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Teaching Conference

A MOVING EXPERIENCE

There was a powerful sense of urgency at this year's Teaching Conference, held in Birmingham on January 3rd/4th and which will surely be remembered as one of the most exciting in the annals of the British Bahá'í Community. The theme, taken from the recent letter from the Universal House of Justice, was: "This fateful hour in human history . . . opportunities we must seize before it is too late." Throughout the Conference the accent was on personal involvement, the urgency of teaching and the power latent in the Cause of God.

Over two hundred and sixty believers met at the Midland Hotel, Birmingham, in spite of 'flu' and bitter weather. The first Devotional was arranged by members of the Birmingham Community. Afterwards John Long, Chairman of the N.S.A. welcomed all those present, and extended greetings to all who were unable to attend.

He then handed over to Ronald Bates of the English Goals Committee who introduced Philip Hainsworth to speak about the goals of the 9-year Plan. Philip spoke of the absolute necessity of winning the goals, "chosen after very careful consideration by the National Assembly to fulfill the overall goals given to us by the Universal House of Justice." It was essential to the healthy growth of the Cause of God in the world. We could see in the world the rapid growth of chaos—darkness was spreading. We should "examine our service to the Cause in the light of this letter from the Universal House."

After Philip's talk came the reports of the Goals Committees — a departure from the custom of recent years when these were given on Sunday morning. The names of Goal Towns and Islands were boldly printed on posters at the back of the hall, so that all could see at a glance the numbers of believers in each. The English Goals report came first. Betty Goode told how the Committee had selected certain places as "prime goals," to achieve Assembly status by Ridván. Other goals had been given a numerical target, to encourage a gradual growth of numbers. Heartening

progress had been made, but about sixty believers were still needed for England alone. Some could be pioneers, but many should be achieved through teaching. She reminded us that the emphasis now is on movement and search. "Bahá'ís must be magnets for the confirming power of Bahá'u'lláh."

Lesley Gibson came next to report on progress in Southern Ireland, which must have a National Spiritual Assembly by 1972, so that it can be incorporated in the last year of the 9 Year Plan. Cork and Limerick have yet to be won. Teaching is very difficult in the Irish Republic, she told us, because the people, though superficially friendly "do not easily give their confidence and love." One has to concentrate on making friends over a long period before one can teach. Philip came in here to remind us that the Irish believers cannot carry out the Proclamation Campaign, or use normal publicity. Cork and Limerick were therefore pioneer priorities. Families especially are needed.

We heard then from Northern Ireland of the violence which has beset the country for the last few months. Prejudice is bitter and deep-rooted. The goals are Craigavon, an industrial new town, "with everything new except a new order" and Londonderry a centre of fighting, where more violence is feared. Pioneer families are badly needed.

News of the international goals was presented by Betty Reed. She told us of the achievements of believers in the Guyanas. All its goals are won, and the new N.S.A. will be formed at Ridván. Pioneers are still needed in Africa, and also money for capital projects. Prime international goal is the Faroes, far northern islands. Four pioneers are going there during the next ten months which will bring numbers up to six. There are great difficulties still in Malta. Betty reminded us of the need of faith in pioneering. "We must have faith in Bahá'u'lláh, to be ready to go, if necessary, without having first assured ourselves of a job and a home." Philip came in here to tell us that Britain is

numerically the third pioneering country in the Bahá'í world, coming after Persia and the United States, but the percentage of British Bahá'ís who have pioneered in relation to the size of the Community is the highest in the world. After a short break we heard about the position in Wales and Scotland. In Wales the efforts of pioneers were bearing fruit. The youth had been very active, but more were needed. In Scotland there had been several gains, and there had been much travel teaching. About 32 pioneers were still needed for Scotland, especially for the islands, and the friends were asked to visit Stornoway if at all possible between March 21st and April 4th, when there would be two weeks of specially intensive teaching activity.

Betty Reed spoke again to remind us of our victories. We must not, she said, underestimate our success. Looking back to 1946, when there were only four Assemblies, growth had been steady, but we were "over-stretched in all our goals". We should all re-assess our service to the Cause, and consult to see if we are doing the right thing.

The Guardian once said that the Bahá'í Fund was the "life-blood of the Cause of God." So Charles Macdonald reminded us of the many commitments of the British Bahá'í community. Besides the regular needs of the N.S.A., amounting at the moment to £200 a week, there was the International Fund, the Funds for the Panama Temple and for the upkeep of the Mother Temple of Europe and the European Continental Fund for the work of the European Board of Counsellors and Auxiliary Board Members. More believers should, he said, "lay their offering on the altar of sacrifice;" for there was a mystery in sacrifice which released spiritual power. He also asked that as many believers as possible should make donations under Deeds of Covenant, a scheme which permitted the Faith to recover the income tax and that communities should take the trouble to allocate the funds they sent to the Treasurer.

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Wonderful news came from the Publishing Trust concerning Ruhíyyih Khánum's book on the life of the Guardian "The Priceless Pearl", it is hoped that the English version will be available at Ridván. There are to be two editions, one very costly in limited numbers and the other more modestly bound, but identical in text and illustrations. Only 1,500 copies would be produced in the limited leather-bound edition, for which requests would be invited from all over the world. The cloth-bound edition would cost in the region of 30/- and it is hoped that as many as possible of the believers would purchase it.

Next, Patrick Green explained the plans of the National Assembly for the Proclamation Project. Plans were going ahead for a two-tier presentation which would involve the whole community. The first tier, to be undertaken by the N.S.A., would be presentations to members of the Government and the Shadow Cabinet, people of influence and leaders of thought on a national level. The second tier would consist of people of importance designated by each community. The N.S.A. presentations should be made first. In order to help communities with their presentations a special committee had been formed and advice would be given in due course on the form these should take. The book "The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh" and the booklet "The Call of Bahá'u'lláh" had been made into parcels A and B, to allow Assemblies and groups to buy them at considerably reduced cost. It is essential that the names and addresses of prospective recipients be sent in to the Proclamation Presentation Committee, to avoid possible duplication. It was hoped that both books and booklets would be widely distributed and that a considerable impact would be made.

After this we broke for the evening meal—a chance to meet friends and compare notes. On our return we gathered again to hear Betty Reed comment on the recent letter from the Universal House of Justice. The letter was first read by the Chairman. Betty then spoke of the "evidences of Divine chastisement". We should look for these in the Proclamation booklet. Bahá'u'lláh said "From two ranks of men hath power been taken, kings and ecclesiastics . . ." All those rulers who had refused to listen to Him were overwhelmed with disaster. The evidences are still apparent today as the world plunges deeper into chaos. This is the power of the Manifestation of God. This is the most crucial time in the history of world civilisation. Our goals would be won by the same power, the power of Bahá'u'lláh. We could be absolutely sure that the Cause of God would triumph.

We were called upon to be "more loving, more united more dedicated and prayerful than ever before"—Betty mentioned the special role of women in the Bahá'í Cause, to bring beauty, joy

and happiness to life. These special gifts of home-making and comfort-bringing were also important teaching assets. The Universal House of Justice called upon us to set for ourselves individual teaching goals. If each one of us brought in one new Bahá'í every year, and inspired that new believer with zeal for teaching, numbers would grow rapidly. Bahá'u'lláh has chosen us in this day. How indeed can any of us be silent?

Betty then asked for ideas from the floor, as to how individuals could best introduce the Faith to strangers. Excellent suggestions were made. Mostly these consisted of different ways to use people's interests, encourage them to talk, and then lead to mention of the principles, and eventually, if sufficient interest had been aroused, to bring in the name "Bahá'í". People were interested in their children, their future, in marriage and family—all these had proved to be good starting points. There were also suggestions for daily prayer, using especially the Tablet of Ahmad and the "Remover of Difficulties". For many the evening then came to an end, but a few of us were able to go to Patrick Green's house, where we had the privilege of meeting Mr. Habib Taherzadeh, Adib's elder brother, who has just come from Haifa, where he had been working on the codification of the Guardian's writings.

On Sunday morning, after the very beautiful devotional chosen by the Kirkwall community, it was Adib Taherzadeh who spoke, to give us a message from the Universal House. "We urgently pray for all the Bahá'ís every day, and we are looking forward every day to news of the bringers of the Faith to the goals of the nine year plan. We stand at a crucial moment in the history of man and our responsibility is very great."

The role of the Local Spiritual Assembly at this time was the first topic that morning. George Bowers spoke of the importance of the L.S.A. Its task at the present time was to be mainly a teaching body. Therefore, although problems had to be faced, and were a necessary part of a Local Assembly's development, it must not get bogged down in problems. All members should earnestly strive to be present, and they should act at the meetings as though Bahá'u'lláh or 'Abdu'l-Bahá was present. At the 19 day Feast ideas should come from the rank and file—all should have a chance to speak. One should attend the 19 day Feast even at the cost of personal sacrifice for effort carried effect. We should pray for our contacts by name.

