

SERVANTS OF THE GLORY
A CHRONICLE OF FORTY YEARS OF PIONEERING

Dempsey and Adrienne Morgan

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EARLY YEARS

I was born in Detroit, Michigan. My mother was a practicing Christian Scientist. I believe I inherited from her an inclination for things spiritual. She was devout, sincere, with a loving spirit, but she passed away when I was five years old, leaving my father to rear me. My desire was to be a doctor, so I attended the University of Detroit and studied pre-med, but couldn't get into medical school at Wayne University in Detroit. At that time admission for blacks was limited to one annually, and there were about 80 on the waiting list.

MILITARY SERVICE

I took an appointment to West Point Military Academy where the prejudice was more than I was willing to tolerate. Without completing the training I enlisted in the Air Force and was sent to Tuskegee, Alabama. Intensive training turned me into a fighter pilot. Ultimately I was assigned to Europe and during my active duty I flew all the fighter aircraft in the Army Air Corps.

Our mission was to patrol the Massena Strait where Sicily and Italy meet, monitor the troop and transport ships and supplies to prevent the German aircraft from attacking Allied ships as they proceeded through the Mediterranean. These were two-hour flights from Salerno south of Naples, and I flew a hundred of them. Then we were moved from Salerno to another airfield. We were flying P-39 Air Cobras with 37mm cannon in the nose and four machine guns, which were very good to back up the infantry at Anzio Beach. We'd get up at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning to get the aircraft ready, park a Jeep at the end of the field with the lights turned on, and use that for runway lights. The planes were loaded with ammunition, and we flew over the Apennine Mountains in the center of Italy in order to drop the bombs on the Germans at Anzio. The Germans were blocking Allied progress up through Italy by occupying Casino Abbey located on a mountain. Just below that mountain was the Volturno River where the Allies had to cross in order to advance. Since the enemy were preventing them from passing, a way had to be found around the bottleneck in order to open Anzio so the Allies could get to the north of Italy. Only later did I learn that the soldiers who opened that Anzio beachhead were black – the 92nd Division that had been cut off – and we black pilots were holding the Germans at bay. Our planes destroyed German personnel, gun emplacements and trucks.

I flew 100 missions in the 12th Tactical Air Force. After completing 50 missions, I requested permission to return home, but was informed there were not enough trained pilots to release me. I was black, in a black 100th Fighter Squadron, one of four squadrons in the 332nd Fighter Group. We escorted the bombers to the targets, and never lost a bomber. Finally, our 100th Fighter Squadron was transferred to Foggia on the Adriatic Sea, to fly Thunderbolts and later P-51s. The Thunderbolts were large aircraft with a range of 400 miles and burned a lot of fuel, so they were not equipped to accompany bombers. When there were enough P-51s or Mustangs for everyone, we could fly to the targets in the south of France, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Greece. I used to patrol the Danube river from the Polesti oil fields up to Vienna, Austria to keep the Germans from bringing up oil for their tanks and aircraft.

Upon returning home I found I had been given credit for only 70 missions in the 15th Air Force. My records had been destroyed in a fire in the St. Louis warehouse where they had been stored, so there was no record of the 100 or more missions I had flown previously. Although I flew 81 missions in the 15th Air Force, I was given credit for only 70, because the Group commander had flown 72 missions. Normally, he didn't fly very often, particularly the dangerous missions as he was non-expendable, whereas we fighter pilots were expendable.

As a result, he was credited with 72 missions and I with only 70, although I had more than 181 missions to my credit at the end of World War II.

POST-WAR ENDEAVORS

I left the Service feeling that at last I could fulfill my dream of becoming a doctor, as I had completed the premed courses required. However, my attempt to enter Howard University was a failure, because there were so many applicants waiting, I couldn't be admitted for another year. Meanwhile, I earned a degree in psychology, then returned to Detroit where I worked as a medical assistant in a mental institution. Some of the patients were Jews who had survived the holocaust, and were suffering from schizophrenia and other mental disorders. My job was to assist in giving them shock treatment. Apart from administering chemicals such as insulin to increase their temperature and induce shock, there was little that could be done for them.

I also worked as a parole officer and served as a member of the parole board for the biggest walled prison in the world at that time. Generally, I taught physics, chemistry and mathematics in English-speaking countries in schools outside the United States. However, in the States then it was difficult for a black man to get into the school system, although black women were accepted.

Adrienne was born and grew up in Erie, Pennsylvania. She began her higher academic career at Thiel College in Greenville, PA. After a year, she transferred to Howard University in Washington, DC where she earned her Bachelor's degree in sociology. With her degree in hand, she found a job as a secretary with the government in the nation's capital. While working there, we met. After just a few dates, we were married in 1953. We then moved to Detroit where Adrienne taught high school, while I went into the Criminal Justice system. By serving on the parole board, my study of psychology enabled me to become acquainted with the mentality of the psychopath or criminal. In addition, I had a case load of about 130 exconvicts in Detroit. I continued with this work and studied law in the evenings for two years until we left the States.

During this period we became interested in the Bahá'í Faith when some of our friends told us about it and invited us to Bahá'í meetings.

The Harbinger

I bring Truth to the world,
the Prophet declares.
Are there none who are seeking,
Is there no one who cares
To cast off the fetters of orthodoxy,
To renounce the world and follow Me?

I bring light to the world,
the Prophet affirms.
The Book has new meaning;
Forget the old terms.
All the knowledge and virtue
That one longs to find
Are in Me in abundance,
Just open up your mind.

I bring love to the world
Says the Prophet. At last
Fighting, prejudice, hatred
Belong to the past.
The Most High has sent me from
His Realm above
To teach that all creatures
are worthy of love.

I bring life to the world
The Prophet proclaimed.
For those ailing and heedless,
Spirits bankrupt or maimed,
Resurrection is here. Do not
Tarry or wait.
The Kingdom is come, it will
soon be too late.

I bring peace to the world,
The Prophet has said.
The wars must now cease;
Enough blood has been shed;

My will must prevail,
no more conflict or fray.
For, like it or not,
THIS IS THE LORD'S DAY.

◆ Throughout this book, all poems were written by Adrienne while the text was by Dempsey.

NEW HORIZONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

At Davison Bahá'í School in September of 1955 we both became Bahá'ís and immersed ourselves in Bahá'í activities. We served as members of the Detroit Local Spiritual Assembly until our departure in 1958 to go pioneering. The Beloved Guardian had impressed upon the Bahá'ís the necessity for the success of the Ten Year Crusade. Adrienne and I were eager to be a part of helping to spread the Faith throughout the world. We felt it was our responsibility to stop everything we were doing and answer this call to serve. When the Beloved Guardian announced the Ten Year Crusade in 1953, there were 12 National Spiritual Assemblies in the world and 6,000 Bahá'ís in the United States.

Answering The Call

Of the countries we have lived in
And the places we have seen,
Each had its own nostalgic charm
No matter where we've been.

We went to teach the Bahá'í Faith,
Learn their customs, share their pain.
They taught us how to love their land;
We feel there was mutual gain.

All Asia was enchanting.
The strangeness, heat and smells
Assaulted our senses daily,
But we learned to adapt quite well.

We set out for Cambodia,
With a brief stop in Vietnam.
The pioneer who lived there
Had not the slightest qualm.

About our being in transit.
He hustled us off the plane
And argued with officials
So they would let us remain.

A surprising change of venue.
We had our doubts, but he
Was pleased that he had pulled it off.
Perhaps it was meant to be.

Knowing full well we'd come to teach
He had decided then and there
That we would be of much more use
In this warring country, where

Believers needed visiting,

Where living could be rough,
Where fighting broke out frequently,
And traveling to teach was tough.

The Vietnamese had suffered much,
They'd scarce no will to cope
With war as a constant fact of life.
The Bahá'í Faith gave them hope.

When it was time to celebrate
The '63 Jubilee,
Vietnam had 12,000 souls
For Bahá'u'lláh's family.

'Twas less than one year later
That we were obliged to leave.
Our visas could not be renewed,
No likelihood of reprieve.

Cambodia once more in our sights,
We kept our original plan
To teach Cambodians about the Faith,
And avoid a government ban.

VIETNAM

We left the States for Hawaii, the first leg of our journey, stopped briefly in the Philippines, then continued on to Cambodia, our destination in Southeast Asia. Enroute the plane made a short stop in Saigon, Vietnam where the pioneer, Jim Fozdar, who had been informed of our coming, met us at the airport. He suggested we change plans and remain in Saigon. This was opportune for him because he wanted to return to the States for a vacation with his wife, Paru, and their sons, Huni and Vahid. So we began our pioneering in Saigon, looked for a house to rent and searched for jobs.

Jim Fozdar was from Bombay, India. His mother was a Bahá'í and his mother's mother was a Bahá'í. Jim was one of nine Bahá'í youth sent to the United States for an education. He attended the University at Berkeley, California, and earned a master's degree in electronics engineering. His brother, John Fozdar, received a medical degree in England. Their father was a medical doctor, so being from an educated family, the sons were well set for pioneering. Jim returned to Southeast Asia, got a well-paying job in Vietnam working with the American government, which sent him back to the States to get his citizenship so he could continue to work for them. Jim set up the American communications for the Vietnamese government.

Before the election of the first Universal House of Justice, there was no institution to which we could turn for assistance with the teaching. We had to rely on our own resources. Jim's salary made it possible for him to contribute half his monthly earnings to the Faith, \$500. Adrienne worked as a secretary and I taught English at the Vietnamese-American English School, so we contributed \$200. Rodney Edwards, another black pioneer who worked for the American government in Saigon, gave \$200. Thus, we had about \$1,000 monthly for teaching.

TEACHING PROGRESS

Jim had been pioneering in Vietnam since 1954 and had succeeded in bringing in about 380 Bahá'ís throughout the country. By 1962 we were getting 100 declarations each month. There were lots of teachers and lots of schools. In Saigon we set up five deepening institutes, one in each quartier (i.e., one in each area of the city), with a teacher in each of them. A Bahá'í with a Vespa (a two-wheel motorbike) visited each of the institutes daily and reported back to me. I visited one of them each week.

As the English School was sponsored by the American government, the American principal told me I couldn't teach in the school as I had been doing. By that time, however, there were so many students in the school who were Bahá'ís, I could form a teaching committee. They did the teaching in the school and I met with them every week or two to provide literature and collect declaration cards. A number of Bahá'ís were enrolled at the school through this method. The students were teachers, professional people, and some police who were sent to the States for training in how to control police dogs to better stop the Communists from invading their country.

I found it fairly easy to teach the Faith in French Indochina. The Vietnamese are nice people and easy to teach. The Cambodians are spiritual also. On the other hand, the governments opposed us and investigated our activities. In both Vietnam and Cambodia we had Bahá'ís who worked as government security and they kept us informed of what the government was doing.

Karen Crenshaw
Baha'i House of Worship
Wilmette, IL 60091 USA

Mr. Dempsey Morgan
P. O. Box 16672
Kampala, Uganda

September 17, 1991

Dear Mr. Morgan,

I am writing to you to share a most wonderful experience I recently had at the House of Worship in Wilmette. Several months ago, a young Vietnamese woman came into our office. She was a lovely woman, poised, gentle and very happy to be visiting our House of Worship. She related to me that when she was a small child in Vietnam, she had a teacher who told her that one day she might visit the Baha'i House of Worship in Wilmette. He also shared the principles of the Faith with her. She described him as a Black American with a pencil-thin mustache. She went on to tell us that she left her country years ago to attend university in the United States where she met and married an American. She never forgot this teacher, so when she came with her husband to Chicago on a business trip, their first stop was the House of Worship.

While she and her husband looked around the Temple, I paged through old issues of *Baha'i News* and *The Baha'i World*, in hopes of finding a man who matched the description of her teacher. I came across the enclosed picture and showed it to her. She was overjoyed when I showed her this picture and she identified you as her teacher from Vietnam. I took her name and address and assured her that I would attempt to find you and pass along her greetings to you. She and her husband purchased some Baha'i books and pamphlets, and I gave them the name of Baha'is in their area.

As this dear woman was so deeply touched by your spirit so many years ago, I wished to share this story with you. I have included her address in this letter and hope that you may be able to make contact with her. Both she and husband are very interested in the Faith. What a beautiful connection you established so long ago!!

In His service,



Karen Crenshaw
Baha'i House of Worship Activities Office

Eventually I was elected chairman of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Saigon and served as Treasurer of the National Teaching Committee of Vietnam. I also became a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Southeast Asia, which was responsible for progress of the Faith in 14 countries. We had worked diligently, and by the grace of God, 1,000 Bahá'ís had been enrolled in the city of Saigon alone by 1962. As a result of the deepening institutes, seekers were declaring and being deepened at the same time. There were now 12,000 Bahá'ís in the entire country. Hand of the Cause Dr. Muhájir had helped the pioneers, Orpha Dougherty and Jack Davis, with mass teaching in the Philippines. When they visited Vietnam they gave us some helpful hints so we could begin mass teaching.

Questions

Never knowing what may happen
From one country to another,
One oftentimes felt uncertainty
Is the effort worth the bother?

Many a day was passed in asking
Am I spiritual enough to cope?
Of course. The promise of Bahá
Should be enough to give one hope.

And yet we fail to trust in God.
Instead, we moan and weep and wail,

Afraid of what the future holds
When many of our plans have failed.

Still, God stands ready to assist,
With outstretched arms He beckons all.
Forget frustrations, obstacles,
Leave self aside, respond to the Call.

Dare we question, even doubt
That all things are divinely blessed?
Just make the effort, pray for help,
Assured that God will do the rest.

INDIGENOUS ELECTIONS

Dr. Muhájir taught Orpha and Jack how to teach effectively among the indigenous people in the mountainous region of the Philippines where the aboriginals lived who could not read or write. When it was time to elect their Local Spiritual Assemblies, he instructed the pioneers to arrange the Bahá'ís in a circle and call out the names of everyone eligible to vote in the community. Each Bahá'í in the circle was given nine sticks which they placed in front of them. When they wanted to vote for someone for the Assembly, they took one stick and placed it behind them. The sticks were collected and counted to determine how many votes that person had received. This procedure continued until all nine sticks had been used for each person in the circle. Those who had the most sticks were elected to the Local Assembly.

We didn't have that much difficulty in Vietnam because there were many Vietnamese who could speak English as well as their own language, although there were a lot of dialects among the many tribes. We had to bring together members from tribes all over the country, and it was necessary to have Bahá'ís who could translate into the various dialects.

A SAMPLE OF CORRUPTION

Rúhíyyih Khánúm had been to Australia to dedicate the Temple there, and she stopped in Saigon on her way back to Israel. During her visit 60 people became Bahá'ís. I went with her to visit the schools Jim had established, one in Nhabe near Saigon, and one in Phuoc Long, another in Danang, which is in the northern part of South Vietnam. We took her to the school in Nhabe and also to Phuoc Long, about 50 miles north. At the school in Phuoc Long we were told soldiers policing the area for the government would sometimes come and sit through the Bahá'í Feast. Although this was contrary to Bahá'í beliefs, there was little we could do because the soldiers kept their machine guns strapped to their backs at all times.

The government was aware of the school in Phuoc Long because all the youngsters in the area were attending it. When our teachers learned that the government was planning to build a new school across the street, they were excited and apprehensive, fearing they would lose their students. There was so much corruption, however--and this actually was the first time I saw it in practice--by the time the school was built, it was no bigger than an outhouse, in other words, an outside toilet. There was very little left from the funds that had been appropriated because the money had been stolen. So much for the big government school that had appeared to be so threatening.

That reminds me of the days of President Jackson when he ordered the Native Americans out of their land in the southeastern part of the United States, i.e., South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Mississippi. They were allotted instead some very poor land in Oklahoma. The tribal hunters fought back, but the peaceful farmers offered no opposition. The President proposed they be given a certain sum of money for food during their migration to Oklahoma which was to compensate them for the loss of their land. Somehow, the money never reached them. The suffering they endured on the long walk in the winter without food or proper clothing is recorded in history as the 'Trail of Tears'.

POLITICS AND NARRATIVES

The elected Vietnamese President, Ngo Dinh Diem, was very unpopular. His corrupt family ruled the country and everyone was forced to hang his picture in their home or place of business. He lived in a palace, rode in a bullet-proof car that more than likely was ordered for him from the United States, and had a military escort to accompany him wherever he went. Later, when the North Vietnamese took over the south, the people were impressed that Ho Chi Minh rode to work every morning on a bicycle and lived in an ordinary house, even though he was head of the government.

The Vietnamese army decided to attack the palace and oust Ngo Dinh Diem. His palace was not far from where we lived in Saigon. Planes were flying overhead, trying to strafe the palace, but they didn't drop bombs because it was too close to the center of town. Police were firing at the aircraft with submachine guns as the planes passed just above the trees of the palace. Adrienne was preparing to go to her job at the pharmaceutical company, but I forced her to stay in the house. She wasn't happy about being restrained. We waited a couple of days until everything had calmed down before venturing out. The attempt to kill Ngo Dinh Diem was not successful but it upset a lot of things in Saigon.

Upon returning to work at the Vietnamese-American School I found only one other teacher, a German woman who had married an American. She had lived through the blitz in Berlin, so such attacks were not new to her. No classes were held that day as many students didn't come and we two were the only teachers.

From My Balcony

The sundry sights that I can see
As I gaze from my balcony
Are varied poignant, meant to be
A panoramic view of all
The numerous things I can recall.

Two laborers balance heavy loads
On bamboo sticks or cattle goads
That also serve as people prods.
They trudge along with measured pace
Among the throngs, all bland of face.

Brash youth race by on Hondas sleek,
While pretty girls with manners meek
And long, black hair, slim forms petite,
Converse in groups, or hurry on
To rendezvous they're bent upon.

Urchins in rags have chased a rat.
It's cornered, beaten with a bat.
How sad to see it die like that.
They strike it once, then more than twice.
I wonder if it had some mice?

Soldiers in lorries that roar and clatter
Along the street, make pedestrians scatter
In mortal fear. What does it matter?

They are the law, who can deny it?
Only a fool would dare defy it.

Father and mother with babe in arms,
On one bicycle amid the swarms
Of crushing traffic and raucous horns
Manage somehow to navigate
Their way through the passage they must
take.

Buddhist monks in saffron robes,
Making their rounds with begging bowls,
Bare head, bare feet. In silent rows
Outside each home in the rain and shine
They wait for food of any kind.

A tired cabby makes his way
On scrawny legs that pump and sway
His pedicab throughout the day.
He's homeward bound, now moving
stiffly.
For him, night passed all too swiftly.

The microcosm since passed by
Has all but ended. The moon is high
As stars appear in the darkened sky.
Alas, there's not much more to see
As I gaze from my balcony.

Some amusing tales have originated from the war. I was told that the Viet Cong (the Communists from North Vietnam) caught a Vietnamese Bahá'í and were about to kill him. He said 'Alláh'u'Abhá' and waited. One of the Viet Cong said, "Oh you're a Bahá'í. I'm a Bahá'í too." So they didn't kill him.

From the Americans I heard a joke about an American soldier in the hospital. A friend came to visit and inquired how he was injured. The soldier said "I was walking down the road

and saw this Vietnamese. Not knowing whether he was an enemy or friend, I yelled out ‘the hell with Ho Chi Minh,’ and he yelled ‘the hell with President Johnson.’ While we were shaking hands on the road, we were hit by a truck. That’s how I got injured.”

One of our Vietnamese Bahá’ís named Minh lived on the outskirts of Saigon among many Chinese. Before he became a Bahá’í he was teaching the Faith. He was responsible for bringing in 200 Chinese believers in a small village which I visited several times. Minh was quite a person. He kept a boa constrictor under the bed where he slept at night. It was in a large cage that could be opened quickly. I didn’t realize he might have had it for his protection. When I was in combat in Italy I carried a ‘45 in a shoulder holster all the time and slept with it at night in case the enemy came to our area. I felt I would at least have something to slow them up and keep them from destroying us. Perhaps Minh had the boa constrictor for the same reason. It was big, about 16 or 18 feet long. I don’t know how he fed it. I understand a constrictor can swallow a cat or a small pig, or something like that and live for a couple of months without eating. They are not poisonous but they can stop one from breathing, and are dangerous to small children, so they should be handled carefully. Minh had a close friend named Mung and the two of them did a lot of teaching together before they became Bahá’ís. Eventually, Mung also accepted the Faith.

ON TO THAILAND

When the National Spiritual Assembly for the region was dissolved in 1964, a National Spiritual Assembly of Vietnam was formed with its seat in Saigon. The 14 countries formerly under the jurisdiction of the NSA of Southeast Asia were replaced by five new NSAs: the one in Vietnam, and one each in Laos, Thailand, Philippines and Indonesia.

In spite of our success with teaching the Faith in Vietnam, we left for Thailand in 1959 because I couldn’t get a proper job and the government would not extend our visas. Jim was still in the States. At the airport in Thailand the immigration official asked why we were coming to the country. I said we wanted to study the culture, so they let us enter. We were both employed as teachers at the International School in Bangkok and obtained resident visas. I was in charge of the Science Department, teaching physics, chemistry and mathematics. There were four other Americans who taught biology and other subjects in the department. Adrienne taught Social Studies and English.

The ruler of Thailand, Phumipol Adulyadej, was born in Massachusetts, USA. He was a good king and lived for his people. Naturally, his relatives ran the government and all royalty were related in some way to the king. He was also King of the Buddhists of Thailand, as Buddhism was the state religion. So, if any Thai renounced Buddhism for another religion, this was considered a form of treason.

