

BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

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The Standard Bearers of the Nine Year Plan

November, 1964.

To the Baha'is of the World.
Beloved Friends,

Once again the World Centre of our Faith has been the scene of historic events, affecting profoundly the immediate prosecution of the Nine Year Plan and the future development of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. The occasion was the gathering in the Holy Land, for a period of fourteen days, of the Hands of the Cause of God to discuss their vital responsibilities, and particularly as Standard Bearers of the Nine Year Plan.

The Universal House of Justice took advantage of this opportunity not only to receive the advice, opinions and views of the Hands on the progress of the Nine Year Plan, but to consult them on the highly important goal announced at Ridván, 1964, under World Centre Goals as "Development of the Institution of the Hands of the Cause of God, in consultation with the body of the Hands of the Cause, with a view to the extension into the future of its appointed functions of protection and propagation."

It was apparent that the elucidation of this vital goal, affecting as it does the relationship of the Hands of the Cause of God to all other institutions of the Cause, was imperative to the prosecution of the all important teaching work and the development of the Bahá'í World Order.

Accordingly, the Universal House of Justice gave its full attention to this matter and, after study of the sacred texts and hearing the views of the Hands of the Cause themselves, has arrived at the following decisions:

There is no way to appoint, on to legislate to make it possible to appoint, Hands of the Cause of God.

Responsibility for decisions on matters of general policy affecting the Institution of the Hands of the Cause, which was formerly exercised by the beloved Guardian, now devolves upon the Universal House of Justice as the supreme and central institution of the Faith to which all must turn.

It is with great joy that we are able to share with you the initial steps now taken to attain the goal.

The assignment of the Hands to

various continents remains unchanged but, in order to expedite the work, the continents of Asia and the Western Hemisphere will each be divided into zones for the day-to-day work of the Hands, one or more Hands being responsible for each zone. Asia will consist of two zones: the Middle East comprising the countries from and including Pakistan westwards and also Asiatic U.S.S.R.; and South and East Asia comprising the remainder of the continent. The Western Hemisphere will consist of three zones: North America, Central America (including Mexico) and the Antilles, and South America. The Hawaiian Islands will be included in the Australasian continental area, as listed in the recently issued statistical summary.

The number of members of the Auxiliary Boards for the propagation of the Faith will be increased in every continent, raising the total number of Auxiliary Board Members in Africa from eighteen to twenty-seven; in Asia from fourteen to thirty-six; in Australasia from four to nine; in Europe from eighteen to twenty-seven; and in the Western Hemisphere from eighteen to thirty-six.

The Hands of the Cause in each continent are called upon to appoint one or more members of their Auxiliary Boards to act in an executive capacity on behalf of and in the name of each Hand, thereby assisting him in carrying out his work.

The exalted rank and specific functions of the Hands of the Cause of God make it inappropriate for them to be elected or appointed to administrative institutions, or to be elected as delegates to national conventions. Furthermore, it is their desire and the desire of the House of Justice that they be free to devote their entire energies to the vitally important duties conferred upon them in the Holy Writings. The importance of close collaboration between the Hands of the Cause and National Spiritual Assemblies

cannot be overstressed, and a separate communication is being addressed to National Assemblies on this subject, supplementing guidance given in earlier letters.

We anticipate announcing at Ridván 1965 plans for Oceanic and Intercontinental Conferences, an overall plan for world-wide proclamation of the Faith during 1967-68, the centenary year of the revelation of the Súriy-i-Mulúk, involving co-operation of National and Local Assemblies throughout the world, and conditions of entry for a competition for the design of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of Panama.

Teaching the masses is the greatest challenge now facing the followers of Bahá'u'lláh. No work is more important than that of carrying His Message with utmost speed to the bewildered and thirsting peoples of a spiritually parched world. Now, as the Hands return to their various continents, reinforced by a wider and more efficient organization of their work, we are confident that the whole Bahá'í world will, with rising enthusiasm and ever-increasing success, press forward with the teaching work, greatly increase the flow of pioneers, more widely participate in the financial support of the work of the Cause and add rapidly to the list of goals already accomplished.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Signed and Sealed.

The Universal House of Justice.

VISITORS

We were very happy that a meeting of three of the Hands of the Cause of God in Europe, Mr. Balyuzi, Mr. Ferraby and Dr. Muheschlegel, was held in the Haxíratu'l-Quds on Monday afternoon, November 16th. Amongst other welcome visitors have been Mr. Ron Bates, a member of the N.S.A. of Luxembourg and Mr. Jan Sijssling, of the N.S.A. of Holland, who brought greetings from the Bahá'ís in Europe; and Mr. Bernard Leach, just back from Japan, who brought greetings from the Friends in the Far East. Returning pilgrims have all brought the warm love of the members of the Universal House of Justice, the Hands in Haifa and the Friends serving at the World Centre.

Story of a

(Continued)

TEMPLE

RISING IN ALL ITS BEAUTY

On 20 November, 1960, the cornerstone for the Mother Temple of Europe had been laid on the basis of a part permit for the excavation work of the Temple. On 22 November the final building permit was received, and joy and happiness as well as deep gratitude to Bahá'u'lláh moved the heart of every believer. Thus one of the important goals of the Crusade Plan of the beloved Guardian could be considered as safeguarded at long last, and all energies concentrated on its material execution.

The building permit, however, contained 44 injunctions which restricted, to a certain extent, the free planning of details of the edifice, and therefore a protest was entered against a number of points on 20 December, 1960. The decision on this protest did not, however, interfere with the continuation of the raw construction.

