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Message for Annual Bahá'í Conventions, year 117, Bahá'í Era, from the Hands of the Faith in The Holy Land

Dearly beloved Friends:

Another twelve months of important Bahá'í events have revolved upon the mighty axis of our beloved Guardian's divinely inspired, world encompassing Crusade. Once again, at this blessed Ridván period, we pause to survey the accomplishments of the past year, to enumerate its victories and to assess the tasks that still lie ahead ere we reach the goal of 1963 and enter upon the celebration of the supreme jubilee of our Faith, the hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission—a mission which casts its light forward over five hundred thousand years of human destiny. We Bahá'ís may well raise our hearts in thanksgiving to Him for the constant evidences of His unfailing grace, protection and guidance vouchsafed to us, the small but faithful band of His followers scattered throughout the populous and ancient centres of culture in both the East and the West, throughout the wildernesses of Africa and the New World, and the far-flung islands of the seas. In spite of the heavy blow we received so recently through earthly separation from our Guardian—a blow from which our hearts still bleed; in spite of our frailty as chosen instruments of God; in spite of the fewness of our numbers in the face of the teeming millions as yet unaware of the advent of the Promised One of all ages; in spite of the circumscribed nature of our material resources—in spite of all these things we witness that this Faith of ours is receiving an uninterrupted impetus from the Will of Bahá'u'lláh and that its nascent institutions, given to us by Him, elaborated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and erected by Shoghi Effendi, are multiplying in number, growing in strength, casting down deeper roots into the life of society, increasing in prestige and demonstrating the power nascent within them which must flower eventually into a World Civilization and bring about that Golden Age which will in truth be the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth.

The process of knitting the Bahá'í world together and co-ordinating its far-flung activities, which was carried on from the World Center of our Faith by the beloved Guardian, has steadily continued since his passing and bears witness to the enduring foundations he laid during the thirty-six years of unremitting toil and self-sacrifice which characterized his ministry. The brilliance of his planning, the far-reaching vision which inspired his decisions, the vitality of the Administrative Order he built up during his lifetime, continue to bear fruit. The 'heart and nerve center' of the Faith, the hub into which the spokes of this mighty wheel of

God, this New World Order, fit has continued to function with unabated vitality, receiving its spiritual impetus from the twin Holy Shrines in which are laid to rest the Twin Manifestations of God for this day, and pouring this life-force into the world-wide Community of the followers of the Most Great Name, in spite of having so recently passed through one of the worst crises in one hundred and seventeen years of Bahá'í history. The Ten Year Plan, the latest step in the unfoldment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan' designed to bring about the spiritual conquest of the entire globe, has forged ahead in a truly miraculous manner since that grievous and fateful November day in 1957 which witnessed the removal of its guiding force, its Commander-in-Chief, the designer of its every phase, and the one to whom its prosecutors, whether Hands, Board members, administrative bodies, pioneers or teachers, looked for words of encouragement and guidance and from whom they eagerly anticipated receiving that measure of reward or acclaim that he in his wisdom and love might bestow upon them.

Not only has the unity of the Faith been protected, the plans of its enemies forestalled and its properties safeguarded, but the spirit of the believers has not faltered in the darkest hour of test. We may truly say that it is this great pact of faith in the hearts of the friends that has held the Cause steadily on the course chartered for it by its Guardian, and has been the magnet attracting so many new souls to the Faith during the past two years. It is this force of faith in Bahá'u'lláh and love for Him that has swept the Bahá'ís of the world forward to such astonishing victories as the establishment during this present Ridván period of the entire number of spiritual assemblies specified by the beloved Guardian in the Ten Year Plan as the necessary foundation for the future independent National Bahá'í Bodies of Latin America. Those responsible for this feat obeyed his behest to '... set their faces towards those fields that still remain unexplored and direct their steps to those goals that are as yet unattained, assured that He Who has led them to achieve such triumphs... will continue to assist them in enriching their spiritual birthright to a degree no finite mind can imagine or human heart perceive.' How shining are the evidences that this promised support has been vouchsafed to them by Bahá'u'lláh Himself. Last Ridván with so many local assemblies still needed in Latin America, the heights still to scaled seemed unattainable; this Ridván the banner of conquest floats proudly from every hilltop. How greatly must Shoghi Effendi's heart rejoice!

The truly extraordinary evidences of progress throughout the entire range of Bahá'í activity should cause us all to ponder anew the mysterious power of

this Faith, to marvel at the secret springs that so constantly feed its needs, and to supplicate that during the coming year a still greater measure of Bahá'u'lláh's loving protection, His all-conquering strength, His unfailing guidance, may be vouchsafed to us in the prosecution of the beloved Guardian's mighty Crusade. With humble gratitude for the untiring and consecrated labours of our fellow-believers and deep joy in their achievements, we share with the friends the truly remarkable list of the major events and victories of this past year.

The number of territories comprising the World Community of the Most Great Name has now risen to the impressive total of two hundred and fifty-six, including all of the one hundred and thirty-one original virgin goals of the World Crusade listed by our beloved Guardian, with the exception of ten territories within the Soviet orbit. One of the most difficult objectives of the Ten Year Plan, Hainan Island, has recently been opened by a stalwart Knight of Bahá'u'lláh of Chinese origin, adding another pearl to that chain of islands girdling the Asiatic mainland.

The steady process of multiplication of localities where Bahá'ís reside in all parts of the globe has raised the total of these centres to over five thousand eight hundred, far exceeding 'the goal of five thousand Bahá'í centres in the Eastern and Western Hemispheres', called for by our beloved Guardian in his Ridván Message three short years ago. More than thirteen hundred localities have been added since his passing, over six hundred of these during the past year alone.

This uninterrupted expansion, brought about by the twin process of dispersion and enrollment of new believers, has brought the number of such centres in the Goal Countries of Europe to more than a hundred and forty! in Germany and Austria, to a hundred and forty-eight; in the British Isles to a hundred and fifty-one; in Australasia and in the Dominion of Canada, respectively, to nearly a hundred and sixty; in the Indian subcontinent to a hundred and eighty; in Latin America to nearly three hundred and forty; in the Pacific area to over five hundred; in Persia to more than one thousand and seventy; in the African continent to eleven hundred and forty; and in the United States of America to nearly fifteen hundred and seventy.

In the African continent and throughout the Pacific region, areas encompassing almost half of the original one hundred and thirty-one virgin territories to be opened during the World Crusade, extraordinary progress continues to be made, the rate of increase far surpassing that in any other parts of the world and bearing conclusive witness to the spiritual vitality in the hearts of their indigenous peoples. As evidence of this mighty process of conversion now taking place, we may cite the fact that over four hundred new centres have been added in Africa during the past two years, and over two hundred in the Pacific region during the last twelve months. In Latin American, the scene next year of the formation of no less than twenty-one new National Spiritual Assemblies, more than a hundred centres have been added since last Ridván, a feat the magnitude of which cannot be sufficiently stressed when one considers the vast territory involved and the

relatively small number of believers able to carry forward the work of the Crusade.

The number of local spiritual assemblies throughout the world, referred to by our Guardian as the 'foundation of the edifice of a rising Order', is rapidly approaching one thousand five hundred, reflecting an increase of almost two hundred in each of the last two Ridván periods. Of these more than two hundred and forty are now incorporated.

Over half of the thirty-one National and Regional Spiritual Assemblies now established have achieved the Crusade goal of incorporation, seventeen having so far secured this legal registration, the latest being the energetic National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Burma, which has just received, less than a year after its own formation, official recognition by the government of the Union of Burma.

Translations of the continually expanding literature of the Faith have now been made in two hundred and sixty-eight different languages, representing an increase of nearly one hundred and eighty since the inception of the Crusade. Ninety-six of these are supplementary to those originally specified by our beloved Guardian in the Ten Year Plan. During the Crusade years Bahá'í literature has been translated into all of the European languages called for in the Plan; into eighty-two of the indigenous languages of Asia; sixty-five of Africa; and over twenty in the Americas.

Progress in erecting the three great Mother Temples of Africa, Australasia and Europe is steadily continuing. Practically three years before the end of the World Crusade the beautiful and highly suitable Mashriqu'l-Adhkár at present reaching completion in the heart of Africa, will be dedicated, during this coming August, at a ceremony attended by believers from many districts and territories of what was once known as the 'dark continent' but now shines as one of the brightest regions of the entire Bahá'í world. The Temple in Sydney, Australia, is rising at a rapid pace, and already this great 'silent teacher' of the Antipodes is attracting wide publicity and the attention of thousands of people who pass by it daily on an adjacent main highway. It is anticipated that its dedication will take place early in 1961. The plans for the European Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, long the subject of opposition on the part of certain church elements in Germany, are now well advanced and it is hoped that construction can commence during the coming months at the Temple site near Frankfurt. These historic first steps in the process of erecting Houses of Worship and their attendant institutions, which play such an important part in the Bahá'í society envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh, are being followed up and supported through the purchase of many sites for future Temples. During the past year, Japan, Austria, Bolivia, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic have acquired plots of land for this purpose, raising the number of such sites since the inauguration of the Ten Year Plan to the truly impressive total of thirty-three.