The Thais originated from China, while the Cambodians are Malays originating from Indonesia, so the temperament of each ethnic group is different. The Thais are a little more aggressive in industry and economics than the Cambodians; the Cambodians are more spiritual but warlike. They will fight and kill each other. Another factor to be considered is numbers. At the time Cambodia had only 8 million people, whereas there were 26 million in Thailand. On the other hand, the Vietnamese had 30 million in South Vietnam and another 30 million in the north, or a total of about 60 million in the entire country. It is ironic that those 60 million were able to overcome the forces of 250 million Americans.

THAI CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

Thailand was a pleasant place to live, but since the people are ardent Buddhists, religion is strictly monitored and it was difficult to teach. Adrienne and I rented a honeymoon cottage from a cousin of the King. She was our landlord and tried to be helpful, but we weren’t

getting many believers. The Thais have quaint customs and will go to great lengths to avoid hurting your feelings. If, for example, you ask in which direction is the post office, they will give you detailed directions even though they may not know what they are talking about. However, they are wonderful, charming people with courteous manners, such as placing the palms together as if in prayer and bowing their heads when greeting you. At one time Bangkok was overrun with stray dogs. As it is against their religious belief to kill anything, poison was scattered in the streets at night for the dogs to eat. Of course the dogs died, but the Thais were convinced they had not killed them, as the dogs killed themselves by eating the poison.

Thai houses are constructed of teak and other valuable woods they have in abundance. In the countryside they are built on poles elevated from the ground to prevent animals from entering. All houses are built so as to take advantage of the wind as it flows through the openings, thus keeping the occupants cool. This is necessary in such a hot, damp climate. Houses are built in somewhat the same manner in Vietnam, but the Vietnamese are thinner, with slighter body frames and they can get rid of the heat faster. It was really difficult for American soldiers who served in the East without being properly dressed for temperatures ranging in the 80s and 90s nearly every day the year round.

The King of Thailand becomes a monk each year for a period of time. He dons the saffron robe and goes begging for his food just like the other monks. This is a good practice because he learns about his people in this way. It is the custom for the monks to beg for food each morning. They cannot eat after 12 noon until six the following morning, but they can drink. Therefore, they leave the monastery about 6:00 daily with their empty rice bowl and stand silently in front of each home until they are given rice, food and fruits. It is considered very meritorious to provide food for the monks. Everything they collect must be eaten before noon of that day. It is not a luxury to be a monk, but they do get a chance to study and this is what they like. A lot of young men are kept off the street in this way. They can become a monk for a year or two or more, studying all the while. When they leave the monastery they are prepared to take their place in society. I found that half of the young men in Thailand were monks or had been, and the other half were soldiers.

The monks never touch women or stand in the shadow of a woman. When they beg in the morning they are often accompanied by a young boy novice who can receive any money or other offerings given to them by a female. They must absolutely refrain from having anything to do with women while they are monks. This is one of the required sacrifices. In turn, the women lower their eyes, turn their backs or step off the walkway when a monk is approaching.

Women are everywhere in Thailand. It is said that Asia is the feminine part of the world and Africa the masculine part. Thai women are very feminine and attractive, which renders them all the more appealing. Even the American government sponsors Thai women to study in the States more frequently than Thai men. After studying abroad, Thai doctors usually prefer to practice in the well-equipped hospitals of the city rather than go to the countryside where they are needed.

Oriental Market

Around six each Sunday morning,
While the air is cool and clean,
A sprawling market comes to life
With peddlers on the scene.

Pungent smells from market stalls
Are wafting on the morning air.
Breakfast rice or noodles served
On the sidewalk here and there.

Lengths of cloth in divers patterns;
Gold and silver jewellery;

Glassware, china, cookware, baskets.
 Items spread for all to see.

Birds for sale with brilliant plumage
 Always merit close attention.
 Wealthy buyers seeking rare breeds
 Are too numerous to mention.

Incense, candles, sacred objects;
 Begging bowls on full display'
 Prayer beads, carpets, robes and sandals,
 Or perhaps a lacquered tray.

Fishes, squid and eels abounding,
 Seafood for exotic tastes.
 Buy them whole or part – no matter.
 Nothing really goes to waste.

Giant roaches cooked in spices;

Live bats with their staked out wings;
 Collared monkeys with sad faces.
 One can buy so many things.

Despite umbrellas, cooling drinks,
 The torrid sun comes bearing down, While
 temperatures proceed to soar
 And waves of heat rise from the ground.

Shortened tempers, children crying,
 Spirits wilting, clothing too.
 Shoppers hasten to make choices;
 If not this one, that will do.

Noon approaches, crowds are pressing,
 Shuffling wearily away.
 Venders gather up their produce,
 And market closes for the day.

The food was very good in Thailand. One of the native fruits is the durian, which the Thais call the king of fruit. It is a large fruit the size of a watermelon with long spikes on the rough outer surface that can prick the flesh painfully. The government asked people not to carry durian on public transport because it could cause serious injury. Once one has become accustomed to the taste of durian (a blend of onions and pineapple) it is really delicious. Thailand has a wide variety of fruits and vegetables and the markets are well stocked.

Compared to the Vietnamese, who consume a lot of lettuce, the Thais are sturdy and strong. While working in the fields they wear a big straw hat to keep their skin from getting dark and clothing to cover the entire body. In Africa the natives eat nuts and grains principally, and meat when they can get it. The main diet in Uganda is green bananas (locally known as ma-toe-kay), which are steamed whole in hot coals. This is often the only food the family eats for days. Whereas, the Thais eat large quantities of rice and a variety of green vegetables. The Vietnamese also eat rice, many kinds of green leaves as well as fruits and some vegetables, with bits of meat or fish. Their seasoning is a special kind of liquid salt, called nuoc mahm, a very salty fish sauce used in both Thailand and Vietnam to season rice. It seems to improve their mental ability.

The Thais have had a long association with England and the United States. Located as it is between Burma, which the British occupied, and Indochina, which was conquered by the French, Thailand became a buffer zone between the two powers and was left alone. The Thais admire the West and have been very much aware of what is happening there. In fact, the Thai King Mongkut offered to send elephants to Abraham Lincoln to help him fight the civil war. The Thais love their country and when they travel abroad they have no desire to remain away from home for any extended period of time. Likewise, they do not want their country overrun with outsiders, so foreigners are not encouraged to stay. Anyone who wishes to remain in Thailand indefinitely or for life must get permission from the King, but I think very few such permissions are granted.

In the past the King had many wives and numerous offspring, consequently, there were many cousins and relatives. Each year or so some of these relatives were removed from the royal family, denied the special privileges it entailed, and relegated to the status of

commoners. No doubt everyone in the Parliament was related to the King in some way. Having been a pilot, I was interested in aircraft and I found that the cousins of the King controlled many of the businesses. Once I was invited to the airport where, at the time, the representative of some small American aircraft company was trying to do business. I learned that these representatives are required to pay the relatives of the King who hold government positions, if they want to establish their business or carry on trade in the country. This is the accepted practice.

DEALING WITH THIEVES

We had three female servants, a cook and two young girls who did the washing, cleaning, etc. while we were at work. One of the girls became a Bahá'í, but the cook was a thief and in league with a policeman. Hand of the Cause Mr. Samandari was to attend a forthcoming meeting in Bangkok of the National Spiritual Assembly of Southeast Asia. I ordered some suits tailored with matching handmade shirts, so as to look nice for the occasion. Unfortunately, the cook stole the trousers to the suits and took them to the Thieves Market, where stolen goods are bought and sold by any interested parties. I found the pawn ticket she received and went to see if I could find my trousers. It was no use. The tickets matched up with entirely different trousers too small for me.

There are many thieves in Thailand and it can be a problem~ It was rumored that a judge awakened in the morning and found everything in his house had been stolen, even his guard dogs. He went to the garage to get his car to report the theft, but the car had been stolen also. Sometimes sleeping gas is inserted in the air conditioner while the occupants are sleeping so the thieves can take what they like without interference. This sort of thing happened in Thailand because the rural people come to the city without financial means or a place to live, and without government assistance they resort to stealing to provide for themselves. We didn't have much but we guarded our possessions. We didn't need a car as taxis were very accessible. We even engaged a taxi to pick us up in the morning, take us to work at school, and bring us home in the afternoon.

SOME EASTERN BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS

The Buddhist religion is very beautiful and the story of Buddha touched me deeply. I read how Buddha left his home and family life in order to search for the reason for certain happenings. He was the son of a king, and his father sheltered him from everything unpleasant by surrounding him with all kinds of diversions, beauty and lovely maidens. He had a wife, of course, perhaps more than one, but he was still not satisfied. He stole out of the palace alone and came upon a sick man for the first time in his life. Farther along he saw old people, and people who were suffering and dying. He was surprised and began to search for answers as to why such things had to happen. He settled himself under a Bo tree to seek knowledge until he finally became enlightened, and from that time devoted his life to telling people what he had learned.

During Buddha's lifetime Hinduism was the dominant religion and there were many

Bangkok Sunset

Flamboyant streaks of orange and violet blues,
Aquamarine and crimson meld the blaze
Of color bled to iridescent hues
That light the sky in dazzling displays.

One gazes at the awesome spectacle
Breathless, and with utter fascination,
Mindful of how each of us should be
Grateful for God's marvellous creation.

Oppressive heat evoking lassitude
Is lifted somewhat when the twilight nears.
The sun disk slowly lowers in the sky.
Quite suddenly, it's gone; the night appears.

representations of God, although the people believed in only one God, so they said. If you recall, Rudyard Kipling said: "East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet except under one God." The people of the East think, and rightly so, that religion has always been, that there have always been prophets and there always will be prophets. In the case of the Hindus, they are waiting for the Tenth Avatar, and the Buddhists await the Fifth Buddha. Now Bahá'u'lláh has come to answer all of their prayers, and once they understand the Bahá'í Faith, they accept it. The impediment is their rulers who are also head of the religion. Thus, if you deny the religion, you are also denying the King.

In Thailand the King is greatly revered, and he makes a special effort to travel throughout the country to learn the problems of the people. This is probably why he has outlasted all the other rulers. Bahá'u'lláh said He came and found the kings were not just, but it seems the Thai King is as close to being just as any king could be today, as opposed to those who have lost their thrones, like Franz Joseph of Austria and others who were deposed.

An interesting fact about the Buddhist religion is that generally bodies are cremated



INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
BANGKOK, THAILAND.

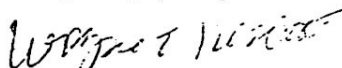
May 23, 1961

To Whom It May Concern:

I am happy to recommend two of the finest teachers that I have had the pleasure of being associated with during the past two years. Mr. and Mrs. Dempsey Morgan have been employed at the International School Bangkok as teachers in the high school. Mr. Morgan has been in charge of the Science department and Mrs. Morgan has been an instructor in English and Social Studies. In every instance I have found them to be loyal and conscientious far above what is normally expected of a school employee. Mr. Morgan planned, designed and constructed the major part of our new laboratory at International School. He has instilled a love of Science into his students, and his dedication to the profession of teaching will be long remembered by his students and fellow associates alike. Mrs. Morgan is one of those rare people who is capable of accepting any assignment in a school or in the business world and doing a thorough, proficient job. She has never hesitated to accept difficult assignments on short notice, and in every case, she has performed an excellent job.

I sincerely regret that Mr. and Mrs. Morgan are leaving Bangkok at the end of this school year, however, I appreciate the fact that their dedication to their chosen religion makes it necessary for them to take its message to other countries. We shall miss them, and speaking for the International School Bangkok, we will welcome them any time they might desire to return.

Very truly yours,


Wayne E. Nesbitt,
Principal

instead of buried, and before cremation they are stored in the rafters of the house for about 40 days in order to dry out. In the pagodas the body is placed in a stone sarcophagus with holes

in the sides for the body fluids to drain out before it is burned. According to Bahá'u'lláh the body should return to nature as it came into this world, because burning shocks the spirit of the deceased. Therefore, Bahá'ís must bury the body and pray after 40 days that God will have mercy upon the soul and take it into Paradise. I informed the Buddhists that their ancestors are not pleased with them for burning their bodies, but they continue the practice. Perhaps the custom grew out of the need to find a way to dispose of the excess population when land was scarce.

Christians have the idea that religion began 6,000 years ago, which is not true. Buddhists say there have always been men and there always will be men, just as there always have been prophets. The Bahá'í teachings tell us that because the spiritual world is eternal there are men, and although the individual man has a beginning, he also is eternal and has no end. Rather than merely a material being, man is a spirit connected to the material body, without any place of bodily connection. Man is granted the bounty by God to know and to worship Him through the Prophets sent to man by God. By this means man is able to read and understand the Writings of the Prophet and to know and worship God.

There are many similarities between the Christian and the Buddhist religion. Buddhism has two sects, known as the Big Wheel and the Little Wheel. The Big Wheel includes Hinduism and Buddhism, just as the Christian religion includes Judaic teachings. We revere the Old Testament and the New Testament yet we follow the spiritual laws of Jesus Christ rather than the material laws of Moses as do the Jews who did not accept Jesus Christ. Without the teachings of Christ, the Jews have become materialistic.

Life is different in the East where people look at the spirit rather than the body. Westerners try to make the Asians become materialistic and have been somewhat successful in Thailand because the Thais have never had to suffer. The Faith is not easily accepted there, whereas the suffering endured by the people of Vietnam and Cambodia has developed their spirituality. The Beloved Guardian mentioned that the eastern part of the world is spiritual and the western is material.

TRANSLATIONS AND DEEPENING

As we didn't do so well in Thailand with the Faith, the Bahá'ís outside the country felt we should have had more believers. I find some countries are more fertile than others so far as the Faith is concerned, and some are barren. As opposed to Vietnam and Cambodia, Thailand was a barren country in my opinion. Adrienne and I worked as usual, bought books and arranged for *The New Era* to be translated in the Thai language as well as other books and prayers, just as was done in Vietnam and Cambodia. Mrs. Fozdar wrote books for translation and distribution, one of which was Buddha and Amitabha. Amitabha, which means 'the Glorious Friend,' is another title of Bahá'u'lláh. Translators were engaged who were as knowledgeable in English as in their own language. The pioneers supervised the translations, helped with the meanings of words and spiritual implications. Thus, the translations were much better than had they been done by someone who didn't understand the religion. Mrs. Fozdar, Charlie Duncan, and others devoted a considerable amount of time and effort to this undertaking. The translations proved to be very good, especially *The New Garden* done in Cambodia. The Cambodians who fled to Thailand during the war had no access to *The New Garden*, and attempted to translate it into Cambodian while they were in the refugee camp. Unfortunately, the translation was similar to street language. In Thailand there are separate vocabularies, one for the King and another for the rest of the people. When speaking to the King, one is expected to use the royal vocabulary, and there are certain things about the King that must not be mentioned when speaking to him. The vocabularies are complicated and in translating it is necessary to ensure that the meaning is understandable to everyone. Thanks to

Bahá'u'lláh, our translations were adequate and understood by those who read them.

Mention should be made of Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Charles Duncan, who accepted the Faith through Marzieh Gail, daughter of Dr. Ali Kuli Khan. Charles had received a bachelor and a master's degree from the University of California. He said he had the choice of going to Africa, to Asia or to the southern United States as a pioneer. However, black Bahá'is were not particular about going to the southern States, so they went out of the country. Charlie chose to go to Borneo, and for this he was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh by the Beloved Guardian. From there he went to Bangkok, Thailand. A talented musician and composer of Bahá'í music, Charlie also learned to read and write the Thai language, a considerable accomplishment and very helpful in assisting with the translations of the books.

We applied for permission to incorporate the Local Spiritual Assembly of Bangkok. One of the Thai Bahá'is and I went to what was the equivalent of the Thai FBI for this purpose. Upon arrival the Thai panicked when he saw all the soldiers and office staff. He didn't want his name listed as a Bahá'í on the records, although he had been quite active up to this point. It was a great test for him and he failed it.

Visa Problems

Our major concerns were visas,
Which often were not extended.
We left Cambodia for Thailand,
Hoping they could be amended.

Thailand was much more inviting.
There, people are happy and free.
The Faith was slowly taking root,
So 'twas an ideal place to be.

We held weekly language classes
To attract the youthful Thais.
They came to learn about English
And we taught them about Baha'i.

They always asked: "Where is the God?"
In their mind It was a thing
That either Nature had created,
Or was a subject of their king.

We boarded the train to Laos
When Thai visas had expired.
Another country scarred by war,
The people displaced and tired.

The staunch Baha'is were trying to teach;
It was very evident.
Few believers came to meetings
During the days that we spent.

Once more armed with valid visas,
Our chosen goal seemed close at hand.
We gathered our few resources,
Prepared to carry on as planned.

Back to Thailand, then Cambodia.
Rockets were falling all around,
Nightly blackouts were the routine.
Welcome to the battleground.

We learned Baha'is of the Southeast
Would be holding a Convention
In Malaysia. Should we risk it?
It was worth it just to mention.

Ruhiyyih Khanum would be present.
The trip would help to ease the strain
Of teaching in Cambodia,
And doubtless bring us spiritual gain.

The Baha'is there were so focused,
So dedicated to the Faith.
Their eager Muslim teachers
Did not pause or hesitate.

To propagate the Word of God
Among every group and creed,
Except native Malays. They were
By law forbidden to believe.

Returning to our pioneer post
Much renewed in spirit and faith,

It wasn't long before we found
The seekers knocking at our gate.

Cambodians came at dawn and dusk
Eager to learn about the Word.
They asked us where this Truth came
from,
And devoured everything they heard.

We taught them much that they should
know

Of ancient prophecies and more,
To fill them with the love of God
And open wide their spiritual door.

The Bahá'í Prayers and New Garden
Were translated into Khmer,
But the government insisted
On censoring our literature.

They said it first must be approved
By the Ministry of Religion,
And before we passed it out
We had to have their permission.

The Buddhist monks opposed us.
They were certain the Faith would be
A threat to their own religion
As well as an apostasy.

Our teachers were being followed
By those whom we knew to be
Assigned to check our movements;
Perhaps the local CID.

The police gave us a warning:
"Don't give out book or pamphlet.
"Baha'i is only for your home.
"Don't teach in town or hamlet.

"You sign this written statement
"That you will obey. If not
"We take away the literature
"From anyone who may be caught."

We had warned them to use caution
And avoid any police they saw.
But the believers were on fire,

They chose to disobey the law.

They took the books to spread the Word
To all. No matter where they went.
As luck would have it, some were caught.
Their good intentions were misspent.

The police came to us demanding
All books and literature that we had.
They took it away and threatened
Our situation appeared very bad.

They also required a document
Which they wanted Dempsey to write
And say Cambodia did not want
Baha'i, and it had no rights.

Dempsey wrote it in English—
He didn't know how to write Khmer—
And said Lord Buddha had returned
But they didn't want to hear.

They took the written statement,
Not quite sure of what it said,
And ordered us to leave forthwith.
The Faith in Cambodia was dead.

Next day we left for Africa,
Leaving dear friends behind.
Some were detained in prison,
Others made themselves hard to find.

No, it's not easy to bid farewell
To those we've known and cherished.
We'd shared their world for eleven years;
So many of them had perished.

What most disturbs my consciousness
Is the wanton destruction of lives
In Cambodia and Vietnam,
And Laotians, trying to survive.

Perhaps one day we shall return
When their future is not so dark.
On their minds, their lives, their faith in
God,
Let us pray we have left our mark.

REVIVING THE FAITH IN CAMBODIA

At the request of the National Spiritual Assembly, Adrienne and I left Thailand and went to pioneer in Cambodia. The country had been opened to the Faith earlier by two pioneers, one of whom was Professor Avaregan, but all the Bahá'ís there were Chinese. They numbered about 10 or 15 and all were afraid of the government, which was not too fond of the Chinese who were primarily businessmen. When we arrived we had difficulty with visas, and I had a hard time finding a job. Adrienne was employed as a secretary with the American Military Assistance Advisory Group.

My efforts finally resulted in teaching English at the Cambodian American English Institute. There I met a lot of Cambodians and discovered that a Cambodian typewriter was available. I made friends with the head of the school and many of the students became Bahá'ís. In addition, when the majority of the Americans were required to leave Cambodia, only 35 of the original 500 Embassy people remained. I was given the job of running the commissary, which was stocked with canned food, flour and supplies for 500 people. Meat was flown in from Vietnam and kept in the refrigerated storage area. We had permission to go to their American movies, which was a treat after pioneering in Vietnam. The first movie we saw was 'Dr. No' with Sean Connery.

Cambodia's King, Prince Sihanouk, was the King of the Buddhists, and as such it was his job to protect the Buddhist religion. The monks were very powerful and he relied on them for assistance to keep him on the throne. He pretended to stop the Communists while at the same time he maintained close relations with Communist China.

We were in touch with a few Cambodian believers. One was a wonderful Chinese Bahá'í, C.M. Lee, and another who led the group was named Lim Inchin. Lim was Chinese but looked like a Cambodian because he was brown-skinned. He was a very clever fellow who spoke Cambodian, English, French and several dialects of Chinese, and was respected by the Chinese Bahá'ís. Lim was serving as an officer in the Cambodian army when he got an appointment to study engineering in Moscow. He left behind his pretty little wife and child and, before his departure, he offered us his house, which we declined. We were living in a hotel managed by C. M. Lee.

The Cambodians claim they are descended from an Indian prince and a mother who was a seven-headed snake. At Angkor Wat, the ancient ruins of Cambodia's former glory, you can see the seven-headed snake at the entrance of the buildings. Although they are Buddhists, such superstitions are thoroughly entrenched in their religion. On the other hand, although the West is more scientific and less superstitious, there are still some questionable events mentioned in the Bible that are accepted as fundamental Christianity.