On 17 October, 1960, the excavation work was started on the Temple ground, and solid rock was found after some time which had to be blasted. The weather was very wet that Autumn and the foundation pit had constantly to be pumped out, in order to continue the work.

1961

In December, 1960, the first layer of concrete was placed. Then the winter period started and in order to carry on the work without delay, in spite of frost and snow, a huge tent was erected in January, 1961, and kept until 7 March above the building site, in which stoves were placed so that the inside temperature was kept above 0 degrees. The next step was to cast the foundations for the 27 pillars, and they were ready in March, 1961. The connecting wall for the 27 pillar foundations followed and the inside drainage as well as the outlets for the air circulation and at the National Convention, 1961, the bottom plate of the auditorium was finished.

The water supply pipe was also installed in December, 1960, and estimates had to be worked out with reference to the electricity supply, as the building machinery necessitated the immediate availability of current. A special cable had to be laid from the village to the Temple ground (about 1 km.) which was done from January until March, 1961, when the temporary transformer could be installed. In the meantime the machinery was run by Diesel power. Also the order for the scaffolding was placed with

Mannesmann in January, 1961.

With these points settled everything was prepared to start the mounting of the prefabricated pillars in May, 1961. The firm Schokbeton at Kampen (Netherlands) had initiated their construction plans in October, 1960, but so many technical difficulties, especially in regard to structural requirements set by the German authorities, emerged which entailed lengthy tests, negotiations and correspondence, that the actual mounting was delayed by three months.

Not to lose any time the foundations for the 27 ambulatory pillars, the tie beams connecting the inside and outside pillars, as well as the floor of the ambulatory were built.

The N.S.A. of Germany, in the meantime, exerted every effort to expedite the building development by visits to Kampen and several meetings with the contractors. In June, 1961, the 9 lower parts of the main pillars of the auditorium were cast at Kampen and in July the 18 lower parts of the intermediate pillars, which then were approved by the Technical University of Aachen. Thus the mounting could start, according to the new schedule, on 8 August, 1961.

The prefabricated parts are made of a mixture of blast furnace cement, gravel and gravel sand and the finishing is of outstanding quality. The pillars of the auditorium are cast in three parts, of which the lower parts are 6 m high and weigh about 7 tons. The anchorage of the pillars on their base is done by a sort of ball-bearing joint which necessitated the most accurate dimensions and only allowed a very limited tolerance measured at less than 2 mm.

In September, 1961, the mounting of the lower parts of the pillars was finished and the concrete connection ring in October, 1961. People from many countries had been working during the year 1961 at the Temple site; from Italy, Spain, Netherlands, Australia, Germany and also one Persian Bahá'í.

1962

After the drainage was installed, in December, 1961, the N.S.A. had to take the decision to stop building for the winter period as with snow and frost it would have been too dangerous to continue mounting. The heavy storms in February proved that this decision was wise as tremendous damage could have been done to the building, if the pillars were only kept in place by the scaffolding. However, at the concrete plant in Kampen work

continued and in February, 1962, the 27 middle parts of the pillars were ready for installation. They weigh 14 tons each and are 12 m. high. They are connected to the lower parts by welding together the ends of the steel reinforcements in both pillar parts.

The mounting started again on 19 March, 1962, and the 9 middle parts of the main pillars were erected.

In April, 1962, all 27 parts were erected and then welded to the lower parts. In May the 27 upper parts were placed and in June the concrete ring on top of the 540 roof elements started, and the cellar underneath the ambulatory was excavated.

On 27 July, 1962, the lantern was finished and thus the total height of the Temple reached at which occasion the workers were given a special treat and the Hand of the Cause of God, Mr. Leroy Ioas and Mrs. Ioas just happened to be present.

In August, 1962, the erection of the pillars of the ambulatory was started. In September, all roof elements of the cupola were placed and the roof of the ambulatory could be cast in concrete. When this work was done in November, the raw construction had been finished which was celebrated with the "Richtfest"—a German custom during which the workers turn over the building to the owner in a ceremony. On 8 January, 1963, television made a film of the Temple which was broadcast on 9 January.

The cupola was glassed in October and November, 1962, and then heavy winter weather broke in. The ambulatory was covered with tarpaulin sheets underneath which the work could be continued, such as placing the frames for the windows.

1963

In January, 1963, also the ambulatory was glassed with panes of 8 mm. crystal glass, and in February the 9 doors were installed. In March, the Greatest Name was laid in the lantern in blue and silver mosaic. In that month the snow started to melt and thus the laying of a protection cover on top of the cupola and the roof of the ambulatory could continue. The sunblinds on the inside of the 540 roof elements were fixed during the same time and then the cupola painted.

In April, 1963, the cupola was finished so that the scaffolding could be removed. This also meant the consummation of plans A and B which had been approved by the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land. Construction was then discontinued to allow the friends going to and coming from London to visit the Mother Temple of Europe.

In June, 1963, work was started again after the Universal House of

Justice had approved plan C. The electric wiring was installed as well as the 27 flood lights on the cantilever. In July, the ground around the Temple was removed to allow the building of stairs leading up to the ambulatory. In August, 1963, the raw construction was approved by the German Building Authorities. The plastering and painting in the auditorium was done, the building of the underground transformer station started as well as, in September, the caretaker's house.

1964

In November, the electric floor heating was installed and the floor covered, in December and January, 1964, with plates of natural stone.

