

BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

Published by

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE BRITISH ISLES
BM/BAHAI, LONDON, W.C.1

No. 100

Bahá'í Year 109

SEPTEMBER—OCTOBER 1952

BAHÁ'Í WORLD

AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND. The colour film of the Holy Shrines and Gardens on Mount Carmel has been shown to twenty-six audiences in New South Wales and Queensland.

A feature article on the Faith appeared in May issue of the New Zealand *Woman's Weekly* entitled 'Who and What are the Bahá'ís?'

BELGIUM. An instructive two page illustrated article about the Cause, far from unfavourable, appeared in an August issue of the Dutch periodical, *Post*, printed in Antwerp.

There are now more than forty believers in Brussels, and Antwerp has been chosen for development to Assembly status.

CANADA. Contributions to the Bahá'í Fund are now recognised as allowable for purposes of income tax. A member of Ottawa Community, while sharing a panel on an Ottawa radio station, was asked to comment on the Faith.

DENMARK. Believers in Denmark number well over forty and several live in isolation, at some distance from Copenhagen.

EGYPT and SUDAN, with their new Assembly at Mansura, now have nine Local Assemblies including Khartoum.

FINLAND. Josephine Kruker reports two regular meetings per week, one public and one fireside, with average attendance ten to fifteen souls.

FRANCE. There are now Assemblies in Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, groups in Hyères, Nancy and Alès, and isolated believers in six other towns.

GERMANY. In anticipation of the global crusade there was to be a special study made of Bolshevism and Communism at the Summer School this year. There are now five Summer Schools organised in Germany in a year.

HOLLAND now has Assemblies at Amsterdam and the Hague, and two active groups at Bussum and at Nijmegen where Geertrui Angkersmit, who became a Bahá'í in Brighton, has now been joined in the Faith by two of her sisters.

INDIA, PAKISTAN and BURMA. Colombo Assembly has started extensive teaching work in four towns in Ceylon, at Kandy, Galle, Kalutara, and Batticaloa.

Four new Assemblies were established last year on the mainland, three others were resuscitated and eleven

consolidated. Eighty newspapers and periodicals published 'glowing reports of the celebrations in the various cities of the World Religion Day.'

The Nineteen Month Plan to be consummated next April has five goals:

- (1) To contribute Rs. 250,000 (about £18,750) to the Báb's Shrine Fund.
- (2) Translation and printing of *New Era* into Indonesian, Siamese, Malay, Kachin, Shan, and Karen languages.
- (3) To send pioneers to Siam, Malaya, Indonesia, Indo-China, Nepal, Zanzibar, and Madagascar.
- (4) Consolidation of weak Assemblies and establishment of new centres in home territories.
- (5) To raise New Era School, Panchgani, to the status of a Government aided School.

IRAQ. A two volume book in Arabic by a Baghdad believer, proving Bahá'u'lláh's claim from the Qurán and the Prophetic Traditions, has been vigorously attacked in a series of articles in the Moslem Press in Iraq and in a magazine in Damascus.

ISRAEL-HAIFA. Our Beloved Guardian has high hopes that the Báb's Shrine will be completed next year. Ugo Giachery, Hand of the Cause, was under direction in September to sign a contract in Utrecht, Holland, for the specially designed glazed gold tiles for the dome, 27,000 in number.

ITALY. Three Communities flourish, in Rome, Naples and Florence. Milan and Genoa are to be developed if possible up to Assembly status by next April. There are now over seventy believers in Italy.

JAPAN. Tokyo, where the only Assembly is located, has appointed an Extension Teaching Committee and assigned to it the entire territory of Japan outside its own local area.

LUXEMBOURG. The fifth and final European Teaching Conference drew one hundred and thirty believers from twenty-one countries. Attended by four Hands of the Cause of God—Ugo Giachery, Zikrullah Khadem, Hermann Grossmann, Adelbert Mulschlegel—the Conference attained a triumphant climax at the five hour Unity Banquet, where addresses by the Hands of the Cause were followed by special and beautiful messages from each of the fully established communities so far created during the Second Seven Year Plan under the direction of the European Teaching

Committee, together with brief greetings from all other countries represented—a wonderful spiritual bouquet offered up to the glory of the Beloved.