The Thais and Cambodians look alike,—but they have different origins. The Thais are Chinese and were called black Thais when they were in China. I believe they emigrated from China and settled in Thailand. The Cambodians, being of Malay origin, emigrated from Indonesia and are of a different temperament. Although they have not prospered so well materially as the Thais, they were awaiting the return of the Buddha.

Bahá'í books were translated and printed, a Bahá'í center was opened in Phnom Penh, and we had a Cambodian Bahá'í teacher who knew English. She taught a class at the center each day. By studying six hours a day five days a week, the students were able to complete a book in a month. Although the Catholics had been in Cambodia for 40 years, they didn't have one Cambodian convert. We were told they insisted that the Cambodians throw down the statue of Buddha and break it before they could be accepted as Christians. The Cambodians loved and respected Buddha, so they refused to do this. We explained to them that

Bahá'u'lláh is the Fifth Buddha and that we revered Gautama Buddha as a Prophet also. We learned that their Holy Writings predict that when the Buddha returns there will be trouble on all sides. At the time the Thais had made incursions into Cambodia, so the border with Thailand had been closed. In addition, they were fighting the Laotians and the Vietnamese, so they indeed had trouble on all sides.

Close Encounters

On returning to Cambodia
From a meeting in Vietnam,
We boarded an early taxi –
The trip was eight hours long.

To avoid a confrontation
With fighting along the route
Twixt raiding Communist forces
And the government, in pursuit.

Ten passengers in an old Ford
That had once seen better times.
We two and the driver up front,
Five women with babies behind.

At one point on the highway,
With a line of cars ahead,
The traffic slowed down to a crawl
Then came to a halt instead.

We had a premonition
That something might happen here;
Too quiet, ominous silence.
One could sense the mounting fear.

I looked off toward the lush rice fields
Where some farmers were at work.
They stopped, looked up, and stood quite
still.

Our driver began to jerk.

He quickly threw the car in gear,
Jammed the accelerator,
And sped around the line of cars.
Scarcely a few moments later

There was a barrage of gunfire.
His instincts hadn't been wrong.
All breathed a sigh of relief, because
We'd escaped the Viet Cong.

JUBILEE - INTERLUDE IN ISRAEL

When the first Universal House of Justice was elected in 1963, Adrienne and I traveled from Cambodia to Thailand to get the airplane. One of the Bahá'ís who was a policeman in Malaysia contracted with Qantas airline for a 707 aircraft. The plane picked up Bahá'ís in Singapore, in Kuala Lumpur, then flew to Bangkok where we boarded it, together with some Bahá'ís who had come from Japan and the Philippines. Before leaving for Israel all of us visited with a wonderful Bahá'í woman who was suffering from terminal cancer. She had been born in Alsace-Lorraine, the small area between Germany and France. At two years of age she visited the States in 1912 with her parents and had sat on the lap of Abdu'l-Bahá, an occasion she recalled when we were pioneering in Bangkok in 1959. She had opened a school for children on the same street on which we lived. That's how we met her and her two daughters, one of whom was an airline hostess. The Bahá'ís stood around her bed and recited prayers. We asked her to hold on until we returned from Israel, but unfortunately she passed on soon afterwards.

The plane was full of Bahá'ís when we left Bangkok. It stopped in Athens, Greece enroute because there was difficulty at the time between the Jews and Arabs, so the pilot was careful not to invade air space the Arabs claimed as their own. From Athens I and others took a connecting flight to Israel while Adrienne went on to London.

In 1963 the United States had 10,000 Bahá'ís, Indonesia had about 20,000 as did the Philippines, and Vietnam had 12,000. At that time also there were 55 National Spiritual Assemblies in the Bahá'í world. I had the bounty to be chosen as one of the tellers who spent the entire night counting the votes in the beautiful home of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. After the election we in Israel proceeded to London where the Jubilee was held to celebrate the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. We met old friends from the States as well as Bahá'ís from all over the world.

L. Ambassador d'Israël

Phnom-Penh, Novembre 9, 1974

Mr Dempsey Morgan,
Secretary of the Teaching Committee,
Bahá'ís of the Khmer Republic,
B.P. 2139,
Phnom-Penh

Dear Mr Morgan,

When I returned from an extended home leave, I found your kind letter dated 9 August 1974, for which I thank you very much.

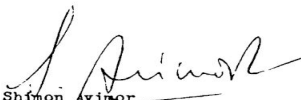
I was very glad to learn that the Khmer Government has now finally recognised the Bahai Faith as an independent religion and has granted your congregation the right to conduct classes in religion.

For an Israeli, there is no need to be convinced of the non-political character of the Bahá'ís - the contacts with Israel is of long standing and we remember well the positive attitude of the Bahá'ís towards the state of Israel.

As a little token of appreciation, I attach to this letter to pictures of the beautiful Bahai Shrine in the Persian Garden in Haifa, which I bought specially for you.

Please accept again my thanks and best wishes.

Yours sincerely,


Shimon Aviner
Ambassador of Israel

CHANGES AND PROGRESS

Lim Inchin returned from his sojourn in Moscow after two or three years. The Bahá'ís asked me to come to the airport to greet him on his arrival, which I did. As soon as he landed he came directly to me, ignoring his waiting wife. I said, "Why don't you go and greet your wife? Don't come to me." He replied, "I want to see you, I want to talk with you."

A few days later his friends gave a big welcome home dinner for him at a Chinese restaurant. He began talking to me about what the Russians had told him: that the United States has only foreign scientists, that they don't have American scientists. Obviously, he had been brain-washed. Actually, he didn't study the engineering course he wanted. They just filled him with Communist propaganda and sent him back. He did learn the Russian language, so he had that to add to his linguistic accomplishments. He went on to say the Americans didn't know how to build airplanes, that their planes weren't good. I tried to tell him if he wants to learn about the United States he should go and visit himself, not repeat what the Russians say. He didn't want to be associated with Americans after his return. He took a job at one of the Eastern European embassies in Phnom Penh and became a translator. We didn't see much of him after that. In spite of his Communist leanings, he was still a nice fellow, but working for the Communists caused him to become estranged from the Faith.

By the time Malaysia got its National Spiritual Assembly, Cambodia had more Bahá'ís than Malaysia, but Malaysia had had no interruptions from civil war as was the case in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. The civil wars were more or less contained in Vietnam and Laos and pioneers had been there quite a while, whereas in Cambodia we were the sole pioneers and no one wanted to come because of the precarious situation. We learned that Rúhíyyih Khánúm and Violette Nakhjavání were to be present for the election of the National Assembly of Malaysia. With very little money, Adrienne and I took the train from Phnom Penh to the Thai border, traveling all night in 90°F heat in order to reach the border towns of Battambang and Sisophon. The border with Thailand was closed with about a half mile of no-man's land between the two countries. With our baggage on our backs, we walked the half mile between Sisophon, Cambodia and Aranyaprathet, the nearest Thai town. From there we took a taxi to Bangkok to board the train for Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where the Bahá'í convention was being held. It was our brief period of spiritual renewal.

When the Cambodians gained independence from the French, all the older people got jobs with the government and the young men were idling in the streets. They had no work so they tried to learn as much as they could and get the advantage of an education. One of our Bahá'ís, Kem Saroun, had received a grant to study in the States at a mining university in Colorado. He failed in his second or third year and thus didn't complete the training. Upon returning home to Cambodia he had no place to stay and no money. His English was good, so I placed him with our best teachers, Khuy Sien and Ay Sok Chun. Kem Saroun became a Bahá'í but he didn't have it in his heart. However, he impressed Jim Fozdar with his English. Upon Jim's frequent visits to Cambodia I tried to tell him, that Kem Saroun was not as sincere as the others but he couldn't see it. To my knowledge, Khuy Sien had brought in 400 believers and Ay Sok Chun was very devoted and aggressive in spreading the Faith. He went to far off places to teach, was finally stopped by the government officials and imprisoned for teaching near the border.

Prince Sihanouk began to voice his displeasure with the American government. Anti-American riots broke out, cars were overturned, and houses were raided as the situation began to deteriorate. The Americans were getting rid of all their property preparatory to leaving. We were able to get a refrigerator for the first time, as well as an air-conditioner which we didn't use because the heat was not excessive and the apartment was equipped with ceiling fans. It had tile floors, a spacious balcony, and we had furnished it quite attractively with red and black Chinese lacquered furniture. We had a series of Chinese cooks, so all in all life wasn't bad.

Despite the unrest and the threat of Communist invasion, the teaching was going well. Periodically I traveled to Indonesia for meetings of the National Spiritual Assembly of Southeast Asia. Jim Fozdar had informed the government that the Bahá'ís were based in Indonesia, which was favorable for the Faith because the Cambodian government was on good political terms with Indonesia during this period. He had also probably leased the Bahá'í Center for 99 years. Nothing can be purchased outright from a kingdom or royal government. You are allowed to occupy it only for a certain length of time.

Ethnically, the Malays were the same as the Cambodians. The country of Malaysia had about 50% Malays, 10% Indians from India, and about 40% Chinese. The Indians and the Chinese became Bahá'ís, but the Malays were Muslims and the Muslim government forbade any teaching of the Malays. All the Bahá'ís cooperated well. The Chinese (so-called 'overseas Chinese') were the businessmen, made a lot of money, and contributed to the Faith by financially supporting the Indians who pioneered in Africa and throughout Asia.

The Chinese in Cambodia were a very small group, but they were clever, and the Cambodian government tried to outwit them by passing laws to restrict their activities and

businesses. I made the acquaintance of an Egyptian UN representative, Mr. Kanawaty, who was an efficiency expert. The Kanawatys were very kind to us. They had two small boys whom Adrienne tutored for a while. He told me the Chinese kept three sets of books, one for the government, one for public scrutiny, and another for themselves. In this way they could carry on their business and make money without being discovered. The Cambodian government couldn't compete against the Chinese because although they were allowed to work in the government-owned department store, they were able to bribe the Cambodians in authority and buy out the department store.

The political situation was beginning to take its toll of our Bahá'ís. Our Chinese Bahá'í, C. M. Lee, returned from the London Bahá'í Conference and was arrested on trumped-up charges, beaten and imprisoned for quite some time. There was nothing we could do to help him. The prison was about two blocks from our apartment building. We could see the oil drums of food being taken to the prisoners daily. It looked terrible.

Be Ye of the Faithful

Two eager young Cambodians
Were Khuy Sien and Sok Chun.
Spiritual, intelligent,
So handsome and full of fun.

One was an English teacher
With lots of imagination;
The other was a student.
Both had great expectations.

Khuy Sien's dream of The Master
Influenced him to declare.
When Sok Chun heard the Message,
He rushed out to teach everywhere.

They memorized Bahá'í prayers,
They studied the teachings and laws.
Their little group was well informed
To carry on the Cause.

Soon the government banned teaching,
Sok Chun was thrown in prison.
The others taught more quietly
To avoid undue suspicion.

We were obliged to leave Phnom Penh,
So the friends had lost their mentor.
Badgered by the government,
They were forced to close the Center.

Sok Chun was released from prison
And, determined to flee the land,
He donned the robe of a Buddhist monk,

And set out for Vietnam.
While walking through a battlefield
He was picked up by some G.I.s,
And his multi-lingual talents
Were a blessing in disguise.

Since he spoke the English language,
They asked him to call air strikes.
He joined the Cambodian army
While the war was at its height.

Viet Cong threatened to kill him
When they recognised his voice.
At times he was gravely wounded
But continued to fight by choice.

In spite of prison and suffering,
Both Khuy Sien and Sok Chun
Survived, and never lost their faith,
Or doubted they'd overcome.

Our brave Sok Chun was killed one day
With his family and Army guys.
We felt we had lost a son
When we learned of his demise.

Phnom Penh fell to the Viet Cong.
Khuy Sien and his family
Were marched for miles northwards,
And imprisoned cruelly.

He lost his wife and children too,
And thus forced to survive alone,
Depended on Bahá'u'lláh
For the strength to carry on.

We journeyed to Cambodia
In the summer of '91,
Hoping to contact Khuy Sien,
Who is also like our son.

Our hearts were full on seeing him.
His dear face was lined with care –
Evidence of past suffering.
Still, the spirit we loved was there.

He has another family now
And a sweet little girl of five.

We pray for his continued faith
So long as he is alive.

Two fearless, dedicated souls
Determined to demonstrate
That they would risk their lives for God;
No sacrifice was too great.

The faith needs more such precious ones.
Thank God for the privilege
To know them, teach the, love them,
To be worthy of their pledge.

LAST DAYS OF PHNOM PENH

All the countries in the area were frightened of a Communist invasion, so with the help of the Americans, civil war was being waged everywhere. The Communists finally got hold of American cannons and fired on Phnom Penh, the capital. Some of their rockets had 15 pounds of TNT and the Russian rockets they used had 25 pounds of high explosives. Normally, the rockets would penetrate only the outside wall of the building, so you were fairly safe within the inner walls. At one point they ranged in on our neighborhood. The Bahá'ís scattered. Ay Sok Chun, who was living in the Bahá'í Center, disguised himself as a Buddhist monk and started walking towards Vietnam. An American helicopter picked him up in the combat zone and the soldiers asked him what he was doing there. He told them he was a Bahá'í, that the Cambodian government was against the Bahá'ís and would have arrested him if he had stayed in the country. He spoke Vietnamese as well as English and Cambodian, so the Americans rescued him, trained him and used him as an interpreter. The Communists used psychological warfare also, talking to the Cambodians by radio to frighten and distract them. They came to know Ay Sok Chun's voice when he called the strikes, and they threatened to kill him. Eventually, he became a captain in the Cambodian army and was very helpful to the Faith when he could be.

Not until later did we learn that a politician from Indonesia had come to Cambodia and told the wife of the Minister of Interior that Bahá'ís caused trouble and participated in politics in Indonesia. This caused the Cambodian government to close the Bahá'í Center and outlaw the Faith. I was summoned to the police department and obliged to write a letter saying that I would never send any Bahá'í teachers outside the capital city. When the take-over of the country by the Communists was imminent, we left for Thailand in the nick of time, a day or so before everything fell apart. We were in Cambodia many times because when there was a serious Communist threat we left for Thailand, and when the threat had passed we would return. Once I took all my books and paid taxes to get them to Thailand, thinking it was the last time I would be in Cambodia.

Adrienne and I returned again in 1971 as the ban imposed on the Faith by the government after our departure was still in effect. I knew many of the Cambodian officials and the Universal House of Justice said it would be very meritorious if I returned and tried to get the ban lifted. We remained from 1971 to 1975, during which time there were constant tests in the form of interference and threats from the government. Ay Sok Chun had married a nurse in Vietnam, brought her to Cambodia, and they had two sons. C. M. Lee was finally released from prison, went to Laos where he became chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Laos for a while, then moved to Hong Kong with his family.

The apartment we lived in was close to an area that was frequently bombed. Our kitchen was an inside room, so every night we took our bed into the kitchen and slept there until morning. All night long we could hear people screaming in terror as the rockets came in over the Mekong River and fell in the city. The Americans were also bombing around the city in their attempt to destroy Communist positions. Our doors and windows shook as the bombs fell from the B-52s. It was very unnerving.

Adrienne returned to the United States in 1973 to see her mother. While she was gone Ay Sok Chun wanted to move his young wife and children into our apartment, but I didn't think it was proper for him to do that as I was by myself. He feared the Communists would find out where he lived and blow up his house. Later, while on the front line the Communists attacked his unit with mortar fire, his gunners panicked and started to run away. As he tried to hold them, he caught shrapnel in the lung and was hospitalized. I went to see him several times. He was in a room with other officers who were lying on the floor badly wounded. Ay Sok Chun told me blood was coming from his mouth when he got shot and he was sure he was going to die. He was sent to the French hospital where the doctors were unable to find the shrapnel, so they decided it would be best not to try to remove it. At another time he was shot in the back and buttocks. When I went to see him his wife was at the hospital and he was suffering from malaria also. He begged me not to tell "mother" – he called Adrienne his mother – that I had seen him like that. He was smiling in spite of the pain, and I thought to myself 'this man is certainly a noble character'.

One Sunday morning I returned home from the Bahá'í Center in order to get a book. On the way back a rocket fell and killed a small boy who was riding a bicycle. Rockets were falling around the Center, but we continued our meeting. Another Bahá'í, , had no place to live. He had been a corporal in the military, but after the army became disorganized he and his family moved into the spacious servants' quarters at the Bahá'í Center. I would have preferred that Ay Sok Chun stay there but he could not, and Adrienne and I had our own house.

I was teaching mathematics at the American School and Adrienne was working as a local hire for the United Nations. She also taught English and Social Studies at the American School until the Americans were evacuated. Only about 35 Americans were left behind to consume the large quantity of food in the commissary. The Embassy asked me to manage the commissary, which I did until we left to pioneer in Africa, although we were not allowed to buy any of the food.

When we finally did leave Cambodia for the last time, I could not take my Bahá'í books because it was too expensive to ship them out as we had been doing previously. In haste, I even left my driver's license, our clothing and many things we were never able to retrieve. The Communists succeeded in cutting off the capital city, Phnom Penh, from access to the Mekong River, and they claimed that Cambodia would drop to them like a ripe fruit from a tree. The city was surrounded, the Communists were placing explosives underwater to blow up the ships in the harbor, while the government dropped bombs in the water to prevent the divers from planting explosives. All day and night there were explosions, and the rockets were falling so frequently it was easy to determine where the Chinese rockets had struck. Ultimately, the airlines refused to land, so the United States chartered an airline with Taiwanese pilots to bring food supplies into the city and keep the population fed. On our way to the airport the road surface was pockmarked with holes. At the airport we had to remain in bunkers which protected those who were to board the planes from the rockets until the French Caravelles could carry them to Bangkok and elsewhere.

PURE SOULS

C. M. Lee was not released from prison until after we had left the country. Some years later when he moved to Hong Kong his wife became involved in politics and was estranged from the Faith. However, C. M. Lee never wavered, and it was he who escorted Rúhíyyih Khánum during her visit to China.

Khuy Sien lived through the war despite great suffering. He and his family were force-marched to the south when the Communists took Phnom Penh. His wife died in a work camp and also his children, but he survived. He said he dreamed that Bahá'u'lláh told him not to worry, that no harm would come to him. He was skeptical of the dream until he dreamed of 'Abdu'l-Bahá also, Who assured him that he truly had dreamed of Bahá'u'lláh. We saw him in 1991 with a new wife and little daughter when we visited Cambodia on our way from pioneering in Central Africa. He was the same self-effacing staunch Bahá'í we had left behind years before, and I think he is still there.

Ay Sok Chun moved to Battambang, a Cambodian city near the Thai border. The last I heard was that the Communists had killed him, his wife and children. He was truly a wonderful, courageous Bahá'í. The news of his death made us very sad. Each country has its pure souls and in Cambodia Khuy Sien was one of these as was Ay Sok Chun.

In Vietnam Jim Fozdar thought Le Loc was a pure soul. In Chad we had Tshiambu Valentine, and in Uganda there were Oule, Isimai, and some others. Bahá'u'lláh said He couldn't find a pure soul, but I believe there are those in some countries who have reached that level of spirituality, and even martyrdom. In my opinion, martyrdom surpasses the rank of the Hands of the Cause, because there were those who were not named Hands who died and were imprisoned for the Cause.

POINT OF NO RETURN

In Bangkok we waited in vain for news from Cambodia, but it was completely cut off. I had left some money with the Cambodian Bahá'ís so they could carry on the Faith until my return, as money is the lifeblood of the Faith. From the bank in Bangkok I sent additional funds to our account in Phnom Penh so Khuy Sien could access it. Unfortunately, the bank had been taken over by the Communists, so nothing more was seen of the money. I kept the receipt, and years later tried to trace it from Bangkok. There was no record of it.

My visa for Thailand was about to expire and I had to go to Laos to renew it. I wired the Universal House of Justice to inform them of the circumstances. They replied it would be very meritorious if I remained in Thailand until such time as I could return to Cambodia, but I knew the country would be closed for some time. Incidentally, Jim Fozdar had visited the Beloved Guardian who advised him the Communists would be strong in Southeast Asia for a while. We all knew the Communists would be there, but we didn't know for how long.

FRUSTRATION IN LAOS

In Laos I had an unfortunate encounter with Anita Ioas' husband. The Thai Embassy in Laos informed me I would need a letter from the American Embassy if I wanted to extend the Thai visa. At the American Embassy I met Anita's husband, with whom I was not acquainted. I explained to him what was needed but he didn't feel he could assist me. When I mentioned this incident later to Anita, she said her husband was waiting until the Bahá'ís really got into trouble to help them, and he didn't consider my situation serious enough. Her husband, she said, had been a pilot for the Royal Canadian Air Force, so we had something in common. If I had known this, I might have been able to talk with him and persuade him to give me the letter. Otherwise, I could have paid \$5,000 to the Thai government official to get a permanent residence visa, or perhaps done it by some other costly means. I was 55 years old then and

had ridden in a cramped bus all night from Bangkok to Laos and it was a major disappointment. I assume that since I was in the country as a Bahá'í in an unofficial capacity and he was an official of the American government, this was a major reason for his refusal.

During my brief stay in Laos I met a couple of wonderful Persian pioneers, one of whom was Feradoun Missaghian. I had known Feradoun previously when he and his friend, having just completed high school, had come to Southeast Asia to pioneer in the early sixties. The Iranian Bahá'ís decided to send Feradoun to Laos; the other fellow went to the States and settled in Skokie, Illinois near Chicago. Feradoun eventually married a lovely young Bahá'í girl whose family had served 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Haifa.