Again the frost period slowed down work, however, in the interior of the Temple switchboards were installed and heating elements on the cantilever, the cellar was painted and the inside stair to the cellar, as well as its floor, covered with stone plates. In February, 1964, the painting of the ambulatory was started and the transformer installed in March, when also the caretaker's house could be continued.

As soon as the ground got drier the path leading up to, and the area around, the Temple was covered with gravel and the outside stairs with stone plates. This work done and all the other finishing touches, including cleaning, chairs and curtains, completed, the Temple was ready for dedication in July, 1964. By that time the raw construction of the caretaker's house was also done; but the building of the road, canalisation, fencing and parking lot remained to be carried out according to funds available.

A passage of Bahá'í World, Vol. XII, page 542, written with reference to the Mother Temple of America, might equally have been written about our own Temple: "... every Bahá'í may well thrill with gratitude for the years of concentrated effort and immense sacrifice which brought the Temple to its present point of completion, and steel his resolve to assure completion of this impressive, noble and exquisite framework within which the Bahá'í House of Worship can blazon forth its divine Promise to a desperate world!"

The last letter of our dear Mrs. Amelia Collins, late Hand of the Cause of God, who was so closely linked to the Mother Temple of Europe, is quoted in conclusion:

"Beloved Friends: Words do not come when I attempt to write to you, first, to express my deep gratitude to Bahá'u'lláh for giving me the bounty to take part in the laying of the cornerstone of the Mother Temple of Europe, and next, my deep appreciation for your loving consideration for

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Congo The following report is taken from the October issue of the Bahá'í Gazette produced by the N.S.A. of Central and East Africa. "Congo reports show that whilst a few, a very few, of the Bahá'ís became involved in the political troubles which are now affecting the Congo, the mass of the believers remain firm and are quite apart from the strife which is dividing and disrupting their fellow Congolese. When the delegates returned to the Congo from Convention they found their country disturbed, their villages wrecked and in some cases burned. Many had lost their clothes and possessions and their families had fled into the bush. All those who stood clearly for their Faith were allowed to proceed unmolested. The Board member and some committee members met and decided to call some big meetings to tell all the friends to keep out of any political affairs, carry on teaching their Faith and trust in Bahá'u'lláh. 365 believers attended the first meeting and over 2,000 the second. About eight of the friends failed to appreciate the teachings of the Faith and became involved; they were killed. On the other hand large quantities of books of various religions were destroyed, but all Bahá'í books were collected and returned to Board Member, Shabani. The authorities in control on one of the borders gave a permit to an N.S.A. member to visit the Bahá'ís in Kampala, and though he was very ill on the way and it took him 15 days, he arrived safely and took back with him literature, clothes, etc.

Some parts of the Congo are closed to us and we cannot even get any message from them. Special prayers were read in the House of Worship at Kampala, and we are sure all the friends will join us in praying that the friends in the Congo will be kept safe and strong, and will demonstrate the power of

me, making what seemed an impossibility a fact, a bounty I will cherish throughout eternity. When supplicating at the threshold of Bahá'u'lláh I shall see all the shining faces who had one wish that every obstacle be removed and the Temple arise in all its beauty. . . .

"Assuring you that I shall follow every step in this glorious task which is before you, but is the responsibility of us all—Alláh'u'Abhá. (Source: German N.S.A. Temple, Bulletins 1 to 4).

(Concluded)

their Faith to all those unhappy people now fighting amongst themselves.






Brazzaville Pioneer Azemikhah has been able to place selections from 'Paris Talks' in French, in the newspaper, "La Voix Africaine."

India During September and October Amatu'l-Bahá Ruhíyyih Khanum continued her visit to India meeting Bahá'ís, opening new villages to the Faith and attending a number of receptions given for her. In Gwalior, on 15th October, she was received at the All-India Teaching Conference by 500 Bahá'ís with a salute of guns and showering of flowers. The conference was extremely successful and many, enkindled with the spirit of the Faith, offered their services in the path of the Cause.

On October 18th, Ruhíyyih Khánum reached Delhi where she stayed for four days before her departure for Haifa. While in this city she met the Bahá'ís in a meeting held to commemorate the Birth of Báb. She also met the Prime Minister and the President of India and addressed a very successful Press conference.

Norway A Bahá'í Winter School will be held from February 6th to 9th, 1965 at Smedsgarden Pension, Nesbyen in Hallingdal, Norway. The district which is 3½ hours by train from Oslo and 7 hours from Bergen, affords wonderful opportunities for skiing or walking. If you are interested write to: Mrs. Nell Dosen Nielsen, Nikolaikirkealm 3, Bergen, Norway.

Income from Donations

Budget		Actual To Date
£7,000		£7,000
£6,000		£6,000
£5,000		£5,000
£4,820		£4,406
£4,000		£4,000
£3,000		£3,000
£2,000		£2,000
£1,000		£1,000
Gap £414		

NEWS of the Communities

BELFAST

Belfast Quaker Children attend Unity Feast

A NUMBER of Quaker children have recently been attending services at various churches in the city to find out how other people worship and the Bahá'ís were asked if the children could come to a similar Bahá'í gathering. The Belfast L.S.A. decided therefore to arrange a special unity feast on Sunday morning, November 29th. At this gathering after a suitable devotional, the meaning and function of the 19 day feast were explained to the children and three adult Quakers who attended. Questions, tea and biscuits followed and then the children broke up into two groups to ask questions of the Bahá'í youth—'Abdu'l-Bahá seemed very near as we watched the children's radiant and happy faces. It appears that the children went home and said later that if they hadn't already been brought up as Quakers they would have definitely wanted to be Bahá'ís.

