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TEACHING CONFERENCE 1967



Workshops in Action.

"Say, teach ye the Cause of God, O people of Bahá, for God hath prescribed unto everyone the duty of proclaiming His Message and regardeth it as the most meritorious of all deeds." This call to teach, raised by Bahá'u'lláh Himself, began our annual Teaching Conference, held in Leicester, January 7th/8th. Over 250 friends heard the cable from the Universal House of Justice:

ASSURE ATTENDANTS TEACHING CONFERENCE ARDENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES INSPIRATION PURSUE GOALS NINE YEAR PLAN STOP URGE SPECIAL ATTENTION ESTABLISH LOCAL

ASSEMBLIES EIRE REINFORCE
NORTHERN ISLAND LOVING
GREETINGS.

Prayerfully and eagerly we discussed our service to Bahá'u'lláh and how to share His life-giving Message with the people of the British Isles.

Discussing the tasks facing the British community, Betty Reed, Eric Hellicar and Charles Macdonald stimulated us with their remarks. Betty recalled that a year ago the Universal House of Justice had urged the British community to consolidate and extend the home front "reservoir of man, power, energy and administrative

experience which must be the spring-board for your world-wide tasks no less than for the proclamation of the Faith to the masses in the British Isles". The National Assembly has made Eire the first priority as we have to raise three more L.S.A.'s there in the next four years, in preparation for establishing and incorporating the N.S.A. of Eire by the end of the Nine Year Plan. The task is not easy, as it has taken sixteen years to establish, and in a measure, consolidate the one L.S.A. in Dublin.

Since Shoghi Effendi called us the "chief builders of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Order throughout the

unnumbered, the diversified and widely scattered Dependencies of the British Crown." Betty invited us as builders to roll up our sleeves and work together to build up the homefront, following the plan set out by the Divine Architect. This will also prepare us for the exciting proclamation period ahead. The N.S.A. has already outlined the programme for the British Isles. We were urged to prepare now in our individual lives, for as the Faith becomes known, so too will Bahá'is become known. Could we cope with mass conversion if it came tomorrow? L.S.A.'s and potential L.S.A.'s must prepare by getting a deeper understanding of working within the Administrative Order. All of us can help to prepare the non-Bahá'í public by mentioning the word "Bahá'í" in its proper context each day to a new person. Through building up and consolidating the homefront we shall be able to fulfill our destiny and shoulder our responsibilities at home and abroad. We must remember, Eric said, that our first priority is to live the Bahá'í life. In teaching the Faith we should beseech the grace of Bahá'u'lláh and pray that His Message reaches the hearts of the waiting souls. And we should nurture the seeker's interest in the Faith until it is confirmed or otherwise, and continue this nurturing after he declares. Charles startled us with his statement that if every Bahá'í in the British Isles helped to bring in one soul each year, starting from now, by the end of the Nine Year Plan the entire British Isles would be Bahá'í. What a challenge!

Stimulation continued during meal-times, as friends joyously exchanged greetings and news, including those who had come from as far north as the Hebrides and Inverness and as far south as the Isle of Wight, Guernsey, and Cornwall. Twelve airletters filled with messages and signatures went out to the devoted pioneers overseas. Literature and other sales items from the Publishing Trust and Sales Committee were quickly bought up. A cable of greetings arrived from Ruhi Yeganeh in Belize, and Hugh and Olive McKinley wrote, "Loving greetings from Syros, Cyclades Islands, Greece. With all our hearts we pray for your success."

Highlighting the Conference on Saturday evening were the "workshops" — an innovation at Teaching Conference. For the first time we had everyone participating in discussing the tasks of the community, sharing their experiences in teaching, giving their ideas. Returning from dinner each person went to one of the fourteen workshops. Each group discussed one of five subjects: "Opening new towns — first year activity"; "Second year — systematic teaching"; "Teaching in numerically weak L.S.A.'s"; "Teaching in cities and large towns"; "Teaching in villages and extension teaching". Hand of the Cause John Ferraby, the Board Members and members of the N.S.A. passed from group to group contributing their thoughts to the group discussions. The atmosphere was charged with enthusiasm.

The following morning, reports were given of all topics discussed. Everyone emphasized the importance of personal teaching, of participating in community life, and of working together using the appropriate administrative channels for guidance and assistance. Specific ideas mentioned were: Create opportunities to invite neighbours into our homes socially, particularly in newly opened towns; firesides could be a spontaneous development. Insert personal interest stories in local newspapers and include mention of the Faith. Seek opportunities of sharing the platform with other groups and possibly offer speakers on the Faith to interested organisations. Put the name of the local Bahá'í community on the list of the Council of Social Services. Be simple in our hospitality so that others feel they can reciprocate, for example, have "pot-luck suppers". For systematic teaching, establish regular firesides and have visiting teachers to speak on non-Bahá'í as well as Bahá'í subjects. Use more history of the Faith in teaching as it gives opportunity for the listeners to acquaint themselves with historical facts. Where there are L.S.A.'s, ensure that everyone understands the significance of the 19-Day Feast and help everyone to attend. We should study the letter of Hand of the Cause Hasan Balyuzi printed in the Bahá'í Journal No. 154 (February 1963) on the 19-Day Feast. If an Assembly has difficulties, contact the N.S.A., Board Member, or Teaching Committee for appropriate help. Co-operative action is vital. Know our fellow Bahá'is, let's get together often. Bahá'í communities in large cities or towns should think in terms of national activity. See if posters could be placed in the town or village and changed regularly. Recognise that each village has its own individual personality which we must adapt to.

Following these reports Mr. Ferraby shared with us his thoughts on the above-mentioned five topics: The sacrifices of the pioneers have always been the key to success in teaching the Faith in a new place. For systematic teaching Bahá'is must find that those who respond to the good local traditions, i.e. those traditions which would be in harmony with the Teachings, might respond to the Faith. In numerically weak Local Assemblies, the friends should help each other to become firm in the Covenant, strengthening their love for Bahá'u'lláh and obedience to His commandments; those friends who are firm in the Covenant should help those who are less firm. The Faith should be our life and not just our religion. We should all turn to the City of God in our prayers — directing our hearts to the Shrines of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh in Haifa and Akká; we should also help others to do so. In villages we should gain the friendship of those influential people who should respect rather than oppose the Faith. At the invitation of the Hand general consultation followed.

Points were then raised by the national committees. The Irish Teaching

Committee pleaded for all of us to pray and to think about the goals in Eire even if we couldn't pioneer or do travel teaching there. This teamwork and co-operative action was further emphasized by John Long, who stressed again the message of the Universal House of Justice on universal participation: we can all pray, we can all fight our spiritual battles, and we can all contribute to the Fund.

Service to Bahá'u'lláh means, therefore, service through love, unity, teamwork, action. All of us went away with a feeling of confidence, reminded that when a message comes from the World Centre, new power is released for us to carry out the directives it contains. The Creative Word calls us to action, and the conditions already exist for our success. We know that, "The Lord said, 'Let there be light, And there was light'."

OVERSEAS NEWS

MALTA.

Captain and Mrs. Giddings visited Malta on 19th./21st January. Dorothy Wigington is planning to visit the island for two weeks over Easter. We should like to mention that Charles Duncan who visited Faroes did not also visit Malta, as was incorrectly reported in Bahá'í Journal No. 176.

Information is available about Degree Courses at the University of Malta, where overseas students are accepted.

There are Faculties of Medicine and Surgery, Dental Surgery, Law, Engineering and Architecture, Arts and Science. The courses vary in length from 3 to 7 years according to the subject being studied and also the entry qualification of the student at the time of admission. The minimum entry requirement is 6 passes at "O" level in the General Certificate of Education or other acceptable Examination and such students embark on a longer course of study at the University than those admitted at "A" Level. Would students wishing to study at the University of Malta please contact Mr. Ray Humphrey of the Overseas Goals Committee at 108 Wendover Drive, Bedford.

A local Spiritual Assembly has to be established in Malta as a goal of the Nine Year Plan and The National Assembly has given a measure of priority to Malta for pioneers. Pioneering to Malta is therefore a most valuable service to the Cause.

GUYANA

The friends in Guyana, who are already holding Study Classes twice a week to study Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets to the Kings as part of their personal preparation for proclamation, will be considering and putting forward suggestions for Proclamation Activities throughout their country. It looks as though six or more friends from Guyana will be attending the Panama Conference.

OVERSEAS GOALS COMMITTEE.

A Meditation for the Fast

"Praised be Thou, O Lord my God! I supplicate Thee by Him Whom Thou hast called into being, Whose Revelation Thou has ordained to be Thine own Revelation and His Concealment Thine own Concealment. Through His Firstness Thou has confirmed Thine own Firstness, and through His Lastness Thou hast affirmed Thine own Lastness. Through the power of His might and the influence of His sovereignty the mighty have apprehended Thine omnipotence, and through His glory they who are endowed with authority have acknowledged Thy majesty and greatness. Through His supreme ascendancy Thy transcendent sovereignty and all-encompassing dominion have been recognized, and through His will Thine own will hath been revealed. Through the light of His countenance the splendours of Thine own face have shone forth, and through His Cause Thine own Cause hath been made manifest. Through the generative power of His utterance the whole earth hath been made the recipient of the wondrous signs and tokens of Thy sovereignty, and the heavens have been filled with the revelations of Thine incomparable majesty, and the seas have been enriched with the sacred pearls of Thine omniscience and wisdom, and the trees adorned with the fruits of Thy knowledge. Through him all things have sung Thy praise, and all the eyes have been turned in the direction of Thy mercy. Through Him the faces of all have been set towards the splendours of the light of Thy countenance, and the souls of all have been inclined unto the revelations of Thy divine greatness.

