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## THE GUARDIAN'S MESSAGE TO CONVENTION

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On the occasion of the triumphant conclusion of the second year of the Ten-Year Plan, marking the termination of the first half of the second phase of a decade-long Bahá'í World Spiritual Crusade, I invite the delegates assembled at the twelve Annual Conventions, convened simultaneously throughout the Bahá'í world during the Ridván Festival, to survey with me the mutiple evidences of the progressive unfoldment of the incalculable potentialities with which this world enveloping, steadily consolidating enterprise has been endowed by the Author of the Tablets of the Divine Plan at the very hour of its inception.

In every continent of the globe, throughout the widely scattered islands of the Mediterranean and the North Sea, of the Atlantic, the Pacific and Indian Oceans, this mighty Plan, devised for the systematic execution of the Design conceived by the Centre of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant for the propagation of His Father's Faith, is forging ahead, gaining momentum with every passing day, tearing down barriers in all climes and amidst divers peoples and races, widening irresistibly the scope of its beneficent operations, and revealing ever more compelling signs of its inherent strength as it marches towards the spiritual conquest of the entire planet.

The number of the virgin territories of the globe opened to the Faith has, since the inauguration, and in direct consequence of the vigorous prosecution, of this stupendous undertaking been raised to one hundred and eight, swelling the number of the sovereign states and chief dependencies included within the pale of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh to two hundred and thirty-six, above two hundred of which have been enlisted under His banner since the ascension of the Centre of His Covenant.

All the territories within the confines of the American, the European, the Asiatic and the African continents, assigned to ten Bahá'í National Assemblies, have, with the exception of Soviet-controlled territories, been opened. Of the seventy-two Islands allocated to eleven Bahá'í National Assemblies, no less than sixty-four have opened their doors to the vanguard of Bahá'í Crusaders, leaving Spitzbergen and Anticosti Island, situated respectively in the North Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, Nicobar Islands, Cocos Island and

Chagos Archipelago in the Indian Ocean, and Loyalty Islands, Sakhalin Island and Hainan Island in the Pacific Ocean — one of which is a native reserve, two of which are within the Soviet Orbit, while four others are either privately owned or controlled by private companies — as yet unopened by the heroic band battling for the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

The northern limits of the Faith in Europe have been pushed beyond the Arctic Circle as far as 70 degrees latitude, through the settlement of a Bahá'í pioneer in Reals Kolen, Batsfjord, Finnmark, only three degrees below Arctic Bay, Franklin, the northernmost Bahá'í Centre established, in the course of the Opening Year of the Ten-Year Plan, in the North American Continent. Valiant pioneers have, moreover, volunteered and are busily engaged in devising plans, or have actually embarked on the necessary preparations, to cross the mountain frontiers of Tibet, to enter the Ukraine, beyond the Iron Curtain, to gain admission to the few remaining, hitherto inaccessible islands of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and to penetrate deep into the Arctic Ocean as far as the ice-bound island of Spitzbergen.

No less than forty races are now represented in the world-wide Bahá'í Community, which has been recently enriched through the enrolment of representatives of the Greek, the Berber, the Pigmy, the Somali and Guanche races. The number of localities where Bahá'ís now reside is well over thirty-two hundred, of which fourteen hundred are located in the Great Republic of the West, over six hundred in the Cradle of the Faith, more than three hundred in the African Continent, and over one hundred each in the Dominion of Canada, in Australasia, Latin America and in the Indian Sub-Continent. In the African Continent alone the number of members of the Negro race has, within the space of four years, increased to over thirteen hundred; the number of territories opened to the Faith has reached fifty-eight, the number of local Spiritual Assemblies already established and functioning is now fifty, the number of tribes represented within the swiftly expanding Bahá'í Community is now over ninety, whilst the number of African languages into which Bahá'í literature has been and is being translated exceeds fifty.