PORTUGAL. Communities now exist in both Lisbon and Oporto.

SARAWAK. James Fozdar, with wife and small son, pioneers in Kuching, reports signal successes. Three full page articles on the Faith in the Chinese owned *Sarawak Tribune*, the only English newspaper, were followed by press attacks in the local Muhammadan Malay newspaper. Some thirty-three people are studying and hopes are high for achievement of Assembly status by April, 1953.

SOUTH AMERICA. This year's National Assembly comprises four members from Peru, two from Brazil, and one each from Ecuador, Uruguay and Columbia. There are 440 believers with twenty-two Assemblies and fourteen Groups.

SPAIN. Virginia Orbison announced that there had been ninety declarations in all and that there are now thirty who were active in both Madrid and Barcelona. Extension work, under great difficulties, is being pursued.

STRAITS SETTLEMENT. An Assembly now flourishes in Singapore as a result of the devoted efforts of Dr. and Mrs. Fozdar, pioneers from India, whose son is pioneering in Sarawak. Second Officer Brian Giddings, whose ship called at Singapore a few months ago, spent two evenings with the Doctor and his family and tells of the contact they have made with many notables and of the wonderful work Mrs. Fozdar is doing in the cause for the emancipation of women. The day following Brian's arrival Mrs. Fozdar sailed for a three-month teaching tour of Australia, planned by the Australian N.S.A.

SWITZERLAND. There are now over a hundred believers and four Assemblies at Berne, Geneva, Zurich, Wolfhalden. Great efforts are being made to get another Assembly in Basle so that there will be five Swiss Local Assemblies next April when the new Italo-Swiss National Assembly is to be elected in Florence.

U.S.A. A memorial service commemorating the fortieth anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to the Unitarian Church in Flatbush was conducted by Dr. Karl Chworowsky, its Pastor.

SUMMER SCHOOL CABLES

The following cable was sent the Guardian from the Summer School on August 26th:

'Attendants Summer School, gathered Welsh University, comprising British Hand Cause, 160 believers, guests, American, Australian, Canadian, Egyptian, German, Latvian, Persian, English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, centred eve Holy Year theme Master Figure of human history, eager shoulder tasks outlined Message summons Lord Hosts, beseech prayers confirmation consummate current Plan as befitting offering Holy Threshold prelude participation world crusade. Assure you deepest loving devotion.'

The Guardian replied on August 29th, 1952:

'Deeply touched, profoundly appreciate noble sentiments. Praying fulfilment high destiny. Deepest love.'

SEVEN YEAR COVENANTS

The National Treasurer thinks that the friends would like to know more details about the making of Covenant payments to the Bahá'í Faith.

A Covenant is a Deed of Promise under which a person indicates that a certain sum of money shall be paid half yearly for a period of seven years to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles.

The National Treasurer, on behalf of the Assembly which is constituted as a charitable organisation, can then claim a refund from Inland Revenue of the amount of the tax. The refunded tax and the promised annual sum of money together make the gross annual contribution.

If the contribution comes from income on which less than the standard rate of income tax (at present 9s. 6d. in the £1) is paid, Inland Revenue will eventually collect the difference between the standard rate and the rate which the contributor actually paid.

Thus any payment under Covenant at the present time almost doubles itself. Covenant payments are a great help to the Treasurer in two especially valuable ways—he can budget ahead on the proposed payments and there is the refund of tax for the Bahá'í fund instead of the Inland Revenue.

The Treasurer will gladly answer any questions from those who may be interested in this method of contribution and will supply an appropriate form for the purpose on request.

A Statement on the Fund

The estimate given below of income and expenditure indicates the measure of the financial responsibility that the British Bahá'í Community in its present stature is believed capable of undertaking, in the view of the National Assembly.

