural evening’ in Uruguay

The first “Evening of Cultural Integration” was held last November at the National Hazíratu’l-Quds in Montevideo, Uruguay.

Nearly 120 people attended the event, which was planned by the Spiritual Assembly of Montevideo and featured traditional costumes and dances by representatives from the diverse communities in Uruguay.

Dr. Virginia Petekian spoke on the history of Armenia and the arrival of Armenians in Uruguay, while Mrs. Beatriz Santoz, a journalist for the Nationwide Radio and Television Network, spoke about the arrival of blacks in Latin America.

She emphasized the Bahá’í concepts of equality, peace and integration, saying she felt “very much at home” among the Bahá’ís.

The president of the Central Israelite Committee of Uruguay also attended, and expressed his sincere respect for the “Bahá’í cause,” repeating the sentiment expressed by Mrs. Santos of “feeling at home,” not only because of Bahá’í hospitality but also because of the Bahá’í ideology.

Mrs. Sima Baher Caballero, representing the Bahá’í community of Montevideo, presented a summary of worldwide Bahá’í social and economic development projects, while Mrs. Maria Luisa Silva, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Uruguay, spoke about the Bahá’í teachings on unity in diversity.

The Bahá’í community of Montevideo, Uruguay, received an award for its efforts in promoting world peace on the occasion of the second anniversary of the opening of the Cultural Center for Peace and Integration. About 70 people attended the event, which was held at the Uruguay-United States of America Cultural Alliance.

The program included presentations by well-known Uruguayans including a psychologist and a sculptress, as well as poetry readings and performances of traditional songs and dances.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Uruguay helped plan an international women’s conference last October 6-8 in Montevideo.

About 300 people from a dozen countries took part in the event, which was sponsored by Montevideo’s Ministry of Education and Culture.

Special folders containing Bahá’í literature for women were prepared and distributed to officials, the press, prominent persons and several related associations.

United Kingdom

The Society of Friends (Quakers), acting on their own initiative, recently put up this sign in front of their Meeting House in Manchester, England, and left it on display for about a month.

Tonga

Bahá’ís took part in the 1989 Royal Agriculture Show in Tonga, winning prizes in three categories. The show is a competition held among all the island groups in Tonga.

The Bahá’í Women’s Committee of Vav’u won first prize for its display, while in the farming category prizes were won by several Bahá’ís including long-time pioneer Geoffrey Hougland who received a prize from His Majesty King Taufahau Tupou IV for the best industrial innovation.

Mr. Hougland invented a tapa machine for mechanically processing tutu, the bark of the mulberry tree, into a flat sheet ready for hand-finishing. Tapa is a traditional cloth, handcrafted and used in Polynesian society for ceremonial occasions. Women’s groups, who make most of the tapa cloth, have bought more than 20 of the machines.
Transkei

More than 40 people, most of them students, attended a World Peace Day poster contest awards ceremony October 14 at the Youth and Pastoral Centre in Umtata, Transkei. The contest was sponsored by the Spiritual Assembly of Umtata.

Fifty-one students from four schools submitted original posters on the contest theme, “Peace.” After first-, second- and third-place prizes were awarded, the Bahá’í children delighted the audience by singing two Bahá’í songs. Bahá’í literature was then distributed including copies of the peace statement and the Xhosa translation of “Creating a Spiritual Home.”

Benin

Counsellor Zekrullah Kazemi was one of the speakers at a conference for Auxiliary Board members and their assistants held last December 28-30 at the Muhajir Regional Center in Abomey, the capital of Benin.

The five Board members and 70 assistants who took part heard the Counsellor speak of the fundamental role the assistants must play in strengthening local Spiritual Assemblies.

Also at the conference were representatives of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Benin and Togo.

Suriname

The Bahá’ís of Suriname took part last October 23 in a nationwide television broadcast on AIDS and its prevention.

The telecast was sponsored by the National AIDS Program, a committee of the Ministry of Health. Also participating were representatives of the Hindu, Islamic and Christian faiths.

The hour-long program included discussions about many aspects of morality, spirituality, marriage and sexual behavior.

It marked the first time that the Faith has been represented with other religions on a nationwide television program in Suriname. Referring to the telecast, the announcer identified the participants as belonging to “the four major religions of Suriname: Hindu, Christianity, Islam and the Bahá’ís...”

The National Spiritual Assembly points out that this was a major step in the recognition of the Faith in Suriname.

Canada

Orison is the name of a new journal published by the Bahá’í Institute for the Arts, a section of the Association for Bahá’í Studies in Canada and the U.S.

The first issue focuses on Art and Service, to inform readers of ways in which some artists are performing services for the Faith. The publishers say that as the journal evolves it will include a wide array of studies of the Bahá’í Faith in relationship to various aspects of the arts.

“The Spot” is a coffee house, centrally located, that the local teaching group opened for a project featuring a team made up of six Irish Bahá’ís and five visiting Bahá’ís from Canada.

“The House” is one the local Spiritual Assembly has rented to accommodate the teachers.

“The Place” is a large empty room situated near “The Spot” which is used every evening for firesides attended by those at the coffee shop who express an interest in the Faith.

Each afternoon the Bahá’ís teach in public places. These activities include singing and playing guitar at “The Spot.” After dinner, team members and any inquirers met during the day gather at “The Place” for a fireside-concert until around 10 p.m.

Among recent highlights was a concert by three American Indians who sang and danced. The audience of about 250 responded by standing and chanting, “We want peace! We want peace!”
Germany

Twenty-six Bahá'ís from France, Italy, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and United States joined Bahá'í communities in West Berlin, Germany, in proclamation and teaching activities among East Germans last December-January 2.

The cultural diversity of the friends strongly attracted the thousands of people who were contacted in East Germany. More than 50,000 copies of an abbreviated version of the peace statement were given out with other materials at the four major border check-points in West Berlin and at the Brandenburg Gate. Countless interviews with visitors from East Germany seemed to provide a clear signal of receptivity to the Faith.

During the Bahá'í Youth Winter School in Traben-Trarbach, 200 participants from 12 countries including East Germany, Romania, Hungary and the Soviet Union gathered for the first time since World War II. Each day, the group consulted on the challenges and new possibilities for serving the Cause in Eastern Europe. Of the 20 non-Bahá'ís who attended the school, three were later enrolled in the Faith.

Kenya

Six hundred-fifty people attended the Bahá'í-sponsored “Africa for Peace” festival last December 8-10 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Joining Bahá'ís from Kenya, Madagascar, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda at the festival were Counsellor Peter Vuyiya of the International Teaching Centre; Counsellors for Africa Oloro Epyeru and Hizzaya Hissani; and 16 Auxiliary Board members.

The festival was opened by a representative of Kenya's Ministry of Culture and Social Services. Thirty-five musical groups took part including two outstanding non-Bahá'í choirs. El Viento Canta, a traveling Bahá'í musical group, also performed, adding charm and joy to the occasion.

Guyana

A three-year plan begun last May 1 in Guyana and aimed at entry by troops has led so far to the enrollment of more than 2,300 new believers in that country.

Africa/Austria

El Viento Canta (The Singing Wind), a group of Bahá'ís whose musical performances have thrilled audiences throughout Europe, recently toured Africa, performing in Botswana, Kenya, Liberia and Uganda last December and leaving behind them large numbers of new believers and interested seekers.

The group performed for about 200 people in Maru'a’Pula, Botswana, closing with a song from Venezuela that featured audience participation. They were given a standing ovation amid cries of “More! More!”

Four days later they appeared at a festival in Nairobi, Kenya, where the headmaster of a school became a Bahá'í, saying he wished to tell his whole school about the Faith and make all the students as well as his own children “sons of peace.”

The music of El Viento Canta draws people's attention, and the group introduces the principles of the Faith between songs. By the final evening of the Nairobi festival, five people had embraced the Cause.

On December 11, the group had an opportunity to meet and perform for the ambassadors to Kenya from Canada, Israel, Mexico and Switzerland.

The Mexican ambassador invited the musicians to a party at his home. While there, they were photographed by a reporter from a popular magazine and made appointments for interviews with two radio personalities. During the party several people asked to hear more about the Faith, and an impromptu fireside ensued.

During a side trip to Uganda, one of the members of the group was detained by police for taking a photograph in an area which, unknown to the Bahá'í, was restricted.

When the chief officer at the local police station heard that the man was a Bahá'í, he told the arresting officer, “Let him go. He is a Bahá'í.”

On December 22 the group appeared on national television in Monrovia, Liberia. During the interview they were asked about the purpose of their visit to Liberia, which led to questions about the Faith.

On December 28, El Viento Canta performed with other Bahá'í musicians including Marvin (Doc) Holladay, a jazz saxophonist from the United States, at a music festival in Liberia.

At the close of the African tour, the group was told that it should return to Europe to tour the Eastern Bloc countries. They found a photographer to take photos for their new visas, and while he worked he spoke of their concerts and how much they had affected him. Before the musicians left his studio, the photographer had asked to be enrolled in the Faith.

El Viento Canta (The Singing Wind), a group of young Bahá'ís who perform traditional Latin American music, gave an impromptu concert January 9 at the Hazíratu’l-Quds in Vienna, Austria, for Bahá'ís and about 35 of their guests.

The following day, the group performed in Oberwart for a group of Roman people. About 30 attended, and some returned the next day for another performance for an audience of about 200. Part of that concert was filmed by Austrian television, and a radio interview was held before the performance.

On January 12 El Viento Canta began the next leg of its European tour, leaving for Zagreb, Yugoslavia, where they were interviewed on television for 30 minutes and performed for an audience of 600. After the concert, 70 copies of Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era were given out, and two people became Bahá'ís.

The singing group's name was taken from the Spanish version of a song by pioneer Phyllis Day which says, “The wind is singing in the mountains . . . that the Promised One, Bahá'u'lláh, has come.” El Viento Canta was formed while all of the members were serving together at the World Centre in Haifa, Israel.

Italy

The Russian Consul in Italy, Anver Starkov, was given copies of the peace statement in English and Italian during a luncheon in his honor on the occasion of an exhibit of Russian culture held recently in Montichiari, Italy.

The gift was warmly received by the consul and his wife, and the Bahá'í who presented it was thanked in the presence of the guests.
Papua New Guinea

The Bahá’í women of Lae, Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea, in collaboration with the Morobe Women’s Association, organized a recent week-long conference in Lae.

Topics such as “Law and Order,” “Literacy,” “Women and the Environment,” “Customs and Culture,” “Women in Decision-Making” and other current issues were discussed in morning sessions with the Bahá’í point of view on each presented, while afternoon sessions included practical demonstrations of such skills as baking, drum oven building, sewing, bookkeeping, compost making and others.

Margaret Nakikas Namaliu, wife of the prime minister of Papua New Guinea, and Mrs. Bungtabu Brown, president of the National Council of Women, were among the more than 100 women attending the conference, which was covered widely by the media.

Germany

The anniversary of the Birth of Bahá’u’lláh was celebrated last November 12 with an historic reunion of the Bahá’ís of East and West Berlin.

The celebration was planned originally as a major public meeting in West Berlin by the nine local Spiritual Assemblies in that area.

When the Berlin Wall was declared open on November 9, the Bahá’ís of West Berlin immediately extended an invitation to the friends in the eastern part of the city to join them.

An estimated 200 people, Bahá’ís and others from both East and West Berlin, including at least 40 non-Bahá’ís from East Berlin, gathered for the public celebration on November 12.

They gave thanks for the uniqueness of this time in history, with the opening of the Wall symbolizing the growth of trust and understanding among the nations of Europe and the world.

The 25th anniversary of the dedication of the European Bahá’í House of Worship in Langenhain, Germany, was celebrated with a series of events, the last of which took place November 10 at the city hall in Hofheim, near Langenhain.

An estimated 600 people gathered in Hofheim for a concert by two large choirs and a chamber orchestra of about 100 musicians who performed works by Bach, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Kaminsky. The concert was co-sponsored by the city council of Hofheim and the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany.

Among the speakers was Rolf Felix, the mayor of Hofheim, who commended the Bahá’ís for their vision of world peace and expressed a wish that the Bahá’í House of Worship might serve as an example of world peace for many people.

The Chaplains’ Board of the American Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) has approved for worldwide broadcast to U.S. military personnel and their families a series of one-minute video tapes entitled “Peace Talks.”

The series was produced by the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska and introduced to AFRTS by the Bahá’í Committee for English-Speaking Friends in Germany.

World Centre

The Universal House of Justice recently appointed the first European Bahá’í Youth Council consisting of seven young Bahá’ís who will coordinate those activities of European youth that have a continental impact.

In addition to that duty, the Council will assist and advise the Continental Board of Counsellors, National Spiritual Assemblies and National Bahá’í Youth Committees on matters related to Bahá’í youth activities.

The Council will also send representatives to non-Bahá’í youth groups and other agencies on the continent.

The Council held its first meeting last November 4-6 in London, England.

Bangladesh

After consulting with Counsellor Burháni-Din Afshin, the Bahá’ís of Bangladesh recently launched five regional teaching projects.

Since then the Rajshahi region has reported 700 new believers and seven new local Spiritual Assemblies, while in the Khulna region 3,650 new Bahá’ís have been enrolled and 13 new Assemblies have been formed.
Macau

Two students from the School of the Nations, a Bahá'í-operated international school in Macau, were invited in January to take part in a Mandarin language contest in Zuhuai, China.

The first "Zuhuai-Macau Mandarin Language Contest" was sponsored by the Zuhuai-based academic association which promotes the use of Mandarin, China's national language, in that Cantonese-speaking area of China. The contest included adults, youth and children, nearly all of whom had come from various parts of China to work or study in Zuhuai or Macau. They demonstrated their fluency in Mandarin via speeches, recitations and songs.

About 1,500 local Chinese residents, mostly youth and children, attended the event which filled the Zuhuai Theatre to capacity. The contestants from the School of the Nations received an especially warm welcome, as they were the only non-Chinese taking part. Eight-year-old Serena Fuller and nine-year-old Donald Tennant, both children of pioneers from the U.S., gave short talks in Mandarin, followed by a Mandarin song with guitar accompaniment by Keith Barnes, a pioneer from Canada who is a teacher at the School of the Nations.

Other Bahá'í contestants were Chuck Fuller and Farzam Kamalabadi, two pioneers from the U.S. who have contributed greatly to the School of the Nations project. Mr. Kamalabadi's talk centered on themes conveyed in "The Promise of World Peace," while Mr. Fuller's light-hearted talk on "The Four Steps to Learning Mandarin" won first prize in the speech category.

Guam

Bahá'í women on Guam have formed a Bahá'í Women's Association as a step toward achieving the goals of the Six Year Plan. The purpose of the Association, as stated in its by-laws, is "promotion of the role of women in working for peace in the family, the community and the world through education, spiritual enrichment, investigation of the true significance of the equality of men and women, and through philanthropic and social service activities."

The contest was the most recent in a series of exciting developments at the School of the Nations. Of special note was a demonstration of support last November by the government of Macau, whose Department of Education awarded the school a $400,000 grant to expand into a new and larger facility to accommodate its growing enrollment.

To cope with the waiting list of parents who want to enroll their children in its bi-lingual Mandarin/English program, the school marked its second anniversary in January by opening an afternoon kindergarten session and building two additional classrooms in the primary school section.

Beginning next September, the existing location will house an expanded pre-school and kindergarten program, and the primary school will occupy the new location along with a secondary school that will be added at the rate of one grade level per year. Both facilities will be used to house the school's growing Centre for Continuing Education, an evening school program offering language classes, computer courses, and vocational training for adults and youth.

Peru

Members of the 'Raul Pavon Teaching Project,' held recently in Peru, are shown with the Mothers' Club of the rural community of Puno.

A number of Mothers' Clubs have asked for Bahá'í speakers.

Following the enrollment of 36 new Bahá'ís, the first phase of the Raul Pavon Teaching Project in Peru drew to a close with a number of exciting events taking place in communities near Radio Bahá'í.

The "Raul Pavon youth" had taken "serving the community" as their goal for the project. As a result of their efforts, the Government Tourist Agency and the town hall of Puno agreed to co-sponsor a city-wide clean-up campaign. Radio Bahá'í helped by holding interviews and presenting live reports as the activity progressed. The Raul Pavon youth and a teaching team from Radio Bahá'í sponsored a conference especially for young people from the nearby countryside. Ninety-eight non-Bahá'ís attended and took part in such discussions as "The Search of Today's Youth for a New Meaning of Life," "Why Do You Respond to Bahá'u'lláh?" "Who Is Bahá'u'lláh?" and "How We, As Youth, Can Establish World Peace."

After the conference, the young Bahá'ís spoke on the radio, calling on the people in the vicinity to "change with us."

As a result of the project, the headmasters at all the local schools have agreed to open their facilities for any activities planned by the Bahá'ís, and the schools' Mothers Clubs have asked for speakers on the Faith and related topics.
Germany

About 200 people of diverse backgrounds gathered last September 3 at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Langenhain, Germany, for a “Festival for Understanding Among Nations.”

Performances of music, classical dance and other arts were given by Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í artists from Greece, Iran, Turkey and Germany.

A special “International Worship Service” at the Temple, with prayers in many languages, contributed significantly to the success of the event.

Last September 10, about 250 people attended an interfaith worship service held to mark the 25th anniversary of the dedication of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Langenhain, Germany.

Two priests and a non-Bahá'í men's choir took part in the program, which included readings from the sacred texts of several religions and whose theme was “peace.”

Following the worship service a film about construction of the House of Worship was shown, after which the director of the men's choir and his wife embraced the Faith.

In September, 23 professors and doctors from the People's Republic of China spent an evening at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Langenhain, Germany.

Their visit was part of an official program organized by Hoechst Industries and the Chinese-German Medical Association. It included a banquet and a performance of classical German music by a string quartet.

A copy of the Chinese-English deluxe edition of The Hidden Words was presented to each of the guests.

Paraguay

A group of indigenous people was the first fruit of a weekend teaching campaign held September 23-24 in Paraguay.

On Saturday, members of the teaching team visited three ethnic groups who, despite having their own churches, invited the Bahá'ís to return the following day.

When team members returned, one group of Lengua people, 17 adults and 18 children including the chief, accepted the Faith at once.

The chief remarked as the Bahá'ís were leaving that he had traveled a long way the previous Friday, to Asuncion, to visit the Bahá'í National Center, “because I wanted to know you better.”

It was decided to make regular visits to the Lengua group as they want to learn more about the Faith in order to become active believers.

Suriname

Among the goals of the Six Year Plan in Suriname is teaching the Faith to the country's Chinese population. To help in that effort, Cheong Kong Wah (right) pioneered to Suriname from Malaysia. Here he helps teach a Chinese couple the Faith with help from Auxiliary Board member Marijke Van Lith (second from left).

The Netherlands

Ten Bahá'ís were among the 16,000 people who attended a recent "Churches Day" gathering sponsored by the Netherlands Council of Churches.

As most of those attending had never heard of the Faith, the event was a great opportunity for proclamation.

During a session on interreligious meetings, one of the Bahá'ís raised the question of whether it might be possible that all religions spring from one source. A Hindu answered, “Naturally. All religions can come only from one Source—the Creator.”

In a workshop entitled “Men and Power,” on the inequality between men and women, there was much arguing among the men and women present.

When a Bahá'í took her turn at the microphone, she spoke for 10 minutes explaining the Bahá'í principle of the equality of men and women, and emphasizing the importance of the woman as educator of the new generation. She said she was happy to have an opportunity to encourage the men as well as women, and urged the men to support and stimulate the women in their development.

Her talk was greeted by a large round of applause from the audience and created much happiness in the session.

United States

The video production “Peace... The Promise” has been chosen as a finalist, from among more than 3,000 entries from more than 30 countries, in the annual International Film and Television Festival in New York City.
Nigeria

Three teaching campaigns held last October in Nigeria led to the enrollment of 964 new believers.

During the Samuel Bakare Project in Oghara, Bendel State, from October 16-20, 142 people were enrolled.

After nine days of teaching in the Ikwerre and Ihie areas, the Bahá'ís enrolled 111 people and formed seven new local Spiritual Assemblies.

Following these two projects a National Teaching Conference was held, from which 18 Bahá'ís traveled to Omu-Aran, where the Elizabeth Gibson Kwara Teaching Project was under way. When it was over on November 5, 711 new believers had been enrolled and 25 new Assemblies formed.

Thailand

Following a National Youth Camp last October at Saraburi, Thailand, 13 Bahá'í youth went on a two-day teaching trip organized by the National Teaching Committee. They visited Nakorn Rajsima, enrolling 423 new believers.

Among the new Bahá'ís were seven police personnel, seven nursing students, two teachers at a primary school, 148 students at Suam Mon School, and some of those involved in a sports program at the local stadium.

Some of the youth met with a man and his wife who own the Mahachon Business News and established an excellent rapport with them.

The woman had worked for Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 17 years and had lived for more than two years in Iran. She offered one of her vacant houses to the Bahá'ís for their use during future visits, and was delighted to hear that the Bahá'ís planned to visit again soon.

Samoa

The National Spiritual Assembly of Samoa began an “Entry-by-Troops” teaching campaign last November 20 with the close collaboration of the Board of Counsellors and Auxiliary Boards.

By December, 1,144 people had declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh. More than 50 villages now have some 50-60 Bahá'ís each.

Transkei

Shown are those who gathered at the Enoch Olinga Bahá'í Center in Transkei for a recent conference for assistants to the Auxiliary Board. The conference was arranged by Auxiliary Board member Giti Rodhani. Counselor Lally Warren (left of center with tote bag) was the guest speaker.

India

Some 300 women have been enrolled in the Faith as a result of the Javanmardi Teaching Project in India.

Among the activities in Dhenkanal Town and nearby villages was a talk given at the Nurse Training Centre on “The Role of Women in Bringing Peace.” All of the women who attended that meeting later declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh.

Teaching continued in the Panchayat villages where the enrollment of more women brought the total to about 300. The enrollment of youth and children is also increasing.

The Bahá'í House of Worship in India continues to attract diverse groups of people.

In December the 12th Tai Sitppa, who is second in rank to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, visited the Temple, accompanied by three monks. He expressed his delight with its design, as the lotus is closely linked to Buddhism. He was given an information packet and escorted around the House of Worship by the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of India and staff members.

A group of 13 African students at Jawaharlal Nehru University, who also visited the Temple in December, suggested that a program be arranged at their school to teach the Bahá'í message. The idea was echoed by a professor from Hisar. Haryana, who visited with his students and suggested that the time is ripe for the Bahá'ís to meet with university administrators to give them the message, thereby allowing them to educate students with guidance based on the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

Also in December, several large groups of children visited the Temple, listened to the Bahá'í message and asked many questions about the Faith.

Hong Kong

who is a well-known actor, recently visited Hong Kong and was the guest on a popular radio talk show.

on a popular radio talk show.

Mr. Hinton spoke about his early days in South Africa, where he had become a Bahá’í 20 years ago, and of his acting career: with Britain's Royal Shakespeare Company. Eventually he went to Australia, where he appears on television and is an active member of the Bahá'í community.

16 April 1990/Bahá'í News
Australia

Two national Bahá'í conferences were held during the last week of December 1989 in Sydney, Australia.

One, a national Chinese Teaching Conference, was attended by Counsellor Suhayl Ala'i, four members of the National Spiritual Assembly, and 100 of the friends. Many new believers, mainly Chinese, were present.

As a result, a one-year intensive Cabramatta Teaching Project has been launched, directed toward ethnic minorities in the Sydney area. A Center has been rented to provide a base for the teaching activities. Since it was opened, 20 people have become Bahá'ís.

The second conference, called “New Models for Life,” was based on the 1989 Ridván message from the Universal House of Justice. Counsellor Ala'i, four members of the National Spiritual Assembly and four Auxiliary Board members were among the more than 700 Bahá'ís who attended including some from the Cocos Islands.

A separate conference for pre-youth was held simultaneously. Evening entertainment included performances by Bahá'ís and their guests are pictured at a fireside for Chinese seekers held at the home of a Bahá'í in Perth, Western Australia. Owing to the fervor created by a Chinese Teaching Conference last December, many new believers who are Chinese have joined in the teaching.

Jack Lenz and his son, Asher, from Canada, and Don Lewis, an Aborigine from Australia who performed on the harmonica, organ, guitar and didgeridoo.

The conference closed with a unity feast, and the following day many of the friends gathered for a barbecue. On that same day, two people declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh.

Togo

Lea Nys, a traveling teacher from Belgium, is pictured with General Gnassingbé Eyadema, Head of State of Togo, during a visit to his office in Lomé last November. Gen. Eyadema arranged for a Bahá'í booth at the International Trade Fair which he officially opened the following day.

Bophuthatswana

The Bahá'í community of Bophuthatswana held its first International Bahá'í Summer School last December 25-29 at the Pilanesberg National Game Reserve. Among the 263 people attending were friends from 11 nations, including one from as far away as Norway, and five Auxiliary Board members from Bophuthatswana and neighboring countries.

Sessions were dedicated to furthering the understanding of the process of entry by troops.

One of the highlights was a visit by the National Broadcasting Television Services (BOP-TV) whose producer and crew spent the better part of a day interviewing those at the school. They also filmed classes in progress and interviewed a four-member panel representing African, Iranian, American (both black and white) and male and female members of the Bahá'í community.
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To the Baha’is of the world

Dearly loved Friends,

Having ended a year of momentous achievements, we stand at the threshold of the last decade of this radiant twentieth century facing an immediate future of immense challenges and dazzling prospects. The swiftness of events during the past year is indicative of the acceleration, as the hundredth anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's Ascension approaches, of the spiritual forces released with the advent of His revolutionizing mission. It is an acceleration which, in its suddenness and wide transformational impact on social thought and on political entities, has aroused feelings of delight as to its immediate effects and of bewilderment as to its real meaning and destined outcome, prompting the astonished editors of an outstanding newspaper, finding themselves bereft of explanations, to attribute it to the workings of an "Invisible Hand."

For the followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the world there can be no doubt as to the Divine Source and clear intention of these extraordinary happenings. Let us rejoice, therefore, in the wondrous signs of the beneficence of God's abounding grace. The high level of teaching and enrollments reported last Ridván has been sustained, and new fields of teaching have been opened from Eastern Europe to the China Sea. With the settlement in recent weeks of two Knights of Bahá'u'lláh in Sakhalin Island, the last remaining territory named by Shoghi Effendi in his Ten Year Global Plan entered the Bahá'í fold. The re-creation last Ridván of the local Spiritual Assembly of Ishqábád, the recent election of that of Cluj in Romania, the first new Assembly in the "East Bloc," the re-establishment and formation this Ridván of local Spiritual Assemblies in other parts of the Soviet Union and in other countries of Eastern Europe—all these achievements and immediate prospects affirm our arrival at a significant milestone in the fourth epoch of the Formative Age. The Administrative Order now embraces a community of wider diversity than ever before. It is such prodigious developments that prompted our recent announcement of a subsidiary Two Year Teaching Plan, now formally launched, to which we commend your urgent and active attention.

How staggering, how far-reaching have been the activities which propelled the community in one short year toward this stage in its evolution! As we reflect on the wonders of Bahá'u'lláh's confirmations, our hearts turn with love and appreciation to the Hands of the Cause of God everywhere, who, as the standard-bearers of that community, have ever upheld its bright emblems against the darkness of the times. With an indomitable spirit they persevere in fulfilling, under all circumstances and wherever they may be, their God-given tasks to stimulate, edify and advise its widely scattered, rapidly multiplying members. In the face of the new situation in the Bahá'í world, we take joy in mentioning some instances in the past year of association of Hands of the Cause with the developments in Europe and Asia. Ama­tu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum, in an extended journey to the Far East, represented the Universal House of Justice at the formation of the National Spiritual Assembly of Macau; spent time with the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh in Mongolia where subsequently the first native declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh; and devoted much attention to the friends in different parts of the People's Republic of China, where her film "The Green Light Expedition" has been shown on television. Mr. Collis Featherstone focused much energy on re-invigorating the long-suffering friends in war-ravaged Vietnam. At this very moment, Mr. 'Ali-Akbar Furutan is visiting the USSR, which he was forced to leave during the persecution of the Faith there; now he has returned in triumphant fulfillment of a wish expressed to him by our beloved Guardian some 60 years ago.

Nor have the Counsellors members of the International Teaching Centre been slow in responding to opportunities to foster the climate of progress now evident in all quarters of the globe. Through the unified vision of growth to which they have called the Continental Boards of Counsellors and their able, hard-working and self-sacrificing auxiliaries, a new vitality can be felt in the expansion and consolidation of the Faith throughout the world. The Continental Counsellors deserve the deep gratitude of the entire Bahá'í community as they approach the close of their current five-year term, distinguished for their outstanding services.

Just as the community has extended its ramifications internally, it has also expanded its relations, influence and appeal externally in a variety of ways, some astonishing in their breadth and potential. A few examples will suffice: Through the newly established Office of the Environment, the Bahá'í International Community, on its own initiative and in collaboration with other environmental organizations, re-instituted the annual World Forestry Charter Gathering founded in 1945 by the renowned Richard St. Barbe Baker; since then the Office of the Environment has been invited to participate in important events sponsored by international organizations concerned with environmental questions. The Bahá'í International Community has been involved in the work of the Task Force for Literacy under the aegis of UNESCO and was invited to participate in the World Conference on Education for All held in Thailand, where its representative was asked to assume a variety of
highly visible and important tasks which gave prominence to the Bahá'í community. Steps were taken, with the encouragement of a senior government official, to open in Suva a branch of the Bahá'í International Community's United Nations office for the Pacific region. The University of Maryland in the United States announced its decision to establish "The Bahá'í Chair for World Peace" in its Center for International Development and Conflict Management, which will give rise to a great increase in academic efforts to examine the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. At almost the same time the National Spiritual Assembly of India announced that an agreement had been reached to establish a Chair for Bahá'í Studies at the University of Indore.

The continuing efforts to secure the emancipation of the Bahá'ís of Iran evolved to a new stage. For the first time, a United Nations representative was able officially to meet on Iranian soil with a representative of the proscribed Bahá'í community. The result was recorded in a report to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, at whose recent session in Geneva a resolution on Iran mentioning the Bahá'ís was again adopted. In a corollary action of far-reaching importance, the United States House of Representatives unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the emancipation of the Iranian Bahá'í community and outlining steps to be taken by the United States government toward this end; a similar resolution is before the Senate.

In the Holy Land, preparations for the execution of the building projects on Mount Carmel received a definite boost. It is a cause of deep satisfaction that, on the eve of Naw-Rúz, the District Town Planning Commission, after delicate and complex negotiations, decided to approve the plan submitted by the Bahá'í World Centre. This paves the way for the ultimate issuance of building permits.

Beloved friends: Merely two years separate us from the conclusion of the Six Year Plan and the beginning at Ridván 1992 of the Holy Year, that special time when we shall pause to appreciate the tumultuous record of events which will have brought us to the Centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh and to reflect with due solemnity upon the redemptive purpose of the life of the most precious Being ever to have drawn breath on this planet.

In anticipation of this high watermark in Bahá'í history, plans have been set in motion for two major world events: one, the gathering in the Holy Land of a wide representation of believers from around the globe to participate in a befitting commemoration of that poignant consummation in the vicinity of the Most Holy Shrine. A component of this commemoration, symbolic of the transcendent and victorious influence of Bahá'u'lláh's liberated Spirit, will be the depositing beneath the floor at the entrance door of His Shrine of a receptacle containing the illuminated Roll of Honor of the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, a listing initiated by Shoghi Effendi during his Ten Year Plan of those intrepid souls who arose to conquer in the Name of their Lord virgin territories mentioned in that Plan. This will have brought to a fitting conclusion, after nearly four decades, an intention expressed by the beloved Guardian himself. The living Knights of Bahá'u'lláh will be invited to witness this occurrence.

The other event will be the Bahá'í World Congress to celebrate the centennial of the inauguration of the Covenant bequeathed to posterity by Bahá'u'lláh as the sure means of safeguarding the unity and integrity of His world-embracing Order. It is to be convened in November 1992 in New York, the place designated as the City of the Covenant by Him Who is its appointed Center and Who anticipated that "New York will become a blessed spot from which the call to steadfastness in the Covenant and Testament of God will go forth to every part of the world."

Related events at the local and national levels will combine with these two primary occasions to give vent to the innermost sentiments of the Bahá'ís and to impress on the public the profound fact of the appearance in the world of the Lord of the Covenant and the aims and achievements of His sublime mission. Indeed, plans are in progress to mount an intensive campaign to emblazon His Name across the globe.

The friends everywhere must now orient themselves to the significance of these twin anniversaries. They must be spiritually prepared through prayer and study of the Teachings to obtain a deeper appreciation of the station and purpose of Bahá'u'lláh and of the basic meaning of His mighty Covenant. Such preparation is at the very core of their striving to effect a transformation in their individual and collective lives.

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Mount Carmel the construction of the Terraces of the Shrine of the Bab and the remaining buildings on the Arc of the World Administrative Center of the Faith. The one calls for resolute, sustained and confident action on the part of the individual believer. The other requires a liberal outpouring of funds. Both are intimately related.

Over the last two years, almost one million souls entered the Cause. The increasing instances of entry by troops in different places contributed to that growth, drawing attention to Shoghi Effendi’s vision which shapes our perception of glorious future possibilities in the teaching field. For he has asserted that the process of “entry by troops of divers nations and races into the Bahá’í world...will be the prelude to that long-awaited hour when a mass conversion on the part of these same nations and races, and as a direct result of a chain of events, momentous and possibly catastrophic in nature, and which cannot as yet be even dimly visualized, will suddenly revolutionize the fortunes of the Faith, derange the equilibrium of the world, and reinforce a thousandfold the numerical strength as well as the material power and the spiritual authority of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh.” We have every encouragement to believe that large-scale enrollments will expand, involving village after village, town after town, from one country to another. However, it is not for us to wait passively for the ultimate fulfillment of Shoghi Effendi’s vision. We few, placing our whole trust in the providence of God and regarding as a divine privilege the challenges which face us, must proceed to victory with the plans in hand.

An expansion of thought and action in certain aspects of our work would enhance our possibilities for success in meeting our aforementioned commitments. Since change, ever more rapid change, is a constant characteristic of life at this time, and since our growth, size and external relations demand much of us, our community must be ready to adapt. In a sense this means that the community must become more adept at accommodating a wide range of actions without losing concentration on the primary objectives of teaching, namely, expansion and consolidation. A unity in diversity of actions is called for, a condition in which different individuals will concentrate on different activities, appreciating the salutary effect of the aggregate on the growth and development of the Faith, because each person cannot do everything and all persons cannot do the same thing. This understanding is important to the maturity which, by the many demands being made upon it, the community is being forced to attain.

The Order brought by Bahá’u’lláh is intended to guide the progress and resolve the problems of society. Our numbers are as yet too small to effect an adequate demonstration of the potentialities inherent in the administrative system we are building, and the efficacy of this system will not be fully appreciated without a vast expansion of our membership. With the prevailing situation in the world the necessity to effect such a demonstration becomes more compelling. It is all too obvious that even those who rail against the defects of the old order, and would even tear it down, are themselves bereft of any viable alternative to put in its place. Since the Administrative Order is designed to be a pattern for future society, the visibility of such a pattern will be a signal of hope to those who despair.

Thus far, we have achieved a marvelous diversity in the large numbers of ethnic groups represented in the Faith, and everything should be done to fortify it through larger enrollments from among groups already represented and the attraction of members from groups not yet reached. However, there is another category of diversity which must be built up and without which the Cause will not be able adequately to meet the challenges being thrust upon it. Its membership, regardless of ethnic variety, needs now to embrace increasing numbers of people of capacity, including persons of accomplishment and prominence in the various fields of human endeavor. Enrolling significant numbers of such persons is an indispensable aspect of teaching the masses, an aspect which cannot any longer be neglected and which must be consciously and deliberately incorporated into our teaching work, so as to broaden its base and accelerate the process of entry by troops. So important and timely is the need for action on this matter that we are impelled to call upon Continental Counsellors and National Spiritual Assemblies to devote serious attention to it in their consultations and plans.

The affairs of mankind have reached a stage at which increasing calls will be made upon our community to assist, through advice and practical measures, in solving critical social problems. It is a service that we will gladly render, but this means that our local and National Spiritual Assemblies must adhere more scrupulously to principle. With increasing public attention being focused on the Cause of God, it becomes imperative for Bahá’í institutions to improve their performance, through a closer identification with the fundamental verities of the Faith, through greater conformity to the spirit and form of Bahá’í administration, and through a keener reliance on the beneficial effects of proper consultation, so that the communities they guide will reflect a pattern of life that will offer hope to the disillusioned members of society.

That there are indications that the Lesser Peace cannot be too far distant, that the local and national institutions of the Administrative Order are growing steadily in experience and influence, that the plans for the construction of the remaining administrative edifices on the Arc are in an advanced stage—that these hopeful conditions make more discernible the shaping of the dynamic synchronization envisaged by Shoghi Effendi, no honest observer can deny.

As a community clearly in the vanguard of the constructive forces at work on the planet, and as one which has access to proven knowledge, let us be about our Father’s business. He will, from His glorious retreats on high, release liberal effusions of His grace upon our humble efforts, astonishing us with the incalculable victories of His conquering power. It is for the unceasing blessings of such a Father that we shall continue to supplicate on behalf of each and every one of you at the Sacred Threshold.

The Universal House of Justice  
Riḍván 1990
The United States

San Francisco hosts Chinese Symposium

"Reaching the Chinese: The Time Is Now" was the topic of spirited consultation March 29-April 1 during the Bahá'í International Chinese Symposium at the Bahá'í Center in San Francisco, California.

Nearly 400 people including some 50 of Chinese heritage representing nine countries and 24 states gathered in the spacious auditorium at the Center to take a close look at the Chinese and their culture, discuss teaching Chinese both inside and outside of mainland China, and inspire a sense of urgency among one another to act now, while the doors are open.

In a message to the Symposium, the Universal House of Justice wrote:

"These are momentous times in the fortunes of mankind...times of rapid and far-reaching global change which gives rise to fundamental questions of concern about the social order in which we all live.

"All over the world, but particularly in China, our contemporaries are searching for answers to these questions. This searching appears to have generated a new kind of receptivity which recognizes in the Teachings the basic principles which are at once timely, relevant and compelling.

"The conjunction of this receptivity with the presence of thousands of Chinese in your midst presents an opportunity for teaching that may never recur in your lifetime.

"The time is now."

Among the special guests at the Symposium was a retired member of the House of Justice, David Hofman, who shared stories of his recent travels through Macau, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Mr. Hofman pointed out that the Chinese people have a rich and varied history and culture and share a philosophy that is remarkably similar in many respects to the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

Teaching successes from around the world were shared by Bahá'í pioneers where efforts to reach Chinese outside the People's Republic of China are having a noteworthy effect.

Those addressing the topic included Sabrina Townsend, who recently came to the U.S. from Hong Kong; Donald Tennant from Macau; Charles Pau, a member of the International Chinese Teaching Committee who has been teaching in Singapore and Australia; Kit Yin Kiang from Taiwan; and representatives of the National Chinese Teaching Committee of Canada who reported about recent activities in Vancouver, British Columbia.

In a moving session on Friday morning, 11 Chinese Bahá'ís spoke about how they had become Bahá'ís and what had attracted them to the Faith.

They were drawn to the Cause, most said, because of the unity of the Bahá'ís as well as by the social principles and the teachings on world peace.

Their stories reinforced the sentiments expressed in a letter to the Symposium from the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Ruhiyyih Khánum in which she urged the friends to remember that "this great race (the Chinese) comes from an entirely different historic background outside the Judeo-Christian-Muslim line of world religions, and the appeal to their very logical minds and different historic and cultural background should be from their point of view and not the one we are used to in the Western Hemisphere and Europe."

Speakers, panelists and workshop facilitators at the Symposium represented the Boards of Counsellors and Auxiliary Boards of Asia and the Americas; the U.S. National Spiritual...
David Hofman (left photo), retired member of the Universal House of Justice, addresses the Chinese Symposium. Among the performers were singer/dancer Zhu Ming Ying (center) and the Pacific Zheng Ensemble.

Assembly; the Bahá'í Committee for China appointed by the Universal House of Justice; the International Chinese Teaching Committee; the Bahá'í International Community; the National Teaching Committees of Canada and the U.S.; and many present and former pioneers and traveling teachers who lived in or traveled through China or other countries with large Chinese populations.

Also attending were members of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Ecuador, Macau, Singapore, Suriname and Thailand.

Plenary sessions included talks on the development of the Cause in China and offered a wealth of ideas about how to reach the Chinese outside of mainland China.

"Understanding the Chinese People and Culture" was the topic of a talk by Charles Pau of Singapore who also spoke on "The Vision of Chinese Teaching Outside Mainland China."

Mr. Pau referred to a letter from the Universal House of Justice to the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly, read to the Symposium by Judge James Nelson, vice-chairman of the National Assembly, which suggested that one of the best opportunities to contact Chinese in America is in the universities where one can reach those who will return to China to become that country's most influential citizens.

Lori McLaughlin, a former student in mainland China now at Cornell University, reiterated that point in a talk entitled "The Role of Youth in Reaching the Chinese."

She noted from experience that young people in China are struggling to find answers to their country's problems, but that many who look to the U.S. to find those solutions are disappointed.

"Bahá'í youth," she said, "can offer the greatest gift (to the Chinese), the solutions they are seeking."

"One way to reach the Chinese youth is to study the Chinese language in school and go to China to continue your education. Any field can be researched or studied in China."

Farzam Kamalabadi, a member of the Bahá'í Committee for China, spoke on "The Bahá'í Faith and China," and later outlined some of the many ways in which Bahá'ís can use the mass media, especially the many
Chinese-language newspapers around the world, to reach the Chinese population.

Andy Sham of the U.S. National Teaching Committee spoke on "Teaching Chinese People in the United States" and introduced the recently approved Chinese teaching and declaration card.

Sandra Hutchinson of Canada, who has traveled extensively in China, spoke on "Establishing Chinese Teaching Networks," pointing out that one of the best ways to form a network of Chinese friends is "to begin with the Chinese person most available to you. In becoming close to that one person, you will have many Chinese friends before you know it."

A slide program by Roland Yazhari depicted some of his many trips to mainland China.

Panel discussions included those on "Differences and Similarities Between Chinese Inside and Outside of Mainland China" and "Teaching Chinese in Universities."

Panelists for the first of these were Rosalie Tran, Kit Yin Kiang, former residents in China John Skeaff and Deborah Todd, and Victor Greenspoon, a pioneer to Thailand.