The total number of the European, the African, the Asiatic and American-Indian languages into which



Bahá'í literature has been and is being translated is one hundred and sixty-seven, of which fifty-two are among those included in the provisions of the Ten-Year Plan, and twenty-four are supplementary languages into which the translation of Bahá'í literature has been spontaneously undertaken by the indefatigable band of pioneers and new converts in Africa, in South-East Asia, in the South Pacific Islands and in the Antipodes.

The number of incorporated Bahá'í national and local Spiritual Assemblies has now reached one hundred and forty, seventy-five of which are located in the United States of America, the latest additions to this steadily mounting list in other continents being the Assemblies of London and Manchester in the British Isles; of Ciudad Trujillo in the Dominican Republic; of Kuching in Sarawak; of Jakarta in Indonesia; of Helsinki in Finland and of San Juan in Puerto Rico.

In the Holy Land, the Centre and Pivot around which the institutions of a world-encompassing Administrative Order revolve, steps have been taken for the preparation of a Synopsis, and for the codification of the Laws, of the Most Holy Book, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Mother-Book of the Bahá'í Revelation, as an essential prelude to the eventual translation and publication of its entire text.

A fund has been inaugurated in anticipation of the adoption of preliminary measures for the ultimate construction of Bahá'u'lláh's Sepulchre in the heart of the Haram-i-Aqdas recently established in the plain of 'Akká.

The international Bahá'í endowments on Mt. Carmel have been greatly enhanced by the signature of a contract with the Israeli Authorities for the acquisition of an area of thirty-six thousand square meters, situated on the promontory of Mt. Carmel, overlooking the Cave of Elijah, as well as the spot sanctified by the footsteps of Bahá'u'lláh and associated with the revelation of the Tablet of Carmel, for the price of one hundred and eight thousand dollars, to serve as the site for the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Holy Land, the entire sum having been donated by Amelia Collins, Hand of the Cause and outstanding benefactress of the Faith.

The vast area surrounding the Báb's Sepulchre has been enlarged through the purchase from the Development Authority of the State of Israel of five houses adjoining the last terrace of His Shrine for a sum of approximately sixty thousand dollars, as well as through the acquisition of a six thousand dollar plot that has been registered in the name of the Israeli Branch of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles; of a house, valued at ten thousand dollars, that has been registered in the name of the Israeli Branch of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada; of a twenty-eight thousand dollar plot, to be registered in the name of the Israeli Branch of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Persia; and of a five thousand dollar plot to be registered in the name of the Israeli Branch of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Australia and New Zealand. Moreover, steps are now being taken for the purchase of several properties, valued at approximately one hundred and forty thousand dollars, the acquisition of which is essential for the safeguarding of the area in close vicinity of the

Báb's Sepulchre, as well as for the future extension of the arc around which the edifices, destined to serve as the seat of the future Bahá'í World Commonwealth, are to be erected.

Following the expropriation by the Israeli Finance Minister, on the recommendation of the Mayor of the City of Haifa, of the plot adjoining the site of the future International Bahá'í Archives on Mt. Carmel, the fixing of the position of the far-flung arc, around which the edifices constituting the Seat of the World Bahá'í Administrative Order are to be built, the location of the site of the building and the preparations for the excavation of its foundations, a hundred and twelve thousand dollar contract has been signed in Rome for the quarrying, the dressing and carving of the stones and the fifty-two columns of the building which will amount in weight to over nine hundred tons and are to be shipped within less than two years to the Holy Land.

The landscaping of the extensive area stretching between the Báb's Sepulchre and the resting-places of the Greatest Holy Leaf, the Purest Branch and their mother, and destined to encircle this Edifice, has been undertaken, adding greatly to the beauty of the surroundings of these consecrated Spots in the heart of God's holy Mountain.

In the Cradle of the Faith, the site of the Síyáh-Chál, the scene of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission and the second holiest spot in His native land, purchased in the course of the first year of the Ten-Year Plan, has been transferred by the donor of this holy and historic place, Habíb Sábet, to the name of one of the Hands of the Cause acting as my official representative in that country.