Adib followed George without a break, to speak about achieving the goals. We must meditate, he said on the great bounty of having the Faith. And we must meditate also on what is the purpose of our lives. We should not be living exactly like everyone else around us. Some believers, he said, while believing in Bahá'u'lláh and loving Him with all their hearts, tended to have

their own idea of service to the Cause. They sometimes had hobby horses. We had to try to see the Cause as it really is, and consider what is required of us now, in this day. We must fill the goals. We must be prepared to arise and go, without security, putting our faith in Bahá'u'lláh. He does everything for us if we trust Him. Adib then called upon the friends to arise, there and then, to pioneer. And one by one the believers came forward, many moved to tears. There were new faces of new believers, and faces we knew and loved. There were old and young, those who had never pioneered before, and those whose lives had already been spent moving around to teach the Cause. With Adib's encouragement some arose whose circumstances made pioneering seem impossible. He made us see that it was the offering that mattered most of all, the desire to serve. The rest we could leave to Bahá'u'lláh. Then little notes began to appear from the friends offering sums of money to help the pioneering effort. It was agreed at this point to send a cable to the U.H.J., giving the numbers of pioneer offers, while the names should be sent immediately by letter, so that special prayers could be said for them at the Shrines. The cable read:

LT BAHÁ'Í FAITH HAIFA 260 GATHERED TEACHING CONFERENCE BIRMINGHAM UPLIFTED INSPIRED YOUR MESSAGE AWARE URGENT NEED INDIVIDUAL RESPONSE ACHIEVE GOALS STOP 46 DEDICATED SOULS ARISEN FULFILL PIONEER NEEDS STOP NUMEROUS GENEROUS OFFERS DEPUTISATION PIONEERS STOP ARDENTLY REQUEST PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PIONEERS COMMA NAMES FOLLOW * LOVE BAHÁ'Í LONDON.

Then "The Remover of Difficulties" was read and with full hearts the whole company sang "Allah-u-Abhá" before we left the hall for lunch. The afternoon session was taken by the four Board Members, Mary Kouchehzadeh, David Lewis, Joan Gregory and Ernest Gregory. Each in turn urged us to respond to the call of the Universal House of Justice and be in spirit wholly behind the goals. They reminded us of the importance of steadfastness in the Covenant, of daily prayer and reading. We must work for our individual goals, we must not lose the opportunities of the hour. The Master said that Bahá'ís must be distinguished—we must bring the Covenant to life.

Later the reply to our cable came from the World Centre:

LT BAHÁ'Í LONDON. OVERJOYED SUCCESS TEACHING CONFERENCE HIGHLY GRATIFYING RESPONSE PIONEER NEEDS ASSURE FERVENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES SUPPLICATING DIVINE BLESSINGS ASSISTANCE PIONEERS CONFIRMATION DEVOTED EFFORTS ALL FRIENDS ACHIEVE GOALS UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE.

It was once again time to disperse, and we returned to our tasks with faith and courage renewed. We must set individual goals—we must not lose opportunities at this crucial time but we shall have behind us always the power of the Manifestation of God.

TRAVEL TEACHING IN AFRICA

A REPORT OF PETER SMITH'S SEVEN MONTH TRIP.

(During which he visited 13 African countries: viz.: Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Rhodesia, Botswana, South Africa, Swaziland, Lesotho and Mozambique).

The National Assembly is indeed happy to share with you the expression of appreciation by the Universal House of Justice when they informed us that they were delighted with the success of this project and felt that such types of projects should be encouraged. The Continental Pioneer Committee for Africa had written to the Universal House of Justice stating that in view of the success of this project, and also the success of the project of Michael Brooks, they believe that more young people of this particular calibre should be sent to the continent from Iran, Europe and the United States. The experience would be most valuable to them and their services would be most meritorious for Africa. Michael Brooks will be returning to this country shortly and the friends will also remember the excellent project undertaken by Moojan Momen in Africa.

Dear Friends,

How wonderful it is to be able to bring you the greetings and love of the hundreds of Bahá'ís I met whilst I was in Africa.

I have been asked by the National Spiritual Assembly to tell you about my African trip, but truly, it is difficult to know where to start—so much happened and my seven months there passed so quickly.

Before I start, however, I would like to say something, especially to the youth (although the rest of you are welcome to read it), and that is *please, please*, my dear Bahá'í brothers and sisters do not lose your opportunity, Africa is a continent waiting to be set ablaze, the Faith has already progressed much and can make even greater progress—but the time is urgent. Workers are needed *now*, before materialism makes Africa a desert. In every country I visited the Bahá'ís told me how much they need pioneers and how valuable more and more travel teachers can be. Please, if there is any chance that you can go to Africa as a travel teacher or better still as a pioneer, then go. The welcome, the love and the sincerity that will be showered upon you is beyond description. Happiness shall be your reward.

I remember one old man I met in Kenya. I guess he had a small plot of land on which he grew just enough to feed himself and his family. He had just walked over 10 miles when I first met him, he had walked those 10 miles from his village to meet me because he had heard that there was a Bahá'í visitor from overseas. I remember him; short, old, wizened, yet sprightly. He had been a farmer all his life and



had had no education in the way that you and I understand that term. I think he was wearing his only clothes—he had no shoes so his toes were splayed out and his feet looked like leather.

What did he do?

"I teach the Faith . . . I walk from village to village and talk to the people . . . I tell them, 'Christ has returned'."

I looked into his eyes, which were, oh, so deep, and realised how insignificant acquired knowledge was. Quite likely this man knew hardly anything but, "Christ has returned", but in his heart he had understood the Faith. His was a simple spirit and having encountered the Cause of God, what was the next step but to put it into practice and live by it. So simple, yet so difficult—yet in a way so easy. It is upon such believers as this that Kenya's 600 Local Spiritual Assemblies are founded.

Whatever happened, I wonder, to that family we met in the Usambara Mountain Range in Northern Tanzania. They were not Bahá'ís but Moslems (nominally—simple, good people). We (my translator and myself) had climbed a mountain. We had had a free day and after prayer had felt drawn to the mountains which towered above the town where we were staying. What a climb it was. We suddenly realised how unfit we both were. The path was narrow and steep and we had to stop more and more often as we went higher and higher. How beautiful the view and the verdant vegetation that grew even on the mountain tops. Then, suddenly, we met a young man who was running (by comparison with us) up the hill, he invited us to his home. At the group of huts that was the family's home we met his father and other members of his family. They shared the Casava and warm milk that was their meal with us, all we had to offer them were some bananas we had

brought up from the valley below. It was the sincerity and spontaneity with which they offered us hospitality which touched me so deeply. We talked about the Faith and they were very happy and wanted to know more and more. Yet who would be able to teach them? Tanzania is a vast country and they were remote, the few Bahá'ís who would be able to visit such an area had a hundred and one other villages to which they also needed to go to and teach.

Whenever I think of Zambia I think of "my" Land Rover. Almost the first thing that the Zambian Bahá'ís who met me at the airport said was: "I hope you can drive?" They also said that as I had disembarked from the aircraft rather jauntily, that was my "B.Z." (Before Zambia) condition, they would be interested to see whether I staggered away "A.Z." (After Zambia). Anyway without further ado I was "given" a long wheel base Land Rover and told to get on with it. After 3,600 miles of driving in a matter of weeks I became aware of what "A.Z." might mean. It was strange, I thought, the Bahá'ís seemed to have a passion for living in the very remote areas which were not served by Zambia's good main roads. It was a fascinating experience—learning how to become a rally driver. I remember one day's journey of 360 miles—60 miles were tarred; 120 miles were red murrum, which although heavily corrugated, wasn't too bad . . . but the remaining 180 miles . . . well very interesting, and almost indescribable, but it was worth it. All the energy that had been lost on the journey was quickly replaced when we saw the happy smiling faces of the Bahá'ís. The fine dust that caked us was well rewarded by the wonderful days we spent with the friends. How sorry I was to part with that Land Rover, it and me had bounced along (and I do mean *bounced*) together so much that I almost felt part of it.

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Lesotho was where I went wading. A country of intensely eroded mountains and deep valleys with broad streams—hence me with my shoes around my neck en route to a mountain village. During the three days I was there, we (my translator and I) received 22 declarations. Not bad. I wonder whether wading rivers in this country would have a similar effect. It would often happen that as we were walking along (our usual method of travel) somebody would come out of their house—we would start talking, they would invite us into their home, we would talk about the Faith, they would ask a few questions, then they would ask “O.K., how do I become a Bahá’í?” They meant it. They were sincere, no sooner would they have signed the declaration cards than their neighbours would call in and the whole process would start again, often with the same result. Then after a brief talk about the significance of being a Bahá’í and with several more prayers we would be on our way again.

This use of prayer was a wonderful thing and perhaps not used enough in teaching our contacts in the British Isles. In Lesotho we not only started and finished every meeting (however small) with prayers but we also made the contacts say or *learn* (if they were illiterate) a prayer during the meeting.

Really, dear friends, there are so many stories I could tell you. There were tests, there were moments of great tiredness, but above all there was such happiness. I do not know whether my meagre efforts were of much benefit to the African believers but I do know that I gained *so* much and was taught so much about what it means to be a Bahá’í and what it means to truly serve the Faith. I know that if ever again I had such a glorious opportunity I would seize it and God-willing, I would learn from my many mistakes.