A very friendly, deeply spiritual atmosphere was created and our special effort was much appreciated by the Society of Friends.

BRIGHTON

EXTENSION teaching has been carried out by the Brighton Bahá'ís in Worthing since October and in Southwick since early November. The familiar pattern of prior advertising, writeups in local papers if possible, followed by a public meeting, sustained afterwards by regular firesides and presentation of Bahá'í books to the local library, is having results all up and down the country as more and more we seek and find those souls who are ready to receive the message of Bahá'u'lláh. This effort by Brighton was rewarded within a fortnight of the first meeting by a declaration in Worthing and there is regular attendance at firesides both there and in Southwick.

LEICESTER

Presentation of invalid chair to British Red Cross

THE last Week-end School to be held in the Leicester Centre prior to its closing was held on November 21/22nd when some 40 people attended including contacts.

The theme of the School was 'Teaching the Faith' with Joan Gregory speaking on 'The Spiritual

requirements," Elizabeth Chapman on 'Knowledge of the Teachings' and Ernest Gregory on 'Means and Methods.'

Throughout the school there was lively participation by those present and the consultation by Bahá'ís only on the Message from The Universal House of Justice concerning Teaching the Masses was ably conducted by Ernest Gregory.

At the beginning of the Sunday afternoon those attending the school participated in a very pleasant little ceremony when Vera Long, on behalf of the Leicester Assembly, presented a folding Invalid Chair to the Leicester Branch of the British Red Cross. Mrs. Crumble, Branch Officer of the Medical Loan Department with a colleague looking very smart in their uniform, received the Chair and said how welcome was the gift as their Loans Dept. received many more requests for Invalid chairs than their small supply could really meet.

During the school a White Elephant stall, manned by the members of the Leicester community, provided a very successful means of raising money for the National Fund and the proceeds from this together with those from the sale of tea and coffee resulted in £22 being sent to the Fund.

The Leicester friends greatly appreciated the support given to the school by those from eight other Bahá'ís communities.

LONDON

IN order to raise money for the funds, the London Youth organised a White Elephant Sale on November 8th, at the close of a special conference between London's 9-Year Plan Committee and other London Committees, as well as representatives of some neighbouring Communities. On this auspicious occasion, therefore, the number of possible customers was increased, and the proceeds amounted to £41 10s. But in spite of the efforts of two very persuasive "auctioneers", so many beautiful things had been donated to the Youth, that we have sufficient left for another sale at some future date.

We are very proud that although we have lost an excellent member of our Book Sales committee, it is because Mimi Tahmassabi was invited to Haifa to work on the Secretariat of the Universal House of Justice. A farewell party was held jointly for Mimi and for Edith Johnson, who is returning to the States,

NEED FOR BAHÁ'Í YOUTH TO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AS BAHÁ'ÍS

As has quite rightly been said, children born to Bahá'ís are Bahá'í from the very first moment. Their Bahá'í education and training is one of the precious responsibilities of parenthood, and there is no dividing line at the age of 15 when they change from "not being a Bahá'í" to "being a Bahá'í." But it is necessary somewhere along the line for the young person to identify himself as a Bahá'í, for it cannot be taken for granted that the child of a Bahá'í will inevitably catch the spark of faith. So at the age of 15, the young person of his own free will if he wishes to do so, personally identifies himself as a follower of Bahá'u'lláh. The age of 15 is the age at which this is done, as that is the age at which Bahá'u'lláh Himself indicated one's spiritual obligations, such as keeping the fast, begin. The most convenient way in which a young Bahá'í can take this step is to make a declaration of Faith, so a young Bahá'í wishing to identify himself in this way, should sign a declaration card and the 'Register' side should be completed for the National Assembly's records. Any youth who does not do this is assumed to be not a Bahá'í and the obligations of a Bahá'í do not rest upon him, neither can he share in the privileges. This point is important for the future for when, for example, the question of marriage arises, a Bahá'í is required to obey the Laws of Bahá'u'lláh, but one who is not a Bahá'í is under no obligation to do so. If a Bahá'í child does not wish to identify himself as a Bahá'í at the age of 15, but later on desires to do so, he is equally welcome at the later age.

at one of the Monday Coffee evenings at the Centre.

We have found another method of "free" publicity, which other friends might like to try, if they can get on good terms with officials at their local Town Hall. We have been able to place the large blue-bordered Shrine poster in the office of the Entertainments Manager, on a board showing all local performances by orchestras, etc., in the Town Hall, and everyone booking for these events will be able to see that regular public meetings are held in the area, with an address to which they can apply for printed programmes; and some of our principles are also listed.

Consort with one another

WE have been delighted to hear of happy and successful Week-end and One Day Schools in Leicester (21/22nd November); Bristol (25th October); Winchester (8th November) where Mehrangiz Munsiff was amongst the speakers and a good newspaper write-up with a photograph followed; Canterbury (11th October) at which Kianoush Kouchezkadeh, Edith Johnson and Hugh McKinley were the speakers. We have received copies of some of the programmes and have been thrilled by the well planned themes and the good balance of speakers. Some communities managed to incorporate into their programme the special session for Bahá'ís only and were helped and encouraged by the study and consultation.