A five-year Plan has been inaugurated for the purpose of raising twelve million tumans for the construction of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in that land. The design of this historic Edifice has been finally selected from among a number of designs submitted by Bahá'í Architects in both the East and the West, the choice falling upon the plan conceived by the Hand of the Cause and President of the International Bahá'í Council, Mason Remey—a design which incorporates a dome reminiscent of that of the Báb's Holy Sepulchre.

A contract has moreover been signed as a preliminary step for the eventual purchase of the Fortress of Chihriq and its surroundings, for a sum of over two hundred thousand tumans.

In the United States of America a plot has been acquired in the precincts of the Mother Temple of the West to serve as the site for the construction of a Home for the Aged, and which will constitute the first of the Dependencies to be erected around that holiest Bahá'í House of Worship. Measures have been adopted and the design authorised, for the completion of the landscaping of the area surrounding that same building. The National Bahá'í Publishing Committee has been converted into a Bahá'í Publishing Trust, functioning under the jurisdiction of the American National Spiritual Assembly. The total number of American Indian tribes with which contact has been established has now reached twenty-two, whilst members of the Apache, the Cherokee, the Omaha, the Oneida, and the Sioux tribes have been enrolled in the American



Bahá'í Community. The number of territories, federal districts and states of the United States of America where official authorisation for the conduct of Bahá'í marriages has been granted is now twenty-one, whilst the number of localities in that same country where the Bahá'í Holy Days are officially recognised is over twenty-five.

Land for no less than eight of eleven Temple sites to be acquired according to the provisions of the Ten-Year Plan, and involving an expenditure of eighty thousand dollars has been purchased in the following places: in the holy city of Baghdád, on the banks of the Tigris, blessed by the footsteps of Bahá'u'lláh, of an area of thirty thousand square metres; on the banks of the Nile in Cairo, the centre of both the Arab and Islamic worlds, of an area of seventeen thousand square metres; in Frankfurt, the heart of the European continent, of an area of seventeen thousand square metres; in New Delhi, the capital of India, of an area of sixty-six thousand square metres; in Sydney, the oldest Bahá'í centre in the Australian continent, of an area of eleven thousand square metres; in Kampala, in the heart of the African continent, of an area of twenty-four thousand square metres; in Johannesburg, the second largest city in the African continent, of an area of six thousand square metres; and in Panama City, the importance of which has been underlined by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the Tablets of the Divine Plan, of an area of twenty thousand square metres.

No less than fourteen national Ḥazíratu'l-Quds, out of the forty-nine listed in the provisions of the Ten-Year Plan and which are to serve as seats of future Bahá'í National Spiritual Assemblies, have already been purchased, largely through the liberal contributions of the Hand of the Cause, Amelia Collins. These buildings, involving the expenditure of over two hundred thousand dollars, are situated in five continents of the globe; in London, Bern and Vienna in the European continent; in Anchorage, Lima and Panama City in the American continent; in Tokyo, Istanbul, Kabul, Bahrayn and Suva in the Asiatic continent; in Johannesburg and Tunis in the African continent; and in Auckland in the Antipodes. Negotiations for the purchase of three additional Ḥazíratu'l-Quds, in the cities of Rome, Jakarta and Colombo are moreover under way, while funds, totalling one hundred and thirty thousand dollars have been pledged for the purchase, in the immediate future, of twenty-seven other Ḥazíratu'l-Quds in Latin America and the European continent.

Furthermore, the sum of fifty thousand dollars has been contributed by the Hand of the Cause, Amelia Collins, as yet another evidence of her munificence, for the purpose of establishing Bahá'í national endowments in no less than fifty countries, situated in all five continents of the globe. A plot has, moreover, been purchased in South Africa, a property offered in the Aleutian Islands and a fund initiated for the same purpose in Alaska and Finland.