Among the many other properties added in various parts of the world during the past year to the already impressive list of Bahá'í holdings, the following are of special interest because of the official recognition which their acquisition has involved, giving increasing emphasis to the independent character of the Faith, and adding to its prestige; The approval of the District Commissioner of Kenya, of the allocation of two plots

of land in village areas for Bahá'í purposes, and the pending approval of a third plot; the authorization, confirmed through a special decree issued by the Ministry of Finance in Laos, for the Bahá'í Community in Vientiane to own in its name a plot of land as an endowment; and the recognition by Governmental authorities of Bahá'í burial grounds as such in Abbotabad, Nawabshah and Montgomery, in Pakistan, and in Seremban, Malaya, the three latter sites being direct allocations of Government land for the purpose of establishing separate Bahá'í cemeteries.

Another evidence of the growing recognition of the independent character of the Faith is the continued expansion in the number of territories, states, provinces and other civic units where the Bahá'í Marriage Certificate is legally accepted. Such recognition has now been granted in nearly forty-five different countries and political sub-divisions, the latest additions being the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan in the Dominion of Canada. The Bahá'í Holy Days are now officially recognized by school authorities in eighty different countries, states and cities. In the United States, including Alaska, more than ten new areas have been added since last Ridván.

In the African continent, the onward march of the Faith bears eloquent testimony to the spiritual receptivity of its inhabitants, so strongly emphasized by our beloved Guardian, and reflected, even before his passing, in the beginnings of that mass conversion confidently predicted by him. As a result of the intensive teaching campaigns launched by the four African Regional Assemblies, the number of declared believers throughout this vast continent has risen to well over fifteen thousand, seven thousand having been added since last Ridván. In Central and East Africa, the number of enrolled believers has more than doubled in the short space of a year. Over four thousand new declarations have been recorded in Uganda alone since April 1959, nearly twelve hundred in Kenya, and well over two hundred in Tanganyika. In the Belgian Congo, also, the beginnings of mass conversion are becoming evident. In the far-flung territories under the jurisdiction of the Regional Assembly of South and West Africa, a gain of over sixty per cent has occurred during the past twelve months in the total number of adherents of the Faith. The zeal of the new believers in this area is well illustrated by the recent settlement of the Island of Sesse in Lake Victoria, an accomplishment of a nature ever dear to Shoghi Effendi's heart. The number of local spiritual assemblies in the whole of Africa has reached a total of three hundred and seventy-six, an increase of well over two hundred since the passing of the beloved Guardian. Representatives of two hundred and seventy-three different African tribes are now included in the membership of the Bahá'í Community. Noteworthy among the many new instances of official recognition accorded the Faith during the past year are: The establishment and registration of the first Bahá'í Publishing Trust in Africa, in Kampala, Uganda; the inclusion of 'Bahá'í' on the official census sheet as one the religions of Swaziland; and the registration of the Hazíratu'l-Quds of Port Victoria, Seychelles as a religious property, thereby exempting it from all taxation.

The Pacific area, exclusive of Australasia, competing

with the African continent for that 'Palm of victory' so often mentioned by the beloved Guardian himself, continues to fulfil the high expectations held by him for the rapid advancement of the Faith throughout its widely dispersed countries, islands and territories. Last year the number of local spiritual assemblies in this region had reached one short of the hundred mark—double the number which existed in 1957, and a further substantial increase is anticipated during the present Ridván period. In the region of South-East Asia, the number of declared believers now exceeds seven thousand five hundred, including over forty-eight hundred in the Mentawai Islands alone. In addition to the astounding progress being made there, more than a thousand new believers have entered the Faith in Indonesia during the period since Ridván 1959. In the ten island groups comprising the territory of the Regional Assembly of the South Pacific, there are now nearly sixty localities. A three-fold increase in the number of centres in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands has occurred in the past year, and news has recently been received that on one of these islands, to which the first Gilbertese Bahá'í was banished because of his association with the Faith, nearly fifty new believers have recently been enrolled, due to his single-handed efforts. One Hazíratu'l-Quds has already been completed in this remote outpost, and two more are under construction.

In the vast territory of the Western Hemisphere, including within its confines the cradle of the Administrative Order, as well as those republics whose rulers were addressed by Bahá'u'lláh in such insistent and weighty terms, the number of localities to which the light of His Faith has penetrated now totals nearly two thousand one hundred, well over three hundred of which constitute local spiritual assemblies; almost a hundred and forty of these are now incorporated. The rapid spread of the Faith among the Indians of South America in recent months has rivalled the extraordinary progress made in the heart of the African continent and the islands of the Pacific, and may well foreshadow a parallel process of mass conversion in the New World. In Bolivia, a seven-fold increase in the number of Indian believers has occurred since last Ridván, bringing the total to over the one thousand mark, drawn from almost a hundred different localities. As many as twenty-five new all-Indian local spiritual assemblies may be formed in this country alone during the current Ridván period. Throughout the Americas contact has been established with more than sixty different tribes since the inception of the Crusade, evidence of the steady progress made in carrying the Teachings to these indigenous peoples to whose enrollment in the Faith both 'Abdul'-Bahá and our beloved Guardian attached such great importance.

Among the many instances of an ever-wider proclamation of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh during recent months, the following may be cited as an indication of the wide geographical area now being reached, and a testimony to the increasing official and public recognition of the Faith as an independent religion; the Australia-wide press and publicity campaign recently initiated by the National Assembly of that country; the first publicity received over both radio and television in the British Isles; the broadcast of a programme consisting of Bahá'í Sacred Writings over the All-India Radio from New Delhi; the presentation of the Message

to the People of Japan on Radio Tokyo, and from a national television station in that country; the time accorded to a Bahá'í speaker in Switzerland over Radio Lausanne, as well as the television interview granted a travelling teacher in France, which was telecast from two principal stations in that country; the allocation of radio broadcast time to the local Spiritual Assembly of Suva, Fiji Islands, along with other religions, including Christian, Hindu and Moslem; and the notable increase in publicity freely accorded the Faith in the United States of America, particularly in connection with such Bahá'í-sponsored events as World Religion Day, Race Amity Day, and the Bahá'í observance of United Nations Week.

An enumeration of the various teaching conferences, institutes and week-end schools held throughout the world during the last twelve months is most impressive, not only because of the very large number which took place, but also because nearly every part of the world-wide Bahá'í Community is represented. Though not necessarily complete, the following is a representative list of these gatherings, which our beloved Guardian considered to be a demonstration of the zeal and earnestness of the believers in 'discharging their primary obligation to propagate their Faith': The Austrian Teaching Conferences held during the past winter in Vienna, and in Linz, as well as the first Austrian Youth Winter School in Krieglach; the Benelux Teaching Conference in Brussels; the striking total of one hundred and sixteen teaching conferences, one-day and week-end schools held in twenty-four different cities and towns in the British Isles; the Regional Teaching Conferences held in Germany, in Hanover, Heilbronn, Köln, Stuttgart, Ulm, and two in Frankfurt; the two Regional Teaching Conferences held in France, in Orleans and Montpellier; the six Regional Teaching Conferences held in the Iberian Peninsula; the Teaching Conference for the German-speaking cantons of Switzerland, in Zürich, and that for French Switzerland, in Lausanne; the Italian Teaching Conference, in Rome; the Finnish Teaching Conference, in Helsinki; the three Teaching conferences of India, in New Delhi, Kanpur, and Mysore; the Teaching Conferences of Japan, in Tokyo, Osaka, Hiroshima and Nagasaki; the Teaching Conference of East Pakistan, at Dacca, and of West Pakistan, at Lyallpore; the forty-five teaching conferences and week-end schools held in Central and East Africa, including thirty-five in Uganda, four in Kenya, four in Tanganyika, and one in Ruanda-Urundi; the teaching conferences and teacher training schools held in Mauritius, Mozambique, both Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Swaziland, the Union of South Africa, and Zululand; the many teaching conferences in the Australian continent, including three in each of the States of Victoria, and Queensland, respectively, two each in New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia, and the same number in Tasmania; the teaching conferences held in all the main centres of the North Island of New Zealand; the first All-Philippine Teaching Conference, in Manila, and the conferences held in Indonesia, Malaya, and other areas of South-east Asia; the Teaching Conferences of the South Pacific Islands, at Tuarabu Village, in the Gilbert and Ellice group, in Apia, Western Samoa, the