News from the new goal towns. Poole, opened by Aileen Beale, Mahboubeh Yazdani and Mahboubeh Maher, report 9 non-Bahá'ís at their fireside meetings. Ipswich opened by Fay Yazdani has regular newspaper advertising in the form of a quotation from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and Fay has already managed to get two Bahá'í books into the local Library.

We hear that Ho San Leong, a young Bahá'í friend from Malaya, visited Torbay Youth Week-end School, giving an excellent talk and delighting his audience with stories of teaching work in the villages of Malaysia. Tom Garroay, young Canadian Bahá'í, is much in demand for talks. Our grateful thanks to these friends from overseas for their help in our teaching work and to so many others who travel tirelessly.

This movement of Bahá'ís to different parts of the country, giving little talks, or just being visitors, has a wonderful effect on both visitors and those being visited. To see a fresh face, to hear of a new experience, a different approach to teaching the Faith, or a wonderful excuse for a "get-together"—visiting each other is so essential to the development of the bond of love and fellowship between the friends—a power that if truly released would sweep all before it.

We would ask that everyone considers being a visitor sometime, somewhere, soon. L.S.A.'s could plan visits to different communities

within fairly easy travelling distance, isolated Bahá'ís could plan to visit each other and all of this will be made much easier if communities tell each other of their activities; give telephone numbers of the

OUR "HELPER" TASKS IN AFRICA

THE Africa Committee hope from time to time to keep the friends informed of progress and news from Africa regarding those objectives with which, in the Nine Year Plan, the British Community is associated. What is to be achieved is, of course, primarily the responsibility of our sister communities and National Assemblies in Africa and our task is one of "Helper" to them. This means, as we are so far removed from the scene of the actual work, that our relative usefulness depends entirely on the realism of our postal communications with our friends out there. To establish and maintain close relations at a distance is, then, our major task as a committee. This takes more time to achieve than might at first be thought from a casual first appreciation, and is at present absorbing all our efforts, the fruits of which we hope to enjoy at a later date!

At this stage the Committee thought perhaps you would all like to know just exactly what are the important matters we are to help to accomplish in Africa by 1973. They are these:—

- (1) To open Rodriguez Island—the prime responsibility of the N.S.A. of the Indian Ocean.
- (2) To consolidate Sierra Leone—the prime responsibility of the N.S.A. of West Africa.
- (3) To consolidate Dahomey, and acquire a National Haziratu'l Quds in Victoria, Cameroon Republic—the prime responsibility of the N.S.A. of West Central Africa.
- (4) To consolidate South West Africa—the prime responsibility of the N.S.A. of West Central Africa.
- (5) To acquire a National Haziratu'l Quds in Blantyre / Limbe, Malawi (Nyasaland)—the prime responsibility of the N.S.A. of South Central Africa.

Africa Committee,
November, 1964.

Secretary or the fireside meeting host, where possible, and don't let any one of us ever go anywhere with a spare seat in the car!

If there are friends with time to spare, or planning to make business trips with an odd evening free, please get in touch with this Committee and offer your services as a visitor (not necessarily as a speaker). Financial resources are available. Let's see more of each other.

English Teaching Committee

PIONEER NEEDS NOW

THE Pioneer Committee wishes to place before all the friends the position of the Home Front—both regarding the goals already achieved and the present needs of L.S.A.'s which have dropped below numbers. **We need a total of twenty-six Bahá'ís!** And these are needed to maintain the L.S.A.'s we already have and restore L.S.A. status to Swinton and Aberdeen. We give below the facts of the position of those towns needing help and would ask all believers to pray that these needs will be met before Ridván, and that the present teaching efforts will be blessed with declarations in all parts of the British Isles.

The Pioneer Committee's work for the Faith is concerned **only with pioneer offers** and consultations, and we look to the Bahá'ís of the British Isles to continue to keep us busy in the service of the Cause.

Goal towns opened this year: Poole, Ipswich, Bath, Stafford, Bedford (Jan. 6th, 1965) Oakham (end December, 1964) **Guernsey** has also been opened.

Local Spiritual Assemblies below numbers—PIONEERS needed NOW.

Northampton	needs	2
Peterborough	„	1
Portsmouth	„	1
Sutton Coldfield	„	4
Wokingham R.D.	„	1
Inverness	„	3
Glasgow	„	1
Southport	„	4
Dublin	„	1

18

Groups (to regain Assembly Status):—

Swinton	needs	2
Aberdeen	„	6
At December 8th, 1964 TOTAL pioneer needs for L.S.A.'s and Groups		26

We eagerly await your letters and are ready and willing to offer you consultations any Thursday evening in the Haziratu'l-Quds.

Write to the PIONEER COMMITTEE OF THE N.S.A., Secretary, Mrs. R. M. Wade, 14 Northumberland Road, New Barnet, Herts. Telephone: Barnet 4232.

ABERDEEN

Can Any Retired Person (or Persons)

OF SCOTTISH DESCENT

CONSIDER MOVING INTO THIS IMPORTANT TOWN
WHICH IS THE FOCAL POINT FOR THE ISLANDS?

From the National Treasurer

AGAIN this month the gap between budgeted and actual donations to the National Fund has been reduced. The National Spiritual Assembly is indeed grateful to the friends for this fine effort. Inevitably, with one foot in the old world, we all have extra commitments at Christmas, and the gap may widen a little, which means that the "life-blood" of the Cause must flow even more strongly in the period up to Naw-Rúz. A regular donation, no matter how small, from every believer is still the aim and is a vital element of the "universal participation" called for by the Universal House of Justice.