How great is Thy power! How exalted Thy sovereignty! How lofty Thy might! How excellent Thy majesty! How supreme is Thy grandeur — a grandeur which He Who is Thy Manifestation hath made known and where-with Thou hast invested Him as a sign of Thy generosity and bountiful favour. I bear witness, O my God, that through Him Thy most resplendent signs have been uncovered, and Thy mercy hath encompassed the entire creation. But for Him, how could the Celestial Dove have uttered its songs or the Heavenly Nightingale, according to the decree of God, have warbled its melody?

I testify that no sooner had the First Word proceeded, through the potency of Thy will and purpose, out of His mouth, and the First Call gone forth from His lips than the whole creation was revolutionised, and all that are in the heavens and all that are on the earth were stirred to the depths. Through that Word the realities of all created things were shaken, were divided, separated, scattered, combined and reunited, disclosing, in both the contingent world and the heavenly kingdom, entities of a new creation, and revealing, in the unseen realms, the signs and tokens of Thy unity and oneness. Through that Call Thou didst announce unto all Thy servants the

advent of Thy most great Revelation and the appearance of Thy most perfect Cause.

No sooner had that Revelation been unveiled to men's eyes than the signs of universal discord appeared among the peoples of the world, and commotion seized the dwellers of earth and heaven, and the foundations of all things were shaken. The forces of dissension were released, the meaning of the Word was unfolded, and every several atom in all created things acquired its own distinct and separate character. Hell was made to blaze, and the delights of Paradise were uncovered to men's eyes. Blessed is the man that turneth towards Thee, and woe betide him who standeth aloof from Thee, who denieth Thee and repudieth Thy signs in this Revelation wherein the faces of the exponents of denial have turned black and the faces of the exponents of truthfulness have turned white, O Thou Who art the Possessor of all names and attributes, Who holdest in Thy grasp the empire of whatever hath been created in heaven and on earth!

Praise be to Thee, therefore, O my God — such praise as Thou didst ascribe to Thine own Self, and which none except Thee can either comprehend or reckon. Thou art He, O my Lord, Who hath made known His own Self unto me, at a time when Thy servants have failed to recognise Thee — servants who, by virtue of the ties that bind them to Thee, have been ruling over all that dwell on earth and have been vaunting themselves over its peoples. Were I, O my God, to exercise from pole to pole supreme dominion over the earth, and were I to be offered all the treasures it containeth, and were I to expend them in Thy path, I would still be powerless to attain unto this station, unless I were assisted and strengthened by Thee. And were I to glorify Thee, O my God, so long as the glory of Thy majesty endureth and the influence of Thy sovereignty and power will last, such a glorification could never be compared with any of the praises which Thou, as a token of Thy grace, hast taught me, and wherewith Thou hast bidden me to extol Thy virtues. If such be the excellence of each one of the praises which Thou hast taught me, how immeasurably greater must be the excellence of the station of the One Who hath known Thee, Who hath entered Thy Presence, and pursued steadfastly the path of Thy Cause!

I have clearly perceived, and I am wholly persuaded, that Thou hast from everlasting been immeasurably exalted above the mention of all beings, and wilt continue unto everlasting to remain far above the conception of Thy creatures. None can befittingly praise Thee except Thine own Self and such as are like unto Thee. Thou hast, verily, been at all times, and wilt everlastingly continue to remain, immensely exalted beyond and above all comparison and likeness, above all

imagination of parity or resemblance. Having, thus, recognised Thee as One Who is incomparable, and Whose nature none can possess, it becometh incontrovertibly evident that whosoever may praise Thee, his praise can befit only such as are of his own nature, and are subject to his own limitations, and it can in no wise adequately describe the sublimity of Thy sovereignty, nor scale the heights of Thy majesty and holiness. How sweet, therefore, is the praise Thou givest to Thine own Self, and the description Thou givest of Thine own Being!

I testify, O my God, that Thou hast, from eternity, sent down upon Thy servants naught else except that which can cause them to soar up and be drawn near unto Thee, and to ascend into the heaven of Thy transcendent oneness. Thou hast established Thy bounds among them, and ordained them to stand among Thy creatures as evidences of Thy justice and as signs of Thy mercy, and to be the stronghold of Thy protection amongst Thy people, that no man may in Thy realm transgress against his neighbour. How great is the blessedness of him who, for love of Thy beauty and for the sake of Thy pleasure, hath curbed the desires of a corrupt inclination and observed the precepts laid down by Thy most exalted Pen! He, in truth, is to be numbered with them that have attained unto all good, and followed the way of guidance.

I beseech Thee, O my Lord, by Thy Name through which Thou hast enabled Thy servants and Thy people to know Thee, through which Thou hast drawn the hearts of those who have recognised Thee towards the resplendent court of Thy oneness, and the souls of Thy favoured ones unto the Day-Spring of Thy unity, — I beseech Thee to grant that I may be assisted to observe the fast wholly for Thy sake, O Thou Who art full of majesty and glory! Empower me then, O my God, to be reckoned among them that have clung to Thy laws and precepts for the sake of Thee alone, their eyes fixed on Thy face. These, indeed, are they whose wine is all that hath proceeded out of the mouth of Thy primal will, whose pure beverage is Thine enthralling call, whose heavenly River is Thy love, whose Paradise is entrance into Thy presence and reunion with Thee. For Thou hast been their Beginning and their End, and their Highest Hope, and their Supreme Desire. Blinded be the eye that gazeth on whatsoever may displease Thee, and confounded be the soul that seeketh the things that are contrary to Thy will.

Deign, O my God, I implore Thee, by Thy Self and by them, to accept, through Thy grace and Thy loving-kindness, the works we have performed, however much they fall short of the loftiness of Thy state and the sublimity of Thy station, O Thou Who art most dear to the hearts that long for Thee, and the Healer of the souls that have recognised Thee! Rain down, therefore, upon us from the heaven of Thy mercy and the clouds of Thy gracious providence that which will cleanse us

from the faintest trace of evil and corrupt desires, and will draw us nearer unto Him Who is the Manifestation of Thy most exalted and all-glorious Self. Thou art, verily, the Lord of this world and of the next, and art powerful to do all things.

Do Thou bless, O Lord my God, the Primal Point, through Whom the point of creation hath been made to revolve in both the visible and invisible worlds, Whom Thou hast designated as the One whereunto should return whatsoever must return unto Thee, and as the Revealer of whatsoever may be manifested by Thee. Do Thou also bless such of His Letters as have not turned away from Thee, who have been firmly established in Thy love, and clung steadfastly to Thy good-pleasure. Bless Thou, likewise, as long as Thine own Self endureth and Thine own Essence doth last, them that have suffered martyrdom in Thy path. Thou art, verily, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

Moreover, I beseech Thee, O my God, by Him Whom Thou hast announced unto us in all Thy Tablets and Thy Books and Thy Scrolls and Thy Scriptures, through Whom the kingdom of names hath been convulsed, and all that lay hid in the breasts of them that have followed their evil and corrupt desires hath been revealed, — I beseech Thee to strengthen us in our love for Him, to make us steadfast in His Cause, to help us befriend His loved ones and challenge His enemies. Shield us, then, O my God, from the mischief wrought by them that have denied Thy presence, and turned away from Thy face, and resolved to put an end to the life of Him Who is the Manifestation of Thine own Self.

O my God and my Master! Thou knowest how they have disgraced Thy Cause and dishonoured Thee among Thy creatures, how they have joined Thine enemies, that they may undermine Thy Revelation and injure Thee. Lay hold on them with the power of Thy wrath and might, O my God, and expose their shameful acts and their wickedness, that whatever is hid in their breasts may be revealed unto the people that dwell within Thy land, O Thou Who art the Inflictor of trials, the Fashioner of nations, and the Bestower of favours! No God is there beside Thee, the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful”.

Bahá'u'lláh.

FOR YOUR DIARY.

N.S.A. Meetings.

24th—26th March.
14th—16th April.

Convention.

29th—30th April.

Weekend School.

Burnley 22nd—23rd April.

Summer Schools.

Harlech 1st—8th July.
Dalston Hall 12th—26th August.

Winter School.

York 27th Dec.—6th Jan., 1968.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY'S NEWS LETTER

DECLARATIONS.