Africa is in great transition. Europe always seems to be completely overwhelmed by the forces of materialism. In Africa this materialism has not yet engulfed the people—who will help teach this Cause there before it does?

spilled over into ours, and was soon looking at our show as well. At intervals the Bahá’í Victory Chorus tape was played.

Many of the friends helped to man the booth in shifts for the three days. There were about 13,000 people present on Saturday 4th, and although that amount did not actually visit the booth, the friends had a lot of talking and explaining to do. Around 4,000 people attended on Sunday afternoon.

The Booth was dismantled at around 6.30 p.m. and all went to catch the ferry which would bring them to Georgetown, much elated and happy with the wonderful teaching experience.

OVERSEAS GOALS COMMITTEE.

PROCLAMATION IN GUYANA.

Bahá’í booth at the Uitvlugt Fair held on the west coast of Demerara, on 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th October, 1969.

A great deal of preparation and hard work had to be put in by the Friends to launch the project of a booth at the Uitvlugt Fair, but fortunately the actual structure of the booth was provided by the Fair Committee, who did their very best to co-operate and help us. Up to the night before opening, Ed. and Ellen Widmer, our new Bahá’í from Eccles, Mr. Stephens, and the Dolphins assisted the Sign Painter to get the posters ready, and put on the finishing touches, Mr. Stephens, a Carpenter-Contractor prepared the frames himself.

The theme of all five posters was ‘Bahá’u’lláh is the Promised One of God’, and the ‘Unity of Man, Religion and the World.’ The efforts of the friends on their completion was more than rewarded as everyone visiting the Booth, even those comparatively disinterested in what it represented, remarked on the colour, beauty and art of the posters. Three of the 4 ft by 5 ft depicted the teachings on Unity, one large 4ft by 8ft. showed Bahá’u’lláh as the Promised One and gave some facts on His life, and another 4ft by 5ft identified the Faith.

A few hours before opening, Misses Griffith and Pierre helped Mr. Widmer and Sidney English to hang the signs, and display the books and pamphlets. Every piece of literature available to us was attractively arranged on a table so that they could be looked at, and enquirers who asked questions and showed interest were directed to the Centre, at Charlotte Street, for further information and to purchase the books if they so desired. Another table was laden with pamphlets of every description which were handed out, even a few in Hindi and Chinese. About forty people signed the Guest Register, requesting to hear from us again and receive more literature and visits.

The Area Teaching Committee was represented at the official opening by Mrs. Choudhury, and the L.S.A. of Georgetown by Mrs. Dolphin, who brought along potted plants, ferns and flowers to add the final touches of colour to the booth. The fair started attracting people by 4 p.m. and from that time onward it was estimated that around 3,000 people streamed in and out of the fairground, hundreds passing by the booth, and many stopping for a few minutes just to look and comment on our display.

A slide show showing the name of Bahá’u’lláh and His teachings, followed by pictures of the Temples and Bahá’is around the world, interspersed with views of the maps to designate area, was put on for about fourteen minutes duration on the first night and about seven minutes for the second. This attracted a fair crowd, because the booth next to ours, by the U.S.I.S. portrayed “Man on The Moon” and the crowd that stopped to watch this film, naturally

VISIT TO AMERICA

Whilst on pilgrimage to the World Centre in 1966, we received a kind invitation from some of the American friends to visit the U.S.A. We have just returned after spending a month there.

We had, of course, looked forward to this visit with anticipation but experiences everywhere were beyond anything we could have imagined. The natural beauty combined with the spiritual atmosphere of Greenacre impressed us greatly. There we were privileged to spend some time in the room occupied by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and to walk in the gardens where He walked. This felt Holy ground indeed. We attended deepening classes in Fellowship House where we met with that gracious hospitality and loving welcome which is the hallmark of the friends in the U.S.A.

Our Nineteen Day Feast in Florida was a spiritual experience we shall ever remember with joy and gratitude.

Another significant experience was a week-end school in Green Lake, Wisconsin. This is a most fantastic estate, running for two and a half miles along the shore of the lake. Forty buildings stand as Conference Houses in a beautiful landscape and are hired by various groups for religious, educational, and social purposes. Bahá’is hold many schools there. Appropriately written on a notice board at the entrance to this estate are the words “A closer walk with God.”

Time spent in this continent would be incomplete without a visit to the Bahá’í Mother Temple. Here we were privileged to be present with many local dignitaries and other eminent people who had joined the American friends for the occasion of the new floodlighting of the Temple by a system used for the first time in any part of the world. It was a most moving occasion as we all stood in the grounds for this memorable meeting; which was arranged with prayers and readings, and witnessed the beauty of the Temple rise in the darkening night as the powerful lights were switched on. This lovely Temple can now be seen in distant Chicago—a most impressive sight. We look forward to sharing with friends here a recording of the Capella Choir, and many colour slides.

Looking back on this happy and memorable visit, having glimpsed some of the fruits arising from the efforts of this community, we recall the loving words of the Master in His last farewell Message to them. “The seeds with which I have been entrusted I have now scattered far and wide before you. Under your tender loving care, by your ceaseless exertions, everyone of these seeds must germinate. . . . the steadily mounting sun of His Revelation, shining in its meridian splendour, will enable this mighty Tree of His Faith to yield in the fulness of time and on your soil, its golden fruit.”

Ann & Fred Halliday.

News from the South Pacific

The National Assembly is happy to share the following letter we have received from Hand of the Cause of God 'Ab'ul Qazim Faizi, who is travelling in the Pacific.

Dec. 12, 1969

My very precious and always remembered friends,

I spent one week in the isles of New Caledonia where for the first time I had the pleasure of meeting your two valiant pioneers Mr. and Mrs. Battrick and their beautiful daughter Sarah. Words fail me to tell you how much I had been thinking of and praying for all the dear friends of the British Isles and how whole heartedly I was impressed by these devoted, detached and altogether valiant soldiers of the Faith in the midst of the Pacific! Their house and arms are always open for the dearly loved native believers. Though they have to earn their living by spending every hour of the day in some sort of mundane employment, no one had ever been deprived when knocked at their doors. I feel sure that the records of their brilliant services will shine in the annals of our beloved Faith and in the History of the Southern Hemisphere as long as the Southern Cross shines in those far off horizons. Who says that the British people can not learn any languages, even their own? The Battricks speak French very beautifully. They teach the beloved inhabitants of all these islands in the French language. They are beloved, respected and approached by them. The knight of Bahá'u'lláh Mr. Jean Serau, his wife and children could find no better co-workers and supporters of the Faith than this blessed family. Their two houses form the solid rock foundation of the stupendous cause of God in the midst of the endless Pacific Ocean. Every step they take, they are confirmed, sustained and guided by their Lord who explicitly promised them assistance before their departure to the arenas of pioneering and teaching.

With a heart brimful with joy and pride I congratulate the British Bahá'í Community for having offered to Bahá'u'lláh such courageous souls for the propagation of His ever expanding and all redeeming Faith.

If two of that beautiful Community can achieve wonders, I feel confident that all, especially the youth are in positions to raise and reach higher levels of everlasting victories.

These two noble souls have made their small and very simple abode as the focus of the Bahá'í activities. I know for sure that the dear ones at home can do ten-fold and even more. The least they can do is to establish firesides in all houses and even cottages of the adjacent islands, whose fire will never extinguish and by whose light and warmth many dormant souls will be quickened and many lost and bewildered individuals will find their haven in spiritual rebirth. The news of such

undertakings at home will surely raise all your pioneers abroad to loftier levels of devotion, achievement and sacrifice.

Here in Fiji I am in contact with another dear soul Mrs. A. F. Leadham whose strong faith, loving heart and great spiritual attraction add to the assets of your Community so greatly loved by our beloved Guardian and from every member of which—especially the youth, he expected Herculean tasks to be performed throughout their endless dominions. I hope that my prayers will take wings from this ocean and reach everyone of you.

Yours humbly,

FAIZI.

Greetings from the World Centre

15th January, 1970.

To National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles.

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

We wish to thank you most warmly for your letter of December 15th, 1969 advising us of the successful conclusion of arrangements for two pioneering projects and Mr. Momen's teaching tour, to Guyana. The British Friends and your National Spiritual Assembly can well feel proud of the efforts they have so devotedly made for the establishment of the administrative institutions in that land, and when the National Spiritual Assembly is formed at Ridván it will indeed be another laurel to add to the splendid record of overseas service of the British Bahá'í Community and a victory fully in keeping with the high hopes entertained for you all by the beloved Guardian

The detailed account of the truly splendid response of the friends at Teaching Conference has reached us and we rejoice at this new manifestation of the wonderful spirit animating the British believers. This spirit of practical devotion won them the love and commendation of the beloved Guardian and if it can be communicated to the new believers now entering the Cause, the high destiny which the Guardian of the Faith predicted for the British Bahá'í community will surely be achieved.

We take this opportunity of congratulating you most warmly on the three booklets, "The Call of Bahá'u'lláh", "And Did Those Feet" and "These Things Shall Be" which you have produced as aids to your proclamation programme. Both in content and appearance they present the Cause in an attractive and dignified manner and "The Call of Bahá'u'lláh" particularly appears to be an excellent introductory booklet.