The other pioneer in Laos was Faiz Yeganegheh, a power engineer working for the American government. At the time the Americans were using Vientiane as a base to fight the Communists in the area and many pilots were flying from the airfield in Laos. Yeganegheh, an expert on jet engines and gas engines, was teaching the Laotians how to repair the engines. He married a Laotian girl. Years later in 1991 we met him and his wife in Bangkok when they came to place their daughters in school. We all happened to be staying at the same hotel.

I also met a young American Bahá'í girl who appeared to be a hippie from her dress and manner. It was disturbing to me to see how the Americans will let themselves go just because they are out of the country. They seem unaware that the people in Asia try to dress and look their best by wearing western clothes so they can look like Americans. A Bahá'í who looked like a hippie and was not properly dressed conveyed an image, in my opinion, that was injurious to the Faith. The young lady later came to Bangkok and I tried to help her in some way I don't recall.

For 11 years I had pioneered in French colonies of Vietnam and Cambodia, which was known then as French Indo-China. As the official language was French, I lost a lot of fluency in English. In order to teach the Faith to people who didn't speak English well, I had to use very simple language and my limited French. The same was true in Thailand where Thai is the official language. However, as students were eager to learn English as a foreign language, it provided an opportunity for me to teach the Faith. In Vietnam I also thanked God for being black, because it made me aware of how the Vietnamese had been looked down upon and oppressed by the French. I found I had a lot in common with the Vietnamese and this empathy helped me to teach the Faith to them.

GROWTH OF THE FAITH IN INDONESIA

Dr. Muhájir had pioneered in Mentawai Island, located in the Indian Ocean on the west side of Indonesia. From Djakarta, the capital of Indonesia, it took about a week to get there. The people were very primitive and wore no clothes. The Indonesian government was Muslim and employed Iranian medical doctors to help keep their people healthy. As a doctor Dr. Muhájir was employed and sent to Mentawai Island where he remained for a number of years and was able to enroll thousands of Bahá'ís on the island. I heard him say that as he traveled by canoe among the islands he could hear people in another canoe on the other side of the river chanting, "Who is The Bab?" Someone would reply, "The Bab is the Forerunner." Another would ask, "Who is Bahá'u'lláh?" and the reply would be: "He is the Prophet for today." Of course this made Dr. Muhájir very happy. I think he built five or six primary schools there, but his life was very difficult.

He had an assistant, Jamshed Maani, who also did wonderful work there, in Sarawak and in Borneo where he was sent in 1963 by the National Spiritual Assembly for the region. Jamshed brought in 6,000 Bahá'ís among the Dyak tribe, who lived in long houses. Each long house had an Assembly. The Dyaks told Jamshed they had been waiting for him because according to their tradition a white man would come and bring a new religion. So they

accepted the Faith quickly.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Southeast Asia sent Yankee Leong, a Chinese Bahá'í from Malaysia, to assist Jamshed in Sarawak. Yankee Leong said one of the native Bahá'ís came to hug him, and the man was filthy as the natives never take baths. Yankee Leong told the man to go home and take a bath and he would hug him. The man said if he took a bath it could kill him. Yankee Leong suggested he do it gradually, by putting only his foot into the water the first day. The next day he could put his leg into the water and proceed like that each day until his entire body had been bathed. A few days later the man returned, having taken a full bath, and Yankee Leong said "after that he was quite huggable."

Jamshed Maani reminded one of Jesus Christ in appearance, detached, very spiritual. I wanted him to come to Saigon and help us conquer the entire country of Vietnam. However, it seems he went to bed one night and dreamed that Bahá'u'lláh came and told him he was the next prophet. The following morning he notified the Iranian Bahá'ís in Indonesia, who called the National Spiritual Assembly to ask them to send someone to Indonesia to examine Jamshed Maani. They feared he had become a Covenant breaker. He was summoned to Djakarta to meet with Jim Fozdar and me from Vietnam, and Dr. Muhájir from Singapore. According to Dr. Muhájir, Jamshed had been pioneering alone for five or ten years and he had no wife, so this might have been part of the problem. No action was taken concerning Jamshed. We all went to Haifa together for the election of the first Universal House of Justice. When Jamshed returned to Indonesia, the Bahá'í religion was banned by the Muslim government. Some Bahá'ís were arrested and imprisoned, one of them because he was praying. Jamshed returned to Iran where members of his family became his followers which caused him and them to be declared Covenant breakers. Incidentally, the language spoken in Mentawai Island was the same as that spoken in Borneo, although they are 1500 miles apart. This was helpful to Jamshed as, having pioneered in Mentawai Island, it enabled him to translate some of the books for the Dyaks in Kuching, Sarawak when he went there.

CHANGING PLACES

The Lotus Temple

Astride New Delhi's desert sands
A lotus flower in concrete stands,
Exuding spiritual redolence
That has no earthly peer.

Stone petals pointed heavenward,
Like folded hands upraised to God
In fervent prayer, for all the world
Be they afar or near.

With unshod feet and lowered head
One enters with a humble tread,
To hearken to the Sacred Word
And wondrous songs of praise,

Extolling God within its walls,
Summoning, luring is the Call,
Reminding all of One Who loves
Despite man's evil ways.

O, how the soul soars, heart renewed!
Revitalized! One's spiritual mood
Is satiated, overwhelmed;
Its every need replete.

Supernal flower! To all proclaim
The Gospel of His hallowed Name!
Another Messenger has come!
Why dally or retreat?

For once again man has a sign
That God would fain redeem mankind
From waywardness and wickedness,
To love and unity.

O beautiful edifice of God!
Attracting those who seek the Lord,
Thou art unique in all the earth.
His blessing rest on thee.

We left Asia with the intention of making a roundabout trip to Africa by booking a brief stop in India. I had also thought of stopping in Burma but our tickets did not provide for this. As we had no visas for India, we were assigned a soldier at the airport to accompany us wherever we went. We remained in New Delhi a few days to see how the teaching was being done there. At the Bahá'í Center the Secretary of the NSA of India, Mr. P. N. Rye, showed us around and told us they had 17 people at work enrolling new believers, as they were coming in so fast (mass conversion).

IMPRESSIONS OF INDIA

Things are done on a grand scale in India. For example, there were 60 urinals in the men's toilet in the stadium. The Indian vocabulary contains words describing their currency in lacs, which is equivalent to 200,000. This means 2 lacs are 400,000 rupees. Even newspaper accounts affecting the population report happenings in the hundreds of thousands or millions. Of course they have four to five times more people than we have in the United States. The Indian population at that time was about 900 million; no doubt there are a billion or more now, including Bangladesh and Pakistan. India is a very spiritual country. In addition, their handicrafts, pottery, weaving, textiles, etc. are outstanding. They have capable chemists who produce all the medicines we have in the U.S. The only difference is that their knowledge is combined with the spiritual, which may be one reason why Americans do not always understand their way of thinking. We in the United States do not look upon material substances as having spirit; to us they are lifeless. I would venture to say the Indians are much more advanced than the Americans in this respect.

'Abdu'l-Bahá mentions the five kingdoms: the mineral, plant, animal, man, and the prophets. The Indians recognize these also from the teachings of Krishna and Buddha. They practice spirituality, but superstition and misinterpretations have crept into their beliefs to

such an extent that their understanding has become altered. At certain times of the year the Buddhists will not step on the grass, nor will they kill anything, even mosquitoes, for fear that it may be a reincarnation of someone's ancestor. In America people kill anything, even the people they don't like, and we brutalize and kill animals, but in India all living things are respected. Indians and other Asians who study in the United States excel in science because they have the advantage of thousands of years of transfer from their religions. In addition, they have been exposed to ideas that are foreign to Americans, who believe the world began 6,000 years ago.

MAKING ENDS MEET

There is no doubt the Indians knew how to milk the tourists. In those days a glass of apple juice that I wanted for breakfast cost \$1.00, too expensive for a Bahá'í pioneer who was practicing economy. Upon leaving the hotel one morning I encountered a Hindu swami who assured me he knew everything, even the name of my grandfather, which he offered to tell me for the price of \$1.00 American. I told him I knew the name of my grandfather, so why should I pay him \$1.00 to tell me what I already know.

Travel costs were so expensive I often changed money on the free market. Some call it the black market, but I call it the 'true market' because the government sets the value of its currency at an artificially high rate in order to make a profit. For example, in Cambodia the United Nations allowed the Cambodian government to fix the rate of exchange at one riel for an American dollar, whereas the true value was more like 1,000 riels to an American dollar--a tremendous difference. The same was true in Indonesia. When I attended meetings of the National Spiritual Assembly of Southeast Asia in Djakarta, one of the Bahá'ís was kind enough to change money for us at 14,000 of the Indonesian currency to \$1.00, whereas the Indonesian government was offering 55 to \$1.00. So with a couple of dollars I could ride all over town in a taxi for little or nothing. To those who would condemn this as engaging in black market, I say, on the contrary, the government is dealing in the black market by setting up unreasonable rates for their currency in order to trade dollars in other countries at an inflated price.

The American Embassy in Cambodia did the same thing. They were trading dollars through a moneylender at the Embassy who gave 1,000 of the local currency for, say, \$5.00 American. The moneylender had trading contacts in Hong Kong who allowed him a percentage of the profits. As a result, the embassy foreigners in Cambodia were living on very little money. Of course these transactions were all clandestine. Being local hire we didn't benefit from such arrangements. In Vietnam it was different, because Jim Fozdar was from Bombay and acquainted with all the Indians in Saigon, so he was able to negotiate to obtain money at the true rate. The Indians in turn were sending dollars back to India.

Desirous of changing money on the free market in New Delhi, we took a taxi to an area where this could be done without too much notice. When I was in the process of changing the money, Adrienne became very nervous when she saw the police approaching. I completed the transaction and hailed a taxi to go to another part of town. We got out, it drove off and suddenly Adrienne realized she had left her purse in the taxi. The purse contained all our money, plane tickets, travelers' checks, passport identification, everything. I put her in another taxi and sent her to the American Embassy to tell them what had happened. Meanwhile, I went to search for the taxi in New Delhi with its millions of people and millions of taxis. The chances of finding the purse were practically impossible. I proceeded to the taxi stand, and just as I arrived the taxi driver drove in to turn in the purse he had found in the seat. Thanks to Bahá'u'lláh, everything was just as she had left it. When I returned to the Embassy with the purse, everyone thought it was a miracle it had been recovered. Adrienne

was certain this was a warning from Bahá'u'lláh.

We proceeded to Egypt to get entry visas to Uganda, our destination. At the British High Commission in Cairo, the High Commissioner was hesitant to issue the visas because we had only one-way tickets to Uganda. I went to the American Embassy where, by chance, I saw a friend from Detroit who was employed by the State Department. He took me to the American charge d'affaires who gave me a letter to present to the High Commissioner, and the visas were granted. Before our departure we visited the Egyptian Museum and climbed the pyramids.

A NEW CHALLENGE – AFRICA

African Temple

Enthroned upon Kikaaya Hill,
You'll find an imposing queen,
With brilliant stained glass apertures
And crown of emerald green.

As night descends with quietude
Her beacon rays serene
Extend into the evening sky,
And lighten the darkened scene.

The shallow steps and tapered columns
Rest on hallowed ground;
An edifice that one can see
For several miles around.

In nine directions, radials
Expand into grassy knolls
Where one can meditate at will
And energize the soul.

A space where one can browse at ease,
Even while the time away,
Admiring shrubs and flowering trees
That thrive within each bay.

This symbol of God's dominion
Entices the hearts and minds
Of all who would seek refuge here.
It's for people of all kinds.

A precious trust has been enshrined
Deep within its sacred wall;
A consecrated souvenir,
A Token of His blessed call.

Each Temple is a concrete proof
That God fulfills His promise
To send mankind a Messenger
Who will live and teach among us.

The disbelief and hopelessness
With which one oft contends
Are soon forgotten before God,
Where every knee must bend.

This temple for humanity
Helps obliterate the pain
And gratify the soul of man.
Come! Behold this sacred Fane!

I chose Uganda as our point of entry to Africa for several reasons: It was the home of Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga, whose teaching methods I wanted to observe; it was also the home of Hand of the Cause Musa Banání; the capital city, Kampala, was the seat of the National Spiritual Assembly of Central and East Africa, as well as the site of the first Bahá'í House of Worship in Africa.

A FORTUITOUS ARRIVAL

We arrived in Uganda just before the election of their new National Spiritual Assembly and renewed our acquaintance with Hand of the Cause Mr. Olinga, whom we had met at the London Conference in 1963. The fact that he hugged and greeted me so warmly was, I believe, why I was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly and became its vice chairman. I

also served on the National Teaching Committee and, at one point, was its chairman.

Uganda was responsible for seven countries, which included Uganda, Chad, Central African Republic, Gabon, Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire. I planned to remain in Uganda for about two years in order to familiarize myself with the mentality of the Africans, as I had with the mentality of the Vietnamese, Cambodians and Thais. My training in psychology caused me to think that Africans were different. Then I wanted to open Chad to the Faith. It had been part of French Equatorial Africa in the Sahara Desert.

Africa

Benighted continent veiled from sight
For centuries; oft unexplored.
A perilous land, yet vibrant, bright.
For too long has it been ignored,
This Africa.

Men bent on trafficking in slaves,
Brought sailing ships and Arab dhows
To seize, subdue with staves and whips,
The mark of Cain upon their brows,
In Africa.

Primeval forests, mountains, plains
With high, cascading waterfalls
That plunge like frothy bridal trains;
Deep canyons echoing nature's call –
Is Africa.

Savannah, bush in lush confusion,
Sparsely dotted with flat-top trees.
Refuge for wildlife in profusion
That have roamed the land for centuries
In Africa.

Fetid swamps and poisonous snakes
In humid jungles spawn disease;
Infectious ills that mutilate
Or kill. One finds all sorts of these
In Africa.

O land of promise and abundance!
Like phoenix risen from savage past
Of tribal wars and ignorance
To overcome the handicaps
Of Africa.

Continent that needs unity
And education from God's Book,
With sentient blacks in quantity
Who'll make the world sit up and look
At Africa.

Civilization's cradle land;
Cyclopedia of ancient lore,
Now open wide to every hand.
The long hiatus is no more,
O Africa.

At this time Uganda had a number of pioneers: Claire Gung, Philip and Lois Hainsworth, Patrick and Geraldine Robarts, Hassan and Isobel Sabri, Les and Ruth Hawthorn, Rex and Mary Collison, the caretakers of the House of Worship, and Frances Beard. Hassan Sabri taught at a technical school outside the city and Philip Hainsworth was employed by the Uganda Department of Health as a British government national. Patrick Robarts, son of the Hand of the Cause, was an architect and designed the Bahá'í Center on the Temple grounds.

The Collisons came to Africa about 1953 when the Beloved Guardian launched the Ten Year Crusade. They were designated Knights of Bahá'u'lláh as a result of their pioneering in Rwanda, and afterwards became the caretakers of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Kampala. At the time Rex was nearly 80 and Mary was about 68, although both were youthful in appearance. They settled in the small cottage designed by Mary and built on the temple grounds, When the civil war made it too dangerous for them to remain in Uganda, they returned to the States. Rex wanted to come back to Africa, but Mary became ill with cancer and the doctor discouraged him from returning. Mary died subsequently and Rex lived on to be 100 years old before passing on.

Through the intervention of the pioneers, Adrienne and I were able to get teaching jobs at Lubiri Senior Secondary School in Kampala, where ‘Alí Nakhjavání had taught when he was pioneering in the 50s. I taught physics, chemistry and mathematics, and Adrienne taught social studies and English. Apart from the two of us, there were 19 British teachers in the school, and shortly after we arrived the teacher who had been teaching the sciences left for England, so I was appointed head of the Science Department. When the Headmaster left on home leave I also became Deputy Headmaster. The school was operated on the Cambridge system, i.e., all the courses were designed and approved by Cambridge University. It was also located in the compound of the King of Uganda, the Kabaka Edward Mutesa.

The principal language of Uganda is Luganda, the tribe as a whole is known as the Baganda, the people are referred to as Muganda, and anything pertaining to the culture of the people is called Kiganda. It was really the Kabaka’s school, as it was surrounded by a wall that enclosed the entire compound, and had been established by the British to further the education of the ruling Baganda tribe. After attending secondary school, the students were sometimes sent to England for further studies.

As employees of the school, we had the added advantage of being provided with a furnished house located about five miles outside the city. There was a sizeable compound with a garage, and it was not uncommon to see a family of mongooses running through the yard. We also had huge anthills as large as the house. Consequently, the house was infested with termites. Philip Hainsworth kindly brought a sprayer and chemicals to spray the house, after which we were sweeping up ants and roaches in piles to be hauled away. Even sections of the walls had to be removed to get rid of the termites. Usually houses in Uganda are constructed from bamboo frames tied with interwoven vines then plastered with mud. The more expensive dwellings were plastered or covered with cement. Although the exterior might look like cement, inside the woven vines and mud were an ideal hiding place for termites, insects and roaches. In addition, we had to install iron bars on the windows and cover them with iron mesh to prevent thieves from using poles to fish through the windows.

TEACHING AND MORE TEACHING

In British East Africa it is necessary to have a car, unlike Asia where, in Vietnam, we could walk most anywhere or get a small, inexpensive taxi for about 15¢ to 20¢ American. The customary mode of transport in Cambodia was a cyclo, a two-wheeled carriage attached to a bicycle pedaled by a man. Needless to say, the cyclo drivers were very thin and did not live very long doing strenuous work like that in a hot climate. Thailand had numerous taxis and also a regular bus service within the city, both of which were inexpensive. But the British built cities that are spread out with considerable distance from one place to another. When we started teaching at the school, we were living in the Bahá’í Center in Kampala, which was too far from the school to walk up and down the many hills every day. Kampala is built on seven hills, like Jerusalem, so I bought a small Fiat but it didn’t have quite enough power to climb some of the hills. A friend was kind enough to follow us with his Peugeot when we went on teaching trips, just in case we became stalled. Eventually, we traded in the Fiat for a more substantial Opel, a GM model made in Germany, with which we had no trouble.

Most of our time was spent in Bahá’í meetings when we were not at school. On weekends and holidays we traveled all over the country teaching and learning to teach the Ugandans. Hand of the Cause Mr. Enoch Olinga frequently stayed at our home after returning from a teaching trip before going on to his tribal area. He was from the Ateso tribe, a Nilotic group in the north and one of 14 tribal groups in Uganda. The Baganda, one of the southwestern tribes, are Bantu as are most of the people of southwest Africa. I frequently visited Mr. Olinga’s home, which was about a four-hour drive from Kampala. I watched him

closely as he taught, and I found he would speak for about 15 or 20 minutes then let everyone get up and relax before they sat down to listen again. He didn't just talk to the Africans for an hour or more as I did, so I tried to perfect my technique. When I came upon a group of Africans, I would practice. They listened courteously, and when I asked how many believed what I had said, one or two always responded in the affirmative. I felt Mr. Olinga would have been able to convince 20 out of a group of 25.

A Man of Africa

Enoch was a writer of some renown,
A bon vivant in his own hometown.
A likely state minister, t'was said
By those who knew him well.

One day –

He happened to come upon Bahá'ís.
Impressed by the goodness of their lives,
He listened for hours, entranced to hear
The tenets of their Faith.

He made no commitment at the time,
But the words just seemed to haunt his
mind.

The Teachings must have hit the mark
For he quietly went away.

And returned to his home and tribal lands,
Where he spread the Word to family and
friends.

Many enrolled as hearts were touched;
The Faith was soon acclaimed.

His attitude and lifestyle changed.
Although they might have thought it

strange,

Family and friends began to say
He was a true Bahá'í.

From the Writings he sought humility
And learned of God's wisdom and
prophecy.

A spiritual giant he became,
With O, so much to give.

Advanced to the station of Hand of the
Cause,

Exuding love wherever he was,
He travelled to countries throughout the
world,
As an envoy for the Faith.

The Guardian said that Enoch should be
Known as the Father of Victory.
He was shy of this honor bestowed upon
him,
For he was a humble man.

One day –

Soldiers with rifles came to his door,
Intent upon murder they'd tried before.
They killed this man of Africa.
Olinga was his name.

Africans have the capacity to listen for hours. Perhaps this is owing to their custom of listening to the elders and storytellers who passed on from memory vital information from generation to generation by word of mouth. The same custom occurred in early Judaism when the sayings and life of Jesus were handed down in this way and written only 90 years after His death. The Christian Bible was not completed until a few hundred years thereafter, but with God's guidance the events were told truthfully.

We made several trips to Nairobi and often stayed in Kericho in western Kenya, which was at 6,000 feet and a favorite stopping place of President Moi. The town had a four-star hotel, newly built with a special accommodation reserved for him. I tried to rent that room but it wasn't possible. It was a three-day trip the way I drive because after leaving the highlands we descended to Nakuru in the valley, then back up the escarpment to Nairobi. Nakuru is a pretty town where the lake is noted for its flamingoes, and as one climbs the escarpment there is a spectacular view of the Rift Valley.