The degree of our collective capacity to meet our 'spiritual obligation' to contribute to the International Bahá'í Fund and to the Africa Fund in the befitting manner indicated depends directly upon how nearly we are able to meet the balance of £2,800 since, generally speaking, the other figures are less flexible. Income during the first three months of this period has been notably below the estimate and consequently our power to contribute to these Funds has been proportionately small.

ESTIMATED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE OF THE NATIONAL FUND FOR PERIOD JUNE 21ST, 1952—JUNE 20TH, 1953

Expenditure				£
International Bahá'í Fund	...	...	...	300
Africa	...	...	...	1,900
Centenary	...	...	...	630
Teaching and Consolidation	...	...	...	800
National Assembly	...	...	...	1,250
Sundries, Institutions, and other Committees	...	...	...	900
				£5,800
Income				
Guardian (earmarked for Africa)	...	...	...	1,000
Covenants (including tax refunds)	...	...	...	1,488
Other income assured	...	...	...	520
Balance to be found	...	...	...	2,800
				£5,800

Explanatory Notes

(1) British contribution to the Africa Fund was fixed at £75 a month. The total would meet all administrative expenses and pay for two pioneers and at least one representative at the Conference.

(2) Centenary figure was estimated at a little more than the outlay in 1944 to comply with the Guardian's instructions regarding the scale of celebration.

(3) National Assembly. This includes the whole of the Secretary's salary, part of which is provided by the Publishing Trust, whose contribution forms part of the item 'other income assured.' Other National Assembly expenses include meetings, typing, printing, etc.

(4) Sundries, etc., covers Convention, Teaching Conference, Journal, International contributions to the Townshend Fund offset by assured income from overseas, legal charges, audit, bank charges, loan repayment, contingencies and various Committees.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

STATION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

IV

The Guardian writes (*W.O.B.*, p. 103) that the assertions by Bahá'u'lláh of the unprecedented claims He has advanced, of the spiritual energies He has released, and of the glories of the Day of God, with the endorsements of these assertions made by the Báb and 'Abdu'l Bahá, are so numerous that a whole volume would be needed to contain a compilation even of the most outstanding of them. A few quotations however may serve to show something of the sublimity and power of these tremendous pronouncements.

'I testify before God,' proclaims Bahá'u'lláh, 'to the greatness, the inconceivable greatness of this Revelation. Again and again have We in most of our Tablets borne witness to this truth, that mankind may be roused from its heedlessness.'

'In this most mighty Revelation, all the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest, their final consummation.'

'That which hath been made manifest in this pre-eminent, this most exalted Revelation, stands unparalleled in the annals of the past, nor will future ages witness its like.'

—*World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 103.

Referring to Himself, He proclaims (*ibid.*, p. 104):

'He it is Who in the Old Testament hath been named Jehovah, Who in the Gospel hath been designated as the Spirit of Truth and in the Qurán acclaimed as the Great Announcement.'

'But for Him no Divine Messenger would have been invested with the robe of prophethood, nor would any of the Sacred Scriptures have been revealed. To this bear witness all created things.'

'The word which the one true God uttereth in this day, though that word be the most familiar and commonplace of terms, is invested with supreme, with unique distinction.'

'The generality of mankind is still immature. Had it acquired sufficient capacity We would have bestowed upon it so great a measure of our knowledge that all who dwell on earth and in heaven would have found themselves, by virtue of the grace

streaming from Our pen, completely independent of all knowledge save the knowledge of God, and would have been securely established upon the throne of abiding tranquillity.'

'The pen of Holiness, I solemnly affirm before God, hath writ upon my snow-white brow and in character of effulgent glory these glowing, these musk-scented and holy words: "Behold ye that dwell on earth, and ye denizens of heaven, bear witness, He in truth is your well beloved. He it is whose like the world of creation hath not seen. He whose ravishing beauty hath delighted the eye of God, the Ordainer, the All Powerful, the Incomparable!"'

Comparing the greatness of those who recognise His station with that of the followers of earlier Dispensations, He affirms (*God Passes By*, p. 98):

'He around Whom the Point of the Bayan hath revolved is come. If all who are in heaven and on earth, be invested in this day with the powers and attributes destined for the Letters of the Bayan, whose Station is ten thousand times more glorious than that of the Letters of the Suranic Dispensation and if they one and all should, swift as the twinkling of an eye, hesitate to recognise My Revelation, they shall be accounted, in the sight of God, of those that have gone astray and regarded as "Letters of Negation".'