Taking part in the second panel were Jene Brusen-Bellows, who has traveled in China and taught in several Asian countries as well as in colleges in the U.S.; Barry Shapiro, a former pioneer to Africa who is active in Chinese teaching at Purdue University; and Lori McLaughlin.

Both panels were followed by an open mike dialogue between panelists and the audience.

Workshop sessions presented opportunities for consultation on a variety of topics. One of them, on the first Sino-American Conference on Women’s Issues, to be held next June in Beijing, was conducted by Juana Conrad, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly who is on the conference steering committee and will be taking part in the event itself.

Meanwhile, Barbara Sellars, chairman of the Asia-Pacific Islander Cultural Awareness Training Committee in Fresno and secretary of the board of directors of Fresno Refugee Services, conducted a workshop on Southeast Asian Bahá’í refugees.

Other sessions addressed such topics as reaching Chinese on college campuses and teaching experiences of Bahá’ís in China and Macau.

On Saturday evening, about 300 Chinese from the San Francisco area were guests at a gala "Tribute to Chinese Culture" at the Bahá’í Center.

Following the program, many of these guests attended a reception at...
which 11 people including nine Chinese embraced the Cause.

The program itself included performances by Zhu Ming Ying, a singer-dancer from mainland China now living in Boston who in 1989 won China's first-ever Gold Record Award; the Pacific Zheng Ensemble from San Francisco; a Bahá'í children's choir from the Bay area led by Ron and Carol Lyles of San Mateo; Elaine Wu, former soloist with the Central Philharmonic Society in Beijing; Lilian Wu, a Bahá'í from San Francisco who is a well-known pianist and former recitalist with the BBC; and the Chinese Folk Dance Association of San Francisco which performed a traditional dance from Mongolia and a fan dance in the Anhui, Shantang and Yunnan styles.

The Chinese Symposium was well-covered by the media with articles in four Chinese-language newspapers and programs on two television stations whose audience is predominantly Chinese.

A video tape of the Chinese cultural evening was requested by a local Chinese-language TV station, to be aired as a one-hour special dubbed in Chinese.

On the day the Symposium opened, a press conference and luncheon was held in Chinatown at which Mr. Hofman, Rosalie Tran of the Hong Kong Office of Public Information, Mr. Kamalabadi and Mr. Kiang explained that the Symposium was being held to promote an understanding of the Chinese culture and to establish friendships among Chinese and Americans.

The Chinese Symposium ended at noon on Sunday, after which about 270 Bahá'ís and Southeast Asian guests from the Bay area were brought by bus to the Center for a Southeast Asian Bahá'í Conference.

It was reported that nine of the Southeast Asians accepted the Faith while en route to the conference, which was a reunion for many of them as well as an opportunity to greet and to hear from Mr. Hofman who gave an especially warm welcome to the many children seated on the floor at the front of the room.

At the close of the conference, which was conducted in English, Hmong, Khmer, Lao and Vietnamese, several of those who had taken part in the weekend's events remained in San Francisco to continue teaching efforts that had begun several weeks before the Symposium under the guidance of the Metro 1000 Project Committee.

As of the opening of the Symposium the teachers had reported 31 declarations, a number that has since risen to at least 54 including 13 Chinese and 17 Southeast Asians.
On cutting edge of ‘entry by troops’

Ellen Widmer, a U.S. pioneer to Guyana who serves as an Auxiliary Board member in that country, spoke recently to staff at the U.S. Bahá’í National Center in Wilmette, Illinois, about teaching victories in Guyana’s Muhájur Project.

“When I arrived in Guyana, in 1969,” she said, “there were 110 Bahá’ís in the entire country. At the end of 1989, there were 22,000. And as a result of the Muhájur Project, 11,000 new believers have been enrolled in the past three months.”

This means that, with a total population of 750,000, more than four percent of Guyana’s citizens are now Bahá’ís.

About a year and a half ago, said Mrs. Widmer, the Universal House of Justice asked the Continental Board of Counsellors in the Americas to suggest a country that was ready for a campaign to initiate entry by troops.

Specifically, it was looking for a country whose government had a good relationship with the Bahá’í community and whose people would benefit greatly from the increased participation of the Bahá’ís in the affairs of the community at large.

Guyana was chosen, and the Muhájur Project came into being, coordinated by the Counsellors.

Following a week of orientation, Counsellors Eloy Anello and Peter McLaren chose 26 full-time teachers to serve on the project, looking specifically for those to whom unity and obedience were paramount. They also concentrated on creating a balance among projectees as to sex, age and cultural background, as well as balancing the number of native and non-native teachers.

“One of the most important factors in our success, I believe,” said Mrs. Widmer, “was that we took the time to clarify our vision of ‘entry by troops.’

We talked about our fears and perceived obstacles and what steps we could take to overcome them.”

An initial goal, she said, was “to identify receptive villages, but we soon found that every village was receptive.

“The people were so ready to hear the Message that they were offended if teachers did not stop at their house. Some even said they had dreamt of the visit, and said they had been waiting eagerly for the friends to arrive.”

The next step in the campaign was to revisit the homes of those who had accepted the Cause and teach their families.

Next, the groups approached leaders and people of influence in each village to enlist their support and help in reaching the people. As a result, the leader of one Buddhist temple became a Bahá’í.

Within four weeks, Mrs. Widmer said, 26 Guyanese had arisen to join the project while all over the country, new Bahá’ís were arising to serve.

The Bahá’í community, which was growing so rapidly that in one locality the only place large enough to hold the Feast was a local ballpark, soon found itself looked to by the community at large for help with many of the social problems it was facing.

“The people are quite concerned about the moral decline of the youth,” said Mrs. Widmer. “So the Bahá’ís have begun teaching classes in morals for children. The classes are so large, numbering about 200 each, that we are restricted in the activities we can offer. But the children learn songs and prayers and The Hidden Words.”

Classes also were started for mothers, but before long the men in the villages wanted to learn about health care and educating children, so now the classes are called couples’ classes.

As a result of these and other activities, the Bahá’ís in Guyana have been catapulted from obscurity and are having a nationwide impact. In fact, the president of Guyana has asked for a meeting with the National Spiritual Assembly to consult on the future of Guyana.

Already, the government has decided to introduce a new curriculum in public schools to teach moral values, and is considering using the Mother’s Books published by the National Spiritual Assembly of Kenya as a guide in developing that curriculum.

Other nationwide projects receiving help from the Bahá’í community, said Mrs. Widmer, include a medical project, a literacy program, and the prime minister’s anti-drug campaign.

Last year the prime minister addressed a Bahá’í youth conference in Guyana, saying that the most effective thing the young Bahá’ís could do to help other youth would be to teach the Faith as much as possible.

The Bahá’í community in Guyana is achieving its great success despite a lack of material advantages that many countries might take for granted. The greatest need, said Mrs. Widmer, is for written materials (in English), especially children’s books and the Bahá’í Writings.

“The House of Justice,” she said, “designed this project as a pilot to be replicated around the world.

“It has been successful,” she concluded, “because of the power of Bahá’u’llah.”
Ecuador

Radio professionals at IBAVC Seminar

The third Bahá’í Radio Seminar sponsored by the International Bahá’í Audio-Visual Centre (IBAVC) was held last November 25-December 5 in Cumbaya, Ecuador.

The Radio Seminar has become an important yearly event for IBAVC, an agency brought into being by the Universal House of Justice and responsible to it. IBAVC oversees all Bahá’í media work around the world. There are presently Bahá’í radio stations in seven countries: Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Liberia, Panama, Peru and the United States. Each of these countries was represented at the conference as were four countries who do not as yet have Bahá’í radio stations: Canada, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico and Venezuela.

The seminar, whose purpose was to encourage the radio stations to establish strong bonds of fellowship and to stimulate an exchange of ideas among them, was held in a charming old Spanish-style building used as a school and retreat by Catholic nuns. The conference theme was teaching, and the focus for participants was on how to increase the use of radio to support the teaching work, especially the plans of the various National Spiritual Assemblies.

For the first time, African believers took part in a Radio Seminar—two members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Liberia represented Radio Bahá’í in that country. It marked the first time that every country with a Bahá’í radio station was represented by at least one indigenous Bahá’í.

Another significant aspect was the number of women participating. Two station coordinators are women, and more women than ever before are serving as announcers, programmers and producers. Also, this was the first time that the recently appointed Latin American Radio Advisory Committee was introduced to radio station personnel. The committee is to provide technical assistance to the five Latin American radio stations. . . this was the first time that the recently appointed Latin American Radio Advisory Committee was introduced to radio station personnel. The committee is to provide technical assistance to the five Latin American radio stations.

Among the 60 people attending the seminar were three members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for the Americas: Eloy Anello, Isabel de Calderón and Ruth Pringle; five Auxiliary Board members; and three members of the IBAVC: Kurt Hein, Dean Stephens and Donald Witzel who served as coordinators of the seminar.

Among the highlights was a visit to the grave of the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatulláh Muhájjir. There were presentations during the seminar on the vision of teaching and radio from the perspective of the Hands of the Cause Dr. Muhájjir and Enoch Ollinga, and Counsellor Raúl Pavón.

The last evening of the seminar was a festival of cultural presentations of dance, song and other expressions of cultural identity—it was a joyful event and a fitting climax to this enlightening conference.

The IBAVC, which convened the seminar, has members in various parts of the world. It has no office but has a secretariat, presently situated in Toronto, Canada, which oversees communication between the World Centre and the committee and its divisions, and with other agencies, Bahá’í and non-Bahá’í. In addition to the secretariat, the IBAVC has four divisions:

- The Media Materials Division, which keeps track of the production of video talks, cassette tapes, films and slide programs produced around the world, and gathers, markets and distributes media materials to all countries, arranges for translations, etc. The division’s Video Service Office is presently in Toronto, with one staff member, while the distribution office for scripts and audio tapes is supervised by Susan McLaren in Maracaibo, Venezuela.

- The Media Promotion and Training Division, which guides and assists National Spiritual Assemblies and is considered by the committee to be the heart and soul of the work mandated by the Universal House of Justice. The division is directed by Randie Gottlieb in Puerto Rico.

- The Program Production and Assistance Division, which was created recently to help countries that need such technical advice. In places where opportunities exist but expertise is lacking, skilled people are sent to help with program production.

- The Radio Bahá’í Division, which oversees the seven Bahá’í radio stations. The committee points out that it has no authority over any of the stations—they are under the supervision of their National Spiritual Assembly. The Radio Division’s function is to advise, assist and review; in other words, it is a servant of the radio stations on behalf of the Universal House of Justice and the National Spiritual Assemblies. —Helen Hornby
Hawaii

‘First Lady’ receives Alexander Award

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the Hawaiian Islands has presented the 1990 Agnes Baldwin Alexander Award for Service to Humanity to Lynne K. Waihee for her efforts in promoting literacy as honorary chairman of the Governor’s Council on Literacy.

The award was presented March 21 at a banquet in Honolulu commemorating Naw-Ruz and United Nations International Literacy Year and sponsored by the Bahá’í community of Hawaii.

Mrs. Waihee is the wife of Gov. John Waihee, the first Hawaiian ever elected to that position. The governor and five other members of the Waihee family were among the more than 180 people attending the banquet.

The featured speaker was David Hofman, a retired member of the Universal House of Justice. Addressing the topic “Literacy and World Peace,” Mr. Hofman said the ability to read “is a fundamental right and privilege of every human being,” and a necessary building block for world peace.

While serving on the House of Justice, Mr. Hofman was one of the authors of “The Promise of World Peace,” a document addressed to the peoples of the world and released in 1985.

Gladys Ainoa Brandt, a former recipient of the Alexander Award and retired president of the Board of Regents of the University of Hawaii, read the citation accompanying the presentation, noting that Mrs. Waihee has been a leader in developing the vision and strategies to achieve the goal of a literate Hawaii.

The award was presented by the Bahá’í community “as a token of (its) inexpressible appreciation for her leadership, work and commitment to the field of literacy and education, her deep concern for the family, and for being an example to us all in her community service.”

Mrs. Brandt was one of three former recipients of the award at the banquet.

Also in the audience were representatives of all the major literacy programs in Hawaii, members of the University of Hawaii Institute for Peace and the East-West Center, Earl Arruda of the Hawaii State Teachers Association, state Sen. Andrew Levin and Rep. Samuel Lee, and two members of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs from Molokai.

The UN has declared 1990 to be International Literacy Year so as to mobilize an ongoing effort to eradicate illiteracy around the world. The International Literacy Year banquet, the first event of its kind in Hawaii this year, gave the Bahá’ís an opportunity to share news of their “Project Read and Write,” which has been undertaken by the 27 local Bahá’í communities throughout the islands.

In accepting the Alexander Award, Mrs. Waihee acknowledged the work of the Bahá’ís through Project Read and Write, and accepted the honor on behalf of the many workers in the field who, she said, are sacrificing their time and resources to help eradicate illiteracy. She applauded the work of Ba-
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India

In January, the Bábá'ís of the South Arcot District of Tamil Nadu State, India, inaugurated a new phase of the Dr. Muhájir Memorial Teaching Project, and by the end of the first week had enrolled 2,500 new Bábá'ís. As of February 12, the total number of new enrollees stood at 14,050 including members of two new tribes.

The newest phase of the project resulted from the visit last December of David Hofman, retired member of the Universal House of Justice, after which 600 people were enrolled.

An integral part of the effort is a consolidation plan that follows the enrollment of new Bábá'ís. A week after their enrollment, they are invited to a one-day study class and then invited to become a part of the teaching effort. After three weeks, those who volunteer attend an in-depth 10-day study session where they learn the rudiments of teaching and deepening.

In February, Counsellor S. Nagaratnam, three Auxiliary Board members and about 35 of the teachers gathered for a victory conference to initiate the final phases of the campaign, which are to include continuing contact with the new believers through visits and correspondence.

Teaching committees will be formed in every village to help organize the Nineteen Day Feasts, children's classes, youth activities, literacy classes and deepenings, and to communicate with the State Bábá'í Council. The committees will also be responsible for encouraging the friends to take part in the election of their local Spiritual Assemblies.

The third phase of the project is to create strong local Assemblies as quickly as possible. Assistants to the Auxiliary Board have been appointed in all areas to facilitate the process.

Eight Bábá'í teachers were invited to Madras, India, for a recent five-day seminar conducted by Counsellor S. Nagaratnam. Inspired, they set out to teach in Tamilnadu State, and by the end their project reported that 1,024 new Bábá'ís had been enrolled.

The Spiritual Assemblies of Hyderabad and Secunderabad, India, have presented copies of the peace statement to the Cabinet ministers of the state government of Andhra Pradesh. Representatives of the Assemblies met with 15 Cabinet ministers and five vice-chancellors of the state universities.

All of these dignitaries expressed their wish to know more about the Faith. Many had already visited the House of Worship near New Delhi, and several expressed their desire to become Bábá'ís.

The Olinga Teaching Campaign, which began in Gumla, India, last July, has so far enrolled about 7,000 new believers and formed 24 local Spiritual Assemblies.

The people in the villages scattered among the hills and valleys in thick forests around Gumla follow ancient tradition, never before having embraced an established religion. About 400 of these villages have now heard about the Faith.

The Olinga campaign has a goal of 25,000 new believers and 40 new local Assemblies.
The Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'lllah Muhajir passed away in Quito, Ecuador, on December 29, 1979. As a befitting memorial to one who had dedicated himself so completely to helping that country attain to its high aspiration for mass conversion, the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador inaugurated a year-long teaching campaign in his name. Its primary goal was to carry the Faith to and enroll Ecuadorians from the various strata of society: the working and middle classes, professionals, members of unions and cooperatives, and ethnic groups such as the Chinese, the indigenous, and those of African descent.

The campaign was to end, on the 10th anniversary of Dr. Muhajir’s death, with an international teaching conference so that his friends could recount their achievements in his name and be stimulated to strive even harder for “entry by troops.”

As December 1989 came to a close, anxiety and tension mounted as the devoted workers pored over details to make certain everything was in order for this long-awaited occasion. Among the first visitors to arrive were Dr. Muhajir’s widow and their daughter, Gisu, who were received at the airport by a representative of the National Spiritual Assembly and a number of the friends who had been awaiting their arrival. The Bahá’í community of Ecuador was pleased to welcome other members of Dr. Muhajir’s family including his sister, Mrs. Lamieh Nazirpur, and her husband, Parviz Nazirpur, from Canada, and a nephew, Bijan Adiparvar, who is pioneering in Venezuela and is chairman of that country’s National Spiritual Assembly.

On December 28, in the comfortable headquarters of the Colegio de Arquitectos del Ecuador (the Professional Architects’ Association) in Quito, the conference began. More than 300 Bahá’ís came from all parts of Ecuador including the Galapagos Islands, and there were representatives from Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Curacao (Dutch West Indies), Mexico, Panama, Peru, Switzerland, the United States and Venezuela. Among the many visitors were eight members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for the Americas: Eloy Anello, who represented the International Teaching Centre; Isabel de Calderón, who represented the Board of Counsellors; Rolf von Czekus, Gustavo Correa, Shapoor Monadjem, Ruth Pringle, Arturo Serrano and Rodrigo Tomás. The Counsellors held their regular meeting during the week of the conference and met with the National Assembly to help with an extended teaching plan that was presented on the final day of the conference.

The Counsellors also took an active part in the conference itself, giving a number of enjoyable, thought-provoking presentations. The tone of the conference was set the first day as Mr. Anello’s reminiscences of Dr. Muhajir were followed by a loving tribute by Mrs. Muhajir to his life of service to the Cause. Not only did she come to the conference cloaked with the spirit of her dear husband, as expressed by

The grave of the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’lllah Muhajir in Quito, Ecuador, is decorated with a heart-shaped garland of flowers on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of his passing.
some of the believers, she also came bringing the vision and hopes of the World Centre that the teaching campaign would be extended for another year and amplified. The message to the conference from the Universal House of Justice read as follows:

"Dear loved Friends,

"As our hearts turn to your assemblage, we are moved to recall the remarkable spirit of Dr. Muhájír, whose presence is surely felt by all of you gathered on this occasion.

"Dr. Muhájír was a man of vision, who had an extraordinary ability to recognize the practical needs of the community, but he was also a man of action and his greatest dream was that the masses of humanity would soon awaken to the call of Bahá'u'lláh. He well understood that the greatest gift that Bahá'u'lláh has given us is the privilege to become instruments through which other souls are touched by His healing message. If we offer ourselves in the right manner, if we make selfless efforts, if we arise with love and with courage, then our services and sacrifices will be confirmed and many seeking souls will find eternal life. Thus the Cause of God will blossom before our eyes.

"Dr. Muhájír has left a great legacy, and by the grace of God his earthly remains reposes in Latin America, in a land and amongst a people that he loved so much. We earnestly pray that the memory of his indomitable spirit will inspire all of those present at this International Conference to arise and follow his noble example by offering enthusiastic and humble service during the year-long teaching plan that has been dedicated to his memory.

"With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice"

Friday morning, December 29, began the official commemoration of the 10th anniversary of Dr. Muhájír's passing. In spite of the sadness of the hearts of his loved ones, there prevailed a beautiful and serene spirit at his gravesite as prayers were read and chanted in various languages. Then, as the anniversary of the hour of his death approached, nearly everyone present placed a lovely flower on his grave as a symbol of love and reverence, after which the friends returned to the conference with a renewed spirit of dedication to the Cause.

The letter from the House of Justice was the first inkling that the enthusiasm of the participants and the decision of the National Assembly would lead to a second year of the Dr. Muhájír Project, this time concentrating on entry by troops among the indigenous peoples and the receptive coastal people of African and Afro-Indian descent. The response to the presentation of this plan on the final day of the conference was overwhelming, and 81 people immediately volunteered to serve as teachers in the campaign. Some who planned to leave Ecuador for other countries canceled their plans on the spot to offer their services. Three young Bahá'ís, who were about to complete their year of volunteer service and return to school, after hearing the National Assembly's plan bearing Dr. Muhájír's name and securing the blessings of their parents who were present, decided instead to remain in Ecuador for another year to help in the campaign.

A number of visitors said they would return during the year to help with the teaching so that Ecuador could attain its goal, and the Counsellors from Latin America promised also to return periodically to help with "entry by troops." A special contribution was made to allow for 63 scholarships to be given on a national level, and there were to be 10 full scholarships for Bahá'ís with limited resources such as those in indigenous areas of the country including the Galapagos Islands.

Thanks to an extremely efficient organization and proceeds from the sale of T-shirts and other items, the net cost of the conference was only $31.42 (U.S.). As for contributions, the National Fund received $1,397.70 in cash and $42,310 in pledges. It was proposed during the conference, and later approved by the National Assembly, that $25,000 of the funds pledged should be donated to the Universal House of Justice toward the cost of constructing the Arc on Mount Carmel.

The conference received extensive coverage in newspapers and on television and radio including Radio Bahá'í in Otavalo. On the last day of the event, Counsellor Correa took part in a three-member panel with the director of Channel 5 TV and the manager of a major newspaper in Quito. The theme of the hour-long discussion was world peace. Sr. Correa made at least three other television appearances to speak about the conference. At the end of the conference, Channel 13 TV conducted a five-minute interview with Counsellors von Czekus, Monadjem, Serrano and Tomás.—Helen Hornby

Pictured are many of the friends who took part last December in a teaching conference in Quito, Ecuador, dedicated to the memory of the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'lláh Muhájír.
As a prelude to her participation in the conference commemorating the 50th anniversary of the passing of her mother, May Bolles Maxwell, the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum visited the Toba communities in Chaco, Argentina, from February 17-20.

On her arrival in Camp Medina, a wave of Toba Indian Baha'is engulfed her, singing, dancing and embracing her. They had come from many distant communities on the third day of a special campaign to welcome the Hand of the Cause, whom they named Chi-I-Shi (Morning Star).

During her stay with the Toba friends, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum spent the mornings under the shade of trees to study prayers from a newly published translation into the Toba language of "The Words of God," which they learned by heart. At these meetings with Baha'is and their guests, eight people embraced the Faith.

During the evenings there were meetings of between 150-200 to discuss many topics, among which were the role of the Toba people in the Faith and in future civilization, the roles of women, children and youth, and social and economic development. The meetings lasted well beyond midnight each night.

**Chile**

*Shown are members of a week-long summer teaching project in Huiló, in the Mapuche indigenous area of Chile. They are gathered in front of the Huiló rural community public school where they slept each night during the project. Thirty youth from Brazil, Chile, Uruguay and the U.S. volunteered to serve on the project following a successful National Teaching Conference held January 20-21 at the Bahá'í National Center in Santiago. Activities included children's classes, deepenings, and a public meeting attended by 120 people. One hundred five people from five Mapuche communities were enrolled in the Faith. After the project, the Spiritual Assembly of Temuco, a city of 240,000 in the center of the Mapuche area, hosted a Unity Tea for the projecteers to thank them for their services.*

**Italy**

The Portici Teaching Campaign, which has reported 88 enrollments in southern Italy, is spreading throughout the country and may soon cross the border, thus becoming a European teaching project.

One of its main features is the progressive involvement of the newly enrolled friends in the consultative process and in taking care of specific activities at the Bahá'í Center.

In addition, teaching groups consisting of new and more experienced Baha'is are spreading the Message in Portici. The newer Bahá'ís are also taking part in teaching campaigns in other parts of Italy.

A major contributing factor to the success of the campaign is the unity and consultation among the Counselors, members of the National Spiritual Assembly, Auxiliary Board members and their assistants, and the Portici Teaching Committee.

Teaching efforts are bearing fruit in other areas of the country as well. At a recent meeting in Gela, Sicily, six young people embraced the Faith, and new believers are also reported in Cosenza, Calabria, and northern Italy.

Inspired by these successes, the Sardinia Teaching Committee has launched its own intensive campaign.
Papua New Guinea

An average of 25 people per day attended a nine-day institute last December 23-31 at the Bahá’í Center in Rabaul, Papua New Guinea. Delegates from Popendetta, Kieta, Kavieng, Wonga Wonga, Kimbe and Kerevat came to the institute, whose focus was on teaching and the Administrative Order.

Cuba

The largest gathering of Bahá'ís ever assembled in Cuba filled the National Bahá'í Center in Havana last December 2 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Faith in that country. A sumptuous luncheon and commemorative cake was followed by singing and dancing.

Perfecto Pérez Toledo, the first Cuban to embrace the Faith, spoke about the early days in Cuba, paying tribute to those who helped build the Cuban Bahá'í community including Philip and Laily Marangella, Josephine Kruka, Jean Silver, William de Forge, Emogene Hoagg, Gayle Woolson and Ruth Moffett with the help of the Hands of the Cause of God Dorothy Baker and Zikrullah Khadem and the late member of the Universal House of Justice, Charles Wolcott.

Tonga

Madge Featherstone (seated at right in background), wife of the Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone, addresses Bahá'ís in Tonga during the Featherstones' recent visit to New Zealand, Tonga and Fiji.

India

In February, a new local Spiritual Assembly was established in Bolangir, Orissa State, India, as a result of efforts in the Varqa Teaching Project.

Members of the Varqa Project held a four-day book exposition in Bolangir, during which time they visited local schools, conducting classes on morals and presenting copies of the peace statement to teachers and headmasters.

As a result, several teachers and about 60 students were enrolled in the Faith, and 41 of the more than 500 people visiting the book exhibit also declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh.

As soon as the exhibit had ended, the Spiritual Assembly of Bolangir was elected in the presence of Auxiliary Board member N.C. Sahoo.

Adam Lopatka, first President of the Supreme Court of the Polish People's Republic, accompanied by two judges of the Polish Supreme Court, visited the Bahá'í House of Worship in Bahapur, India, on January 19. They were escorted by two representatives of the Indian Judiciary and an interpreter from the Polish Embassy in Delhi.

Mr. Lopatka mentioned that a representative of the Bahá'í International Community had visited Poland and presented a copy of the peace statement to the Head of State.
India

In January, the Bahá’í House of Worship near New Delhi, India, welcomed 316,110 visitors including more than 74,000 who were in the city on January 26 for the Republic Day parade.

Also touring the Temple on that day were busloads of youth, representing nearly all the States of India, who came to attend a national conference of the Youth Hostels Association.

As usual, professionals from the various States who were in Delhi for training, seminars or conferences did not miss the chance to visit the Temple. Among the many groups were two from Mizoram, one composed of school teachers and the other of students at a polytechnic institute. Members of both groups were thrilled to receive Bahá’í literature in the Mizo language.

A group of 22 engineers, representing the National Council for Cement and Building Materials, visited the House of Worship to ask for information on the building’s architectural and engineering features, but on their arrival showed a keen interest in learning more about the Faith.

A regular daily feature is the arrival of mini-bus loads of Bengalis who come for the morning prayer service. Besides the regular bus service groups that come every day, busloads of tourists from nearly all States visited the Temple during the month.

Winter in Delhi invites the hill people, and this year a large number of Nepalis from Sikkim, Darjeeling, Kathmandu and some from Nepal made it a point to visit the Temple. This year, with seven Bahá’í volunteers at a time from Darjeeling and Sikkim, no Nepali-speaking visitor was left unattended.

Overseas groups visiting the House of Worship in January included a large number from France; others from Germany, Hong Kong, Great Britain and Israel, and smaller groups from Japan, Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland, Italy and Thailand.

A large number of school children continue to come to the Temple on Saturdays, with 15,119 visiting in January.

On several occasions special prayer services for the children were organized, and they sat reverently in pin-drop silence.

Among dignitaries, diplomats from many embassies in Delhi visited the House of Worship, often with their families and guests. A group of 15 diplomats and their wives from the German Democratic Republic were happy to receive pamphlets in German and to see a picture of the House of Worship near Frankfurt, saying it would now be possible for them to go there since the Berlin Wall does not divide the two Germanies anymore.

Other countries whose dignitaries paid visits to the Temple in January included Colombia, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Poland, North Yemen, Cambodia, Sikkim, Chile and Malaysia.

Also, Russians continue to visit in large numbers. With the publication of The Hidden Words and Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era in Russian, these visitors are delighted to receive copies in their own language and carry them back to the Soviet Union.

Groups from Byelorussia, Armenia, Moscow, Leningrad, the Ukraine and other republics in the Soviet Union enjoyed every moment of their visits to the House of Worship in January.

Four Latvians, all engineers, were delighted to learn that there are Bahá’ís in their Republic.

Another group of four Russians was overwhelmed by the Teachings of the Faith, and one said before leaving the Temple, “I fully agree with all the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh.”

Six Russian professionals from Moscow and Leningrad were thrilled to learn about the Faith in fluent Russian from a Bahá’í, Mrs. Lily Ayman of Switzerland, who was in India for a few days.

A busload of 33 Russians, all from the Soviet Encyclopedia Publishing House, spent an hour investigating the Faith and collecting information which they said would be included in the Russian Encyclopedia of Philosophy and Religion.

Families from the Soviet Embassy, the TASS news agency office, USSR Information Office and Cultural Centre came to the Temple mainly on Saturdays and Sundays. Many had visited the Temple earlier, but were returning with their families. It is evident from their questions that the Faith and House of Worship are topics of discussion among the Russians before their visits.

One couple, who have recently come to the Soviet Embassy in Delhi, spent at least two hours in the Temple, reading the entire Russian edition of Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era while seated in the prayer hall and library.
Nigeria

The Kay Wilson Teaching Campaign, held last November 22-December 6 in Nnewi, Anambra State, Nigeria, surpassed its goals by enrolling 759 new believers and forming 24 new local Spiritual Assemblies.

Meanwhile, the Elizabeth Gibson Campaign, in Kwara State, resulted in the enrollment of 711 new believers and the formation of 25 new local Assemblies.

Counsellor Peter Vuyiya of the International Teaching Centre in Haifa was an active participant in the Wilson Campaign, and served as a source of inspiration for the 20-30 members of the teaching teams, most of whom were youth.

The Gibson Campaign was held in a previously untaught area that includes the town of Omu-Aran. An isolated believer in that town, who had agreed to arrange for food and housing for the team, was amazed when 18 team members arrived. By the end of their visit there were 70 new Bahá'ís in Omu-Aran.

Their host bid team members a tearful goodbye, saying that now all the people will know he is part of a large family, and not a religion of his very own.

Cameroon

More than 40 young people, 15 of whom were not Bahá'ís, attended a recent program hosted by the local Spiritual Assembly of Bamenda, Cameroon, to present the Bahá'í Volleyball Club. They kicked off the event with a volleyball game on a court built three years ago at the Regional Bahá'í Centre, using a net recently donated by a family in the community and a ball purchased by the local Assembly. After the game there was an introduction to the Faith, the presentation of the Bahá'í Volleyball Club, and lunch.

Puerto Rico

The Bahá'ís in the Arecibo area of Puerto Rico have established such a good relationship with local news media that they now face difficulty in keeping up with the opportunities presented for publicity.

The newspapers regularly carry articles, photographs and publicity for the twice-weekly Bahá'í television programs. The local TV station often broadcasts the Bahá'í public service announcements on peace that were developed by Bahá'ís in Alaska. One of the local radio stations invited the Bahá'ís to take part in a two-hour interview about the Faith. The program was aired “live” and also taped for future use.

Last December the Bahá'ís were asked to produce a 90-minute “holiday special” featuring guests from various religious backgrounds speaking about peace. The station offered to pay for the production crew and donate studio and air time if the Bahá'ís would build the set, obtain the host and guests, and write the script. The program was transmitted on various cable services, reaching 14 communities. It was shown six times on consecutive days at various times of the day.

Cape Verde Islands

As of the end of February, 29 new believers had been enrolled in the Cape Verde Islands as a result of the ongoing Duarte Vieira Teaching Campaign.
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Work on extension of Terraces adjacent to Shrine of Báb begins on 146th anniversary of His momentous declaration

TO ALL NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES
WITH FEELINGS OF PROFOUND JOY ANNOUNCE TO FOLLOWERS OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH IN EVERY LAND THAT ON MORNING OF TWENTY-THIRD MAY, ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-SIX YEARS AFTER THE DECLARATION OF THE BÁB, WORK ON EXTENSION TERRACES COMMENCED. THIS HISTORIC OCCASION MARKED BY VISIT HIS SHRINE AND SHRINE OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ BY THE HANDS OF THE CAUSE OF GOD AMATÚ’L-BAHÁ RÚHÍYYIH KHÁNUM AND ‘ALÍ-ÁKBAR FURÚTAN, THE MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE AND COUNSELLOR MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE WITH FARIBURZ SAHBA, ARCHITECT OF TERRACES AND MANAGER OF ARC PROJECT, TO PRAY FOR DIVINE CONFIRMATIONS ENABLE UNINTERRUPTED PROSECUTION THIS MAJESTIC ENTERPRISE. SUBSEQUENTLY DETAILED PLANS WERE VIEWED FOR LENGTHENING EASTERN WING OF MAIN TERRACE OF SHRINE, MAKING IT EQUAL TO EXISTING WESTERN WING. GLORIOUS UNDERTAKING CREATION BEFITTING RESTING PLACE MARTYR-HERALD FAITH WAS ENVISAGED BY BAHÁ’U’LLÁH HIMSELF, WAS SOLEMNLY INITIATED BY ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ WHO RAISED WITH INFINITE PAINS ORIGINAL STRUCTURE AND PLACED WITHIN IT THE SACRED REMAINS OF THE BÁB, WAS VIGOROUSLY PURSUED BY SHOGHI EFFENDI, WHO COMPLETED CENTRAL EDIFICE, EMBELLISHED IT WITH BEAUTEOUS SUPERSTRUCTURE AND CONNECTED IT WITH MAIN AVENUE TEMPLAR COLONY THROUGH CONSTRUCTION FIRST NINE TERRACES, IS NOW ENTERING UPON CULMINATING PHASE ITS DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EXTENSION BEAUTIFICATION NINE EXISTING TERRACES AND CONSTRUCTION NINE MORE TO REALIZE MONUMENTAL CONCEPT REACHING FROM FOOT TO CREST HOLY MOUNTAIN.

CALL UPON FRIENDS EVERY LAND RALLY SUPPORT THIS SACRED ENTERPRISE NOW INSEPARABLY LINKED WITH ARC PROJECT EXPRESS BEFITTINGLY THEIR AWARENESS MAGNITUDE BOUNTY CONFERRED UPON MANKIND BY MINISTRY AND SACRIFICE BLESSED BÁB, DEMONSTRATE THEIR COMMITMENT TO BAHÁ’U’LLÁH’S CALL IN TABLET OF CARMEL TO ESTABLISH UPON THAT MOUNTAIN SEAT GOD’S THRONE AND FULFILL, THROUGH THEIR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS, ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ’S AND SHOGHI EFFENDI’S VISION OF EFFLORESCENCE MIGHTY INSTITUTIONS FAITH ON MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
MAY 24, 1990
It’s true: mankind *is* one

This true story is really two or three rolled into one, but they are so intertwined that it is best to tell them as one.

In 1978 Gerald and Rhea Laursen visited a friend at the Jemez Pueblo in northern New Mexico. It was a happy time, but a sad time as well because the friends were parting.

Vangie had listened carefully to the news that her friend Rhea was leaving New Mexico again to tell others of her belief in the oneness of mankind and the need for peace and unity among all the peoples of the world.

“As you travel in Argentina, teaching your faith,” asked Vangie, “will you carry a message for me?”

“If I can,” Rhea promised.

“You say you will visit the native people of Argentina. Will you tell them of us, that we are well, and that we would like to know how they are?” Vangie’s voice was low and intense.

“In our legends,” she continued, “repeated to us as we learn of our heritage and our religion, we are told of the time when our people were happy, one people—several tribes, but one people. We lived in what your people have named lower Mexico and the Canal Zone.

“We are told that the land was so fertile, the climate so lovely that we became a large and happy nation. However, we continued to grow, much as the lush vegetation, until the land was overrun.” Vangie hesitated as if in respect to her forefathers.

“Our wise men gathered in council; they knew it was their responsibility to find a solution.

“They prayed their prayers.

“They danced their dances.”

This article, “Mankind Is One,” was written for Bahá’í News by Rhea M. Coleman, a former pioneer to Argentina who now lives in Los Alamos, New Mexico.

“Mankind...”

They waited on the Great Spirit for guidance.”

Once again Vangie hesitated, almost as if she were questioning the right of an outsider to know this history. After a few moments, she continued:

“In a vision it was told we must separate. Some must move north, some must go south. Because we were all equal, none would be spared this migration.

“It was decided by the wise men that lots would be drawn, determining which families were to go to the south and which were to travel north.

“Our families came north. We were unprepared. The weather was severe, and we had never known cold. The land was dry and barren; we had only known lush, fertile ground.

“Our people built caves into the mountainside, and we survived the cold.

“We learned to cultivate the dry land and to water the corn with water from the rivers.

“Our people learned to build with the mud and the trees; we learned to love this barren but beautiful land which was now ours.”

Vangie’s voice changed from soft and sad to proud and almost challenging.

“Tell them we have prospered,” she said.

“We have suffered, but we have learned.”

Her voice rose again: “Tell them we are well. We are together. We have survived!”

Silence. Rhea waited.

“Tell them,” Vangie continued, “that we would like to hear from them.

“Will you do that for me? I know your message is important, but you are the first we have trusted with this request.”

Deeply honored, and tearfully grateful, Rhea said, “Yes, I will speak of this to your people. May I show them pictures?”

Vangie nodded.

Rhea kept her promise.

Whenever she met the native people in Argentina and talked of her own mission, she passed on the message and the greetings from Vangie.

The native people responded lovingly and gratefully, for they too had wondered about the stories the old ones had told.

Each time the request was carried out, Rhea wrote to Vangie of her people’s situation, and sent back pictures, just as she gave pictures of the Pueblo Indians to all who would listen.

Eventually, Rhea had an opportunity to visit the Mapuche tribe on the Lago Rosario Reservation, in the Patagonia region near the Antarctic.

During that visit she told of the message from the Jemez Pueblo.

As she spoke, the chief bowed his head. Because women in that area are not supposed to speak out, Rhea was afraid she had offended the chief.

The silence became almost overwhelming as they awaited his response.

It seemed hours before he lifted his head and said, “What she has told us is the truth. We have the same story in our legends. We are the same people.”

For the first time, he looked directly at Rhea.

“Return to them our greetings,” he said, “and tell them how we are. You know more of what she wants to hear than we know what to tell her.”

His voice became heavy and sad as he talked about his tribe and the problems of the Reservation.

He told how the young people had begun to make fun of the stories of their origin.

How the older men had fasted for proof to pass on to the younger men.

How one had had a vision that said...
information about their origin and their people would be brought to them by a white-haired woman.

His voice was almost a whisper as he told how the younger men had roared with laughter on hearing this.

How the young men had suggested it was an old man's wish for something different because in that area no one had ever seen a white-haired Indian, let alone a white-haired Indian woman!

The chief bowed his head as he explained that he was grateful and honored to be the one who received the message. He would, he said, pass the information on, and hoped the young men would listen, stay on the Reservation, and away from the problems of the cities.

The spirit was peaceful, the people in the room united.

Certainly one could say the jewel had been passed.

But there is more.

Among the many reasons for the visit to the Reservation was the need to register the identification numbers of the Bahá'u'lláh, couldn't one?

But there is more.

The author (second from left) with American and Mapuche Indian friends. In Argentina. Chief Califú is at the far left; Señora Califú is fourth from left. in Argentina. Chief Califú is at the far left; Señora Califú is fourth from left.

"Coliman.

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Among the many reasons for the visit to the Reservation was the need to register the identification numbers of the Bahá'u'lláh. (A law had been enacted in Buenos Aires, requiring that all religions register the names of their members.) Gerald was recording the information.

"You'd better look at this I.D., Rhea," he said. "They have the same name as you."

Rhea had just been able to get the Mapuche women to talk with her (a considerable accomplishment) and wasn't at all eager to look at someone's I.D.

"Rhea, this is important. Look at this!" Gerald insisted, pointing his finger to the exact spot he wanted Rhea to read.

"Coliman! Why, that's my name!"

Afterward, Rhea hoped she hadn't shrieked.

Gravely, the chief nodded.

"My family have always been chiefs," he said. "Me, my father, his father, and his father's father."

"When my father's father's father was young, he married a Welsh lady whose name was Coleman (in Spanish, Coliman)."

"Her people tried to take her away, but she chose to stay with my great-grandfather."

"She taught him to read the white man's books. She read from books, and taught the people how to use our earth to make better bricks, by using fire. The books showed how to build our houses strong, how to protect our health and our land."

"Together they made us a strong tribe."

"When the Spanish sent the black men against us, expecting to annihilate us, she read to us about the tactics of battle. We survived."

"My great-grandparents were wise. They lifted the Mapuches of Lago Rosario high."

"When the Spanish decided that since they couldn't get rid of us we must live on the Reservation, my great-grandparents refused until they negotiated favorable terms."

"In return for staying on the Reservation, we were given schools. We were given our own hospital—with doctors, and the promise of training for our people. We now have Mapuche doctors, and this very week I watched my granddaughter become a registered nurse. Not a sister—not an aide—but a real registered nurse."

"However, we remain Mapuches and, as such, in Argentina, we are considered little better than a good dog, and less than the spirited horses we are allowed to raise and sell to the military."

"The government, when it required that we all be registered, refused us the right to use our maternal name (in Argentina, children use the name of their mother). The official edict said that no Indian had the right 'to pretend' to a white person's name."

"Therefore, those of us who have the blood right, have Coliman as our middle name."

Rhea explained that one of her great-grandfathers also came from Wales, that in the United States children used their father's name. She explained that she felt they were cousins.

Gravely, the chief welcomed her onto the Mapuche Reservation, with the privilege of a home there.

Within the hearts of the pioneers the jewel glowed warmly. So much had happened that day that the couple, with their grandchildren, returned to Trevelin completely amazed.

Imagine! Two circles of unity had been completed before their eyes—in just that one day.

The greetings were carried from one branch of a long-separated family to another, reuniting a nation, while Rhea found a family, unknown to her, which, by virtue of that relationship, made her a member of the Jemez tribe of New Mexico.

Oh God! Increase my astonishment.
Reflections on 'these Latter Days'

In the midst of this chaotic world when the structure of the old order is crumbling with bewildering rapidity, when mankind is groping in the darkness of illusion and despair, we Bahá'ís are immensely blessed through the grace of Bahá'u'lláh, inasmuch as the Universal House of Justice—that infallible Body which is guided by the Hand of the Blessed Beauty—brings us enlightenment and vision through its inspiring letters and messages, acquaints us with the shape of things to come, enables us to take account of the challenges we must face, indicates the nature of the tasks we are called upon to undertake, and gives us glad-tidings, faith and assurance to strengthen us in these crucial times and enable us to arise and render our humble service to His Threshold.