We are happy to welcome Mr. A. Derwent Maude, Borth; Mr. Robert N. Evans, Swansea; Mr. Hugh W. Featherstone, Horsham; Mrs. Julia B. Laden, Ipswich; Mrs. Olive and Mr. James Smeatham, Carlisle; Mr. Thomas D. Sharp, Burnley; Miss Fetneh Monadjem (Youth), Wymondham, Norfolk; Mr. Coorosh Sabet, Rugby; Mr. Denis Brett and Miss Rita Bridge (Youth), Cardiff; Mrs. Cynthia N. Blake and Mrs. K. Anne Thorne, Salisbury; Miss Pamela Mizon, Miss Yas Anvar and Miss Yafa Anvar (all Youth), Brighton; Mr. Patrick J. Duffy, Leicester; Mrs. Beda Haldane, Belfast; Mr. Brian J. Moore (Youth), Brent; Miss Nushafarin Shakibaie (Youth) and Mr. Charles K. Wright, Croydon; as well as Mrs. Elaine Varjavandi and Mr. Fariborz Varjavandi, Manchester; Miss Vivienne Youde, Pontypridd; Miss Adele C. Senior, Swinton and Mrs. Ann Shaw, Glasgow, all youth claiming voting rights.

WORLD CENTRE.

We are delighted to share with you two paragraphs of a letter dated 9th January 1967 from the Universal House of Justice, “The acquisition of the Temple site near Dublin, and of the new Haziratu'l-Quds for Eire is splendid news. We trust you will soon be able to lay a foundation for more Local Assemblies in this country, where teaching the Faith is so difficult.” “We are happy to welcome a number of pilgrims from the British Isles during this period. The devoted labours of your Assembly and of the British community are a source of great encouragement to us and we assure you all of our

ardent prayers in the Holy Shrines for your confirmation and the rapid development of your work.” There is a great value to the community as well as bounty to the individual when Friends make the pilgrimage to the Holy Shrines and the World Centre.

‘ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

During his second visit to England, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá visited the Mosque at Woking in January, 1913, and there delivered an address on world unity, at the invitation of the Moslem Community of Great Britain. We have just received from the Universal House of Justice for our national archives a precious original invitation card to that meeting. This card is reproduced below. It forms another close link with the Beloved Master.

TO HELP INDIVIDUALS TO PREPARE FOR PROCLAMATION

As well as the important task of studying the Tablets to the kings and rulers of the world, so that we know what Bahá'u'lláh Himself proclaimed a hundred years ago, we each need to prepare ourselves by living a true Bahá'í life. It is “living the life” which is the key to success in all our Bahá'í activities and in all our contact with non-Bahá'í relatives, friends, work-mates and business associates. The National Assembly has therefore started a new feature in the Journal. In this issue, and in every other issue, you will find an extract from the Writings which gives clear guidance on what it means to be a Bahá'í and how we should live. Sometimes the extract

“To God belongeth the East and the West. Therefore wherever a man turneth to pray, there is the Face of God.”—KORAN.

“Thou, whom the human races worship, who belondest unto many peoples, lead us forward into better things!”—SANSKRIT.

“Love one another. As I have loved you, even so love ye also one another.”—NEW TESTAMENT.

“This handful of dust, the world, is one home! Close your eyes to racial differences. Consort with all people with love and fragrance. Welcome all with the light of Oneness.”

HIDDEN WORDS.

To meet Abdul Baha (H. E. Abbas Effendi)

The Mosque, Woking, Surrey.

Friday, January 17th, 1913,

at 3.15 o'clock p.m.

TRAIN LEAVES WATERLOO AT 2.20 P.M. FOR WOKING.

RETURN TRAINS LEAVE WOKING AT 4.15 P.M., 4.34 P.M., AND 4.59 P.M.



may be a long one, sometimes it will be a short one. All will help to purify and transform us into true followers of Bahá'u'lláh.

THE BAHÁ'Í MONTH OF 'ALÁ, THE MONTH OF THE FAST.

The month of 'Alá (Loftiness) begins on March 2nd, and from that day, for nineteen days, all Bahá'ís between the ages of fifteen and seventy keep the Fast. We eat before sunrise and after sunset. In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh has written; "*We have commanded you to pray and fast from the beginning of maturity; this is ordained by God, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers. He has exempted from this those who are weak from illness or age, as a bounty from His Presence . . .*". And in another passage He says, "*We have enjoined upon you fasting during a brief period, and at its close have designated for you Naw-Ruz as a feast . . . The traveller, the ailing, those who are with child or giving suck, are not bound by the fast . . . Abstain from food and drink, from sunrise to sundown, and beware lest desire deprive you of this grace that is appointed in the Book.*"

All the Bahá'ís in the world are keeping the Fast which Shoghi Effendi has explained is "essentially a period of meditation and prayer, of spiritual recuperation, during which the believer must strive to make the necessary readjustments in his inner life, and to refresh and reinvigorate the spiritual forces latent in his soul . . .". We feel especially close to our fellow-believers throughout the world, and to the World Centre, at this time. The Fast ends

with the joyous Naw Ruz Feast on March 21st, which is the first day of Spring.

OBITUARY.

We are sad to report the passing of two dear friends of the Eccles Community: Miss Betty Grundy, on a visit to a non-Bahá'í friend in Edinburgh, died in hospital there on 30th January, and Mrs. Ellen Russell died in hospital in Eccles on 7th February. Betty had been a member of the Eccles Assembly for many years, and had represented that Community numerous times as their delegate to Convention; even in the last few years of declining health she continued to take a lively interest in all the activities of the Faith, local, national and international, and she will be much missed from our gatherings. Dear Ellen, with her quiet modesty, was a truly loving soul, who attracted the hearts of others; through her radiance and buoyant faith even her final illness was a means of bringing the Faith to many people in the hospital. The Edinburgh Friends were in touch with Betty, and the loving care of the Eccles Community surrounded Ellen to the very end.

From Miss Kilford ('Killie') of Winchester, we learned that Miss Alice Phillips who died recently in Arundel, had been a Bahá'í for at least forty years; she was a very active member of the London Assembly in the earlier days, was one of the, then, few good speakers, and also did a great deal in working for the very flourishing Youth Group in the days when the London Bahá'í Centre was in Grosvenor Place.

the lives of some of the heroes and heroines during the early history of the Faith. On the first evening Ronald Taherzadeh and Moojan Momen spoke about the individual and social obligations of a Bahá'í youth. On Tuesday evening Bahiyyeh Nakhjavani gave a moving talk on Tahiri and David Jenkinson gave an account of the life of Thomas Breakwell, who was the first Englishman to become a Bahá'í.

On Thursday evening Peter Moore recounted the ceaseless and untiring activities of Martha Root, and Shahrnam Firoozmand spoke about the sacrifice of over two thousand Bábís who were martyred in Zanjan.

The last day of the School was devoted to a youth convention with the representatives of the AATC, NTTC, and NYC giving reports of the projects of their committees. Most youths took part in the discussion, and altogether we got many ideas for action in serving the Cause. At the end of the School we all felt that the plans made during the week should now be carried out, and in departing for our home towns, there was an attitude of realism and a strong desire to serve, which will surely yield results in the months ahead.

This report cannot end without a mention of the willing co-operation of all those who attended the School even in performing some of the less spiritual and more unpleasant tasks like cleaning up the floors or washing up the dishes.

A strong feeling of love and harmony was evident throughout the School, so much so that it aroused the admiration of the friendly Warden of the Hostel who declared the School as the best ever and who said he is looking forward to our next visit.

The following are replies to cables sent to the World Centre giving loving greetings and requesting prayers and guidance.

PLEASE CONVEY THOSE ATTENDING YOUTH WINTER SCHOOL YORK ASSURANCE PRAYERS DIVINE CONFIRMATIONS. UNIVERSAL HOUSE JUSTICE.

KINDLY CONVEY OUR LOVING APPRECIATION MESSAGE RECEIVED YORK WINTER SCHOOL ASSURE PRAYERS SUCCESS HANDSAFITH

EASTER CONFERENCE 24th/27th MARCH.

This Conference will be held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Cardell, in Manor Farm, Great Paxton, St. Neots, Hunts.

Title: "Easter Conference, Action, Summer Teaching Plan." Programme: Bahá'u'lláh's Proclamation; Goals of the Nine Year Plan; Different projects of National Teaching Committees such as Village Teaching, Cornwall project, etc.

For bookings and information write to:— Miss Sima Kadoli, 83 Hartford Street, Cambridge.

NATIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE REPORT

YORK WINTER SCHOOL, 1966.

The Annual Winter School held in the Youth Hostel at York is now an established institution for the British Youth.

There were in all 82 residents during the week with more than ten who came for short periods. The theme was "Our Aim . . . The Bahá'í Life", and throughout the sessions ran a sense of purpose, a reason why we were all there together, not just to see friends but because we all wanted to achieve something for the Faith.

The School opened with a devotional, followed by a talk given by Adib Taherzadeh on the privileges as well as the responsibilities of the Bahá'í Youth. The programme of the School was divided into three parts: main sessions in the mornings followed by discussion, study courses in the afternoons, and youth speakers in the evenings.