If you are already making regular donations or intend to do so, and if you pay income tax at standard rate, do consider entering into a covenant—for even as little as £1 per year. On each pound donated, 12/8 tax can be recovered (it will be more under the new tax rate). This year we have budgeted to recover £2,500 in this way, a wonderful boost to the Funds at no extra cost to the friends.

Send your donation or enquiries to—the National Treasurer, Charles Macdonald, 75 Eglantine Avenue, Belfast, 9.

OXFORD'S FIRST BAHÁ'Í WEDDING

TEACHING conference 1964 was a very important event in more ways than one for Mr. Lawrence Creitz and Miss Monireh Alibabai since it was there that they met for the first time, having booked into the same hotel. On Saturday, November 28th, 1964, in Oxford's Clarendon restaurant the couple were married; to those who knew them, perhaps only the logical outcome to that first encounter in January. Larry is stationed at Brize Norton R.A.F. base but in actual fact hails from Colorado Springs, U.S.A., while Monireh, a children's nurse, comes from Hamadan near Teheran. This uniting of East and West in marriage was something that particularly delighted 'Abdu'l-Bahá and we can feel sure that His blessed presence was with the happy couple on the day.

The Oxford Times printed a photograph of the couple and a de-

tailed report of the ceremony. Mr. John Morley welcomed the guests and explained what was to follow, giving emphasis to the fact that other than the prescribed marriage vows and the consent of parents of both bride and bridegroom, there was no set ritual in a Bahá'í marriage ceremony nor was there any equivalent to a priest or a minister since there was no priesthood in the Faith. Various prayers, to the couple's personal choice, were read or chanted and, after the marriage vows, they exchanged rings and signed the marriage certificate. The simplicity and dignity of the occasion made a great impression on those present.

This one simple marriage ceremony is unique and will always remain so. Not only was it a symbol of the unity of East and West but above all it was the **first** Bahá'í wedding in the city of Oxford.

Comparative data of famous domes

St. Peter, Rome	Total height	457 feet
	Inside diameter of dome	134 feet
St. Paul's, London	Total height	372 feet
	Inside diameter of dome	113.7 feet
Hagia Sophia, Istanbul	Total height	183 feet
	Inside diameter	108.7 feet
Pantheon, Rome	Inside height	144.3 feet
	Inside diameter of dome	144.3 feet
Bahá'í Temple, Wilmette	Total height	191 feet
	Inside diameter of dome	72 feet
Bahá'í Temple, Frankfurt	Total height	93 feet
	Inside diameter of dome	90 feet

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE No. 1 A/C.

22nd October, 1964—28th November, 1964 (incl.)

INCOME				EXPENDITURE			
Donations:—				N.S.A.			
L.S.A.'s and Groups ...	...	£215 1 0	(30)*	Travel ...	...	£40 6 0	
Individuals ...	...	713 13 7	(63)*	Office ...	...	109 1 10	
		£925 4 1		Tel. & Cables ...	...	33 5 7	
Less Payments against Covenants		39 6 9		Postage and Stationery ...	...	13 19 1	
		£885 17 4		Auditors ...	...	18 18 0	
Interest and Dividends ...	...	7 10 0		Incorp. docs. ...	...	21 16 0	
Refunds to us:—				E.T.C. ...	...	30 10 0	
Loans ...	...	15 0 0		Other Home Committees ...	...	52 8 4	
Incorporation Expenses ...	...	20 18 6		Overseas Committees ...	...	26 18 11	
Sundry ...	...	14 12 1		Pioneer Committees ...	...	72 10 7	
				Journal ...	...	26 11 7	
				Monthly Transfers:—			
				H.Q.—Rprs. & Dec. ...	...	35 0 0	
				—Running ...	...	120 0 0	
				Donations ...	...	48 0 0	

* **Communities contributing:**—Belfast, Birmingham, Bournemouth, Brighton, Brize Norton, Cambridge, Canterbury, Chester, Eccles, Edinburgh, Epsom, Exeter, Hove, Inverness, Jersey, Leicester, London, Malta, Manchester, Motherwell, Nelson, Oxford, Reading, Romford, Salisbury, Southport, Sutton, Swansea, S.S. Caltex Brisbane, Watford.

KNOW YOUR BAHÁ'Í LITERATURE

Prayers and Meditations

By Baha'u'llah. Translated by Shoghi Effendi

THIS volume of 184 prayers and meditations, revealed at different moments during the 40-year long banishment of Bahá'u'lláh from His homeland, is an anthology selected by the beloved Guardian and originally translated for publication and devotional use during the American first Seven Year Plan. The words that Shoghi Effendi then wrote, in April 1938, are surely as relevant now as ever they were then: 'Community... believers... must at so critical stage in fortunes declining civilisation seek purge galvanise their souls through daily prayer meditation that can best sustain them in discharge task still initial stage development.' 'Summoning their aid vitalising influence "Prayers and Meditations" which Author their Faith Himself unto Bahá'u'lláh that He may draw nigh unto them.'

Indeed the Guardian had 'every hope that the perusal of such a precious volume will help to deepen more than any other publication, the spirit of devotion and faith in the friends, and thus charge them with all the spiritual powers they require for the accomplishment of their tremendous duties towards the Cause.'