Some two years ago the Universal House of Justice called for “universal, rapid and massive growth of the Cause of God.” At that time the stage had been set through the heroic sacrifices of the beloved friends in Persia who, in vast numbers and over a long decade, had joyously drained the cup of martyrdom in order to vindicate the spiritual ascendancy of the Cause of God before the gaze of all mankind. Indeed, the fire of selfless devotion that those heroes of God had kindled in that land by the Will of the Lord shed imperishable glory and light upon all Bahá'í institutions throughout the world, infused a fresh capacity in the minds of men everywhere, and focused world attention on the Faith at all levels.

Last year the Universal House of Justice announced that due to an upsurge in teaching activities in certain regions, there was evidence that the “entry by troops” promised by ‘Abdu'l-Bahá might soon take place. Then this year the Bahá’í world was overwhelmed with joy and wonder at the thrilling news in the Ridván message, affirming that the hope expressed a year ago had come true in no fewer than eight countries in Asia, Africa, South America and the Caribbean, and that fresh enrollments had reached the unprecedented level of half a million! This is indeed an historic and soul-uplifting victory—and it is interesting to note that all of the above nations belong to the so-called “third world” countries, a token of divine grace vouchsafed to these peoples.

But aside from being a delightful glad-tidings, “entry by troops” constitutes one of the signs of the time in which we live and is a significant event associated with the advent of the Lesser Peace. In a communication addressed to the American Bahá’í community in July 1953, the Guardian has given us a clear perspective as to how and in what circumstances the entry by troops will take place:

“This flow of fresh recruits will presage and hasten the advent of the day which, as prophesied by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, will witness the entry by troops of peoples of diverse nations and races into the Bahá’í world—a day which, viewed in its proper perspective, will be the prelude to that long-awaited hour when a mass conversion on the part of these same nations and races, and as a direct result of a chain of events, momentous and possibly catastrophic in nature, will suddenly revolutionize the fortunes of the Faith, derange the equilibrium of the world and reinforce a thousandfold the numerical strength as well as the material power and the spiritual authority of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh.”

Moreover, it is highly interesting to note that the promise of “entry by troops” originally comes from the Qur’án, as a sign of God’s victory in the “latter days.” This prophecy is set forth in a special chapter—one of the shortest ones, barely two lines—stating that when the day of God’s victory arrives, you will see people entering the religion of God by troops. Also, there is another verse in the Qur’án that affirms this prophecy. It says: “The victory of God is near at hand. Convey this glad-tidings to the faithful.” In Islam, this prophecy is regarded as very significant, and in some Muslim countries the above phrase—“the victory of God is near at hand”—often appears engraved on stones or pillars or is elaborately painted on tiles above the entrances to mosques, houses or places of public gatherings. Yet few people, if any, have ever had a notion of its true meaning, for in past Dispensations the believers always consisted of a small minority, while the unbelievers commanded an overwhelming majority.

Today, however, it is the Will of God that in this glorious Revelation the spiritual conquest of the planet be accomplished through world peace and the unification of all mankind, and that every disunited, warring and rebel-

This essay, “These Latter Days,” was written by Habib Taherzadeh, a member of the Bahá’í community of Brazil. Mr. Taherzadeh formerly worked in the Research Department at the Bahá’í World Centre and was coordinator of a group that translated the book Selections from the Writings of the Bab.
luous element within human society be welded and fused into a harmoniously functioning organ, like members of a single human body. In His Writings, Bahá'u'lláh states that in this Day there will be no further reprieve for the people of negation, nor will they have any refuge to which to flee. He also has written:

"After a time all the governments on earth will change. Oppression will envelop the world. And following a universal confusion, the sun of justice will rise from the horizon of the unseen realm."

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

Moreover, it is highly significant that in its Ridván message the Universal House of Justice should have referred, for the first time, to the Lesser Peace as a "far glimmer" looming on the horizon and have affirmed the approaching culmination of the three collateral processes which, as Shoghi Effendi has foretold, should take place simultaneously, namely:

1. The increasing maturity of Bahá'í institutions.
2. Construction of the remaining buildings of the Arc on Mount Carmel.
3. The establishment of the Lesser Peace.

The first two of these are goals of the Six Year Plan, to whose fulfillment by 1992 the Bahá'í world is wholly committed. The third is part of God's own major Plan, and no one but Him knows the exact time of its advent, nor the manner in which it will come about. However, as the Master, the beloved Guardian and now the divinely inspired Universal House of Justice have clearly foretold, there is every indication that it will take place before long.

The advent of the Lesser Peace will bring about a drastic transformation in the life of man on this planet, as a result of which the age-old spectre of war will be wiped out forever from the face of the earth, and the millennial proph-

ecy, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks," will be fulfilled during this generation. A federal system of world government will come into being which will, through the force of circumstance, adopt those universal Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh that have practically become the spirit of this age, such as universal education, a universal language, elimination of prejudice, equality of rights for both sexes, abolition of the extremes of poverty and wealth, and so on, and will incorporate them into its worldwide institutions. This will mark the inception of the age of human maturity and the establishment of the Most Great Peace. In the concluding passages of The Promised Day Is Come, Shoghi Effendi has set forth beautifully the consecutive steps in this vast process of man's organic and spiritual evolution which God's wisdom has lovingly destined for him.

Also, we must bear in mind that the Lesser Peace, which is a political union of all nations, is bound to be accompanied or preceded by a great commotion, by unprecedented upheavals. In a Tablet, Bahá'u'lláh states that the Faith of God fulfills a two-fold function: on the one hand, it acts like the soft breeze of spring that infuses a new life into all created things and enables them to grow and flourish; while on the other, it acts like a devastating autumn gale, uprooting enormous trees and laying waste huge buildings that hinder its irresistible advance. For it is evident that in order to erect a new building, the old one must be torn down and the ground cleared to prepare for the new construction. Outwardly this will be a painful process, though inwardly a blessing in disguise.

Shoghi Effendi says that the growth of the Faith of God today is like that of Christianity in its early years, when the mighty structure of the Roman Empire had to be demolished to make way for the rise and establishment of the new civilization based on the spiritual teachings of Christ. Now, in this age of transition, we can discern the same twofold process of integration and disintegration moving toward its climax on a world scale with ever-increasing momentum. At this juncture, Charles Kingsley's fitting words come to mind: "The night is darkest before the morn, "When the pain is sorest the child is born, "And the Day of the Lord is at hand."

One more word in conclusion: If we delve into the recent messages from the Universal House of Justice, we will notice that ample emphasis is given to the urgency of the present hour when God's own mighty Plan is geared up to full operation. Therefore, it behooves us as Bahá'ís to display a new spirit of dedication and to fix our attention on the challenging responsibilities that confront us today; for this is our God-given opportunity to prove our worth, our genuine faith in Bahá'u'lláh. Happy and blessed are those who respond to the call without delay, lest this rare opportunity be forfeit forever.

The beloved Guardian, in a message written in 1955, makes this earnest appeal in a poignant voice that rings across the gulf of nearly four decades:

"O my spiritual brothers and sisters! The time has come that you should arise, to leave your homes, to hasten forward, to raise the Call of God. It is high time to go pioneering, to make the utmost endeavor in diffusing the light of divine guidance, to withstand the onslaught of the darkness of error. The days of your life are fleeting away. Make best use of this precious opportunity; otherwise alas, alas, we shall be full of grief and remorse for not having fulfilled our duty toward God. . . ."

May Bahá'u'lláh bless and guide us, His humble servants, and enable us to serve Him in these anxious times through which we are now passing.

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**Italy**

On March 20, Counsellor Louis Hénuzet visited an ongoing teaching project in Portici, Italy. On that day there were five enrollments, and the following day, during a Naw-Rúz unity Feast attended by 250 people, seven more were enrolled in the Faith.

There are now 105 new believers in Portici, and the community's first local Spiritual Assembly was to have been elected at Ridván.

The Board of Counsellors, Auxiliary Board members, and National Teaching Committee have begun deepening programs in the area, and a search is under way for a Bahá'í Center.
Inspiration

A ‘conqueror’ for St. Helena

Shortly before she died on the island of St. Helena in the South Atlantic Ocean, Catherine Huxtable received a written tribute from a medical specialist, Dr. A.T. Jousse, who was intensively studying the problems of the physically disabled. “Unfortunately, you have been faced with a progressive disorder for which the medical profession has nothing really to offer. That in itself is most discouraging, because each year you look forward to less physical activity and the decline is more rapid than that, due to the simple aging process with which we are all faced.

“I have no doubt, however, that your life has been greatly prolonged by your high motivation, and I quite agree with you that it has been very full. I think your influence has undoubtedly been much greater than that of most humans and much greater than anyone could evaluate...”

Catherine felt that most of the credit for her full and successful life should have gone to “Bahá’u’lláh, Whose teachings will give anyone courage and power to fulfill his dreams...” Some of the credit she also ascribed to her husband and to her mother, her “generous, long-suffering helper.”

Catherine Rudyard (Heward) Huxtable was born January 6, 1932, at Charlwood House, Charlwood, Surrey, England, to Lt. Col. Stephen A. Heward and Mrs. Helen (Bury) Heward. She moved with her parents on their return to Canada in 1939 and received her primary and secondary education at Havergal College and Bishop Strachan School.

When she was eight or nine years old she was observed to be falling frequently, she was unable to run and climbed stairs slowly, and she tired quite easily. At the age of 10, muscular dystrophy was diagnosed. During the next few years, her back and legs weakened and later her arms too were affected. Her mother made arrangements for her to continue school using a routine as normal as possible but without gymnasia or outdoor recreation, and with a necessarily restricted social life. She could still walk, but with a poor sense of balance and frequent falling. However, she was able to attend Girl Guide camps during the summer. Those 10-day adventures living closely in a group with other girls and sleeping in tents or under the stars were memorable for her.

Catherine found it difficult to accept the fact that she would be crippled. She used a wheelchair when she was 15 but it took two years for her to accept its regular use as the means by which she could have a fuller, more flexible life. Because her arms were too weak to draw anywhere but at a desk, depriving her of the freedom of movement she felt was essential for an artist. Shortly after giving up the art course, she was successful in obtaining work doing beautiful and delicate petit point pictures and jewelry which enabled her to earn small amounts of her own money.

Using the wheelchair, and helped by her friends, she was able to enjoy a wider social life. She became interested in the ideas of the Unitarian Fellowship and was elected vice-president of its youth group.

She met her husband-to-be, Clifford Huxtable, at a university dance which she attended to listen to the music and share the company of people enjoying themselves. Clifford and Catherine were strongly attracted to each other. Both were seeking meaning and purpose in their lives, and together they became drawn to the Bahá’í teachings. Catherine had become severely troubled by the prospect of becoming bedridden and found comfort and strength in the Bahá’í teachings on the spiritual meaning of tests and difficulties. Clifford and Catherine formally declared their faith in Bahá’u’lláh in April 1952, in the home of John and Audrey Roberts whose teaching activities had been the initial indirect channel for their introduction to the Bahá’í Faith. They were married on May 7, 1955, in her parents’ home where they lived for two years. Catherine added to her accomplishments by serving in the administration of the affairs of the Faith in Toronto, where she was elected to the local Spiritual Assembly.

In November 1957 the Huxtables moved to Regina, Saskatchewan, a smaller city on the Canadian prairie, as pioneers. This move initiated an accelerating pace of pioneer service in the face of great obstacles. With the help of Miss Eileen White, who undertook...
the physical tasks of housekeeping, Clifford and Catherine's first pioneer move, made despite the well-meant re-monstrances of some friends and relatives, proved successful. They aided the Regina community to develop on a self-sustaining basis. By the time they left it had doubled in numbers and become strong and united.

With the confidence born of accomplishment, and in response to the renewed call for believers to enter the pioneer field, Clifford and Catherine moved from Regina in September 1959, arriving on the Gulf Islands, off Canada's west coast, in October. It was a source of great joy to them to be filling a goal specifically designated by Shoghi Effendi, the last one he chose. Cliff and Catherine were the first Bahá'ís to reside in the Gulf Islands. To move there they stepped onto a higher plane of determination and sacrifice. Catherine encouraged the move even though it meant her husband's resignation from the security of a professional position in adult education, and the outlook for work in the Gulf Islands was not encouraging. Catherine was unable to walk at all even with help, and they had to accept the uncertainty and low pay of unskilled manual labor. Clifford obtained work making fences on a sheep ranch, and later as a deckhand on the ferry boats connecting the islands with the mainland. A year after their arrival he was offered the position of principal of an elementary school and their income became more dependable again. Catherine also worked as a local representative for a firm producing household and children's goods.

Catherine had a warm and sincere interest in everyone she met. Their home was open to all comers, even to the sacrifice of her precarious health which required an ordered, settled and tranquil existence. Her dynamic contentment afforded encouragement to others burdened with difficulties. Her illness was turned into a blessing, and her overcoming its limitations, an instrument of attraction.

Within two years of their arrival in the Gulf Islands, a resident of the islands, the first to do so, accepted the Bahá'í Faith in their home. The first public meeting in the islands was held in May 1963. The group had grown to nine by December, and Catherine was elected chairman of the local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Gulf Islands when that body was formed in April 1964.

Although it had been assumed that the bearing of children might be unwise and possibly dangerous for Catherine, a son, Gavin Clifford, was born on June 27, 1962.

Having built the nucleus of the Bahá'í community of the Gulf Islands, Clifford and Catherine responded to the call of the Universal House of Justice, during the Nine Year Plan, for Canadian pioneers to the island of St. Helena in the South Atlantic. Again facing the uncertainty of insecurity of income, their goal an isolated speck in an ocean on the opposite hemisphere, they sold their home and possessions and set out with their young child, winter approaching, to cross the continent on the first stage of her final odyssey.

Traveling by auto, trailing a caravan with special fittings for the wheelchair, and equipped for overnight stops, the trio spent three months visiting Bahá'í communities in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec. In Montreal they stayed at the Maxwell home, the only Canadian home in which 'Abd'u'l-Bahá stayed during His visit to North America in 1912. Catherine addressed meetings and a children's class. This part of the journey, undertaken at the request of the National Spiritual Assembly, helped to develop in the Canadian Bahá'í community a heightened awareness of pioneering in preparation for the discharge of that community's widening international responsibilities, anticipated in the Tablets of the Divine Plan. Their journey included a sojourn with Catherine's mother.

From Montreal they flew to Dublin, Ireland, and then to London, meeting and inspiring the friends in both centers. They departed from Southampton on March 29, 1966, on the R.M.M.V. Capetown Castle and arrived on St. Helena on April 9, living in a hotel and then in part of the ground floor of a town house. Four months later, Clifford was appointed to a teaching position in the school system of the British colony. Once again their income became more dependable and the position opened to them a small government-owned house.

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Elizabeth Stamp was the first Bahá'í pioneer on St. Helena Island. She stayed at her post throughout the Ten Year Crusade before returning to the United States for reasons of health. Mrs. Stamp died in Connecticut in 1970.

They were deeply interested in all the people on the island and made many friends from all walks of life. Although Catherine's health was continuing to deteriorate, all who knew her were inspired and cheered by her warmth, keen intelligence, wide interests and courage. She continued to maintain a voluminous correspondence, showing in her letters a sensitivity to the individualities of each of her correspondents. She continued to direct household affairs and supervised the care of her son, developing a close and affectionate relationship with him.

On St. Helena, as had been the case throughout her life, the medical doctors who attended Catherine went out of their way to ensure that she had the best possible care. However, her illness continued to progress and it became increasingly difficult for her to breathe. A machine was sent by friends from the United States in an attempt to help her respiration. After a few weeks of rapid deterioration of her health, she died in the early morning of October 25, 1967.

Her resting place in the hills of St. Helena is marked with a memorial contributed by Canadian friends and the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada.
Commentary

Purging the shadow of racism

We who live in the late 20th century are in a state of dangerous imbalance. We are scientific and technological giants, but moral and spiritual dwarfs. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the stark contrast between our ability to have instantaneous communication with every part of the planet and our inability to rid ourselves of prejudice. In spite of the overwhelming scientific evidence that humanity is one species and no segment of it is either intellectually or physically inferior, prejudice in the form of ethnocentrism and racism persists.

Prejudice against people belonging to a different tribe or culture dates back many millennia, long before its crystallization into prejudice against those of a different race. Indeed, until the voyages of discovery some 500 years ago, there was little contact between people of the three major races, who were isolated from one another by formidable geographical barriers. Since that time, even though isolating barriers have been eliminated through advances in technology, prejudice continues its long history by being passed from generation to generation. The most extreme form of prejudice—racism—has now infected the human family in every part of the globe. No one is completely immune to it.

At this point in our social and spiritual evolution, we stand at a great watershed in history—we are at the threshold of planetary maturity. This generation must explore the root causes of racism, understand them, and then alter those personal attitudes and ways of looking at others that prevent amity and concord.

Understanding prejudice requires the recognition that in an earlier time it played a key role in social organization. Throughout history, humanity has been divided into groups: tribal, ethnic, national, and others. Irrespective of the size and type of the group, prejudice against others served the function of forging identity, solidarity, a sense of belonging and acceptance—the bases for both physical and psychological security. Those outside of the group, the "others," were cast in the role of adversaries.

In the past, negative feelings about "others" were used to form in-group cohesion and to enable the group to continue as a separate entity; they engendered loyalty and closer cooperation among the members. Compared to "their way," "our way" of life and of doing things was perceived as superior or even the only way.

In the face of perceived threats from adversaries, the tribal, ethnic or national group would forget its internal squabbles and problems when it was necessary to mobilize to defend itself. Prejudice against others was a strong motivator for protecting the group; it was an insurance against military defeat, exploitation, enslavement, absorption, and even the obliteration of the group itself.

In our time, we can no longer use prejudice against others as an instrument for our own survival. It has become obsolete, just as war itself has become unthinkable as a means of settling disputes in a nuclear age. Yet, a racist mentality lingers on in 20th-century society—dividing us from each other, tying us separately with ropes of prejudice, suspicion and contention. Why?

Let us look first at the differences between a healthy sense of self-esteem or self-worth and its unhealthy extreme of narcissism and egotism. Having a high regard for one's race, ethnicity or nationality is in a real sense an extension of a high regard for one's self. Feelings of self-worth and self-esteem are psychologically healthy, but when positive group identity is accompanied by prejudice toward others, it is a perversion and very destructive.

In the same way that ideas of self-worth can be perverted into egotism and narcissism, a positive sense of group identity can be perverted into the sickness of racism and ethnocentrism. When prejudice causes the individual to assign negative characteristics to an entire group, the perversion is complete.

Racism is attractive because it gives a person a false sense of self-righteousness, superiority, and psychological security. It marks the boundaries that define the in-group versus the out-group. Racism and ethnocentrism are thus perversions of the noble impulse of love for one's own people and culture. Yet, the love of one's own people, culture and nation is not at all incompatible with the respect and love of others. Love for one's heritage need not be expressed by hatred and animosity toward others. All cultures, races and ethnic groups belong to one human family and should be equally valued—since it is now well-established that biologically there is but one race, the human race. Prof. Jay Gould of Harvard University writes: "Human races are not separate species. . . . They are recent, poorly differentiated sub-populations of our modern species, Homo Sapiens . . . marked by remarkably small genetic separations."

The nuclear age has made all our past instruments of limited group security obsolete. The only way that we can now have genuine security is to eliminate racism—a barrier of the defunct
old order that keeps us from our cherished goal of the healing unity necessary for permanent world peace.

It is time to realize that prejudice, a twisted and insidious emotion, has outlived its historical effectiveness. It can only motivate social and political policies that are oppressive and divisive. We need to recognize our larger kinship to the whole species.

Group identity, belonging, and solidarity are the bases for both physical and psychological security. Recognizing this legitimate need for security, we need to extend and widen the limited ethnic and racial allegiances we now have. In addition to love for our own group, we can each develop a sense of belonging to the whole human race, a sense of solidarity with all peoples and cultures who are, after all, only superficially different from our own. The more we learn about others and the more we understand our inherent similarities and recognize our common humanity—the more effectively we can eliminate our prejudices.

Ethnic identity need not and should not be abandoned as the price of peace. Universal solidarity can be achieved by connecting the diverse peoples of the world in a chain of interlocking circles—each retaining its cultural heritage, yet each linking harmoniously with the larger heritage of mankind.

Freedom from racism, prejudice, divisiveness and hatred is true freedom. It is the foundation for a lasting and meaningful world peace, the kind of peace that provides not only for tranquility among the peoples of the earth but also within the heart and mind of each individual.

Prejudice was a stone-age tool of primitive groups of human beings, isolated physically and psychologically from one another. It served the group's esprit de corps and identity. Now that social, demographic, scientific, technological and information revolutions have transformed our formerly vast planet into a global village, racism and ethnocentrism are not only obsolete, they stand in the way of our species' survival. Anthropologists tell us that humanity evolved physically in Africa and then, after millions of years of living together, dispersed over the globe. In our time the branches of the human family can come together again. We must make it a planetary family reunion, enjoying our diversity yet feeling the deep bonds of unity in an everlasting peace.

FOOTNOTE

Cameroon

The third Regional Baha'i Youth Conference for the North West Province of Cameroon was held last December 16-17 in Bamenda. Fifty-three young Baha'is from 10 localities in the province gathered to consult on "Transformation."

Workshops conducted by the youth included "Training Our Spiritual Selves," "The Fields of Service for Youth," and "The Challenges of Modern Society to the Baha'i Youth."

A two-day deepening institute followed the conference at which topics of study included the Covenant, the sufferings of Baha'u'llah, the Six Year Plan, and Baha'í laws.

Pictured are many of those who took part last December in a Regional Baha'i Youth Conference in Bamenda, Cameroon. Six people embraced the Faith during the conference.

Bahá'í News/June 1990 9
Mr. Furútan visits Soviet Union

On March 16, the Hand of the Cause of God ‘Alí-Akbar Furútan left the Holy Land to visit the Bahá’ís in the Soviet Union.

Before departing he said, “My heartfelt wish for many years has been that once again my eyes might behold the vast, rich land of Russia, especially because in 1930 I received a letter from the beloved Guardian, which he penned himself, stating the following: ‘It is my hope that you will, in the future, be able to render great services in Russia.’”

At the University of Dushanbe, Mr. Furútan spoke to 400 people, of whom only 25 were Bahá’ís, although he was unable to speak openly about the Faith. On April 19, in Moscow, he was interviewed for a program about the Faith on Soviet Television.

During a visit to Moscow University, Mr. Furútan was invited to address a seminar at the Institute of Psychology and Pedagogy. Expecting an audience of perhaps 30, he was quite surprised to find more than 300 students in attendance. His topic was the relationship of psychology to religion, and he was able to speak directly about the Faith.

The highlight of Mr. Furútan’s visit to date has been the election at Ridván of the local Spiritual Assembly of Moscow. On April 24, the following message was telephoned to the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany and relayed to the Universal House of Justice via electronic mail:

“After 60 years, the local Spiritual Assembly of Moscow has been reformed in the presence of the Hand of the Cause of God ‘Alí-Akbar Furútan. . . the local Spiritual Assembly was honored to meet with the Hand of the Cause and Counsellor Polin Rafat. Heavy agenda and great responsibilities await us. Yours in His service, the local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Moscow.”

Sakhalin Island

Abbas Katirai (left), a long-time pioneer and former member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Japan, arrived with his wife, Resvanieh, March 24 in Sakhalin, opening the Soviet island to the Faith. Since Sakhalin was the last remaining goal of the Ten Year Crusade (1953-63), Mr. and Mrs. Katirai have become Knights of Bahá’u’lláh. With Mr. Katirai in this photograph, taken at the market in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, are his son Foad (in hat and dark glasses) and two friends.

Germany

Active teaching is under way in East Germany. Local Spiritual Assemblies and individual Bahá’ís from West Germany have established contact with mayors and other public officials in East Germany, and have received permission from those authorities to have information stands in various cities.

Inquiries from residents in East Germany are regularly received at the National Bahá’í Office in West Germany. On February 6, a letter was received from someone who had been introduced to the Faith through a pamphlet and who, after reading it, wrote: “I have reached the conviction that I must be a member of ‘our’ Faith. I am sorry that I do not have my own house, because I would have offered a room for receiving people to talk about our Faith and to enlist every interested citizen of our country to our Cause. There are realistic opportunities for an . . . extension of our Faith in East Germany.”
Argentina

About 1,250 people including 400 who were not Bahá'ís attended the 50th anniversary Commemorative Conference of the passing of the Hand of the Cause of God May Bolles Maxwell, which was held February 27-March 1 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Attendees came from as far away as Canada, Hawaii, Israel and Spain, and seven Indian tribes were represented.

The special guest at the conference was Mrs. Maxwell's daughter, the Hand of the Cause God Amatu'l-Bahá Rühíyyih Khanum. Also warmly welcomed were three members of the Continental Board of Counsellors: Eloy Anello, Isabel de Calderón and Shapoor Monadjem.

The conference was focused on remembrances of Mrs. Maxwell's many international services and her flame-like love for the Cause of God which led her, in ill health at the age of 70, to journey to the southernmost outpost of the Faith in South America and, in the words of the beloved Guardian, "lay down her life in such a spirit of consecration and self-sacrifice as to merit the crown of martyrdom."

During the conference the Hand of the Cause, accompanied by Counsellor Monadjem and a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Argentina, had a filmed interview with the president of that country, Carlos Menem, and two members of his Cabinet.

On the final day of the conference, Amatu'l-Bahá Rühíyyih Khanum was received by the mayor of Buenos Aires and presented him with a copy in Spanish of the pamphlet, "A Pattern for Future Society." She also met with the president of the Foundation for Peace and Brotherhood.

Twelve people were enrolled in the Faith during the conference.

Ivory Coast

Pictured are some of the 150 Bahá'ís who attended the Harmittan Bahá'í School last December in Ivory Coast. They came from 21 localities, with some walking nearly 30 kilometers (18 miles) to be present.

United Kingdom

A special dedication ceremony was held April 14 at the newly refurbished Hazíratu'l-Quds of the United Kingdom.

The gathering marked the reopening of the National Centre following a 15-month period during which it was closed for extensive remodeling and upgrading of facilities. The renovations took place under the guidance of the Universal House of Justice to allow the Centre to better serve not only the Bahá'ís of the U.K. but the worldwide Bahá'í community as well. The Centre now houses the Office of the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly and the Bahá'í Information Office.

A conference on "Community and Diversity," sponsored by the Association for Bahá'í Studies for English-speaking Europe, was held April 6-8 at Newman College in Birmingham, England.

Forty people from the United Kingdom, Ireland and Holland took part in the program, which included the presentation of 18 papers including two from Belgium, whose authors were unable to attend.

The keynote speakers were Prof. Alan Rogers of the University of Reading, a distinguished figure in the fields of adult and continuing education, and Dr. Seosamh Watson, senior lecturer in the faculty of Celtic Studies at University College in Dublin and chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Republic of Ireland.

Thailand

The Spiritual Assembly of Chiang Mai, Thailand, dedicated its new Bahá'í Center last November 12, the anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh.

The governor of Chiang Mai presided, thanking the Bahá'ís for teaching spirituality to the people of Chiang Mai. He said that as the area progresses materially, it needs to progress spiritually as well, and he wished the Bahá'ís success.

Following the dedication ceremony the Wildfire theatre group, which was visiting Chiang Mai, entertained.

That afternoon the Bahá'ís and their guests celebrated the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, an occasion that was considered to be a great success, especially as 37 of the guests accepted the Faith.

Taiwan

The Council of Agriculture of the Executive Yuan (Senate) of Taiwan has agreed to co-sponsor, with the National Spiritual Assembly of Taiwan, a Bahá'í education program on environmental protection. This marks the first formal joint effort between the Bahá'ís of Taiwan and the government, heralding the opening of many new areas for service for the Bahá'ís there.
Papua New Guinea

These children were photographed during a busy day at the LAES Keravat pre-school, one of several pre-schools initiated by the Bahá'ís of Papua New Guinea. Among other things, students at these pre-schools study their a-b-c's, work on carpentry projects, plant trees, and work on developing 'gutpela pasin' (good qualities).

Republic of Ireland

An article in a recent issue of Ireland's Kilkenny Standard Monthly Review opens with the question, “Why is an Iranian accountant selling health foods in Kilkenny?” It goes on to tell the story of a Bahá'í from Rasht in northern Iran who came to Ireland as a refugee from the Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic fundamentalist regime.

Also in Ireland, the Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine carried an article about a Bahá'í in Tralee who is an acupuncturist and psychotherapist as a part of its monthly feature entitled “A Day in the Life of...”

An interview with the Bahá'í, who was a recent runner-up for the Tyringham Practitioner of the Year Award, included a discussion of his life and profession, and mentioned the Faith.

Western Caroline Islands

The Western Caroline Islands have witnessed a large number of declarations since last Ridván. About three and one-half percent of the population of these islands is now Bahá'í.

Panama

A group of Guaymi Indian Bahá'ís, eight men and eight women, took part in the 12th National Craftsmanship Fair held at the Atlapa Convention Centre in Panama.

The group, whose presentation was entitled “Traditions of Guaymi Dances,” came from Boca de Remedio, an indigenous community which is entirely Bahá'í.

The director of the group gave a talk on the Bahá'í message of the unity of mankind and told of the work of the Faith in preserving Guaymi culture.

Pamphlets about the Faith were given to members of the audience, among whom were the Minister of Commerce and Industry and other national government officials.

Israel

Voices of Israel is the first English-language poetry journal in Israel. Besides carrying verse by Israeli poets, the current issue (Volume 17) introduces poems by three persons not resident in Israel, three of whom are Bahá'ís: Jeff Williams and Michael Fitzgerald of the U.S. and Chris Cholas of Belize. The Faith is mentioned in notes about the contributors.

Australia

Artist Lorni Hyland (right), an Australian Aboriginal Bahá'í, displays a sample of her work for the friends. The tapestry is an example of traditional Aboriginal design. She is holding carved and painted Emu eggs.
India

David Hofman, retired member of the Universal House of Justice, arrived last December 11 in Trivandrum, India, for a week-long visit to Kerala State. The visit had been announced in a leading newspaper which helped inform the public of his presence.

While in Trivandrum, Mr. Hofman was interviewed on television and on All-India Radio. During the radio interview, he was asked to talk about various aspects of the Faith, especially its relevance to present-day world challenges. Mr. Hofman also took the opportunity to invite his listeners to visit the Bahá’í House of Worship in New Delhi.

Mr. Hofman was the guest at a well-attended press conference organized by the Press Club of Trivandrum, speaking of the Mission of Bahá’u’lláh in building a new civilization. More than 50 reporters, representing all of the newspapers in Kerala, took part in the conference.

A second press conference, at Ernakulam, was equally well-attended and successful.

Mr. Hofman and Counsellor S. Nagaratnam were received by the former Maharaja of Kerala for an hour-long meeting, the first time the Message of Bahá’u’lláh had been discussed with the royal family. Mr. Hofman gave the former Maharaja a copy of “The Promise of World Peace” and invited him to visit the House of Worship.

Among the other dignitaries who met with Mr. Hofman were the Chief Minister of Kerala State and the head of the Institute for English Studies.

The Rotary Club of Central Trivandrum held a special meeting in honor of Mr. Hofman, at which the club president quoted from the peace statement while introducing Mr. Hofman. After speaking about the Faith and its relevance to this scientific age, Mr. Hofman was asked many questions.

One of the most memorable events of Mr. Hofman’s visit was his participation in the inauguration of Bahá’í Bhavan, the state Hazíratu’l-Quds. More than 150 people attended the ceremony, which was presided over by Counsellor Nagaratnam. It was announced on radio and television and covered that evening on a television news report.

World Centre

The diversity of these young volunteers serving at the Bahá’í World Centre in Haifa, Israel, demonstrates the unity of mankind in action and has an impact that is felt far beyond the Centre itself. In February, Glen Duncan, a Bahá’í from Australia and former worker at the World Centre, shared the photo with another Australian youth whom he met while traveling in Eastern Europe. On looking at it the young man, who had been bitterly complaining about the bleak and ugly city in which they were staying, was transformed. ‘All those smiling, happy young faces together from all around the world,’ he said, ‘is the most amazing thing I’ve ever seen. Tell me more about this religion of yours!’

Trinidad/Tobago

Following a successful teaching campaign in Chaguanaus which brought 1,000 new believers into the Faith, the National Teaching Committee of Trinidad and Tobago launched a new teaching-deepening campaign in central and southern Trinidad dedicated to the memory of the Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery.

The target areas were Las Lomas No. 2, St. Helena, Kelly Village, and the surrounding areas in central Trinidad, and Mayo, Whiteland, Poonah and surrounding areas in the south. The general plan included visiting and deepening Bahá’ís in those communities while teaching their families, friends and neighbors.

From September 15-December 31 the campaign witnessed the enrollment of 809 new believers, restored four local Assemblies and two children’s classes, held 25 deepenings, distributed Bahá’í literature among isolated Bahá’ís and non-Bahá’ís, and organized two special meetings for old and new Bahá’ís to meet with Counsellors Rodrigo Tomas from Costa Rica and Peter McLaren from Venezuela.

Romania

Bahá’i activities in Romania are gathering momentum as student pioneers from Germany help that neophyte community to hold firesides. The friends report a steady flow of new believers, and the Bahá’í community of Cluj, now 17 strong, has asked permission from the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany to form Romania’s first local Spiritual Assembly. They are also searching for a suitable location for a Bahá’í Center.

There has been one article about the Faith in a Romanian newspaper and interviews on radio and television that focused on the humanitarian and medical assistance offered by the Bahá’ís to the people of Romania in recent weeks.
Philippines

The village of Mabaras-Liwanag, in the hinterlands of Oriental Mindoro Province in the Philippines, can be reached only on foot, and the journey is at least two days' walk from the nearest highway. The local Spiritual Assembly of that isolated community decided that a cooperative store would render an important service to the Mangyan community. So one was planned with the intention that all profits would be saved in a special fund for teaching and socio-economic projects.

Already the Assembly has had many opportunities to use the fund to benefit the community. The first purchase was a Coleman lantern for use during evening meetings, as there is no electricity in the village.

When Bahá'ís noticed that the community water supply, derived from a nearby spring, needed cleaning, they bought four bags of cement and a few tools to build a small catchment. Now there are plans to improve their tutorial schoolhouse, so they have been acquiring lumber for the construction of a permanent building.

Mabaras-Liwanag is one of a number of villages under the civil jurisdiction of Barangay Panaytayan. The Barangay has come to trust the Spiritual Assembly and honors its decisions in settling disputes in the village. The Assembly conducts weekly deepening classes that are attended by about 50 people, who maintain a spirit of warmth in the open and courteous consultations.

Because of the Assembly's success in managing the affairs of its community, Mangyans from other villages have been visiting to see how the meetings are conducted and how the consultations are handled.

The Bahá'ís of the Philippines held a seminar/workshop February 19-25 on "Bahá'í Radio Programming." Counsellor Vicente Samaniego, an Auxiliary Board member and three members of the National Teaching Committee helped trainer Douglas Moore, a Bahá'í from Alaska, conduct the seminar for 15 trainees.

Canada

Students at the Maxwell International Bahá'í School in British Columbia, Canada, are using music and drama as well as public talks to reach out to the community with the Message of Bahá'u'lláh. Performances already held include one on SaltSpring Island, commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Bahá'ís' presence there, and another at the Education Network Conference in Vancouver.
United States

Pictured is this year's exhibit by the Bahá’ís of Manatee County, Florida, at the Manatee County Fair, whose theme was 'The Beauty and Bounty of Manatee County.' The Bahá’í exhibit, which included continuous showings of video tapes depicting the Shrines of Bahá’u’lláh and the Bab, the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, and Bahá’í Houses of Worship around the world, won first prize in the category of Religious and Service Organizations. This marked the 21st year in which the Bahá’ís of Manatee County have taken part in the Fair, which this year drew more than 100,000 visitors.

Hungary

The Bahá’í singing group “El Viento Canta” (The Singing Wind) continued its tour of Eastern Europe in January with a number of concerts in Hungary, each of which was followed by “coffee house” firesides at which lively discussions of the Faith continued for several hours.

In Sopron, about 400 people heard the group, whose members were able to speak openly about the Faith. On January 23 they performed for about 150 people including the Argentinian Ambassador at the Military Club in Budapest. Also attending were students from Chile, Peru, Mexico and Venezuela.

The following evening, four members of the group attended a fireside at the home of a Hungarian Bahá’í at which people declared their faith, one from Hungary and the other from East Germany.

Pakistan

The fourth phase of the Saied Hindi Teaching Campaign in Pakistan ended February 23 with 369 people accepting the Faith, among them people of Muslim, Ahmadiyyah and Hindu backgrounds.

In addition, 75 new Bahá’í localities have been opened and two new local Spiritual Assemblies formed, at Khanpur and Chak No. 8P Katta. The latter is the world’s first local Assembly comprised entirely of newly enrolled Bahá’ís of Ahmadiyyah background.

A significant victory is the large number of women who have been enrolled. In Chak No. 21, one Ahmadiyyah woman was enrolled, and in another village nine women embraced the Cause. Altogether, 100 of the new believers are women.

Germany

Since the opening of the Berlin Wall last November, the Bahá’ís of West Berlin and West Germany have distributed some 250,000 copies of a shortened version of “The Promise of World Peace.” The shortened version is called “Friedenschancen” (Chances for Peace) and is being given to East German visitors to the West and directly to citizens in the German Democratic Republic.

The National Bahá’í Office in Langenhain, West Germany, now receives letters and inquiries about the Faith on a daily basis from East German residents. Interviews with hundreds of seekers have taken place, while dozens of interested people who offered their names and addresses are being visited by traveling teachers.

The mayors of various cities in East Germany have received delegations of West German Bahá’ís and have accepted copies of the peace statement.

The National Spiritual Assembly has given permission to West German Bahá’ís and local Spiritual Assemblies to teach freely in East Germany, and has made teaching, proclamation and deepening there its first priority for the remaining period of the Six Year Plan, in addition to its goals in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.
Ecuador

Rufino Gualavisí Farinango, a renowned indigenous Bahá’í teacher, died March 23 in Otavalo, Ecuador.

Mr. Gualavisí taught the Faith to thousands of indigenous people and campesinos and helped open many difficult areas of the country to the Faith, often accompanied by his spiritual father and teaching companion, Counsellor Raúl Pavón. Although beaten and imprisoned at various times, he remained steadfast and never once wavered in his teaching efforts.

He is buried in the cemetery "Parques del Recuerdo" in Quito, on the left side and adjoining the resting place of his good friend and staunch admirer, the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’lláh Mühajir. On learning of Mr. Gualavisí's passing, the Universal House of Justice cabled the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador:

"Deeply saddened news passing outstanding sacrificial teacher Cause God Rufino Gualavisí. His noble qualities, his loving nature, his immense services indigenous masses native land never to be forgotten and worthy source pride your community. Urge hold befitting memorial meetings his blessed memory throughout country. Assure fervent prayers Holy Threshold for progress his radiant soul Kingdom on high. Kindly extend heartfelt condolences family and friends."

Leeward Islands

The "Sparks of Peace" Bahá’í Youth Project, a collaborative effort between the Continental Board of Counsellors and the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Caribbean area, was designed to encourage native West Indian youth to travel and teach while providing young Bahá’ís from other areas an opportunity to learn more about the Caribbean.

The project was sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Leeward Islands and coordinated by its National Youth Committee.

Fourteen National Assemblies took part, sending 24 youth and chaperones to the project. These formed five teams that traveled and taught in nine islands and countries before convening in Guyana for a Bahá’í Youth Conference.

Each of the groups was identified by a team name:

"Mirrors of Reflection" went to the U.S. Virgin Islands. Most of their activities were service-oriented such as cleaning and painting equipment in two parks and working with government officials on a proposal for increasing awareness of United Nations' functions in the Caribbean.

The team also did some direct teaching, presented several firesides and shared the Message with about 30 young people at Wesleyan Holiness Youth Camp.

Meanwhile, the “Song of the Wind” group visited Dominica and St. Vincent, working on service activities for the Association of the Disabled.

The "Quddus" team visited both Guadeloupe and Martinique, helping the former community realize its goal of opening two villages to the Faith.

They taught, took part in service activities, and were interviewed by radio and newspaper reporters.

In Barbados, the "Mulla Husayn" team’s activities included direct teaching, firesides and public meetings that led to a number of enrollments.

In Grenada, they joined the "Mona" teaching campaign already in progress, dividing their time among teaching, deepening and doing chores.

The "Royal Falcon" team spent its time in Trinidad, both north and south. Most of their efforts were spent on direct teaching, and they enrolled about 150 people.

Zaire

As a result of the efforts of a group of traveling teachers who braved the nearly impenetrable jungle of the Ubundu zone in the province of Haute-Zaïre, more than 200 people have become Bahá’ís in that remote hard-to-reach area of Zaire.

Eighty people were enrolled in the village of Batiamoliko; in another village of about 40, the entire population became Bahá’ís; and in the village of Bafale, there are now more than 50 adult Bahá’ís and about 40 Bahá’í children.

In spite of the difficulty of reaching the area, the friends do their best to teach the Faith. The people in the Ubundu zone are receptive, and there are now 12 Bahá’í communities in the area.

The Bahá’í Club at the University of Kisangani in Haute-Zaïre has been given its own room in which to meet and host activities. The club, which has 48 members, has sponsored a literary competition and shown a film about the Bahá’í House of Worship in India.

Recently, the club sponsored a conference on abortion, which included speakers from the university’s psychology and education departments. The conference drew nearly 1,000 students.
Haiti

One of four Bahá'ís who went last November to teach in the village of Anse-a-Macon, on the island of Cayemite off the coast of Haiti, meets the wife of a new believer and some of her neighbors. The Bahá'ís on the island are holding deepenings and children's classes for its 12,000 residents who, it is believed, will all become Bahá'ís.

A Bahá'í children's class in the village of Anse-a-Macon, on the island of Cayemite, off the coast of Haiti. A team of four Bahá'ís traveled to the island last November to teach and, it was hoped, to enroll the island's 12,000 residents.

Brazil

Reports from the Southern Teaching Project in Alvorada, Brazil, say that in two days, February 13-14, 228 people were enrolled in the Faith.

As of the end of February, more than 600 new believers had been enrolled.

Alvorada has had a Bahá'í school for the past 15 years, so many of the new Bahá'ís are long-time friends of the Faith. As a result, the campaign is bringing in new believers who are already well-informed about the Faith.

While enrollments continue and the campaign has been extended beyond its February closing date, deepenings have begun through visits to the new Bahá'ís and their families.