Such marvellous progress, involving such diversified activities, extending over so immense a field, within such a brief space of time, and notwithstanding the smallness of the numbers of the participants in this Global Crusade, the meagreness of their resources and

the restrictions imposed upon them by those who are either unsympathetic to their Cause, or alarmed by their rising influence, or envious of the pervasive power of the Faith they champion, impels me to announce, in anticipation of the opening of the third phase of the Ten-Year Plan, the formation, during Ridván, 1957, in addition to the three Regional National Spiritual Assemblies to be elected in 1956 in the African continent, of thirteen National Spiritual Assemblies, some of which will be regional, others independent, some interim and others permanent.

These National Spiritual Assemblies, representing no less than forty-two territories, will be established in four continents of the globe. Four will be in Asia; in Japan, in Pakistan, in the Arabian Peninsula and in South-east Asia. Three will be in Europe: in Scandinavia and Finland, in the Benelux countries and in the Iberian Peninsula. Five will be in America; the first, combining within its jurisdiction the Republics of Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay and Bolivia; the second, comprising the Republics of Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela; the third including Mexico and the Republics of Central America, Costa Rica, El-Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama; the fourth embracing the Islands of the greater Antilles, Haiti, Cuba and the Dominican Republic, and the fifth in Alaska. And lastly, one will be in the Antipodes, in the Dominion of New Zealand.

Responsibility for the convocation of the eight Bahá'í Conventions whose delegates are to elect eight National Spiritual Assemblies in North, Central and South America and in Europe, and which are to be held in Anchorage, in Panama City, in Port-au-Prince, in Buenos Aires, in Lima, in Stockholm, in Brussels and in Madrid, will devolve upon the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States of America; for the convocation of the four conventions whose delegates are to elect four National Spiritual Assemblies in Asia, and which are to be held in Tokyo, in Karachi, in Bahrayn and in Jakarta, upon the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís of the United States of America, of Persia, and of India, Pakistan and Burma; and for the convocation of the convention whose delegates are to elect the National Spiritual Assembly of New Zealand, which is to be held in Auckland, upon the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Australia and New Zealand.

I call upon the following Hands of the Cause to act as my representatives at these thirteen historic conventions, that are to pave the way for the erection, in four continents of the globe, of the pillars destined to support, in varying measures, the Universal House of Justice, the final unit in the construction of the edifice of the Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh: Valíyu'lláh Varqá and Horace Holley at the South American Conventions to be held in Buenos Aires and Lima respectively; Corinne True at the Greater Antilles Convention to be held in Port-au-Prince; Dhikru'lláh Khádím at the Central American Convention to be held in Panama City; Paul Haney at the Alaska Convention, to be held in Anchorage; Hermann Grossmann and Adelbert Muhlschlegel at the Scandinavian-Finnish Convention to be held in Stockholm; George



Townshend at the Benelux Convention to be held in Brussels; Ugo Giachery at the Iberian Convention to be held in Madrid; Ṭarāzu'lláh Samandarí at the Arabian Convention to be held in Bahrayn; 'Alí-Akbar Furútan at the South-east Asian Convention, to be held in Jakarta; Shu'á'u'lláh 'Alá'í at the Pakistani Convention to be held in Karachi; Jalál Kházeh at the Japanese Convention to be held in Tokyo; Clara Dunn at the new Zealand Convention to be held in Auckland.

I urge, moreover, as many members as feasible of the Auxiliary Boards appointed by the aforementioned Hands of the Cause in the American, the European, the Asiatic and the Australian continents, to attend these momentous gatherings, at which the representatives of as many as forty-two Bahá'í Communities will assemble, and, through their active participation, reinforce and widen the scope of the deliberations of the elected delegates.