Several of the tributes which the Báb, 'the King of Messengers,' 'The Primal point from which have been created all things,' 'the Countenance of God whose splendour can never be obscured,' used to love to pay to the lofty station of His beloved Master Bahá'u'lláh, have already been given—to which may be added to His Cause.

'The Bayan and whosoever is therein revolve round the saying of Him Whom God shall make manifest.' . . . 'The Bayan deriveth all its glory from Him Whom God shall make manifest.'

'All blessing be upon him who believeth in Him and woe betide him that rejected His truth.'

'To-day the Bayan is in the stage of seed; at the beginning of the manifestation of Him Whom God shall make manifest its ultimate perfection will become apparent.' 'Ere nine will have elapsed from the inception of this Cause the realities of the Created things will not be made manifest. All that thou hast as yet seen is but the stage from the moist-germ until we clothed it with flesh. Be patient until thou beholdest a new creation.'

—*World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 100-1.

As an illustration of the transcendent greatness attributed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh may be cited His interpretation of an ancient Zoroastrian prophecy concerning the Sun's standing still, in the latter days, for a whole month in the heavens. This portent He affirms is meant to indicate the magnitude of the Bahá'í Cycle 'a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years.'

—*World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 101-2.

GEORGE TOWNSHEND

(To be continued.)

'...LOOKING TOWARDS THY PLEASURE...'

(This account of themselves was specially written at the request of the Southern Teaching Committee who have for long admired this 'belief expressed in action'.)

The Norwich friends, in consultation, have put forth the following ideas on the conduct of Bahá'í communities. It is not claimed that these principles are practised any better in Norwich than elsewhere; it is only hoped that this review will stimulate others as it will undoubtedly stimulate Norwich itself, to put them into practice more effectively.

Firstly, belief in Bahá'u'lláh, which is the basic requirement of all Bahá'ís, is something that can be developed to a higher degree of intensity, and some attempt is made here to keep Him in the forefront of our minds, together with the Báb, and to have the same love and veneration, or even more so, that a Christian upbringing makes almost easy to acquire for Jesus Christ. It is on this our unity has been maintained, in spite of many 'difficult times'; indeed unity has been gained by becoming Bahá'u'lláh's Bahá'ís, completely emancipated from our previous religious backgrounds. We have grown up together like one family, into the new era—sufficiently to realise that to lose *this* Faith is to lose all; there is nothing to fall back on. As individuals we need the Cause to help us in our difficulties and we are no longer frightened at internal disturbances, but rely on the unfailing Bounty of Bahá'u'lláh recognising our faults and acquiescing in our trials.

Most, one might say all, have had to make sacrifices for the Cause, more especially of our time. The long-term policy, first tried out in Norwich, of establishing permanent pioneers is acknowledged to have been successful.

Not having a Centre, 19 Day Feasts and other meetings have been held in the homes of friends and, together with frequent visits to one another, have helped to get a sense of community; a weekly Fireside has been held, which is made purely Devotional once in each month, while a Sunday study-class is held which often becomes devotional in its character. An endeavour is made to give everyone a chance to speak, or if not, of arranging the monthly devotional programmes. It has been suggested that we tackle difficult subjects; this arises from the desire to get intriguing titles.

If a speaker does not feel capable of saying much on the subject allotted, there are always plenty of readings that are applicable. Perhaps an unusual theme is useful in widening our acquaintance with the Teachings. In any case, it is the discussion, after the formal talk, on which we place most store.

Consultation has now reached a high level; the discussions do not wander far or often from the point, showing the members can make up their own minds. All are very much at ease in giving their point of view and no one dominates—no one is allowed to dominate; the Norfolk character is not that sort, as the history of Norwich shows! Yearly changes in the allotment of the various offices has also had great teaching value.