three conferences held in the Tongan Islands, and the Fiji Teaching Conference in Suva; the Winter Workshop held on the Campus of the University of Alaska, at Fairbanks; the Winter Conference in Ketchikan, Alaska; the All-Argentine Teaching Conference, in Rosario, and similar Conferences held in Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay; the National Teaching Conferences of Peru, in Lima, and of Brazil, in Niteroi; the twenty-five teaching conferences held in Canada, covering every province of the Dominion, and including thirteen in Ontario alone; the Costa Rica Teaching Conference in San Jose; the Teaching Conference of Nicaragua, held in Managua; the All-Mexico Conference, in Mexico City; the Youth Congress held in Guatemala City; the Intercommunity Teaching Conference of Panama, in La Chorrera; the Honduran Teaching Conference, held in Taulabe; the three International Schools of the Greater Antilles, one in Ciudad Trujillo, Dominican Republic, and two in Port-du-Prince, Haiti, as well as two National Teaching Conferences in the same area; and the series of nationwide conferences, nearly sixty in number, held in the United States of America, sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly, and aimed at creating a deeper understanding of the needs of the Cause at this present stage of the World Crusade, and designed to lend a marked impetus to the teaching work, both abroad and on the Homefront, as well as approximately sixty additional Area Teaching Conferences held throughout the length and breadth of that country.

The recapitulation of facts such as these, concrete evidence of the astonishing forward march of this irresistible, divinely-inspired Plan, cannot but fill our souls with courage and determination to arise and carry out the remaining tasks of the World Crusade with greater vigour and dedication than ever before.

The supreme importance and significance of the World Centre of the Faith, irrevocably fixed by Bahá'u'lláh Himself in the Holy Land, and constantly stressed by the Guardian in his writings, has emerged since his passing and looms before us in its stupendous outlines, as the Most Great Jubilee approaches and the institutions of the World Centre evolve. It is incumbent upon the Bahá'ís, particularly their elected National and Regional representatives, to realise that the unity of the Faith and the necessary uniform spread of its activities depends upon the proper co-ordination and protection which is given from the World Centre. National or Regional plans or interests cannot be permitted to sacrifice the overall interests of a closely-knit, smoothly functioning World Community. The eagerness of the Assemblies, and the believers they represent, each striving to attain in its own area a greater measure of development, to raise up new institutions such as Hazíratu'l-Quds, Temples, Schools and Endowments, must be at once fostered and contained; fostered so that the Faith may arise locally in all its glory and power in different parts of the world; contained and directed so that each part whilst expanding and developing as fast as possible may not place in jeopardy the work of another area or undertake over-expansion or expenditure at the expense of another member of this single entity—a World Community. A constant consultative flow of communications must ever-increasingly, as the Crusade draws to its close, pass in and out of Haifa between the various National and Regional Assemblies and the Hands of the Faith

in the Holy Land upon whom has developed the task at this critical juncture in Bahá'í history of safeguarding and promoting the world interests and world-wide progress of the Cause of God.

During this year of momentous preparation for the election of no less than twenty-one new National Spiritual Assemblies in Central America, the Antilles and South America, a ceaseless effort must be exerted on the part of all those responsible for the fulfilment of these supremely important goals of the Crusade in order to insure that the newly elected local assemblies, as well as those previously elected, remain at their present level, that their membership be maintained during the coming year, that they be deepened in faith and understanding of the Administrative Order, that the Communities they represent are increased in number and the rank and file of the believers more deeply confirmed in the spirit of the Faith and encouraged to serve its interests and spread its knowledge among the peoples of their respective countries. This is going to require arduous work on the part of those devoted and consecrated pioneers who constitute the vanguard of Bahá'u'lláh's advancing hosts; it is going to mean more pioneers and teachers may still be required in this strategic field of service; it will entail on the part of the Mother Community in North America an unabated flow of assistance in the form of loving consultation, co-operation and guidance, as well as a supply of material means from this more prosperous and richly blessed community to these struggling new daughter communities, rich in spirit and in promise, but often lacking in the financial resources necessary to attain their objectives and maintain their centres; it is going to necessitate further outpourings of treasure from the devoted self-sacrificing followers of Bahá'u'lláh in the Cradle of the Faith who already through the operation of the Persia-America deputization plan have been responsible during the past eighteen months for much of the present spectacular success we now enjoy in the Latin American field; it will entail a greater measure of activity on the part of both the Board members and the elected representatives of the present four Regional National Assemblies functioning in this area. It must inevitably draw heavily upon the strength and the time—so fleeting, so short and therefore so precious—of the Hands of the Faith, both those serving at the World Centre and those allotted to the Western Hemisphere. We are confident, however, that these needs can and will be met and the glorious prize now well within our reach be seized in all its perfection and the new National Assemblies emerge next Ridván in all their promise, prepared to assume their functions as pillars of that Universal House of Justice so soon to be born.

We are evidently entering a new phase in the unfoldment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Plan for the spiritual conquest of the entire planet. A movement can be seen in different parts of the world such as has not been witnessed since the inception of this Cause in Persia. The masses are beginning to stir, to raise their eyes and look questioningly upon the Message we are presenting to them; at first by hundreds, now in some places by thousands, they are embracing this Faith, fulfilling the prophecies of the Master and the words of the Guardian. Although at the present time this new

process is taking place largely amongst the so-called more primitive members of human society, introducing into the Bahá'í family of peoples much needed qualities of both heart and mind, we have every reason to believe it presages similar movements of mass conversion in other territories.

The impact of the passing of our beloved Guardian, the electric shock it administered to the entire body of the believers, the fire of sorrow and test through which they passed and from which they are emerging stronger than ever before, cannot but release, as has every major crisis in the past history of our Faith, a fresh flow of those forces which mysteriously and irresistibly lead it to new victories, widen the pale of its influence, and swell the ranks of its followers. In view of this conspicuous process now taking place we call upon these pioneers and believers struggling in distant and difficult fields and particularly those in the recently opened territories, to persevere in their labours, to take fresh heart, to appreciate the spiritual significance of the service they are rendering and remain steadfastly at their posts—posts so dear to our beloved Guardian and to which he attached such great importance. Though the soil of men's hearts be unfertile, the spiritual climate of their thoughts inhospitable and the promised harvest seem but a distant dream, let them remember their sacred responsibility as Bahá'u'lláh's 'forward marching warriors' and steadfastly persevere in their task until they not only achieve success, but God willing, in the end bless the land they have served so faithfully by laying their bones to rest in it, as many a pioneer has done before them, and their graves become places of visitation for future generations.

The recent, little short of miraculous, achievements in Latin America demonstrate to us what hidden springs of strength are released in us when we obey the behests of our Guardian. They prove to us that the promised aid of the Supreme Concourse is at hand, eager to assist us, and that in the words of Shoghi Effendi its 'invisible battalions are mustered, rank upon rank, ready to pour forth reinforcements from on high' and sustain even the humblest service undertaken in the Path of God.

Very little time remains to us if we are to accomplish fully and with resounding success the tasks allotted to us by Shoghi Effendi in the last, mighty Plan we received from him, the final fruit of his divinely inspired mind. We need not, we cannot, and we will not fail him. It lies within our power to seal with complete victory his World-encircling Crusade. This can only be done, however, if mighty and ceaseless efforts are made by each and every believer and more particularly those who form a part of such richly blessed and favoured communities as those in the Cradle of the Faith and in the Cradle of its Administrative Order. Aside from the task of consolidating and maintaining the work in Latin America, prior to the election in Ridván 1961 of the twenty-one independent National Assemblies to be formed there, a tremendous amount of work faces the Bahá'ís, whether they be Hands, National Bodies entrusted with specific tasks, teachers or pioneers. In Europe, where no less than eleven National Assemblies must be formed in the spring of 1962, the requisite number of local Assemblies, the foundation for these new institutions, is far from being complete. Approximately forty must be constituted by next April. The field is difficult, the

people, sunk in materialism, often cynical and disillusioned as a result of two wars, and indifferent to religious truth and preoccupied with the economic problems and social diversions of a highly civilized continent. All these factors constitute one of the greatest challenges of the entire Crusade. A Faith, however, for which twenty-thousand of its adherents died as martyrs, which has planted its banner in a little over a hundred years in two hundred and fifty-six territories of the globe, embracing every independent nation, every dominion, mandate and trust territory and all the major islands of the world, whose valiant pioneers and teachers are scattered like life-giving seed in every corner of the planet, has the power within it to sweep away every obstacle in its path. If the present National Assemblies focus their strength and concentrate their thoughts, resources and energies on the goals they must attain; if the individual believers consult their hearts and their consciences and arise and proceed to the battle-fronts most in need of their assistance; then the power placed by God in the Ten Year Plan, the third and final stage of the initial epoch in the evolution of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Master Plan, will, like a mighty tidal wave, sweep away every remaining obstacle and carry us to glorious victory.