The Rift Valley gets its name from a break in the continent that begins at the Red Sea, goes through Ethiopia down through Kenya and on to South Africa. All the highlands in East Africa where cities have been built are developed. The British built good roads in Uganda and a big hydroelectric dam in Jinja, a nearby town to Kampala, which supplies electricity throughout Uganda and Kenya. The water system is good although the water has to be boiled. In other places we found that even though the water source may have been good, the plumbing had rusted, so it wasn't safe to drink the tap water. Evenings are cool in Kampala, so sleeping is good even though it is on the Equator. The elevation makes living ideal, it is perpetual springtime. The climate of Nairobi, however, requires fireplaces in the houses, and without a fireplace a heavy blanket is needed to sleep comfortably, so the Kenyans weave wool blankets.

SIDE TRIP TO RWANDA

As a member of the National Assembly and of the National Teaching Committee, I had hopes that we could open Rwanda. Two Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, Rex and Mary Collison, had gone there for that very purpose and stayed until they were forced to leave. Ugandan Bahá'ís also said they had gone to the area, formerly known as Burundi (which was later divided into the two countries of Rwanda and Burundi) and had attended a meeting of 5,000 Bahá'ís in eastern Zaire with no pioneers present. With these facts in mind, we set out to reconnoiter for the Faith. Much later when we were in Kinshasa, Zaire an African Bahá'í showed me photographs of Bahá'ís in Rwanda, and said he and his friends had opened that area to the Faith. He had a letter from the National Spiritual Assembly of Belgium which was responsible for the teaching there.

Before crossing from Uganda into Rwanda we stopped overnight in an old hunter's lodge where meals and lodging were provided for travelers. It still retained some of the luxury of its former days when the British used it for hunting. I attempted to get all the available maps of the area. Upon consulting one of them I discovered we were traveling on a route south of a lake in Rwanda that was shown on the map as being in the north. The lake was filled with hippopotami and the land around it was populated by lots of zebras and other non-predatory wildlife.

Rwanda is a land-locked country and thus obliged to receive oil and other products from Kenya through Uganda. These are transported by huge trucks over poorly paved roads that were rendered less navigable by huge ruts created by the trucks. In our little Opel we had to be very careful to straddle the ruts for fear of hitting the undercarriage of the car. Also, the soil around some of the mountains was composed of fine, powdery gypsum that billowed up from the road as we drove, blinding us and preventing us from seeing little more than a few feet ahead. We spent the night in a Catholic compound in Kigali, the capital city. All the hotels were full and we were advised not to leave the car in the streets during the night because thieves were stealing cars. The Catholics had a compound with a high wall and guards where the car was protected. They also had rooms to rent. The trip to Rwanda had been so hazardous, we spent the night praying for the help of Bahá'u'lláh on the return journey.

As an overseas pioneer you have many spiritual experiences that do not occur in the States, merely because the people are more receptive. This is especially true with mass teaching. Most of the teaching was carried on by the Africans themselves, although we made trips upcountry on weekends and holidays to teach under the trees in the open air. I planned to remain in Uganda for only two years before pursuing my goal, which was to open Chad to the Faith. The Ugandans were reluctant to see us go since we had become familiar with the country, but we did manage to get away in 1967 after three years.

THE CHADIAN VENTURE

The French Caravelle on which we traveled from Kampala, Uganda landed in the center of Kinshasa, Zaire where the airport is located. We checked our airline arrangements to proceed to Chad, then tried to register at the principal hotel in town, but we were refused a room by the Belgian clerk. Since we couldn't get a room, we decided to board the ferry to cross over the river to Brazzaville, French Congo. I went into Immigration to clear our documents while Adrienne waited outside. A man beckoned to her and invited her into a building attached to the Immigration office. She was hesitant to go until some African women came out of the office and asked her to enter for Immigration inspection. Inside the building they asked whether she was carrying diamonds. Of course she wasn't and said so, but they wanted her to remove her clothes and submit to a search, which she refused to do. Meanwhile, I came out of Immigration and was annoyed because she hadn't waited as I told her to. I called and she came out of the building and told me what had happened.

We then boarded the ferry for Brazzaville. In spite of a valid entry visa the Immigration officer there refused to let us enter. The government was Communist and didn't want Americans. When we tried to insist, the official went into a rage and ordered us back to the ferry that was just about to return to Kinshasa. We barely managed to board as it pulled out into the river.

On the return trip we met a very cordial Zairois gentleman obviously well-to-do, standing near his brand new car that was being ferried across. During the conversation we mentioned not being able to get a hotel room, and he offered to assist us. He took us to the very hotel that had refused us earlier and told the Belgian clerk to give us lodging, which he did immediately. The next day we boarded an Air France bus that was ferried across to Brazzaville. We were forbidden to get off the bus until it arrived at the airport in Brazzaville. Only by this means were we able to continue on to Central African Republic and from there to our destination in Chad.

In Bangui, Central African Republic, we met a pioneer from Haiti, Jean Baptiste and his wife and children. There were four Local Spiritual Assemblies and a number of Bahá'ís in C.A.R. I believe Jean Baptiste and his wife had accepted the Faith through Ellsworth Blackwell and his wife, Ruth, when they pioneered in Haiti about 1952. We had met Ellsworth in Detroit. At one time he was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States. As both Haiti and C.A.R. are French-speaking, the Haitian pioneers had no difficulty with the language. During our brief stay with the Jean Baptistes, I tried to encourage him, as I felt there was a great possibility for bringing in many believers there.

Another Beginning

From eleven years in Asia
To Africa, where Bahá'ís
Were spiritual and numerous,
Where one's spirit comes alive.

Uganda's House of Worship
Is a beauty to behold;
A silent teacher of the Faith,
Inspiring, admired, extolled.

In Uganda's for upcountry

Where we oftimes went to teach,
The villages were off the road
And many were hard to reach.

We slept in native straw huts
Wherever we might be.
People came from miles around
As we taught beneath a tree.

There was a need for pioneers
In the desert land of Chad
Where there were no believers yet,
But no doubt some could be had.

The NSA of Uganda
Considered the likelihood
Of sending us there to teach the Faith.
Possibilities seemed quite good.

We felt it might be just the place
For us to serve the Cause.
We hoped our entry wouldn't be
A problem, but it was.

With only one-way tickets
We alighted, somewhat flustered.
The immigration officer
Refused entry, as he blustered:

“No round trip ticket? You can't stay.
“There's a plane to Paris, Go!”
We had no ticket, nor the means,
What now? We didn't know.

A commotion in the airport!
Two people arguing, loud.
The officer turned around to look
At the shouting, angry crowd.

The NSA of Uganda
Had given us a letter
That said they were responsible
For us. It solved the matter.

We handed him the document
When he finally turned around.
He glanced at it and waved us through.
We proceeded into town.

An extension of our visas
We approached with trepidation.
Mostly Muslims were in charge
In this French-speaking nation.

When we made the application
This was uppermost in our mind,
'Cause the Muslim clerk was hostile,
Though his Christian boss was kind.

He granted us extensions
Despite the Muslim's protest,
Who claimed we're proselytizing
And, therefore, unwanted guests.

As Chad had no believers,
One Assembly was the goal.
By Ridván of the following year,
Near 1,000 had enrolled.

'Twas beyond our expectations
And we desperately needed aid.
Some travel teachers soon arrived
And a firm foundation was laid.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

I had tried to find out as much as possible about Chad before leaving Uganda, but there was little information .. I did, however, learn there were about three million people when we went there. Now I understand there are about eight million.

The Chadians are noted for building straw boats, which the Swedish explorer, Thor Heyerdahl, used as a model for his boat when he set out with the objective of proving that ocean migration by straw boat was possible. He did so, and refuted the notion that people were unable to traverse large expanses of water before Columbus. Either they did, or the continents were joined, or closer together many millions of years ago.

Upon landing at the airport in Fort Lamy, the capital city, the Immigration Officer wanted to send us out of the country immediately because we didn't have return tickets. I had anticipated we might have trouble, so I requested a letter from the National Spiritual Assembly of Uganda stating that we were under their auspices and would not be a burden to the government of Chad. The officer accepted the letter's contents and allowed us to enter.

We took up temporary residence in a quaint French hotel that reminded me of the movies I used to see of World War I when the military pilots stayed in hotels in France. As it was the Christmas holiday season, we could do nothing about extending our visas. After the holidays,

we applied to the Chief of Protocol for a visa extension. He was a Christian but his assistant was a Muslim and opposed to granting us any extension. He said we were coming to make propaganda. I could sense that he and the Chief were not too friendly, but the Chief granted the visas for six months, probably just to annoy his subordinate.

GETTING SETTLED

We began to look for a permanent place to live. Fort Lamy (now known as Ndjamena) had about one-half mile of paved street in the center of town. The rest of the city and country is sand, because it is in the Sahara Desert near Lake Chad. While searching for a house, we walked so much the sand stripped the soles from our shoes. Finally, we found a place owned by a Libyan merchant whose brother had been imprisoned for stealing diamonds. We were informed that when the brother was released from prison we would have to move, as it was his residence.

The house was entirely empty, so I bought lumber at the lumber yard to make a huge bed and an armoire (a cupboard for hanging clothes and storing linens). In some countries overseas there are no closets like we have in the States, so the armoire serves this purpose. I also made benches for the living room so we could seat about 35 persons, and a dining table and chairs, which were the nicest pieces of furniture. These were very large, as was all the furniture, which I liked very much. Adrienne made pillows stuffed with kapok, which was readily available and inexpensive.

We employed a local cook although the only stove we had was a little charcoal burner, but he managed to serve some fairly good meals. Most people in developing countries prepare and cook their food on the ground. The French had dug deep wells in the desert, so we could drink pure water from the faucet. Chad was the only place in Africa where we didn't have to boil the water. The house was finally ready for us to begin teaching. We looked for jobs, and the best I could do was a teacher of English at the U.S. Information Service. Adrienne was hired as a secretary with the United Nations.

BUILDING THE FAITH

From our arrival in December of 1967 until Ridván of 1968 we had six Bahá'ís, not including Adrienne and me, but not enough to form a Local Assembly. I wrote to the Universal House of Justice to ask if we could elect an LSA that year as soon as we got another Bahá'í. They said no. However, between April and July of 1968 we got 100 declarations, and many more in August.

We began to teach by bringing in people off the street as they walked by the house. A teaching class was organized and each day about 35 Bahá'ís came for two hours, six days a week for six months. They were deepened in all the books we had, including the French

Desert Vista

Smooth sand as far as the eye can see
On distant horizon, endlessly.
No creature, dwelling, bush or tree –
Just rolling dunes, occasionally.

A merciless sun, no rivers that flow;
But it has a purpose, this we know.
Were it not for the sand for winds to blow
There'd be no variation – change would be
slow.

Yet, sparsely scattered, not arid or bare,
There's a speck of green, an abode of
prayer
That suddenly looms in that vast nowhere –
An oasis, asylum. God put it there.

translation of *The Dawn Breakers*. While teaching I learned a lot of French, as the students spoke no English. There were about 14 different tribal languages, but Chadian Arabic was the lingua franca of the people. When Chad became a French colony, the official language became French. I did engage a fellow from Togo who was employed at the U.S. Information Center Library. He assisted with the translation and teaching and later became a Bahá'í.

Gradually a nucleus of teachers was formed and sent out to teach the Faith. By Christmas of 1968 we had more than 1,000 believers, about 70 of whom were well deepened Bahá'ís, and five centers were opened in the town quarters. I was able to use the typewriters and duplicating machines at the U.S. Information Service to cut stencils and print Bahá'í literature. As the printing equipment was separate from the Library proper, I could reproduce more than 1,000 photographs of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as well as other literature. Each Bahá'í was given a picture of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

It was not long before 3,000 of the 9,000 population of Fort Lamy were believers. I could walk down the street and be greeted by people who said, "Alláh-u-Abhá!" even though I had never seen them before. We set up institutes in the quarters with teachers and reproduced the training course booklets on Bahá'í Laws & Teachings, Principles and Administration that had been written by Mary Collison in Uganda. In some instances it was necessary to write the characters in longhand on the stencils as there were no characters on the typewriter to reproduce them. The believers studied from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon daily, and were served bread and tea, because many had very little food apart from what they got at the institute. As a result of the booklets, I knew what the Africans did and did not know, and made sure they were well grounded in the basic facts of the Faith. There were things about the Board Members and Hands of the Cause, however, that were not mentioned in the booklets. If a Hand of the Cause was expected to visit, I would explain how he became a Hand, the significance of his station, etc. in order to prepare them.

In the Fall of 1968 the Universal House of Justice called for a conference in Sicily which I wanted very much to attend, but as usual we had no money. I have a special affinity for Sicily. It reminds me of World War II when, as a fighter pilot I flew my Thunderbolt aircraft over that area. We were stationed at Foggia on the Adriatic Sea, and before D-Day we had been assigned to soften up the south of France and northern Italy where the Germans were producing Messerschmitt planes. My commander, Robert Tresville, and I had both been to West Point Military Academy and we were flying together on this mission when he was shot down by the Germans in the Bay of Genoa. I returned to Corsica to spend the night, but instead of going direct to Foggia as I had planned, I was informed by Operations I must go to Sardinia then over to Naples and behind enemy lines to reach Foggia. I plotted a compass direction on the map but missed Sardinia somehow and wound up at Palermo in Sicily, where I landed for refueling before returning to my base. The conference in Palermo, Sicily brought back many memories.

A PLEA FOR HELP

I informed the Universal House of Justice that Bahá'ís were coming in so fast we needed someone to assist us. They sent Dr. Mehdi Samandari, a Counselor, to make a report when we had 700 believers. Prior to his arrival I mentioned to Valentine that we ought to have 1,000 believers before Christmas 1968. Valentine was a musician from Zaire who played the saxophone. He had traveled to West Africa with a band, got as far as Chad and was stranded. He became sincerely interested in the Faith and was one of our most devoted Bahá'ís. He immediately took it upon himself to leave his family and go teaching with some financial support from us. His efforts increased the number of believers to 1,000, and by Ridván of our first year in Chad we had 1,600 Bahá'ís.

Valentine

A friendly smile had Valentine.
It started in his eyes
And spread to cheeks and mouth and chin,
As if he were surprised

That anyone would notice him.
In fact, it was all there –
The charm and cordiality
And qualities most rare.

A tender heart had Valentine,
For one could always find
Compassion, mercy, trustfulness,
A nature loving, kind.

With big guitar, sweet singing voice,
He travelled here and there
To play for groups in clubs and parks.
It didn't matter where.

A searching soul had Valentine.
His firm belief in God
Ensured that he would find the Truth,
Whatever paths he trod.

An open mind had Valentine.
Thought of a different tribe
From neighbors who were hostile,
He turned their taunts aside.

He had no time for prejudice.
His thoughts were far above
The pettiness and jealousy

Of those who could not love.

Confirmed Bahá'í was Valentine.
For when he found the Word
He read the books and studied much
And pondered all he heard.

His songs became more beautiful.
He sang of love divine,
Of Holy Messengers from God,
And the oneness of mankind.

A pioneer was Valentine
In answer to the Call,
He gathered up his family,
His big guitar and all,

And moved to another country
Where he was sure he could
Proclaim the Faith and serve his God
The way he felt he should.

Board Member now is Valentine.
If there is one who can
Go forth and find the seeking souls,
It surely is this man.

There is no better prototype
Of faith and loyalty
Than Valentine, a stalwart soul
Of spirituality.

Dr. Samandari had pioneered in Somalia where he labored for 20 years trying to form a Local Spiritual Assembly, but the Muslims opposed him and the government proved difficult. He was the son of Hand of the Cause Samandari. He said everyone was curious about Chad because very little had been written or was known about the country, so he was surprised that we had so many Bahá'ís. During his investigation, Dr. Samandari asked a few basic questions: "Who is The Bab?" "Who is Bahá'u'lláh?" and some believers couldn't answer. They were not prepared. This taught me a lesson. I found the visitors usually asked the same questions, so I tutored them well so they would be able to respond intelligently the next time with "The Bab is the Forerunner, Bahá'u'lláh is the Prophet for today" (in French: Le Bab est le Precursor. Bahá'u'lláh est le Prophet pour aujourd'hui)~ Although they had been deepened for months from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, they had to be prepared for those two direct questions.

Dr. Samandari arrived at a time when we were in poor financial straits. We had one sheet, one blanket, and one mosquito net. The nights in the desert can be cold, so we gave him our blanket and kept the sheet and mosquito net. During the night he was forced to cover his head with his coat to ward off the mosquitoes. The next day he went to the market and bought us a mosquito net, thinking we had suffered as he had suffered. We were ashamed that we had not given him the mosquito net as well as the blanket. In his report to the Universal House of Justice Dr. Samandari said I was impatient. I felt since I had the entire country as my responsibility, I had every reason to feel as I did and his opinion was somewhat unjustified.

VISITORS

Faith-wise we had made considerable progress in Chad and visitors came to confirm the results. Professor Avaregan was among the first. As he was an engineer, he was very helpful in solving some of our engineering problems. (I had known his brother in Detroit in the '50s). I was trying to make concrete benches that I wanted to divide into thirds, and he showed me how to do it with a string.

Another visitor was an Iranian engineer, Mr. Ferdows, who had studied in Germany and had become quite a successful millionaire in Iran by devising cartoons on how to fix things. He and his wife traveled through Africa, visited Uganda, and met many of our former friends there. They stayed in a hotel and took meals with us. Mr. Ferdows used to flatter our African cook by saying, "Oh Ali, Ali, what a good food you cook Ali." Ali cooked as the locals did on a charcoal burner placed on the ground from which the ashes had to be removed from the bottom, but it proved to be satisfactory.

Ali became a Bahá'í and when the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Fort Lamy was elected, he voted for himself as treasurer, thinking that the money collected would be for him. He didn't understand that the contributions were to be used for the expenses of the Faith. Something similar happened in Cambodia when the treasurer of the Local Assembly of Phnom Penh thought the money was being given to him as a Bahá'í. I recall that he took off with it. One has to have patience and train the believers about the money. This is not so easy to do as they have so little and are so poor. At that time the per capital income was \$50 per year when a man could find work. For this reason we always provided refreshments at the meetings. It also encouraged them to teach.

Aziz Yazdí paid us a surprise visit. He has a long history. His family pioneered in Egypt, then moved to Haifa where he lived on Bahá'í property on the corner of the site of the present Universal House of Justice. He knew the Beloved Guardian, of course, and also 'Alí Nakhjavání. Aziz was a member of the NSA of East Africa before it was known as the National Spiritual Assembly of Uganda and Central Africa. The last time I saw him was in Zaire when we were pioneering in Lubumbashi. He was still very active at 84 years old. I had met him in Uganda when he was a Board Member and I a member of their National Spiritual Assembly. There were no Counselors at that time. As a Board Member Aziz assisted Mr. Musa Banání, the Hand of the Cause in Uganda, and handled the money for the Hands and Board Members in that area. Aziz had established a business in Nairobi, Kenya that manufactured aspirin and was profitable. He told me he traveled to Iran with Mr. Banání to recruit pioneers for Africa. They found no one wanted to come because all were making money and were reluctant to leave home, with the exception of two young men with little education or training who expressed an interest. The young men were told to go home, shine their shoes, and return the next day, which they did, and he accepted them as pioneers.

These young men made the trip to Central Africa in a Russian airplane that landed in Bangui, Central African Republic. They were refused entry because they were traveling on a Russian plane, so they continued on to Cameroun where they disembarked and were granted a

six-month's visa. The visa was about to expire when I heard about them. Having been in Chad for about two years, I was on very good terms with the Immigration authorities. I soon discovered that when I was properly dressed in a suit and tie, they thought I was a dignitary or representative of the American government, so they were very cooperative and granted my requests. We ourselves had been granted three-year visas by this time, so there was no problem for me to obtain three-year visas for pioneers who wanted to remain in Chad.

I wrote to them in Cameroun and told the young men, Bijan Yazdani and Nosrat Mossadegh, to come to Chad, which they did. Bijan reminded me of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, very quiet, unassuming, gentle disposition and devoted to the Cause. Central Africa is a treacherous place with snakes, deadly diseases, etc. and it is no small matter to reside there, but the boys didn't seem to mind at all.

Olive MacDonald, an American pioneer, had also arrived. She secured a job as a secretary with a foreign oil company and was subsequently elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Chad along with the two Iranian youth.

Dr. Muhájir came to see the Iranians, but I had sent them to Fort Archambault in the southern part of the country, along with two or three good Chadian teachers. They all did very well with the teaching there, with the result that 25 Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed and declarations received from a number of believers in the city of Fort Archambault.

It was our special honor and privilege to be hosts to Rúhíyyih Khánum when she stayed in our home for ten days several months before the election of the National Spiritual Assembly of Central Africa. After setting out in East Africa, she drove a Land Rover all through Central Africa to Chad, with the intention of continuing on to West Africa. She and Violette Nakhjavání were accompanied by the Counselor Oloro Epyeru. It was a daunting trip for only two women, particularly when Oloro returned to Uganda as they left Chad. During the days she visited and taught in the neighboring villages, and every night until 2:00 in the morning we talked about the Holy Land and she related tales of the Beloved Guardian. What a blessing it was to have her in our home for those days!

Rúhíyyih Khánum told us how she and the Guardian had gone to London at the beginning of World War II in order to purchase carpets, cabinets and other furnishings for the Archives building. As they could not return to Israel by way of Europe, they took a ship to South Africa, then boarded a train, and ultimately rented a car to drive up to Egypt in order to get back home. She said she became so tired of riding she wanted to get out and walk a bit. The Guardian cautioned her it was not safe because there were lions, but she did it anyway.