There are the geographical advantages of living close to one another, while the difficulty of travelling to other communities makes us value the more what outside contact with the Bahá'í world we can make and receive. More especially visitors give us a boost up; as one member puts it—'it is like a blood transfusion.' Visits to London, the only community we can reach easily, have been a great stimulus and we recommend the younger communities to relate themselves as much as possible to some more mature community.

Norwich has always been conscious of being part of a greater whole, and are keen on travelling 'en masse' to National events. This is coupled with a confidence in the National bodies who, we realise, are doing a difficult job very effectively. A sign of our trust is that contributions to the National Fund have been chiefly voted for by the community and only exceptionally have been a matter of individual effort.

Stockholm Inter-Continental Conference

Friends are asked to note that this will take place from July 21st to July 26th, 1953, inclusive. It is necessary for a rough estimate to be made at once of the number who will participate in the Conference, and any friend who thinks it at all possible he may go is asked to notify the secretary of the National Assembly at once. Such notification carries no obligation to attend, but it might prove impossible to accommodate friends who do not at this stage indicate that they may go.

Changes of Address

Blackburn Secretary: Mrs. Cooper, Feniscowles Old Hall, Pleasington, nr. Blackburn.

London Secretary: Eruch Munsiff, Esq., 50 West Kensington Mansions, Beaumont Crescent, London, W.14.

Torquay Secretary: J. A. Povey, 82 Fleet Street, Torquay.

Additions to the Community

Since the last list was published in *Bahá'í Journal*, registration cards have been received from the following:

William Green (from India), Norwich
John Gould, Cardiff
Mary Sloan, Belfast
Dorothy Rookwood (from Australia), London
Amy Duffy, Cardiff
Anne Moore, Cardiff
Alice Draper, Northampton
Thomas Parker, Glasgow
John Kirby (youth), Brighton
Violet Taylor, Torquay
Philip Harvey, Brighton
Ada Motley, Sheffield
Kamran Moghissi (from Switzerland), Banbury
Elizabeth McWilliams, Liverpool
Dora McWilliams, Liverpool

'TEACH YE THE CAUSE OF GOD, O PEOPLE OF BAHÁ!'

What I can do as an Individual Believer . . .

I. HOME AND FAMILY

- (a) Be a true Bahá'í to my family.
- (b) Teach the Faith of God to my children. When they near the age of fifteen, explain to them the great significance of declaring themselves, and the solemn and joyous responsibility of such an action.
- (c) Encourage the friends of the family to visit our home, and through Bahá'í love and fragrance make it a centre of attraction.
- (d) As a Bahá'í youth I can demonstrate to parents and friends the true character of Bahá'í life and give them an inkling of the 'new race of men' that Bahá'u'lláh is calling into being.

2. PEOPLE I CONTACT

- (a) Remember the special interests of relatives and friends and bear in mind the possibility of giving a Bahá'í book as a birthday or Christmas present, if it is thought they might appreciate it.
- (b) Demonstrate the Bahá'í spirit of service by being helpful and courteous to my friends and to strangers whom I meet. In times of adversity always find opportunities for words of comfort, and give, either by word of mouth or in writing, Bahá'í explanations as given by Bahá'u'lláh or 'Abdu'l-Bahá, when these can ease a perplexed and troubled mind.
- (c) Keep up at least one pen friendship with a Bahá'í overseas for mutual interest and encouragement, so as to help demonstrate in practice the oneness of the Bahá'í world and to enrich the Feast occasionally with extra news from abroad.

3. TEACHING

- (a) Memorise Bahá'í prayers and short passages from the Scriptures to quote when talking with seekers or those who seem receptive.

- (b) Become familiar with all the teaching literature so that I can make intelligent use of it, both in distributing it among friends and strangers, and in my own study and talks on the Faith.
- (c) Hold a fireside at least once in each nineteen days for even one or two people and gradually introduce them to the Faith.
- (d) Form a study group in my home as an outgrowth of fireside meetings, and request the assistance of my Local Spiritual Assembly (or, if I am an isolated centre, of the Regional Teaching Committee) to lead the inquirers to confirmation in the Faith of God.
- (e) Study the teachings on some particular subject so well that I could give a short talk on it at a fireside. As I gain experience, offer my services as a speaker to the Regional Teaching Committee.
- (f) Watch for opportunities to assist at public meetings in my town, so as to ensure to all who come a warm welcome, a fragrant loving atmosphere, a feeling of being a continual focus of appreciative attention, a chance to look at and acquire Bahá'í literature, and to give name and address for future invitations, perhaps an arrangement for private discussion after the meeting.