The efforts of Auxiliary Board member Tuba Maani, four local Spiritual Assemblies, and pioneers and traveling teachers from three states in Brazil have contributed greatly to the success of the project.

Cook Islands

Pa Tepareu Ariki, Lady Davis, hereditary ruler and president of the House of Ariki and wife of the former prime minister of the Cook Islands, Sir Thomas Davis, died last February 2 in New Zealand. The 68-year-old Ariki, lovingly known to her people as "Aun-tie Pa," was one of the Cook Islands' earliest Bahá'ís, having accepted the Faith more than 30 years ago.

The Universal House of Justice expressed its sorrow in a cable to her husband that called attention to "her outstanding services behalf her people" and advised that appropriate memorial gatherings be held throughout the Cook Islands and at the House of Worship in Samoa.

In 1985, Pa Ariki was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Cook Islands. She attended, as part of the Cook Islands contingent, the dedication of the House of Worship in Apia, Western Samoa.

Also in 1985 she presented a copy of the peace statement to her husband, the prime minister, on behalf of the National Assembly of the Cook Islands. As a result, he and Lady Davis visited the Bahá’í World Centre and met with the Universal House of Justice.
REJOICE ANNOUNCE COMPLETION RESTORATION NORTH WING OF HOUSE OF 'ABDUL-LLAH PASHA IN 'AKKA PERMITTING FIRST VISIT ADDITIONAL AREA THIS HOLY PLACE BY CURRENT GROUP PILGRIMS ON SEVENTEENTH JUNE. WING CONTAINS HALL IN WHICH 'ABDUL-BAHÁ HELD FEASTS AND OTHER GATHERINGS AND ALSO ROOM OCCUPIED BY SHOGHI EFFENDI DURING BOYHOOD, BOTH ROOMS BEFITTINGLY FURNISHED BY AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚHíYIH KHÁNUM.

JOYFUL EVENT COINCIDED LETTING CONTRACT MAJOR WORKS EXTENSION MAIN TERRACE OF SHRINE OF THE BÁB. THIS INITIAL STAGE CONSTRUCTION TERRACES, COSTING APPROXIMATELY 550,000 DOLLARS, DUE TO BE COMPLETED IN FOUR MONTHS.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
JUNE 19, 1990
Building ‘new Order,’ brick by brick

2 p.m. Saturday, April 7, 1990.
The "Trabies" are passing us.
"Look at the Americans, mommy," the children cry, waving out their back windows at us. "Their cars are loaded down to the ground, and they’re going so slow!"

We are on the E40 Autobahn, headed east, between Karl Marx Stadt and Dresden, deep in East Germany.

All last year I had tried to sell my Volkswagen LT28 van, after deciding that I didn’t have the time or the inclination to turn it into a motor home as I had planned. It should have been easy to sell, but it wasn’t. The price was right, the machine sound (even though it was painted six or seven shades of yellow)—but no one even asked about it. Then I got word that a load of stuff was needed in Poland to help construct a Baha’i summer school—plumbing fixtures, tubing, supplies. I volunteered to take it.

Plumbing fixtures, tubing, supplies. At the border with the Deutsches Demokratisches Republik, talking to the Grenz polizei beamter (customs official): "Let’s see, I’ve got three toilets—no, four, counting the portapotty; 11 windows, a blackboard, blankets . . . ." all in my fractured German. He waves us through.

One van becomes two as my brother-in-law, Larry Creitz from Luxembourg, joins in. He is carrying more tubing, fittings, a ditto machine and an overhead projector from the last Ice Age. People, too. Harold (South) came to look for places he and his wife could live on their Social Security—you can live quite well in the East if you have hard currency. Danis (Ashberger) came to work on installing the toilets, tubing and fittings. Suzi came to do whatever needed doing; Monireh came to cook; Betty and I came along to do the plumbing, cooking, cleaning, driving, or whatever.

Heading east on the E40. Joints in the cement slabs thump the tires regularly, sharply, shifting the load forward and then back. That’s when the road is smooth enough to feel the joints—not at all very often. Miles (kilometers—more kilometers) of cobblestone autobahn, speed limit 40km (24 mph). Even at that speed we are jolted. Larry gets a speeding ticket. He is following us, but the policeman probably thinks someone with Luxembourg license plates will be able to talk to him. He’s right. We learn about his son, his daughter, get their address so Suzi can write. We depart laughing.

Last night we worked until 1:30 a.m. Loading. Deciding. Refiguring. The copper tubes for the water supply had arrived at 10 p.m., and they were too long to fit in either van. At 11:30 p.m. we came to the conclusion that the rack we were trying to make fit on top of Larry’s van wasn’t strong enough to carry 80 kilos (160-plus pounds) of whippy copper. Everything went into the garage with the door closed for a "hacksaw party" (German quiet hours are in effect at from 11:30, even on a Friday night). By 1:30 a.m. everything was loaded (except for our luggage) and we fell into bed for three and a half hours of sleep. Larry insisted we had to be on the road by 6 a.m.

4:30 p.m. Saturday, April 7: We have arrived at Goerlitz, on the East German/Polish border. A traffic cop waves us toward the end of a line of cars waiting to cross. The line stretches out of sight. We begin following it back. After several false turns we find the end—1,500 or 2,000 cars back and four kilometers from the border. The line is moving, though. Every 15-20 minutes someone fires up and we move forward 100-200 meters. Behind us, the line stretches to at least seven kilometers. Thank heaven Larry insisted that we leave early—the folks behind us must have left Germany around 7 or 8 a.m.

Some of the cars ahead of us and behind us don’t fire up. The people have been playing their stereos, headlights burning, forgotten. Or they have flooded their carburetors. Everyone gets out to push. We’re all in this together. East German families along the route have set up Imbiss (snack) stands along the route, capitalizing on the capitalists. A table, a few bottles, a coffee pot, and a bucket of soapy water to wash the cups. Carbonated orange juice is excellent. Coffee, not bad. We move on.

10:15 p.m.: We arrive at the border. Harold has misplaced his little visa application that was in his passport. We are all praying. We’ve heard about bureaucracy in the East Bloc ("Your papperss are not in orrrrrrr! You will come mit me, plissis!"") Harold is in Larry’s van. Larry gets out to talk to the man at the passport window. The man nods, picks up another visa form, fills it out correctly, gives it to Larry to give to Harold, and waves them through.

*Trabants: East German autobahn machines—small, plastic-bodied cars often seen creeping along in the slow lane on West German autobahns, where there is usually no speed limit.

This diary of a trip to Poland last April 7-12 carrying supplies to help build a Baha’i summer school at Hajj’any was written by James S. Smith, a pioneer to West Germany. The trip was made under the auspices of the European Teaching Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany. Besides Mr. Smith, those transporting the supplies were his wife, Betty, and Danis Ashberger from Germany, and Larry and Monireh Creitz; their daughter, Suzi; and Harold South, all pioneers from Luxembourg.
through. We are next.

The man at the Polish end of the customs office is surprised when I say "Djinguye!" (Polish for "thank you"—my only word of Polish). He comments at length, smiling, and waves us through. Now for the customs office.

"What's all this?"

"Well, I've got toilets and sinks and plumbing for a Bahá'í school we're building near Olesnica..." He nods and waves us through. It has been a long day for him, too.

10:45 p.m.: We are rolling through the Polish night. Hitchhikers stand in the middle of the road, wearing black, trying to flag us down or commit suicide; it's not entirely clear which. After the third incident, we decide that it's probably both. Larry is leading. He has slowed down to 80 kph, then to 70—60 in the towns. Even in the dark it's easy to see that this was once a prosperous area. The houses are large, ornate, solid. They are also in an advanced state of disrepair. Memories of the war are still fresh in many walls.

We pass closed gas stations with people lined up in the darkened driveways, sleeping in their cars, waiting for morning. We have enough fuel to make it to Hajdany (hahn-da-nahn-eh), the farm near Olesnica where the school will be built. Driving so slowly uses less gas. We pass another station—it looks like the rest, but there is a red light glowing on one of the pumps—someone is getting gas! We pull in. He really is open, and he takes West German marks. We tank up on 14 Deutschemarks. Gas seems rather cheap.

Midnight: Pride and stubbornness give way to common sense. Betty takes over the driving, and I crawl into the back of the van. As I bounce around on the back seat, I am not really asleep, but not really awake either. Just the way I was while I was driving, only not really awake either. Just the back of the van. As I bounce around on the back seat, I am not really asleep, but not really awake either. Just the way I was while I was driving, only not really awake either. Just the back of the van. As I bounce around on the back seat, I am not really asleep, but not really awake either. Just the back of the van.


"I am Swabo (Tsvahbo). I speak one month English." (He has been studying English for one month; already, he speaks it better than I did German after my first two years in Germany.)

"I am Hanno." "I am Törle." "I am Karsten." "I am Helen." "I am Hugh." "I am Terry." Sunday is a blur because my brain isn't ready to function so quickly after the long trip. We drive Farhad's son, Anise, into Wroclaw (Vrotswahv, once known as Breslau). He has to return to his apartment to study for an exam. First, he takes us shopping downtown. The stores are closing, but we buy some candy. Prices look horrible—200,000 zloty for a dress, for instance. We get out the calculator. Let's see, 9,500 zloty to the dollar—the dress is $21 U.S. Cheap, no? Except Swabo has told us that his mother, a telephone operator, earns 200,000 zloty a month. Everything is relative. Anise says the quality isn't very good. Under the layers of soot and dirt, the older buildings are lovely. The over-all effect, though, is somewhat depressing. But the people are nice.

Focus in. Monday, 9:45 a.m.: I am loading broken brick onto a flat-bed trailer, ready to haul it out of the way so that the ground can be filled in, improving drainage. The trailer isn't very strong, so I call Helge over with the tractor to pull it to the dump site. We have been working for two hours already, and we're tired. I hold the tongue of the trailer to line it up with the tractor. Helge backs up.

I am suddenly reminded of Gene Wilder in the movie Young Frankenstein. He is jammed between a revolving bookcase and the entrance to a hidden passage. "Put-the-candle-back-in-the-socket!" he screams. My hand is jammed between the tractor hitch and trailer ring. "Pull-the-tractor-forward-now-PLEASE!" Helge looks back, pulls forward. My hand does not feel good inside the glove. I pull the glove off, and wish I hadn't. There is a large hole in the top of the web of my hand between the thumb and fingers, an-
Anna Monadjem (the hostess and owner of the house), Monireh Creitz (Luxembourg), Törle Klapp (West Germany) and Betty Smith (West Germany).

other ragged one on the other side. Lots of red. It doesn’t hurt so much as feel—mashed. I wiggle my thumb. Everything works, but I’m dripping on the landscape. I clamp my other hand over the mess to slow down the drip and head for the house. Suzi comes along to take care of first aid. I keep checking myself for signs of shock, faintness—all I feel is stupid. I have worked with farm equipment before. I know better.

Swabo and Helge go with Betty and me to the clinic in Olesnica. Swabo’s English is put to the test, as no one speaks anything but Polish. I don’t recommend getting hurt in Poland. The doctor is kind, concerned, quick. Thank heaven for the quick, for she has no local anesthetic. There is no medicine at the hospital. In two minutes, she cleans and staples my hand together. Thirty seconds later I am on my way across town to the pharmacy to buy antibiotics to take back to the hospital. In two minutes, I am back at the farm. What a difference! I have worked with farm equipment before. I know better.

11 o’clock: I am back at the farm with a mummified thumb and not a lot of pain. Like I said, mostly stupid. More people arrive. Rudi, Ashad, Eric. From Germany, Denmark, Iceland. I help unload the trailer I had started with. Suzi and Danis stack the whole and broken bricks in two piles behind the brick outhouse. We work for an hour. Two. I’m ready for tea.

Instead, I get lunch. Monireh has made Persian rice and Chela Kebab. Monireh says the meat is rabbit, and not to tell Suzi. Suzi is suspicious, and won’t eat it. Later, we learn that the Polish word Monireh has used is “rodent,” and not necessarily rabbit. Whatever it is, it is delicious.

7 p.m.: Supper is in shifts now, 10 at a time. More people have arrived. The kitchen is tiny. I hurt now, but not my thumb. Where they gave me the shots.

9 p.m.: We gather for prayers. There are too many people for the kitchen, but no one minds. Everyone is happy.

Tuesday. Wednesday.

The work goes on. They are digging a trench under one of the walls to take the sewer lines to the septic tank, and have come to a meter-diameter boulder. Everyone says that they’ll have to fill in the trench and move to one side. Helen won’t hear of it. She is down in the trench, her long black hair in her face, working the power chisel. Slowly she disappears under the wall. At 8 p.m., after supper, the remains of the stone come out.

Herr Rupert is German. He is not a Bahá’í, but is a friend to the Bahá’ís. He has volunteered to do the plastering and mortar work, crossing the GDR and Poland alone on the train. He doesn’t speak any English; Helen speaks no German. They form a team to do the walls on the dining room. Old bricks, weathered beams, wiring disappear beneath a smooth grey face.

In the kitchen, Persians and Poles, Americans and Germans struggle with the coal stove and the one tiny sink. Breakfast, lunch, dinner, and morning and afternoon tea breaks. Outside, 4,000 goslings march and counter-march across the meadows, systematically turning them into deserts. One of the dobermans has a puppy. We are cooks and computer technicians, teachers and housewives, farmers and flyers. At night, around the bonfire in the yard, Ashad plays the flute and Swabo the jazz harmonica. Hanno keeps the rhythm with two sticks from the fire. Everyone sings. As I am falling asleep, I hear birds in the back of the house. A dog has knocked the door off the room where the baby chickens are kept, and they have fled in terror. Anna and I walk through the wet grass with flashlights, finding the crouching birds and tucking them into our arms, calming them. There are 80 in all, and all must be found. The roosters are white, and easy to spot. The hens are red, and blend into the dark. It takes an hour, but we find them. Meanwhile, people are still singing around the fire.

8:15 a.m. Thursday, April 12.

The yellow van is loaded with our luggage. Monireh and Betty, Danis and I must leave. None of us wants to go. Some of the people have already been working on the school building for two hours. Suzi is finishing her architectural sketch of the new kitchen. Yesterday she was filling in a hole with wet cement, her face blackened like a coal miner’s from her work upstairs, pulling beams clear from a rotted ceiling. Törle is taking over the kitchen. Maren and Jürgen have adjusted the saws and have begun making the windows. Maren is the carpenter—her father, an IBM executive, is her assistant.

We don’t want to go, but we do. Down the rutted track through the forest, where we have seen the tiny roe deer. Along the highway toward Olesnica, where every day we have seen the Polish Air Force biplane circling in its training flights. Past the turnoff to the clinic where the patient patients sit waiting for—we couldn’t figure out what they were waiting for. Away from Hajdany, away from our friends, back to Germany and work and our “normal” lives. The world had changed for us, though. And given the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh, we have changed the world a little bit for everyone else, as well. Gin dobry (good day).—James S. Smith
In the many years since becoming Bahá'í, my wife and I had often wondered what it would be like to visit the land of its origin. In 1970 our opportunity arrived; the in-laws came to visit, and offered to look after the four young children, and also the farm. As it happened, the farm work was in a resting time, but how could we make the necessary arrangements in so short a time before the in-laws departed?

After a host of phone calls we managed to book flights that would give us three weeks away. No sooner had we booked than another Bahá'í suggested an improvement: “Why not ask the Universal House of Justice if you could, on the return trip, spend three days in the Holy Land visiting the Shrines?” We wrote and received a welcome, but now another friend said: “Why not go to Constantipole first, and then to Edirne, to visit the House of Bahá’u’lláh before going to Iran?”

More phone calls, and that was squeezed into the schedule! We were amazed that it should have fallen into place so easily. It was obviously the Will of God, but also useful, I thought, to have a wife who was once an airline hostess and knew a lot of the ropes.

The story of our visit to Constantinople and Edirne must wait for another time, as the reader is no doubt as eager to get to the House of the Báb as we were. So, to continue: as our plane landed at Tehran airport we found ourselves in quite another world; we tried to realize how this miracle had come about. Some Bahá’í friends had been alerted to watch for us, and soon we located their waving arms. They took us to a waiting limousine which we later

found belonged to a general of the army, and were whisked away into the traffic. And that was our first experience of the traffic in Iran in 1970. There seemed to be only one law: “Do what you can while you can.” Ordinary policemen did not have the authority to ticket cars, and the drivers took all the liberties they could.

To get back to the story: we were taken to a hotel and then to the National Bahá’í Office to ask for permission to visit as many of the places of early Bahá’í history as our short stay would permit. We were greeted by the national secretary, who asked which places we wanted to visit. I held out my copy of The Dawn-breakers, which we had been reading on the plane, and said, “All of these.” For a moment he was at a loss for words, both because of the impossibility of visiting all those places in three weeks and because, owing to the danger to the Holy Places themselves from visits, the Universal House of Justice had instructed the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran to limit severely all such visits. Already, these places had been put off limits to Bahá’ís living in Iran, and the National Assembly wanted to restrict considerably tours by visiting Bahá’ís.

He said the committee responsible would have to guide us. Could we come back in two days? He then introduced us to Atto, another visiting pilgrim from America, who spoke good Iranian and was looking for companions with whom to share the pilgrimage. This was evidently another intervention of Providence. How could we have possibly found our way around Iran without an interpreter?

We spent the next two days investigating the modern city center, but often came upon unusual sights. Imagine, for instance, a mother and three teen-age daughters shopping in a store, she wearing the ancient traditional dress with veil over the lower half of her face, the daughters all in modern western clothing with no veils. To us, this showed clearly that the ancient and modern cultures existed in Iran side by side. In fact, as we found out later, the Shah was encouraging western ideas while the Mullahs were trying to retain the ancient Muslim ways. At that time the Shah was winning easily, but as we now know, he later lost the throne and the Ayatollah Khomeini led the country back to Islamic fundamentalism.

When we returned to the National Office, the secretary suggested that we start by visiting the House of the Báb in Shíráz, 600 miles to the south. He must have felt this would keep us busy much of our allotted time. Of course, we accepted gladly; it was a most logical place to start our pilgrimage.

Soon we were aboard a long-distance bus for the first leg of our journey, to Isfahán, 300 miles away. As we wound our way through the massed rows of traffic in the city, Atto told us of a recent American visitor who had brought his own car and in seven days had six accidents. Feeling that he had too much to learn about driving in Tehran, the man took a taxi which immediately shot off at high speed into the chaos. The driver went through no less than three red lights, but coming to a green light, he stopped. When his passenger asked why he had stopped at a green light, the taxi driver replied that cer-

This article, “Tracing the Footsteps of the Báb,” was written for Bahá’í News by Ted Cardell, a long-time Bahá’í who has since left the farm in England and now lives in Red Bluff, California.
tainingly some crazy fool would be coming through from the other direction!

Looking around at the occupants of the bus we saw people of every class and occupation, all talking animatedly in Iranian. At the back of the bus sat an attendant with large jugs of water and two glasses to refresh any passenger who called on him. Everyone used the same glasses with a bare rinse. Since there had been a warning on the radio about a cholera epidemic, we decided to contain our thirst until we reached a rest stop.

Soon we were speeding over rough tarmac into the countryside. On our map we saw that the road skirted an enormous desert that stretched over most of the center of Iran. Atto recalled that Iran, the old Persia, had for several thousand years been the site of great battles between competing tyrants. It was the custom of whoever won those battles to burn and destroy the whole countryside. Thus this desert had all been beautiful country at one time.

We covered many featureless miles and passed through a few hamlets until, five hours later, the bus drew up at an eating place. We wondered whether it was safe for tourists to go in, and if the food was clean. Atto assured us that it was and we entered a barren room, full of crude tables and chairs where true peasants sat smoking their hubble-bubble pipes while watching television. We found some soft drinks; the food was simple but adequate, and we reboarded the bus refreshed. The next few hours of bumpy, dusty travel brought only one real change in the scenery. We came to a place where an underground river surfaced, and the scenery was breathtaking. We came to a place where an underground river surfaced, and the people were drawing pure water from it. Our bus stopped while we filled our containers.

During the journey we were mindful that the blessed Báb had traversed this same road on horseback more than a hundred years ago under much different conditions. It had taken Him many days, not 10 hours or so sitting in a comfortable bus. By evening we came to the lovely and famous city of Isfahan, the mid-point of our journey. To say that it is a treasure-house of enthralling architecture only partly describes this jewel of a city. Everywhere there was evidence of thoughtfully created beauty, in the buildings, the streets and the people. It was a sudden and dramatic change from the bleak countryside. We stayed at a hotel that was more like an art museum.

The next morning some local Bahá'ís came and took us to the house of the Beloved of Martyrs and the King of Martyrs. When they were killed by a mob, all the contents of the house had been ransacked and confiscated, and the families were destitute. A maid, however, found a few coins in the wreckage and brought them to the wife. With great disdain she had thrown them to the mob, saying, "What God has taken, I will not take back!"

The present custodians of the house told us the story, and reminded us that when the Báb, on His journey north, had visited this home, those two martyrs were then only about 10 and 12 years old. They were helping to serve the visitors, and became so uplifted by the words of the Báb that they asked Him for martyrdom. The Báb accepted. It was years later, when they were grown and had devoted their lives to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, that they attained martyrdom.

Our guides next took us to see their extensive archives building which had somehow survived the years of persecution. Many historic Bahá'í relics were on display, but perhaps the most breathtaking were two full front pages of an ancient Russian newspaper, yellowed with age but still clearly depicting dramatic and earth-shaking events. The first was a drawing of the execution of the Báb, showing the firing squad, the smoke from their guns, and the two victims fixed to the wall in Tabriz. The other was a life-like drawing of God's most great Manifestation, Bahá'u'lláh, on a white horse, entering Bahji with His servants and family. The detail was so clear that we could see the expression on Bahá'u'lláh's face as He looked with power and authority toward the artist. So real was the drawing that we gazed at it in awe for some time.

The next morning we boarded another bus and set off, only to come to a halt at the city's boundary. The driver parked the bus and disappeared for an hour. We were then told that by law a driver is not allowed to drive for more than eight hours. The driver had driven all night to arrive at Isfahan, and had to be replaced. Two or three hours later another driver arrived, and we continued our journey.

There was little of significance during the next day's journey, but as dusk began to fall on that desolate landscape we saw in the distance that our road wound across a valley and entered a giant stone gate. As we approached it, we saw that it was covered in Arabic lettering. "Look, Ted and Alicia,"
said Atto, “the Koran Gate.” We passed through and entered Shiráz, the birthplace of the Báb.

We found a hotel, got a hot bath and a good night’s sleep. Next morning we phoned a local Bahá’í whose name the national secretary had given us, and he came to guide us around the city and to the House of the Báb. We went first to see the beautiful and impressive shrine to Haafiz, another poet who had prophesied this great Day. Our guide then had to return to his business, and before leaving suggested that the following day we might like to visit the ancient ruins of Persepolis, about 50 miles to the north. We wandered for a while in the street, and suddenly were hailed by joyfully by a young man whom we recognized as one of the Persian Bahá’ís living in England who had visited our farm the year before. His name was Baghram. “What on earth are you doing here?” we said in astonishment. “I live here,” he replied. “This is my home town which I have come to visit.” We told him of our own visit, and shared many memories together.

Early the next morning we took a taxi to the ruins of Persepolis, the ancient seat of King Darius. The road from Shiráz was through a more cultivated area of Iran, and various crops could be seen on all sides. Once more we were struck by the strange contrasts in this land. We saw a farmer harvesting wheat as had been done in Biblical times, spreading sheaves on the ground and driving oxen over them to trample out the grain; another man was throwing the grain and chaff up in the wind to separate them. Arriving at Persepolis we wandered silently among the ruins. After the reign of Darius his kingdom had been conquered and the city and palace destroyed. Only a few giant stone pillars and some carved statues remained. All was kept in excellent condition for the tourists. Later we retired to a lovely tea house and in the cool of the evening sat eating a large watermelon before returning to Shiráz.

The next morning our guide took us first to the gate in the southern part of the city where on that historic day, May 22, 1844, the Báb greeted Mulla Husayn. The gate had since been demolished, but we were shown two large trees at the entrance to a market where it had stood. I got out of the taxi and set up my tripod and large camera, determined to do this in a professional way, only to have a heavy hand take me by the shoulder. Looking up, I found myself confronted by a policeman giving a stern lecture in Iranian. I had visions of us languishing in a foreign jail, but Atto turned up and translated: “He says this is forbidden because these people are very backward and hate all foreigners. You are likely to cause a riot.” Hastily packing up, we departed without a photograph, but vowing to return the next morning and shoot through the taxi window. Those pictures, by the way, turned out well.

Next came our visit to the House of the Báb. Again, our guide impressed upon us the importance of protecting the House. He explained that once before a mob had ransacked the House and smashed the precious windows. Fortunately, the Bahá’ís had anticipated the attack and replaced the original windows with duplicates before it happened.

Iranian clothes were loaned to my wife, complete with a “yashmack” (veil) to cover the lower part of her face. My European clothes were common to the Iranians and required no disguise. How great had been the need for such precautions we can now appreciate some 20 years later; now there is no trace of this sacred House. The mobs and the government have razed it to the ground. But to return to our visit:

We advanced into the courtyard and looked around. To the left was the well from which must have been drawn the water that was brought to wash the feet of Mulla Husayn. Looking up, we gazed upon a large, ornate window on the next floor.

As we gazed across to that corner by the window, the words from The Dawn-breakers came to our minds: “Now is the time to reveal the Surih of Joseph.” We seemed to hear Mulla Husayn describe his state of mind: “I sat spellbound by His utterance, oblivious of time and those who awaited much for our disguise! We had no alternative but to pass on with a chuckle. Soon we came to a heavy wooden door on which our guide knocked. It was opened, and we passed into a small garden. Here we were led to the opening of an underground tunnel which connected with the garden next door. I remember nothing of the garden, for as we emerged from the tunnel we faced a tall brick wall with an archway through which we could see into the courtyard of the Báb’s House. In the center was a small, clear pool of water, and beside it an orange tree, a descendant of one the Báb had planted more than a hundred years ago.

We advanced into the courtyard and looked around. To the left was the well from which must have been drawn the water that was brought to wash the feet of Mulla Husayn. Looking up, we gazed upon a large, ornate window on the next floor. It had five vertical sections featuring designs in colored glass. To our right was the main entrance from the street. Through this door the Báb had led Mulla Husayn with the words, “Enter in peace secure.” But now it was permanently secured and never used. Near the door was the foot of a red carpeted stairway leading to that upper room. Reversely, we ascended the stairs and found ourselves on a small landing with an open doorway to our left. We stood looking through the door over a high step which also functioned as a threshold for prayer. As we knelt at the threshold we gazed upon a scene we will long remember.

Rich Persian carpets covered the floor; in the far corner, next to the large window, stood an old-fashioned oil lamp; perhaps the spot where the blessed Báb had been seated when He spoke with Mulla Husayn. (Let the reader pause here and take up his copy of The Dawn-breakers. On page 65 are photographs of the main street entrance and also the stairs up which we had climbed; on page 59 are three views of the room at the top of the stairs.)
you are a Bábí,' he said. She drew herself up, looked him in the eye with a power that belied her age, and forcefully replied, 'I am ready; you do it too!' The man retreated, abashed at such faith.

As we retraced our steps to the main streets, our hearts and minds were trying to adjust to these inspiring sights and events. But there was more to come. We were taken next to the Masjid-i-Vakil mosque to see the pulpit from which the Báb had addressed the congregation.

We read how the Shah summoned the Báb to Tehran for a full investigation, but after the Báb had left Isfahán, the chief Vazir had persuaded the Shah that it might be dangerous for him to meet the Báb, Who seemed to have a magic power to change people. The Shah had then ordered the Báb to turn away from Tehran and proceed to the prison of Mah-kú to await his pleasure. On the way, the Báb had spent some time in Tabriz, being imprisoned in the fort named ‘The Citadel.’ It seems that we were now destined to follow the same route, for the next day we flew back to Tehran and once again consulted with the national secretary, who suggested that we go to Tabriz.

We spent the night in a hotel in Tehran and were amazed to see on the hotel register the names of the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears and his wife, Marguerite. From our room, we rang them and pretended to be phoning from England, but when we disclosed that we were in the same hotel they invited us over and we were able to have a long talk with them about their own travels in Iran, undertaken at the request of the Universal House of Justice. They had just returned from Mah-kú, where we were hoping to go, but since they had been surrounded by a mob and forced to leave town, they advised us not to go there. However, they felt it would be in order to go to Tabriz. That afternoon we attended a large Bahá’í meeting for women in Tehran; the speaker was Mr. Sears.

The next morning we flew to Tabriz. Looking at a map, we saw that our plane would pass over Zanján, where many Bábís had been besieged in a fort and later martyred. We followed our flight on the map and found ourselves above Zanján at a great height, but unable to see it because it was directly beneath us. Soon, however, the plane varied its course and we were able to photograph the city.

In Tabriz we found a lively Bahá’í community and attended a large fireside. As we left, the friends pointed out some men nearby who, they said, always waited outside Bahá’í meetings to persuade inquirers it was wicked to go there. At the time, we were amused. Little did we know that in a few short years, massive persecution would rear its ugly head again and cost many lives.

Later, the friends took us to the Citadel, a massive ruin of a fort. The window of the room in which the Báb had been incarcerated was still visible at the top right-hand side of the building. I found a way to climb up to that room, which looked out over the city. One of my companions pointed out a large white building in the middle of the city, about a mile away. This was the site of the Báb’s martyrdom after He had spent some time imprisoned in Mah-kú and Chihiroq and after His trial before the leading Mullahs. We remembered that incredible scene when the Báb had faced His accusers and announced, ‘I am, I am, I am the Promised One!’

That evening we were entertained by a young Bahá’í family with two lovely children. The mother was English and the father an Iranian doctor. We cherished the photo we took of that event, for he was martyred a few years later.

We flew back to Tehran and then took another flight out of the country. We had to take a circular route to avoid flying over Syria; this meant flying once more over Tabriz, Mah-kú and then Mt. Ararat in Turkey, where it is said Noah’s Ark came to rest after the Flood. We meditated on that great catastrophe that had descended upon the world because of its wickedness and for rejecting the Prophet of God. What, we wondered, would be the fate of this generation before it would with one voice acclaim God’s Promised One? Our plane landed in the Holy Land and we were able to visit the Shrines of Baha’u’lláh and the Báb and to pray that mankind would soon open its spiritual eye to the long-awaited arrival of the Kingdom of God on earth.
Soviet Union

‘The Promise of World Peace’ tour

This article, "The Promise of World Peace Tour," is reprinted from the April 1990 issue of Light of the Pacific, the newsletter of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the Hawaiian Islands.

They came together from eight nations and found the idea of world peace very much alive in the Soviet Union. The 62 members of "The Promise of World Peace Tour" were overwhelmed with the response when they traveled to Russia in November and December of last year. "It was unbelievable," said Robert Palmer of Maui, one of the tour coordinators. "Our youth learned firsthand that the people of the world's other superpower are as anxious for cooperation among our nations as we are."

Bahá’ís from eight international communities—Australia, New Zealand, the Mariana Islands, Samoa, Canada, the U.S., Germany and Israel—joined the 24 Hawaiian Bahá’ís on the 12-day tour. The Promise of World Peace Tour was hosted by Youth Ambassadors International of Washington state and by the Foundation for Social Innovations (FSI) in Moscow. Their camps in both countries and in public through youth and teacher exchanges state and by the Foundation for Social Innovations (FSI) in Moscow. Their innovations and found the idea of world peace very much alive in the Soviet Union. The 62 members of "The Promise of World Peace Tour" were overwhelmed with the response when they traveled to Russia in November and December of last year. "It was unbelievable," said Robert Palmer of Maui, one of the tour coordinators. "Our youth learned firsthand that the people of the world's other superpower are as anxious for cooperation among our nations as we are."

Visits to Soviet homes provided more significant experiences of personal interaction among group members and Soviet citizens. Twenty-five stayed with Soviet host families of children attending Moscow's School Tours. Home visits were four days long and a first experience for the families, which only recently were allowed to have foreigners in their homes. "It was an experiment by the school and a wonderful success," said Dr. Morrison. "Being offered the chance to live everyday life in Soviet homes was probably the best experience our youth had, and was the source of tremendous growth in cultural understanding for both the Soviets and Americans."

One youth summed up the experience by saying, "It's easy to talk about world peace and being a world citizen when you're in Hawaii. But it's hard when you're in a situation and don't know the language and have to . . . communicate.”

Soviet youth. And indeed, it was this message of inevitable world peace and a plan for global cooperation that drew such overwhelming response from the people the group met.

Visits coordinated by the FSI in the cities of Moscow and Kazan included schools, factories, a home for children of dysfunctional families, an artists' center and a university, many of which had never hosted foreigners before. They also arranged a five-hour youth congress at Moscow's Ministry of Propaganda at the Kremlin where more than 200 western and Soviet students publicly discussed their concepts of world peace. Educators heading private and school groups devoted to peace and international friendship attending this same congress interacted with the visiting adults. According to Dr. Gary Morrison, another tour coordinator and secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the Hawaiian Islands, the audience's response took them by surprise each time "The Promise of World Peace" was introduced.

We expected polite applause and polite questions, but we didn't expect the instant and intense interest in the principles expressed in 'The Promise of World Peace,'" said Dr. Morrison. "Sometimes the whole schedule of a day's events was thrown off due to the eager response from our guests demanding post-meeting personal interaction among individuals to discuss ideas set forth in the document. We were delighted when they said they saw in the document something with which to build on their current efforts toward world peace." Teachers in two schools asked for additional Persian-language copies of the peace document to incorporate into their classes on ethics and international politics.

According to Dr. Morrison, adult group chaperones were also able to interact with professional counterparts and establish professional links that may resultually in student and college exchange. Among them were medical professionals at Moscow's Monika hospital, department heads of the University of Kazan's journalism, music and international relations departments, members of cultural popular dance and song groups.
A finely crafted symbol of peace is sent from Hawaii to Russia—with love

A symbol of love, the traditional calabash, was passed from one generation to another and placed in the home of the favored descendant. Among Hawaiian people, the calabash was the choice gift for the Ali‘i, the royalty.

Stewart Medeiros is the first master craftsman in the history of Hawaii to create the royal ali‘i calabash not as a single piece, but as a set of five calabash bowls which, when put together, form the Queen Lili‘uokalani-style pedestal calabash.

The artist has infused the pedestal calabash with symbolic elements of peace. The dark cord around the top and bottom of the pedestal symbolizes that moment when life appears to be out of control and the decision is made to get a grip on life and hold it together. The belt around the middle of the pedestal symbolizes the need to take responsibility for life, when you need to “buckle down” or “buckle up” and take stock of your life. The penny in the belt symbolizes a new beginning, and its portrait of Abraham Lincoln focuses on honesty, that new beginnings must be made with honesty. The gold cord around the base of the pedestal symbolizes the golden foundation of peace. The message of the pedestal in symbolic terms is that America and the Soviet Union will get a grip on life and have a new beginning in complete honesty in striving toward peace.

The three large calabash bowls, when turned right side up, have images inside, also with symbolic elements. When you turn over the base of the pedestal to look inside the largest of the calabash bowls, you will find inside a natural illusion of a universe. For the artist, this means being inside the world and looking out, being in the heart of the world, that peace can come only when you get into the heart and look out from there. The center pedestal calabash has a distinct image of a butterfly, which represents peace. At the top, inside the calabash, the artist sees an image of an eagle with a sickle in its beak, symbolizing the United States and the Soviet Union flying together in peace.

Mr. Medeiros presented this fabulous piece of art work to “The Promise of World Peace Tour” as a gesture of Aloha from the people of the Hawaiian Islands. It stands five feet tall and is valued at $20,000.

Haiti

A delegation of four Bahá’ís representing the country’s National Spiritual Assembly, recently presented a copy of “The Promise of World Peace” to provisional President Madame Erthal Pascal Trouillot.

The President opened the meeting by relating some of her memories of Bahá’í meetings she had attended as a child, which she described as “joyous.” She said she had visited the House of Worship in the U.S. and was deeply impressed by the beauty of the Sacred Writings on the walls.

She then accepted the peace statement from Auxiliary Board member Laurence Bosschaart.

After a discussion of Bahá’í principles and the Administrative Order, the director of the Antis Zunuzi Bahá’í School spoke about the importance of education and of some of the activities at the school.

The president was given copies of “One Country,” a publication that describes the school at Lilavois, and The Proclamation of Bahá’u’lláh as a gift from the National Assembly.

President Trouillot said she believes that “all religions are one.” She was happy to hear from the Bahá’ís, and expressed a desire to visit the National Center in Kingston. She asked for prayers for Haiti and its people.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, like every National Assembly, is represented at the United Nations by the Bahá'í International Community (BIC). Unlike other National Assemblies, however, the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly has its own representative at the UN because of the location of that international body in New York City.

Since 1947, when the UN first recognized non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and gave them official status, the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly has appointed representatives to the organization to act on its behalf. The National Assembly is considered an NGO observer and is accredited to the UN Department of Public Information. More than 1,000 other NGOs have such status. As an observer, the National Spiritual Assembly's representative may attend open meetings of the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and other UN organs, departments and specialized agencies.

The Bahá'í International Community, however, is a specific agency established by the Universal House of Justice to represent that international Bahá'í council and the Bahá'í world community to the world at large. The Universal House of Justice has referred to the Bahá'í International Community as "windows of the Bahá'í community to the world," stating further that "the Bahá'í International Community is the name used by the Bahá'í world in its relationships with the United Nations, governments, and other international or national organizations." The Bahá'í International Community, now comprising 151 national/regional affiliates with a membership of some five million—a cross-section of humanity—is engaged in a wide range of activities serving the spiritual, social and economic needs of people everywhere.

The primary function of Bahá'í work at the United Nations has been to forge close ties with the UN, gaining recognition, prestige and influence for the Faith while cooperating to build a better world. The work of the UN office reflects the wide-ranging concerns of Bahá'í communities around the world. These efforts help familiarize the UN and its agencies with Bahá'í principles and programs, and support the work of that world organization which will lead to the achievement of the Lesser Peace.

In 1970, the Bahá'í International Community was accorded consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and in 1976 with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Consultative status confers the right to make written and oral statements to the UN bodies. The BIC is also associated with the UN Department of Public Information and enjoys a relationship with a number of other UN offices and departments dealing with specific issues. In all cases, the United Nations relationship has afforded—and continues to afford—many opportunities, at UN headquarters and in the field, to acquaint UN personnel, diplomats and leaders of non-governmental organizations with the aims and character of the Bahá'í Faith.

The Bahá'í UN office has also played a leading role in the attempts of the worldwide Bahá'í community to protect the beleaguered Bahá'í community of Iran. It has sought to bring the Bahá'í case before the UN Human Rights Commission in allaying and ending the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran. One result of these efforts has been the passage, each year for the past three years, of resolutions by the UN General Assembly expressing its concern about human rights in Iran, and mentioning specifically the Bahá'í situation there.

In helping the UN on matters of common interest and concern, the Bahá'í International Community's UN office has consistently encouraged local and national Bahá'í communities around the world to cooperate in UN programs and observances.
tive for the Bahá’ís of the United States.

During the past four years, the Bahá’í International Community took part in more than 80 UN meetings including major UN conferences, as well as sessions of the UN Economic and Social Council—its regional and functional commissions, committees and working groups—and meetings of other UN bodies. It contributed more than 60 statements on such issues as the advancement of women (in education, development, decision-making and peace); social and humanitarian affairs (social welfare, popular participation, the environment, drug abuse); peace and disarmament (nuclear energy, development); human rights (the elimination of torture, racism, religious intolerance; protection of minorities; the right to development; human rights education). Another 17 statements made jointly with other NGOs addressed issues that included children and war, the role of women in development, the prevention of discrimination against and protection of women, the rights of the child, AIDS and discrimination.

* The information that follows is part of the quadrennial report which NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC are required to submit to that body.

Peace and disarmament

In cooperation with the International Year of Peace Secretariat (later the Peace Studies Unit) and the Department of Disarmament Affairs, the Bahá’í International Community continued to provide local, national and international support for UN peace and disarmament efforts. As a result of worldwide Bahá’í activities during IYP, the UN Secretary-General designated the Bahá’í International Community and five of its affiliates as “Peace Messengers.” In addition, the Bahá’í International Community participated in the UN Conference for Promotion of International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, the UN Conference on Disarmament and Development, and the Third Special Session of the UN General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament.

Social and humanitarian affairs

Collaboration with the UN and its agencies on social and humanitarian issues increased substantially during the years under review. Extensive activities on behalf of women, youth, the aging, and the family, as well as efforts to prevent drug abuse were carried out in close cooperation with the UN Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. The Bahá’í International Community even provided an intern to help the Youth Unit in Vienna for nine months in 1987-88. Efforts to improve health care included distribution of “Facts for Life” and participation in a major consultation on AIDS. The Bahá’í International Community expanded its consultative relations with UNICEF by working closely with the NGO Committee on UNICEF and its newly created Education Working Group on preparations for the World Conference on Education for All.

Women

Through a wide range of projects and activities at the international, national and local levels, the Bahá’í International Community continued to implement the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies. Its representatives also took part in sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, conferences sponsored by Regional Economic Commissions, and UN seminars concerning women, submitting pertinent statements. Since 1988, the Bahá’í International Community has served as convener of “Advocates for African Food Security: Lessening the Burden on Women,” a coalition of international and national non-governmental organizations, UN agencies, and intergovernmental bodies.

Human rights and refugees

The Bahá’í International Community contributed to deliberations on a wide range of human rights issues during the annual sessions of the Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. It also delivered statements to the annual sessions of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, and submitted proposals on draft instruments to the Working Group on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the Working Group on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. As a participant in both UN and NGO working groups, it helped draft the Convention on the Rights of the Child, contributing notably to the text of Article 17. The Bahá’í International Community also worked with the UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), attending yearly sessions of the UNHCR Executive Committee, and taking part in the formal consultations and informal meetings between the UNHCR and its NGO operational partners.

Information activities

The Bahá’í International Community continued to disseminate information about the UN and its activities to its affiliates all over the world, encouraging sponsorship by Bahá’í communities of initiatives in support of special programs, years or days, such as the Decade for Cultural Development, the International Year of Peace, International Literacy Year, the International Day of Peace, UN Day, Human Rights Day, and World Food Day. Representatives of the Bahá’í International Community also helped plan and carry out annual DPI/NGO conferences in New York City.