We must face the fact that a still greater measure of self-sacrifice is required of us than perhaps at any previous time in the prosecution of the World Crusade. Two thirds of this Crusade is already won; the opening of the virgin territories, the translation of our literature into so many diversified languages, the erection of continental Houses of Worship, the multiplication of Assemblies and centres, the increasing recognition of the independent character of our Faith, the incorporation of its administrative bodies, the formation of new National Bodies, are either accomplished facts or now lie well within our grasp. The last third, however, still remains. The new National Assemblies must be securely raised on their specified foundations; the Homefronts, the very bed-rock of existing older national Assemblies, which have lagged far behind the general rate of progress achieved in other fields, must now receive the assistance which alone can fulfil their objectives, namely a wide increase in settlers and an influx of new souls enlisted under the banner of Bahá'u'lláh through a renewed and unremitting teaching effort. And finally, the European Temple, one of the most important goals of the Ten Year Plan, still remains to be erected. The accomplishment of these tasks not only requires a fresh dedication to our work on the part of every single believer, but of necessity will demand a great outpouring of our material resources. The strength of the Cause of God in all dispensations, however, has been in the rank and file of its adherents; it is the meek, the obscure, the poor, indeed often the needy, who have arisen like veritable spiritual giants and established its institutions, raised its first precious edifices, carried its Message to the masses, laid down their lives for its Teachings, and demonstrated the regenerating spiritual power of the Word in its Manifestation. So to-day, as our Guardian's Crusade approaches its end, it is to the rank and file of the believers that we must look. From them will come its heroes, saints and martyrs; they will be the ones to fulfil the hopes of Shoghi Effendi,

to realize the promises of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, to lay the foundations of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh on an unshakable foundation, to win the ultimate victory.

The beloved Guardian made quite clear the supreme role of every single Bahá'í. He said, one year after the inception of the World Crusade, that 'This challenge, so severe and insistent, and yet so glorious, faces no doubt primarily the individual believer on whom, in the last resort, depends the fate of the entire community. He it is who constitutes the warp and woof on which the quality and pattern of the whole fabric must depend. He it is who acts as one of the countless links in the mighty chain that now girdles the globe. He it is who serves as one of the multitude of bricks which support the structure and insure the stability of the administrative edifice now being raised in every part of the world. Without his support, at once whole hearted, continuous and generous, every measure adopted, and every plan formulated, by the Body which acts as the national representative of the community to which he belongs, is fore-doomed to failure. The World Centre of the Faith itself is paralyzed if such a support on the part of the rank and file of the community is denied it. The Author of the Divine Plan Himself is impeded in His Purpose if the proper instruments for the execution of His design are lacking. The sustaining strength of Bahá'u'lláh Himself, the Founder of the Faith, will be with-held from every and each individual who fails in the long run to arise and play his part'

The Master has made clear in an impelling and impassioned appeal, the overwhelming potency of the forces released by Bahá'u'lláh, which activate those who respond to His call. These words surely leave none of us any excuse for failing in our duty to God, Bahá'u'lláh and His Cause: 'The undying Fire which the Lord of the Kingdom hath kindled in the midst of the Holy Tree is burning fiercely in the midmost heart of the world. The conflagration it will provoke will envelop the whole earth. Its blazing flames will illuminate its peoples and kindreds. All the signs have been revealed; every prophetic allusion hath been manifested. Whatever hath been enshrined in all the Scriptures of the past hath been made evident. To doubt or hesitate is no more possible. . . . Time is pressing. The Divine Charger is impatient, and can tarry no longer. Ours is the duty to rush forward and, ere it is too late, win the victory.'

April, 1960.

Rúhíyyih

Amelia Collins

A. Q. Faizi

Paul Haney

Jalal Khazeh

John Ferraby

Horace Holley

O Lord, deliver us from all temptations, tests, and evil suggestions of those who have turned their faces from Thee. O Thou Merciful God, confirm us by Thine invisible hosts and reinforce us through Thy heavenly angels.

O Lord we are weak, poor, submissive and humble; strengthen, enrich, and uplift us above all earthly conditions.

O God! As Thou hast illumined our hearts with the light of knowing Thee, make us firm in Thy blessed Covenant.

Verily, Thou art the Clement, the Forgiving.

TALK GIVEN TO THE NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í CONVENTION IN LONDON ON
SATURDAY, 23rd APRIL, 1960

by MR. HASAN BALYUZI, HAND OF THE CAUSE OF GOD

I thought, Friends, of trying to take you back a number of years in our own particular Bahá'í history, that is the British Bahá'í history. We do know what our tasks are for the next three years. I don't think they need any repetition. We know them, we have heard of them and we have just been reminded of them in this very inspiring message from the World Centre. But I would like particularly to emphasise this afternoon the rôle which this community must play, must inevitably play, in this great drama of Bahá'í history. It is a rôle given to us by the beloved Guardian himself and it is a destiny forged by this community at a time when every reason would have told it that it could not have undertaken such a great task, but boldly undertook it, fulfilled it, accomplished it, and won the laurels of victory. And as a result of that, forged its own destiny, as attested by the beloved Guardian. What I would like to do is to go back to those great messages which came to us throughout the years from him, and in which he spoke of the destiny which this community had forged for itself, and which awaited it in the future. I would like particularly to do this because, friends, I believe in my heart most strongly that of all the countries of Europe, to-day, this country stands readiest for the beginning of mass-conversion. Every report that I have had confirms this belief in me, and it is up to you now; you bear the armour of Bahá'u'lláh, you are the army of light and it is up to you to hold aloft this torch, and to begin this mass-conversion of the European continent, and to feed Europe with those pioneers that are so urgently needed to form the Spiritual Assemblies that are to be the bases on which the National Spiritual Assemblies must be raised in 1962.

There are quite a number of us here to-day who don't remember those very exciting days of exactly ten years and a month ago. The Cause has indeed expanded within these ten years. It was a very thrilling time. I have here before me a communication which went out from the N.T.C. which had a Herculean task and nobly fulfilled it, in those months. It is dated March 20th, 1950, and is headed: ENTREAT ENTIRE COMMUNITY SEIZE FIRMLY PRIZE FINGERTIPS. These are the words of the beloved Guardian himself, quoted, and it told the community a tale of sorrow. It told the community that there were only thirty-one days left and thirty-three vacancies to be filled, more than one per day. On the 13th April, 1950 another communication went out from the N.T.C. headed: VICTORY IN SIGHT. That is what this community achieved within but three weeks. And then, on the 17th April, the final communication of the N.T.C. was headed: VICTORY, and said: DEEPEST AND LOVING CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU ALL, FOR THIS GREAT TRIUMPH, WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ALL AT CONVENTION. And then, this was the message, a cable which came from our beloved Guardian when we told him that at long last victory had been achieved

and a miracle had taken place. This is what he said: OVERJOYED DEEPLY GRATEFUL IMMENSELY PROUD SIGNAL VICTORY ACHIEVED BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY BRITISH ISLES SHEDDING LUSTRE OPENING YEARS SECOND BAHÁ'Í CENTURY. Mark his words: 'shedding lustre opening years second Bahá'í century', and then when the N.S.A. sent him a cable offering him greetings for Ridván, this was the beloved Guardian's answer: SHARE JOY RECIPROCATATE NOBLE SENTIMENTS HEARTILY CONGRATULATE NATIONAL ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES TRIUMPHANT COMMUNITY INDEFATIGABLE NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE ALL SUBSIDIARY AGENCIES PARTICULARLY SELFSACRIFICING PIONEERS WHO SO OUTSTANDINGLY CONTRIBUTED SIGNAL VICTORY REVERBERATING BAHÁ'Í WORLD. And then exactly ten years ago this was the message which he sent to this Convention: April 1950, a decade ago: (I'll read these words very slowly, because this is where he begins to tell this community how it has forged its destiny and what was now expected of it and what it had to do in years to come). HEART FLOODED JOY/STRIKING EVIDENCE BOUNTIFUL GRACE BAHÁ'U'LLAH ENABLING VALLOUROUS DEARLY LOVED BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY BRITISH ISLES TRIUMPHANTLY CONCLUDE FIRST HISTORIC PLAN HALF CENTURY BRITISH BAHÁ'Í HISTORY HERALD AUTHOR FAITH CENTRE COVENANT COURSE ON HIGH ACCLAIM SUPERB COLLECTIVE ACHIEVEMENT IMMORTALISING OPENING DECADE SECOND BAHÁ'Í CENTURY UNPRECEDENTED HISTORY FAITH BRITISH ISLES UNRIVALLED ANNALS ANY BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY EUROPEAN CONTINENT UNPARALLELED PERCENTAGE NUMBER COMMUNITY RESPONDING PIONEER CALL THROUGHOUT BAHÁ'Í WORLD SINCE TERMINATION APOSTOLIC AGE BAHÁ'Í DISPENSATION. HISTORIC PLEDGE BRITISH BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY NOBLY REDEEMED TRIBUTE MEMORY MARTYR PROPHET FAITH WORTHILY PAID. SPIRITUAL POTENTIALITIES PROSECUTE SUBSEQUENT STAGE UNFOLDING MISSION FULLY ACQUIRED. And then he said that it was time to launch another plan, a two-year plan, on which so much was to depend. Now I would like you particularly to concentrate your attention on this, because this Crusade now approaching its end and the plans that are to follow it and the Crusades that are to succeed it, in the words of the Guardian which I am going to read to you now, depended on the successful conclusion of that Two-Year Plan which he gave to this community, he gave it to this community to start a process which will lead the world community of Bahá'u'lláh to its Golden Age. You see, you must realise, my friends, how great is your responsibility,