4. SEEKING OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHING

- (a) Follow the suggestions made by the Guardian in *The Advent of Divine Justice* (p. 43) and serve in some local outside activity that is in accord with the tenets of the Faith, thus making contacts for the Faith and for my firesides.
- (b) Demonstrate the principle of the Oneness of Mankind by striving to contact and teach members of various races, classes and backgrounds in my locality.

- (c) Interest the blind in using our Braille literature.
- (d) Watch the local press for any likely opportunities for giving the message or offering Bahá'í speakers—remembering, however, that unless specially empowered, I should always consult my Local Spiritual Assembly before writing to a newspaper, otherwise, in the present early stage in the spread of the Faith, confusion or embarrassing duplication may arise.

5. INVIGORATING THE LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY

- (a) I can visit other Bahá'í communities to weave threads of fellowship which will unite the hearts of the friends and strengthen the Cause. If away from home for a Nineteen Day Feast I should make a point of attending in another town if possible.
- (b) Make every possible effort to attend Convention, teaching conferences, and other special events, and to attend Summer School, where I can enrich my understanding of the Faith while experiencing the joy of a period of continuous fellowship with the Friends.
- (c) Become informed on Bahá'í Administration and thus fit myself more fully to serve in the Community or on a Local Spiritual Assembly.
- (d) Study the Guardian's messages, the *Bahá'í Journal* and any other communications which are circulated from time to time, so as to be informed of all that is happening in the Bahá'í World Community. 'Let your vision be world-embracing.'
- (e) Ensure in every way I can that through the 'Grace of the Spirit' engendered by mutual association with fellow believers, whether in Feasts or other meetings, my community increases in attractive power.

- (f) Impelled by the measure of my devotion to the Faith, contribute regularly and to the utmost of my ability to the Bahá'í Fund (local, national, and international) thus helping the promotion of the Cause collectively as well as through my own efforts. '... a spiritual obligation.'

If I carry the wonderful responsibility of living in an isolated centre there are many additional ways I can spread the Message:

6. PUBLICITY

- (a) Patiently cultivate the interest of the local editors and reporters in using Bahá'í news releases and publicity on appropriate occasions. I can make an appointment with them to introduce them to any special Bahá'í visitors or speakers that come to my town. In my contacts, however, I must remember not to approach

well-known figures without consulting the National Spiritual Assembly (unless, of course, they are personally known to me).

- (b) Pioneer where I live. Even if I live in a Bahá'í community, there are still many people in my town who have not heard of the Faith, and among them will be many seekers.
- (c) In pioneering at home I can ask the Regional Teaching Committee for suggestions and for someone to help me undertake a teaching campaign in a well-planned, orderly manner. In order to save time for a visiting teacher and make the best use of it, I can survey in advance the available library, newspaper, and meeting-room facilities and get to know those organisations which share certain principles and aims in common with us.
- (d) Place myself at the disposal of a nearby Assembly or the Regional

Teaching Committee to assist in extension or travelling teaching.

- (e) Maintain a circulating library of Bahá'í books in my home and lend them to likely seekers. Place books in my home-town library and encourage friends to read them.
- (f) Develop a mailing list in order to send out invitations or get people together quickly when a Bahá'í speaker comes to my town.

At all times, whether I am isolated, or live in a community, I should remind myself daily that it is my sacred obligation to teach—a duty which is inescapably placed upon Bahá'ís as part of the Covenant of God. Remember the urgency expressed in Shoghi Effendi's words: 'The needs of a sorely stricken society, groping in its distress for God's redemptive Message, are growing more acute with every passing hour.'

WITH EVERY PASSING HOUR!