They stopped in several places, one of which was in Lubumbashi, Zaire where they spent the night at the railroad station hotel. When we pioneered there 20 years later I found the hotel in much need of repair and a place of ill repute. However, this was near the end of the railroad that starts in South Africa and terminates in Central Zaire in Kasai, the diamond mining area. She and the Guardian must have hired a motor car to take them the rest of the way north. En route to Chad in the '70s, she and Violette and Oloro also stopped in Kisangani, and Oloro quaintly referred to that particular hotel as the place "where Rúhíyyih Khánum slept with the Guardian."

CONVENTION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

During her visit Rúhíyyih Khánum learned that we were planning to take about 36 delegates to the Convention in Central African Republic. She very generously provided \$500 to transport the delegates to Bangui, C.A.R. for this purpose.

It was claimed that a brand new truck driven from Fort Lamy to the south of Chad over the sandy, rutted, washboard roads would have the appearance of a ten-year old vehicle by the time it arrived at its destination. Bill Davis, another American pioneer, arranged with a tourist

company in Fort Lamy to furnish a driver and a French bus to make the trip to Bangui. It was a hard, grueling drive for everyone, particularly the driver. Adrienne was the only woman. Enroute we ate sardines, supplemented with mangoes and bananas, and carried our own bread and water. Before crossing the border into Central African Republic, we spent the night in Fort Archambault.

In Bangui the delegates were able to find lodging in a number of old empty houses. The National Spiritual Assembly of Uganda designated me as chairman of the Convention to elect the National Spiritual Assembly of Central Africa, which was to represent about 150 to 200 believers in Congo Brazzaville, 16 or 17 in Gabon, 150 in Central African Republic, and 6,000 in Chad.

The purpose of the election was to enable these countries to work toward increasing their numbers and eventually to elect their own National Assemblies in the future. With the largest number of Bahá'ís, Chad had five seats on the Assembly. I was hoping there would be six members, but one of the Convention participants suggested that two members be elected from Congo Brazzaville instead of one since Chad had so many seats. This gave two members each to Central African Republic and Congo Brazzaville, five to Chad, and none to Gabon. I wasn't too pleased because I felt these countries had had their opportunity, having been in existence longer than we in Chad. Nevertheless, we carried on with this National Assembly until the Universal House of Justice gave permission to separate into three distinct National Spiritual Assemblies. By that time Chad had about 9,000 Bahá'ís, CAR and Congo Brazzaville had about 400 each, and Gabon still had only 17.

The trip home was no less exhausting, even though we took another route. We stopped at a small town where everything was filthy. In parts of Africa this means a place that has been used as a toilet and never been cleaned. In that hot weather, the stench was overpowering.

The teaching continued to make progress in Chad, but Congo Brazzaville was having problems. The secretary of their Local Spiritual Assembly became ill and no meetings were held until the next session of the National Spiritual Assembly of Central Africa. Both the secretary and her husband were Iranian doctors pioneering in the north of Brazzaville. Their teaching was at a standstill. The available money for teaching had been allotted to each country equally. Chad had exhausted its teaching funds while Congo Brazzaville had used none of theirs because no meetings had been held.

Eventually, with the approval of the Universal House of Justice, the NSA of Central Africa was dissolved and three separate National Spiritual Assemblies emerged: one for CAR seated in Bangui, known as the National Spiritual Assembly of Central African Republic; the National Spiritual Assembly of Congo Brazzaville seated in Brazzaville, and the National Spiritual Assembly of Chad in Fort Lamy. Gabon still didn't have enough believers to warrant having its own National Assembly.

THE CHADIAN CONVENTION

Gazi was a neighboring desert village of Fort Lamy with some crumbling mud dwellings where the chief of village, who accepted the Faith, gave us some land. I was told that 'Gazi' means 'difficult' in Arabic. We began to build a primary school on the land. When the House of Justice granted us a National Assembly, preparations were made to hold the National Convention there. The Africans have been building straw structures for centuries, and one of the believers constructed an auditorium from straw mats that was large enough to hold 500 people. During the heat of the day the mats were dampened with water so the desert wind could blow through them and cool the air. I sent Bijan and Nosrat, the Iranian youth to help with the construction. They had to sleep out in the open desert, which was no doubt difficult for them, but they did it. Quite likely this contributed to their being elected to the first

National Spiritual Assembly of Chad.

A Spiritual Bounty

Rúhiyyih Khánum came to see us
With her companion, Violette.
They visited two weeks in Chad.
'Twas a bounty we'll never forget.

They met with Bahá'ís in villages,
Travelled far and near through the sand.
Each night they talked of the Guardian,
And told tales of the Holy Land.

When the day arrived for them to leave,
Gone was our spiritual pleasure.
We waved goodbye with tear-filled eyes
And hearts full of memories to treasure.

For election of our NSA

Two Counsellors had been sent.
On the outskirts of the city
Beneath a dampened straw mat tent.

The first Bahá'í Convention
Of Chad was convened in this land,
Blessed by the loving presence
Of Enoch Olinga, the Hand.

Four years had passed, we'd done our bit,
It was time to move on from Chad.
There were pioneers and teachers,
And more believers to be had.

Bahá had blessed our efforts;
We had no cause to complain.
The Faith was spreading everywhere;
The Morgans weren't needed again.

The most outstanding event of our experience in Chad was the presence of Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga, who was sent along with Counselor Samandari, to officiate at the election of the first National Spiritual Assembly of Chad. At the Convention Mr. Olinga told Adrienne and me that we were the conquerors of Chad. In three years Bahá'u'lláh had given us 10,000 Bahá'ís, a National Spiritual Assembly of which I was chairman, and a Board Member for Central Africa, my wife. Also, there were 96 Local Spiritual Assemblies throughout the country.

ATTEMPTS TO INCORPORATE

Attempts were made to get the Faith incorporated. I decided to try to see the President, Tombalbaye, but as he was not in his office, I followed the suggestion of his secretary and wrote a letter which the secretary agreed to deliver to him. While preparing the application file for incorporation, I asked one of our staunch Bahá'ís and a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly to recommend a lawyer. He said a lawyer was not necessary. This Bahá'í had been a chemist and had worked in the post office. He impressed me by bringing in 25 believers and was one of the few who contributed to the Faith. I was totally unaware that he had been caught opening mail in the post office and had been sent to prison. Consequently, when our request for incorporation was submitted together with the names of the members of the Local Assembly, it was refused. During his visit to Chad, Dr. Muhájir had advised us to make no further attempts at incorporation until the Bahá'í lawyer, Dr. 'Azízu'lláh Navídí, could come to assist us.

Dr. Navídí was a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh and the lawyer of the Beloved Guardian. He was also the lawyer for the Iranian Oil Company. The Guardian had encouraged him to study international law at the Sorbonne in Paris, from which he earned a doctoral degree. Dr. Navídí soon learned after his arrival that the government objected to the title 'National Spiritual Assembly' because it resembled too closely their own National Assembly of Chad. He decided to change tactics and request the incorporation of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Fort Lamy. This proved to be acceptable and was approved by the government.

THE DISPERSION

Following the election of the National Spiritual Assembly we prepared to leave Fort Lamy. We were a bit worried that the woman pioneer was not favorable to the idea of mass teaching. She and the Iranian youth would be in charge of the future progress of the Faith, so we left it in the hands of Bahá'u'lláh. The Holy Writings state that when the first pioneer leaves home to settle in another country, the Faith in the donor country will be firmly established, so two pioneers were sent out from Chad.

Daniel Chi Chi went to Congo Brazzaville and Tshiambu Valentine went to Gabon. Chi Chi took it upon himself to move to a Portuguese enclave called Kabinda. Chi Chi was an Angolan who had been living in Chad. He was the chemist who had been condemned by the government for four years for stealing from the mail. According to French law, the individual is considered guilty until proved innocent. Kabinda is an extension of Angola that juts into the Congo just beyond Zaire. It is a part of Gabon, cut off by an isthmus of land that follows Zaire into the Atlantic Ocean. An inlet goes up from the ocean to Matati, the port at which Zaire receives goods from other countries that are shipped by rail to Kinshasa.

Valentine went to Gabon to help develop the country, but unfortunately he was forced to leave. Most of these countries were not eager to have outsiders come to stay. One has to be very clever to be able to remain with the government's permission. We had had a lot of experience of this sort during our pioneering, but poor Valentine had not. This part of Africa comprising Chad, Gabon, Congo Brazzaville and Central African Republic, was under French domination. The circumstances were somewhat different in Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi which had been colonized by the Belgians.

One of the pioneers in Chad, Bill Davis, who had become a Bahá'í in the States, left to receive medical assistance at the American installation in Germany. He had suffered shell shock in World War II, for which he was receiving disability. I saw him several years later in South Carolina when we were pioneering there.

I wanted to conquer the Sahara Desert for the Faith. It has a beautiful history of Noah's descendants from Canaan who spread throughout Africa and ultimately became Muslims. A Muslim university in Andalusia, Spain existed long before Europe had such institutions. In fact, a European attended this university and later became a Pope of Rome. It was he who encouraged the kings of Europe to wrest Palestine from the Muslims, marking the beginning of the Crusades in the 10th century. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said they fought for 200 years until Saladin, the Muslim commander, drove the Europeans out of the Middle East. As a result of the Crusades, Europeans who had been exposed to Islamic learning and culture raided the Islamic libraries in Egypt and the Middle East for books which they took back to Europe for translation into their languages. Thus, association with the teachings of Muhammad brought the Europeans out of the Dark Ages into the Renaissance.

BACK TO CAMBODIA

As we prepared to leave Chad, we paid \$200 to send our books to Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Enroute we stopped at Nice in the south of France for a few days before going on to Israel. During World War II when I was in the 15th Air Force I used to fly over Nice to escort bombers that dropped bombs on the Germans in the south of France. Now it was 1971 and we were staying in a hotel that overlooked the Cote d'Azur portrayed in so many movies. I tried to get a flight that would stop in Rome, because I had been there during the war and also in 1963 after election of the first Universal House of Justice. In Rome I asked the airport staff if this was the airport over which I flew to escort bombers. This was a mistake on my part, because they became angry and informed me this was a new airport; the old one was near Lake Como. I wanted to take Adrienne to Rome to show her the Sistine Chapel and other buildings I had visited when I was a pilot. Instead, we had to go on to Greece where the airport was much the same as it had been when I fought in World War II. From Greece we had to take a plane from Athens down to Haifa because the Muslims had Israel bottled up. We were privileged to meet with some members of the Universal House of Justice – 'Alí Nakhjavání and Amoz Gibson – who questioned us about Africa and the situation there. We also talked with Hushmand Fathezam about Asia. From Haifa we went to Thailand and made arrangements in Bangkok to continue to Cambodia.

THE BAN IS LIFTED

In Phnom Penh we again saw Khuy Sien, one of our best teachers, but we made no attempt to teach until the ban had been lifted. Dressed in my best attire, I rented a Mercedes with a driver and visited the generals, accompanied by an older Cambodian who knew the important people in the government. Eventually I had an opportunity to talk with the Prime Minister, Long Boret, a fine fellow who had learned of the Faith through his association with the United Nations as Cambodian representative. He wrote a nice letter for us and arranged for the ban to be lifted so the Bahá'ís would have permission to teach again. Unfortunately, the Communists took over shortly thereafter and we had to retreat to Bangkok. With the Communist takeover, Prime Minister Long Boret was killed as were one million Cambodians,

While waiting in Bangkok to return to Cambodia, Adrienne wanted to return home to see her mother. It was then 1975, we were both 55 years old and had been pioneering since we were 38, almost 20 years. Adrienne was physically exhausted and worn out from living in hot climates. I wanted to go to Gabon because Valentine had been put out, but the House of Justice felt I should return to the States to be with my wife. I went to Haifa to appeal to them, stating I would lose my spirituality if I returned to the States. I felt very spiritual out there with tens of thousands of Bahá'ís as a reward for my teaching, and now they were going to send me home.

'Alí Nakhjavání handed me the letter from the House congratulating us for serving the Faith so valiantly and suggesting we return home. I felt it was because I was 55 years old and they thought it was not as easy for me as it had been when I was a younger man.

My thinking was influenced by the fact that a Bahá'í from England, Philip Hainsworth, who had been in East Africa for 20 years, had decided to retire. He had been a captain in the British Army, was extremely intelligent and erudite. Both of us had served as members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Uganda at the same time. He was a very likeable fellow, nicknamed 'The Tank' because of his size. At age 55 he went home to get himself settled, as it is very difficult to get a job when one is over 40. I thought perhaps the House of Justice felt that at my age I couldn't go to Gabon and handle the situation effectively. You do get sick from malaria, hepatitis, and other diseases that can pull you down in Asia and Africa,

especially if you are alone in a country with no one to help. Adrienne always set up the house and managed the servants. In the tropics it is too hot to do the customary chores yourself, such as cooking meals, washing clothes, cleaning, etc. that can be done easily in the temperate climate. We always had two or three servants to do these tasks. With Adrienne in the States to see her mother, I was alone and forced to return to the States also.

RETURN TO THE AMERICAS

Back in the States we were faced with the obligation to look for jobs. It took me somewhat longer than Adrienne to find work, as she had been employed previously by the National Academy of Sciences and was rehired right away. Although I had a commercial pilot's license, had been a fighter pilot, studied psychology, worked in the prison system and in a mental hospital, I stood a better chance of being hired in Washington if I were famous, young, or had political connections. After sending out 150 resumes, I was finally employed in May of 1981 at Air and Space Engineering of the Department of Defense, from which I retired in 1982. They wanted me to stay on the job until I was 72, but I knew I wouldn't be able to pioneer in Africa at that age, and I wanted to get in as much pioneering time as possible. It was more important to me to sacrifice and assist the Faith than to stay and work for the federal government in order to retire with a better income.

During this period the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States brought C. M. Lee to the States for a visit. I was very surprised to see him. Neither the National Assembly nor the Washington Bahá'ís had any idea of our association with him in Cambodia or that we were the best of friends. Arrangements were made for him to stay in Georgetown with Anita Ioas, daughter of Hand of the Cause Leroy Ioas. It was Anita's husband whom I had met in Laos when he worked for the American consular service and who refused to help me renew my visa for Thailand. This was a wonderful opportunity for me to renew my friendship with C. M. Lee. We had dinner together at a Chinese restaurant. However, it never occurred to me that he might have preferred to dine in an American restaurant. The Chinese food was poor compared to what you can get in Asia. C. M. Lee returned to Hong Kong and later escorted Rúhíyyih Khánum through the country when she visited China. I assume he is still there.

I wanted to go home-front pioneering in New Orleans, Louisiana. Adrienne told me to go ahead and she would join me. During the year I was there I found that at one time in the early '70s there were many declarants, but the Bahá'ís were afraid they wouldn't know what to do with them. They received no help from the National Spiritual Assembly.

Dr. Muhájir visited New Orleans and asked me if I could go to Togo, West Africa, as a pioneer. It was a pleasure to see him again, but I had to decline his suggestion to go to Togo as I didn't have the money. At that time I was employed as an assistant accountant by the Department of Agriculture in New Orleans. He then suggested that I go to Martinique, which I did.

A MONTH IN MARTINIQUE

I left for Martinique, a department of France, which has very close ties to the French. Josephine, the wife of Napoleon Bonaparte, was born there. I landed at Fort de France, met with the National Spiritual Assembly of the French Antilles, and learned they were not desirous of engaging in mass teaching. It seems Pouva Murday had visited earlier and taught so successfully that 150 people had declared, but none of the Bahá'ís had taken the trouble to visit them, so the declarants left the Faith. As the island of Martinique had been colonized by the French, Catholicism is well entrenched.

I stayed with a couple who were pioneering from French-speaking Canada, the Guilbeaux. Mr. Guilbeaux had some difficulty finding employment because the Martiniquais did not want foreigners to come and take jobs from the local people. He was working a night job in a hotel, which left his wife alone. When I stayed there she spent the nights with her friend and worked on a regular job in a hardware store during the day. It was not easy for a young couple with meager resources to live under such conditions. Their apartment was in a high-rise on the top of a mountain with a view of the bay where the tourist ships docked. The

wind blew so strongly you could dry clothes in 15 minutes. There was a Prix Unique (the French equivalent of Wal-Mart) where groceries, clothing, etc. were sold. With money, life was not bad in Fort de France.

Many slaves had been imported from Africa years ago, so the majority of the local population were black, freed, former slaves. One of the volcanic mountains had erupted in 1902 and killed nearly all the inhabitants in the northern part of the island, with the exception, I was told, of two men who were in prison. Being shut away in the dungeons from the noxious gases had saved their lives.

I did some teaching in the north end of the island when the volcano was still fuming. There was no fire but plenty of smoke, and it was quite bright at night. On one side of the island is the Atlantic Ocean with high waves and dangerously swift currents. The Caribbean Sea on the other side is calm, ideal for swimming and for vacationing tourists. Mme. Guilbeaux accompanied me to the north of the island. I gave her some advice on how to bring in new believers and she became an effective teacher. However, I found that not only was the National Assembly averse to mass teaching, but some of the pioneers from the States resented my presence, and made it very obvious. After I left Martinique I received a letter from Mme. Guilbeaux stating she had a number of new declarants. Unfortunately, their family situation with his working nights and her in the daytime contributed to the dissolution of their marriage, in addition to the fact that she was attractive and had to contend with advances from men.

A young girl from Canada was studying law in Fort de France. I asked her if she would marry my black friend who had just finished engineering in New Orleans. He was a fine young man, tall, good looking, and worked for his father who was a bricklayer. In this way he was able to work his way through a prestigious university in New Orleans. I was looking for a wife for him. This young lady had denounced her mother to the Local Assembly in Canada for, so she claimed, criticizing the Local Assembly. As a result, her mother lost her voting rights. I was surprised she would do such a thing and felt I had made a mistake, as her heart could not be very loving, although she claimed it was.

SOUTH CAROLINA

From Martinique I went to South Carolina, where I had been told there was mass teaching. As I felt mass teaching was my forte, I wanted to be where this was taking place. One of the Bahá'ís was a clerk in the employment office at Fort Jackson military base in Columbia, S.C. He was able to get me a job as a clerk in the Training Aids Division. I was 56 at the time. Another Bahá'í, a Native American, was very helpful when she learned I was looking for an apartment for my wife. She was a brilliant girl, a Phi Beta Kappa graduate from a school in Missouri, and was serving in the military as a captain at Fort Jackson. She took me to the complex where she was living and I was able to rent a nice apartment.

Meanwhile, Adrienne was working in Washington, D.C., so I bought a car and drove to Washington to pick her up. I discovered she had also bought a car, so we rented a trailer to carry her things and attached it to my vehicle while she followed in her car with her cat. She wasn't happy about living in the South as she had been born and reared in the northern United States where there wasn't as much prejudice and hatred. South Carolina had a bad reputation ever since the days of slavery, and even in the '70s it was not uncommon for black people to be kidnapped or just disappear.

We settled in Columbia and Adrienne was hired as a secretary at the University of South Carolina. She decided to work on a Master's degree. I taught the Faith every evening for two or three hours after work, and always got one or two believers. The blacks of South Carolina were similar to those in Uganda, so it was easy to teach. As there were only eight members of

the Local Assembly when I arrived, I became the ninth member. With constant teaching I was able to get 47 new declarations to build up the community.

When the secretary of the National Teaching Committee was scheduled to visit Columbia, I went out and got 50 declarations in two weeks, and presented them to the Local Assembly, but the members were not pleased. The National Teaching Committee Secretary told the Assembly members they were very fortunate to have these 50 declarations, as other assemblies couldn't even get one declaration. She suggested that each of them take a few of the declarations and go and visit them. Outside the city I also got a number of believers who were turned over to Board Member Trudy White, who provided me with literature and declaration cards .

This was our first stint of home-front pioneering and we enjoyed it, taking advantage of the libraries, the zoo, and the movies. Adrienne liked her work at the University, but the prejudice of the southern whites I had to deal with at Fort Jackson made my work less satisfactory, although I stuck with it.

NO MASS TEACHING?

I visited the believers and deepened them to the best of my ability. I went to Malaysia to purchase books such as *The New Garden* that were suitable for those who are not advanced in reading. The National Teaching Committee seemed reluctant to encourage the kind of mass teaching we had done in Africa and Asia. I even prepared a syllabus for a deepening course based on *The New Garden* for presentation at Louis Gregory Institute, but the American Bahá'ís were hesitant to consider it. I recall the Beloved Guardian mentioned that American Bahá'ís say nobody can tell them what to do. He said he wasn't trying to tell them what to do, but only to protect them by suggesting they get out of the cities. He suggested that no more than 15 Bahá'ís remain in the cities

Adrienne was also a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Columbia and was appointed an Assistant to Auxiliary Board Member, Elizabeth Martin. During one meeting from which she was absent, an Assembly member said, "Let's send Adrienne to _____" I remarked he should ask the Board Member before sending the Assistant anywhere, because the Assistants were meeting with Local Assemblies to assist and strengthen them. I knew I would have to go with her as they hadn't mentioned anyone else to accompany her, and it was customary for two people to go together when teaching. I was the only one who went out alone. I was not in favor of the suggestion and said so, but was outvoted by the other members. As the Board Member, Elizabeth met with the Local Assembly to resolve the matter. Bob Martin, Elizabeth's husband, was a wonderful Bahá'í. He and Elizabeth had settled in Winnsboro, a small town near Columbia. He had served in World War II and was receiving disability as a result of having been thrown from a truck in Asia.

RENEWING DECLARATIONS

I became the chairman of the Local Assembly and, to my surprise, I found that 50 of the declarations I had submitted had been placed in the back of the filing cabinet. I took them, revisited the declarants, and Adrienne, who had become secretary of the Assembly, had them registered and sent to the National Office.