On Tuesday morning Philip Hainsworth spoke about the Guardian, giving a picture of Shoghi Effendi as a person, and reading some of his messages to the youth. This talk was particularly useful and interesting to the vast majority of the youth who were either very young during the Guardian's lifetime or who

have become Bahá'ís since his passing, and who have had little opportunity to appreciate the superhuman works and the unique guidance of that Master-Builders of Bahá'u'lláh's Administrative Order.

The following day Farhang Jahanpour gave a talk on some major mystical writings of Bahá'u'lláh, including "Prayers and Meditations", "Seven Valleys" and the "Hidden Words" which, he said, should form the basis of a Bahá'í life. There were many questions and much discussion following, this being a topic about which there is always more to learn. Ernest Gregory, as the representative of the Hands Of the Cause, spoke on Thursday morning about what the youth and the community as a whole could do to better serve the Faith. He pointed out ways in which youth could help in their communities.

The study sessions in the afternoons were centred around the study of the "Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh" and were led each day by a different person.

Perhaps the most inspiring parts of the School were the evening sessions which were addressed by youth speakers. Most of these talks were about

NEWS FROM THE COMMUNITIES

ABERDEEN

World Religion Day was celebrated in the Music Hall, Aberdeen on 16th January. There were speakers from the Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and Bahá'í religions. Alan Inkster from Banchory gave a short enlightening talk on the Bahá'í Faith.

A large advertisement was inserted in the local newspaper and posters were displayed throughout the city. This proved to be an immense success attended by a record number of 38 persons. Many people who heard of the Bahá'í Faith for the first time asked questions after the meeting and left with pamphlets.

The discussion was continued informally in a nearby Bahá'í home, thus bringing to an end a most rewarding evening.

BELFAST

The Bahá'ís of Belfast and the neighbouring communities, with many of their friends, gathered together for the World Religion Day celebration. Over ninety people enjoyed the programme of music and readings arranged by Mr. and Mrs. Morley of the Dublin Community.

The programme opened with a reading of the Lord's Prayer and the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, followed by a short account of the difficulties experienced by Noah and Columbus due to their contemporaries being unable to understand their spirit of adventure.

Then followed readings from the World scriptures demonstrating the oneness of religion and the reference of each Founder to His second coming and the beginning of the cycle of fulfillment. The concluding passages which came from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh explained that He is the fulfillment of all these prophecies.

After the meeting £22 was collected for U.N.I.C.E.F. and the "Save the Children Fund." Representatives of these organisations were present. They expressed their gratitude to the Bahá'ís for this gesture and one of the ladies remarked that "what we received today was something that money cannot buy".

Favourable short reports appeared in two of the City's newspapers, and their effects have been significant.

PETERBOROUGH

Coffee and discussion evenings are being held on alternate Thursdays at the Bahá'í Centre. A course on Bahá'í Administration being given by Dorothy Ferraby is proving very interesting. Family Sunday Afternoons for social activities have recommenced.

POOLE

During a "Special Week" in October, 1966 this goal town had the bounty of several visiting speakers. The spiritual and photographic beauty of the slides shown by Harry Charles of his pilgrimage

to Haifa were deeply appreciated as were talks given by John Edwards, Alma Gregory and David Lewis. At one meeting there was an old gentleman who recalled being in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá'.

SHEFFIELD

An excellent Youth week-end school was held at the TOC H on 18th/19th February.

The opening talk on Saturday was given by Eric Hellicar whose subject was "Why are we Bahá'ís?" This was followed by a well attended social evening with a good sprinkling of non-Bahá'ís present.

The Sunday Morning session consisted of a Bahá'í/Christian panel answering questions raised from the floor, the school concluded with a talk given by Michael Cleasby entitled "The Oneness of Mankind."

The school was well organised and presented, by the highly enthusiastic Sheffield Youth and it was gratifying to see an attendance of 36 including 10 of our non-Bahá'í friends. It was also good to see the support given by Friends from as far afield as Cambridge, and it is to be hoped that the efforts of the hard-working Sheffield Youth will soon be rewarded.

SWINTON

In October, 1966, the community responded to an offer of travelling teachers by the A.A.T.C. and were delighted to have Joan and Ernest Gregory for the weekend of 10th/11th December, and Farhang Jahanpur on Thursday, 15th December.

Both occasions were most successful and well attended. Joan and Ernest conducted a deepening programme for Bahá'ís in the homes of friends. The community reaped great spiritual benefit from this weekend.

Farhang attended a coffee morning and spoke at a public meeting on the "Occident and the Orient". Both occasions were well attended and were supported by friends from Eccles and Stockport. Farhang was interviewed by a reporter from the local newspaper which printed a good write-up. The community feels that both occasions were so successful in expounding the Faith to the people of Swinton that they would commend other L.S.A.'s to avail themselves of the services of travelling teachers offered by the A.A.T.C.

WANDSWORTH

Wandsworth L.S.A. felt that it would be a fine opportunity to launch the public teaching activities in their borough, by celebrating World Religion Day. They utilized it by arranging their first public meeting at St. John's Hall, Putney on Sunday 15th January, 1967.

The meeting was advertised in three local newspapers, and was also brought to the notice of thousands of local residents by the distribution of 5,000 invitation-handbills. The arrangements

prior to the meeting were conducted like a major business publicity drive, involving the active co-operation of most of the community members. The neighbouring community of Hammersmith and individual Bahá'ís from Richmond and Kingston Boroughs also assisted in the venture.

The most gratifying aspect of this successful meeting was the presence of twenty-two non-Bahá'ís in the audience of eighty-three, who came as a result of the publicity. A number of them requested to be advised of future Bahá'í activities. They also asked a number of interesting questions on the Bahá'í Faith, after talks on 'Oneness of Mankind' given by Tony MacCarthy and Earl Cameron.

The meeting commenced with an excellent presentation of the principal aspects of various established religions including the Bahá'í Faith, by the Bahá'í children. When refreshments and tea were served after the meeting, a truly happy atmosphere prevailed.

It is significant to report that the overwhelming success of the meeting can be attributed to a large extent to the prayers offered by the Universal House of Justice. Wandsworth L.S.A. had written to the U.H.J. in good time, urging them to offer prayers at the Holy Shrines for the success of the first public teaching venture in the borough. The success of this meeting has made it clear to us that the U.H.J. had graciously complied with the request, even before their reply to that effect was received.

DRAW NIGH UNTO BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Every eye, in this Day, should seek what will best promote the Cause of God. He Who to the Eternal Truth, beareth me Witness! Nothing whatever can, in this Day, inflict a greater harm upon this Cause than dissension and strife, contention, estrangement and apathy, among the loved ones of God. Flee them, through the power of God and His Sovereign aid, and strive ye to knit together the hearts of men, in His Name, the Unifier, the All-knowing, the All-Wise.

Bahá'u'lláh.

Publishing Trust

Shoghi Effendi, Said "those who do embrace the Faith should be constantly urged to study the literature of the Cause. It is not sufficient that our numbers should increase, we want people whose faith stands on a rock no trial can move. We want people who in turn arise and carry the message to other people and guide other souls."

Bahá'í News, July 1932.

The Bahá'í Publishing Trust can provide you with a large assortment of books. Send a stamped addressed envelope for a free catalogue to:—

Bahá'í Publishing Trust,
248 London Road,
Leicester.

IRISH TEACHING COMMITTEE REPORT

Exciting news from Northern Ireland is that our goal Lurgan — Portadown has been re-opened by the move of Dr. Rustom Jamshidi to the hospital there. Successful World Religion Day Celebrations were held in Belfast where 95 attended and the newly established Group in Dun Laoghaire. Shortly after the meeting in Belfast Mrs. Haldane became a Bahá'í, and so follows her daughter Geraldine, who is already a Bahá'í. Public Meetings have been held in Bangor, Belfast, Castlereagh and Larne R.D.

The Irish Teaching Committee held a One Day Work-Shop on "Bahá'í Administration in Action," on February 19th in Dublin. A study group is held each week in Dublin to make a deeper study of the Covenant.

The Irish Teaching Committee following its consultation with the N.S.A. during their historic meeting in Dublin, offered consultation to every believer in Ireland to stimulate a two-way flow of teaching ideas. We know that it is the desire and bounty of all believers to serve the Cause of God. One may not be a public speaker, or a "Fireside" speaker, but there are many ways of teaching, we sometimes do not realise where our service can be of best use as part of the whole. Consultation between the Committee and individual believers can reveal where each one of us best fits in. It may also assist the Committee to find out the individual teaching needs, so that we can experience together the growing joy of universal participation in the Cause. Based on these ideas many friends had the opportunity of consulting with the Irish Teaching Committee at their last meeting. The response has so far been most stimulating, and some exciting ideas have come up in consultation. The Committee looks forward to more such meetings with the friends over the next few months. Throughout Ireland we are feeling the exhilaration of the speed-up of travel teaching called for by the Universal House of Justice. We have heard reports of the visits of Philip O'Brien, Margaret Magill, Zebbie Whitehead, and others who have made teaching trips from South to North. Frances Beard has arrived in Dublin on leave from Uganda, and has already shared with the Dublin friends some of her experiences there. This committee is arranging a meeting in Dublin for the friends in that area, and a teaching trip to the North, when during March Frances will visit the communities there. Dublin has recently had visitors from the north including Jamshid Arjomandi, who assisted in the preparation of the new Hazrat'ul-Quds for the visit of the National Spiritual Assembly. There has been a declaration in Dublin, Billy Cahill, who is of Irish Catholic background.