and I am not mincing my words, they are indeed breathtaking, because he raised you very high indeed, and you deserved to be raised so very high, because you pledged yourselves to something which seemed impossible and you achieved it and therefore he raised you high, he gave you this high rank this great station, and with a high rank, goes a great responsibility. He gave it to you to inaugurate a two-year plan in Africa the results of which you have just heard in this message from the World Centre. And he made dependent on that plan the launching of a Ten-Year Crusade which will be the prelude to crusades of the future. Now, these are all written down in his own words, this is not what I infer, but what he himself, our beloved Guardian said, and here they are, and I am going to read them to you. He said in February 1951 'On the success of this enterprise' (the Two-Year Plan), 'unprecedented in its scope, unique in its character and immense in its spiritual potentialities, must depend the initiation, at a later period in the Formative Age of the Faith, of undertakings embracing within their range all National Assemblies functioning throughout the Bahá'í World—undertakings constituting in themselves a prelude to the launching of world-wide enterprises destined to be embraced upon in future epochs of that same Age by the Universal House of Justice, that will symbolise the unity and co-ordinate and unify the activities of these National Assemblies'. And these are again his own words: 'To be singled out as the chief agency in the prosecution of a task of such dimensions, such significance, and the harbinger of events so glorious, is indeed at once an inestimable blessing and staggering responsibility, with which the British Bahá'í community, emerging triumphantly and in rapid succession from the ordeal of a world war and the struggles involved in the prosecution of a historic Plan, has been honoured at so critical and challenging an hour in the fortunes of mankind'. I told you these are his own words. I am firmly convinced that now we can do great things in the year now opening which is going to be a glorious year in the annals of Bahá'í history. A year which will terminate with the election of the first elected international Agency of our Faith. A year in which twenty-one National Spiritual Assemblies will be raised in the Western Hemisphere. Never before in Bahá'í history has a single year witnessed the formation of so many National Assemblies. Never before in Bahá'í history have all its national agencies, its national bodies, its future National Houses of Justice, been called upon to elect its first international agency, the prelude to the election of the Universal House of Justice. It's a glorious year now opening, a year in which this community greatly blessed in so many ways—presently I will read you the words of the beloved Guardian himself in which he speaks of the blessings showered on this community—a year in which this so richly blessed community must play a great, a worthy and a noble part, eclipsing all that it has achieved in previous years.

Here is what he said in July 1956 in a letter to this community: 'The annals of the British Bahá'í community, small in numbers, yet unconquerable in spirit, tenacious in belief, undeviating in purpose, alert and vigilant in the discharge of its manifold duties and responsibilities, have in consequence of its epoch-

making achievements been vastly enriched. The process set in motion and greatly accelerated through the successive formation of the Six-Year Plan, the Two-Year Plan and the Ten-Year Plan, must continue unabated and unimpaired. Nay, with every passing day it must gather momentum. Every individual believer must, henceforth, encouraged and inspired by all that has already been achieved, contribute to its future and speedy unfoldment.' And he ends this with a prayer which I will read at the end.

And then you have, friends, his very last message which came to us only three months before his passing. There is a great deal there he has told us to do which we have not yet quite done. This is his last mandate given to us, only three months before he left this world, and this is what he told us. He speaks of the future, a glorious, splendid future in store for this community, and then he says: 'To be enabled to rise to this occasion, to ensure the energetic, the systematic and uninterrupted conduct of so vast and diversified an enterprise, amidst peoples and races fully as promising, and even more remotely situated' (he spoke there of the Pacific area in particular), and presenting them with a challenge more severe than any which has faced them in the past, the small band of the ardent, the high minded, and resolute followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, charged by Destiny and by virtue of the enviable position they occupy, with so glorious a responsibility for the future awakening of the great masses, living under the shadow of, or whose governments are directly associated with, the British Crown, must needs in the years immediately ahead, acquire greater coherence....' These are the things which he charged us with, things which we have to do: '... acquire greater coherence, increase more rapidly in numbers, definitely emerge from obscurity, plumb greater depths of consecration, enrich its store of administrative experience, become definitely self-supporting and associate itself more closely, through the body of its elected representatives and its future Hands, with the National and Regional Spiritual Assemblies on the European mainland and in all the other continents of the globe, and particularly with the Hands already appointed in both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. 'The rapid multiplication of isolated centres, groups and local assemblies, particularly in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and Eire; the incorporation of firmly grounded Local Spiritual Assemblies; a greater measure of publicity; a wider dissemination of Bahá'í literature; a quick and substantial rehabilitation of the vitally important national Fund; a firmer grasp of the essential verities of the Faith; a more profound study of its history and a deeper understanding of the genesis, the significance, the workings, and the present status and achievements of its embryonic World Order and of the Covenant to which it owes its birth and vitality—these remain the rock-bottom requirements which alone can guarantee the opening, and hasten the advent, of that blissful era which every British Bahá'í heart so eagerly anticipates, and the glories of which can, at present, be but dimly discerned.'

Now, Friends, this is the destiny of this community, this is the great task before it. I am certain that if we do what our beloved Guardian has told us to do, and expects us to do, we can, not double, but treble and quadruple our numbers within the next twelve months. Of that I remain absolutely and completely certain. It

is within our grasp; please God, that we go ahead and do it. And by doing so we shall not only form those Local Spiritual Assemblies that are required here, but we shall help our brothers and sisters on the European Continent greatly, within the next twelve months.

I am not going to speak of pioneering, this is so evident. This is what has given us this wonderful victory in Latin America. People did go out since the call reached them last November. It was last November at the gathering of the Hands in the Holy Land, when it was decided to complete the number of the Local Spiritual Assemblies in Latin America, to lay the foundation for the election of the Western Hemisphere's twenty-one independent National Assemblies in Central and South America and in the Antilles. And within five months or less there were souls who went out, who forgot everything, who did not count the cost, and now, as you heard in this message, to-day, April 23rd, 1960, the banner of victory waves on every hilltop that seemed impossible to scale only five or six months ago. And this happened only because there were those who poured out their material resources and there were those who went out and settled in these remote regions, and some of them went over long, long distances to reach these goals, and so every Local Assembly required in Latin America was formed. I am certain the same can happen in Europe. There are forty Assemblies to be formed in Europe, and that can happen, will happen and must happen; we cannot fail in the last lap. You have a notable share to contribute to this victory on the European continent. You can increase your numbers greatly, so to have that store of manpower that can go out, and will pour out into these ten countries of Europe. Less than ten now, because I am most happy to tell you that Belgium no longer needs any pioneers. Spain ceased to need any more pioneers about a couple of years ago. And Belgium has almost completed its task. Two assemblies were formed in Portugal this Ridván . . . and I believe three Assemblies were formed in Scandinavia—I don't know which countries. Next door there is Holland, we have only got to jump across the sea. In Holland something like forty souls are required in various goal towns, because Holland is to have eight Local Spiritual Assemblies. Nearly next door to it, Italy and Switzerland also need your help, they need pioneers.

As I said at the beginning, and I repeat it, Friends, by what I have been told, by what I have heard and by what friends have written to me, I have come to this conclusion, that there is every evidence that of all European countries the one that is most ready now for the beginning of that mass-conversion is the British Isles. It's up to you.