We assure you of our ardent prayers in the Holy Shrine for the rapid development of your work and the successful accomplishment of all the goals of the Nine Year Plan.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE.

NORTHERN IRELAND—AN APPEAL

CRAIGAVON, in Northern Ireland is a new City which is being built, and has numerous opportunities for jobs and houses of all types. It has been found that it is a very difficult goal to complete without the settling of a pioneer family in the area. We are therefore appealing to anyone who can consider settling in this area, which has very great potential.

CAN YOU COME TO THE CITY OF DERRY?

The Group in this City which has been beset by much external trouble during the last year, due to the riots which have split still further the community with no hope of union until the Message of Bahá'u'lláh reaches the hearts, are asking for **Residential teachers** who can come for a month or more and work or stay in the City and seek out those waiting souls that we know are longing for Bahá'u'lláh.

Pioneers are also very much needed as the Group once six has by circumstances been reduced to three. Still God wants a Local Assembly in Londonderry, and He will. Can you help?

If so, write to Dr. Keith Munro, M.B., Gransha Hospital, Derry. Messages can be left 24 hours a day (Campsie 261)

IRISH GOALS COMMITTEE (NORTHERN PANEL)

NATIONAL EXHIBITION, CAN YOU HELP?

The National Exhibition will be displayed at the Guildhall, Derry, from 18th-21st March (inclusive) and offers of help to man this important proclamation project will be greatly appreciated.

Please write to Dr. Keith Munro (address above).

STORNOWAY FORTNIGHT.

As you will know, Stornoway, on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides, is the priority goal in Scotland this year. Many people are already planning a trip through the beautiful West Coast of Scotland in order to visit Stornoway, and we hope there will be a constant stream of visitors there as soon as the weather improves and holidays begin.

We would especially ask people to go up if they can during the fortnight March 21st - April 4th. What better way of starting the Bahá'í Year 127 than with a teaching trip? If you can go during this period (or at any other time), please contact Mrs. Betty Shepherd, 42 Island Bank Road, Inverness, for details of travel and accommodation possibilities.

The friends in Stornoway will be organising a variety of activities, including the presentation of the Proclamation books, so your support will be most welcome. Ya - Bahá'u'l-Abhá Stornoway!

AN ENDURING FOUNDATION

The Relationship between The Guardianship and The Universal House of Justice

The following is the text of a letter written by the Universal House of Justice in answer to an enquiry from an individual believer, which will be of general interest to the friends.

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

Your recent letter, in which you share with us the questions that have occurred to some of the youth in studying "The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh", has been carefully considered, and we feel that we should comment both on the particular passage you mention and on a related passage in the same work, because both bear on the relationship between the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice.

The first passage concerns the Guardian's duty to insist upon a reconsideration by his fellow-members in the Universal House of Justice of any enactment which he believes conflicts with the meaning and departs from the spirit of the Sacred Writings. The second passage concerns the infallibility of the Universal House of Justice without the Guardian, namely Shoghi Effendi's statement that "Without such an institution (the Guardianship) . . . the necessary guidance to define the sphere of the legislative action of its elected representatives would be totally withdrawn."

Some of the youth, you indicate, were puzzled as to how to reconcile the former of these two passages with such statements as that in the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá which affirms that the Universal House of Justice is "freed from all error".

Just as the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá does not in any way contradict the Kitáb-i-Aqdas but, in the Guardian's words, "confirms, supplements and correlates the provisions of the Aqdas", so the writings of the Guardian contradict neither the revealed Word nor the interpretations of the Master. In attempting to understand the Writings, therefore, one must first realize that there is and can be no real contradiction in them, and in the light of this we can confidently seek the unity of meaning which they contain.

The Guardian and the Universal House of Justice have certain duties and functions in common; each also operates within a separate and distinct sphere. As Shoghi Effendi explained, "... it is made indubitably clear and evident that the Guardian of the Faith has been made the interpreter of the word and that the Universal House of Justice has been invested with the function of legislating on matters not expressly revealed in the teachings. The interpretation of the Guardian, functioning within his own sphere, is as authoritative and binding as the enactments of the

International House of Justice, whose exclusive right and prerogative is to pronounce upon and deliver the final judgement on such laws and ordinances as Bahá'u'lláh has not expressly revealed." He goes on to affirm, "Neither can, nor will ever, infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain of the other. Neither will seek to curtail the specific and undoubted authority with which both have been divinely invested." It is impossible to conceive that two centres of authority, which the Master has stated "are both under the care and protection of the Abhá beauty under the shelter and unerring guidance of His Holiness the Exalted One", could conflict with one another, because both are vehicles of the same Divine Guidance.

The Universal House of Justice, beyond its function as the enactor of legislation, has been invested with the more general functions of protecting and administering the Cause, solving obscure questions and deciding upon matters that have caused difference. Nowhere is it stated that the infallibility of the Universal House of Justice is by virtue of the Guardian's membership or presence on that body. Indeed, 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will and Shoghi Effendi in his "Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh" have both explicitly stated that the elected members of the Universal House of Justice in consultation are recipients of unfailing Divine Guidance. Furthermore the Guardian himself in "The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh" asserted that "It must be also clearly understood by every believer that the institution of Guardianship does not under any circumstances abrogate, or even in the slightest degree detract from, the powers granted to the Universal House of Justice by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, and repeatedly and solemnly confirmed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will. It does not constitute in any manner a contradiction to the Will and Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, nor does it nullify any of His revealed instructions."

While the specific responsibility of the Guardian is the interpretation of the Word, he is also invested with all the powers and prerogatives necessary to discharge his function as Guardian of the Cause, its Head and supreme protector. He is, furthermore, made the irremovable head and member for life of the supreme legislative body of the Faith. It is as the head of the Universal House of Justice, and as a member of that body, that the Guardian takes part in the process of legislation. If the following passage, which gave rise to your query, is considered as referring to this last relationship, you will see that there is no contradiction between it and the other texts. "Though the Guardian of the Faith has been made the permanent head of so august a body he can never, even temporarily, assume the

right of exclusive legislation. He cannot override the decision of the majority of his fellow-members, but is bound to insist upon a reconsideration by them of any enactment he conscientiously believes to conflict with the meaning and to depart from the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh's revealed utterances."

Although the Guardian, in relation to his fellow-members within the Universal House of Justice, cannot override the decision of the majority, it is inconceivable that the other members would ignore any objection he raised in the course of consultation or pass legislation contrary to what he expressed as being in harmony with the spirit of the Cause. It is, after all, the final act of judgement delivered by the Universal House of Justice that is vouchsafed infallibility, not any views expressed in the course of the process of enactment.

It can be seen, therefore, that there is no conflict between the Master's statements concerning the unfailing divine guidance conferred upon the Universal House of Justice and the above passage from "The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh".

It may help the friends to understand this relationship if they are aware of some of the processes that the Universal House of Justice follows when legislating. First, of course, it observes the greatest care in studying the Sacred Texts and the interpretations of the Guardian as well as considering the views of all the members. After long consultation the process of drafting a pronouncement is put into effect. During this process the whole matter may well be reconsidered. As a result of such reconsideration the final judgement may be significantly different from the conclusion earlier favoured, or possibly it may be decided not to legislate at all on that subject at that time. One can understand how great would be the attention paid to the views of the Guardian during the above process were he alive.

In considering the second passage we must once more hold fast to the principle that the teachings do not contradict themselves.

Future Guardians are clearly envisaged and referred to in the Writings, but there is nowhere any promise or guarantee that the line of Guardians would endure for ever; on the contrary there are clear indications that the line could be broken. Yet, in spite of this, there is a repeated insistence in the Writings on the indestructibility of the Covenant and the immutability of God's Purpose for this Day.

One of the most striking passages which envisage the possibility of such a break in the line of Guardians is in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas itself:

"The Endowments dedicated to charity revert to God, the Revealer of Signs. No one has the right to lay hold on them without leave from the Dawning Place of Revelation. After Him the decision rests with the Aghsán (Branches) and after them with the House of Justice—should it be established in the world by then—so that they may use these endowments for the benefit of the Sites exalted in this Cause, and for that which they have been commanded by God, the Almighty, the All-Powerful. Otherwise the endowments should be referred to the people of Bahá, who speak not without His leave and who pass no judgement but in accordance with that which God has ordained in this Tablet, they who are the champions of victory betwixt heaven and earth so that they may spend them on that which has been decreed in the Holy Book by God, the Mighty, the Bountiful".