MOVEMENT FROM PLACE TO PLACE

In a letter dated 20th January, 1966, to the N.S.A. of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles, the Universal House of Justice wrote:—

"There is no doubt whatever that the constant movement of teachers, even though circulating within a small radius, can have a highly stimulating effect on the teaching work. Permanent settlers, a constant stream of visiting teachers to speak at regular firesides, is a pattern which has not yet been bettered."

And in a letter to the Bahá'ís of the World, at Ridván 1966, the Universal House of Justice again wrote:—

"The challenge to the local and national institutions of the Faith is to organise and promote the teaching work through systematic plans, involving not only the regular fireside meetings in the homes of the believers, the public meetings, receptions and conferences, the weekend, summer and winter schools, the youth conferences and activities, all of which are so vigorously upheld at present, but in addition through a constant stream of visiting teachers to every locality. The forces released by this latter process have been extolled by Bahá'u'lláh in these words:

"The movement itself from place to place, when undertaken for the sake of God hath always exerted, and can now exert, its influence in the world. In the books of old the station of them that have voyaged far and near in order to guide the servants of God hath been set forth and written down."

Following these calls, both the Assembly Assistance Teaching Committee and the New Territories Teaching Committee made appeals for the friends to become circuit teachers and visit other communities. Coupons were sent out to all the believers in England, inviting the friends to offer their services in ways in which their circumstances permitted. It can now be reported that there has indeed been a great increase in movement between communities, goal towns and groups, and following the coupon project, there are now a number of friends travelling regularly, who had rarely visited other communities previously!

There are several forms of circuit teaching — trips undertaken by experienced teachers who may visit several Assemblies and Goal Towns and hold public meetings as well as firesides — visits of teachers to a single area to concentrate on the contacts of a single community — regular visits of individual Bahá'ís to other communities, and occasions when several members of one community may support the activities of another. It is in these last two

methods that every believer is able, and is urged to participate, and we feel that when these activities become more and more widespread, we shall at last see "universal participation" firmly established in England.

We would again urge all the friends to search their hearts and ask themselves if they can offer to visit other towns. We are not appealing for clever speakers — just for friends fired with the love of Bahá'u'lláh and who will travel for His sake. Take the first step, and the following steps will become easier and effortless! When we gather together at Convention, Teaching Conference, and at Summer Schools, we all know the joy of Bahá'í love and fellowship, and how the flames of our love for the Blessed Perfection are fanned into a blazing fire by contact with our fellow believers. Let us make this a weekly occurrence by our visits to other places. Offers please to:—

Either Secretary, N.T.T.C.,
Mrs. Betty Goode,
8, Knowle Road,
Stafford.

Or Secretary A.T.T.C.,
Mrs. Lois Hainsworth,
Sharaf,
10 Church Road,
Horsforth, Nr. Leeds.

Friends intending to visit a town for personal reasons will surely wish to consult the list of firesides which has been twice published in the Journal, and which it is hoped, will be used by everyone; and of course L.S.A. secretaries can always supply the names and addresses of other Assembly secretaries, so that direct enquiries about firesides and other meetings can be made. (For the list to be completely effective it is necessary for us to know as quickly as possible of any change of address, time and day of the firesides, and for information about meetings not so far published).

How the Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá longed to travel! In one of the tablets of the Divine Plan he cried out in these words:

"Oh that I could travel, even though on foot and in the utmost poverty, to these regions and, raising the call of Yá Bahá'u'l - Abhá in cities, villages, mountains, deserts and oceans, promote the Divine teachings. This, alas, I cannot do. How intensely I deplore it." And at the end he cried, "Please God, ye may achieve it."

Let us seize this opportunity to travel and set out with hearts overflowing with joy, knowing we answer the call of both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

ASSEMBLIES ASSISTANCE AND
NEW TERRITORIES TEACHING COMMITTEES.

Africa's Greatest Challenge

In sharing with you this deeply moving appeal from the Hands of the Cause in Africa, the National Assembly wants you to know that we have gladly responded to this call for prayers, and we invite everyone in the Community to do so too.

TO: All those "heroic Generals" of the Nine Year Plan assisting with the vital work in the Continent of Africa. Beloved Co-workers in the Vineyard of God:

The Hands of the Cause of God in Africa, Mr. Musa Banani, Mr. Enoch Olinga, and myself, send you our warmest and deepest love and appreciation from grateful hearts for all that you are doing to help the work in Africa. Never before in religious history has there been such an inter-continental plan of co-operation as this unique and planetary process launched by our supreme Universal House of Justice on the inspired pattern of our beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi.

The countries of the United Nations, unaware of the potent Source of their Inspiration, are trying to carry out on a material plane those very things which Bahá'u'lláh summoned all mankind to do nearly a century ago. Imagine! We, the servants of His Mighty World Order are making it a reality in the soil of human hearts in every land. Soon there will be 108 Pillars of the Universal House of Justice. What a bounty it is to be living in this day. Already, as the prophet Habakkuk foresaw, the "knowledge of the Glory of the Lord" does indeed "cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

We, in the Continent of Africa, consider ourselves richly blessed that there are already 35 National Spiritual Assemblies helping us to achieve our major goals. We are now asking you to assist us once again, but in a way that will not cost a cent, will take no part of your budget, but will link your hearts with ours in prayer . . . letters were written (to Auxiliary Board Members and all National Assemblies in Africa) after a long and careful appraisal of the Nine Year Plan goals to be won in Africa. We knew immediately that we had to have much more help from "on High". Beloved friends, we stand face-to-face with the following herculean tasks in Africa:

- (1) Establish 26 new N.S.A.'s in Africa. Nearly 60% of all in the 9 Year Plan.
- (2) Raise the total number of LSAs to 4,465. Nearly 30% of all in the Plan.
- (3) Raise the number of Localities to 17,200. Nearly 30% of all in the Plan.
- (4) Purchase 27 Temple Sites. Nearly 45% of all to be purchased in the Plan.

- (5) Acquire 27 National Endowments. 50% of all to be acquired in the Plan.
 - (6) Acquire 26 National Haziratu'l-Quds. 50% of all in the Nine Year Plan.
 - (7) Acquire 88 Local Centres. Incorporate 337 LSAs. Nearly 25% of all in the Plan.
 - (8) Acquire 3 Winter/Summer Schools. 75% of all in the Nine Year Plan.
 - (9) Acquire 17 Teaching Institutes. Over 50% of all to be acquired in the Plan.
- Deepen 34,000 Bahá'is in these Institutes before Ridván 1973!

It is our earnest hope, therefore, that the members of your August Body will join with us in prayers each day between now and Ridván, so that this lion's-share of the mighty tasks of the Nine Year Plan may be speedily accomplished and so that the momentum of teaching may be regained and thus assure our common victory.

We will be deeply grateful for any prayers you may say on our behalf in Africa, from the Greatest Name to the Tablet of Ahmad. We have chosen the prayer of Bahá'u'lláh on page 94 of Prayers and Meditations, so filled with promise and hope:

"Magnified be thy Name, O my God! Now That thou hast caused me to apprehend this truth, I beseech Thee, by Thy Name, which no scroll can bear, which no heart can imagine and no tongue can utter — a name which will remain concealed so long as Thine own Being is extolled — to unfurl, ere the present year draw to a close, the ensigns of Thine undisputed ascendancy and triumph, that the whole creation may be enriched by Thy wealth, and may be exalted through the ennobling influence of Thy transcendent sovereignty, and all that may arise and promote Thy cause.

Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the All-highest, the All-Glorious, the All-Subduing, the All-Possessing."

With warmest and tenderest love to each one of you, from truly grateful hearts, in the service of the beloved Guardian,

HANDS OF THE CAUSE OF GOD IN AFRICA.

TEACHING CONFERENCE, LEICESTER, JANUARY 1967.

Workshops in Action.

Copies of the photograph on page 1 may be obtained from Mrs. Philip Hainsworth, Sharaf, Church Road, Horsforth, near Leeds. Prices, including postage, are:—

Postcards: 1/6 each.
Half-plate: 2/3 each.
Full-plate: 3/6 each.

If you would like copies, please send your request, including remittance, before 3rd April. No orders received after that date will be accepted.

A MEETING RECALLED

The following is an account by Miss Florence Altass, now of Hastings, of her meeting with 'Abdul-Bahá in Edinburgh in 1912.

"I had known Dr. Johnson and Dr. Hakim who had invited me to meetings and I went regularly and always felt the profundity of the readings. It all rang so true.

Then the great day arrived when the Beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk. Although I didn't know the language, I felt I **knew** the message he gave. The interpreter didn't mean anything to me, somehow my eyes were riveted on The Great Teacher and Messenger. His great blue eyes seemed to pierce my very soul and I knew then I belonged, but not on the outer plane. Within me a battle went on for years after, as I had been an ardent Catholic and felt that Church held my allegiance.