Now I would like to make a particular appeal: Please, please don't wait for anybody else, don't wait for a committee or an Assembly, for a week-end conference, for the Hands, for anyone; go out and teach as you have never taught before. Go out and

pioneer; man these outposts and teach and don't wait for anyone else. Those people who went out to see Bahá'u'lláh—and they didn't know whether they would see Him—in the citadel of 'Akká; they only knew they would have to go, they did not wait for anybody else to tell them whether the road was safe, whether they could safeguard their journey, whether they could give them a donkey to ride upon, they did not wait. Once they heard that Bahá'u'lláh was there in 'Akká after many months of no news, they just started walking, because they knew they had to do it. They knew that they had to see His face. They walked through the deserts, they scaled high mountains, it took them months, and months, and months, and they waited for nobody. When Badí went out there, he waited for no one, Bahá'u'lláh was waiting for him. And when he was given that letter which he was to take to the Sháh he did not count the cost; he knew that he had to take this letter of Bahá'u'lláh and deliver it in person into the hands of the Sháh of Persia. What happened to him did not matter, what mattered was that this letter had to be delivered into the hands of the Sháh. And he went out to deliver that letter, and suffered martyrdom, he knew he would.

Now, we will be here to-day and to-morrow. On Monday we will disperse. Let us begin this work right on Monday. Don't wait until Tuesday or until the week-end when a directive from the committee will reach you or from the Assembly or anyone. Let us start on Monday, and walk, just as those believers did. And let us within these next twelve months do away with a great deal that is unnecessary. I am certain that all over the Bahá'í world we do a great deal that is unnecessary and totally and completely irrelevant to the tasks that face us. Let us do away with all those things which are irrelevant and unnecessary, relatively unimportant. Once before I spoke of the imperatives of the Cause. Let us see what the imperatives are; as Badí saw that the imperative was that the Letter of Bahá'u'lláh was to be put into the Hands of the Sháh. Let us see to-day what are the imperatives of the Cause, and give ourselves entirely, heart and mind and soul to those imperatives. In what you do within the next twelve months and indeed to the end of the crusade; as individuals, as committees, as Assemblies; I am sure I can speak on behalf of my fellow-Hands in Europe, and pledge the utmost help and support of the Hands and the Board Members to you in whatever you do to fulfil these remaining goals of our beloved Guardian's World Crusade. I pledge to you that help and support to the utmost.

I said I would read at the end those words of the beloved Guardian which were in the nature of a prayer:

"That the entire community may befittingly respond to the call of the present hour, and bring to final consummation the Mission with which it has been entrusted is the deepest yearning of my heart and the object of my unceasing prayers."

DEDICATION OF THE MASHRIQ'UL ADKAR OF AFRICA

'We have the greatest joy in writing to you to advise you that August 20/21st has been set as the date for the dedication of the Mashriq'ul Adhkár of Africa, and that the dedication ceremony will be performed by our revered and beloved Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum supported by the revered Hands of the Cause in Africa.

It would be a great joy to all of us in Africa, if your Assembly could bring this notice to the attention of the friends in your area, so that they may share with us our joy and happiness at this wonderful news. Also it may be possible for some of the friends to join us in person

on this historic occasion. Detailed plans have not been formulated, but further communications will be sent to you after our next National Assembly meeting, which will be held on March 25th.

'Please pray with us for the removal of all obstacles so that this great day may be fulfilled without any delay, thereby bringing great joy and happiness to our dearly beloved Guardian's heart.

'With deepest loving greetings.'

National Spiritual Assembly of The Bahá'ís
of Central and East Africa.

THE BAHÁ'Í TEMPLE IN KAMPALA



NEWS FROM THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

To read of news from Africa in the Daily Press is to be saddened and sickened, we see nothing there but prejudice, blood-shed, hatred—then by the news and pictures printed below we are suddenly reminded of the old psalmist, and of 'the cool waters' by which 'He leadeth me'. An international Kindergarten, where children of many races, colour, and creed learn to live together, and of the completion, and the coming dedication of the Mother Temple of Africa, the Bahá'í House of Worship, with its nine doors for the nine World Faiths, with the nine Holy books laid within it, where all mankind may enter and come together to worship one God. Both school and Temple are in Kampala, where there are many racial troubles. Let us pray increasingly for the unity of mankind in the love of God.

THE KINDERGARTEN

For the first time in the history of Kampala, Uganda, a completely inter-racial kindergarten has been started. The enterprising founder of this unique project, opened last May, is Miss Claire Gung, the first pioneer to set sail for Africa in 1951 when the British National Spiritual Assembly inaugurated the African campaign. Twenty-five years experience as a children's governess and kindergarten teacher, together with nine years residence in Africa gave Claire excellent qualifications for her work, which she speaks of as her service to Bahá'u'lláh. A true service to our Faith indeed, is this wonderful kindergarten; for in it children of all racial backgrounds (African, Indian, Chinese, Goan, British), religious communities (Christian, Moslem, Sikh, and Hindu) and languages, are meeting, learning and playing together.

The school is in Claire's own home. It is beautifully equipped with brightly coloured tables and chairs, blackboards, books, toys, paints, and modelling clay indoors, and a large sandbox, slide, swing, and see-saw in the grassy playground, which is her tree-shaded and fenced front garden. Every person who passes her home is taught a lesson in unity just by observing her children at play together. Forty children now attend the kindergarten.

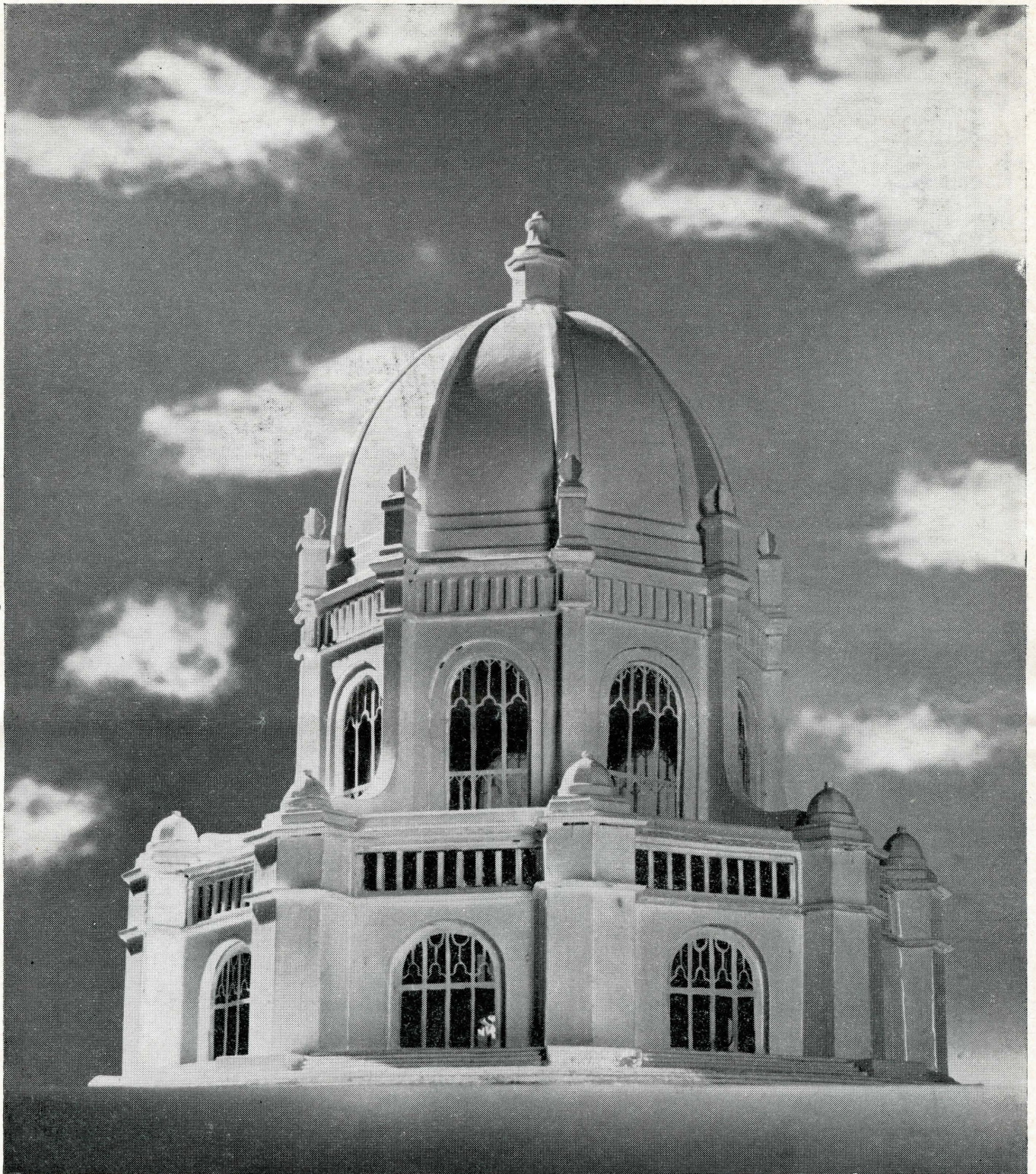
'Auntie Claire' is widely known as a Bahá'í, and her selfless service to the children of Kampala has won her much praise, an article in the newspaper, and the enrolment of the Kabaka (King) of Buganda's children in her school. Not only are the children of her school drawn closer together by the bonds of friendship and love, but their parents are strengthened in the belief that the peoples of the world can truly be united. Claire has shown the people of Kampala that Bahá'ís practice in their lives the unity which their Faith teaches.

'Consider the flowers of a garden. Though differing in kind, colour, form, and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm, and addeth unto their beauty.'

From a Tablet revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

THE BAHÁ'Í TEACHER





THE AUSTRALIAN HOUSE OF WORSHIP

The House of Worship for the Australian Continent, built upon a headland, a landmark for ships at sea, upon a main highway down which thousands pass daily is nearing completion. The lamp which is the

pinnacle of the dome, was placed in position by a helicopter. It is hoped that the dedication of the Temple will take place in the spring of 1961.

NEWS FROM THE BRITISH BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY

The new Area Teaching Plan, inaugurated at Teaching conference, has given a new impetus to teaching everywhere in the British Bahá'í Community.

We reprint here, from Home Front the original Teaching Plan, together with the first reports from the teaching Units, because they help us to keep before us

this plan, and its implications. We have only reports from a few Units, but work everywhere is forging ahead in a new way. The drawing-in of lone believers into this teaching plan is a most joyful thing, and has done much already to spread the teaching efforts, and discover new fields.

LIST OF TEACHING UNITS

In order to help us to see more clearly the direction our efforts must take, the following goals have been formulated:

1. That all Isolated Believers aim for Group status.
2. That all Groups aim for Assembly status.
3. That all Assemblies aim for Incorporation.
4. That all Assemblies aim to send out pioneers to reinforce the Goal Towns.

and below is given a list of the Teaching Units with their primary goals:

Scottish Region

1. Inverness—Assembly status
(Stornoway)
2. EDINBURGH—Rapid increase in number
Aberdeen—Assembly status
(The Islands)
3. GLASGOW—Consolidation
Motherwell—Assembly status
4. Newcastle—Assembly status
Carlisle—Assembly status

Northern Region

5. BRADFORD—Incorporation
LEEDS—Incorporation
Sheffield—Assembly status
York—Assembly status
6. BLACKPOOL—Incorporation
Blackburn—Assembly status
*Southport
*St. Annes
7. CHEADLE—Incorporation
ECCLES—Consolidation
MANCHESTER—Teaching and Dispersion
Swinton—Assembly status
8. LIVERPOOL—Rapid increase in numbers
Bangor (M)—Assembly status
Chester—Assembly status
9. BIRMINGHAM—Incorporation
LEICESTER—Consolidation and Incorporation
NORTHAMPTON—Incorporation
NOTTINGHAM—Consolidation
Loughborough—Assembly status

Southern Region

10. CAMBRIDGE—Consolidation
NORWICH—Incorporation
Newmarket—Assembly status
Peterborough—Assembly status
11. BRISTOL—Consolidation
Gloucester—Assembly status
12. OXFORD—Consolidation
READING—Consolidation
Wokington—Assembly

13. HOVE—Consolidation
LONDON—Dispersion
Canterbury—Assembly status
*Brighton—rapid increase in numbers
14. BOURNEMOUTH—Incorporation
PORTSMOUTH—Incorporation
Salisbury—Assembly status
Winchester—Assembly status
15. Exeter—Assembly status
Torquay—Assembly status

Welsh Region

16. CARDIFF—Incorporation
Pontypridd—Assembly status
The Valleys—rapid increase in numbers

Northern Ireland

17. BANGOR—Incorporation
BELFAST—Incorporation
(DUBLIN—Incorporation
Cork—Assembly status)

Note: Those towns in capital letters are L.S.A.s.

Those towns in ordinary letters are Goal Towns.

Those marked * are Groups.

Those towns in brackets are in E.A.T.C. territory. Those Assemblies underlined are requested to convene a meeting of the believers in their UNIT to consult together on the implications of this Plan.

TEACHING UNIT CONFERENCES

Unit 16: CARDIFF, Pontypridd, Caerphilly

A special Conference was called, with representatives from the N.T.C. present, to discuss plans for an intensive teaching campaign commencing mid-September. The first month will comprise almost daily public meetings, each week having a special theme running through it. The next two months will comprise close follow-up with study courses and firesides. A continual stream of teachers will be provided. The publicity side will be gone into very thoroughly, including the possibility of television appearances.

Unit 17: BANGOR, BELFAST, DUBLIN, Cork

As Northern Ireland has virtually achieved all its Ten Year Crusade goals, it was felt that the Unit should include the whole of Ireland enabling the Northern Irish friends to assist Eire in the achievement of her goals. As Southern Ireland is E.A.T.C. territory, members of this committee were also present at the Conference, which may prove to be one of the most important Bahá'í gatherings yet held in Ireland.

Almost to a man, the Northern Irish friends pledged their week-ends and holidays to serving the Cause in Eire, and a rota is now being worked out to cover nearly every week-end until the goals of Incorporation for Dublin and Assembly status for Cork are achieved. A pioneering offer was also made by one of the Northern Irish friends who is now endeavouring to settle in Dublin.

Unit 7: CHEADLE, ECCLES, MANCHESTER, Swinton

Regular activities are taking place in most of the communities in this Unit, and each will support the others as much as they can. One Day Schools are to be planned at regular intervals, as it was felt that they would be of great value, and an outline programme was drawn up. Prayer meetings were recommended, and also the joining of outside societies with kindred aims to get to know more people. Youth activities are developing well.

Unit 5: BRADFORD, LEEDS, SHEFFIELD, YORK

Their Conference resulted in Leeds deciding to put into operation, plans for Incorporation. Following the Conference Bradford has written to say that they too would like to put in motion plans for Incorporation. Bradford and Leeds are to get together with a view to having joint Public Meetings, each supporting the other. All communities are to be kept fully informed of each other's activities, and particular help and support will be given to the work in York. Already plans have been made to attend the first public meeting to be held in that Goal Town.

Unit 14: BOURNEMOUTH, PORTSMOUTH, SALISBURY, WINCHESTER, Wimborne

On going to press a full report had not yet been received about their Conference, but we understand that the consultation proved most successful. The main emphasis was on getting Salisbury and Winchester up to Assembly status. Assistance will be given to lone believers to enable them to form Groups, and all the Bahá'í are to be encouraged to travel around the Unit area to support meeting and firesides.

Units 1, 2 and 3: EDINBURGH, GLASGOW, ABERDEEN, INVERNESS, MOTHERWELL

This Conference certainly achieved its purpose, and 'we were practically working as one'. Plans are to be made for every help and assistance to be given to the Goal Towns, and already these have been put into action. The Aberdeen School was given very strong support indeed, and as many friends as possible intend to go to the public meeting being planned in Inverness. On consulting on the weak state of the Glasgow Assembly, two pioneer offers were received.

Unit 9: BIRMINGHAM, LEICESTER, NORTHAMPTON, NOTTINGHAM, LOUGHBOROUGH

The Conference proved a joyous and invigorating occasion. Communities are to keep each other informed of their activities and each will arrange for one or two of their members to visit the other communities in rotation, not necessarily as speakers. Northampton's need for more speakers and visitors was carefully noted. Lone believers will be given every help and

encouragement with the holding of devotionals or firesides in their homes. It was felt that One-Day Schools are invaluable, and a plan for holding regular Schools within the Unit is being drawn up. The friends were also aware of their individual responsibilities, and the many types of activity consulted upon during the Conference provided scope for every individual to play his part in the rapid expansion of teaching.

Unit 12: OXFORD, READING, WOKINGHAM

A Meeting was held in Reading on February 26th. The work of the three communities, plus the lone believers was discussed, and a short-term programme for mutual visiting was planned up to Ridvan. This plan has been working well, and a great deal has been gained through it. The next meeting is planned to follow Convention as early as possible, where, it is hoped, a more ambitious programme will be planned for the summer and autumn. Meanwhile the Area is adding to its present programme the working plans for Mrs. Shirin Fozdar's visit to Oxford, and Reading in May.