The passing of Shoghi Effendi in 1957 precipitated the very situation provided for in this passage, in that the line of Aghsán ended before the House of Justice had been elected. Although, as is seen, the ending of the line of Aghsán at some stage was provided for, we must never underestimate the grievous loss that the Faith has suffered. God's purpose for mankind remains unchanged, however, and the mighty Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh remains impregnable. Has not Bahá'u'lláh stated categorically, "The Hand of Omnipotence hath established His Revelation upon an unassailable, an enduring foundation. "While 'Abdu'l-Bahá confirms "Verily, God effecteth that which He pleaseth; naught can annul His Covenant; naught can obstruct His favour nor oppose His Cause!" "Everything is subject to corruption; but the Covenant of thy Lord shall continue to pervade all regions." "The tests of every dispensation are in direct proportion to the greatness of the Cause and as heretofore such a manifest Covenant, written by the Supreme Pen, has not been entered upon, the tests are proportionately severe . . . These agitations of the violators are no more than the foam of the ocean, . . . this froth of the ocean shall not endure and shall soon disappear and vanish, while on the other hand the ocean of the Covenant shall eternally surge and roar," and Shoghi Effendi has clearly stated: "The bed-rock on which this Administrative Order is founded is God's immutable Purpose for mankind in this day," " . . . this priceless gem of Divine Revelation, now still in its embryonic state, shall evolve within the shell of His Law, and shall forge ahead, undivided and unimpaired, till it embraces the whole of mankind."

In the Bahá'í Faith there are two authoritative centres appointed to which the believers must turn, for in reality the Interpreter of the Word is an extension of that centre which is the Word itself. The Book is the record of the utterance of Bahá'u'lláh, while the divinely inspired Interpreter is the living Mouth of that Book—it is he and he alone who can authoritatively state what the Book means. Thus one centre is

the Book with its Interpreter, and the other is the Universal House of Justice guided by God to decide on whatever is not explicitly revealed in the Book. This pattern of centres and their relationships is apparent at every stage in the unfoldment of the Cause. In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas Bahá'u'lláh tells the believers to refer after His passing to the Book, and to "Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root". In the Kitáb-i-'Ahdí (the Book of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant), He makes it clear that this reference is to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. In the Aqdas Bahá'u'lláh also ordains the institution of the Universal House of Justice, and confers upon it the powers necessary for it to discharge its ordained functions. The Master in His Will and Testament explicitly institutes the Guardianship, which Shoghi Effendi states was clearly anticipated in the verses of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, reaffirms and elucidates the authority of the Universal House of Justice, and refers the believers once again to the Book: "Unto the Most Holy Book every one must turn and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice." and at the very end of the Will he says: "All must seek guidance and turn unto the Centre of the Cause and the House of Justice. And he that turneth unto whatsoever else is indeed in grievous error."

As the sphere of jurisdiction of the Universal House of Justice in matters of legislation extends to whatever is not explicitly revealed in the Sacred Text, it is clear that the Book itself is the highest authority and delimits the sphere of action of the House of Justice. Likewise, the Interpreter of the Book must also have the authority to define the sphere of the legislative action of the elected representatives of the Cause. The writings of the Guardian and the advice given by him over the thirty-six years of his Guardianship show the way in which he exercised this function in relation to the Universal House of Justice as well as to National and Local Spiritual Assemblies.

The fact that the Guardian has the authority to define the sphere of the legislative action of the Universal House of Justice does not carry with it the corollary that without such guidance the Universal House of Justice might stray beyond the limits of its proper authority; such a deduction would conflict with all the other texts referring to its infallibility, and specifically with the Guardian's own clear assertion that the Universal House of Justice never can or will infringe on the sacred and prescribed domain of the Guardianship. It should be remembered, however, that although National and Local Spiritual Assemblies can receive divine guidance if they consult in the manner and spirit described by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, they do not share in the explicit guarantees of infallibility conferred upon the Universal House of Justice. Any careful student of the Cause can see with what care the Guardian, after the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, guided these elected representatives of the believers in the painstaking erection

of the Administrative Order and in the formulation of Local and National Bahá'í Constitutions.

We hope that these elucidations will assist the friends in understanding these relationships more clearly, but we must all remember that we stand too close to the beginnings of the System ordained by Bahá'u'lláh to be able fully to understand its potentialities or the inter-relationships of its component parts. As Shoghi Effendi's secretary wrote on his behalf to an individual believer on 25th March 1930, "The contents of the Will of the Master are far too much for the present generation to comprehend. It needs at least a century of actual working before the treasures of wisdom hidden in it can be revealed....."

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

CAUTION AND WISDOM NEEDED IN ASSOCIATING WITH ORIENTALS

The National Assembly shares with you guidance from the Continental Board of Counsellors on this important subject: Persian Bahá'ís arriving with an up-to-date credential from a National Assembly either of Iran or another country where they have lived since leaving Iran, are of course wholeheartedly welcome. We are delighted to have them here for either a short or a long period.

Persians claiming to be Bahá'ís who do not have a credential, should be treated with extreme caution until they obtain a valid credential or until the National Assembly has checked on their authenticity with the N.S.A. of Iran. They may attend public meetings but they may not, under any circumstances, attend the 19 Day Feasts. It is more than possible they are claiming to be Bahá'ís for some illegitimate purpose.

An important point that is sometimes not understood: the beloved Guardian in a letter to the United States said that no special effort should be made to contact or teach non-Bahá'í Persians, or other people from the Middle East, who were more likely to be potential enemies of the Faith than potential Bahá'ís and they may indeed contact us with the wrong motives. Of course, if a non-Bahá'í Persian appears at one of our public meetings, he should be received with courtesy, but we should not make any special efforts to teach him. The purpose of the teaching work in Europe (and the British Isles is, of course, part of Europe) is to spread the Faith amongst the Europeans, who need it so badly, and this applies both to the native teachers and to the Persian pioneers who have come to help us; in the British Isles we should all set out to teach the British people. There are very occasionally exceptional cases of Persians in the West who sincerely accept the Faith, but such a declaration would need to be investigated very carefully by the National Assembly and verification sought from the N.S.A. of Iran before acceptance.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY'S NEWS LETTER

DECLARATIONS.

We are happy to welcome Miss Joyce Porte (Youth), Belfast; Miss Carol Strawbridge, Londonderry; Miss Patricia Hick (Youth), Co. Clare, S. Ireland; Mr. Peter Packwood, Edinburgh; Mrs. Nora Stephenson and Miss Helen Statham (Youth), both of Burnley Mrs. Evelyn Jerrard, Sevenoaks, Kent; Mr. Robert and Mrs. Ellen Coulson, Wigan; Mr. Alan Wigby of Hintlesham and Mr. Trevor Clarke of Burstall, both near Ipswich; and the following Youth who have claimed their voting rights: Miss Pat Hewitt, Chester; Mr. Norman Collins, Norwich and Miss Jennifer Daws, Bradford. We are delighted to welcome back most warmly to the Faith Mr. Walter Bains of Leeds.

"200 NEW BELIEVERS PROJECT"

We have had the joy in this News Letter of welcoming new believers from Northern Ireland, the Irish Republic, Scotland and different parts of England. At the moment of writing the number of declarations totals 61, of whom 19 are Youth. Please read again the letter from the Universal House of Justice of November 16th 1969 (on p. 3 of the December Journal), it mentions "many opportunities to reach countless waiting souls." Continue enthusiastically the Pray, Travel and Search campaign, the waiting souls are there and we can find them.

TELEVISION PUBLICITY.

We were delighted to hear that Granada Television had invited the Manchester Assembly to send four Bahá'ís to form part of the audience of the Sunday evening programme, "Seven Days". This programme is transmitted regularly on the entire I.T.V. national network at 6.35 p.m., and this particular panel-discussion on January 25th was about Christian Unity. The Manchester Assembly called on assistance from Swinton and Eccles, and Mrs. Pauline Senior, Mrs. Gitta Chaplin, Mr. David Grant and Mr. Shahram Mottahed ably represented the Faith in the audience; being asked by the producer (on the programme) if she was a Humanist, Gitta replied 'No, I am a Bahá'í, and was given the opportunity of explaining what a Bahá'í was. You will remember the report in the December Journal that Mr. Gordon Grant had been interviewed about the Faith on Radio 4 North, and Mr. Carl Card had represented the Faith on a Panel on the B.B.C.'s national T.V. network? The pace is quickening, this is the time of proclamation and it could happen to you. Are you prepared? Could you confidently cope with a radio or television interview? Don't delay, start to-day to read something from the Writings night and morning, deepen in the basic essentials of the Faith, team up with another believer and ask one another questions, immerse

yourselves in the ocean of Bahá'u'lláh's Words and prepare yourselves for that unexpected moment when you may be called upon to explain joyously to thousands, or even millions, of listeners and viewers 'what the Bahá'í Faith is'. The Faith is beginning to emerge from obscurity, and it is impossible for the Faith to emerge from obscurity and the Bahá'ís to remain obscure; we must be prepared for the spot-light of publicity to focus on us, and day by day we must become more worthy to bear the name of 'Bahá'.

CAPITAL PROJECT GOALS.

Two of our Overseas Goals are to assist in the purchase of Hazirat'ul-Quds in Victoria, Cameroon Republic and Blantyre, Malawi; £700 has been sent in the past to each of the National Assemblies in Africa, and the N.S.A. decided at our January 1970 meeting to send a further £1,000 to each. The news of Temple Land in Guyana is a bit disappointing, as the person from whom we were going to buy six acres of land proved to be not the sole owner and therefore could not sell it to us; the Temple Land Committee in Guyana is eagerly continuing its search, as we want to fulfill this goal before the new N.S.A. is formed over there. A search has also begun in the South of Ireland for the last of the capital projects goals there, a piece of land that will satisfy the requirements of an Endowment.