Many in South Carolina were ready to become believers, but the prejudice among certain Bahá'ís prevented the masses from embracing the Faith. Americans appear to be more interested in personalities and those who had desirable personalities were catered to, placed on committees and sent out to teach. Unfortunately/ this did not contribute to the growth of the Faith.

I found the southern blacks are similar to the Africans in their response to the Faith.

They are very spiritual and open, because they love God. By teaching only the blacks, I was able to get many declarations, but the majority of whites were not interested in religion or in anything that included blacks. Until I began teaching in South Carolina I didn't know why the Beloved Guardian asked the American blacks to go south and teach and establish Local Assemblies.

MADAGASCAR

Adrienne's mother passed away while we were in South Carolina, so we drove to her home in Erie, Pennsylvania for the funeral. Upon our return we decided we were sufficiently rested to leave the States again. I had pioneered in Martinique without Adrienne and I thought we should do the islands together. I asked the U.S. National Assembly for suggestions as to where we might go. They offered Spitzbergen, an island near the Arctic Circle, which I felt was a little cold for us after having lived so long in the tropics. When they offered to trade that island with Canada, which was responsible for Madagascar, we became the pioneers for Canada to Madagascar.

Canada wanted to meet with us before we went to Madagascar. I didn't think it was necessary since we were seasoned pioneers, but I told them if they wanted to pay our way to Canada we would come. We always paid our way wherever we went, but we had not figured a trip to Canada in our pioneering expenses. So, at their expense we visited the National Center in Montreal, talked with some of the members of their National Assembly, and returned to South Carolina.

Our travel arrangements were made through Lisel Webster, a retired former employee of the federal government, who was living in Columbia, Maryland. She was then engaged in arranging travel for Bahá'ís to various parts of the world. We had received permission to visit the House of Justice, so she planned our travel to include a stop in Israel with side trips to some Christian holy places, such as Jerusalem, and a kibbutz in Galilee where we remained over night. Our three day pilgrimage was graciously extended by the House of Justice to a nine-day visit. We stayed in a hotel on Mount Carmel and saw many of our old friends.

ENTREE TO ANTANARIVO

We boarded a South African airline to fly to Kenya where, upon arrival, the Kenyan army was very much in evidence to protect the aircraft from anyone who might try to damage or hijack it. From Nairobi the plane crossed over Tanzania and landed at Nosy Bay, which is at sea level on the island of Madagascar. Unfortunately, the airport at Tananarive was only equipped to handle DC-3s carrying at most 38 people. The jet planes with 200 or more passengers could barely land on the airfield at Nosy Bay, and the building was so small everyone was packed and jammed as the officials attempted to process documents. The Communist influence was very evident, because the airport and immigration officials were rude and suspicious. They turned luggage out on a table for examination, placed their hands in one's pockets, required the women to empty their purses, counted the money, etc. We never knew exactly what they were looking for. Of course, when you enter these countries you must prove you have a round-trip ticket or sufficient money to support yourself while you are in the country. We had learned this lesson in Chad. After a thorough search by immigration officers, we flew to Antanarivo, the capital city located at 7,000 feet in the mountains. The aircraft had been fairly empty when we left Nairobi, but at Nosy Bay it filled up with locals, who were very poor, without shoes, dressed in shabby clothing.

Our experience in Madagascar was one we will not soon forget. At one time the island of Madagascar had been occupied successively by the British and the French. The population of eight million was, according to the Christians, three million Christians and five million Animists. French was the official language, although the Madagascans spoke their own native tongue, which we did not learn as we weren't there long enough to do so.

After checking into a hotel, we found the Bahá'í Center located near the top of one of the mountains, nearly 10 or 15 stories above the city below. When you are not accustomed to climbing steep mountains, it takes a little getting used to. These were some of the poorest

people we had ever seen in all of our pioneering in Asia and Africa. The markets had little in the way of food. You are lucky to be able to buy duck eggs, for which you have to acquire a taste, and the coffee is mainly chicory, bitter and very acid. Adrienne was a coffee drinker, but as a result of drinking chicory she developed a serious ulcer and had to be hospitalized when we returned to the States.

We met a Bahá'í family, the Razakas, who lived on top of one of the mountains. It was impossible to drive up there. You had to walk up narrow, winding paths. Mme. Razaka was a Board Member, and Mr. Razaka was a government employee in the Agriculture Ministry. There were 13 children, I believe, all of whom were girls except one, and most of them were Bahá'ís. Mr. and Mme Razaka took us to their farm where we talked with a few of the neighbors about the Faith and had lunch with the family before we all drove back to town. We moved from the hotel into the Bahá'í Center where two other pioneers were living, along with some voracious rats. What food we could get was prepared for all of us to eat together. We spent the Fast there and broke it with a young Bahá'í couple. The husband was Madagascan, the wife was Iranian and pregnant with their first child.

MEETING WITH THE NSA

Enroute to Madagascar we had talked with Aziz Yazdí in Haifa. He was a member of the International Teaching Committee and suggested that we go to South Africa rather than to Madagascar, because the believers in Madagascar were not very cooperative. With this in mind, I asked the friends to get together the National Spiritual Assembly members. When they arrived I was surprised to see they also had no shoes. They sat on the floor as I explained some things to them. This was just after the Fast about a month before Ridván. I told them what I had been told in Haifa, that they had not met in a year and had no Bahá'í activity in spite of the presence of pioneers.

It seems Madagascar had been opened by an Indian Bahá'í lady whom I later met in 1986 at the inauguration of the Bahá'í temple in India. There had been American pioneers to Madagascar earlier too, among them Ellsworth Blackwell and his wife, Ruth, but little had been achieved. The young pioneer from California told me that Bahíyyih Ford had visited and appointed him a Board Member.

LOCAL IMPRESSIONS AND PRACTICES

Despite the poverty of the people, the Madagascans consider themselves better than the Africans. They claim they are descendants of the Samoans, although there is little resemblance that I could see. There were Chinese, Europeans and Africans there, but the general attitude was that Africa is the dark continent inhabited by backward people--a view similar to that the Americans have of Africa. It is sad that people harbor such prejudices against others.

In my opinion, the Madagascans were superstitious, not as spiritual nor as educated as the Africans. For example, a cabbie was driving down the street with a European passenger who heard the cabbie talking to someone seated next to him in the front seat and explaining: "When you were here this wasn't here, and there's another one that's new." The cabbie seemed to be giving his companion a tour of the city. The European passenger was surprised to find that the front seat passenger was dead and had been for some time.

Even at 6,000 feet bodies are buried above the ground rather than underneath it. It is customary to exhume the body annually, wrap it in fresh clothing and rebury it. This is what I have heard, but during my stay I seldom saw the locals in suitable clothes they could afford to place on a dead body. Bodies are buried above ground in New Orleans also, but for a different reason. New Orleans is at sea level, so burial beneath the ground would result in the body

being covered with water.

Although the French and the British who conquered the island, and perhaps later the Russians, have left their mark, the people still have very little. There seemed to be little opportunity for work in Madagascar. No doubt there was a university, but I never saw it, nor was there any facility to teach language or English. There is no comparison between the Madagascans and the East Africans, where the larger cities can boast of four- and five-star hotels, modern apartment buildings, universities, etc. Even in Zambia below the equator, I was surprised to see a modern city in Lusaka. We experienced some trouble leaving Madagascar because the immigration authorities were just as suspicious as they were when we arrived.

A BRIEF RESPITE

We had left our Bahá'í books in storage in Nairobi rather than pay the cost of taking them to Madagascar, so we arranged to have them forwarded to the States at the cost of \$800. I determined I would never again send books out of the country; it was too costly and many of them were missing when I received them in Washington. Having settled in the D.C. area and found jobs, we took an active part in the Bahá'í activities of the communities in Washington and Maryland. It was during this period that Adrienne returned to school to complete her Master's degree .

MEMORABLE BAHÁ'ÍS

Adrienne and I have had the bounty of meeting and knowing many wonderful Bahá'ís.

MÍRZÁ ALI KULI KHAN

Both Adrienne and I served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Detroit, Michigan at the time Mírzá Ali Kahn arrived in Detroit in 1957. We had been Bahá'ís only two years. He was then 82 years old and preparing to write his memoirs. Two attractive girls from Scotland had come to Texas as Kelly Girl secretaries. They were visiting Detroit, and as they were Bahá'ís he wanted to engage them to assist him with the writing when he returned to Washington. Mírzá Ali Kuli Khan was the father of the writer, Marzieh Gail. He had married Florence Breed, an American lady from a wealthy family. Marzieh married an American doctor and has translated many of the Bahá'í Writings from Persian into English.

ENOCH OLINGA

The Beloved Guardian has designated Enoch Olinga as the conqueror of six countries. He began his pioneering in Cameroun, and he told me that by sending teachers to the surrounding countries in West Africa, he was able to open five additional countries, including Nigeria and Togo. It was for this venture that the Beloved Guardian bestowed on him the title of 'Father of Victories'. Mr. Olinga married an attractive Cameroonian lady, Elizabeth, who became our dear friend and of whom we were very fond. They stayed with us frequently when they were in Kampala. Unfortunately, this wonderful Hand of the Cause was killed years later, shot to death along with Elizabeth and their children, and to this day no one seems to know why. I suspect it had something to do with the revolution, as people do terrible things when religion and civil war are involved. The news of this happening came when we were pioneering in South Carolina. It made us very sad.

COLLIS FEATHERSTONE

We can learn much from the Hands of the Cause of God. When they are elevated spiritually, their knowledge is expanded and is potentially higher than the rest of us. I mentioned this to Hand of the Cause Collis Featherstone of Australia when I met him in Laos, where he and his wife, Madge, were visiting Feradoun Missaghian. He was visibly embarrassed and perplexed by my statement, as was his wife. Perhaps he didn't realize that although we are all Bahá'ís with similarities of language, culture, etc., the blessings bestowed on the Hands by God far exceed the bounties the rest of us receive.

AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚHÍYYIH KHÁNUM

When I first met Rúhíyyih Khánum in 1961 she was 51 years old and I was 41. I knew that she had been born in New York in 1910, and that 'Abdu'l-Bahá came to visit her family in Canada when she was two years old. At this time He informed her mother, May Maxwell, that He wanted His grandson, Shoghi Effendi, to marry her daughter, Mary. She herself told us that when 'Abdu'l-Bahá picked her up she knocked His táj off His head. 'Abdu'l-Bahá also told her parents they should not deny her anything or ever tell her no, so young Mary lived a life of untrammelled freedom.

She admits that she gave her mother many anxious moments. She was a queen, and the closer you got to know her the more evident it became. She brooked no nonsense from anyone. When she came to visit Vietnam, I ventured to give her some advice, and in no uncertain terms she informed me that even the Guardian didn't tell her what to do. Later, in 1963 I saw her in Haifa when I served as a teller for the election of the first Universal House of Justice, and had the bounty of seeing her also at the London Conference, as well as in Malaysia at the election of the first National Spiritual Assembly of Malaysia in 1964.

'ALÍ AKBAR FURÚTAN

Hand of the Cause Dr. Furútan was born in the region of Ukraine in Russia, as was 'Alí Nakhjavání, member of the Universal House of Justice. This is the region where the Bahá'í House of Worship in Ishqábád was located. Dr. Furútan attended the University of Moscow, obtained a degree in psychology, then became a professor in one of the schools in Iran. He was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran and was later named a Hand of the Cause by the Beloved Guardian. Dr. Furútan has written some wonderful books on the family and on other Bahá'í subjects.

'ALÍ MUHAMMAD VARQÁ

Hand of the Cause Dr. 'Alí Muhammad Varqá is the keeper of the Huqúqu'lláh (the Right of God), as was his father before him. The Huqúqu'lláh was established by Bahá'u'lláh so that all the Bahá'ís may contribute a portion, in fact 1/19th of their profits, over and above living expenses, to the Faith. I saw him last in Israel.

When the Universal House of Justice was elected, one of their first pronouncements was that they could not appoint additional Hands or elevate anyone to that station, because it was above and beyond the authority vested in them as members of the House of Justice. They did, however, devise a method of appointing Counselors to assist the Hands in carrying on their work. The Counselors are a diverse group educationally and intellectually, but they are doing their best to carry on the work of the Hands.

BACK TO AFRICA – ZAIRE

Zaire has 360 different tribes among the Bantu, with 360 different languages, and as each tribe is very protective of its territory, it is not unusual for them to fight when they meet. The tribe was a unit to protect against wild animals as well as enemies. At the time of receiving independence, very few of the Zairis were educated. Patrice Lumumba was a postal worker with a limited education when he became the first President. He was later assassinated, as was another President before Mobutu gained power. Mobutu became a wealthy man worth four billion dollars when we were in Zaire and, at the same time, he was in debt to the World Bank for four billion dollars. Now he is gone, may God have mercy upon him.

In some African countries, the philosophy about government is if you are in a position to steal money, you should do so. The Africans said since they are not in office very long, they have to get as much as possible while there. This was very much the case in Zaire. President Mobutu pacified the many tribes in the country by allowing one of their leaders to serve as a Minister until he had stolen what the President considered was a sufficient amount, then someone else would be appointed from another tribe. With so many languages to deal with, only five official languages were recognized, one of which was French. It was fortunate the Belgians colonized the country, at least the people had a common language.

MBUJI MAYI

Nearly 20 years after Rúhiyyih Khánum's visit to Chad, I returned to Africa at 63 years of age and pioneered in the diamond mining area of Mbuji Mayi, Zaire. After spending two difficult months in Kinshasa trying to get permission, I was granted a visa to Kasai Oriental Province, which is extremely well guarded because of the diamonds.

Transition

A brief sojourn in Haifa
For some spiritual renewal,
Then on to Madagascar –
An African island jewel.

The government was Socialist
And pioneers were few.
Their NSA had failed to meet,
But there was nothing we could do.

We assembled a few members
And told them how sad was the House
With their seeming lack of service
To the Faith they had espoused.

A few week's stay, and that was it;
We were forced to change our plans.
The government wasn't happy
About having Americans.

Returning to the States again
Was the furthest from our dreams.
We had to find employment
In order to acquire some means

To venture to our next post,
The Republic of Zaire.
We spent a month in Kinshasa
While we waited for our gear.

A plane trip to Bukavu
To visit briefly with Bahá'ís,
And thence by boat to Goma,
Where we found to our surprise

We had to board a battered bus
For a jolting twelve hours ride;
Luggage jammed the narrow aisle;
Arms and elbows poked one's side.

All passengers shared single seats,
With scarcely an inch to spare.
There was no place to stretch one's legs,
Fumes and dust blew everywhere.
We reached our destination.

Butembo the town was named
Because it was elephant country,
And consequently famed.

Mbuji Mayi proved to be quite an experience. The elevation was about 3,000 feet, very warm during the day but rather cool at night. Tom Roberts, a Canadian Bahá'í, had preceded me there as a pioneer. He said it took him a couple of years to convince the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada to allow him to pioneer. His grandmother had acquired a number of - valuable paintings which were sold when she passed away, and each of his siblings received a legacy of \$75,000 from the sale. From his share he purchased a motorcycle and traveled from the coast of West Africa to Central Africa.

Tom was tall, about 6'2", and good looking. He had rented a house but it had no furniture, so both of us slept on the floor. Someone had given him a mosquito netting attached to bedding, which enabled him to sleep without too much difficulty. As I was not well covered by a net, I contracted a bad case of malaria. In addition, my high blood pressure complicated matters because we ate at the African market where the food was heavily salted, and I had exhausted my supply of blood pressure pills.

There was quite a Bahá'í community in Mbuji Mayi. I recall vividly the Nineteen Day Feasts at which the believers sang so beautifully about Bahá'u'lláh as they marched around the fund box to make their contributions. It moved me to tears. They were contributing to the construction of a Bahá'í Center in Mbuji Mayi. I mentioned this to one of the Counselors from Kenya, who said each time he visits the Bahá'í functions in Central Africa he is affected in the same manner.

It also reminds me of the occasion in Uganda when the Bahá'ís from South Africa came to attend a meeting. The final session was a gathering in the House of Worship, at which the South African Bahá'ís sang so movingly everyone in the Temple was crying. There were Bahá'ís from the Seychelles, from islands in the Indian Ocean, from Madagascar, from all over Africa. Not a dry eye could be seen that night as the South Africans sang "Is There Any Remover of Difficulties Save God? Say praised be God, He is God. All are His servants and all abide by His bidding."

It was particularly appropriate because the South Africans were suffering under apartheid and white domination in South Africa, as we all knew. Their singing brought to mind the Negro spirituals of the slaves in the States. I used to listen to them on the radio on Sundays when I was young and they always touched my heart. It also reminded me of the war when the Germans played recordings of American jazz to lower the morale of the Allied soldiers and make them homesick for wives and sweethearts.

After a few months I went to Kinshasa to wait for Adrienne, who was supposed to join me after she had completed her Master's degree at George Washington University. She arrived in Kinshasa in the winter of 1982. I was looking for a place where we could pioneer together, as Mbuji Mayi was much too hot for her. I chose Kivu province, a beautiful location with the highest lake in Africa, about 6,000 feet, and six live volcanoes on the northern end of the lake.

NORTH TO BUTEMBO

From Kinshasa we traveled by air to Bukavu, a city south of Lake Kivu. Adrienne was disappointed that the town looked so decrepit, the buildings were unpainted, roads not maintained, and the food was indigestible. Nothing had been done to the town since the

Zarois had gained independence in 1962. At one time the town probably had been a resort, and President Mobutu had a villa and tea plantation there. He called himself President, but he ruled more like a king. One could not buy land in Zaire; it is leased for 25 years, during which time the lessee is expected to make it productive, otherwise, it reverts to the government of Mobutu. It so happened his doctor was a Bahá'í, Dr. Jazab, who was able to get Mobutu's permission for Bahá'ís to teach in Zaire. I had a copy of that document, and it was surely a deterrent to anyone who came to investigate the Bahá'ís. When they saw Mobutu's signature on it, they would freeze in their tracks.

The believers in Bukavu suggested we go to northern Kivu and open that area where there were no Bahá'ís. Lake Kivu is more than a mile deep with cold water infested with bilharzia, a disease that attacks the liver through protozoa that gestate in snails. As a result, the lake is beautiful but deadly.

We traveled north via an overcrowded boat to the town of Goma, and from Goma a bus, rickety and overcrowded, took us through the game parks, forests, etc., up to Butembo. It was a hot, uncomfortable 12-hour ride. We arrived in Butembo exhausted and in need of a place to stay. Finally, after a few days in a hotel, we were able to rent a house from a Lebanese who was the agent for a Zarois, probably one who confiscated the land when the Belgians moved out. It was large, not expensive, and had some furniture. When the Africans took possession of the country, they also took over the houses and land, but no effort was made to maintain them. Greeks and Lebanese were taking advantage of the chaotic situation in Zaire. Our landlord had a store in which he sold cloth, tires, groceries, etc., and he managed the house for the African owner. The house had five fireplaces, which were necessary at that elevation of 6,000 to 7,000 feet, because it could get quite cold, although Butembo was only about 14 miles from the Equator.

At the only bank in town I arranged for the Swiss Bahá'í in Kinshasa, who was the Treasurer of the National Spiritual Assembly of Zaire, to cash my checks drawn on the New York bank, in return for local currency that he deposited in my account in Butembo. Perhaps the local bank would have cashed my dollar checks, but there was no assurance I could get enough money to keep going from month to month. Before leaving the States I had traveled from Washington to New York by train to visit the big banks and find out which of them had branches in Kinshasa. I found that City Bank had such a branch, so the Swiss Bahá'í could easily cash my City Bank checks in Kinshasa, and he was kind enough to provide this service for us. We began to think seriously of retiring in Butembo, as we both had a little retirement money, sufficient to live on and be independent.

WOOL CLOTHES FOR THE EQUATOR?

I had to walk to the opposite end of town to get to the bank, and without wool clothing it was very chilly during the cold season. I had no warm clothes, having brought only what was suitable for the hot climate of Central Africa. As a result, I got rheumatism in my legs and had difficulty walking for about three days until I could get Sloan's liniment to loosen the muscles. We just weren't prepared for the cool mountainous climate.

We bought a car from a Dutchman who was managing a tea plantation for President Mobutu and drove through the game park to Uganda, which was engaged in a violent civil war at this time. Several times we were stopped by soldiers with guns before we reached Kampala. At the market I bought a heavy jacket and wool trousers before returning to Butembo.

All the necessary pipes and wiring were available in our house but there was no electricity. Mobutu's government had removed the town's generator. We did have, however, a well equipped bathroom with water piped in erratically about two o'clock in the morning.

As there was no definite schedule, we could go weeks without having water other than what the servants carried from the well. I bought two oil drums, painted them inside to prevent rusting, and had the servants fill them with water for daily household use. In the dining room was a large fireplace where we cooked our breakfast oatmeal on a charcoal burner. The house furnishings included a bed, armoire, some chairs and small living room sofa, a dining table and chairs. There was also a refrigerator, but without electricity it was useless. The property was surrounded by a brick wall and located on about half an acre of land, a part of which the servants used to plant a garden. Adrienne did the cooking on a brick stove that I arranged to have built in the kitchen. It gave off so much heat her skirt was always well cooked in the front.

Butembo

Belgians had colonized Zaire,
The traces were here and there.
A few brick houses, deserted now,
And some shops in disrepair.

The one hotel for foreigners
Was adequate and plain.
The dusty streets soon turned to mud
Whenever there was rain.

Through the blessings of Bahá'u'lláh,
We soon found a residence
Of a former Belgian doctor
Who had fled at Independence.