Since fewer than half the contents of this book are available within the covers of any other three Bahá'í books taken together we need to ponder well if we have so far either not taken steps to possess a copy or if we possess a copy but do not constantly peruse it.

True, the volume contains the Obligatory Prayers, the Tablet of Visitation, the short Healing Prayer, the special prayers connected with the Intercalary Days, the Fast, Naw-Ruz, Ridván, dawn and death, as well as those prayers we so want to have by heart as soon as we meet them in our own more familiar smaller prayer book. But how much more there is to feed our hunger for spiritual information and spiritual sustenance! Surely every chief aspect of Bahá'í principle and teaching is reinforced in a new way:— the colloquy and relationship between the Supreme Revelator and His Creator; the bewildering power of the Almighty, His attributes and exaltation above the realm of being; the relative unreality of creational existence, yet the tender acceptance by a loving God of all that His creatures can offer in praise and service; the

brutal facts of everyday living of the early believers, in exile and at 'Akká, and the contrast with the Covenant breakers; the exhortation and reminders to those same believers in which Bahá'u'lláh Himself also indicated that His tribulations served but to advance His Cause—these are but a few of the themes.

The prayers include about a dozen written as if from a woman's heart, and many paragraphs well within the range of a child's appreciation. There are also a great many that are intimate to Bahá'u'lláh Himself but yet help us to our own self-knowledge and spiritual development. Then too there are a half dozen lengthy meditations which are unique in the whole range of written records of man's spiritual adventure. The two longest (No. 176 with 49 paragraphs and No. 184 with 22 paragraphs) contain some of the most astonishing, loveliest and most challenging statements in all Bahá'í literature. Consider the content, cadences and completeness of the opening paragraph of 176 or the breath-taking truth of the necessity of the 'letters of negation' set out in paragraph 3 of 184, or the transcendent vision contained in paragraph 5 and the paean of vital thanks in paragraph 9 of that same prayer.

There are so many ways of reading and enjoying the contents of this precious book that it seems wrong to suggest any, yet some people may be grateful at least for some spring-boards to their own further plunging into this Ocean's depths. Although each prayer stands by itself as a perfect whole, and should be perused and studied thus, yet there are also other ways of diving for pearls.

(a) A study of the attributes of God, their variety, range and cogent, cumulative effect. Some may be new to us and can richly reward meditation, e.g. 'The Enlightener of all creation' (47), 'The Source and Centre of my soul' (111), 'The King of eternity and the Quickener of every mouldering bone' (38), 'The Fountain of my life' (88), 'The Well-Spring of all Lights' (43), 'The Help in Peril' (54), 'Lord of the Judgment Day' (55), 'Whom nothing whatsoever can frustrate' (14), 'The Supreme Helper' (6) and many others.

(b) Selection of a specific Bahá'í teaching such as the transcendent unity of God, man's essential im-

potence, the Covenant, progressive revelation of the Word of God, the Báb and His promise then tracing it through the book and allowing the cross comparison of the passages so found, each similar yet different, to play upon and enrich each other adding meaning and value.

(c) The perfect blending of the different kinds of prayer (some have identified nine such kinds) especially in the Long Obligatory Prayer and its remarkable thematic variations, its unity in diversity, its changes in pitch and intensity, in depth and scope.

(d) A straight search for perfectly phrased, astonishingly logical and gloriously fuller amplification of truth in gemlike utterances that occur all through the book, e.g. 'The light of Thy tenderness' (1), 'The Law that streameth from the good-pleasure of Thy will' (11), 'Whose love is my begetter' (98), 'Whose love is the radiance of my heart' (104), 'O Thou Who art my God and throbbeest within my heart' (44), 'Nearness to Thee is the true life of them who are Thy lovers' (55), 'The wine of Thy tender mercy' (12), 'The living waters of Thy love' (6).

(e) The soul-moving range of Bahá'u'lláh's own expression of Himself and His circumstances, e.g. His return to Baghdad from self-imposed wandering in the wilderness (145), His humility before the servants of God and their tie with the Creator (179), His readiness for every sacrifice (111), The vexing troubles afflicting Him and those with Him and their effect (151), beautiful statements of the purpose and the effect of sacrifice (65, 91).

(f) The simple felicity of phrasing and the cadences are often most stirring and invite the reminder that prayers are aided by adding the sense of hearing to the sense of sight in conformity with the sense of the words. Some examples: nos. 10, 29, 150 especially paras 2 and 5, 161 and also 133, 155, 165, 171, 172 and 173 that may already be familiar. In passing we may note the universality of the actual words used, their concreteness and divine simplicity of meaning.

(g) Whole paragraphs of most memorable content occur in many of the prayers and each of us may like to build his own private anthology of them. Some that stand out are: 58 paras 3, 4, 8; 10 para 1; 11 para 3; 12 para 1; 31 paras 1, 2; 38 para 12; 74 para 3; 93 para 3; 97 para 2; 102 para 3; 105 para 4; 108 para 5; 116 paras 1, 123 para 1; 135 para 3; 140 para 2; 150 paras 2, 5; 156 para 2; 161 para 2; 176 paras 17, 18, 39; 178 paras 3, 4, 6; 179 paras 4, 5.

(h) A particularly interesting study is the concept 'remembrance

Continued on page 8, column 3

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY'S NEWS LETTER

NEW MESSAGE FROM THE
UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE,
NOVEMBER 1964

THIS new Message is exciting.

It gives two very important decisions about the Institution of the Hands of the Cause of God, outlines steps taken at the World Centre for the further development of that Institution, makes the first announcement of Oceanic and Inter-continental Conferences, gives the exciting news of an overall plan for world-wide proclamation of the Faith during 1967-68, and mentions a competition to be held for the design of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar of Panama. More details will be announced by the Universal House of Justice at Ridván 1965, but we can see right away that a lot has to be done on the Home Front if the British Community is to be ready to take part in a world-wide proclamation in just over two years' time. We have two years to prepare ourselves individually for this proclamation, to stabilise and strengthen our present assemblies, to establish more assemblies and to set up more groups all over the country. Local Assemblies will themselves be consulting on this, and they will also be consulting with their communities, but to isolated believers the National Assembly sends a special thought: there are several hundred isolated believers spread throughout the British Isles; Shoghi Effendi regarded every isolated believer as a new centre, a potential local assembly; one of the differences between an isolated Bahá'í and a pioneer is in the heart of the believer. If every isolated believer will, from this moment, look upon himself/herself as a pioneer, with the exciting privilege of working to establish first a Group and then a local assembly, a new spiritual dynamic will sweep through the British Isles, and in two years we shall see such expansion that we shall have the necessary coverage throughout the whole country to back up a great proclamation of the Faith. Another important service isolated believers can give is to move into the civic limits of a local assembly which needs strengthening.

APPOINTMENT TO PROPAGATION BOARD

The appointment by the Hands of the Cause of God in Europe of Mr. Richard Backwell as a member

of their Auxiliary Board for the Propagation of the Faith has conferred another privilege upon the British Bahá'í community. Following the guidance of the Universal House of Justice concerning the services of Hands of the Cause and Auxiliary Board Members, Dick has resigned from the National Assembly and a by-election is currently being held to fill this vacancy.

DECLARATIONS:

We warmly welcome to the Faith Mr. Geoffrey G. Howes of Bradwell, Norfolk; Miss Zenith Jones, Mrs. Eluned M. Jones and Mrs. Aeron Bjugovic all of Pontypridd; Miss Lorraine Heip (Youth), Miss Suzanne Farrow (Youth), Miss Haizel Baines (Youth) and Mr. Denis Waddels (Youth) all of Burnley.

NINE YEAR PLAN, ANOTHER VICTORY: GUERNSEY OPENED

We are delighted to announce the opening of the first of the virgin territories of the Nine Year Plan. Mrs. Prudence George, who served in the pioneer field in the Ten Year Crusade first on the British Home Front and then in Luxembourg, arrived in Guernsey on November 12th, 1964.

RE-OPENING OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT

We are happy to share the good news that the Isle of Wight, which was temporarily without a Bahá'í, has been re-opened by Miss Zara Warman, who has settled in Ryde.

SUMMER SCHOOLS 1965 AND 1966

All the Friends who enjoyed past Summer Schools at Dalston Hall and Coleg Harlech will be glad to know that these two venues have been booked for 1965, for the following dates: Dalston Hall, Carlisle, Cumberland — 3rd/17th July; Coleg Harlech, Harlech, Wales — 21st August/4th September. A new venue in the South of England is being sought for 1966.

NORWAY: WINTER SCHOOL

A Bahá'í Winter School will be held in Norway from February 6th to 9th at Smedsgarden Pension, Nesbyen in Hallingdal. Nesbyen is 3½ hours travel by rail from Oslo. Skiing is expected. Cost of a single room is N. Kr. 27.00 per day, double room N. Kr. 25.00 per day. Enquiries to Mrs. Dosen Nielsen, Nikolaikirkealm 3, Bergen, Norway.

LONDON HAZIRATU'L-QUDS

Mrs. Edith Johnson, who has acted as Housekeeper for the Haziratu'l-Quds and helped with Membership Records in the National Office, has returned to the United States, where her father has had to have an urgent operation, and needs her care. In January, Mr. Ron Stee, who is Secretary of the London Spiritual Assembly, will move into the basement flat. This is an interim measure until new, permanent arrangements are made, but it has the advantage that the London Secretary will be on the premises at the Haziratu'l-Quds to take care of matters concerning the London Community.

NEW DECLARATION CARDS

A new declaration card has been designed for new believers to sign when they wish to become Bahá'ís. It is small in size and the back of it is a record card for the National Assembly's Register. This record card should be filled in by the L.S.A. or Group Secretary, or where there is no local assembly or organised group, by the Bahá'í who has taught the new believer the Faith. If a new declarant wants to write a letter and to express in his own words what the moment of declaration means to him, he can certainly still do so, but that is not required, it is entirely optional and in addition to signing the declaration card. Supplies of the new declaration cards have already been sent to local assemblies, groups and goal towns, and isolated believers can obtain them when needed from the National Office (27 Rutland Gate, London, S.W.7.).

Prayers and Meditations

Continued from page 7

of God' and the meanings it gathers to itself in the different contexts of its appearance, e.g. 37 para 2; 56 paras 6, 7; 78 para 1; 79 para 3; 85 para 3; 101 para 5; 107 para 1; 114 para 6; 176 para 28. To quote one passage: 'Enable us, O my God, to live in remembrance of Thee and to die in love of Thee, and supply us with the gift of Thy presence in Thy worlds hereafter' (85 para 6).

Among the most comforting statements are the sure promises of answers to prayer (154 para 2, 161 para 2) and assurances that He will never forsake us (10 para 3; 169 para 2). 'How can I choose to sleep, O God, my God . . . ' (172).