When 'Abdu'l-Bahá shook hands with me, he seemed to transmit something to me, and I've never been the same since, but still the battle went on and the Church I loved seemed like a barrier between me and my conscience.

Before Dr. Johnson passed on, I was deciding to go to London. He gave me an address, in a very shaky writing, at Clifton Hill where I could contact more Bahá'is. I never called them and for years heard no more until Richard St. Barbe Baker came along. I never mentioned to him my thoughts about the two loves and whether I should be true to the Church of my childhood. While talking he read a prayer to me and then sent me a prayer book, Bahá'í, of course, which I treasure. He went away and I used the Prayer Book daily and asked for light but had quite lost sight of any Bahá'is until in Brighton I saw an advertisement and went along each week. Friends were very kind to me although I was still an "outsider". Then for three years I was very ill, with no thought of recovery. That decided me, I felt compelled to write and ask to be accepted. No doubts then that I was not doing the right thing".

ARTICLES ON BAHÁ'Í CHILD EDUCATION.

As Bahá'í child education is a subject which so deeply concerns us all, the Child Education Committee of the Bahá'is of the British Isles, wishes to encourage parents and other friends to write short articles on this subject for publication in the "Bahá'í Journal". The articles would have to be reviewed before publication, so please send them direct to the Child Education Committee, who look forward to collaborating with the community in their work.

Secretary: Mrs. L. Smithson,

92 Beechwood Road,
Sanderstead,
South Croydon, Surrey.
CR2 OAB.

OUR HOME FRONT NEEDS ARE LINKED WITH THE OVERSEAS CHALLENGE

Have you read the heart-stirring appeal made by the Hands of the Cause in Africa for prayers for the tremendous tasks which face the Bahá'ís in that Continent? In sending that call to the National Assembly, Mr. Sears wrote, "Warmest loving greetings to each one of you, and especially abiding gratitude to your August Body whose love and guidance have been the heart of the victories in Africa from the very beginning." Africa is very dear to us, and we have the privilege of still being closely associated with the work there. There are pioneers from the British Community in Uganda, Malawi, Swaziland, Rhodesia, South West Africa, Cameroon Republic, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Somalia. In addition, our Overseas Goals Committee is working with four of the African National Assemblies to achieve their goals in the Nine Year Plan.

Our first overseas assignment, given to us in 1950 by the Beloved Guardian was in Africa; since then we have been given assignments in every part of the world, from Hong Kong in the Far East to Guyana in the far South West. The latest pioneer to leave the British Isles for an overseas post, is making the last part of his journey as a deck-passenger on a boat which travels in the waters of the South Pacific and should arrive in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands at any moment. Now we begin to realise more clearly why it is so vital to build up the Home Front reservoir, to maintain the assemblies at home, to open new goal towns, to form new assemblies, and to expand all our communities. Only by having a strong home community can we shoulder our world-wide tasks.

What are the needs of the Home Front now, as we come again to the last great push before Ridván!

First of all, the victories: Wales has assured its goal of one new assembly this year, the goal town of Swansea already has ten believers; and the goal town of Aberystwyth has been opened. Northern Ireland has achieved its goal

of one new assembly, Castlereagh R.D. is assured; and the last of the three goal towns there, Craigavon, has been opened. In the Irish Republic, Dun Laoghaire has been opened. In Scotland, the last of their five goal towns Elgin, has been opened; and Aberdeen has been regained, by three declarations. In England, the goal towns of Kidderminster, Ipswich, Durham, Kendal and St. Austell have been opened; and the lapsed assembly of Burnley is assured.

ASSEMBLY GOALS THIS YEAR.

The goal island chosen in Scotland to reach assembly status by Ridván was Shetland (Lerwick). The three goal towns in England chosen to become assemblies were Bedford, Poole and Bath. In the Irish Republic, Dun Laoghaire was chosen to be brought to Assembly status. The aim is to build up these Assemblies through teaching and declarations.

THE PICTURE ON THE HOME FRONT.

This then is the picture: eighteen pioneers would maintain all sixty Local Spiritual Assemblies on the Home Front; five of them need only one person to move in and the local assembly is assured. Eight pioneers would open all the remaining goal towns in this phase of the Nine Year Plan. LIMERICK AND CORK HAVE FIRST PRIORITY FOR PIONEERS.

The National Assembly urges everyone to a great, united, joyous effort to meet this challenge. Let us link it with the tremendous challenge which faces Africa, and using that same powerful prayer chosen by the Hands in Africa pray with the full fervour of our united will and the longing of our hearts for total victory at home and abroad.

Mrs. Margaret Bachrich, who was secretary of the Pioneer Committee, herself pioneered to the goal town of Ipswich. Everybody wishing to share in the joy of pioneer service should contact the new Secretary, Mr. Charles Webb, 105 St. Olaf's Road, London, S.W.6.

The following figures show the position of Assemblies needing pioneers:

England:

Epsom	3	Chester	1	Northampton .	1 (lapsed)
Peterborough	1	York	3	Nottingham	1
Sutton Coldfield ...	2	Torquay	3 (lapsed)		

Scotland:

Inverness	2	Motherwell...	1
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Goal Towns and Islands to be opened:

England: Hereford, Newport Mon. and Shrewsbury.

Wales: Bangor, Llanelly.

Scotland: The Inner Hebrides (Skye).

The Irish Republic: Cork and Limerick.

TOTAL NEEDS TO MAINTAIN ASSEMBLIES	18
TOTAL NEEDS TO OPEN GOAL TOWNS.....	8
PIONEERS URGENTLY NEEDED.....	26

SCOTTISH TEACHING COMMITTEE REPORT

Tremendous activity is taking place in all regions, and practically all Scotland and the Islands are receiving press publicity, this brings to notice the Bahá'í Faith and the name of Bahá'u'lláh. Aberdeen had a very successful World Religion Day meeting and is pressing on with follow-up activity; two recent declarations will bring this community back to assembly status again next Ridván.

Edinburgh greatly miss the Hellicar and Roberts families. Eric and Aldie left to take up new appointments. Eric, Margaret and family are in the Goal City of Durham. Aldie, Avril and family are in Redcar, Yorkshire. Declarations continue to be made and the numbers now attending the Junior Sunday School require that more friends be available to assist with the work.

Glasgow, Motherwell and North Berwick continue with regular Firesides, not forgetting Hamilton and Dumbarton where the light of the Faith is steadily burning, we trust that Moira may soon be strong enough, so that with her husband Bill, teaching may be resumed. After two years of good work in Peterhead, the Fox family have now taken up residence in the Goal town of Elgin and are at present busy establishing themselves there. From being 'Evil, poisonous and something to be shunned' it would appear that in Inverness the Faith has at last become "respectable", as all recent meetings have been reasonably well attended and have had lively discussions, at one recent meeting the Provost (Mayor) was present. The Islands are holding firm, but the friends there long for visitors, travel teachers and pioneers. Working in the small hospital in Skye, Pixie MacCallum had a wonderful opportunity to sow seeds throughout the Island. Whilst in Haifa on pilgrimage she cabled the N.S.A. offering to pioneer to the New Hebrides in the Pacific Ocean. To sum up—a vast area, nearly the size of England, with only four Assemblies and several groups, beset with long and difficult lines of communication, is doing a tremendous job of teaching.

CONVENTION 124.

Children's Programme.

Convention will be held in London over the week-end April 29th/30th, at the Town Hall, Ealing. The Child Education Committee have made the following plans for the care of children; Saturday, p.m. — Programme of songs and a party.

Sunday, a.m. — Quiz programme for the 6 to 12 years old, in the charge of Marjorie and Arnold Pitt.

Sunday, p.m.—Slides by Ted Cardell. Party—Audrey Cameron and helpers.

PROCLAMATION:—

— Five - and - a - half - years —

Seven short months lie between us and the Intercontinental Conferences to be held in Frankfurt, Germany; Panama New Delhi, India; Kampala, Uganda; Sydney, Australia; and Wilmette, U.S.A. over the week-end October 7th/8th/9th/10th, which the Universal House of Justice (in their Ridván 1966 message) explained will “sound the ‘opening notes’ of a period of proclamation of the Cause of God extending through the remaining remaining years of the Nine Year Plan to the centenary, in 1973, of the revelation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.” These seven months are all that is left to us to prepare for the proclamation period.

The proclamation period is not like the 1963-64 Centenary, for one year only, it covers five-and-a-half-years. That is why the National Assembly decided to ‘phase’ proclamation activity in the British Isles, and studied the Ridván 1965 message from the Universal House of Justice to draw up an appropriate time-table. The first phase will cover the period September 1967 to Ridván 1969 and the events of those twenty months have been set out in the “Delineation of First Phase of Proclamation Activity”, which Convention delegates will remember receiving at Convention last Ridván, and which has already been sent to all local spiritual assemblies, goal towns and groups. It is given below for you to study. A special proclamation booklet will be published during this period. The Proclamation Committee is already working on detailed plans for this first phase.