"HUMANITY IN CRISIS",

TALK BY RUHIYYIH KHANUM

GIVEN AT FRANKFURT CONFERENCE, JULY 1964.

The National Assembly of Germany is trying to locate a tape-recording of this talk, given by 'Amat'ul-Bahá at the European Teaching Conference which followed the dedication of the Frankfurt Temple in July 1964. If anyone has such a tape recording, would you please be good enough to let us know immediately? The telephone number of the National Assembly is 01-584-2566.

EXTENSION OF THE HARLECH SUMMER SCHOOL TO COVER THE BANK HOLIDAY WEEK-END.

We are glad to announce that the Harlech Summer School has been extended, it will be from Saturday, August 15th to Tuesday morning, 1st September, so as to include the Bank Holiday Monday, August 31st.

WORLD RELIGION DAY MEETINGS.

World Religion Day is celebrated always on the third Sunday in January; it was initiated years ago by the N.S.A. of the United States and is now celebrated by Bahá'ís all over the world. It is a special Bahá'í celebration, and is

an excellent opportunity for Bahá'í Communities to arrange some well thought out activity that will bring together followers of different religions in the various localities. This year the date was January 18th, and excellent meetings included those in Belfast, Birmingham, Ealing, Kensington and Chelsea, Richmond, Watford and Wigan. We look forward to hearing of others.

OUR RIDVAN GOALS.

By the time you read this, everyone will have received the letter from the National Assembly giving full details of the goals to be achieved this Ridván. There is still an urgent need for pioneers. Now that eight pioneers have arisen for Southern Ireland—which is wonderful, and a worthy response from the Friends to the call to lay a strong foundation for the new N.S.A. of the Irish Republic—first priority on the Home Front is the Scottish Island of Stornoway in the Outer Hebrides. This is one of those islands that were stressed so strongly by the Universal House of Justice at the Frankfurt Conference in 1968, when the representative of the House of Justice, Hand of the Cause Paul Haney, said, "The House of Justice asks that attention be given at this Conference to promoting special teaching efforts directed to the islands surrounding the Continent of Europe; this comment is directed to all national communities, but particularly to that of the British Isles, with special reference to the islands of the North Sea. In our consultation we did not discuss the reasons for the special emphasis placed on these island goals, but each of us is entitled to think about it and speculate; it may be that, at some time in the future conditions will be so chaotic on the Continent that these islands may become the depositories of the strength of the Faith, who knows, for a brief period of time or a period of time unpredictable." At the moment of writing this News Letter there are three pioneers in Stornoway, Annaliese Haug who has remained there steadfastly for more than eleven years, Doreen Holdsworth and Roderick Grant who joined Annaliese in her island stronghold last September. Six gaps have to be filled, and the National Assembly appeals for other warriors of Bahá'u'lláh to seize this moment of destiny and hasten to Stornoway. If you can't pioneer there, try to go across for the two weeks of specially intensive teaching activity being organised by the Scottish Goals Committee in March; get in touch with Mrs. Betty Shepherd, 42 Island Bank Road, Inverness.

If you can't go hundreds of miles to build Assemblies in remote islands, have another look at the list you have received and see whether you can move into a nearby goal town or weak Assembly. That would be a tremendous service to the Faith. If you are in London, remember the directives of Shoghi

Effendi and of the Universal House of Justice to move out of London and help to establish Assemblies in other places. The early heroes gave their lives for the Faith, we Bahá'is of this generation are called to live for it — and to build the Administrative Order, so it is important not only to live but to live in the right place, where we can help to build another Assembly.

TEACHING CONFERENCE AND CONVENTION IN GEORGETOWN AMATU'L-BAHA'S VISIT THERE.

We are delighted that 'Amat'ul-Bahá Ruhíyyih Khánúm will represent the Universal House of Justice at the first National Convention to be held in the Guianas; the date will be Saturday-Sunday, May 2nd/3rd, and the election of the new National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'is of Guyana, Surinam and French Guiana will take place during one of the sessions held on Saturday, May 2nd, the last day of Ridván. A Teaching Conference will be held, also in Georgetown, over the two days Thursday/Friday, April 30th/May 1st. All the Bahá'is in Guyana, Surinam and French Guiana are already alerted to these exciting events and are working hard preparing themselves for the birth of their new National Assembly. It is a great privilege that 'Amat'u'l-Bahá will be there on that occasion.

NEW N.S.A. IN SOUTHERN IRELAND.

The Universal House of Justice has announced that the new National Assembly in the South of Ireland will be known as the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'is of the Irish Republic; and the translation in to the Irish Gaelic will be called "Irish" and not "Erse".

REMOVAL OF VOTING RIGHTS.

The National Assembly announces the removal of the voting rights of Mr. John Snell of Exeter.

DEEPENING SCHOOL IN KENDAL

There will be a Deepening School for Bahá'is and close contacts at the Y.W.C.A. Club, Stricklandgate, Kendal, Westmorland, February 28th/March 1st. The theme of the school will be "The Covenant and Administration." A highlight of the weekend will be on the Saturday evening, when Miss M. E. Burkett, Curator of Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, a great lover of and frequent visitor to Persia, will show some of her 2,000 slides, including places of particular interest to Bahá'is. This will provide an extremely valuable background to our knowledge of the history of the Faith in the land of its birth.

The weekend will be preceded by an Intercalary Days party at Ingleside, 67, Sedbergh Road, Kendal, on Friday, March 27th.

Details, and lists of accommodation in Kendal can be obtained from Mrs. Madeline Hellaby at the above address.

ENGLISH GOALS COMMITTEE

RESERVOIR OF MANPOWER.

With thoughts of the mighty tasks to be achieved during the next few years by the "reservoir of manpower"—the English believers, uppermost in their minds, it was with joy that members of the English Goals Committee noted the wonderful attendance at Teaching Conference of so many dedicated souls from the English Goal Towns. Seventeen out of twenty-two of the goal towns were represented and comprised . . . Aylesbury, Bangor, Bath, Canterbury, Chelmsford, Durham, Epsom, Hereford, Kendal, Kidderminster, Lincoln, Nottingham, Oakham, Ryde, Salisbury, St. Austell, York.

Four of the towns had a hundred per cent representation from their communities and from nearly all the rest, more than one believer was there at this wonderful Teaching Conference, to represent their particular goal town. In "town-power" this represents more than 75 per cent, a figure which should make us all very happy!

But that was not all. Of the tremendous offers to pioneer from the floor of the Conference, when one in six of those present arose to answer the call of Bahá'u'lláh, 5 offers came from pioneers already in Goal towns in England, to pioneer elsewhere if necessary!

And that was not quite all! One member of the English Goals Committee rose to join the swelling numbers of souls who rose so movingly when the call for pioneers went out, and this immediately triggered off a chain of events, for straight away another believer rose to join her, and a Persian family offered to return to the town in question, which is Northampton. There is indeed a power in this Cause!

SUMMER HOLIDAYS.

Have you fixed your summer holiday yet? Have you thought of having an island holiday this year? If you have not, then why not try and arrange one, in one of the many island goals around the British Isles, so that the happiness of your holiday can be increased by serving Bahá'u'lláh at the same time. To begin with, as Scotland is priority, there are the Scottish Islands, and we are sure the Scottish Goals Committee will be only too pleased to give you any information you require about these islands. If you feel in need of somewhere a little warmer, why not visit the Isle of Man? If you feel you need to be even warmer still, there is always the Isle of Wight, where we know of a certainty there is an ever increasing awareness of and interest in the Faith. For those who enjoy a "continental" flavour there is Jersey and Guernsey in the Channel Islands, and which although nearer to France than England are still English and enjoy being the warmest goal islands of all!

THIS IS ONLY NATURAL

"The Guardian feels that if only the friends would meditate a little more objectively upon their relationship to the Cause and the vast non-Bahá'i public they hope to influence, they would see things more clearly. The friends are not being forced to do anything, either by the Guardian or by the National Assembly. However, the condition that the world is in is bringing many issues to a head. It would be perhaps impossible to find a nation or people not in a state of crisis today. The materialism, the lack of true religion and the consequent baser forces in human nature which are being released, have brought the whole world to the brink of probably the greatest crisis it has ever faced or will have to face. The Bahá'is are a part of the world. They too feel the great pressures which are brought to bear upon all people today, whoever and wherever they may be. On the other hand, the Divine Plan, which is the direct method of working towards the establishment of Peace and World Order, has perforce reached an important and challenging point in its unfoldment; because of the desperate needs of the world, the Bahá'is find themselves, even though so limited in numbers in financial strength and in prestige, called upon to fulfill a great responsibility. They must, at all times, remember that when the Guardian makes his appeals to the friends, he is only presenting the situation to them. Each one must evaluate what his own response can be and should be; nobody can do this for him. There is no other pressure than the pressure of historical circumstances. He fully realises that the demands made upon the Bahá'is are great, and that they often feel inadequate, tired and perhaps frightened in the face of the tasks that confront them. This is only natural. On the other hand, they must realise that the power of God can and will assist them; and that because they are privileged to have accepted the Manifestation of God for this Day, this very act has placed upon them a great moral responsibility toward their fellow men. It is this moral responsibility to which the Guardian is constantly calling their attention, as he too cannot but obey the compelling force of circumstances and fulfill his paramount duty of calling to the attention of the believers their opportunity, their privileges, and their responsibilities."

(Extract from a letter from Shoghi Effendi, through the Secretary, published in "Bahá'i News, No. 307, September, 1956).

SUMMER HOLIDAYS—continued.

Sorry, we are not travel agents, so we cannot make arrangements for you, but if this year you want to sample what it is like to spend some time on an English goal island, and would like to be put in touch with the valiant souls already there in their pioneer posts, please contact the English Goals Committee Secretary, Mrs. Betty Goode, 8 Knowle Road, Stafford.

NEWS FROM THE COMMUNITIES

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY.

On Sunday the 18th Jan. World Religion Day was celebrated in Pembroke College with a selection of readings from Religious Scriptures interspersed between music. The gathering was opened with a short introductory talk by Farhang Jahanpur and closed with refreshments and a very lively discussion. The number of non-Bahá'is present was few and most were contacts previously.

Members of the community had travelled to Wigan on the Saturday for the excellent week-end school and World Religion Day meeting there. Cambridge generally supports the Newmarket 'Firesides' with speakers and these meetings attract a number of the United Nations Youth Group Members.

For the future, the University Bahá'í Society is planning a Week-End School and party on the 14th/15th February, and joint meetings with the Africa Society, when Moojan and Shahab will speak on their impressions of Africa after their travels there, and the India Society when we hope Mrs. Munsiff will be addressing the meeting there.

In accordance with the Cambridge Community's plans for extension teaching in the villages of Bottisham and Eltisely near here, the Youth plan to travel there, say prayers and make conversation with the local people in the hope of making friends with them and telling them about the Faith.

DURHAM.

The thing that has happened in Durham is that we have lost Margaret and Eric Hellicar who have gone to Cyprus. Quite a few of us have grown from them and so, because we have not been Bahá'is for very long, we have got to start looking after ourselves. It would be very easy just to keep in a cosy little bunch, meeting in each other's houses, saying a few prayers, having a bit of a natter, a cup of coffee and not particularly bothering about finding any new Bahá'is. But because the Helli-cars have gone we are trying extra hard not to get into a rut.

We discuss a great deal about how to get people interested, but it's not easy. For myself, I feel rather embarrassed about asking outsiders to firesides for two reasons. First, the word itself sounds rather "sweet" as it hardly suits modern day jargon. And secondly, to have to explain exactly what you do at a fireside is even more embarrassing as religion is considered by most comfortable Englishmen as a trap.

Some Bahá'is won't share this problem of mine and will think me silly for letting my own feelings get the better of me, but if there is one thing that all Bahá'is have in common it is that we are all different and what suits one person as a form of teaching doesn't necessarily suit the next. So another Bahá'í housewife and I have had the idea of shared dinner

parties, shared, because then we can cover a larger field of friends and because the responsibility of playing hostess and teacher is halved. When we have given a few I will tell you whether people are happier to hear about religion with full stomachs than they are in a cold street or a crowded supermarket.

IPSWICH.

A social was held on January 17th 1970 in the home of Dr. and Mrs. Ma'ani organised by the Youth Committee in Ipswich. Friends and contacts came from Attleborough, Bury St. Edmunds and Cambridge and altogether almost forty people, mostly youth, had a happy evening in a friendly atmosphere with singing and dancing.

This is one of a series of socials held monthly by the Youth Groups in East Anglia and on each occasion the number of non-Bahá'is at the functions increases and the Ipswich friends were happy to have the blessed number of 19 non-Bahá'is present.

Two declarations were received at the social evening from friends who had been attending firesides regularly. These two declarations are from young men living outside the Ipswich boundaries. We look forward to spreading even further to link up with all the L.S.A.'s in East Anglia.

Following the Social we had a wonderful opportunity to have an Exhibition in two windows loaned by the local newspaper offices and an article of approximately 1,500 words in the evening paper as part of the newspaper's effort to give publicity to all the organisations in the town.

Apart from one error of fact in the history of the Faith the article was wonderfully presented without any prejudice or denial of any nature. The writer of the feature could hardly have made a better presentation if he had been a Bahá'í.

The Exhibition was loaned by Mr. Ted Cardell, who delivered it and mainly erected it with a little help from Ipswich. This was done while the Chairman and Secretary were being interviewed by the press, an interview which lasted more than two hours instead of the usual allocation of twenty minutes.

The most wonderful part of the article was a lovely reproduction of a photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It seems such an unbelievable advance in Ipswich from the days, only a year ago, when four believers were planning Bahá'í week with the English Goals Committee. The photograph in the paper is a great driving force to us all and feels full of power.

ST. AUSTELL.

On the 7th October 1969 the St. Austell Trades Fair opened to the public and one of the stands was the culmination of months of organisation and effort

by the St. Austell Group and Ted Cardell. The stand was designed around an eye catching centre piece, consisting of a turntable on which was bolted seven dolls representing some of the different nationalities of the world: a globe of which was secured to the centre of the turntable, the whole being slowly rotated by a small electric motor.

The local paper hailed it as being "a stand devoted to religion, which will certainly create much interest among the public". In addition to the display of books, we had a good supply of pamphlets—some from the E.G.C. and several hundred that we had duplicated ourselves. During the five days of the Fair, some 8,000 people passed the stand and about 900 pamphlets were taken.

We manned the stand in pairs, each pair doing a two hour spell, May White from Torquay, Peter Lee and Alma Gregory from Exeter, and Ann Thompson from Dublin were a wonderful help in this work. Naomi Long and Trudi Scott from St. Ives helped us with transport, bedding and crockery.

A small room had been hired from the British Legion so that we had somewhere to take any interested enquirers for further discussion and a cup of tea. Although it was not needed for this it proved to be a useful base for those manning the stand. By the time the Fair ended on Saturday 11th October it was unanimously agreed that the venture had been a terrific success. Ya Bahá'u'l Abhá.

WANDSWORTH BAHÁ'Í BALL.

The Wandsworth Bahá'í Assembly held its annual ball on November 15th at the Dryburgh Hall, Putney, from 8 p.m. to Midnight.

This year the guest of honour was the Mayor of Wandsworth, Miss Gwynneth Morgan, who was received by the Assembly and shown to the head table for a brief introduction by the Chairman, Mr. Eruch Munsiff and a prayer by Mr. Peter Hardwick. After Lady Kathleen Hornell had presented "Some Answered Questions" to the Mayor, and Najla Baghdadli a bouquet of flowers, the Mayor replied saying that she had read the introductory pamphlet sent with her invitation and looked forward to hearing more about the Faith.

Sitting at the head table with members of the Assembly were Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Jenkins. Mr. Jenkins is the Labour M.P. for Wandsworth, and had spoken at one of the Assembly's public meetings which are still held regularly on the first Wednesday of each month in the smaller hall of the same building.

Among the many guests of the community was the Chairman of the local U.N.A. branch. He and his wife had heard of the Faith before but during the evening they noticed the pamphlets being given out with the prizes and pressed for one which they could take home and study.

The Mayor drew some 30 ticket numbers for prizes which she herself presented with great enjoyment, afterwards being photographed with the prizewinners and the Assembly. Mrs. Jenkins remarked at the generosity of the prizes and the free gay atmosphere. She promptly won a prize, much to her delight.

The Chairman of the Assembly opened the dancing with the Mayor, to discotheque music. About 230 Bahá'ís and guests joined them, having come from many parts of the country.

Hot and cold buffet food was available from 8.30 p.m. onwards, set out on two large tables at the end of the Hall, half of which was filled with smaller tables furnished with white damask, silver plate and flowers.

Reporters from the local press came, and we received a small write-up. The main effect however seems to be in having given the local authorities a sound introduction to the Faith, which will pave the way for establishing the Assembly as a recognised local body. The Mayor took a most unusual step in writing herself to the Assembly thanking them for the evening and promising to read the book.

The Hall has been booked for next year in anticipation of the next Assembly's decision to repeat the function, although it is possible that a larger hall may be required to hold nearer 300.

WIGAN.

World Religion Day was celebrated on January 17th and 18th at Orrell near Wigan when approximately 300 people from all Religions and Denominations attended St. Lukes Parish Hall. A full week-end of talks and informal discussion took place between Christians, Bahá'ís, Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims.

This was a very well organised effort by the Billinge friends, with the splendid co-operation of the Rev. Whitfield of St. Lukes. 4,000 invitations had been sent to all prominent people and Clergy within a radius of 40 miles, and considerable space had been taken for front-page advertising in the local papers.

Many local residents generously entertained Bahá'ís during the week-end, resulting in 14 firesides being held simultaneously in these homes, where the hosts learned much more of the Bahá'í Teachings and showed considerable interest. A Catholic Priest and a Methodist Minister were present for all of the Saturday Sessions and the Bishop of Liverpool was present for the Sunday evening.

Bahá'ís came from far and wide to support this wonderful and inspiring School, helping to create a tremendous spirit of love and unity which so deeply impressed all who attended. Everyone felt that a truly memorable and significant event had taken place.

YOUTH NEWS

SPRING CONFERENCE AND NATIONAL YOUTH CONVENTION

Once again this exciting event has come around so here are some details of the arrangements.

Date:

March 26th-31st.

Place:

Attleborough Secondary Modern School, Attleborough, Norfolk.

Theme:

"I desire distinction for you" ('Abdu'l-Bahá). The Conference sessions will be based on the most recent letter from the Universal House of Justice, dated November 16th, 1969, and on the booklet, "What it means to be a Bahá'í Youth" (obtainable from the Publishing Trust at 2/6). The evenings will take the form of social activities and there will be a public meeting, entitled "The World with a Future." The Bahá'í Youth of East Anglia will be sending invitation cards to their friends as the meeting will not be advertised publicly.

Chairman:

Dr. Abbas Afnan.

Registrar:

Miss Taraneh Afnan, West Carr Road, Attleborough, Norfolk.

Booking:

There are booking slips at the bottom of the most recent issues of "Youth News" or they can be obtained from the Registrar.

Cost:

£4 full board, for the five days. £1 per day full board with overnight accommodation.

Please send £1 deposit with your booking. No-one under 12 may stay at the school; (this is the rule of the Norfolk Education Authority).

Bedding:

Camp beds are provided but no bedding, so bring your own. (The school is centrally heated).

Transport:

Attleborough is on main rail and coach routes.

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH TRAVEL TEACHING

Recently the National Spiritual Assembly wrote to the Universal House of Justice with several queries regarding International Youth Travel Teaching. We should like to quote part of the reply of the House to this letter.

"We are delighted with the splendid work already performed by Bahá'í Youth and are eager to assist them. We feel, however, that you should not encourage young women to go alone on international teaching projects nor should you encourage projects of short

FOR MEDITATION

I have a lamp in my hand searching through the lands and seas to find souls who can become heralds of the Cause. Day and night I am engaged in this work. Any other deliberations in the meetings are futile and fruitless. Convey the message, Attract the hearts, Sow the seeds, Teach the Cause to those who do not know.

I enter all meetings . . . so that the Cause may be spread. When the most important work is before our sight, we must let go the important one.

If the meetings or Spiritual Assembly has any other occupation, the time is spent in futility. All the deliberations, all consultation, all the talks and addresses must revolve around one focal centre and that is: Teach the Cause, Teach, Teach, Convey the message, Awaken the souls.

Now is the time of laying the foundation. Now we must gather brick, stone, wood, iron and other building materials. This is not the time of decoration. We must strive day and night and think and work. What can I say that may become effective? What can I do that may bring results? What can I write that may bring forth fruits?

Nothing else will be useful today. The interests of such a glorious Cause will not advance without undivided attention. While we are carrying this load we cannot carry any other load.

'Abdu'l-Bahá'

duration, requiring large budgets, unless the volunteer can defray some or all of the cost.

These minor restrictions still leave ample scope for Youth service in the international field, as has already been proved, and you may always refer any offer by Youth which you think feasible, for consideration of assistance by the International Deputisation Fund."

The N.Y.C. would like, therefore, to encourage young men or couples who feel that they can undertake to travel for more than two months and be more or less self-supporting to arise and volunteer for Travel Teaching in the International Field. If they want to travel in Europe it would be an advantage if they could speak the language of the country concerned. All applications should be sent to the Secretary.

Miss Lois Chinn, 7 Dicey Avenue, London, N.W.2.

We hope there are many.

"200 NEW BELIEVERS"

CAMPAIGN.

You will have heard in the 19 Day Feast Newsletter for the Feast of Sultan that there have been 48 declarations since this campaign was launched, of which 16 have been Youth. The N.Y.C. is hoping that 100 of the new believers will be Youth so now we have only 84 more waiting Youth to find. Keep at it! !

REQUEST FOR HELP

Carol Moorhouse is writing an essay on Bahá'í Education for the Religious Education department in her College.

The essay would include:

- (1) Bahá'í ideas on education;
- (2) any new ideas that the Bahá'í Faith can contribute to the theory and practice of education;
- (3) children's classes;
- (4) any problems encountered in British schools by Bahá'í parents and teachers;
- (5) Bahá'í Schools.

Carol would be grateful if anyone who has attended a Bahá'í School (anywhere in the world) or has run a children's class or has anything else to contribute, could write to her about it.

Address: West Park Hall, Perth Road, Dundee DD2 1NN.

PROCLAMATION
(PRESENTATION) COMMITTEE.

We are still waiting to hear from a few more of the L.S.A.'s and Groups regarding the details of their presentations of 'The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh.'

As you all know this book was compiled by the Universal House of Justice from the Tablets which Bahá'u'lláh addressed to the Kings and Leaders of the world 100 years ago, when He announced Himself to be the Promised One. The House has now given the Bahá'ís of the world the task of presenting this book to those who have succeeded the original recipients, those who are now in authority, the political leaders, representatives of the judiciary, dignitaries and leaders of thought.

We have a great task to perform, we must ensure that the healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh is brought to the attention of those who conduct the affairs of the world in the hope that they may turn to

Him for guidance.

Filling in forms is something that many of us dislike and it seems a long way from serving the Cause of God, but we would earnestly request that those of you who have not yet returned the completed forms to the committee consult together. When you have consulted in the true Bahá'í manner and completed all the details, we know that you will all be ready to present the Proclamation Books and Booklets as soon as the N.S.A. gives the word. In order that the maximum effect be obtained from this project it is desirable that they are presented to all the recipients within a short space of time. When you have fully completed your lists you will be confident that there will be no delays whilst correct names and addresses are found or the last few recipients are decided upon. The N.S.A. is anxious that every one of the Presentation Booklets sold in the special parcels, is utilised, particularly as they are being heavily subsidised by the Fund. The lists will also help to cut down the risk of a duplication of presentations.

When the committee receives your list we will send you details of Forms of Address which you may find useful when writing to the Mayor, Lieutenants of Counties (if you live in a County Town) the Recorder, Rabbis, Bishops, etc. etc. You will also receive a specimen of the type of letter you might use to write to the proposed recipients.

The Committee is here to help you with any queries you may have. Please write to our secretary if we can be of any assistance. She is Mrs. Chris Richards, 26 Cartwright Road, Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire.

DEADLINE:—

Material for the next issue of the Journal to be in by 9th March 1970, to—
Mr. J. Coates, Editor, 45 Overfield Rd.,
Fawdon, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 3AJ

Publishing Trust

Many Bahá'ís will be delighted to know that we have now produced a really attractive and dignified 38 page booklet for presentation, in connection with proclamation activities, to people who would appreciate a well produced summary of the essential history and teaching of the Bahá'í Faith and its associations with the British Isles. This booklet was on sale at Teaching Conference, and also received mention in the last edition of the Journal. Included in the contents there is a short account of Bahá'u'lláh's proclamation to the Kings and Rulers of the World, a list of the Central Figures of the Faith, extracts from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, some appreciations of the Bahá'í Faith, and three interesting photographs. The quality of this publication is excellent, and the price is 10/- per copy.

In order to present the material in this magnificent booklet at lower cost, we have published two smaller pamphlets. One is entitled 'These Things Shall Be' which covers Bahá'u'lláh's call to The Kings and Rulers of the World, the Central Figures of the Faith, and a brief summary of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. This pamphlet, very attractively produced sells at 1/6d. per copy. The second pamphlet entitled 'And Did Those Feet' also covers the central Figures of the Faith, and their association with the British Isles, a summary of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's first public address to the West. The price of this pamphlet is only 1/3d.

For those who did not attend Teaching Conference, copies of all three of these new, well produced publications can be obtained from the Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 2 South Street, Oakham, Rutland.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE No. 1 ACCOUNT

21.9.1969 to 20.12.69 (inclusive)

INCOME.		£	s.	d.	EXPENDITURE.		£	s.	d.
Donations:—					N.S.A.—				
L.S.A.'s and Groups		1,216	4	3	Travel		264	3	9
Individuals		3,034	18	9	Office		1,173	12	5
		4,251	3	0	Telephone and Cables		68	2	2
Less Payments against Covenants		507	17	3	Postage and Stationery		189	3	1
		3,743	5	9	Journal		185	12	3
Interest and Dividends		361	6	0	Extraordinary		118	19	9
Refunds to us:—					C.D.C.		60	0	0
Sale of Shares		1,726	11	11	E.G.C.		302	18	1
Auction		29	11	0	O.G.C.		555	0	9
Rent Endowment Land		10	0	0	Other Goals Committees		342	12	3
		£5,870	14	8	Pioneer Committee		540	0	0
DONATIONS:—					Other Committees				
Budget		8,250	0	0	Youth Committee		60	10	0
To date		8477	0	0	Sundry		58	15	3
Gap				Nil	Monthly Transfers:—				
					Donations		320	0	0
					Excess Income over expenditure		1,631	4	11
							£5,870	14	8

Co-operative Printing Society Ltd., Rutherford Street, Newcastle upon Tyne