The house was very spacious.
Five fireplaces for heat.
We had no electricity.
Our food was cooked with peat.

Water supply was sporadic,
Turned on two hours at night.
We stored it in the bathtub,
Where mosquitos like to light.

We started Sunday classes
And found the Zarois eager.
Quite soon we had believers, though
Their knowledge was quite meagre.

This was a Catholic stronghold;
The Mormons were active too.

When they found out we were Bahá'ís
Our religion became taboo.

Some spies from the Catholic mission,
Pretending to be very keen,
Attended our Sunday meeting
To report back what they had seen.

The Zarois friends were faithful,
Ignoring the warnings given
By those who tried to denigrate
This threatening new religion.

The faith was growing rapidly,
Even though it was being banned.
More seekers attended the meetings;
Funds were sent to the Holy Land.

Two years of constant firesides
Had produced some active teachers.
An Assembly was elected
In spite of local preachers.

Dempsey had worked hard in Zaire,
Always striving to reach the goal
Of one Assembly in the town
That could maintain itself and grow.

We closed the house and bid farewell
To these friends of several years.
We drove through mountains heading
south
Towards Uganda, with some fears.

Our most difficult problems came from the Christian missionaries, the Baptist Americans. They worked against us once they found we were Bahá'ís. One Sunday morning we had more than a hundred visitors in our yard when we saw the missionaries coming down

the road. We dismissed the friends, but the missionaries realized we had been teaching.

We rented a small house and installed a teacher there with his family. He was a good man from one of the smaller tribes, but was resented by members of the larger tribe, who tried to rob him and take his furniture. However, he proved to be trustworthy even under the circumstances. When we had a large number of believers we elected a Local Spiritual Assembly. There were some good Bahá'ís in Butembo, one of them worked at the post office, and walked down the mountains to the area where the pygmies lived in order to spread the Faith. When he returned his hips and knees were so painful, I had to get some Sloan's liniment for him. Later the postal inspectors examined his books and found shortages, for which they wanted to jail him. I made up the difference to save him. He was sent to Kinshasa for training in the post office there and met the Bahá'ís. They wrote me from Kinshasa praising him as a Bahá'í.

Another of our good Bahá'ís was a bank teller, whose wife, also a believer, came to visit him from Bukavu. At the same time we had the Board Member and another Bahá'í from Bukavu visiting at our home. They were driving a 4x4 small Japanese van. The bank teller's wife prepared a big meal for the Board Member and squeezed herself into the little van when they returned to Bukavu.

The Christian missionaries did everything they could to stop our expansion. They even notified their missionaries as far away as Bukavu to watch out for Bahá'ís. Our Local Assembly of Butembo met regularly and became independent before we left for Kampala. However, the people in Butembo were starving. The mechanics ate only one meal a day. I had to get to the garage in the morning for car repairs, because after 10:00 a.m. all the mechanics were out of energy and lying around unable to work. We wrote to the World Centre explaining there was little food of any kind. Haifa suggested that we leave. A year after our departure the Local Spiritual Assembly of Butembo sent money to Haifa in our name.

We left in 1984 with the intention of retiring in Mombasa, Kenya as my health was not good. We stopped enroute in Uganda for a brief visit. While there the National Spiritual Assembly asked us to meet with them. They requested us to take over the administration of Claire Gung's school in her absence.

Claire was a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh and had been designated the 'Spiritual Mother of Africa' by the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi. She had built a kindergarten for African children in Kampala and was well known throughout Uganda as 'Auntie Claire'. While on vacation from the school, she broke her hip attempting to board a bus in Nairobi, Kenya and had been hospitalized. As the school was left unattended, the National Assembly asked us to fill in while she was gone. Upon her return to Kampala, she was convalescing nicely until she suffered a massive stroke and passed away. Claire was buried in a plot she had bought for herself on the Temple grounds in Kampala near the burial site of Hands of the Cause Enoch Olinga and Musa Banání.

Auntie Claire

Uganda, waging a civil war,
Had soldiers stationed en route,
With threatening guns at road blocks,
Many hostile and eager to loot.

With Bahá'u'lláh's help we made it
To Kampala, where, it transpired
We met with Uganda's NSA

And informed them of our desire.

To relax and live in Mombasa,
The Kenyan town by the sea
Where we had hopes of retiring
As pioneers, quietly.

Instead, they asked us to take charge,
For the remainder of the year,
Of the school that was founded and built

By a German pioneer.

'Twas Auntie Claire's Kindergarten;
Widely known throughout the land

As a model of education,
And very much in demand.

After years of service
And devotion that all admired,
She'd gone to Kenya for a rest,
Being frail, sickly and tired.

No more dream of retirement;
No question about it now.
Bahá'u'lláh had plans for us
For the present, anyhow.

We took up residence at the school.
The student attendance had dropped.
Parents were fearful for their kids,
'Cause the fighting seldom stopped.

One day on our way to the Temple
To check on the pioneers,
We drove into the roundabout
And saw with mounting fears

A soldier with a weapon
Approaching our car on the run.
He pushed the gun in the window
And yelled in his tribal tongue.

We didn't know the language
But it was very evident
That he had the urge to kill us.
We knew exactly what he meant.

We raised our hands and told him
That we were Americans.
He scowled and grunted angrily,
Then withdrew, and waved his hand.

We proceeded to the Temple,
Concerned for Rex and Mary,
The Collisons – caretakers –
Who were up in age, but wary.

All was well, so we returned.
The school was still intact,
Some neighbourhood destruction.

Nightly raids became a fact.

The civil war in Uganda
Was exacting a dreadful cost.
Security was tenuous,
Many innocent lives were lost.

From across the street one dark night
Came machine gun fire and screams.
Soldiers were looting and raping,
We could have been next, it seems.

We left next day for Kenya,
Our nerves over-wrought for once.
Despite pot holes and road blocks
We arrived, and remained eight months.

We still had visas for Zaire.
When our passports were renewed
The visas had to be transferred
To new books and then reviewed.

It's always best to keep in mind –
For African nations, at least –
Some countries can be volatile.
There's no assurance of peace.

Moreover, there's no guarantee
That laws once passed will hold
From one year to the next one, so
You pray and try to be bold.

From Uganda to Rwanda
On to Zaire, immigration.
We wanted the change made quickly
Without too much hesitation.

Alas, to leave Zaire we found
'Twas quite a different portion.
Most officials were not paid
So they use outright extortion.

We knew the border staff could be
Quite venal and malicious;
They were bent on getting money.
We had cause to be suspicious.

They searched us for most anything
That they could use as pretext.

They ordered me to empty out
My purse. I wondered, 'What next?'

Fed up, I shouted in their face

"Ya Bahá'u'l-'Abhá! I'm sick
"Of all this nonsense!" They were shocked
And they let us go right quick.

A CHANGE OF PLAN

Following Claire's passing, instead of retiring, we made plans to pioneer in southern Zaire. The school was taken over by an American Bahá'í and we left on a trip by car to Central Africa. It took us a week to travel south from Uganda through Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia, then northwest to the Congo. Beyond Kenya the roads in the other countries were rutted, dirt tracks in many places, with various checkpoints at which the soldiers were not very friendly. The roads in Zaire were some of the worst we saw. We located two pioneer families in Lubumbashi, Behin and John Newport and Mansour and Gity Raufy. Until we could get an apartment, we stayed at the Bahá'í Center. I became injured and had an operation at the hospital in Lubumbashi. Adrienne bought all the needles to make sure I was not infected with aids, because Central Africa was well known for its aids epidemic. As I was 68 years old, healing took at least two years.

Nightmare

We thought we'd take a different route,
Through Burundi to Uganda.
We stopped to see some pioneers
In the capital, Bujumbura.

Upon leaving Bujumbura
We were delayed for a while.
A mud slide on the highway
Kept cars backed up for a mile.

Some 'locals' gathered round the car
Trying to see what we had on display.
We handed round some pamphlets
And finally they went away.

A policeman came and told us
This was strictly against the law,
We had no right to hand out tracts,
So, we gave him the pamphlets – all.

It was dark when we reached the border,
The guard wouldn't let us through.
"The gate is closed," he said. "Too late."
Now what are we going to do?

We found the nearest hotel
To settle in for the night.
A knock at the door. We opened.

Two policemen were in sight.

'We want your car. Where are the keys?'
They demanded arrogantly.
Dempsey said, "I'll drive the car."
"What is it you want with me?"

They left and took him with them.
I was truly terrified.
All sorts of thoughts went through my
mind.
'Will they beat him up outside?'

The idea was so frightening,
I dropped to my knees and prayed
As I have never prayed before,
But my fears were soon allayed.

They brought him back to the hotel.
They had driven to a park,
Quite deserted and forbidding,
Most unnerving in the dark.

In French, they said, "Don't be afraid,
"We're not savages you know."
"Your car must stay in this compound
"Until we can let you go."

Three officers came next morning
To interrogate us in French.

For hours they examined us
Outside on the hotel bench.

They asked us who we contacted,
What were our intentions, and why
We had given out the pamphlets
To the people passing by.

We told the truth, we didn't know
Of a ban against religion.
They said, "You're under house arrest
"Until we've made a decision."

We were taken to the station,
A signed statement was demanded.
They were doubtful, still they felt
We'd done nothing underhanded.

Not until two days later
Did they inform us we could leave.
We got the car and packed our things.
All the pamphlets were retrieved.

Things hadn't changed in Uganda.
It was pretty much as before.
There were shortages and incidents,
But no major civil war.

We served at the school for four years;
It was time to move along.
Another pioneer had come
And was eager to carry on.

Frustrated Hope

Still thinking of retirement,
Since we were getting on in years,
We thought perhaps we'd spend our days
In the southern part of Zaire.

That huge country is a challenge,
And with so few pioneers
Widely scattered, isolated.
They had been out of contact for years.

Few roads, mere footpaths to connect
The nearest hamlet or village,
Made travel hazardous and rough.

Strangers were fair game for pillage.

Our journey would be indirect.
We'd best take the southern course
From Kenya to Tanzania,
On to Zambia, then drive north.

The Bahá'í school in Tanzania
Was quite newly built, and spare
Of so many needed items.
But the students didn't care.

They came each day to learn, and farm.
Though they weren't Bahá'ís, they still
Were motivated to succeed.
There's no doubt that they will.

We found at the Zaire border
A hive of ineptitude.
Since we had our valid visas,
Our re-entry was approved.

But our car with the foreign license
Presented a dilemma.
Until an import tax was paid,
They refused to let it enter.

To say the least, the tax was large
On purpose, there's no doubt.
We weren't prepared at all for that.
There had to be some way out.

A policemen in the rear seat
Accompanied us into town.
He warned us that the car must be
Parked at the police compound.

We drove first to the Centre
And explained our predicament.
The Bahá'ís asked him to leave the car.
"You have our firm commitment

"And promise that it won't moved
"Till the taxes have been paid."
The policeman wasn't happy,
He reluctantly agreed.

Since the Bahá'ís were Zarois
He accepted them at their word.

Eventually we paid the tax

And nothing further was heard.

In Central Africa the believers were very active and able to do the teaching and administration themselves. Adrienne was elected to the Local Assembly and I was a member of the committee responsible for constructing a wall around the Bahá'í Center and paving the driveway. Adrienne and I bought two Bahá'í centers in the African quarter, and also some other land which we lost. The friends built a school on one of the properties we bought.

We thought this would be an ideal time to visit old friends in Asia. The situation in Lubumbashi was unsettled. We drove to Lusaka, Zambia, gave our car to the believers there and flew to Nairobi to make arrangements to visit Israel and Southeast Asia. We were 71 years old.

ASIA REVISITED

Jim Fozdar was living in Singapore at the time, but the best we could do was talk to him by telephone. We also contacted his brother, John, who was running a hospital in Sarawak, Borneo. We went on to Thailand, visited the Thai Bahá'ís, then to Cambodia to see Khuy Sien. Ay Sok Chun had already been killed by the Communists. We tried to find out what Cambodians were still alive, for about a million people had been killed by the Communists. We found the Bahá'ís were trying to form a Local Spiritual Assembly in Phnom Penh. I also met one of Tuol Pon's wives and discovered that Tuol Pon had more than one wife. I recalled that when he stayed at the Bahá'í Center in Phnom Penh with his family, he had many children.

We contacted Khuy Sien in Kampot, a town south of Phnom Penh. He came to see us with his new wife and little daughter. Khuy Sien had aged but he was still a Bahá'í. We had a group photograph taken and had dinner together at a local restaurant.

CENTRAL AMERICA

Upon leaving Southeast Asia we learned it was impossible for us to return to Zaire. During our absence a civil war had broken out in Lubumbashi and our home and all our belongings had been looted. We had no alternative but to return to the States. We bought a car and drove to Little Rock, Arkansas. I had begun to sleep all the time and since there is a geriatric clinic at the University in Little Rock, I went there to see the doctor. He told me the blood pressure pills I had been taking in Africa were destroying my liver and my blood, so I stopped taking them. We lived in Little Rock about two years, then I suggested to Adrienne that we go back to Africa, but she refused. She said it was too difficult. However she did agree to go to Central America.

SOUTH TO BELIZE

We bought an Airstream mobile home and attached it to a Dodge Ram 4x4, with the intention of going into the mountains of Central America to teach the Indians. We drove down through Mexico to Belize, and remained for nearly two years.

A Local Spiritual Assembly was established in Belmopan, the capital city, but there was a very undesirable situation in Belize. It appeared that some of the Bahá'ís had some questionable practices. An Iranian Bahá'í told me he came to Belize with \$35,000 worth of gems. He opened an auto parts store and had been arrested for gun running, but was bailed out by Arab friends. We discovered that people in Belize believed the Bahá'ís were involved in dealing in narcotics with the Arabs. Those who were not Bahá'ís came to tell me all kinds of bad things about the Faith and its believers.

One More Try

Less than two years thereafter
We set off for another goal –
Central America, Belize.
A journey that took its toll.

We drove south in a 4 x 4

That was pulling our trailer home;
An exhausting undertaking
That I wished we had never done.

Belize was humid, hot, and strange –
Faithwise – in so many ways.
Serious efforts were made to teach,
But we sensed a spiritual malaise.

Sometimes, overtly or subtly,
One could feel a kind of tension.
People were reluctant to talk
Whenever the Faith was mentioned.

We tried to find out what was wrong
So that the Faith would progress.
Bruised egos oft were the result
When some forthright views were
expressed.

As concerns this final venture,
No matter our good intent,
One must admit mistakes were made
Even though they were not meant.

Dempsey's health began to suffer;
He needed an operation.
We packed the trailer, headed north
For his medical attention.

STRANGE HAPPENINGS

Five Bahá'ís died in Belize under mysterious circumstances. A very fine Bahá'í teacher, Dr. Amadiyyih, was said to have fallen through a hole in the bridge in the dark. I examined

the bridge and it appeared very unlikely that this could happen. Also, an East Indian Bahá'í was run down while riding a bicycle on the road. He was the Treasurer of the National Spiritual Assembly of Belize. In addition, a Canadian couple came to Belize and contributed \$55,000 to the Faith. Their bodies were found in the jungle, shot to death, and no one seemed to know why. We visited two former Bahá'í centers near Belmopan that had been abandoned to the jungle for some unaccountable reason. Generally speaking, the Faith appeared to be in a very bad state. I did what I could to try to remedy the situation, but aroused some animosity among the friends.

The police told me the Bahá'ís were prejudiced against darker people. Belize has a special arrangement for the different racial groups. Most of the doctors and lawyers were Garifina, the black African group that had never been enslaved. About 35% of the population were a mixture of Spanish and Indian, called mestizos. The other mix of Spanish, Indian and black were the Creoles. As the British had colonized Belize, everyone spoke English, and some spoke Spanish.

The Indians were easy to teach and readily accepted the Faith. A number of them came to my house and declared, but they were extremely poor. One fellow told me he had no door for his house. I was able to give him a door, a stove, some lumber left over from the furniture I had built, and other items he could use when we were preparing to leave.

I became sick and had a hernia operation performed by a Guatemalan doctor who had been trained in Cuba. The operation cost me \$40. As my health did not improve, and the situation was so difficult Bahá'í-wise, we left and drove our trailer home back to the States as far as Virginia. I learned later that I was suffering from an enlarged prostate.

LOOKING BACK

The peoples of the world have different qualities and capacities. Africans have strong muscles, whereas the people in Southeast Asia have strong nervous systems, as do the Jews, generally speaking. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explains that if the father and mother have strong nervous systems, the offspring will have also, but if their nervous systems are weak, the offspring will be lacking in this respect. By traveling and pioneering in various countries, you can readily see the differences in people, such as their stature, build, skin color, etc., but this does not preclude their having spiritual capacity.

The wonderful thing about Asia is that the people are generally spiritual and accept the Faith readily. According to the teachers in Vietnam, if you teach 10 people, you can get one Bahá’í. It’s about the same in Cambodia, although the results there are not so rewarding. Teaching in Thailand is similar to teaching in the United States, where you have to teach a number of people to get one Bahá’í. With mass teaching one person can be taught and after five minutes of explanation, he accepts and wants to become a Bahá’í. His face lights up and you know Bahá’u’lláh has touched his heart.

In the United States, in places such as Washington, D.C., you might get one Bahá’í after explaining the Faith to 50 people. South Carolina was more fruitful. I could explain the Faith to two people and one would accept, sometimes two out of three, but these were black people.

His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá traveled from East to West in the States for about nine months, then visited Germany, England, France, Italy and North Africa before returning to Israel. He was then 68 years old. After leaving the States He went to Egypt to recover His health. Two devoted Bahá’í servants are now buried there, Abu’l-Fadl and Lua Getsinger, an American. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá left this world in 1921 at 77 years of age. We are presently settled in Bristol, Virginia where I came to have surgery. I suppose it is a fairly safe location, near the mountains, far from the sea, should the bombs fall. At my age, however, it would make little difference about the bombs falling. I would like to go back to Africa or pioneer in some place where we are needed, but alas, I think we are too old.

ON BEING BLACK

We blacks in the United States, I often say, are a colony within the country. In a way our circumstances are worse than the situation the Africans found themselves in when they were colonized. In East Africa, English colonials were in control but the African majority were allowed some say in the government. Here in the United States the white majority population has complete control over blacks, who must be careful what they say and do. In addition, most whites are unaware that the black population has about one-third the per capita income of whites in the U.S. They assume that blacks have the same earning capacity they have. White women are fighting to get equal pay for equal work like the men, but few blacks get a job where they can fight for equal pay for equal work. Our jobs are restricted, our work is limited, our businesses are few. Not too long ago blacks weren’t able to get loans from banks to start up or to expand their business. The blacks in the United States have had all kinds of difficulties, but it has made us better people, I think.

We pioneered in Asia for 12 years, in Africa for 20 years, as well as in Central America, and in Louisiana, South Carolina, Arkansas, and Maryland in the southern United States for a number of years. During our pioneering, Adrienne and I made a couple of trips around the world, traveled to India, climbed the pyramids in Egypt, visited Israel at least seven times, stayed overnight in a kibbutz, and walked the streets of Nazareth. I have crossed the ocean 11 times, twice by boat and nine times by air, sat next to the Pope in Vatican City, and climbed the Acropolis in Athens, Greece.

Teaching was our most important task. We had to tell everyone that Jesus had returned in the glory of the Father. This is why we were out in the world sacrificing and working to spread the news that the One awaited by all people had indeed come. The preachers say that when Jesus returns everyone will be able to see Him and every knee will bow. They ignore the fact that the Bible teaches that Jesus will come like a thief in the night. His Holiness 'Abdu'l-Bahá said He longed to go even barefoot and raise the call of 'Yá Bahá'ul' Abhá!' throughout the countries, but alas, He was too old. I feel I have come to that point also.

SOME FINAL WORDS

Dilemma

What can I do for the Faith today?
What can I write? What shall I say?

What can I do for the Faith today?
How can I teach? Show me the way.

What can I do for the Faith today?
How can I help a soul gone astray?

What can I do for the Faith today?
What shall I give? God will repay.

What can I do for the Faith today?
Study the Writings, meditate, pray.

What can I do for the Faith today?
Be a Bahá'í. Grant that I may.

Trivia

Lasers of thought that flash through the
mind,
Neither kindred nor germane to subject or
time;
Meaningless snippets that pop in one's head,
Senseless, irrelevant, spiritually dead.

Like the crests of a wave or vapors from
planes,
They're nothing to lean upon, pinpoint or
name;
Devoid of direction and substance, like
foam,
Soon dissolved, dissipated. From whence do
they come?

They thwart the brief moments I have with

my Lord,

Creating a deficit I can't afford.
Am I so empty, so shallow, bereft
That I've no concentration, that I have
nothing left?

Dare I hope that in time I'll mature to the
state
That trivial matters will not rule my fate?
God will help, I am sure, if I will but strive
To strengthen the spirit that keeps me alive.

Wait on the Lord

I must wait on the Lord, for all else is
naught;
He's aware of my actions, my motives, my
thought.
Too often impatient, I make up my mind
To speed up the process with acts of some
kind.

By trial and error I blunder along
'Til finally I know my decisions are wrong
Because I have failed to turn to the Source
From which emanates every power and
force.

At last, I surrender my heart, bow my head
In quiet and prayer to His presence instead.
I've a lesson to learn that touches my soul;
Only utter submission will render me whole.

I wait on the Lord, what more can I do?
My efforts are fruitless, only He guides me
through.
True happiness stems from taking one's fill
Of what God in His wisdom has seen fit to
will.

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