Furthermore, I cannot too strongly emphasise the vital necessity for all the Bahá'í Groups, scattered throughout these forty-two countries, to brace themselves, and make a supreme effort, during these intervening two years, to achieve Assembly status, ensuring thereby their participation in the election of the delegates to these fate-laden conventions, and contributing, through this act, to the broadening and strengthening of the foundations of these projected pivotal institutions, destined to play so prominent and vital a part in ushering in the last phase in the gradual establishment of the structure of an Administrative Order that must needs slowly evolve into the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, and which in turn will give birth, in the fullness of time, to a world spiritual civilisation, which posterity will hail as the fairest fruit of His Revelation.

Finally, I direct my appeal, through the assembled delegates, to the entire body of the believers whom they represent, and indeed, on this occasion, to all the up-

holders of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh wherever they reside in all the continents of the globe, to arise, at so auspicious an hour in the fortunes of the Faith, synchronising with so fateful and perilous an hour in the fortunes of mankind, and consecrate themselves afresh, throughout this last, fast-fleeting year of the present phase of this momentous, world-girdling Plan, to the furtherance of the immediate objective enumerated in my last year's Convention Message, ensuring thereby a befitting conclusion to a stage in its resistless unfolding destined to usher in its third and most brilliant phase—a phase on which the triumphant consummation of the Plan itself must so largely depend.

It is indeed my fervent and constant prayer that the members of this firmly-knit, intensely alive, world-embracing Community, spurred on by the triple impulse generated through the revelation of the Tablet of Carmel by Bahá'u'lláh and the Will and Testament as well as the Tablets of the Divine Plan bequeathed by the Centre of the Covenant—the three Charters which have set in motion three distinct processes, the first operating in the Holy Land for the development of the institutions of the Faith at its World Centre and the other two, throughout the rest of the Bahá'í world, for its propagation and the establishment of its Administrative Order—may advance from strength to strength and victory to victory. May they hasten, by their present exertions, the advent of that blissful consummation when the shackles hampering the growth of their beloved Faith will have been finally burst asunder, when its independent status will have been officially and universally recognised, when it will have ascended the throne and wielded the sceptre of spiritual and temporal authority, when the brightness of its glory will have illuminated the whole earth, and its dominion will have been established over the entire planet.

#### NEXT YEAR ON THE HOME FRONT

A letter dated March 29th, 1955, has been received from Mr. Leroy Ioas, Secretary-General of the International Bahá'í Council, which reads as follows:

'On April 21st we will enter the last year of the second phase of the Ten-Year Crusade. As you know, one of the objectives of this second phase was the rapid multiplication of Assemblies, Groups and Centres throughout the world.

During the past year, a great deal has been accomplished by the friends in their efforts to disperse from the large centres of population in order to build up the goal cities and establish new centres. However, we have not accomplished a great deal in the way of increasing the number of Bahá'ís, nor the number of Spiritual Assemblies.

The beloved Guardian sincerely hopes you will make it a point of major study and consideration on the part of your Assembly, so that the entire Community may lend itself to the accomplishment of this great goal during the coming year. Foundations must be laid for many more Assemblies. The friends must disperse from the large centres of population. Our teaching work must become so sanctified and penetrating that

many, many souls will be confirmed. The friends should go forward on this great task in a very determined manner in order to establish as many new Assemblies during the coming year as are possible.

In letters which have come to the Beloved Guardian, he has noted the friends feel there is no need to establish new Assemblies until 1963.

The Ten-Year Crusade ends in 1963; but as many of the goals should be won as quickly as possible. It should certainly be clear to all of the friends that we cannot hold off on the various goals of our tasks until the last year of the Crusade. They should be won just as quickly as possible. Furthermore, there are many tasks of the Crusade which the Guardian is not launching until preliminary goals have been won. For instance, it would be impossible to establish National Assemblies in all of the areas proposed until there are more Bahá'ís, more Groups and more Assemblies in those countries. On the home front, further tasks are dependent on the winning of victories now. The Guardian hopes the keynote of the teaching work on the home front during the current year will be the dispersion of the friends on an unprecedented scale, and the winning of as many Assemblies as is possible.'