Travelling Expenses within the Units

Please note that in order to enable the Teaching Unit Plan to go ahead with the fewest complications and delays, the N.S.A. has authorised the National Treasurer to pay claims for travelling expenses, on the direct application of individual believers who have visited and supported the activities of other communities within their Unit. The claims do not need to be authorised by the R.T.C. or N.T.C.

REPORT FROM THE LIVERPOOL ASSEMBLY

We are delighted to welcome into our midst John and Viola Herman, Bahá'ís from Canada, though John is actually a Liverpudlian by birth. We are also very pleased to have our first 'youth'—Anne Parker, who has recently declared. Anne comes from Glasgow. We hope she will quickly make friends in Liverpool and bring some more young people into the Faith!

In January we began a new programme which was designed to bring greater variety—and we hoped, more contacts!—into our Wednesday evening 'public' meetings. We alternate our usual talks about the Faith, which we give in turn, with a Devotional meeting; and once a month we invite an outside speaker who is not a Bahá'í to come and give us a talk about his or her job, or some subject he or she is interested in. This has three advantages: *we* learn something we did not know before; we keep in touch with the way other people think; and it introduces new people to the Faith. Our list includes, 'Travels in Israel and Persia', 'The Eastern Religions', 'The Work of a Child Care Officer', 'The United Nations Association', 'Personnel Management', 'Work with Handicapped Children', and a discussion with the International Voluntary Service on 'World Unity—Is It Possible?' Those we have had so far have been well attended and extremely interesting and stimulating.

[Continued on back page]

Avenida Ventura Terra 1.
Lisbon.
26th April, 1960.

Our warmest and most loving greetings to all at Convention. The Portuguese representatives are just preparing to set off for the Iberian Convention, and Portugal is this year being unusually well represented, for in addition to its 3 delegates, 6 other Bahá'ís are going—two fully loaded cars.

Neither of us (Jan & Irene) can go because we have no holiday (not to mention shortage of cash), and as it is being held at Tarrasa near Barcelona, just as far away as possible from our side of the Peninsula—on the Mediterranean coast of Spain—a week is required for the sessions and the travelling involved. All except one of the nine going from here are Portuguese, which is a very healthy sign. Yet we should have loved to meet our co-Iberian fellow-workers over the border who have been so dynamic in not only winning, but exceeding their goals a year ago.

However, Portugal too has been stirring. This Ridván we have increased the number of L.S.A.s by two, from three to five, and so have just three more to form by next year. April has produced nine declarations so far. We witnessed the thrilling and moving ceremony of seven declarations avowed and signed on Easter Sunday morning in Faro, the capital of our most southerly province, the Algarve. That settled Faro for L.S.A. status and by a little judicious moving around of pioneers, Queluz was happily fixed and now boasts of an international community of American, Persian, English, Ethiopian and Portuguese believers all of whom manage consultations in English and French, thanks to the invaluable services of Jan for surmounting the language barrier there. Queluz incidentally, has a fine group of contacts which show promise to assure the Assembly next Ridván *without* the aid of pioneers. Irene is now left as an out and out Portuguese in the all-Portuguese mother Community of Lisbon and being spoiled by the dear friends who want to make Kenya recede into some far-away future if there is still a must in this direction.

The true Bahá'í spirit is growing daily and the work is progressing and growing in strength in every centre of the Faith here, preparing for the final effort to complete the victory, which, with the grace and assistance of Bahá'u'lláh, and your continued prayers for our success, we will achieve next year.

We are longing to hear the Ridván news from home. Incidentally, we are only six miles apart, although in different communities, and are colleagues at work. This letter is a truly united effort, the contributions of one being inseparable from those of the other, just as in the team work we so enjoy doing together around this country. Would any of you like to come and see us this summer? Lisbon is lovely.

Our dearest love,
Irene and Jan.

KARACHI

On the evening of 12th November the profusely illuminated gardens of Bahá'í Hall, bathed in multi-coloured lights, were decorated with a mosaic shamiana to seat almost 500 distinguished guests, who had been invited to come and share this joyous occasion with the Bahá'í Community of Karachi. Members of the reception committee welcomed and guided the guests to

the seating places and at exactly 6.30 the function was inaugurated with the welcoming opening speech of the Secretary, Local Teaching Committee. The Chairman in his own turn also welcomed the guests and thanked them for their coming and announced the programme, which apart from devotional readings and chanting of prayers included two speeches on the Life, Mission and Teachings of the SACRED BEAUTY. For almost two hours the programme ran with complete success. Thereafter the guests and the local and visiting Bahá'í friends were served with light refreshments in the traditional Bahá'í Hospitality. Then the guests were shown around the exhibition of Bahá'í Books and photographs, depicting the international—nay! the world wide—character of the Faith. This aroused great interest and the members of the Teaching Committee and other friends as well remained busy answering questions, eager queries and explaining all about the Faith and its purpose. The occasion was indeed a very great success—so much so that the next day *Pakistan Standard*—a local English Sunday Evening paper devoted one whole page to print a comprehensive article on the Teachings, Principles and Prayers of the Bahá'í Faith under the heading of 'BAHA'I BROTHERHOOD—An Aspect of Religion, Life and Faith'.

The Registrar of Marriages in Bombay has for the first time given legal recognition to the Bahá'í Marriage. At this occasion the Secretary of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Bombay was mentioned with his seal on the document of marriage instead of the officiating priest, as required by the Memorandum of Marriages.

Book Review:

'GOD LOVES LAUGHTER'

William Sears' autobiography

The jacket of this book says it is 'the hilarious story of a poor boy from the Middle West who became one of America's top-flight TV stars. But he was bothered with a boyhood dream and eventually left the big time to go to Nineveh. (Like Jonah!)' A footnote at this point advises: 'Better read the book; the author says he has explained this.'

To many the coming true of the dream is a greater achievement than the professional success which the author won.

Bahá'ís will follow with special interest the story of the young boy who dreamed of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on the very night that He was speaking in near-by Minneapolis, and heard Him say, as in fact He did, 'Be like Peter. Fish!'

The subsequent story of struggle and fortitude, disillusionment and doubt, and the final winning through to faith and assurance, with ever the memory of his dream to sustain him, portrays the eternal drama of man in the Valley of Search, and may encourage and help many who find themselves caught in the toils of 20th-century unbelief.

The ever-present laughter in this book will be a warm personal reminder to those who know Hand of the Cause William Sears, while to others it may well be the icing on the strong medicine of spiritual truth.

[From Liverpool Assembly—*continued*]

Another idea we have is of taking the Faith to various parts of Liverpool. We have arranged the first of these meetings for the 6th April, in Wavertree, where one of our members lives. Though this is to be a public meeting we are concentrating our posters and invitations in the immediate neighbourhood. If this experiment works we shall try other areas. We hope that by doing this local interest can be kept alive by the person that lives there, and that in this way we shall eventually cover the whole of Liverpool more intimately than is possible with a large public meeting in the centre of the city. To get to this meeting some of the residents have literally only to cross the road. For our posters we have made use of the fact that the Faith was on T.V. not long ago.

Our Teaching Unit conference was very successful and we saw a number of old friends. This has been reported in detail elsewhere.

WALES

We print the following from the News Letter of the Wales Regional Teaching Committee, received, unfortunately too late for our last issue, but it is news of especial interest. The record of the first declarations in Pontypridd, together with the photograph and an account of an historic occasion.

Our previous Letter announced the arrangements for the teaching visit of Mrs. Meherangiz Munsiff. This was a most successful visit, and we continue to reap the harvest sown by Meherangiz in her tireless service to the Cause in Wales. On sixteen separate occasions, in ten days, she spoke of the Faith, at Public Meetings, Rotary Clubs, Firesides, non-Bahá'í groups, and a Welsh Chapel in Caerphilly. Perhaps most important of all, she appeared on the I.T.V. News Bulletin, seen by Wales and the West of England, when well over half a million people heard her speak directly on the Faith, and in her replies to six questions tell the most important facts of the Faith and its relationship to Christianity. She also recorded an interview at the B.B.C. on the subject of the Faith; so far as we know this has not yet been broadcast, but is in the B.B.C. library for future use. The *South Wales Echo* and several local papers had articles on Meherangiz's visit and talks. We estimated that during her visit 250 people directly heard talks on the Faith, apart from the countless thousands who saw her on Television. A direct result is that one of the technicians at the Television Studio sought Meherangiz out after the programme, eager to hear more of this wonderful message, and he is now a member of the Cardiff Bahá'í community. We cannot thank Meherangiz enough for all she did here.

THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH ON TELEVISION



An Interview on I.T.V. News Bulletin