Participation in UN NGO activities

The Bahá’í International Community has collaborated closely with NGOs at the UN, primarily in New York, Geneva and Vienna, participating in many NGO conferences and consultations. It served as Vice-President (1986-88)—and now serves as Secretary (1988-91)—of the Board of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with ECOSOC (CONGO). In New York, Geneva and Vienna, its representatives also served during this time as officers on NGO committees on human rights, the family, women, human settlements, development, youth, the Department of Public Information, and UNICEF.
Assembly is formed in Tallin, Estonia

On the first day of Ridván the first local Spiritual Assembly of Tallin, Estonia, was formed.

Elected from a community of 13 Bahá'ís were five women and four men. Four of the Assembly members are native Estonians, and one is Russian. Also elected was Brigitte Lundblade, a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Shetland Islands, who was born and raised in Tallin.

Six thousand copies of the Universal House of Justice's peace statement and 4,000 copies of The Hidden Words were printed in Russian and shipped from Tallin to Moscow for use during a tour of the Soviet Union by American Bahá'í musician Red Grammer. The materials, printed by a cooperative in Tallin in which two members of the Assembly are associated, are the first of many titles that may be printed for distribution to Russian-speaking peoples.

The new Assembly has formed a printing committee to consult with the cooperative and the Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Germany about this endeavor.

In the presence of Counsellor Ursula Mühlschlegel and members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Austria, the election of the local Spiritual Assembly of Budapest, Hungary, took place this year for the first time since before World War II.

Before an audience of about 50 Bahá'ís from Austria and Hungary, the friends recalled the historic visit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Budapest and His stay only a short distance from the site of the current election. They remembered, too, the dedicated efforts of traveling teachers and early believers in Hungary that led to the election of Budapest's first local Assembly in 1939.

Cameroon

More than 200 people gathered last February at the Regional Bahá'í Centre in Bamenda, Cameroon, to witness the Bahá'í marriage of Emerencia Panweh and James Basalingi. The celebration included devotions, songs, gifts for the young couple, and a traditional wedding dance which accompanied the bride from her parents' home to the Bahá'í Centre.

Taiwan

The National Spiritual Assembly of Taiwan has decided to open a permanent Bahá'í Office of the Environment in Taipei.

During the past several months the National Assembly and the national government of Taiwan have co-sponsored a program to promote environmental awareness. This has led to a number of television, radio, newspaper and magazine interviews and reports, many of which have explained the project's sponsorship.

Recently, a member of Taiwan's Council of Agriculture said the Bahá'ís were "the ideal people" to organize a nationwide environmental education conference that would bring together various government departments, such as those of the National Parks, Environmental Protection, Education, the Council of Agriculture, and others.

Plans for such a conference are under way as daily environmental education programs proceed successfully in many areas of Taiwan, co-sponsored by the Bahá'ís and the government.
India

On April 3, a Hindu holiday, more than 100,000 people visited the Bahá’í House of Worship at Bahapur, India, the largest number ever to come to the Temple in a single day.

Thanks to the cooperation of those who work at the Temple, from the garden and housekeeping staff to the volunteers from the Bahá’í community of Delhi, the unprecedented number of guests was received courteously and efficiently, and the spiritual atmosphere of the Temple was maintained.

Six special devotional programs were held to accommodate the visitors, and the Temple overflowed with worshippers during each prayer session.

On April 9, in the presence of witnesses, the vice-chancellor and registrar of Indore University, and the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of India, affixed their signatures and the official seal of the Bahá’í community of India on a “Memorandum of Understanding,” establishing a Chair for Bahá’í Studies at the university.

As of the week prior to Ridván, the Muhájir Project in India reported 8,040 enrollments and 60 localities opened to the Faith.

The campaign is being carried out in Pondicherry Union which includes the south coastal states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

Australia

The ninth annual Conference of the Australian Association for Bahá’í Studies was held April 13-16 in Perth.

Among the highlights was a day-long symposium on “The Environment: Humanity's Common Heritage,” which included contributions by several Bahá’ís who are environmental experts.

More than 300 people registered for the conference including members of the public who had heard radio announcements about the event.

Several of the speakers were interviewed on radio and television, and a number of media representatives attended the symposium. News reports and interviews were broadcast on two local TV stations.

Panama

Counsellor Hizzaya Hissani leads the friends in song during a recent visit to the Bahá’í National Center in Panama City. The occasion was a welcoming ceremony for ‘Azíz Yazdí who was traveling in Panama and Central America. ‘When Counsellor Hissani sings,’ said Counsellor Ruth Pringle, who also attended the meeting, ‘all the spirits are lifted.’

Nigeria

In January, 627 people embraced the Faith during the first two weeks of the Maxwell/Rivers Teaching Campaign in the Bori region of Nigeria.

The campaign, named for Dr. and Mrs. William Maxwell who pioneered to Nigeria from 1967-73, is supported by seven full-time and 14 part-time teachers. The goal is to form 24 new local Spiritual Assemblies in that area.

After the first two weeks of teaching a six-week consolidation effort was begun, featuring a mobile institute that visits villages with new Bahá’ís. As a result, 74 more people joined the Faith, several newly formed Assemblies are functioning, and enthusiasm for the Faith is growing.

In March a local teaching conference was attended by 44 people, more than half of whom were newly declared Bahá’ís.

The Muhájir/Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Project, held last January 15-19 at the University of Ife in Oyo State, Nigeria, included the presentation of the Universal House of Justice’s peace statement to senior staff members, holding firesides on campus, and proclaiming the Faith at the annual Book Fair.

About 500 students attended the firesides, at which the Bahá’ís found themselves literally surrounded by groups of people asking questions about the Faith.

During the first five months of its use, the Bahá’í Mobile Institute in Oghara State, Nigeria, has had a significant impact on the Bahá’í community as well as on the Faith’s public image.

The vehicle was dedicated November 6, 1989, during a ceremony at the palace of the Prime Minister of Oghala State, who is a Bahá’í.

Since then, the Mobile Institute has been driven to all of the villages in Jesse, Oghara and Bendel states, has taken part in the Kay Wilson/Nnewi Teaching Campaign, and has been used for consolidation visits to villages in Bendel, Anambra and Rivers states.

Guyana

Counsellors Eloy Anello and Peter McLaren coordinated a week of orientation in Guyana for 12 teachers from overseas and 12 Guyanese.

A teaching project followed, the first week of which produced more than 500 new believers in the upper Corentyne region. By the end of the month there were 2,200 new believers in Guyana.
Brazil

Reports from the Southern Teaching Project in Alvorada, Brazil, say that in two days, February 13-14, 228 people were enrolled in the Faith.

As of the end of February, more than 600 new believers had been enrolled. Alvorada has had a Bahá’í school for the past 15 years, so many of the new Bahá’ís are long-time friends of the Faith. As a result, the campaign is bringing in new believers who are already well-informed about the Faith.

While enrollments continue and the campaign has been extended beyond its February closing date, deepenings have begun through visits to the new Bahá’ís and their families.

The efforts of Auxiliary Board member Tuba Maani, four local Spiritual Assemblies, and pioneers and traveling teachers from three states in Brazil have contributed greatly to the success of the project.

Chile

Pictured are the first three Bahá’ís to graduate from the Núr School in Santiago, Chile, with school sub-director Myriam Rodriguez (left) and director Yolanda Pizarro (second from right). The students are (left to right) Verónica del Carmen Guajardo Reyes, Leyla Munoz Silva, and Liliana del Rosario Rojas Nuñez who received special honors for having the best grade point average. Colegio Núr’s class of 1989, which totaled 19, was graduated last December 6.

More than 135 Bahá’ís, representing 12 of Chile’s 13 regions, met with Counsellor Isabel de Calderón, members of the National Spiritual Assembly, and five Auxiliary Board members last January 21-22 in Santiago for a National Teaching Conference whose themes were “Entry By Troops” and “Personal Transformation.”

In her keynote address, Counsellor Calderón shared news of the Muhájir Project in Ecuador which moved the National Spiritual Assembly to declare the community’s adherence to “Muhájir Year” in Chile.

Hawaii

David Hofman, retired member of the Universal House of Justice, made an extended visit to the Hawaiian Islands in February and March.

After his arrival on February 2 Mr. Hofman went first to the island of Oahu where he lunched with Counsellor Ben Ayala, presented a fireside during a dinner for Chinese teaching aboard the S.S. Independence, and was a guest at a dinner party at which six Soviet guests also were welcomed.

During a week on Kauai, Mr. Hofman spoke at the Rotary Club, public meetings, firesides, Bahá’í gatherings and a youth meeting, and video taped a session with Counsellor Gayle Morrison on “The Sanctity and Nature of Bahá’í Elections.”

The following week, on Maui, he again spoke to the Rotary Club, addressed a Chinese teaching event, hosted a meeting for Bahá’ís, and visited local Bahá’í communities.

Returning to Oahu for another week, Mr. Hofman held deepenings, meetings and firesides in a number of communities, held an island-wide Bahá’í meeting at the Bahá’í National Center, and met with Counsellors Ayala and Morrison and the members of the National Spiritual Assembly.

He was the featured speaker at the National Assembly’s International Literacy Year banquet and Naw-Rúz celebration, at which he sat with Gov. John Waihee and Mrs. Waihee. He then had an in-depth interview with the Honolulu Advertiser.

The advice Mr. Hofman constantly gave the friends in Hawaii was to read the works of Shoghi Effendi, persevere in teaching, and never become discouraged.

Kenya

On February 8-11, the seventh annual National Bahá’í Women’s Conference was held at Nakuru, in Kenya’s lovely Rift Valley.

This year’s theme was “Women and Literacy,” and topics discussed included the Greatest Holy Leaf, the Law of Huqu’ulláh, Bahá’í family life, family planning according to the Writings, and AIDS.

The guest of honor was Njoki Wainaina, coordinator of the African Development and Communications Network, who spoke about the importance of literacy, illustrating in her talk how, in all aspects of community life, literacy is a requirement.

Also speaking on literacy, and challenging the women to take immediate action to acquire literacy and spread it among their fellows, was Counsellor Beatrice Asare.

Literacy is especially important for Bahá’ís, she said, in order to study the Word of God.

Many of those at the conference contributed to the fund for construction of the Arc on Mount Carmel, and one woman, who had carried a declaration card with her for two years, signed it during the conference.

A television program, “The Voice of Kenya,” filmed sessions for later broadcast, and reporters from three major newspapers covered parts of the conference.

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Bangladesh

A deepening conference was held last February in the remote village of Nimgutu, deep in the tribal areas of Bangladesh. A busload of Bahá’ís who came to the event were greeted by “the joyful faces of the tribemen and the beautiful rhythm of drums.”

The conference, held to deepen nearly 500 recently declared Bahá’ís, was planned by tribal Bahá’ís and held in an open field. The friends collected more than 150 kilograms of rice to feed their guests, and as many were coming on foot from as far away as 12 kilometers (nearly eight miles), Bahá’í songs were played on a loudspeaker, welcoming the visitors while they were yet a long way off.

The conference was opened with a prayer, followed by a message from the National Spiritual Assembly of Bangladesh. In between the several talks on teaching, participants enjoyed singing together.

Songs and tribal dances followed the formal program while 227 visitors were enrolled in the Faith. Before the conference was over, nearly all of the 700 people attending were Bahá’ís.

Samoa

The recent celebration of the 50th anniversary of the service of His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II to the people of Western Samoa included a parade in which 40 Bahá’ís marched for the review of the Malietoa and his guest, the King of Tonga.

The Bahá’ís also entered a float depicting the oneness of mankind, which placed second in the judging. The Malietoa, who is a Bahá’í, was represented on the float by his grandson, also a Bahá’í.

On January 7, the Bahá’í Center in Pago Pago, American Samoa, hosted Bahá’ís and 70 guests at a farewell service for the Canow Paddlers Association. Most of the non-Bahá’ís present were members of the Association, which has gone to New Zealand to represent American Samoa at the World Sprints competition.

Since the Pago Pago Bahá’í youth team is the island canoe racing champion, the Bahá’í held the service at the Center the night before their departure. After the program, which included readings from the Bible and the Bahá’í Writings, several people had questions about the Faith.

Malawi

The Bahá’ís of Nkombe, Malawi, traversed mountain paths recently to help deepen Bahá’ís in Chintchebe. They did not ask for help from the National Spiritual Assembly or National Teaching Committee.

Their initiative, according to a report in the Nineteen Day Feast letter, shows “a growing understanding of the fact that the Bahá’í Faith belongs to them and they should arise to serve Bahá’u’lláh.”

Republic of Ireland

More than 130 men and women from all walks of life and from all areas of Ireland, north and south, gathered recently for a conference in Dublin on the equality of men and women. The specific focus of the conference was the harmonious development of men and women and the role of women as peace-makers.

The conference and social evening that followed were the first part of a social and economic development project sponsored by Cooperation North, a non-political, non-denominational group that promotes good-will between northern and southern Ireland.

Cooperation North invited Bahá’ís from the south to join with Bahá’ís in Northern Ireland to arrange two weekends of events, one in Dublin, the second in Belfast. More than 40 non-Bahá’ís attended.

Also, eight organizations sent representatives to the conferences including the Irish branch of the United Nations, the Network of Professional Women in Business, and other women’s groups around the country.

About 100 people attended the opening last November 13 of an exhibit of the works of Gerry O’Mahony, a Bahá’í who is an artist and member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Ireland, at the Temple Bar Gallery in Dublin.

About 20 paintings were exhibited in the show, which was entitled “Response.” Mr. O’Mahony acknowledged that the Bahá’í peace statement was a major influence in his work.

Soviet Union

El Viento Canta, the musical group that features South American music as it spreads the Bahá’í teachings, recently performed at the first Bahá’í weekend school to be held in Russia. The school was organized by the Bahá’ís of Moscow, who elected a Spiritual Assembly at Ridyán.

Sixty people, most of whom were Bahá’ís, attended the school. They represented a large number of republics in the USSR including Estonia, Latvia, Turkmenistan, the Ukraine and the Russian SFSR (Moscow, Murmansk and Leningrad) along with countries including Canada, Germany, Iran, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Norway, Peru, Puerto Rico, the Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom and United States.

Members of El Viento Canta opened the program with songs and prayers.

Prior to the weekend school, El Viento Canta performed three times in Tallin, Estonia, including appearances at an English secondary school with 160 students and a concert attended by 60 people.

At the Pedagogic Institute, 300 students attended a third concert. The group asked members of the audience to sign their guest book afterward, and many stood in line for more than half an hour to do so.

One guest wrote, “To make Estonian girls dance and sing and cheer like that, there must be something really special—which you have.”

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India

In January, the Bahá’ís of the South Arcot District of Tamil Nadu State, India, inaugurated a new phase of the Dr. Muhájir Memorial Teaching Project, and by the end of the first week had enrolled 2,500 new Bahá’ís. As of February 12, the total number of new enrollees stood at 14,050 including members of two new tribes.

The newest phase of the project resulted from the visit last December of David Hofman, retired member of the Universal House of Justice, after which 600 people were enrolled. An integral part of the effort is a consolidation plan that follows the enrollment of new Bahá’ís. A week after their enrollment, they are invited to a one-day study class and then invited to become a part of the teaching effort. After three weeks, those who volunteer attend an in-depth 10-day study session where they learn the rudiments of teaching and deepening.

In February, Counsellor S. Nagaratnam, three Auxiliary Board members and about 35 of the teachers gathered for a victory conference to initiate the final phases of the campaign, which are to include continuing contact with the new believers through visits and correspondence.

Teaching committees will be formed in every village to help organize the Nineteen Day Feasts, children’s classes, youth activities, literacy classes and deepenings, and to communicate with the State Bahá’í Council. The committees will also be responsible for encouraging the friends to take part in the election of their local Spiritual Assemblies.

The third phase of the project is to create strong local Assemblies as quickly as possible. Assistants to the Auxiliary Board have been appointed in all areas to facilitate the process.

A recent teaching campaign carried out in the Purulia district of West Bengal, India, in memory of the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’lláh Muhájir witnessed three successful peace conferences at area colleges. As of March 31, the campaign had led to the enrollment of 500 people.

Mrs. Maryam Babar, wife of the Pakistani High Commissioner in Delhi, India, recently visited the Bahá’í House of Worship in Bahapur. She said that before coming to Delhi, she and her husband were in Iran for four years and that Mr. Babar’s secretary was a Bahá’í. She asked many questions about the Teachings.

New Zealand

Three of the young Bahá’ís who went on a tour of the Soviet Union last December with Youth Ambassadors International share highlights of their experience with fellow youth at the recent Pacific Bahá’í Youth Conference in Auckland, New Zealand.

Seven hundred people from 12 countries and islands attended the recent Pacific Bahá’í Youth Conference in Auckland, New Zealand.

Among those attending were the Hand of the Cause of God Collis Featherstone and his wife, Madge.

Three young people who had recently toured the Soviet Union under the auspices of Youth Ambassadors International told of their experiences, as did those youth who had come from a recent teaching project in Hong Kong and Macau.

Twenty-three young people volunteered a year of service to the Faith, while more than 60 offered to travel and teach.

Germany

About 250 Bahá’ís from at least 25 countries gathered last March 24-25 in Hofheim, Germany, for an Eastern European Teaching Conference.

Among those inspiring the conference with their contributions were two Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre, Isobel Sabri and Donald Rogers, and Counsellors for Europe Agnes Ghaznavi, Elisabeth Mühlschlegel, Ursula Mühlschlegel and Polin Rafat.

Inspiring, too, was the influence of Bahá’ís from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and East Germany, among whom were four new believers. Fifteen Western European countries were represented along with Canada, Hawaii, India and the United States.

The conference was centered around plans and activities in support of the Universal House of Justice’s supplementary Two Year Plan for teaching in Eastern Europe.

During the conference, prayers were recited in several of the languages of Eastern Europe, and some of the believers from that area gave spontaneous talks.
Canada

An ongoing Bahá'í fireside is drawing capacity crowds each week in Flamborough, Ontario, Canada. Many "regulars" drive nearly an hour, even on snowy winter evenings, to attend the popular gathering.

On one evening, a team of young Bahá'ís who had been in the area for three weeks and were about to continue on to a new area brought their 11 newly declared Bahá'í friends to the fireside.

The Bahá'í speaker followed a talk about the promised emergence of the Lesser Peace by reciting from memory three pages of writings by the Guardian about the Bahá'í vision of the unity of the human race.

Instead of taking questions, the speaker then asked each of the new Bahá'ís to tell how he or she had become attracted to the Faith. One by one the 11 told their stories, and it was apparent that the events of their lives and the development of their spirits had prepared the way for their acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh.

One told of having overheard a conversation between a group of Bahá'ís in a doughnut shop: "I had to find out who these people were," he said, "who would talk about the human soul in a doughnut shop."

A young woman who had adopted some of the religious practices of native peoples said she had seen an arrow-shaped cloud and followed it.

Eventually she had come to the house of people who knew of, and told her about, the Cause of God.

Cameroon

Pictured are many of the 50 people who gathered in February for the Bamenda Unit Convention at the Regional Centre in Bamenda, Cameroon. The Convention was preceded by a unity Feast and 'bon voyage' party for a community member, Ibrahim Nyambri, who was leaving to serve at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel.

Trinidad/Tobago

Edna Ruth Caverly, a Bahá'í from Port of Spain, Trinidad, represented the Faith last April 14 at a seminar on Women and Literacy at the Eric Williams Financial Complex in Port of Spain.

She was invited to take part by Steve Solomon, who had been a guest speaker several years ago at the National Conference for the Homeless sponsored by the Bahá'ís of Port of Spain.

During the seminar, Mrs. Caverly spoke about some current Bahá'í activities in the area of literacy, using as a source the International Task Force newsletters from the Bahá'í International Community office in New York. Her report was well-received, and she was able to distribute copies of the peace statement to the chairman and panelists at the seminar as well as to many other interested people.
Baha'i House of Worship: still setting attendance records
American entertainer Red Grammer completes tour of Soviet Union
Germany announces goals of Two Year Plan for East Bloc countries
42 astronauts, cosmonauts at center of UN's Earth Day '90 program
Participants in Landegg Symposium issue statement on environment
UN Conference on Environment and Development set for '92 in Brazil
India's Bahá'í Temple continues to welcome record number of visitors
Around the world: News from Bahá'í communities all over the globe
Red Grammer completes successful tour

On April 20, Red Grammer, the American singer/songwriter who thrilled audiences at the San Francisco Peace Conference in 1986, began a tour of the Soviet Union.

In Moscow, Mr. Grammer took part in two concerts and a television program. He also performed for children at a secondary school.

While in that city, he and his wife, Kathy, were hosted by Vladimir Meeoolja, a well-known Russian folk musician. An assistant of Mr. Meegoolja's became interested in the Faith, and some important hours were spent with him as he helped move the Grammers from one event to another. He was able to meet some of the Bahá'ís in Moscow.

Another man, who had loaned his apartment to members of the Grammer tour group, was distant though present for the election of the Friends. As a result of having Bahá'ís stay in their homes, about six people became Bahá'ís.

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In Kiev, firesides were held at the hotel where the camera crew was lodged. They were well-attended, and gave the Bahá'ís a splendid opportunity to answer questions in an unhurried manner.

Every night during the Grammer tour group's stay in Kiev, firesides were held at the hotel where the camera crew was lodged. They were well-attended, and gave the Bahá'ís a splendid opportunity to answer questions in an unhurried manner.

A man who performs music for children became very close to Red Grammer, and this resulted in their doing some film work together. He shared the stage at the Grammer concert. He, too, has become interested in the Faith and is now studying it.

In Odessa, there was a meeting at the university intended for a tour-group consultation. So many people wanted to remain close to the group—it seemed impossible to turn them out of even an official meeting—that the meeting was turned into a fireside and informal musical presentation, with discussion taking place along with the teaching and singing.

During a 36-hour train journey from Odessa to Leningrad, the group celebrated the Festival of Ridván. Leningrad was filled with teaching opportunities, and the friends were able to revisit some of the contacts from the El Viento Canta tour earlier in the year.

While in Leningrad, Mr. Grammer and others taped a 30-minute television program with the same woman who had hosted a Bahá'í program taped in March. She had studied the Bahá'í literature and knew of Mr. Grammer's music as well. The half hour was divided equally between music and interview.

There was also a school concert and an evening concert. In addition to the school concert, the friends visited three other schools and spoke about the Faith at each of them.

On two evenings the group was invited to the home of a Russian couple who had encouraged them to use their home as a clearing center for raising and processing literature and making and receiving phone calls from all over the country. Their 18-year-old son was of great help to the group because of his excellent English and his desire to be of service. He and his parents are quite close to the Faith.

At every concert throughout the country the group was able to offer Bahá'í literature to those in the audience.

The tour was a success on several levels: the Red Grammer music tour, a teaching trip, and a training ground for future teaching in the USSR. As a result of having Bahá'ís stay in their homes, about six people became Bahá'ís.

But as always with the Soviets, leaving was difficult. "We come here," the Bahá'ís reported, "they love us, care for us, give us everything they can, try to believe in what we share with them, and pour their hearts out to us... We fall in love and then have to tear ourselves away and watch from the train window as they disappear... all of us calling out goodbyes through tears from our mixed emotions."
Details of Two-Year Plan disclosed

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Baha’i Friends,

We are delighted to inform you about the detailed goals of the Two Year Plan 1990-92 for the Eastern Bloc countries which are the responsibility of the German Baha’i community. The plan has been approved by the Universal House of Justice. In a message dated April 17, 1990, the Universal House of Justice stated: “All goals are, as usual, minimum goals, and the friends in this volatile region should under no circumstances be held back from winning victories beyond those which are the goals of the plan.”

You are free to share the details of the plan with your community in the best way you deem fit.

May the Baha’is throughout the world be spurred on, through a careful study of the message from the Universal House of Justice dated February 8, 1990, and this year’s Ridván message, to new heights of teaching and pioneering.

We warmly welcome offers for travel teaching and pioneering, and assure you that our Eastern European Office is eagerly looking forward to assisting those who will volunteer.

With loving Baha’i greetings,

National Spiritual Assembly
of the Baha’is of Germany
April 24, 1990

Two-Year Plan 1990-92 of the German Baha’i community
for Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and Mongolia
Ridván 1990 through Ridván 1992

German Democratic Republic (GDR / East Germany)
- All activities are based on an understanding of the particular social and psychological situation of East German citizens. Baha’is from the West should avoid giving the impression of trying to implement Western concepts and standards to East Germany.
- Establishment of six local Spiritual Assemblies.
- Opening of 30 localities.
- Baha’i Groups in at least 12 localities.
- Identifying West German Baha’i communities with special assistance goals for East German goal cities.
- Six pioneers from West to East Germany.
- Establishment of a Baha’i Center in Berlin.
- Establishment of contacts to the government, presentation of the peace statement to national leaders.
- Holding of Baha’i schools.
- Public relations and media activities.
- Establishment of Baha’i university clubs.
- Integration of East German Baha’is into the activities of the German-speaking Association for Baha’i Studies.
- Establishment, at Ridván 1990, of an East German Literature Fund for cheap access of literature to East Germans; initial donation of DM 10,000 to that Fund by the National Spiritual Assembly.

Soviet Union
- Establishment of 19 local Spiritual Assemblies by Ridván 1992: Moscow, Ashkabad, Duschanel, Baku, Minsk, Krasnodar, Kazan, Leningrad, Murmansk, Samarkand, Tashkent, Yerevan, Ginjeh, Tbilisi, Frunze, Kishinef, Mary, and two other cities, thus ensuring one local Spiritual Assembly in each of the Soviet Republics under the jurisdiction of Germany.
- Promotion of numerous teaching and proclamation activities in a great number of Soviet cities by all means.
- Sending as many pioneers as possible with priority to the goal cities mentioned.
- Holding of teaching and deepening institutes in the USSR.
- Great increase in the production of Baha’i literature in Russian.
- Establishment of a cooperative for Baha’i publishing in Moscow.
- Encouragement of participation by the Soviet believers for the fulfillment of the goals of the plan.

Poland
- Establishment of a local Spiritual Assembly in Warsaw at Ridván 1990, and as soon as possible but no later than Ridván 1992, in five other cities (Krakow, Lodz, Wroclaw, Gdansk and another city such as Lublin, Szczecin, Bydgoszcz, Poznan, Radom).
- Recognition of the Faith in 1990.
- Completion of the Baha’i Center in Hajdany by summer 1991.
- Increase of Baha’i literature.
- Establishment of a Baha’i library in Hajdany and subscription to Baha’i magazines for the community.
- Presentation of the peace statement

Eastern Europe

2 August 1990/Baha’i News
Pictured are Baha'is who gathered last February 24-25 for the first National Baha'i Conference to be held in the Soviet Union in about 60 years.

to national leaders and, if possible, to regional and local authorities.
- Translation and presentation to official agencies and authorities of statements of the Bahá'í International Community about current issues.
- Holding of firesides in each locality.
- Increase in the teaching work.
- Promotion of Esperanto activities, holding of Bahá'í Esperanto Congress in summer 1991, follow-up activities with Esperantists.
- Opening of the north of Poland.
- Sending of at least five pioneers
- Holding of Bahá'í schools and teaching institutes

Albania
- Establishment of one Group with at least nine Bahá'ís in Tirana.
- Opening of three localities.
- Sending of two pioneers.

Bulgaria
- Establishment of two local Spiritual Assemblies: Sofia and Plovdiv.
- Opening of six localities.
- Sending of two pioneer families

El Salvador

Adiz Yazdi (left), a former Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre, presents the Bahá'í view on achieving world peace at a public meeting in San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador. The presentation was one of many given during Mr. Yazdi's weekend visit to El Salvador last February. The translator is Marvin Dreyer, a long-time member of the National Spiritual Assembly of El Salvador.
Earth Day 1990! And what a day it was at the United Nations.

On April 22, a program sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme was held. Assembled for the celebration of "Only One Earth" were 42 astronauts and cosmonauts from 13 countries. It was their space traveler's view of earth from outer space that inspired the theme of the ceremony.

Earth Day 1990 launched the "Decade of the Environment" and marked the beginning of a long-term commitment to building a safe, just and sustainable planet.

The climax of the program was the appearance, one by one, of the astronauts and cosmonauts on the stage of the General Assembly. As each name was announced, his photograph was flashed on a giant television screen overhead.

When the last astronaut's name was called, the entire audience of more than 1,000 UN delegates, representatives of non-governmental organizations, friends and dignitaries rose to give them a prolonged standing ovation.

Before the introduction of the space travelers, the president of the 44th UN General Assembly opened the program, and an address was made by Maurice Strong, secretary-general of the 1992 UN Conference on the Environment.

An "Only One Earth" video presentation featured scenes from outer space, and statements were made by six of the space travelers in the six languages of the United Nations.

They spoke about industrial pollution and disarmament, and presented a potent message about the fragility of the planet, and how, from up there, they could see that we all drink the same water, breathe the same air, and that the oceans are really all only one body of water.

Noel Brown, regional director of the United Nations Environment Programme, accepted a crystal plaque and an "Only One Earth" treaty signed by the astronauts and cosmonauts. He then spoke about the need to restore and preserve the planet.

Another highlight of the program was a direct video communication to the assembled guests from the Russian space station MIR whose cosmonauts urged that the planet be considered as one home by everyone on earth.

The event ended with rousing music by the youth choir "Evergreen—Everblue," directed by a Canadian Bahá'í, Jack Lenz, and songs by the internationally famous singer, Raffi.

Mentioned on the program as one of the two organizations taking part in planning and producing the event was the Bahá'í International Community.

Hugh Locke, director of the Office of Public Information for the BIC in New York, coordinated the event and helped with fund-raising.

The BIC offices designed and printed the program and invitations to the program and reception that followed, handled responses from the invited guests, recruited and helped train the 30 ushers (mostly Bahá'ís), sponsored the appearance of the youth choir "Evergreen—Everblue" from Toronto, coordinated Canadian press releases, and arranged for the appearance of Amy Milne, a seven-year-old environmentalist from Saskatchewan, Canada.

As Saudi Arabian astronaut Sultan Bin Salman Al-Saud said of his experience in space: "The first day or so we all pointed to our own countries. The third or fourth day we pointed to our continents. By the fifth day we were aware of only one earth."

Cuban space explorer Arnaldo Tamayo-Mendes (left at podium) addresses assembled guests at the United Nations 'Only One Earth' celebration April 22 as fellow astronauts and UN officials look on.
The challenge of assuring worldwide environmental integrity is an unprecedented opportunity to establish a global, peaceful civilization.

Participants from 24 nations ranging from Australia to the Soviet Union, North America to China, and from Sweden to Swaziland attended the Bahá'í Youth Symposium on the Environment at Landegg Academy in Switzerland. Entitled "Protecting Our Birthright," the Symposium focused on two major concerns: our rights as individuals to a healthful, natural environment, and humanity’s responsibility to ensure that future generations enjoy the same privilege. We view the environment as a trust, the care of which is the responsibility of all who inhabit the earth.

We are in the midst of an environmental crisis. Deforestation and ozone depletion are but two of the many challenges which were discussed during the Symposium and which have been analyzed in great detail by the World Commission on Environment and Development in its report Our Common Future. Forests are burned in the Amazon, stripped for fodder in Africa and devastated by pollution in Europe. The destruction of the earth’s stratospheric ozone layer as a result, primarily, of the use of chlorofluorocarbons, is a problem many people fail to consider with sufficient concern because of its physical remoteness.

If present trends continue, our children’s birthright may be to live shortened lives in a contaminated world.

However, among the positive signs of a growing awareness of the state of the environment are the commitments being made by political leaders, increasing public interest in the issue, the flowering of many organizations focused on environmental concerns, and the active, long-term involvement of the United Nations.

Current economic and political systems continue to be based on a materialistic foundation and as a result, the above-mentioned initiatives often have limited impact. This in the long term leads to pessimism and despair. Experience has shown that materialism has failed to provide viable solutions to environmental and other global problems. We must make a concerted effort to develop a new worldwide ethic based on spiritual and moral values which will provide the motivation that mere scientific explanations and information are incapable of generating.

We may, in fact, be the last generation that has the opportunity to preserve the ecological balance of the world and to effect those changes needed for the reconstruction of our society. We therefore commit ourselves to those processes we believe are indispensable to transform this potential into an enduring achievement. Given that the human heart and the environment cannot be segregated, we must focus our efforts on the transformation of individuals. Only then can we carry forward an ever-advancing civilization. We must wholeheartedly work together, individually and in our communities, to create a greater awareness and to act decisively to conserve the environment.

We call on the nations of the world to recognize our common interests as one humankind, for the well-being of mankind, its peace and security are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established.

We urge the youth of the world to break down the barriers that have separated us from each other and from the earth on which we live, to develop the consultative processes which, when properly conducted, can lead to unity in an environmentally harmonious world.

Let it be this generation.
United Nations

Conference on Environment in Brazil

During the debate the developing countries expressed concern that the concept of sustainable development would lead the multi-lateral lending and financial institutions to set still more conditions for loans and other assistance.

Neto agreement, to help finance developing-country efforts to phase out ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons. Under heavy pressure from the United Kingdom, the U.S. reversed its position in mid-June.

As one U.N. official explained: "The developing countries consider technology transfers and financial aid essential to carrying out plans for environmentally sound development," but the industrialized countries are not yet ready to deal with these issues. Conference Secretary-General Maurice Strong asserts that "very substantial amounts of additional funding and access to technologies" are in fact required. Strong is president of the World Federation of United Nations Associations and was secretary-general of the Stockholm conference.

After much debate, the General Assembly agreed on specific issues to be tackled, ranging from climate change and deforestation to "improving the living and working environment of the poor and eradicating poverty through measures that integrate environmental and developmental concerns."

Coordinating the complex two-year planning process, drawing up the provisional agenda, and drafting the resolutions for consideration by the conference is a preparatory committee made up of all members of the UN and its specialized agencies and chaired by Tommy Koh, former Permanent Representative of Singapore to the UN.

The committee has established two working groups to help it with specific issue areas. Working Group I will deal with the atmosphere, land resources, conservation of biological diversity, and the sound management of biotechnology. Working Group II will deal with oceans, seas, coastal areas, and fresh water resources; waste management; and the international dumping of toxic wastes. These issues will be
examined from a developmental perspective, taking into account such matters as indigenous patterns of consumption and production, the relationship between food security and agricultural practices, and the development of human resources. The groups are to report to the Preparatory Committee at its four sessions, the first of which will be held August 6-31 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Formal provisions have been made for regional, national and non-governmental input. Each region will hold an advance conference. The first of these—a high-level meeting for Europe and North America—took place from May 8-16 in Bergen, Norway, with others scheduled for late summer and fall. Member states have been asked to form regional preparatory committees, and the secretariat will be providing guidelines for the national reports that will be submitted to the Preparatory Committee at its first session. A special fund for voluntary contributions was established by the committee to help the developing countries—particularly the least-developed—participate fully in the preparatory process.

According to both Strong and UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are to play an important role in the preparatory process as well as in the conference itself. Strong has given NGOs assurances that he will look to them in matters of substance, although the extent of their participation will not be fully defined until the August session of the Preparatory Committee. So far, it has been agreed that NGOs that enjoy consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) should take part in the conference, but some fear that this will have the effect of excluding many NGOs of the developing countries. It was also agreed that national preparatory committees should include representatives of independent groups and be broadly based, but there is no guarantee that governments will comply. The U.S. government says that NGO involvement in the preparatory process for the 1992 conference is both "necessary and desirable."

The week after the organizational session, 150 representatives from 115 NGOs of 40 countries met in Vancouver, Canada, with Strong and Gro Harlem Brundtland, chairman of the Commission on Environment and Development, to discuss NGO participation in the conference. Strong recommended that these groups and others form "a loose coalition or coalitions at national, regional and international levels and/or by sector or issue," so that NGO participation in the preparatory process will be as inclusive as possible.
House of Worship draws record crowds

The Bahá'í House of Worship near New Delhi, India, welcomed more than 175,000 visitors during the first three days of April including a record 117,112 on April 3 alone. On this day, the anniversary of the birth of Lord Rama, thousands of devotees who thronged to the nearby Kalkaji Temple came to the House of Worship along with many other visitors. Although it was not possible to interact individually with such great numbers of people, the staff reached out to them through the Word of God which was chanted during six prayer programs held at short intervals. The prayer hall was packed, and the visitors sat reverently as soon as the prayers began. The total number of visitors in April was 395,079.

Ridván celebration

Ridván, the “King of Festivals,” was celebrated at the Mashriqu’l-Adhká’r with special prayer programs. On April 21 the Spiritual Assembly of Delhi arranged a prayer service for Bahá’ís and seekers. Among those attending was the Temple architect, Fariburz Sahba. The program was followed by short talks in the conference hall in English and Hindi on the significance of the day. To mark the Ninth Day of Ridván, the Bahá’ís of Delhi, with Counsellor Zena Sorabjee, the newly elected members of the National Spiritual Assembly of India, and delegates to the National Convention from the various states gathered at the House of Worship for a morning prayer session. It was an exhilarating experience, capped by the chanting of a prayer in Arabic by the 21-member House of Worship choir.

Dignitaries

Heading the list of dignitaries visiting the Temple in April was Mahmoud Baryali, deputy prime minister of Afghanistan, who was in Delhi on an informal visit. During his short stay, he said he appreciated the warm welcome he was given and the beauty of the Temple.

“I am deeply impressed by the humanism and universalism of the Bahá’í religion,” said P. Balogh, ambassador of Hungary to India, during his second visit to the Temple. He extended his embassy’s help in translating Bahá’í literature into Hungarian, and said a film crew from Hungary would arrive in India in a matter of weeks and would like to film the Temple.

Nikorn Praissengphet, the ambassador of Thailand to India, paid a second visit to the House of Worship in April along with the Thai ambassador to Nepal and some other officials. He said the Temple has become the most important place to visit in New Delhi, and all important guests are brought there. He too offered his help in translating Bahá’í books into the Thai language.

The Soviet deputy minister of aviation, accompanied by two Russian ornithologists, sought information about the Faith and said that since there is now religious freedom in the Soviet Union the people are searching for a suitable religion. Sonia Díaz Llera, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Cuba, asked about the history of the Faith and its relevance and need in today’s world.

Lt. Gen. F.N. Bilimoria, general officer and commander-in-chief, Central Army Command, Lucknow, paid a surprise visit with his family and stayed for an hour. The general’s mother disclosed that they had come to the Temple directly from a ceremony at which the general was given a gold medal by the President of India. He wrote his impressions in the Temple’s visitors’ book: “This House of Worship is so splendid and awe-inspiring; the environment and atmosphere so pleasing to the eyes, heart and mind.” It was the second visit for Mrs. Bilimoria, who said she thought the Temple “an ideal place for meditation.” Their two sons were impressed with the modern approach to religion taken by the Faith, and asked questions about various aspects of the Cause.

Russian visitors

The House of Worship and the Faith are gaining popularity within official Russian circles in New Delhi. Representatives from the House of Soviet Culture and the USSR Trade Representation Centre escorted technologists, engineers, architects, academicians and newly appointed Soviet Embassy officials to the Temple in April. In fact, a professor of international economics remarked that “in the House of Soviet culture, where the atmosphere is so ideologically and politically motivated, my colleagues have a high regard for the Bahá’í Temple and the contribution it is making in spreading the message of unity.”

The open acceptance by Russian visitors of the freedom of practicing one’s religion has caused a resurgence of interest, reiterated during a meeting with B.M. Belousov, the Soviet minister of defense industries, who said through his interpreter that they now have a video tape of the Temple, professionally prepared by an expert from the Soviet Cultural Centre in New Delhi. Mr. Belousov, who was unable to visit the Temple because of other pressing duties, said he planned to do so on his next visit to New Delhi, adding that he would come prepared with questions about the Faith.

Growing interest among Chinese

A remarkable opportunity to present in some detail information about the Faith to mainland Chinese came about in April during a visit to the Temple by several delegations of high-ranking...
Chinese officials. A significant aspect of this was the interest in the Faith shown by the younger members. The first delegation to visit was comprised of members of the Chinese news media, as guests of the government of India under the Indo-Chinese Cultural Exchange Program, were escorted by a public relations officer from the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. Heading the delegation was the director of newspapers for the Press and Publication Administration of China who, along with his colleagues, spent two hours at the Temple, almost every moment of which was spent seeking detailed information about the Faith, all of which was carefully transcribed into Chinese. While explaining about the religious diversity in China, the director warmly welcomed the Bahá’ís to China.

Li Xu’i, vice-chairman of the state commission of science and technology and minister for protection of the environment, who visited with six other Chinese officials, remarked afterward, “Wonderful religion and miraculous architecture.” He added that “the Bahá’ís are warm people, and I hope the Bahá’í religion comes to China and a Bahá’í Temple will be built there.” During the latter part of April, a Chinese Bahá’í from Singapore came to serve at the Temple. This was most fortunate, as visitors included three large delegations of Chinese who were in Delhi to attend the Asian Development Bank conference. These were led by the president of the Agricultural Bank of China, the president of the China Investment Bank, and the governor of the Peoples Bank of China. After hearing an explanation of the principles of the Faith and the Station of Bahá’u’lláh, each of these visitors expressed his appreciation, and each was given Bahá’í literature in Chinese.

Two groups of Chinese from Taiwan, numbering 15 and 10, also were given information about the Faith, and a few left their addresses so that Bahá’ís might keep in touch with them. One remarked, “Your religion is very good and we want to know more about it.”

It was, however, a young Chinese studying in England, Kua Du, who was most touched by the Bahá’í Teachings. She first came early in April and promised to return, taking with her in addition to a pamphlet in Chinese another in Thai for a friend. On her second visit she arrived too late to enter the Temple, but during a third visit was able to take more pamphlets in Chinese to send to her brother and other relatives in China. She was delighted to learn that she could contact Bahá’ís in England, and said that on her return to college in Brighton she would share the Bahá’í message with all her friends.

Japanese visitors

Although relatively few in number, Japanese visitors in April showed considerable interest in the Faith. It was a happy coincidence to have for the last few days of the month a Japanese Bahá’í volunteering as a Temple guide. One visitor in particular seemed especially touched by The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh; she confided that her visit appeared to have been guided by an invisible Hand, and said she would be happy to receive Bahá’ís in her home in Japan.

The deputy chancellor of the Japanese Embassy visited one morning with eight of his Japanese students. He spent an hour talking to our Chinese volunteer, and returned that evening to present his card to her, at which time he was introduced to the Japanese volunteer. He invited her to his home to learn more about the Faith. The invitation was accepted, and the following day she visited his home, accompanied by a member of the National Spiritual Assembly and some other Bahá’ís. A wonderful fireside ensued, a set of Bahá’í literature was presented to the deputy chancellor, and he was asked to present another set to the principal of his school.

Groups

Throughout the month, large groups from West Bengal and Gujarat visited the Temple, and since there are guides from both states, the Bahá’í message was widely disseminated among them. A number of groups from France also visited, and they were briefed and escorted by a volunteer from the U.S. who speaks French. The principle of a universal auxiliary language proved especially appealing to a group of 10 Italian visitors; their tour leader, who has visited the Temple several times, is fascinated by the Faith, and assured the staff in the visitors’ book that “as a tour leader who comes to India often, I will do my best to introduce to all the tourists in my groups this great and exceptional creation of faith and humanity which will certainly leave its sign in this world which is still unaware of the need for this Unity.”

Because of summer examinations few school groups visited in April; but a group of young students from the Ramakrishna Mission School in Arunchal Pradesh listened intently as they were briefed in the conference hall. A few of them were keen to know more and to be contacted by Bahá’ís. The teacher who accompanied them wrote on their behalf: “The idea behind this institution is all-embracing religious faith which impressed our boys very much.”

Individuals

Dr. Suman Shah, a reader in Gujarati at the school of languages, Gujarat University and freelance journalist, came to the Temple with his wife during the last day of his stay in Delhi, and, after seeing the audio-visual program, remained for two hours to learn as much as he could about the Faith.

Mrs. Usha Bhardwaj was deeply troubled when she came to the Temple, having recently lost her 12-year-old son. She said the visit had given her renewed strength and courage, and enkindled in her a desire to further investigate the Faith.

The atmosphere of peace within the Prayer Hall moved V.K. Mehrotra, chief justice of the High Court of Himachal Pradesh, to write in the visitors’ book: “A visit to this fascinating place—possibly the only one of its kind in the world—is an experience in itself which makes one instinctively pray to Him. The place by His grace is being kept, as it should be, by the faithful in the manner which is most befitting.”
Dizzy Gillespie tours Eastern Europe

At the invitation of the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany, the renowned jazz trumpeter John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie, a Bahá'í from the United States, traveled recently to Eastern Europe to perform at a series of European media events, “One World Week,” in which the Bahá’í community of Germany was participating.

Mr. Gillespie’s musical tour began May 9 in East Berlin where some 2,000 people gathered for his concert at the Palast der Republik. Among the special guests were the president of the East German Parliament and the mayor of the city of Duisburg. During the concert, Mr. Gillespie mentioned that he is a member of the Bahá'í Faith whose goal is the unity of mankind.

On May 10, under the patronage of Raisa Gorbachev, who had flowers presented to him onstage, Mr. Gillespie played for a full house of about 2,000, after which he met at the Moscow Press Centre with some 80 journalists from the Soviet Union and other countries who asked about the Faith.

In Prague, Czechoslovakia, the following day, a sold-out house of 2,000 at the Cultural Palace heard Mr. Gillespie’s concert. Among those in the audience were President Vaclav Havel, Mrs. Havel, and U.S. Ambassador to Czechoslovakia Shirley Temple Black.

During that concert, Mr. Gillespie read a Bahá’í quotation referring to the unity of mankind and world peace.

A Dutch television team filmed the concert for a documentary to be presented on international TV systems.

On June 6, the National Youth Radio Broadcasting System of East Germany, “DT 64,” carried an hour-long interview with two Bahá’ís.

Christopher Sprung, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany, and Monika Schramm, a Bahá’í from the Frankfurt area, answered many detailed questions about the Faith, its principles, and especially the degree to which the Bahá’í community is able to put into effect the high standards enunciated by Bahá’u’lláh.

The cities of Bremen (West Germany) and Rostock (East Germany) held a “Volkfest” last January to celebrate the recent changes in those countries and the new partnership of the two cities.

Bahá’ís built an information stand for the festival at which they spoke to hundreds of people and met a family who offered their home as a meeting place for the Bahá’í community. They also gave out 10,000 copies of a shortened version of the peace statement.

Hundreds of people from East Germany, who had been given pamphlets and copies of the peace statement during the first few days after the opening of the Berlin Wall, have asked for more information about the Faith.

More than 80 of them registered to attend a weekend event planned by the Regional Teaching Committee as an introduction to the Faith.
Switzerland

From April 13-19, more than 140 young people from 24 countries including Czechoslovakia and Romania took part in the second annual symposium on the environment at Landegg Academy in Switzerland.

The symposium, dedicated to an analysis of today’s global environmental crisis, was entitled “The Environment: Protecting Our Birthright.”

Twenty experienced resource people took an active part in the symposium including Lawrence Arturo, director of the Bahá’í International Community’s recently established Office of the Environment.

Two Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre, Drs. Farzam Arbab and Magdalene Carney, also were present with Counsellor Sohrab Youssefian and two members of the European Bahá’í Youth Council.

Following an overview of the global environment’s present status, participants studied the nature of man, his relationship to the environment, and the role of the individual in protecting our natural birthright.

The symposium was dedicated to the memory of Richard St. Barbe Baker, and an evening was set aside to review his far-reaching contributions to raising awareness of the vital importance of trees and the role individuals and governments must play in preserving these “lungs of the earth.”

About 30 of the participants were not Bahá’ís, but four were enrolled during the symposium and others said they would investigate the Faith upon returning home.

(A statement by participants in the symposium appears on page 5.)

Spiritual and physical well-being were the topics of week-long workshops held last spring at the Landegg Academy in Switzerland.

Australasia

Mrs. Helen Perkins, a Bahá’í from Australia, recently completed a teaching trip through New Caledonia and Vanuatu.

On Mare Island in the Loyalty Islands, where she was warmly received. Mrs. Perkins held classes on spiritual transformation, the laws of the Faith, and Bahá’í administration, and spoke about the Bahá’í teachings concerning “black magic.”

In Vanuatu, where entire villages are Bahá’í, she had some difficulty meeting with the friends, as it was the rainy season and there was also much sickness among them. She was, however, able to present the Faith to fellow guests in her hotel and did manage to visit a number of villages.

She visited the large Bahá’í Center in Lanakel, on Tanna, which is used by UNICEF field workers, the World Health Organization, government employees and others who come to the island to speak with villagers.

Mrs. Perkins also met the wife of the Head of State in Vanuatu, a gracious Tongan woman who works for the World Health Organization and is a good friend of the Faith.

She then returned to Noumea in New Caledonia, where she and a newly arrived pioneer from Benin were invited to speak at a well-attended gathering that had been advertised on three radio stations.

Estonia

On May 1, a group of 12 Bahá’í adults, their children, and seven guests came from Latvia, Lithuania, Russia and Sweden to join the Bahá’ís of Riga, Estonia, for a “Baltic Bahá’í Rally” whose purposes were to consult on Bahá’í activities and deepen in the Writings.

During the meeting, each person told how he or she had become a Bahá’í or been attracted to the meeting. Later, questions raised by the visitors and new Bahá’ís were discussed.

Two of the guests, from Kiev, happily received a gift copy of Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era in Russian. Afterwards, everyone enjoyed musical entertainment and group singing.
Uganda

The women of Uganda's Mbale Bahá'í community took part last March in International Women's Day activities organized by the National Council of Women. Among the highlights was a fund-raising ball during which women and children appeared in a fashion show entitled "People of Our World," planned by a Bahá'í, which used various costumes to depict unity in diversity. Part of the program featured Bahá'í children dressed in a variety of costumes who held lit candles while singing "Good neighbors come in all colors."

The Minister of Women's Development was quite impressed, saying it was the first time she had seen such a cultural show in Uganda.

The Bahá'í exhibit, which tied for first place in a competition held during the program, drew many admirers; articles for display, made by Bahá'í women, included baked goods, potted plants, toys, embroidery, woodwork, tie-dye, and batik.

The guest of honor, member of Parliament Mrs. Masaba, and Mr. Byaruhanga, district administrator of Mbale, made favorable comments about the display and the Faith.

The administrator expressed his wish to receive Bahá'í literature, and an appointment was made for a Bahá'í delegation to meet with him.

Bahá'í efforts including a literacy campaign, tree-plantings and primary health care education drew praise from Minister of Works Florence Nkurukunda, who noted that they are in line with government policy.

"Youth Commitment and Collective Effort for Global Unity" was the theme of a Bahá'í National Youth Conference held last December 14-17 at the National Center in Kampala, Uganda.

El Viento Canta, a traveling Bahá'í musical group from South America, performed during the conference, after which some of the youth planned a teaching project.

Pakistan

Three young winners seem pleased with their victory in the annual elocution competition held at the Bahá'í-operated New Day School in Karachi, Pakistan. The purpose of the contest, which is conducted in Urdu as well as English, is to help the children become more comfortable when making public appearances.

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Romania

At Naw-Rúz, the first local Spiritual Assembly in Eastern Europe was elected in Cluj, Romania.

On March 20 a public meeting was held to celebrate Naw-Rúz. One hundred people attended including six Bahá'ís from Tirgu Mures and others from Austria, Germany, Japan and Sweden.

The election of the Assembly took place the following day in Cluj with the full participation of the city's nascent Bahá'í community.

Recent enrollments have brought the total number of believers in Romania to 40 and the number of localities opened to the Faith to eight.
Panama

A two-day seminar on literacy, co-sponsored by the Bahá’í community of Panama and the country’s Ministry of Education, was held last April 23-24 in Panama City.

The seminar included sections on literacy in general, literacy in rural areas, and excellence in teaching.

The Bahá’ís were asked specifically to present a talk on spiritual qualities, and on the second day they presented a talk entitled “Universal Elements Essential in Education.”

In preparing for the seminar, the Bahá’ís had been able to meet with the Minister of Education, Ada de Gordon, and to present her with a copy of the peace statement and a Bahá’í book.

Media coverage was thorough, including interviews with Minister de Gordon and two Bahá’ís, Oscar Torrez and Lydia de Díaz, who presented talks at the seminar.

Réunion

When Peggy Baichoo, a Bahá’í pioneer to Réunion, returned to the island after attending an International Women’s Day conference in France, she was invited to collaborate with the Regional Delegate for Women’s Status to help ensure women’s rights throughout the Indian Ocean area.

Mrs. Baichoo was invited by the President of France, Francois Mitterand, to attend a party at the Elysee Palace with 450 women from various countries. During that event, she met with the State Secretary for Women’s Status.

After returning to Réunion, Mrs. Baichoo paid a courtesy visit to the Regional Delegate for Women’s Status for that country, who asked her to take part in a project to secure women’s rights in the Indian Ocean area.

Soviet Union

The Hand of the Cause of God ‘Alí-Akbar Fúrútán (center) is pictured during his visit to the Soviet Union last March-April with members of the Mamedof family in Dushanbe.

Traveling teacher ‘Azíz Yazdí shares stories of his experiences in many countries and his memories of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with the friends in Panama City. Also attending the gathering at the Bahá’í Center were Counsellors Hizzaya and Ruth Pringle. Mr. Yazdí has been cheering and inspiring the friends throughout his recent journeys to the South Sea Islands and Central America.

Ecuador

The year dedicated to the memory of the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu’lláh Muhájír has begun well and is gaining momentum in Ecuador.

At the outset, a team composed of Bahá’ís from seven countries received 69 declarations in the Bolivar area. Mrs. Muhájír has since traveled to the area, encouraging the friends and visiting the Teaching Institute named for her late husband.

One hundred forty-one people have been enrolled in the Faith in Ecuador as a result of the Muhájír Teaching Campaign which began last February in three areas of the country.

Forty-eight declared in the city of Quininde, 47 in the Otavalo area and 46 in Guayaquil.
Austria

While in Austria from March 7–16, the Hand of the Cause of God 'Ali-Akbar Furutan took part in a joint meeting of the National Spiritual Assembly and its Teaching Committee for Eastern Europe.

Eleven young people who had recently become Bahá'ís in Eastern Europe made a special trip to Vienna to meet Mr. Furutan. He met with them twice, and a young woman who had accompanied the group from Hungary accepted the Faith.

On March 10, Mr. Furutan spoke to 250 Bahá'ís from all over Austria about the importance of teaching, especially at this crucial time.

After touring Russia, Mr. Furutan returned to Vienna on April 30, and on May 1 he met with about 20 of the friends there before returning to the Holy Land.

Ireland

A Bahá'í conference on “The Role of Women in the Year 2000” drew more than 120 women and men last March 31 to Queen’s University in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

The aim of the conference was to stimulate consultation on the development of harmony between men and women and the role of women in bringing about world peace.

It was organized by the Bahá'í Women’s Institute of Northern Ireland, and, with the support of a group called Co-operation North, was the second conference to be held on the role of women.

Represented were a number of groups including the Town’s Women’s Guild, Gingerbread, Well Women’s Centre, Women’s Aid, Mothers’ Union, and the Federation of Women’s Institute of Northern Ireland.

This “cross-border” event had a unique spirit, fostering new bonds between the north and south of Ireland, as well as involving those in both communities whose interest lies in social development.

El Salvador

An ailing 'Mr. World,' Efrain Gonzalez, visits the doctor’s receptionist, Susan Quintanilla, during a dramatic presentation by children last February at the jamalyyih Bahá'í Institute in El Salvador. The play was part of a day-long conference held as a climax of the weekend visit by Aziz Yazdi, former Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre in Haifa. About 150 people from 20 Bahá'í communities attended the conference.

Bahá'í youth in Santa Tecla, El Salvador, recently presented a number of evening presentations on the Faith in local high schools.

The programs consisted of music and a brief introduction to the Faith, followed by a half-hour talk about the present world situation, the solutions offered by the Faith, and the role of youth at this critical time.

The effort brought the Faith to the attention of almost 1,000 students, and has led to plans for follow-up activities by the youth.

Honduras

Only eight weeks after the launching of Project Olinga at the beginning of 1990, the Bahá'ís of Honduras reported the enrollment of 1,400 new believers.

A consolidation program for the new believers includes classes for children and youth, community meetings, and study classes.

A five-day teacher training institute, attended by more than 250 Garífuna Indians, included an appearance by 'Aziz Yazdi who was visiting the area at that time.

Mali

As World Health Day 1990 approached, a delegation of three Bahá’ís representing the National Spiritual Assembly of Mali met last March 22 in Bamako with Dr. Charles Randianana, the regional representative of the World Health Organization (WHO), to describe the Bahá’í socio-economic development program of primary health care now being implemented in a number of African countries.

During the meeting, the Bahá’ís offered to undertake such health-related programs in Mali as a means of promoting the aims of WHO’s program, “Health for All by the Year 2000.”

In his capacity as a high-ranking health official with jurisdiction over 17 countries in Northwest Africa, Dr. Randianana encouraged the Bahá’ís of Mali to pursue those plans.
Brazil

The first International Exposition on Education for Peace, sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil, opened last June 4 in Brasilia and was attended by representatives of 23 national embassies and educational institutions.

Countries represented at the opening included Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, Czechoslovakia, Great Britain, Hungary, Israel, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Senegal, Sweden, Thailand and the USSR.

The exposition highlighted the efforts being made by these and other countries to attain peace through education.

The Bahá'ís were applauded by those attending the exposition for their initiative, while a positive television interview was broadcast throughout the country that same day.

Special visitors included the Secretary General of the Ministry of Education and the ambassador from Israel. As many as 2,000 government officials were invited to attend, and 25,000 pamphlets were prepared for distribution during the event.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil has begun a correspondence course to help consolidate the Bahá'í community.

The course, based on one offered by the National Spiritual Assembly of Trinidad and Tobago, is to be made available to all newly enrolled Bahá'ís in Brazil. The first 500 copies were sent to those who were enrolled during a teaching campaign in Rio Grande do Sul, Alvorades.

Alvorada, a town in southern Brazil, has recently been the scene of successful teaching efforts and is reported to be “yielding new fruits.” Two other localities have also been opened to large-scale teaching: Cara-Zinho, which has had 15 enrollments, and Essteo, with 32. Each of these communities was expected to form its own local Spiritual Assembly at Riqué.

A booklet entitled The Bahá'ís and the Berlin Wall, released to all Bahá'í communities in Brazil, is being distributed to authorities and leaders of thought. It presents a correlation of the recent events in East Germany and the transformations in the world, and the main topics presented in the peace statement.

Taiwan

Hsu Shui-teh, Taiwan's Minister of the Interior, recently visited the National Bahá'í Center in Taipei.

It was his wish to meet and consult with Bahá'ís as part of his project to survey each of the major religions in Taiwan to learn how each one may be of help to society as a whole.

Four members of the National Spiritual Assembly and one Auxiliary Board member met for 25 minutes with Mr. Hsu, explaining to him how the activities of the Bahá'í community contribute to the well-being of society.

Mr. Hsu was surprised to learn that membership in the Bahá'í community of Taiwan has grown during the past three years from less than 1,500 to more than 12,000.

One especially significant result of the meeting was that Mr. Hsu agreed that it would be appropriate, in view of the Faith's world-view embracing all cultures, that its official name in Taiwan could be changed from “Da Tung Chiao,” which means “The Religion of Great Harmony” and alludes to Confucius' description of an ideal society, to “the Bahá'í Faith.” The government in previous years did not approve of the change, preferring to retain the old name with its connection to traditional Chinese culture.

Italy

Sixty Bahá'í youth from various parts of Italy took part in a recent conference in Gela organized by youth. The themes were “Individual Behavior for a Better World” and “Economy for a New World.”

The enthusiasm and devotion of the young people made possible the promotion of a large individual heart-to-heart teaching campaign in the streets of Gela. Hundreds of young people attended an evening fireside at which six youth were enrolled in the Faith.

Enayatollah Vahdat (second from left), a Bahá'í pioneer for more than 30 years to Porto Alegre, Brazil, receives from city councilman Dilamar Machado a scroll signifying his new title of 'Citizen of Porto Alegre' in recognition of his many years of community service. Looking on are Mayor Olivio Dutra (left) and city council president Valdir Fraga. The honor was conferred on Mr. Vahdat by a unanimous vote of the city council.

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Australia

A Bahá’í has received approval from the Queensland (Australia) Committee of Religious Studies to include the Faith in her curriculum for a class in the study of comparative religion which she teaches at the school in her community.

With the help of her local Spiritual Assembly, Mrs. Lyn Cooper obtained the permission of the school principal, parents, representatives of local churches, and the director of religious studies of the Queensland Department of Education to present the course on comparative religion which she had designed herself.

Subsequently, Mrs. Cooper’s Assembly received a letter from the Department of Education that appears to give the Assembly chairman the authority to appoint people to teach the course in any school in Queensland.

In addition, Mrs. Cooper is being nominated to serve on the advisory committee for the development of the curriculum for religious studies for the government of Queensland.

Montserrat

Bobbie Martin, a Bahá’í on the Caribbean island of Montserrat, was honored recently for his diligence as Hurricane Hugo swept through the islands in September 1989. Mr. Martin manned his ham radio non-stop throughout the hurricane to transmit information about the island’s plight to the outside world.

In several subsequent radio interviews, the fact that Mr. Martin is a Bahá’í has been mentioned. He was the guest of honor at a special reading of poems relating to the hurricane, and received the Funkyman Award for his services to those on the island.

India

At the end of its first month, the Dr. Muhájjir Border Teaching Campaign, a collaborative effort between Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, India, reported 6,000 enrollments in 12 border villages.

Proclamations in schools and colleges in two districts resulted in 700 enrollments.

Brazil

The first local Spiritual Assembly of the Mura tribe in Amazonas State, Brazil, was formed at Rîchvân. The village, about 12 hours by boat from the village of Beruri, was visited recently by Auxiliary Board member Darioush Akhavan and some other Baha’is. During that visit, 11 people including nine adults embraced the Cause.

“Bahá’í Pre-School Goes Tree-Planting” and “Bahá’í Kids Clean Up.”

In the Swazi Observer, the article was accompanied by a large photograph with a caption explaining that the Bahá’í children were being taught environmental awareness by planting the trees.

Zaire

Shown during a meeting at the school are teachers and parents of 70 students of the “Enfants du Monde” (Children of the World) Kindergarten in Bukavu, Zaire. During the meeting Mrs. Mary Gibson, a Bahá’í, presented to the school a painting of her aunt, Mrs. Armina Lana McCoy, in whose memory Mrs. Gibson had contributed financially to the building of the school some years ago. Mrs. McCoy, born in Virginia in 1886 of parents who had been slaves, and lacking a formal education, nevertheless devoted her life to encouraging others to learn to read and write.

The Bahá’ís of Zaire recently took part in two major teaching events, reaching more than 10,000 people with the Message of Bahá’u’lláh.

At a children’s fair in Kinshasa, the Faith was proclaimed to more than 10,000 visitors. A number of them, some of whom embraced the Cause, visited the Bahá’í National Center.

At a celebration of the 10th anniversary of the creation of the Women’s Condition and Family Life in Zaire (CONDIFFA), Bahá’í women from all over the country made a deep impression on those gathered with a presentation on the Faith.

Swaziland

Children attending a Bahá’í preschool and primary school in Swaziland observed Naw-Rúz on March 20 by planting three trees in support of the “Clean and Beautiful Swaziland” campaign.

The event was covered on television, and both local newspapers printed articles about it under headlines that read “Bahá’í Pre-School Goes Tree-Planting” and “Bahá’í Kids Clean Up.”
Cameroon

Pictured are some of the 57 children who gathered last June 21-23 at the second annual All-Children’s Bahá’í Summer School in Bamenda, Cameroon. Also pictured are some of the teachers and parents who facilitated a variety of programs to fill each day. At the close of the school, the children entertained their parents and teachers at an evening program during which they made presentations based on the lessons and principles they had learned.

Malagasy Republic

Last April, Bahá’ís in Madagascar began a project at the northern tip of the island during which they visited and presented books to dignitaries in the area, held an exhibit in Diego Suárez, and gave public talks on Bahá’í-related social issues.

The friends called on the president of the province, the presidents and vice-presidents of the sub-provinces, the provincial prosecutor, and the provincial director of social education. They were warmly welcomed by all of the dignitaries, who seemed eager to hear about the Faith.

The Bahá’ís were able to describe their collaboration with the government in socio-economic development projects, and were asked many questions, especially concerning what else the Bahá’í community could do to serve Madagascar.

About 50 people helped with the Bahá’í exhibit, which was visited by about 600 people. It was shown on television and mentioned on the radio, which helped attract public attention.

Many people asked directions to the local Bahá’í Center so they could “come to pray.” Some took literature and were invited to attend the weekly community fireside, at which three people immediately accepted the Faith.

A teaching campaign held last August in Madagascar led to the enrollment of 724 new Bahá’ís. About 40 Bahá’ís from Réunion, Mauritius, the Seychelles and France traveled to Madagascar to help in the campaign.

Among those who enrolled was a philosophy teacher who wants to teach those in his class about the Faith. His wife also accepted the Faith, and the couple has offered their home for Bahá’í meetings.

The entire population of the village of Beravna embraced the Cause. Their first action as a Bahá’í community was to lay a foundation stone for their Bahá’í Center.

Western Samoa

Baha’is in Western Samoa march in the anniversary parade honoring His Highness the Malietoa Tanumafili II on his 50 years of service to the people of that country. The Malietoa is a Bahá’í, as are several members of his family.

Belize

A report presented during the 24th annual Bahá’í National Convention in Belize announced that the “Purest Branch” teaching campaign in that country had seen the enrollment of more than 1,000 people, primarily from among the Garifuna tribe, in the previous 63 days.
Special Issue: The Bahá'í Administrative Order
PROFOUNDLY DEPLORE TRAGIC CIRCUMSTANCES SUDDEN PASSING DEARLY LOVED, WHOLLY DEVOTED, INDEFATIGABLE SERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH HEDAYATULLAH AHMADIYEH. HIS CONSTANT PROMOTION SACRED CAUSE THROUGH HIS INTENSIVE IMMENSELY SUCCESSFUL INVOLVEMENT TEACHING WORK INCLUDING HIS AUTHORSHIP WIDELY USED TEACHING BOOKLET WAS AT CORE HIS DYNAMIC SERVICES AS CONTINENTAL COUNSELOR IN AMERICAS, AS MEMBER AND CHAIRMAN FOR MANY YEARS OF NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY BELIZE AND AS PIONEER DURING HIS YOUTHFUL YEARS IRAN. OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS HIS EXTENSIVE TEACHING TRIPS THROUGH CENTRAL, NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA WILL FOREVER BE ASSOCIATED WITH BRILLIANT CHAPTERS DEVELOPMENT FAITH THESE AREAS. DEEPLY SYMPATHIZE MEMBERS HIS BELOVED FAMILY WHOSE WHOLEHEARTED SUPPORT HIS ACTIVITIES WAS EXEMPLARY. PRAYING HOLY THRESHOLD THAT HIS SOUL MAY RECEIVE RICH REWARDS MAY BE IMBUED WITH ETERNAL HAPPINESS THROUGHOUT DIVINE WORLDS.

ADVISING MEMORIAL SERVICES BE HELD TEMPLES PANAMA CITY AND WILMETTE AND IN COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT AMERICAS IN HIS HONOR.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
AUGUST 29, 1990
The following letter, addressed to a National Spiritual Assembly by the Universal House of Justice, appeared in Bahá’í News No. 410 (May 1965). Although its purpose was to clear up questions raised immediately after the House of Justice was first elected in 1963, its contents are as timely today as they were then, and it is reprinted here for the edification of the friends and as an indispensable aid in deepening on the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the Netherlands

Dear Bahá’í Friends,

We are glad that you have brought to our attention the questions perplexing some of the believers. It is much better for these questions to be put freely and openly than to have them, unexpressed, burdening the hearts of devoted believers. Once one grasps certain basic principles of the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh such uncertainties are easily dispelled. This is not to say that the Cause of God contains no mysteries. Mysteries there are indeed, but they are not of a kind to shake one’s faith once the essential tenets of the Cause and the indisputable facts of any situation are clearly understood.

The questions put by the various believers fall into three groups. The first group centers upon the following queries: Why were steps taken to elect a Universal House of Justice with the foreknowledge that there would be no Guardian? Was the time ripe for such an action? Could not the International Bahá’í Council have carried on the work?

The basis for election

At the time of our beloved Shoghi Effendi’s death it was evident, from the circumstances and from the explicit requirements of the Holy Texts, that it had been impossible for him to appoint a successor in accordance with the provisions of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. This situation, in which the Guardian died without being able to appoint a successor, presented an obscure question not covered by the explicit Holy Text, and had to be referred to the Universal House of Justice. The friends should clearly understand that before the election of the Universal House of Justice there was no knowledge that there would be no Guardian. There could not have been any such foreknowledge, whatever opinions individual believers may have held. Neither the Hands of the Cause of God, nor the International Bahá’í Council, nor any other existing body could make a decision upon this all-important matter. Only the House of Justice had authority to pronounce upon it. This was one urgent reason for calling the election of the Universal House of Justice as soon as possible.

Following the passing of Shoghi Effendi the international administration of the Faith was carried on by the Hands of the Cause of God with the complete agreement and loyalty of the National Spiritual Assemblies and the body of the believers. This was in accordance with the Guardian’s designation of the Hands as the “Chief Stewards of Bahá’u’lláh’s embryonic World Commonwealth.”

From the outset of their custodianship of the Cause of God, the Hands realized that since they had no certainty of divine guidance such as is incontrovertibly assured to the Guardian and to the Universal House of Justice, their one safe course was to follow with undeviating firmness the instructions and policies of Shoghi Effendi. The entire history of religion shows no comparable record of such strict self-discipline, such absolute loyalty and such complete self-abnegation by the leaders of a religion finding themselves suddenly deprived of their divinely inspired guide. The debt of gratitude which mankind for generations, nay, ages to come, owes to this handful of grief-stricken, steadfast, heroic souls is beyond estimation.

The Guardian had given the Bahá’í world explicit and detailed plans covering the period until Ridván 1963, the end of the Ten Year Crusade. From that point onward, unless the Faith were to be endangered, further divine guidance was essential. This was the second pressing reason for the calling of the election of the Universal House of Justice. The rightness of the time was further confirmed by references in Shoghi Effendi’s letters to the Ten Year Crusade being followed by other plans under the direction of the Universal House of Justice. One such reference is the following passage from a letter addressed to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles on February 25, 1951, concerning its Two Year Plan which immediately preceded the Ten Year Crusade:

“On the success of this enterprise, unprecedented in its scope, unique in its character and immense in its spiritual potentialities, must depend the initiation, at a later period in the Formative Age of the Faith, of undertakings embracing within their range all National Assemblies functioning throughout the Bahá’í world, undertakings constituting in themselves a prelude to the launching of world-wide enterprises destined to be embarked upon, in future epochs of that same Age, by the Universal House of Justice, that will symbolize the unity and co-ordinate the activities of these National Assemblies.”

Having been in charge of the Cause of God for six years, the Hands, with absolute faith in the Holy Writings, called upon the believers to elect the Universal House of Justice, and even went so far as to ask that they themselves be not voted for. The sole, sad instance of anyone succumbing to
the allurements of power was the pitiful attempt of Charles Mason Remey to usurp the Guardianship.

The following excerpts from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá state clearly and emphatically the principles with which the friends are already familiar from the Will and Testament of the Master and the various letters of Shoghi Effendi, and explain the basis for the election of the Universal House of Justice. This Tablet was sent to Persia by the beloved Guardian himself, in the early years of his ministry, for circulation among the believers.

"...for 'Abdu'l-Bahá is in a tempest of dangers and infinitely abhors differences of opinion. ...Praise be to God, there are no grounds for differences.

"The Báb, the Exalted One, is the Morn of Truth, the splendor of Whose light shineth through all regions. He is also the Harbinger of the Most Great Light, the Abád Luminary. The Blessed Beauty is the One promised by the sacred books of the past, the revelation of the Source of light that shone upon Mount Sinai, Whose fire glowed in the midst of the Burning Bush. We are, one and all, servants of Their threshold, and stand each as a lowly keeper at Their door.

"My purpose is this, that ere the expiration of a thousand years, no one has the right to utter a single word, even to claim the station of the Guardianship. The Most Holy Book is the Book to which all peoples shall refer, and in it the Laws of God have been revealed. Laws not mentioned in the Book should be referred to the decision of the Universal House of Justice. There will be no grounds for difference. ...Beware, beware lest anyone create a rift or stir up sedition. Should there be differences of opinion, the Supreme House of Justice would immediately resolve the problems. Whatever will be its decision, by majority vote, shall be the real truth, inasmuch as that House is under the protection, unerring guidance and care of the One True Lord. He shall guard it from error and will protect it under the wing of His sanctity and infallibility. He who opposes it is cast out and will eventually be of the defeated.

"The Supreme House of Justice should be elected according to the system followed in the election of the parliaments of Europe. And when the countries would be guided the Houses of Justice of the various countries would elect the Supreme House of Justice.

"At whatever time all the beloved of God in each country appoint their delegates, and these in turn select their representatives, and these representatives elect a body, that body shall be regarded as the Supreme House of Justice.

"The establishment of that House is not dependent upon the conversion of all the nations of the world. For example, if conditions were favorable and no disturbances would be caused, the friends in Persia would elect their representatives, and likewise the friends in America, in India and other areas would also elect their representatives, and these would elect a House of Justice. That House of Justice would be the Supreme House of Justice. That is all." (Persian and Arabic Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Vol. III, pp. 499-501)

The friends should realize that there is nothing in the Texts to indicate that the election of the Universal House of Justice could be called only by the Guardian. On the contrary, 'Abdu'l-Bahá envisaged the calling of its election in His own lifetime. At a time described by the Guardian as "the darkest moments of His (the Master's) life, under 'Abdu'l-Hamid's regime, when He stood to be deported to the most inhospitable regions of Northern Africa," and when even His life was threatened, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote to Hájí Mirzá Táqi Afnán, the cousin of the Báb and chief builder of the Ishquáb Temple, commanding him to arrange for the election of the Universal House of Justice should the threats against the Master materialize. The second part of the Master's Will is also relevant to such a situation and should be studied by the friends.

The infallibility

The second series of problems vexing some of the friends centers on the question of the infallibility of the Universal House of Justice and its ability to function without the presence of the Guardian. Particular difficulty has been experienced in understanding the implications of the following statement by the beloved Guardian:

"Divorced from the institution of the Guardianship the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh would be mutilated and permanently deprived of that hereditary principle which, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá has written, has been invariably upheld by the Law of God. 'In all the Divine Dispensations,' He states, in the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, 'the eldest son hath been given extraordinary distinctions. Even the station of prophethood hath been his birthright.' Without such an institution the integrity of the Faith would be imperiled, and the stability of the entire fabric would be gravely endangered. Its prestige would suffer, the means required to enable it to take a long, an uninterrupted view over a series of generations would be completely lacking, and the necessary guidance to define the sphere of the legislative action of its elected representatives would be totally withdrawn." ('The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh," in The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 148)

Let the friends who wish for a clearer understanding of this passage at the present time consider it in the light of the many other texts which deal with the same subject; for example, the following passages gleaned from the letters of Shoghi Effendi:

"They have also, in unequivocal and emphatic language, appointed those twin institutions of the House of Justice and of the Guardianship as their chosen Successors, destined to apply the principles, promulgate the laws, protect the institutions, adapt loyally and intelligently the Faith to the requirements of progressive society, and consummate the incorruptible inheritance which the Founders of the Faith have bequeathed to the world." (Letter dated March 21, 1930, in The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 20)

"It must be also clearly understood by every believer that the institution of the Guardianship does not under any circumstances abrogate, or even in the slightest degree detract from the powers granted to the Universal House of Justice by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, and repeatedly and solemnly confirmed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will. It does not constitute in any manner a contradiction to the Will and Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, nor does it nullify any of His revealed instructions. It enhances the prestige of that exalted assembly, stabilizes its supreme position, safeguards its unity, assures the continuity of its labors, without presuming in the slightest to infringe upon the inviolability of its
clearly-defined sphere of jurisdiction. We stand indeed too close to so monumental a document to claim for ourselves a complete understanding of all its implications, or to presume to have grasped the manifold mysteries it undoubtedly contains." (Letter dated February 27, 1929, in The World Order of Bahá'ulláh, p. 8)

"From these statements it is made indubitably clear and evident that the Guardian of the Faith has been made the Interpreter of the Word and that the Universal House of Justice has been invested with the function of legislating on matters not expressly revealed in the teachings. The interpretation of the Guardian, functioning within his own sphere, is as authoritative and binding as the enactments of the International House of Justice, whose exclusive right and prerogative is to pronounce upon and deliver the final judgment on such laws and ordinances as Bahá’u'lláh has not expressly revealed. Neither can, nor will ever, infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain of the other. Neither will seek to curtail the specific and undoubted authority with which both have been divinely invested." ("The Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh," in The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 150)

"Each exercises, within the limitations imposed upon it, its powers, its authority, its rights and prerogatives. These are neither contradictory, nor detract in the slightest degree from the position which each of these institutions occupies." ("The Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh," in The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 148)

"Though the Guardian of the Faith has been made the permanent head of so august a body he can never, even temporarily, assume the right of exclusive legislation. He cannot override the decision of the majority of his fellow-members..." ("The Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh," in The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 150)

Above all, let the hearts of the friends be assured by these words of Bahá’u’lláh:

"The Hand of Omnipotence hath established His Revelation upon an unassailable, an enduring foundation. Storms of human strife are powerless to undermine its basis, nor will men’s fanciful theories succeed in damaging its structure." (Quoted on p. 109 of The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh) and these of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

"Verily, God effecteth that which He pleaseth; naught can annul His Covenant; naught can obstruct His favor nor oppose His Cause! He doeth with His Will that which pleaseth Him and He is Powerful over all things!" (Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Vol. III, p. 598)

It should be understood by the friends that before legislating upon any matter the Universal House of Justice studies carefully and exhaustively both the Sacred Texts and the writings of Shoghi Effendi on the subject. The interpretations written by the beloved Guardian cover a vast range of subjects and are equally as binding as the Text itself.

There is a profound difference between the interpretations of the Guardian and the elucidations of the House of Justice in exercise of its function to "deliberate upon all problems which have caused difference, questions that are obscure, and matters that are not expressly recorded in the Book." The Guardian reveals what the Scripture means; his interpretation is a statement of truth which cannot be varied. Upon the Universal House of Justice, in the words of the Guardian, "has been conferred the exclusive right of legislating on matters not expressly revealed in the Bahá’í writings." Its pronouncements, which are susceptible of amendment or abrogation by the House of Justice itself, serve to supplement and apply the Law of God. Although not invested with the function of interpretation, the House of Justice is in a position to do everything necessary to establish the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh on this earth. Unity of doctrine is maintained by the existence of the authentic texts of Scripture and the voluminous interpretations of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi, together with the absolute prohibition against anyone propounding "authoritative" or "inspired" interpretations or usurping the function of Guardian. Unity of administration is assured by the authority of the Universal House of Justice.

Statements such as these indicate that the full meaning of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as well as an understanding of the implications of the World Order ushered in by that remarkable Document can be revealed only gradually to men’s eyes, and after the Universal House of Justice has come into being. The friends are called upon to trust to time and to await the guidance of the Universal House of Justice which, as circumstances require, will make pronouncements that will resolve and clarify obscure matters.

The authority to expel

The third group of queries raised by the friends concerns details of functioning of the Universal House of Justice in the absence of the Guardian, particularly the matter of expulsion of members of the House of Justice. Such questions will be clarified in the Constitution of the House of Justice, the formulation of which is a goal of the Nine Year Plan. Meanwhile, the friends are informed that any member committing a "sin injurious to the common weal," may be expelled from membership of the House of Justice by a majority vote of the House itself. Should any member, God forbid, be guilty of breaking the Covenant, the matter would be investigated by the Hands of the Cause of God, and the Covenant-breaker would be expelled by decision ofmitting a "sin injurious to the common weal" may be expelled from membership of the House of Justice by a majority of any other believer. The decision of the Hands in such a case would be announced to the Bahá’í world by the Universal House of Justice.

We are certain that when you share this letter with the friends and they have these quotations from the Scriptures and the writings of the Guardian drawn to their attention, their doubts and misgivings will be dispelled and they will be able to devote their every effort to spreading the Message of Bahá’u’lláh, serenely confident in the power of His Covenant to overcome whatever tests an inscrutable Providence may shower upon it, thus demonstrating its ability to redeem a travelling world and to upraise the Standard of the Kingdom of God on earth.

With loving greetings,

The Universal House of Justice
Haifa, Israel
March 9, 1963
The following passages from a letter written by the Universal House of Justice in response to questions asked by an individual believer about the relationship between the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice first appeared in Baha'i News No. 426 (September 1966).

Dear Baha'i Friend,

... You query the timing of the election of the Universal House of Justice in view of the Guardian's statement: "... given favorable circumstances under which the Baha'is of Persia and the adjoining countries under Soviet rule, may be enabled to elect their national representatives... the only remaining obstacle in the way of the definite formation of the International House of Justice will have been removed." On April 19, 1947, the Guardian, in a letter written on his behalf by his secretary, replied to the inquiry of an individual believer about this passage: "At the time he referred to Russia there were Baha'is there, now the community has practically ceased to exist, therefore the formation of the International House of Justice cannot depend on a Russian N.S.A., but other strong N.S.A.s will have to be built up before it can be established."

You suggest the possibility that, for the good of the Cause, certain information concerning the succession to Shoghi Effendi is being withheld from the believers. We assure you that nothing whatsoever is being withheld from the friends for whatever reason. There is no doubt at all that in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Baha, Shoghi Effendi was the authority designated to appoint his successor, but he had no children and all the surviving Aghsan had broken the Covenant. Thus, as the Hands of the Cause stated in 1957, it is clear that there was no one he could have appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Will. To have made an appointment outside the clear and specific provisions of the Master's Will and Testament would obviously have been an impossible and unthinkable course of action for the Guardian, the divinely-appointed upholder and defender of the Covenant. Moreover, that same Will had provided a clear means for the confirmation of the Guardian's appointment of his successor, as you are aware. The nine Hands to be elected by the body of the Hands were to give their assent by secret ballot to the Guardian's choice. In 1957 the entire body of the Hands, after fully investigating the matter, announced that Shoghi Effendi had appointed no successor and left no will. This is documented and established.

The fact that Shoghi Effendi did not leave a will cannot be adduced as evidence of his failure to obey Baha'u'llah—rather should we acknowledge that in his very silence there is a wisdom and a sign of his infallible guidance. We should ponder deeply the writings that we have, and seek to understand the multitudinous significances that they contain. Do not forget that Shoghi Effendi said two things were necessary for a growing understanding of the World Order of Baha'u'llah: the passage of time and the guidance of the Universal House of Justice.

The infallibility of the Universal House of Justice within its ordained sphere

The infallibility of the Universal House of Justice, operating within its ordained sphere, has not been made dependent upon the presence in its membership of the Guardian of the Cause. Although in the realm of interpretation the Guardian's pronouncements are always binding, in the area of the Guardian's participation in legislation it is always the decision of the House itself which must prevail. This is supported by the words of the Guardian: "The interpretation of the Guardian, functioning within his own sphere, is as authoritative and binding as the enactments of the International House of Justice, whose exclusive right and prerogative is to pronounce upon and deliver the final judgment on such laws and ordinances as Baha'u'llah has not expressly revealed. Neither can, nor will ever, infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain of the other. Neither will seek to curtail the specific and undoubted authority with which both have been divinely invested.

"Though the Guardian of the Faith has made the permanent head of so august a body he can never, even temporarily, assume the right of exclusive legislation. He cannot override the decision of the majority of his fellow-members, but is bound to insist upon a reconsideration by them of any enactment he conscientiously believes to conflict with the meaning and to depart from the spirit of Baha'u'llah's revealed utterances."

However, quite apart from his function as a member and sacred head for life of the Universal House of Justice, the Guardian, functioning within his own sphere, had the right and duty "to define the sphere of the legislative action" of the Universal House of Justice. In other words, he had the authority to state whether a matter was or was not already covered by the Sacred Texts and therefore whether it was within the authority of the Universal House of Justice to legislate upon it. No other person, apart from the Guardian, has the right or authority to make such definitions. The question therefore arises: In the absence of the Guardian, is the Universal House of Justice in danger of straying outside its proper sphere and thus falling into error? Here we must remember three things: First, Shoghi Effendi, during the 36 years of his Guardianship, has already made innumerable such definitions, supplementing those made by 'Abdu'l-
Bahá and by Bahá’u’lláh Himself. As already announced to the friends, a careful study of the Writings and interpretations on any subject on which the House of Justice proposes to legislate always precedes its act of legislation. Second, the Universal House of Justice, itself assured of divine guidance, is well aware of the absence of the Guardian and will approach all matters of legislation only when certain of its sphere of jurisdiction, a sphere which the Guardian has confidently described as “clearly defined.” Third, we must not forget the Guardian’s written statement about these two institutions:

“Neither can, nor will ever, infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain of the other.”

Enactments of the Universal House of Justice are inspired and spiritual. As regards the need to have deductions made from the Writings to help in
the formulation of the enactments of the Universal House of Justice, there is the following text from the pen of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

“Those matters of major importance which constitute the foundation of the Law of God are explicitly recorded in the Text, but subsidiary laws are left to the House of Justice. The wisdom of this is that times never remain the same, for change is a necessary quality and an essential attribute of this world, and of time and place. Therefore the House of Justice will take action accordingly.

“Let it not be imagined that the House of Justice will take any decision according to its own concepts and opinions. God forbid! The Supreme House of Justice will take decisions and establish laws through the inspiration and confirmation of the Holy Spirit, because it is in the safekeeping and under the shelter and protection of the Ancient Beauty, and obedience to its decisions is a bounden and essential duty and an absolute obligation, and there is no escape for anyone.

“Say, O People: Verily the Supreme House of Justice is under the wings of your Lord, the Compassionate, the All-Merciful, that is, under His protection, His care, and His shelter; for He has commanded the firm believers to obey that blessed, sanctified and all-subduing body, whose sovereignty is divinely ordained and of the Kingdom of Heaven and whose laws are inspired and spiritual.

“Briefly, this is the wisdom of referring the laws of society to the House of Justice. In the religion of Islam, similarly, not every ordinance was explicitly revealed; nay not a tenth part of a tenth part was included in the Text; although all matters of major importance were specifically referred to, there were undoubtedly thousands of laws which were unspecified. These were devised by the divines of a later age according to the laws of Islamic jurisprudence, and individual divines made conflicting deductions from the original revealed ordinances. All these were enforced. Today this process of deduction is the right of the body of the House of Justice, and the deductions and conclusions of individual learned men have no authority, unless they are endorsed by the House of Justice. The difference is precisely this, that from the conclusions and endorsements of the body of the House of Justice whose members are elected by and known to the worldwide Bahá’í community, no differences will arise; whereas the conclusions of individual divines and scholars would definitely lead to differences, and result in schism, division and dispersion. The oneness of the Word would be destroyed, the unity of the Faith would disappear, and the edifice of the Faith of God would be shaken.”

Ensures continuity of authority which flows from the Source of our Faith

In the Order of Bahá’u’lláh there are certain functions which are reserved to certain institutions, and others which are shared in common, even though they may be more in the special province of one or the other. For example, although the Hands of the Cause of God have the specific functions of protection and propagation, and are specialized for these functions, it is also the spiritual duty of the Universal House of Justice and the Spiritual Assemblies to protect and teach the Cause—indeed teaching is a sacred obligation placed upon every believer by Bahá’u’lláh. Similarly, although after the Master authoritative interpretation was exclusively vested in the Guardian, and although legislation is exclusively the function of the Universal House of Justice, these two institutions are, in Shoghi Effendi’s words, “complementary in their aim and purpose.” “Their common, their fundamental object is to ensure the continuity of that divinely-appointed authority which flows from the Source of our Faith, to safeguard the unity of its followers and to maintain the integrity and flexibility of its teachings.” Whereas the Universal House of Justice cannot undertake any function which is exclusively appertained to the Guardian, it must continue to pursue the objective which it shares in common with the Guardianship.

As you point out with many quotations, Shoghi Effendi repeatedly stressed the inseparability of these two institutions. Whereas he obviously envisaged their functioning together, it cannot logically be deduced from this that one is unable to function in the absence of the other. During the whole 36 years of his Guardianship, Shoghi Effendi functioned without the Universal House of Justice. Now the Universal House of Justice must function without the Guardian, but the principle of inseparability remains. The Guardianship does not lose its significance nor position in the Order of Bahá’u’lláh merely because there is no living Guardian. We must guard against two extremes: one is to argue that because there is no Guardian all that was written about the Guardianship and its position in the Bahá’í World Order is a dead letter and was unimportant; the other is to be so overwhelmed by the significance of the Guardianship as to underestimate the strength of the Covenant, or to be tempted to compromise with the clear texts in order to find somehow, in some way, a “Guardian.”

This is God’s Cause: its light will not fail

Service to the Cause of God requires absolute fidelity and integrity and unswerving faith in Him. No good but only evil can come from taking the responsibility for the future of God’s Cause into our own hands and trying to force it into ways that we wish it to go regardless of the clear texts and our own limitations. It is His Cause. He has promised that its light will not fail. Our part is to cling tenaciously to the revealed Word and to the Institutions that He has created to preserve His Covenant.

It is precisely in this connection that the believers must recognize the importance of intellectual honesty and humility. In past dispensations many errors arose because the believers in God’s Revelation were over-anxious to encompass the Divine Message within the framework of their limited understanding, to define doctrines where definition was beyond their power, to explain mysteries which only the wisdom and experience of a later age would make comprehensible, to argue that something was true because it appeared desirable and necessary. Such compromises with essential truth, such intellectual pride, we must scrupulously avoid.

If some of the statements of the Universal House of Justice are not detailed the friends should realize that the cause
of this is not secretiveness, but rather the determination of this body to refrain from interpreting the teachings and to preserve the truth of the Guardian's statement that "Leaders of religion, exponents of political theories, governors of human institutions... need have no doubt or anxiety regarding the nature, the origin or validity of the institutions which the adherents of the Faith are building up throughout the world. For these lie embedded in the teachings themselves, unadulterated and unobscured by unwarranted inferences, or unauthorized interpretations of His Word."

**Distinction between authoritative and individual interpretation**

A clear distinction is made in our Faith between authoritative interpretation and the interpretation or understanding that each individual arrives at for himself from his study of its teachings. While the former is confined to the Guardian, the latter, according to the guidance given to us by the Guardian himself, should by no means be suppressed. In fact, such individual interpretation is considered the fruit of man's rational power and conducive to a better understanding of the teachings, provided that no disputes or arguments arise among the friends and the individual himself understands and makes it clear that his views are merely his own. Individual interpretations continually change as one grows in comprehension of the teachings. As Shoghi Effendi wrote: "To deepen in the Cause means to read the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and the Master so thoroughly as to be able to give it to others in its pure form. There are many who have some superficial idea of what the Cause stands for. They, therefore, present it together with all sorts of ideas that are their own. As the Cause is still in its early days we must be most careful lest we fall into this error and injure the Movement so much adore. There is no limit to the study of the Cause. The more we read the Writings, the more truth we can find in Them, the more will we see that our previous notions were erroneous." So, although individual insights can be enlightening and helpful, they can also be misleading. The friends must therefore learn to listen to the views of others without being over-awed or allowing their faith to be shaken, and to express their own views without pressing them on their fellow Bahá'ís.

The Cause of God is organic, growing and developing like a living being. Time and again it has faced crises which have perplexed the believers, but each time the Cause, impelled by the immutable purpose of God, overcame the crisis and went on to greater heights.

"Unto the Most Holy Book every one must turn"

However great may be our inability to understand the mystery and the implications of the passing of Shoghi Effendi, the strong cord to which all must cling with assurance is the Covenant. The emphatic and vigorous language of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament is at this time, as at the time of His own passing, the safeguard of the Cause:

"Unto the Most Holy Book every one must turn and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice. That which this body, whether unanimously or by a majority doth carry, that is verily the Truth and the Purpose of God Himself. Whoso doth deviate therefrom is verily of them that love discord, hath shown forth malice, and turned away from the Lord of the Covenant." And again: "All must seek guidance and turn unto the Center of the Cause and the House of Justice. And he that turneth unto whatsoever else is indeed in grievous error."

The Universal House of Justice, which the Guardian said would be regarded by posterity as "the last refuge of a tottering civilization" is now, in the absence of the Guardian, the sole infallibly guided institution in the world to which all must turn, and on it rests the responsibility for ensuring the unity and progress of the Cause of God in accordance with the revealed Word. There are statements from the Master and the Guardian indicating that the Universal House of Justice, in addition to being the Highest Legislative Body of the Faith, is also the body to which all must turn, and is the "apex" of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, as well as the "supreme organ of the Bahá'í Commonwealth." The Guardian has in his writings specified for the House of Justice such fundamental functions as the formulation of future worldwide teaching plans, the conduct of the administrative affairs of the Faith, and the guidance, organization and unification of the affairs of the Cause throughout the world. Furthermore, in *God Passes By* the Guardian makes the following statement: "The Kitáb-i-Aqdas... not only preserves for posterity the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest, but ordains, in addition to the function of interpretation which it confers upon His Successor, the necessary institutions through which the integrity and unity of His Faith can alone be safeguarded." He has also, in "The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh," written that the members of the Universal House of Justice "...are the body of those who either directly or indirectly elect them, have thus been made the recipients of the divine guidance which is at once the life-blood and ultimate safeguard of this Revelation."

As the Universal House of Justice has already announced, it cannot legislate to make possible the appointment of a successor to Shoghi Effendi, nor can it legislate to make possible the appointment of any more Hands of the Cause, but it must do everything within its power to ensure the performance of all those functions which it shares with these two mighty Institutions. It must make provision for the proper discharge in future of the functions of protection and propagation, which the administrative bodies share with the Guardianship and the Hands of the Cause; it must, in the absence of the Guardian, receive and disburse the Huququlláh, in accordance with the following statement of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "Disposition of the Huqiq, wholly or partly, is permissible, but this should be done by permission of the authority in the Cause to whom it must turn."; it must make provision in its Constitution for the removal of any of its members who commit a sin "injurious to the common weal." Above all, it must, with perfect faith in Bahá'u'lláh, proclaim His Cause and enforce His Law so that the Most Great Peace shall be firmly established in this world and the foundation of the Kingdom of God on earth shall be accomplished.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

*The Universal House of Justice*

**May 27, 1966**
The Counsellors

The ‘rulers’ and the ‘learned’

The following letter from the Universal House of Justice, dated April 24, 1972, is reprinted from Bahá’í News No. 495 (June 1972).

To the Continental Boards of Counsellors and National Spiritual Assemblies
Beloved Friends,

Recently we have received queries from several sources about the nature of the Institution of the Continental Boards of Counsellors and its relationship to the Institution of the Hands of the Cause, and we feel it is timely for us to give further elucidation.

As with so many aspects of the Administrative Order, understanding this subject will develop and clarify with the passage of time as that Order grows organically in response to the power and guidance of Almighty God and in accordance with the needs of a rapidly developing world-wide community. However, certain aspects are already so clear as to require a proper understanding by the friends.

In the Kitáb-i-‘Ahd (the Book of His Covenant), Bahá’u’lláh wrote: “Blessed are the rulers and the learned in Al-Bahá,” and referring to this very passage the beloved Guardian wrote on November 4, 1931:

“In this holy cycle the ‘learned’ are, on the one hand, the Hands of the Cause of God, and, on the other, the teachers and diffusers of His teachings who do not rank as Hands but who have attained an eminent position in the teaching work. As to the ‘rulers,’ they refer to the members of the local, National and International Houses of Justice. The duties of each of these souls will be determined in the future.” (Translated from the Persian)

The Hands of the Cause of God, the Counsellors and the members of the Auxiliary Boards fall within the definition of the “learned” given by the beloved Guardian. Thus they are all intimately interrelated and it is not incorrect to refer to the three ranks collectively as one institution.

However, each is also a separate institution in itself. The Institution of the Hands of the Cause of God was brought into being in the time of Bahá’u’lláh, and when the Administrative Order was proclaimed and formally established by ‘Abdu’lláh-Bahá in His Will, it became an auxiliary institution of the Guardianship. The Auxiliary Boards, in their turn, were brought into being by Shoghi Effendi as an auxiliary institution of the Hands of the Cause.

When, following the passing of Shoghi Effendi, the Universal House of Justice decided that it could not legislate to make possible the appointment of further Hands of the Cause, it became necessary for it to create a new institution, appointed by itself, to extend into the future the functions of protection and propagation vested in the Hands of the Cause and, with that in view, so to develop the Institution of the Hands that it could nurture the new institution and function in close collaboration with it as long as possible. It was also vital so to arrange matters as to make the most effective use of the unique services of the Hands themselves.

The first step in this development was taken in November 1964 when the Universal House of Justice formally related the Institution of the Hands to itself by stating that “Responsibility for decisions on matters of general policy affecting the institution of the Hands of the Cause, which was formerly exercised by the beloved Guardian, now devolves upon the Universal House of Justice as the supreme and central institution of the Faith to which all must turn.” At that time the number of members of the Auxiliary Boards was increased from 72 to 135, and the Hands of the Cause in each continent were called upon to appoint one or more members of their Auxiliary Boards to act in an executive capacity on behalf of and in the name of each Hand, thereby assisting him in carrying out his work.

In June 1968 the Institution of the Continental Boards of Counsellors was brought into being, fulfilling the goal of extending the aforementioned functions of the Hands into the future, and this momentous decision was accompanied by the next step in the development of the Institution of the Hands of the Cause: the continental Hands were to serve henceforth on a world-wide basis and to operate individually in direct relationship to the Universal House of Justice; the Hands ceased to be responsible for the direction of the Auxiliary Boards, which became an auxiliary institution of the Continental Boards of Counsellors; the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land were given the task of acting as liaison between the Universal House of Justice and the Boards of Counsellors; and the working inter-relationships between the Hands and the Boards of Counsellors were established. Reference was also made to the future establishment by the Universal House of Justice, with the help of the Hands residing in the Holy Land, of an international teaching center in the Holy Land.

In July 1969 and at Ridván 1970, further increases in the numbers of Counsellors and Auxiliary Board members were made.

Other developments in the Institution of the Hands of the Cause and the Institution of the Continental Boards of Counsellors will no doubt take place in the future as the international teaching center comes into being and as the work of the Counsellors expands.

We have noted that the Hands, the Counsellors and the Auxiliary Boards are sometimes referred to by the friends as the “appointive arm” of the Administrative Order in contradistinc-
tion to the Universal House of Justice and the National and local Assemblies which constitute the "elective arm." While there is truth in this description as it applies to the method used in the creation of these institutions, the friends should understand that it is not only the fact of appointment that particularly distinguishes the institutions of the Hands, Counsellors and Auxiliary Boards. There are, for instance, many more believers appointed to committees in the "elective arm" than are serving in the so-called "appointive arm." A more striking distinction is that whereas the "rulers" in the Cause function as corporate bodies, the "learned" operate primarily as individuals.

In a letter written March 14, 1927, to the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Istanbul, the Guardian's secretary explained, on his behalf, the principle in the Cause of action by majority vote. He pointed out how, in the past, it was certain individuals who "accounted themselves as superior in knowledge and elevated in position" who caused division, and that it was those "who pretended to be the most distinguished of all" who "always proved themselves to be the source of contention." "But praise be to God," he continued, "that the Pen of Glory has done away with the unyielding and dictatorial views of the learned and the wise, dismissed the assertions of individuals as an authoritative criterion, even though they were recognized as the most accomplished and learned among men, and ordained that all matters be referred to authorized centers and specified Assemblies. Even so, no Assembly has been invested with the absolute authority to deal with such general matters as affect the interests of nations. Nay rather, He has brought all the Assemblies together under the shadow of one House of Justice, one divinely-appointed Center, so that there would be only one Center and all the rest integrated into a single body revolving around one expressly-designated Pivot, thus making them all proof against schism and division." (Translated from the Persian)

Having permanently excluded the evils admittedly inherent in the institutions of the "learned" in past dispensations, Bahá'u'lláh has nevertheless embodied in His Administrative Order the beneficent elements which exist in such institutions, elements of which are of fundamental value for the progress of the Cause, as can be gauged from even a cursory reading of the Guardian's message of June 4, 1957.

The existence of institutions of such exalted rank, comprising individuals who play such a vital role, who yet have no legislative, administrative or judicial authority, and are entirely devoid of priestly functions or the right to make authoritative interpretations, is a feature of Bahá'í administration unparalleled in the religions of the past. The newness and uniqueness of this concept make it difficult to grasp; only as the Bahá'í community grows and the believers are increasingly able to contemplate its administrative structure uninfluenced by concepts from past ages, will the vital interdependence of the "rulers" and the "learned" in the Faith be properly understood, and the inestimable value of their interaction be fully recognized.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice
April 24, 1972
Our understanding of the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh is at best imperfect. Only gradually do we begin to realize that it is an entirely new creation, based on a knowledge, infinitely beyond our comprehension, of man, his needs, and his destiny. We come to it stained with the prejudices of the various cultures in which we have been reared, and can but dimly perceive its principles and its implications. Thus, in the formative age of this new Dispensation, blinded by the old and too immature to understand the new, we have the double task of clearing our hearts of all love and hate engendered by former cultures and deepening our knowledge of a System hitherto unknown in human experience.

Established by Bahá’u’lláh

The Institution of the Hands of the Cause of God is one of the elements of the World Order which we are familiar with and profit by but do not fully comprehend. Unprecedented in human history, it was one of the first of the institutions of the Faith to be actually established when Bahá’u’lláh Himself appointed the first Hands of His Cause. Of these He wrote:

"May My praise, salutations, and greetings rest upon the stars of the heaven of Thy knowledge—the Hands of Thy Cause—they who circled round Thy Will, spoke not save after Thy leave, and clung not save unto Thy hem. They are servants whose mention and praise are recorded in the Holy Writ, Thy Books and Tablets, wherein are extolled their services, victories, and high resolve. Through them the standards of Thy oneness were raised in Thy cities and realms, and the bann-

This article, "The Institution of the Hands of the Cause of God," by Garreta Busey, is reprinted from Bahá’í News No. 420 (March 1966). It was written before the creation in 1968 of the Continental Boards of Counsellors.

When in October 1957, in his last message to the Bahá’í world, Shoghi Effendi augmented the number of Hands to 27, he referred to them as the 'Chief Stewards of Bahá’u’lláh’s embryonic World Commonwealth.'

In this document, the Hands of the Cause of God are referred to as "pillars" and are mentioned immediately after the Guardian and those of the "offshoots of the Tree of Holiness" who have stood firm in the Covenant. In the second paragraph 'Abdu’l-Bahá praises them as those who have declared His Proofs, proclaimed His Faith, published abroad His Law, detached themselves from all things but Him, stood for righteousness in this world, and kindled the Fire of the Love of God in the very hearts and souls of His servants.”

Appointed by the Guardian

In conformity with the Will and Testament of the Master, on December 24, 1951, the Guardian announced the appointment of the first 12 Hands of the Cause of God. Two months later, when he brought the number up to 19, he further clarified their station:

"Members augment body, invested in conformity with 'Abdu'l-Bahá’s Testament, twofold sacred function, the propagation and preservation of the unity of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh, and destined to assume individually in the course of time the direction of institutions parallel in those revolving around the Universal House of Justice, the supreme legislative body of the Bahá’í world, are recruited from all five continents of the globe and representative of the three principal world religions of mankind." (Messages to the Bahá’í World, p. 21)

Chief Stewards

When in October 1957, in his last
message to the Baha'i world, Shoghi Effendi augmented the number of Hands to 27, he referred to them as the “Chief Stewards of Baha'u'llah's embryonic World Commonwealth.” His unerring foresight, his divinely inspired infallibility, is well illustrated by this title. A steward is one who takes charge of the running of a household or an estate. Less than a month after this message was written, when the believers had not yet recovered from the shock of the loss of their beloved Guardian, the Hands of the Cause of God were called upon to take authoritative charge of the affairs of the Baha'i world. In the interim between the passing of the Guardian and the election of the Universal House of Justice, they protected the Faith by such actions as the expulsion of Covenant-breakers and the dissolution of the defecting National Spiritual Assembly of France, which they re-established by calling a new election. At the same time, they reassured the believers, stimulated them to unremitting activity in fulfilling the goals of the Guardian's Ten Year Crusade, arranged for a glorious celebration of the Centenary of Baha'u'llah's declaration of His Mission, and conducted, according to strictest Baha'i principles, the election of the Universal House of Justice.

In spite of their high station and the authority which, as Chief Stewards of the Faith, they have been called upon to exercise, the Hands of the Cause of God, like all the institutions of the World Order of Baha'u'llah, submit to certain limitations. Although they function under the Guardianship, they have no right to interpret the sacred Writings. Indeed, all such interpretations came to an end with the passing of Shoghi Effendi. The Hands devote themselves to the protection and propagation of the Faith, and now, since the election of the Universal House of Justice, they are released from all administrative activity.

Relation to the Universal House of Justice

The relationship that exists between the two international institutions of the Baha'i Faith is one of the strongest proofs of the power of the Covenant. It was briefly defined by the Hand of the Cause Leroy Ioas at the Conference of the Hands of the Western Hemisphere and their Auxiliary Board members in January 1964, when he said that the Institution of the Hands is the Remnant of the Guardian with the responsibility of protecting and promulgating the Faith and preserving its unity; it supports the pillar of the Universal House of Justice.

Discord between the Hands of the Cause and the Universal House of Justice is inconceivable. The appreciation of the supreme authoritative body of the Baha'i administration for its supporting pillar, the Hands of the Cause, is beautifully expressed in a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Netherlands, March 9, 1965. Among other things, it points out the undeviating adherence of the Hands to the instructions of Shoghi Effendi during their custodianship and says: “The entire history of religion shows no comparable record of such strict self-discipline, such absolute loyalty and such complete self-abnegation by the leaders of a religion finding themselves suddenly deprived of their divinely inspired guide. The debt of gratitude which mankind for generations, nay, ages to come, owes to this handful of grief-stricken, steadfast, heroic souls is beyond estimation.”

The Hands on their part have again and again in their correspondence with one another and with the believers expressed their great joy that God has at last sailed His Ark on His Holy Mountain, as Baha'u'llah prophesied in the Tablet of Carmel. They take great pains to educate the friends to appreciate the majesty of its station by referring to the House of Justice in their letters as “that Supreme, Infallible Body,” “the source of all good and freed from all error.” They show it the utmost respect. Any matter, for instance, which an individual Hand of the Cause feels should be brought before it is respectfully submitted through their elected body residing in the Holy Land.

A moving account of their first meeting with the newly elected Universal House of Justice was offered by the Hand of the Cause Jalal Khazeh on a visit to the United States last year (1965). When a spokesman for the House of Justice, in announcing a decision, began to cite passages from the Writings on which it was based, one of the Hands expressed the thought that the acts of that Supreme Body are divinely inspired and need no justification. Then one of the members of the Universal House of Justice, asking permission to speak for the whole, replied that this is indeed true. When the House acts as a body, its decisions are infallible and not to be questioned. And yet, he pointed out, the station of its individual members is lower than that of the Hands, each one of whom had been appointed by the beloved Guardian.

The aristocratic principle

Thus the Hands of the Cause of God are the most august individuals in the Baha'i community. They represent the aristocratic principle of the World Order of Baha'u'llah mentioned by the Guardian in The Dispensation of Baha'u'llah (p. 60). Each was chosen by the Sign of God on earth for the character and capacities which he possessed, and each should be treated with great respect and reverence.

This we forget in America, because it is our national habit to show respect to no one. Reared in a democratic society, which from its beginning has looked askance at the claims of an hereditary aristocracy, and increasingly informal in our way of life, we are inclined to neglect the courtesy due these great souls, especially when, in their humility, they fail to demand it. That very humility is an evidence of their high station. It was one of the qualities of Baha'u'llah Himself, Who said: "I would love to lay My face upon every single spot of Thine earth, that perchance it might be honored by touching a spot ennobled by the footsteps of Thy loved ones!" (Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 44)

For one who is not a member of the Institution of the Hands of the Cause of God but has had the great privilege of working with it, the opportunity to see how the divine virtues are exemplified in the way it functions has been an illuminating experience. Although the Hands were given the duty by 'Abdu'l-Baha of casting out from the congregation of the people of Baha those who oppose the Covenant, they do not go about this in a summary or dictatorial fashion. On the contrary, with the necessary firmness they combine the utmost patience, making every effort to
touch the heart of a defecting believer and to warn him of the gravity of his act before recommending to the World Centre his expulsion from the Faith.

**Demonstrate love**

The well-spring of all religion is love, and this the Hands of the Cause pour forth upon the believers in great abundance. It is an education in the Bahá'í way of life to see how they follow the example of the Master and the beloved Guardian in their generous praise of the friends for their accomplishments, how wisely they ignore those errors and shortcomings which time and the grace of Bahá'u'lláh will correct.

The promulgation of the Faith includes not only giving the Message to the world (and this the Hands and their deputies, the members of the Auxiliary Boards, do in public talks and firesides) but also deepening the believers and, what is more difficult, arousing them to an awareness of their part of the Covenant, specified in the Master's Testament, the obligation of "one and all to bestir themselves and arise with heart and soul and in one accord, to diffuse the sweet savors of God, to teach His Cause and promote His Faith." (p. 10)

We little realize the sacrifices the Hands of the Cause are continually making for us. The burdens under which they labor are heavy and unremitting. Their correspondence with the World Centre, with the members of the Auxiliary Boards, and with individual believers is enormous. They travel widely and as inexpensively as possible, spending themselves in an exhausting effort to arouse us from our apathy. If only we could realize that by a more active response we could keep a little longer this precious heritage from our beloved Shoghi Effendi! In spite of the illness of many of them, the Hands of the Cause are in ceaseless activity, justifying the wisdom of the Guardian, who appointed them knowing that they could be trusted to fulfill the obligation laid upon them by the Master to "strive and endeavor to the utmost of their ability to diffuse the sweet savors of God, and to guide all the peoples of the world," and on all of us as well "not to rest for a moment, neither to seek repose."

**The Auxiliary Boards**

Less than a year after the appoint-
Relationship to National Assemblies

The following address concerning the relationship and functions of the Continental Boards of Counsellors and National Spiritual Assemblies, which was given by Counsellor Edna M. True at the North Atlantic Bahá'í Conference in Reykjavik, Iceland, on September 5, 1971, is reprinted from Bahá'í News No. 490 (January 1972).

In his cablegram of June 4, 1957, one of his very last messages to the Bahá'í world, the beloved Guardian called, with marked emphasis, for the closest collaboration of the Hands of the Cause and National Spiritual Assemblies, referring to them as “the two Institutions occupying, with the Universal House of Justice, next to the Institution of the Guardianship, (the) foremost rank in the divinely ordained administrative hierarchy of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.”

Continuing, in this same message, Shoghi Effendi asserts that “the security of our precious Faith, the preservation of the spiritual health of the Bahá'í communities, the vitality of the faith of its individual members, the proper functioning of its laboriously erected institutions, the fruition of its worldwide enterprises, the fulfillment of its ultimate destiny, are all directly dependent upon the befitting discharge of the weighty responsibilities now resting upon the members of these two institutions . . .” (Messages to the Bahá'í World, p. 123)

Both the content and the tone of this vital message emphasize profoundly the great importance of our understanding, as clearly as possible, the subjects we are now considering, namely, the functions and relationships of these two Institutions, as a necessary first step toward realizing the nature and scope of the constant and close collaboration called for by the Guardian in this stirring message—a collaboration which is so essential to the health and progress of our beloved Faith.

The most fruitful approach to our task, it seems to me, is to reflect together on the true nature and theory of operation of Bahá'u'lláh's Administrative Order, of which all the institutions, including the two with which we are presently concerned, are inseparable, component parts. To do this, we must clear our minds of all former concepts of organization which we have heretofore experienced or known, and open our hearts, even more than our intellects, to a wholly new theory, completely unique and different from any hitherto practiced, either in former religious dispensations or governments. As the Guardian has told us:

“A word should now be said regarding the theory on which this Administrative Order is based and the principle that must govern the operation of its chief institutions. It would be utterly misleading to attempt a comparison between this unique, this divinely-conceived Order and any of the diverse systems which the minds of men, at various periods of their history, have contrived for the government of human institutions.” (The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 152)

“The Administrative Order . . . it should be noted, is, by virtue of its origin and character, unique in the annals of the world's religious systems.” (God Passes By, p. 326)

It is the Guardian who, in his World Order Letters addressed to the early believers—at the very beginning of his ministry—has, with such painstaking care, loving patience and understanding, clarified for us the vital necessity, the unique characteristics, the unimaginable dynamic power, and assured accomplishment of Bahá'u'lláh's Administrative Order. It is through this inexhaustible source of infallible knowledge that we have been enabled to at least glimpse the character and manner of the operation of this unique instrument bestowed by God for the fulfillment of His ultimate purpose for mankind.

What, then, are the basic features of this supreme Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh?

That the “bedrock” on which it is founded is “God's immutable Purpose for mankind in this day.” (The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 156)

That it is divine in origin and authority.

“It should be remembered by every follower of the Cause that the system of Bahá'í Administration is not an innovation imposed arbitrarily upon the Bahá'ís of the world since the Master's passing, but derives its authority from the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, is specifically prescribed in unnumbered Tablets, and rests in some of its essential features upon the explicit provisions of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. It thus unifies and correlates the principles separately laid down by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and is indisolubly bound with the essential verities of the Faith.” (The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 5)

That it is vitally necessary.

“... the Spirit breathed by Bahá'u'lláh upon the world . . . can never permeate and exercise an abiding influence upon mankind unless and until it incarnates itself in a visible Order, which would bear His Name, wholly identify itself with His principles, and function in conformity with His laws . . .” (The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 19)

That it is unique and different from any other organization of the present or the past.

That it operates solely on the spiritual principles and the laws embedded in the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

That it provides all the essentials for the establishment of the Faith and for
The Hand of the Cause of God Horace Holley, whom the Guardian called the "Champion Builder of the Administrative Order," has said:

"The administrative aspect of the Bahá'í Cause is in reality no mere set of external regulations but the very fruit of its universal spirit. Bahá'í administration is nothing less than a worldwide ethic, the special characteristic of which is to transform subjective faith into positive cooperative action—unifying the whole being of each believer through his unity with his spiritual brothers." (Introduction, Bahá'í Administration, p. viii)

How few are the specific administrative directives given by Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and then the beloved Guardian; and in contrast, how detailed are the guidelines of how we are to serve! In delineating the spiritual qualities we should practice, the beloved Master listed them as "conditions," and the Guardian pointed them out as being "obligations incumbent upon the members of consulting councils"—thus implying that the desired results could not otherwise be obtained. Let us briefly review some of these conditions:

"The first condition is absolute love and harmony amongst the members of the Assembly. . . . Should harmony of thought and absolute unity be nonexistent, that gathering shall be dispersed and that Assembly be brought to naught."

"The second condition:—They must when coming together turn their faces to the Kingdom on High and ask aid from the Realm of Glory.

"They must then proceed with the utmost devotion, courtesy, dignity, care and moderation to express their views.

"They must in every matter search out the truth and not insist upon their own opinion. . . ."

"The honored members must with all freedom express their own thoughts, and it is in no wise permissible for one to belittle the thought of another, nay, he must with moderation set forth the truth, and should differences of opinion arise a majority of voices must prevail, and all must obey and submit to the majority. . . ."

"In short, whatsoever thing is arranged in harmony and with love and purity of motive, its result is light, and should the least trace of estrangement prevail the result shall be darkness upon darkness. . . ." (Bahá'í Administration, p. 22)

Let us remember that at the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Ascension the organization (of the World Order) was fully defined but not yet established. It became the responsibility and life work of the beloved Guardian to erect the institutions of this Administrative Order, according to the laws and principles embedded in Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation and the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 147 and 195)

Speaking of the Master's Will and Testament, the Charter of this new World Order, the Guardian wrote in a letter to an individual in March 1930:

"The contents of the Will of the Master are far too much for the present generation to comprehend. It needs at least a century of actual working before the treasures of wisdom hidden in it can be revealed. . . ." (Quoted by the Universal House of Justice in a letter dated December 7, 1969)

Any review of the activities of the Faith during these 50 years since the Master's passing confirms these statements, for we cannot help but be aware of two clear facts:

1. That the functioning of this mighty Order is in its very, very beginning stages, and

2. that we stand too close to the beginning of this unique System ordained by Bahá'u'lláh to be able to fully understand its potentialities or the interrelationships of its component parts.

Dear friends, far from discouraging those who are presently serving in the Cause, these statements should spur them on to greater endeavor, and deeper faith. For throughout the Writings we are promised that through our increased efforts to function more and more according to the spiritual laws which govern the operation of this divine System, our understanding of its greatness and power will deepen, and our accomplishments will grow in quality and extent.

It is the process of applying these spiritual laws and ideas to every aspect of administration and of translating them into practical action that, to me, represents the greatest challenge facing the body of believers and particularly those who serve on the institutions of

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This Cause. To me also, it is this aspect of administration that is the least understood and that most urgently requires our prayerful study and concentrated efforts to comprehend and demonstrate.

As we consider the functions of the two institutions before us, let us bear in mind, with particular emphasis, that they are severally component parts of the same living organism, and not separate institutions each with its own exclusive, clearly defined responsibilities. In fact, in reviewing the functions of the Continental Boards of Counsellors and National Spiritual Assemblies, we will find that while certain responsibilities have been assigned to each of these institutions, others are shared in common, even though these may be more in the special province of one or the other.

The establishment of the Continental Boards of Counsellors (11 in number) was announced by the Universal House of Justice in its cablegram to the world dated June 21, 1968:

"(We) rejoice (to) announce (the) momentous decision (to) establish eleven Continental Boards of Counsellors (for the) protection (and) propagation (of the) Faith. . . . (The) adoption (of) this significant step following consultation with (the) Hands (of the) Cause (of) God ensures (the) extension into the future (of the) appointed functions (of) their institution. . . . Details (of these) new developments (are) being conveyed by letter. Fervently supplicating (at the) Holy Threshold (for) divine confirmations (in this) further step (in the) irresistible unfoldment (of the) mighty Administrative Order (of) Bahá'u'lláh."

In this cable, and in the letters which followed, the Counsellors are "charged with specific functions relating to the protection and propagation of the Faith in the areas under their jurisdiction." The Universal House of Justice also stated:

"They will operate in a manner similar to that set forth by the beloved Guardian for the Hands of the Cause in his communications outlining the responsibilities they are called upon to discharge in collaboration with National Spiritual Assemblies." (Letter of the Universal House of Justice to the Continental Boards of Counsellors, June 24, 1968)

However, the responsibility for expulsion and reinstatement remained vested in the Hands of the Cause:

"The authority of expulsion and reinstatement will be exercised by the Hands of the Cause of God, subject in each instance to the approval of the Universal House of Justice." (Letter of the Universal House of Justice to the Continental Boards of Counsellors, June 24, 1968)

In general, therefore, the functions of the Continental Boards of Counsellors included propagation of the Faith; protection of the Faith; appointment and direction of Auxiliary Board members; trusteeship of the Continental Bahá'í Funds; and consultation with the National Spiritual Assemblies.

And, since the announcement stating the appointment of the Continental Boards of Counsellors ensures the extension into the future of the appointed functions of the Institution of the Hands of the Cause, it is assumed that the following obligations of the Hands of the Cause, as set forth in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, apply to them: to "diffuse the Divine Fragrances"; to "edify the souls of men"; to "promote learning"; to "improve the character of all men," and "to be at all times and under all conditions, sanctified and detached from earthly things. They must manifest the fear of God by their conduct, their manners, their deeds and their words." (Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 13)

In delineating the functions of the National Spiritual Assemblies, the Guardian has stated in general:

Their immediate purpose is to stimulate, unify and coordinate the manifold activities of the believers and the local Spiritual Assemblies;

they exercise full authority over the local Spiritual Assemblies in their province;

they are to initiate measures and di-
rect in general the affairs of the Cause in the whole country or nation;

they direct the vital matters affecting the interests of the Cause in their country, such as the matter of translations, publications, the Mashriqu’l-Adhkhár, organizing and administering the teaching work and other similar undertakings that stand distinct from strictly local affairs; and

it is the members of the National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the world who elect the members of the Universal House of Justice.

In addition, as revealed by Bahá’u’lláh in His Most Holy Book:

“It behooveth them to be the trusted ones of the Merciful among men and to regard themselves as the guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth. It is incumbent upon them to take counsel together and to have regard for the interests of the servants of God, for His sake, even as they regard their own interests, and to choose that which is meet and seemly . . .” (Bahá’í Administration, p. 21)

The beloved Guardian emphasized that:

“Theirs is the duty to purge once for all their deliberations and the general conduct of their affairs from that air of self-contained aloofness, from the suspicion of secrecy, the stifling atmosphere of dictatorial assertiveness, in short, from every word and deed that might savor of partiality, self-centeredness and prejudice. Theirs is the duty, while retaining the sacred and exclusive right of final decision in their hands, to invite discussion, provide information, ventilate grievances, welcome advice from even the most humble and insignificant members of the Bahá’í family, expose their motives, set forth their plans, justify their actions, revise if necessary their verdict, foster the sense of interdependence and co-partnership, of understanding and mutual confidence between them on one hand and all local Assemblies and individual believers on the other.” (Bahá’í Administration, pp. 143-44)

In considering the relationships of these two important institutions—the Continental Boards of Counsellors and the National Spiritual Assemblies—we should keep in mind that:

Bahá’í administration is founded on institutions, laws and principles embedded in Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation; all of its institutions are divinely ordained—integral, inseparable components of a living organism, interdependent and inclusive, not independent and exclusive; and that the health, strength and success of each is closely affected by the condition of the whole. As the Universal House of Justice has written:

“The Bahá’í world community, growing like a healthy new body, develops new cells, new organs, new powers and functions as it presses on to its maturity, when every soul, living for the Cause of God, will receive from that Cause health, assurance, and the overflowing bounties of Bahá’u’lláh which are diffused through His divinely ordained Order.” (Wellspring of Guidance, p. 38)

In communications from the Universal House of Justice since the appointment by them of the Continental Boards of Counsellors—some of which have been addressed to the National Assemblies and the Boards of Counsellors jointly; others specifically to one or the other—the Supreme Body has explained and clarified many important aspects of the relationships of these two institutions.

It is completely clear that in Bahá’í administration the National Spiritual Assemblies are the “administrators” of the affairs of the Cause in their respective countries.

In one of the letters of the Universal House of Justice addressed to both the Counsellors and the National Assemblies, it is clearly stated:

“The Counsellors are responsible for stimulating, counseling and assisting the National Spiritual Assemblies, and also work with the individuals, groups and local Assemblies.” (Letter dated October 1, 1969)

And further:

“It is the responsibility of Spiritual Assemblies, assisted by their committees, to organize and direct the teaching work, and in doing so they must, naturally, also do all they can to stimulate and inspire the friends . . . . It is, however, inevitable that the Assemblies and committees, being burdened with the administration of the teaching work as well as with all other aspects of Bahá’í community life, will be unable to spend as much time as they would wish on stimulating the believers.

“Authority and direction flow from the Assemblies, whereas the power to accomplish the tasks resides primarily in the entire body of the believers. It is the principal task of the Auxiliary Boards to assist in arousing and releasing this power. This is a vital activity. . . .”

In this same letter, the Universal House of Justice points out that:

“Administrations sometimes misunderstand what is meant by the statement that Counsellors and Auxiliary Board members are concerned with the teaching work and not with administration. It is taken to mean that they may not give advice on administrative matters. This is quite wrong. One of the things that Counsellors and Auxiliary Board members should watch and report on is the proper working of administrative institutions. The statement that they do not have anything to do with administration means, simply, that they do not administer. They do not direct or organize the teaching work nor do they adjudicate in matters of personal conflict or personal problems . . . . If an Auxiliary Board member finds a local Spiritual Assembly functioning incorrectly he should call its attention to the appropriate Texts; likewise if, in his work with the community, an Auxiliary Board member finds that the teaching work is being held up by inefficiency of national committees, he should report this in detail to the Counsellors . . . . Similarly, if the Counsellors find that a National Spiritual Assembly is not functioning properly, they should not hesitate to consult with the National Spiritual Assembly in a frank and loving way.”

Again, in this same letter, it says:

“It is the Spiritual Assemblies who plan and direct the work, but these plans should be well known to the Counsellors and Auxiliary Board members, because one of the ways in which they can assist the Assemblies is by urging the believers continually to support the plans of the Assemblies.”

And in a letter addressed to all National Spiritual Assemblies, the House of Justice stated:

“With the rapid development of the work of the Continental Boards of Counsellors and their Auxiliary Boards, it is increasingly important that there be a maximal sharing of information from each national community with them. Your most effective
collaboration depends largely upon the thoroughness of your mutual exchange of information.

"We ask that you keep the Continental Board of Counsellors of your area completely and specifically informed of national activities of teaching and consolidation through such actions as placing the Board of Counsellors, and Auxiliary Board members assigned to areas within your jurisdiction, on mailing lists for circular letters to local Spiritual Assemblies, schedules and programs of summer schools, conferences and institutes, etc." (Letter of March 25, 1969)

In another letter sent on the same date to all Continental Boards of Counsellors, the Supreme Body stated: "Information transmitted by National Spiritual Assemblies and their committees to Continental Boards of Counsellors and their Auxiliary Board members should be as complete as possible. Conversely, a maximum of material from the Counsellors and Auxiliary Board members’ reports should be made available to National Spiritual Assemblies."

In regard to conferences, the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land wrote to the Continental Board of Counsellors in North America on March 14, 1971, as follows:

". . . we felt it would be useful to distinguish between those conferences involving joint consultation of the Hands of the Cause, the Counsellors, the Auxiliary Board members and representatives of National Assemblies on the one hand, and on the other, the type of deepening conferences which are not primarily for consultation but which are designed to meet a need for deepening the believers, and the programs of which are geared to this objective.

"In the case of the first category, that is, conferences called for joint consultation, these are very properly sponsored and called for or convened by Continental Boards of Counsellors.

"In the case of other conferences for encouraging, inspiring or educating the friends, while it is highly desirable to call such conferences in cooperation with National Assemblies, each institution supporting the other, the Continental Boards of Counsellors are fully authorized to call conferences of this type when they deem them necessary.

"The statement of principle outlined above makes it very clear that the sponsorship of deepening conferences is a proper function of the Counsellors. As stated, it is highly desirable that projects of this type be sponsored in cooperation with the administrative bodies, but it is also clear that the House of Justice wishes the Continental Boards to be free to call conferences of this type when they deem them necessary, regardless of whether there is joint sponsorship."

Conclusion

As important and necessary as is the understanding of the functions and specified relationships of these two institutions, the Continental Boards of Counsellors and the National Spiritual Assemblies, the Writings of our Faith clearly show that of still greater import and significance is the spirit in which their members serve. When the relationship between them is one of mutual understanding, of confidence and trust, of sincere love and cooperation; when in their deliberations and actions they are following the precepts and guidelines which have their source in divine wisdom and which have been so clearly and so fully delineated for them, any matters or questions which arise in regard to their respective functions can be frankly and openly discussed and all issues easily and amicably resolved.

Such a relationship, we must recognize, is unique to this divinely-ordained Administrative Order. The secular world is increasingly characterized by destructive competition between institutions—when there are two legislative bodies, they maneuver against each other for power; legislative bodies compete with the judiciary and with the executive branch.

In contrast, the relationship between Baha’i institutions is one of warm cooperation and collaboration, based upon genuine love and dedication to a common goal. It resembles a marriage, in that there is space for each partner to grow and develop; there is mutual respect and encouragement, and differences are settled by taking counsel together in an atmosphere of loving understanding.

So close are we all to the ways and standards of the world, it is difficult to wholly believe in the efficiency of spiritual means for practical accomplishments. Our human intellect can so easily guide us other ways which, in its light, seem more desirable and effective. In one of their precious messages (May 27, 1966), the Universal House of Justice gives us such understanding and wise counsel in this respect:

"Service to the Cause of God requires absolute fidelity and integrity and unwavering faith in Him. No good but only evil can come from taking the responsibility for the future of God’s Cause into our own hands and trying to force it into ways that we wish it to go regardless of the clear texts and our own limitations. It is His Cause. He has promised that its light will not fail. Our part is to cling tenaciously to the revealed Word and to the institutions that He has created to preserve His Covenant."

And so, dear friends, we can see that such collaboration as the Guardian has asked for between the two institutions calls for far more than our human idea of cooperation—even loving cooperation. It is a matter of spiritual growth, and for this, we need divine wisdom. But we are blessed, so greatly blessed to have for our assistance all the guidance needed. Ours is the clear task of striving to understand and obey that guidance.

To all of the other qualities and virtues needed on our journey must be added faith—unshakable faith in Baha’u’llah’s divinely ordained Administrative Order and in its inherent, dynamic spiritual power to fulfill every aspect of His worldwide Mission. As Shoghi Effendi so wisely counseled the early believers, soon after he became the Guardian of the Faith:

"Is not faith but another word for implicit obedience, wholehearted allegiance, uncompromising adherence to that which we believe is the revealed and express will of God, however perplexing it might first appear, however at variance with the shadowy views, the impotent doctrines, the crude theories, the idle imaginings, the fashionable conceptions of a transient and troublous age? If we are to falter or hesitate, if our love for Him (‘Abdu’l-Baha) should fail to direct us and keep us within His path, if we desert Divine and emphatic principles, what hope can we any more cherish for healing the ills and sicknesses of this world?"

(Baha’i Administration, pp. 62-63)

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AN INSPIRING BIOGRAPHY of the Hand of the Cause of God Zikrullah Khadem, this book is a story of love—one man's love of God, of the Central Figures of the Bahá'í Faith, and of his unfaltering devotion to Shoghi Effendi.

Written by Zikrullah Khadem's wife, Javidukht Khadem, this book is a tender portrait of her husband, depicting over sixty-one years of service to the Bahá'í Faith. Also contained in the biography are essays written by the five Khadem children that capture the spirit of love and guidance given by Mr. Khadem, each one illustrating the emphasis he placed on obedience to the institutions, on Bahá'í family life and unity, and on fasting, prayer, pilgrimage, and teaching.

An appendix includes letters of remembrance from other Hands of the Cause of God, from Counselors, from Bahá'í institutions, and from many friends who were touched by his warmth and inspired by his zeal. 5-1/2 X 8-1/2 inches, 365 pages, 53 photos

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DEEPLY GRIEVED ANNOUNCE PASSING VALIANT HAND CAUSE GOD COLLIS FEATHERSTONE WHILE VISITING KATHMANDU, NEPAL, COURSE EXTENSIVE JOURNEY ASIA.

HIS NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS STAUNCH, FEARLESS DEFENDER COVENANT, HIS UNCEASING COMMITMENT PROPAGATION CAUSE ALL PARTS WORLD, ESPECIALLY PACIFIC REGION, HIS UNREMITTING PERSEVERANCE FOSTERING ESTABLISHMENT LOCAL, NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER, HIS EXEMPLARY DEVOTION TO WRITINGS FAITH, HIS OUTSTANDING PERSONAL QUALITIES UNSWERVING LOYALTY, ENTHUSIASM, ZEAL AND DEDICATION, DISTINGUISH HIS MANIFOLD SERVICES THROUGHOUT MANY DECADES.

OFFERING PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES BOUNTIFUL REWARDS HIS RADIANT SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM. ADVISE FRIENDS EVERYWHERE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS, PARTICULARLY IN MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁRS, RECOGNITION HIS MAGNIFICENT ACHIEVEMENTS.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

OCTOBER 1, 1990
In 1925, when the beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, expressed the hope that Bahá'í News would become “the foremost Bahá'í Journal of the world,” it was one of only a handful of Bahá'í newsletters published anywhere. To achieve that goal, the Guardian said, “it must combine the essential qualities of accuracy, readability, thoroughness, dignity and wisdom. It should become a great factor in promoting understanding, providing information on Bahá'í activity, both local and foreign, in stimulating interest, in combating evil influences, and in upholding and safeguarding the institutions of the Cause. It should be made as representative as possible, should be replete with news, up-to-date in its information, and should arouse the keenest interest among believers and admirers alike in every corner of the globe.”

Throughout its more than 65 years of uninterrupted service to the friends around the world, Bahá'í News has strived to uphold and to mirror the lofty standards set for it by the Guardian. Today, however, with so many splendid local, national and regional Bahá'í newsletters being produced, and with news from all over the globe disseminated on a regular basis from the World Centre through its International News Service, the need for a publication such as Bahá'í News has been greatly reduced. Where once the entire Bahá'í world depended on Bahá'í News for timely and accurate reports of events taking place in the far-flung outposts of the Cause, there now exist innumerable sources from which such reports can be obtained.

Bahá'í News has now fulfilled its world-wide mission to proclaim and disperse the glad tidings of the growth and triumph of the Cause of God. As we move confidently into the fourth epoch of the Formative Age of the Faith, already marked by unparalleled progress and opportunities, we note with considerable pride what has been accomplished since Bahá'í News first appeared in December 1924, and with unalloyed pleasure the large number of high-quality publications that have followed in its footsteps and are now well-prepared to carry forward the important work of informing and inspiring the friends in every land and leading the Cause to newer and higher plateaus of victory.

It is with these heart-stirring changes in mind that the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States has decided to end publication of Bahá'í News with this issue and devote its resources more fully to the publication of its own national newspaper, The American Bahá'í. Those readers who have paid subscriptions into 1991 will soon receive notice from Bahá'í Subscriber Service as to the amount of their refund. Subscribers may choose to accept the refund, donate that amount to the National or International Bahá'í Fund, or transfer their subscriptions to The American Bahá'í, World Order or Brilliant Star magazine.

We know that you have treasured and will greatly miss Bahá'í News. Our own sense of loss is no less acute. We will miss the joy and the excitement of producing it, as well as the contact, however indirect, it gave us with the worldwide Bahá'í community. But our spirits are buoyed by the knowledge that many of you will remain with us as readers of The American Bahá'í. To you we pledge our efforts to maintain the high standards of quality and integrity enunciated by the Guardian, established by our predecessors at Bahá'í News and, we hope, upheld during our tenure of service to the Bahá'í world through the pages of the magazine.—The editors
In memoriam

A loving tribute to Mr. Featherstone

The following biographical tribute to the Hand of the Cause of God H. Collis Featherstone, who died September 29 while visiting Kathmandu, Nepal, was researched and written by Graham Hassall on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia, and is reprinted from the October 1990 issue of The Australian Baha'i Bulletin.

The Bahá'í world is mourning the loss of Collis Featherstone, a treasured Hand of the Cause of God, following a heart attack in Kathmandu, Nepal, on September 29. He joins the distinguished company of fellow Hands of the Cause including John Esslemont, Keith Ransom-Kehler, Martha Root, Clara and Hyde Dunn, Dorothy Baker, A.Q. Faizi, Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir, Leroy Ioas, Paul Haney and Ugo Giachery who died far from their native lands in the path of service to the Cause.

For the Bahá'ís of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, particularly, the passing of Collis Featherstone marks a further stage in the closure of the period of their origins and early establishment—a period to which he contributed so profoundly. Born at Quorn, in the state of South Australia, on May 13, 1913, Harold Collis Featherstone and his wife, Madge, were introduced to the Faith about 1944 by Bertha Dobbins. They became Bahá'ís in that year and were among the first “young people” to enter in the Adelaide community.

Their physical vigor and spiritual energy vitalized the Adelaide Bahá'ís, just as Shoghi Effendi had hoped, and the Featherstone home in Albert Park soon became the focus of much teaching activity. In October 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote to Collis and Madge his hope that the Spirit of Bahá'u'lláh might “bless and reinforce” their efforts, and aid them to “obtain a clearer understanding of the essentials of His Faith, and to advance its best interests, and contribute to the consolidation of its God-given institutions.” At Ridván 1946 the Featherstones helped establish the Woodville local Spiritual Assembly, the first such Assembly to be formed aside from that for the city of Adelaide.

From 1948, when Collis was first elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand, national Bahá'í responsibilities were added to those at local and regional levels; and with the commencement of the Ten Year World Crusade in April 1953, his international services rapidly multiplied. Collis and Madge were among the Australian contingent at the New Delhi conference called by Shoghi Effendi to launch the Crusade in Asia and the Pacific, and their pilgrimage, undertaken after the conference, produced bountiful consequences for the Pacific Bahá'í communities as much as for the Featherstones themselves. In addition to their having the unique privilege of meeting and conversing with Shoghi Effendi, their pilgrimage allowed the Guardian to meet the man to whom he felt inspired in October 1957 to cable the words “ANNOUNCE YOUR ELEVATION RANK HAND CAUSE CONFIDENT NEW HONOR WILL ENABLE YOU RISE GREATER HEIGHTS SERVICE BELOVED FAITH. SHOGHII.”

But first, three frenetic years intervened. In 1954 Shoghi Effendi established “Auxiliary Boards” to assist the Hands of the Cause, and Clara Dunn, acting swiftly at the National Convention in 1954, appointed Collis Featherstone and Thelma Perks as the first two Auxiliary Board members for Australasia. Australian pioneers were departing for virgin and consolidation goals in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, and the Featherstones—like several other young couples—although constrained from also departing to distant goals by the need to care for their families, were able to contribute significantly to the administration of regional expansion. As Auxiliary Board members, Collis and Thelma helped Clara Dunn in her duties, often writing reports to the Guardian on her behalf. In addition to continued service on the National Assembly, Collis was the driving force behind the Asian Teaching Committee, which had been established by the National Assembly to assist the Crusade pioneers throughout the Pacific. The committee's newsletter, “Koala News,” came to be treasured by the pioneers as a source of encouragement, and of the latest messages from Shoghi Effendi. An important message that arrived in Adelaide during the day would be typed out by Madge, and rushed to the post office by Collis for posting before midnight. Both Collis and Thelma began to travel frequently to visit pioneers in the Pacific area and the first Pacific Island Bahá'ís. To do so, Collis had to rearrange his business affairs (he had risen through employment with an engineering company to become its co-owner) so as to allow himself greater freedom for travel.

Shortly after the shock of his appointment as a Hand of the Cause in October 1957, Collis received the devastating news of Shoghi Effendi's untimely passing. It was then that the Hands' role as “chief stewards” of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Order conferred on Collis, as on the entire
in 1989. Mr. Featherstone was taken ill while visiting Nepal in September and passed away on September 29 in Kathmandu.

institution of the Hands of the Cause, supreme and grave responsibilities for the protection and upliftment of the Cause of God. Collis traveled to Haifa with Clara Dunn for the first convocation of the Hands, and shared with the other Hands the anguish that accompanied the realization that Shoghi Effendi had not left a will, and that their own institution had consequently ended (since only the Guardian was empowered by the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to appoint further Hands of the Cause of God). Upon completion of an extensive search of the Writings concerning the formation of the Universal House of Justice and the institution of the Hands of the Cause, the Hands announced after their 1959 conclave that the Universal House of Justice would be both elected and established on Mount Carmel at Ríván 1963. The Hands ruled themselves ineligible for election to the supreme institution, and Collis resigned in September 1962 from the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia.

During the Nine Year Plan and afterward, the work of the Hands of the Cause increased dramatically. Collis maintained an 18-member Auxiliary Board (nine for propagation, nine for protection), spread throughout the Pacific, until that function was assumed by a three-member Continental Board of Counsellors for Australasia, first appointed in 1968. After the Universal House of Justice shared with Collis in 1976 its hope that he could devote all his time and energy to Bahá'í duties, he sold his business interest and the Featherstones moved to Rockhampton in Queensland, from where his international duties continued to the last. While he traveled on all continents in the service of the Cause of God, he often expressed his special love for the Bahá'í communities of the Pacific Islands and Southeast Asia. In a multitude of cultures, his special relationship with the Bahá'ís was wholly reciprocated. His visits to remote villages, under the most arduous circumstances of climate, food, transporation and accommodation, nearly always accompanied by Madge, endure in their memories.

Who can adequately portray the unique qualities of such a man? He exemplified spirit in action. He was holy, active and practical, pure and radiant. He possessed authority, he inspired confidence, he showed love. He had the power of attraction. He had no peer in this region. Only future generations will realize the fullness of his achievements. Across almost three decades he represented the Universal House of Justice at such significant Bahá'í events as the dedication of Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs, the formation of new National Spiritual Assemblies, and the convening of international conferences; on many occasions he negotiated with heads of state and governments to secure the protection or the rights of Bahá'í communities; on equally numerous occasions he visited government and religious leaders as special representative of the Universal House of Justice. The Australian Bahá'ís extend their condolences to Collis' wife, Madge, to their children, Margaret, Joan, Kay, Mariette and Geoffrey, and their families.
Messages about the Arc and terraces

"With feelings of profound joy announce to followers of Bahá'u'lláh in every land that on morning of twenty-third May, one hundred and forty-six years after the Declaration of the Báb, work on the extension terraces commenced. . . . Call upon friends every land rally support this sacred enterprise now inseparably linked with Arc Project express befittingly their awareness magnitude bounty conferred upon mankind by ministry and sacrifice Blessed Báb, demonstrate their commitment to Bahá'u'lláh's call in Tablet of Carmel to establish upon that Mountain Seat God's Throne and fulfill, through their generous contributions, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's and Shoghi Effendi's vision of efflorescence mighty institutions Faith on Mountain of the Lord." ¹

The Mountain of the Lord

"Nigh on one hundred years ago, Bahá'u'lláh walked on God's Holy Mountain and revealed the Tablet of Carmel, the Charter of the World Centre of His Faith, calling into being the metropolis of the Kingdom of God on Earth. Through decades of oppression and expansion, persecution and emancipation, His followers have successfully labored to carry His message to the remotest regions of the earth, to erect the structure of His Administrative Order, and to proclaim to mankind the divinely prescribed cure for all its ills. . . .

"On this same Mount Carmel 'Abdul-Bahá, with infinite pains, raised the Mausoleum of the Báb on the spot chosen by His Father, and laid to rest within its heart the sacred remains of the Prophet Herald of the Faith, establishing a Spiritual Centre of immeasur-

able significance. In accordance with the same divine command, Shoghi Effendi embellished the Shrine with an exquisite shell and then, under its protecting wing, began the construction of the Administrative Centre of the Faith, to comprise five buildings in a harmonious style of architecture, standing on a far-flung Arc centering on the Monuments of the Greatest Holy Leaf, her Mother and Brother. The first of these five buildings, the International Archives, was completed in the beloved Guardian's lifetime. The second, the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, now stands at the apex of the Arc. Plans for the remaining three were prepared in fulfillment of a goal of the Seven Year Plan.

"Five closely related projects demand our attention: the erection of the three remaining buildings on the Arc and, added now to these, the construction of the terraces of the Shrine of the Báb and the extension of the International Archives Building." ²

Already we see the effect of the spiritual energies which the completion of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice has released, and the new impulse this has given to the advancement of the Faith. Who can gauge what transformations will be effected as a result of the completion of each successive stage of this great enterprise? The Faith advances, not at a uniform rate, but in vast surges, precipitated by the alternation of crisis and victory. In a passage written on July 18, 1953, in the early months of the Ten Year Crusade, Shoghi Effendi, referring to the vital need to ensure through the teaching work a 'steady flow' of 'fresh recruits to the slowly yet steadily advancing army of the Lord of Hosts,' stated that this flow would 'presage and hasten the advent of the day which, as prophesied by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, will witness the entry by troops of people of divers nations and races into the Bahá'í world.' This day the Bahá'í world has already seen in Africa, the Pacific, in Asia and in Latin America, and this process of entry by troops must, in the present plan, be augmented and spread to other countries for, as the Guardian stated in this same letter, it 'will be the prelude to that long-awaited hour when a mass conversion on the part of these same nations and races, and as a direct result of a chain of events, momentous and possibly catastrophic in nature, and which cannot as yet be even dimly visualized, will suddenly revolutionize the fortunes of the Faith, derange the equilibrium of the world, and reinforce a thousandfold the numerical strength as well as the material power and the spiritual authority of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.' This is the time for which we must now prepare ourselves; this is the hour whose coming it is our task to hasten.

"At this climactic of human history, we are called upon to rise up in

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sacrificial endeavor, our eyes on the awe-inspiring responsibilities which such developments will place upon Bahá’í institutions and individual believers in every land, and our hearts filled with unshakeable confidence in the guiding Hand of the Founder of our Faith. That our Beloved Lord will arouse His followers in every land to a mighty united effort is our ardent prayer at the Sacred Threshold.”

The Pilgrim Path

“This beautiful and majestic path, which extends from the Shrine of the Báb to the city of Haifa, in line with the greatest avenue of that blessed city, which is adorned with trees and verdant plants and illumined with bright lights, which is the object of the admiration of the people of this region and a source of joy and pride to the authorities in this land, will subsequently be converted, as foreshadowed by the Centre of the Covenant, into the Highway of the Kings and Rulers of the World.

“These mighty embodiments of kingly power, humble pilgrims to the Sanctuary of the Lord, will upon their arrival in the Holy Land, first proceed to the Plain of ‘Akáth, there to visit and circumambulate the Qiblih of the people of Bahá, the Point around which circle in adoration the Concourse on High. They will then make their way to this august and venerated city, and climb the slopes of Mount Carmel. With the utmost rapture, ardor and devotion, they will hasten toward this Sacred Spot and, with reverence and submissiveness, humility and loveliness, ascend these terraces to approach the luminous precincts of the sanctified and holy Shrine. Reaching the threshold of the Sanctuary of Grandeur, they will cast their crowns upon the ground, prostrate themselves to kiss its fragrant earth and, circling around its hallowed arcade, call out ‘Here am I, here am I, O Thou Who art the Exalted, the Most Exalted One!’, and recite in tones of fervent supplication the perspicuous Verses of the Tablet of Carmel.

“Thereafter they will walk over the spacious lawns and through the wondrous gardens of this sublime and holy spot, this garden of the Exalted Paradise, will inhale its fragrant scents and taste of its choice and luscious fruits. They will, with tearful eyes and burning hearts, call to mind the pain and suffering, each affliction and calamity, the duress, imprisonment and martyrdom which befell that Wronged One of the world, will behold, with their own eyes, on every hand in this exalted Spot, the glory of Carmel and the evidences of the compelling might and greatness, the invincibility, the all-encompassing dominion of the Conqueror of the worlds, and will praise and glorify the Lord of Carmel.”

The International Bahá’í Archives

“The raising of this Edifice (the International Bahá’í Archives) will in turn herald the construction, in the course of successive epochs of the Formative Age of the Faith, of several other structures, which will serve as the administrative seats of such divinely appointed institutions as the Guardianship, the Hands of the Cause, and the Universal House of Justice. These Edifices will, in the shape of a far-flung arc, and following a harmonizing style of architecture, surround the resting-places of the Greatest Holy Leaf, ranking as foremost among the members of her sex in the Bahá’í Dispensation, of her Brother, offered up as a ransom by Bahá’u’lláh for the quickening of the world and its unification, and of their Mother, proclaimed by Him to be His chosen consort in all the worlds of God. The ultimate completion of this stupendous undertaking will mark the culmination of the development of a world-wide divinely appointed Admin-

The Consecrated Spot

“It must be clearly understood, nor can it be sufficiently emphasized, that the conjunction of the resting-place of the Greatest Holy Leaf with those of her brother and mother incalculably reinforces the spiritual potencies of that consecrated Spot which, under the wings of the Báb’s overshadowing Sepulchre, and in the vicinity of the
future Mashriqu‘l-Adhkar which will be reared on its flank, is destined to evolve into the focal centre of those world-shaking, world-embracing, world-directing administrative institutions, ordained by Baha‘u’llah and anticipated by ‘Abdu’l-Baha, 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 Baha 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 Baha‘u’llah, in such a potentially powerful spiritual and administrative Centre, 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, some of the brightest gems of that World Order now shaping in the womb of this travailing age.

“For such as might undertake, in the days to come, the meritorious and highly enviable pilgrimage to these blessed shrines, as well as for the benefit of the less privileged who, aware of the greatness of their virtue and the pre-eminence of their lineage, desire to commune with their spirits, and to strive to acquire an added insight into the glory of their position, and to follow in their footsteps, let these testimonies written by Bahá‘u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá be their inspiration and guidance in their noble quest. . .”

REFERENCES
1. Universal House of Justice, message of May 24, 1990, to all National Spiritual Assemblies.
5. Shoghi Effendi, Messages to the Bahá‘í World, pp. 74-75.
On September 23 a five-member Soviet film crew recorded a worship service in the Auditorium of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois. The crew, from Rus-film, an agency formed by the Soviet government to produce a series of films about religions in the Soviet Union, is preparing a full-length documentary film on the Faith that is to be shown in theatres throughout the country. Rus-film has already been to Alaska, Wilmette and the Louis G. Gregory Bahá'í Institute in South Carolina, and plans to visit each of the seven Bahá'í Houses of Worship. While in Wilmette, Rus-film also filmed a concert featuring Seals and Crofts, Dan Seals, and the combined House of Worship and Tennessee Bahá'í Choirs under the direction of Tom Price. The film is being made with the blessing and co-operation of the Universal House of Justice which has script approval. It is estimated that as many as 60 percent of those living in the Soviet Union will see the completed film.
Gregory Institute hosts Peace Fest '90

More than 500 Bahá'ís and their guests from South Carolina and other Southeastern states stomped and swayed to the sounds of gospel music, Bahá'í singers, and straight-ahead big band jazz September 21-23 at Peace Fest '90, the fifth annual festival hosted by the Louis G. Gregory Bahá'í Institute near Hemingway.

The various events making up this year's festival, featuring musical talent from all over the country, were staged throughout the Hemingway area. Included were a performance by the 18-member Peace Fest Orchestra led by saxophonist Marvin (Doc) Holladay; a Gospel Jubilee with many of the area's most popular groups; and music by the Bahá'í duo "Swan."

Truit White, director of the Gregory Institute, described the Peace Fest as "a forum for creative thought centering on peace, a unifying cultural celebration, and an opportunity for fellowship and spiritual sharing."

"The main purpose," he said, "is to focus attention on the importance of individual and collective efforts in establishing peace: in the family, community, nation and, ultimately, the world."

An important part of this is the recognition of those who have made outstanding contributions in the field of "peacemaking."

Honored with this year's Peace Award, given to an individual or group in recognition of significant contributions to progress and peace, was 91-year-old Modjeska Simkins of Columbia, South Carolina.

Mrs. Simkins, a long-time community activist, was instrumental in organizing the South Carolina chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the 1940s and '50s.

The recipient of the Ambassador Award, given annually to a person or group from northeastern South Carolina for exemplary community service, was Marjorie McIver, a local school administrator who is well-known for her work with area youth.

WLGI Radio Bahá'í carried a live broadcast of Friday evening's Gospel Jubilee at Hemingway's Mitcheom Community Center, inviting area residents to attend.

More than 500 did, and enjoyed several hours of inspiring music by a dozen of the area's best choirs and soloists.

WLGI also broadcast the Saturday evening Peace Concert and awards ceremony from McCown Auditorium in Conway.

The concert opened with a performance by "Swan" (Bahá'ís Kingsley and Suzanne) from Griffin, Georgia.

Counsellor for the Americas William Roberts then presented the Peace Award to Mrs. Simkins, and Mrs. McIver received the Ambassador Award on behalf of the Gregory Institute from Margene Nelson-Willis, a Bahá'í from Hemingway.

The highlight, as usual, was a dynamic performance by the Peace Fest Orchestra which included in its program three compositions written especially for Peace Fest '90: "Enoch Ol inga," by saxophonist Roger Hogan; "City of Man," by trumpeter Warren Kime; and "Sweetness and Light," by Mr. Holladay.

The orchestra was joined for this performance by vocalist Wendy Rose of San Francisco.

Members of the Peace Fest Orchestra also gave a free concert for students and faculty at a vocational/technical center in Conway.

On Sunday morning an interfaith worship service was held at the Louis Gregory Institute.

Following the devotions, Counsellor

91-year-old Modjeska Simkins of Columbia, South Carolina, receives the 1990 Bahá'í Peace Award from Counsellor William Roberts.
Saxophonist Marvin (Doc) Holladay, leader of the Peace Fest Orchestra, trades his usual baritone to solo on the bass saxophone during the Peace Fest '90 concert in Conway, South Carolina. This year's festival marked the fifth consecutive yearly appearance by the orchestra, composed of top-flight jazz musicians from all over the U.S.

Wilma Ellis, director-general of the Bahá’í International Community in New York City, addressed the gathering, referring to the Faith as “a new chapter in the Book of God” and stressing the value of intercultural experiences to children growing up in today's society.

Other speakers Sunday morning included Alberta Deas, a member of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly, and Mrs. McIver, who spoke about her work with young people in South Carolina.

In the week prior to the Peace Fest, WLGI Radio Bahá’í was given a certificate of recognition by the Horry (County) Cultural Arts Council for outstanding media service.
China

Bahá’ís at Beijing Women’s Conference

More than 40 Bahá’ís from several countries were among approximately 500 Chinese and American women who met June 25-28 in Beijing to exchange ideas during the first Sino-American Conference on Women’s Issues.

Two Chinese and two American speakers opened the conference at the historic Great Hall of the People. This monumental opening was shown on Chinese television and covered in newspapers.

Vice Premier Wu Xue Qian and Secretary-General Luo Gan attended the welcoming banquet, also held in the Great Hall of the People.

Chinese delegates from 30 provinces including federation leaders, researchers and women leaders from all strata of society participated with women from 38 American states, Canada, Suriname and Taiwan. Several Bahá’ís resident in China also attended.

Juana C. Conrad, a member of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly who served on the conference steering committee, said the conference was two years in preparation and, as experienced, far exceeded her highest expectations.

Katharine Bigelow of the National Spiritual Assembly’s Office of External Affairs also served on the steering committee as an ad hoc member.

Of the 64 papers presented at the conference in workshop sessions, six were by Bahá’ís. It should come as no surprise to those acquainted with the Chinese culture that the Bahá’í principles were readily accepted by those in attendance. The Bahá’í presenters were:

- Dr. Homa Mahmoudi, “International Women Executives and Their Personal Relationships.”
- Dianne C. Bohannon, “Women in Management and Administration: An Imperative for World Prosperity.”
- Ding Jo Hsia Currie, “The Role of Mothers as First Educators of Children: East and West.”
- Farzaneh (Fafar) Guillebeaux, “Internalized Oppression of Women.”
- Dr. Nahid Sobhani, “Infant/Child Care.”

The goal of the conference was to provide a forum for sharing research, information and ideas on four key issues related to women: education and training; employment and career advancement; family and child care; and health and well-being.

The Chinese reacted to the social trends in American society, particularly those reflecting the breakdown of order and loss of religious values, with great alarm.

By contrast, Bahá’í principles, when shared, were enthusiastically received.

On the last day of the conference Dawn Haghighi, a Bahá’í who is a lawyer in Chicago, presented a summary of the Family and Child Care workshops to the entire assemblage of participants.

She ended her remarks with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s statement regarding men and women as two wings of a bird, and identified the quotation as coming from the Bahá’í Writings.

One unmistakable sign of the effect of this conference, and a source of optimism for future meetings of Bahá’ís with mainland Chinese, is the degree to which Bahá’í principles and approaches were brought forth and accepted by the plenum.

The vitality of Bahá’í principles as a non-threatening help to the well-being of China became manifest. Indeed, two of those attending the conference moved to embrace the Faith.

The conference theme, “Holding Up Half the Sky,” was chosen by the co-sponsors, the All China Women’s Federation and Global Interactions Inc., a non-profit corporation based in Phoenix, Arizona. It refers to an old Chinese saying that denotes women’s equal share with men in the work force and the development of society.

At the closing banquet, a gift was presented to the All China Women’s Federation by the representative of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly.

The gift was a tapestry by Vicki Hu Poirier, creator of tapestries on display at the Bahá’í Houses of Worship in the U.S. and India.

It depicts the conference theme, “Holding Up Half the Sky,” and includes a quotation (rendered in Chinese characters) by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “The East and the West must unite to give to each other what is lacking. This union will bring about a true civilization, where the spiritual is expressed and carried out in the material. Receiving thus the one from the other the greatest harmony will prevail, all people will be united, a state of great perfection will be attained . . .”

The tapestry shows women from the East and West cooperating to build a white jade column up to the sky. It is made of many small pieces to symbolize that even small, seemingly insignif-
significant acts that women do are important and contribute to the whole column.

The column has carved pieces of jade sewn on it to symbolize the value and purity of such acts. On the column are stitched in Chinese characters the names of a few of the attributes of women; for example, justice, virtue, goodness, talent, friendship, heart, beauty.

A peach tree in bloom in the background symbolizes that this is a spiritual springtime. At the base of the column, a Chinese grandmother explains the meaning of the column to a small Native American child who represents tribal women from both countries, America and China.

The grandmother was chosen because grandmothers are the repositories of knowledge and wisdom in society. This particular woman is also a portrait of the artist's mother-in-law.

The tapestry will be hung in the VIP reception room of the new All China Women's Federation building in Beijing.

Another highlight of the week's proceedings was a reception at the residence in Beijing of U.S. Ambassador Lilley for all the American delegates and some Chinese delegates.

Before and after the conference itself many Bahá'ís attended pre- or post-conference exchanges to other parts of China.
Construction of Arc's terraces begins

On the morning of May 23, the Hands of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum and ‘Ali Akbar Furútan, the members of the Universal House of Justice and the International Teaching Centre, and Fariiburz Sahba, manager of the Mount Carmel projects, gathered for prayers at the Shrine of the Báb.

Afterward, Glenford Mitchell, a member of the Universal House of Justice, emphasized the historical significance of the day, pointing out that 146 years ago the One before Whose Shrine they now stood had inaugurated a new era in the history of mankind, and that the Mountain of God will in future witness monumental establishments created in His honor.

On that same day, the House of Justice announced that work on the construction of the terraces around the Shrine of the Báb would commence.

Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum expressed her delight that whatever was visualized by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and arranged by Shoghi Effendi was now being implemented by the Universal House of Justice, and she emphasized how important it is for the Bahá’ís to see the continuity in the administration of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh.

Mr. Sahba explained that the construction of the terraces would begin with repairing and strengthening the existing retaining walls of the first level below the Shrine.

Afterward, the eastern side will be extended to make it symmetrical with the western terrace.

Correction

On page 3 of the September issue of Bahá’í News, a line correction was inadvertently misplaced, obscuring a part of the next-to-last paragraph in the article on the election, infallibility, and authority of the Universal House of Justice. The paragraph should read as follows:

"The third group of queries raised by the friends concerns details of functioning of the Universal House of Justice in the absence of the Guardian, particularly the matter of expulsion of members of the House of Justice. Such questions will be clarified in the Constitution of the House of Justice, the formulation of which is a goal of the Nine Year Plan. Meanwhile, the friends are informed that any member committing a "sin injurious to the common weal" may be expelled from membership of the House of Justice by a majority vote of the House itself. Should any member, God forbid, be guilty of breaking the Covenant, the matter would be investigated by the Hands of the Cause of God, and the Covenant-breaker would be expelled by decision of the Hands of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land, subject to the approval of the House of Justice, as in the case of any other believer. The decision of the Hands in such a case would be announced to the Bahá’í world by the Universal House of Justice."
Uganda

These villagers in Nakinu, Uganda, are studying to become primary health care workers. Their teacher, Margaret Ogembo (standing), is a Bahá’í. After completing the course of study, they will go into the villages in the area to immunize children against diseases and to teach the people the rudiments of primary health care. The program, considered to be one of the most effective of its kind in Africa, is sponsored by the Bahá’í Office of Social and Economic Development in Uganda.

Australia

A nine-day “Mankind Is One” Institute was held last April in Queensland, Australia. Sixty-four people attended the event including friends from three Aboriginal reserves and a sizable number of children, pre-youth and youth.

The institute began with a discussion of progressive revelation and the relationship between the Aboriginal belief in “the Dreamtime” and the spiritual progress of mankind. Included was lively consultation that led to the declaration of belief in the Faith by two Aborigines.

Workshops covered such topics as the Covenant, the Central Figures of the Faith, Bahá’í administration, and Bahá’í laws.

During the workshop on Bahá’í administration a mock “Assembly” was elected. The group, realizing that illiteracy might be a factor, learned to hold an election by placing stones; all sat in a circle with eyes closed, singing “Alláh’ú’Abhá,” while each took his turn walking outside the circle, placing stones behind others to indicate his choices.

The newly elected “Assembly” then consulted on a variety of issues on which a real Assembly might have to deliberate.

Before the close of the institute there were four new believers including the first Aboriginal gold-medal winner at the recent Commonwealth Games.

The success of the institute can be measured also by the fact that participants left with a renewed ambition to teach the Cause, several even asking for stacks of enrollment cards to take home with them.

Nigeria

The Rosenberg/Abeokuta Teaching Campaign held in August in the heart of the Yoruba-speaking area of Nigeria is reportedly the most successful teaching effort ever held in that country.

During the two-week campaign, 715 people were enrolled as Bahá’ís and 26 local Spiritual Assemblies were formed. Part of the excitement over this large number of new believers lies in the fact that fully half of them are women.

In nearly every village, large numbers of people accepted the Faith and a local Spiritual Assembly was formed. These new believers are so attracted to the Cause that they begged the friends to revisit them soon to help deepen them in the Teachings.

Eastern Europe

As of August, there were about 480 Bahá’ís in Romania including 70 to 80 in Bucharest. During the first seven days of a month-long tour by the Spanish music group Dulcamara, 62 people became Bahá’ís.

In the Soviet Union, two new local Spiritual Assemblies have been formed—in Kiev (where membership has grown from zero to about 30 since last March) and Ulan-Ude, which now has about 20 adult Bahá’ís and “many youth.”

During a recent teaching campaign in Bulgaria, 11 people declared their faith in Bahá’u’lláh. And in Warsaw, Poland, the Bahá’ís are making plans to purchase a building to use as a Center.

The Netherlands

A Bahá’í Youth Teaching Project was held last December 23-27 in the town of Nijmegen, in the Netherlands. More than 25 young people from seven countries took part.

Five hundred balloons that read “World Peace Is Inevitable” were given to children on the streets near where the Bahá’ís had set up a booth in the busy Christmas market. On Christmas day, the Bahá’ís visited several churches, presenting the priests with copies of the peace statement.
Venezuela


Receptions held in association with the conference made it possible for the Bahá’ís to meet several officials from the Venezuelan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, one of whom offered his help for future contacts with the ministry.

During the conference, representatives of all non-governmental organizations met to discuss the formation of an association of NGOs in Venezuela. The proposal was adopted, and on May 10 representatives of each NGO signed a Declaration of Intent to form the organization. Afterward, the National Spiritual Assembly of Venezuela invited all NGO representatives to a reception where they met members of the Bahá’í community of Caracas.

Since the conference, the newly formed NGO Association has held two meetings, at the most recent of which its members decided to follow the Bahá’í practice of electing officers without campaigns or nominations.

Transkei

Pictured are many of those who took part in a tree-planting ceremony in honor of Earth Day 1990 following this year’s Bahá’í National Convention in Transkei.

Cuba

Esperantist Bahá’ís from 10 countries gathered July 14-28 in Havana, Cuba’s Palace of Conventions for the 75th Universal Esperanto Congress.

Among those attending were Counsellor for Europe Agnes Ghaznavi and Auxiliary Board members Marta Formoso, Bijan Ghaznavi and Teresa McGregor.

The Bahá’ís held two activities at the Congress. Ms. McGregor was invited to speak about the teaching work among the Mayas of Yucatán, Mexico. When she had finished, two Esperantists declared their intention to study the Faith because, they said, they were “already Bahá’ís.”

Brazil’s Bahá’í delegate, Davis Queiroz, and one member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Cuba visited the offices of Prensa Latina, the Cuban press agency, and presented Bahá’í literature including the peace statement and Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era.

About 120 Cuban Esperantists accepted Bahá’í literature, and four of them declared themselves Bahá’ís.

Canada

More than 150 young people attended a Bahá’í International Youth Conference held August 3-5 at the University of Saskatchewan, Canada.

Also taking part were two Counsellors, two members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, and two Auxiliary Board members.

A message from the conference reported significant participation of native and non-Bahá’í youth. During the event, four young people declared their belief in Bahá’u’lláh.
Guyana

Two Bahá'ís from the U.S. traveled and taught last February and March in Guyana, making musical and dramatic presentations in the heart of the country.

Donna Kime and Ann Arp, both from the Chicago area, were able to coordinate their talents with the efforts of two youth, Jai Persaud of Guyana and Bahiyyih Phillips, a Bahá'í from Buffalo Grove, Illinois, who is completing a year of service in Guyana.

After thanking the group, the headmaster at one school at which they performed asked, “Is it not so, that the Bahá'í Faith is the only hope for the world?”

Ms. Kime also directed and performed in a two-hour musical proclamation that drew nearly 400 people, most of whom were not Bahá’ís.

Other highlights included three radio interviews, a weekend workshop on music and drama in service to the Faith, and a stop-over in Trinidad where they performed for 100 faculty members at the university and were interviewed twice on radio.

El Salvador

His Eminence Nikorn Praisaengpetch, ambassador of Thailand to India, is pictured during his recent visit to the Bahá'í House of Worship at Bahapur, near New Delhi. Fascinated by the beauty of the Temple, Mr. Praisaengpetch has made several visits. With him are members of his family and the Temple guide (right).

Members of the Bahá'í musical group Nueva Primavera (New Springtime) perform at a variety show, which was part of an International Conference for Teaching the Bahá'í Faith at Universities, held last April 8-13 at the Jamaliyyih Bahá'í Institute in El Salvador. About 50 people from five countries attended the conference.

Zambia

In southern Zambia a former priest of a Christian church, his wife and daughter have embraced the Faith. He has served his church for some time as treasurer but said he must leave the church to serve Bahá'u'lláh.

He had four years of theological study in South Africa and the United States, and is also a teacher. He is already undertaking extensive teaching work for the Faith.

When the man received a letter from his bishop, assigning him a new responsibility, he replied that he is a Bahá'í now, and suggested that the bishop investigate Bahá'u'lláh's Message “for your own good.”

Kiribati

The Bahá'í community of the Kiribati Islands held its first National Convention at Ririván, electing to its first National Spiritual Assembly two indigenous women, Maureen Nakekea and Marao Teem.
**Paraguay**

The Paraguay International Chinese Teaching Symposium, the first event of its kind in South America, was held last June 10 in Asunción.

More than 80 people from 10 countries attended with Counsellor Shapoor Monadjem, four Auxiliary Board members, and a member of the International Chinese Teaching Committee.

During the symposium, a television crew interviewed two Bahá'ís from Costa Rica and one from Paraguay.

One result of the event was a commitment by local Bahá'ís, youth and adult, to concentrate their efforts on teaching the Faith to the Chinese.

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On January 30 a floral tribute was offered at the grave of Roque Centurión Miranda, the first Paraguayan to embrace the Faith, in the Bahá'í cemetery at Lambare to commemorate the 30th anniversary of his passing.

Mr. Miranda’s two daughters, Dora and Mirna, recited prayers they had learned as children and shared memories of their father.

That evening, a memorial service was held at the National Bahá'í Center.

**Burkina Faso**

Eight hundred ninety-eight new believers were reported to have been enrolled in Papua New Guinea last September, followed by 458 in October and November. The number of local Spiritual Assemblies elected in 1989 was 180. As momentum builds, the enthusiasm and determination of the friends continues to increase.

Shown are participants in a training and refresher course for primary health care workers held last May in Koalio, Burkina Faso. The course was part of an ongoing sanitation and nutrition education project sponsored by the National Social and Economic Development Committee of the Bahá'ís of Burkina Faso.

Renowned jazz trumpeter John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie is pictured during a concert appearance last May in Moscow. Mr. Gillespie’s visit to the Soviet Union was part of an East European media project called ‘One World Week,’ and his concert in Moscow was held under the patronage of the country’s First Lady, Raisa Gorbachev.
Honduras

Only eight weeks after the launching of Project Olinga at the beginning of 1990, the Bahá'ís of Honduras reported the enrollment of 1,400 new believers.

A consolidation program for the new believers includes classes for children and youth, community meetings, and study classes.

A five-day teacher training institute, attended by more than 250 Garifuna Indians, included an appearance by 'Aziz Yazdí, who was visiting the area at that time.

Project Muhájjir, launched in January 1989 in Honduras, reported more than 1,300 new believers enrolled by the end of the year. Most of these new believers are from the Garifuna area.

More recently, Project Olinga, begun in the same area in January 1990, reports the enrollment of 300 new believers in the project's first four days.

India

Entry by troops continues in Tamil Nadu, India, where spokesmen for the Karaikkal Teaching Campaign report that 13 volunteers, some of whom were Bahá'í youth, welcomed some 1,200 new believers into the Faith during the second week in March.

Short talks about the Bahá'í concepts of prayer, work as worship, and the oneness of mankind were broadcast recently on the All India radio station in Vihayawada. The talks were given by Auxiliary Board member G. Sambasiva Rao.

As a result, a number of letters were received from people who wish to know more about the Faith and its teachings.

Trinidad/Tobago

A teaching campaign dedicated to the late Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery was held last September-December in central and southern Trinidad. The effort led to the enrollment of 750 new believers and the formation of four local Spiritual Assemblies.

Also as a result of the campaign, two children's classes were reopened, 23 village deepenings were begun, and visits were made to elderly Bahá'ís who were given Bahá'í literature and pictures of the House of Worship in India.

Finland

Pictured in traditional Lakota Indian dress is Counsellor for the Americas Jacqueline Delahunt (left) who was visiting the recent Sami Project held in Finland, Norway and Sweden. Also pictured are Ritva Torikka (center), a Sami, and Allison Healy, a Blackfoot Indian.