The National Assembly’s objective has been to plan a steadily unfolding programme which the British Community will be able to sustain, both financially and with adequate manpower. A second phase will be planned in good time. The N.S.A. has also borne in mind the timing of the re-election of the Universal House of Justice, and the beginning of our public proclamation is timed to take place after the re-election of that Supreme Body, when the newly-elected House is in office for a further period, rather than on the eve of its re-election.

Let us pause here, and see exactly what we are celebrating. Sometime during the months of September and October 1867, in Adrianople, Bahá’u’lláh revealed the Suriy-i-Muluk, and one hundred years later, appointed representatives of the Bahá’í world will visit the site of the house in Adrianople where this Tablet was revealed; that is the first centenary to be celebrated during the proclamation period. In August 1968 an Oceanic Conference will be held on an island in the Mediterranean Sea to commemorate Bahá’u’lláh’s voyage upon that sea, a hundred years before, from Gallipoli in Turkey to

the Most Great Prison in ‘Akká; that is the second centenary to be celebrated. And in 1973 we shall celebrate the centenary of the revelation by Bahá’u’lláh of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

The National Assembly is happy to share with you a very helpful outline prepared by the Hand of the Cause Jalal Khazéh from “God Passes By”, which draws very much upon Shoghi Effendi’s own words:

“Three of the most outstanding events of the Ministry of Bahá’u’lláh are: the birth of His Revelation in the Siyáh-Chál, His Declaration in Baghdad and His Proclamation in Adrianople. Regarding this last period Shoghi Effendi quotes an eye-witness as having said that, “the Divine verses were raining down in such number that it was impossible to record them.”

The most momentous Tablet revealed during this period was the Suriy-i-Muluk, addressed to the Sultan of Turkey, his ministers, the Kings of Christendom, the French and Persian ambassadors to the Sublime Porte, the Moslem ecclesiastical leaders in Constantinople, the people of Persia and the philosophers of the world, (see pages 171-2, “God Passes By”). Greater detail regarding this Tablet can be found on pages 172 to 175 of “God Passes By.” Another important work revealed in Adrianople was the Surih of the Branch in which the station of the beloved Master was foreshadowed (p. 177 G.P.B.).

On August 31st 1868, the Blessed Beauty was banished from Adrianople to the penal colony of ‘Akká, the Most Great Prison. The Tablets which He revealed there fall into three distinct categories, first are those which constitute the sequel to the proclamation of His Mission in Adrianople, second are the laws and ordinances recorded for the most part in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, third are those Tablets which enunciate and reaffirm the fundamental principles underlying His Dispensation (p.205-6 G.P.B.).

The Tablets revealed in the early years of His exile to ‘Akká were addressed to the Kings and religious leaders of the world (p.206) such as, Queen Victoria (p.206-7, 207-8); the Emperor of the French, Napoleon III (p.207); the rulers of America and the Presidents of its Republics (p.207); Nicolaevitch Alexander II, Czar of Russia (p.207); the King of Prussia, Wilhelm I (p.208); Francis Joseph, the Austrian Emperor (p.208); a second Tablet to Ali Pasha, the Grand Vizir of the Sultan of Turkey (p.208-9); the entire company of ecclesiastical leaders of all religions (p.209); Pope Pius IX (p.209); the patriarchs of the Christian church (p.209-10); the concourse of monks (p.210); the entire

body of Muslim ecclesiastics (p.210-11); the Jewish People, to whom He announced the coming of the Most Great Law (p.211); the priests of the Zoroastrian faith (p.211); and through Queen Victoria to the members of the British legislature (p.211). These comprise “the salient features of the concluding utterances of that historic Proclamation, the opening notes of which were sounded during the latter part of Bahá’u’lláh’s banishment to Adrianople and which closed during the early years of His incarceration in the prison-fortress of ‘Akká”, where the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was revealed (see G.P.B., p. 213).

In that Most Holy Book are recorded Bahá’u’lláh’s words to the Presidents of the Republics of the American continent, the members of the world’s parliaments, the Emperor Wilhelm I, conqueror of Napoleon III, and Francis Joseph; His reference to the lamentations of Berlin; His condemnation of the throne of tyranny established in Constantinople, and His words addressed to His native city, assuring her that God has chosen her to be “The source of joy of all mankind.” (p.215).

Those are the Tablets which constitute Bahá’u’lláh’s Own Proclamation to the Kings and Rulers of the world. The National Assembly recommends that, in preparation for Proclamation 1967-1973, you study these Tablets, extracts from which are to be found in “Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh,” “Epistle to the Son of the Wolf,” “Bahá’í Revelation”, and “The Promised Day is come”.

Here is the first phase of Proclamation activity in the British Isles:

1. On Wednesday, September 27th, 1967, the National Assembly, through its official representative, will lay flowers on the Grave of the Beloved Guardian, and prayers will be said, to coincide with the visit made by representatives of the Bahá’í World to the site of the house in Adrianople, where the historic Suriy-i-Muluk was revealed. All Friends will be invited to attend this ceremony.

2. At the Feast of Mashhiyyat, Wednesday, September 27th, a special devotional programme will be planned to mark that historic visit in Adrianople.

3. Saturday, September 30th, 1967, a befitting national observance will be held in London to mark the opening of the centenary period; this will be of a spiritual/devotional character, for Bahá’ís only, but it will be publicised to press and radio.

4. October, 1967, a party from the British Isles will attend the Inter-Continental Conference in Frankfurt.

5. In the period October 1967/Ridván 1968 befitting observances of a spiritual/devotional nature will be held throughout the British Isles, the “pivotal centres” (i.e. London, Edinburgh, Belfast, Cardiff and Dublin) taking the lead in each country, with local celebrations following, so that there is a steady build-up of local publicity throughout the land.

OBEDIENCE CHILD EDUCATION

'Abdu'l-Bahá once said: "The fathers and especially the mothers, must always think how they can best educate their children; not how to fondle and embrace them and thus spoil them. By every means at their disposal they must inculcate into their growing bodies, minds and spirits, the principles of sincerity, love, trustfulness, obedience, true democracy, and kindness toward all races; thus hereafter the world of civilization may flow in one mighty current and the children of the next generation may make secure the foundations of human solidarity and good will."

As we read these words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, we note that in enumerating the various attributes He would have parents cultivate in their children, He includes obedience. It is well to consider, in this New Day, when enlightened parents are breaking away from the old idea of blind obedience on the part of the child and are attempting to set him free from too much adult dominance in order that he may develop his own personality and initiative, that parents do not make the mistake of too little restriction and become lax. The more obedient a child is, the more true freedom he may enjoy, for extreme lib-

erty is licence. Of this Bahá'u'lláh wrote: "*Know ye that the embodiment of liberty and its symbol is the animal. That which beseemeth man is submission unto such restraints as will protect him from his own ignorance and guard him against the harm of the mischief-maker.*"

Mrs. Amy Dwelly, formerly associated with the Merrill-Palmer Nursery School, writes for us: "From infancy on, obedience can and should be taught. This magnificent lesson, however, can not be learned suddenly or without effort. One of the secrets of teaching a child to obey is to begin when he is very young by giving him a few important commands that he understands perfectly and seeing to it that he always obeys them. Too many don'ts; no's and can'ts confuse and puzzle a small child with the result that he usually ignores them all. The few well chosen commands given to a child should be related to his health, safety and spiritual well being, but these should be always obeyed. The successful parent does not nag, but he is consistent.

'Abdu'l-Bahá said "The integrity of the family bond must be constantly considered and the rights of the individual members must not be transgressed. The rights of the son, the rights

of the father, the rights of the mother, none of them must be transgressed, none of them must be arbitrary." This sort of mutual respect and understanding, such as one expects to find in every Bahá'í family, is the soil in which sincere obedience will flourish.

Upon all Bahá'ís entrusted with the training of a child, is placed the divine responsibility of teaching him obedience to God's Commands so that he will indeed be, "fully prepared to render instant, exact and complete obedience." This is beneficial to himself.

Bahá'u'lláh wrote: "*O ye peoples of the world! know assuredly that My commandments are the lamps of My loving providence among My servants, and the keys of my mercy for My creatures.*" Observe My commandments, for the love of my beauty, Happy is the lover that hath inhaled the divine fragrance of his Best Beloved from these words, laden with the perfume of a grace which no tongue can describe." "Think not that We have revealed unto you a mere code of laws. Nay, Rather, We have unsealed the choice wine with the fingers of might and power."

More important still, as your child grows older, he will take his place in the great army of Bahá'u'lláh in this Day of God. The victories of any army are commensurate with the obedience of its soldiers. Consider an army of a country. How impossible to capture a city if each soldier were occupied with his own concerns! Even when a man is sincerely sure that he is right, his disobedience can cause loss to the entire army.

Vahid at Yazd commanded his servant Hasan to convey the treatises of the Báb to a certain place on the road to Mihriz, warning him that in no wise must he change his course. Nabil tells us: "No sooner had Hasan mounted his horse and prepared to leave than the cries of the sentinels . . . reached his ears. Fearing lest they capture him and seize the precious manuscripts in his possession, he decided to follow a different route from the one which his master had instructed him to take. As he was passing behind the fort, the sentinels recognized him, shot his horse and captured him. Meanwhile Vahid . . . chose the same route that he had advised his servant to take, and, arriving safely at that spot, was surprised to find that Hasan was missing. Vahid knew immediately that he had disregarded his directions and had been captured by the enemy. And so the treatises penned by the hand of the martyred Báb were lost.

Obedience! To the words of Bahá'u'lláh, the Master, the Guardian Obedience to the Administrative channels of their grace! A reverence for law; nay, a love and gratitude for law; this, parents, is the greatest protection, the most profound benefit, and the fondest heritage that you can bequeath to your child, the spiritual soldier of tomorrow.

Bahá'í News No. 127, July 1939.

continued from page 10.

6. Ridván 1968, re-election of the Universal House of Justice, in which members of the British N.S.A. will take part.

7. Upon the return from Haifa of National Assembly members, the full celebration of the Ridván period will include the holding of National Convention and the staging of a major Exhibition in London for one week. The venue for this Exhibition will be such that the room can also be used for the holding of public meetings and receptions and in the evenings the public will be invited to attend lectures, panels will be presented, guest speakers will be invited from other organisations, and similar activities will take place. It is possible that a banquet will be held in London at this time, at which prominent non-Bahá'ís will be entertained.

8. The Exhibition will then move in turn to the capital cities of N. Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and the programme of meetings as held in London will be repeated according to the new needs in each country. It is possible that a banquet will be held in each of the pivotal centres in turn.

9. After these major Exhibitions in Belfast, Edinburgh, Cardiff, the material will be remoulded to form an exhibition which can be used throughout the country in the months leading up to Ridván 1969.

10. British representative(s) will attend the Oceanic Conference to be held in the Mediterranean Sea during August 1968 to commemorate the centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's voyage upon that sea.

As can be seen from these details, in the British Isles the period from September, 1967 to Ridván 1968 will be one of a steadily developing publicity programme at local level, with press and radio/television releases of national activity interspersed, as representatives of the British Community take part in national and international activity. It is on this foundation of local publicity that national publicity will later be built up.

The next seven months are precious, we all need to use them to the very best advantage to prepare for the five-and-a-half years of Proclamation activity. Basic things need attention, such as: intensification of teaching efforts throughout the country, especially personal teaching, to attract more and more people to the Faith; the preparation of each of us individually, through a deeper understanding of what is meant by 'the Bahá'í life' to meet the glare of publicity as the Faith passes out of obscurity into the next stage of its development; and the preparation of local assemblies (and potential assemblies, i.e. goal towns and groups) so that they work joyously and effectively as Bahá'í institutions and are able to shoulder the many exciting tasks which proclamation activities will bring, especially, we fervently pray, a great increase in the number of new believers.

(An incorrect statement appeared in the article "Preparing for Proclamation" published in the "Bahá'í Journal" No. 177 January, 1967, third column, under the sub-heading 'The Event Being Celebrated'. The Suriy-i-Muluk is one single Tablet, revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in Adrianople sometime during the months of September and October 1867).

- N.T.T.C. REPORT -

DECLARATIONS IN GOAL TOWN.

The Carlisle group are happy to welcome two new believers, Mr. and Mrs. J. Smeatham who have recently declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh. Let us pray that this Community will be further blessed in the near future.

WOMEN'S CIRCLE HEARS OF BAHÁ'Í FAITH.

A talk on the Bahá'í Faith was given to the Scunthorpe Presbyterian Women's Circle by Lois Hainsworth. A great deal of interest was shown by the audience of about twenty, and Lois's supply of pamphlets soon disappeared.

A COMMITTEE MEETING PLUS.

Committee work has a tendency to become a matter of routine, dealing with figures and theories, and (in the minds of some, at least!) divorced from reality. To rectify this picture of committees as remote bodies, working in a vacuum; to establish a closer relationship with the Bahá'ís under its care; and, as is our belief, to give added impetus to the spiritual forces now shaping the destiny of each town and village, through united prayer and consultation, in the very spot where the 'battle' is being waged; the N.T.T.C., like its sister committees, has adopted the policy of holding its meetings in goal-towns.

Its last meeting was held in Aylesbury. But it was a meeting with a difference. For part of the time, the N.T.T.C. was joined by the A.A.T.C. for a joint appraisal of the teaching work in England, and consultation on means of intensifying it.

The meeting took place beneath the ageing oak-beams of a Tudor Inn, a place where Cromwell himself had stayed whilst engaged in a revolution that changed the nation. And now Bahá'ís were meeting, not to plot the overthrow of a monarchy, but, inspired by far purer ideals, to draw up plans for a spiritual revolution.

During the weekend a consultative meeting was held to discuss teaching activity in Aylesbury. This was attended by the pioneers of that town and friends from Oxford.

On Sunday morning, a special reception was arranged to which the Editor of the Buckinghamshire Herald was invited, as he had shown interest in the Faith through quotations in the paper.

Friends present, included both Teaching Committees, and friends from Aylesbury and Oxford. It was a very happy gathering.

PARAMOUNT DUTY OF EVERY BAHÁ'Í.

"With this vision clearly set before us, and fortified by the knowledge of the gracious aid of Bahá'u'lláh and the repeated assurances of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, let us first strive to live the life and then arise with one heart, one mind, one

voice, to reinforce our numbers and achieve our end. Let us recall, and seek on this sad occasion the comfort of, the last wishes of our departed yet ever-watchful master:—

'It behoveth them not to rest for a moment, neither to seek repose. They must disperse themselves in every land, pass by every clime, and travel throughout all regions. Bestirred, without rest, and steadfast to the end, they must raise in every land the triumphal cry 'Ya Bahá'u'l-Abhá!' (O Thou the Glory of Glories) . . . The disciples of Christ forgot themselves and all earthly things, forsook all their cares and belongings, purged themselves of self and passion, and with absolute detachment scattered far and wide and engaged in calling the peoples of the world to the divine guidance; till at last they made the world another world, illumined the surface of the earth, and even to their last hour proved self-sacrificing in the pathway of that beloved One of God. Finally in various lands they suffered glorious martyrdom. Let them that are men of action follow in their footsteps!'

Having grasped the significance of these words, having obtained a clear understanding of the true character of our mission, the methods to adopt, the course to pursue, and having attained sufficiently the individual regeneration—the essential requisite of teaching—let us arise to teach His Cause with righteousness, conviction, understanding and vigour. Let this be the paramount and most urgent duty of every Bahá'í. Let us make it the dominating passion of our life. Let us scatter to the utmost corners of the earth; sacrifice our personal interests, comforts, tastes and pleasures; mingle with the divers kindreds and peoples of the World; familiarize ourselves with their manners, traditions, thoughts and customs; arouse stimulate and maintain universal interest in the Movement, and at the same time endeavour by all the means in our power, by concentrated and persistent attention, to enlist the unreserved allegiance and the active support of the more hopeful and receptive among our hearers. Let us too bear in mind the example which our beloved Master has clearly set before us. Wise and tactful in His approach, wakeful and attentive in His early intercourse, broad and liberal in all His public utterances, cautious and gradual in the unfolding of the essential verities of the Cause, passionate in His appeal, yet sober in His argument, confident in tone, unswerving in conviction, dignified in His manners—such were the distinguishing features of our Beloved's noble presentation of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

If we all choose to tread faithfully His path, surely the day is not far distant when our beloved Cause will have emerged from the inevitable obscurity of a young and struggling Faith into the broad daylight of universal recognition.

This is our duty, our first obligation. Therein lies the secret of the success of the Cause we love so well. Therein lies the hope, the salvation of mankind. Are we fully conscious of our responsibilities? Do we realize the urgency, the sacredness, the immensity, the glory of our task?

I entreat you, dear friends, to continue, nay, to redouble your efforts, to keep your vision clear, your hopes undimmed, your determination unshaken, so that the power of God within us may 'fill the world with all its glory',".

Shoghi Effendi.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The National Assembly wishes to draw the attention of all the Friends to the following two letters received from the Universal House of Justice in response to questions we have put to them:

Haifa, Israel, February 5th, 1967.

INSCRIPTION/SYMBOL ON TOMBSTONES.

In reply to your letter of January 26th, we are glad to share with you the following quotations from the beloved Guardian's letters:

" . . . there is no reason why the word 'Bahá'í' should not appear in the centre of a nine-pointed star on the tombstone of dear Elsa Vento, but the ring-stone emblem should not be used, nor the Greatest Name."

"Shoghi Effendi feels it is better not to put the Greatest Name on Bahá'í graves. It is not forbidden to do so but inappropriate."

We trust this answers your questions.

With Loving Bahá'í greetings,
(Signed and Sealed)

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE.

February 5th, 1967.

Dear Friends,

DESIGNATION OF THE FAITH.

In reply to your letter of January 26th, we realize that there are occasions on which the use of the term "Bahá'í World Faith" may be justified and useful. However, it is our hope that the friends will gradually lose the habit of using this term as widely as they do now. The designation "The Bahá'í Faith" is more dignified and is preferable. Any adjective added to this name tends to a diminution of its stature and might be taken to mean that their are other "Bahá'í Faiths".

With Loving Bahá'í greetings,
(Signed and Sealed),

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE