

HOME FRONT

A News Bulletin

No. 18

NOVEMBER 1959
DECEMBER

Extract from the writings of the beloved Guardian included in the latest Message from the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land

"Dearly beloved friends,

..... Ours is the duty to fix our gaze with undeviating attention on the duties and responsibilities confronting us at this present hour, to concentrate our resources, both material and spiritual, on the tasks that lie immediately ahead, to insure that no time is wasted, that no opportunity is missed, that no obligation is evaded, that no task is half-heartedly performed, that no decision is procrastinated. The task summoning us to a challenge, unprecedented in its gravity and force, is too vast and sacred, the time too short, the hour too perilous, the workers too few, the call too insistent, the resources too inadequate, for us to allow these precious and fleeting hours to slip from our grasp, and to suffer the prizes within our reach to be endangered or forfeited. So much depends upon us, so pregnant with possibilities is the present stage in the evolution of the Plan, that great and small, individuals, groups and Assemblies, white and coloured, young and old, neophytes and veterans, settlers, believers, as organizers of groups, and as contributors to the formation of local or national Assemblies, as builders of the Temple, as laborers on the home teaching front all, without exception and in every sphere of activity, however modest, restricted or inconspicuous, must participate and labor, assiduously and continually, until every ounce of our energy is spent, until, tired but blissful, our promised harvest is brought in, and our pledge to our Beloved fully redeemed."

N.T.C. LETTER

Dear friends,

With the mighty call, quoted above, from the beloved Guardian to every individual heart, ringing in our ears, the National Teaching Committee, fresh from their consultation with the National Spiritual Assembly, wishes to put before you the vital needs of this present hour.

The long anticipated increase in the flow of pioneers to the Goal Towns of the Ten Year Crusade, which rose to a crescendo following the last Teaching Conference, has been achieved by more than 40 radiant souls leaving their homes to serve the Cause of God, and who are now settled at their posts.

The courage, faith and devotion of these pioneers must now be matched by the dedicated teaching activity of every individual believer, wherever he may be, so that "our promised harvest is brought in and our pledge to our Beloved fully redeemed". The pioneers have rung up the curtain, and the vision must now unfold.

"This challenge, so severe and insistent, and yet so glorious, faces no doubt primarily the individual believer on whom, in the last resort, depends the fate of the entire community."

We therefore ask all believers, on re-reading the latest Message from the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land, to take a full and vigorous part in teaching, whether you be isolated, or in a Group, Goal Town or Assembly. And we must remember that the effectiveness of our efforts depends upon our dedication to His service, the inspiration and strength gained through persistent daily prayer and study of the teachings, and on the regular holding and attending of the Nineteen Day Feast instituted for us by Baha'u'llah.

In order to help us see more clearly the direction our efforts must take, the N.T.C. recommends that all work should circle around the following determinations -

- a. Individual daily teaching to attract the seeker
- b. The regular holding of the Nineteen Day Feast
- c. Regular firesides - the spearhead of all Baha'i teaching activity

and the following goals formulated -

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

"Arise, O Wayfarer in the path of the love of God, and aid thou His Cause."

Baha'u'llah

Devotedly yours in His service,

NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE

GOAL TOWN NEWS

ABERDEEN On 29th October 16 people attended the first Baha'i public meeting to be held in Aberdeen. Four of these were friends of Jackie Thomas, and the others came through the advert in the newspaper. Jackie has certainly done some fine work since she pioneered there.

BANGOR We have also had wonderful news of the first Baha'i public meeting to be held in Bangor on 25th November. Twenty-two people who saw the advert in the newspaper, attended the meeting although it was during one of the worst rainstorms they have had. They listened with considerable interest to the talk given by Mrs. Violette Nakhjavani which was followed with a most animated discussion. One lady said it was one of the most interesting evenings she and her husband had ever spent in Bangor.

BLACKBURN The friends here are making arrangements to hold a public meeting on 18th December at the Y.M.C.A. which we would urge all those friends who can to support, as this is the first public meeting to be held in Blackburn for a long time.

From now on they are planning to have a public meeting on the last Friday of every month.

We have also received the good news that Iran Ghobad has obtained permission to live out of hospital, and can now look for a room where firesides can be held. (In her hospital it is usually very difficult for nurses from overseas to obtain permission to live out)

CARLISLE Iran Moussazadeh has already found herself a nice flat and made quite a number of friends. She writes: "I never enjoyed my life so much that I enjoyed since I came to Carlisle. I enjoy every minute of it." Very similar to what Jackie tells us in Aberdeen. At the urgent request of Iran, the N.T.C. has agreed to hold a One-Day School in Carlisle on 10th January, which will be preceded by a public meeting on 9th. When she made this suggestion Iran had already provisionally booked the necessary rooms for both these functions! We hope the friends will give this School and public meeting all the support they can.

CANTERBURY Are holding regular firesides every Wednesday, and have occasional public meetings. With the help of London they are planning a Weekend School for the 30th/31st January.

CHESTER Philip and Lois Hainsworth have just made a teaching trip to Chester where they stayed for a few days giving valuable help attending firesides and meetings.

EXETER There are now six Baha'is in Exeter (2 adults and 4 youth) and with Sidney Barratt of Prudhoe they have formed themselves into a Teaching Committee. Incidentally we hear that there is a strong likelihood of Prudhoe coming within the civic limits of Exeter soon! Mrs. Mokhtari who recently pioneered there, has offered one of the rooms in her house for the Exeter Baha'i Centre. This is a very fine offer indeed.

GLOUCESTER Dr. John and Greta Fozdar have now left for Borneo, taking with them our heartfelt thanks for the valuable services they have rendered to the Cause in this country. We shall miss them, but we are very happy to now be able to give you the wonderful news that Ruhi and Dorothy Sabit have at last found accommodation in Gloucester and moved in. Their address is: Top Flat, 72 Stroud Road, Gloucester.

INVERNESS At the beginning of the year a copy of "All Things Made New" was placed in the public library by the N.T.C. and the Shepherds have just written to say that the book has been taken out six times. As an aid to teaching Baha'i quotations are to be placed weekly in the local paper for three months, and we shall be interested to see what effect they have.

LOUGHBOROUGH Pat and Ian Sinclair are now settled in their new home on dry land, and have at last been able to sell their boat. The friends here hold regular firesides, and one or two of them have joined the Adult School Discussion Group where not long ago Mr. John Long was invited to give a talk on the Faith. Also quite recently they have had a long letter of theirs printed in the local paper in reply to a statement made by a Minister that World Peace was a Utopia!

MOTHERWELL As you know, a teaching campaign was recently held here, and we feel sure that the devotion and hard work of the friends will bear fruits they had not dreamt of.

NEWCASTLE They are organising a teaching campaign to coincide with their Weekend School on 6th/7th February and write to say that all the expenses will be met by the Group. Although they are not yet of Assembly status, they have offered to give all the help they can to the work in Carlisle, and some of them have already visited Iran Moussazadeh, who is all alone there.

NEWMARKET Mrs. Elaine Rogers is still valiantly carrying on the work here all alone. She holds regular firesides on Tuesdays and takes her contacts to any public meetings held in Cambridge.

PETERBOROUGH As a result of giving the local paper an account of a fireside held at the home of some friends of Gitta Chaplin when she was on a visit to Peterborough, Ray Humphrey was interviewed on the Faith, and an article was published filling half a page, together with a photograph of Ray, and headed: "He's a Baha'i - The Only One in Peterborough". Ray states that he is well and truly marked as a Baha'i now!

PONTYPRIDD Some fine teaching work is being done in this town and in nearby areas. Since August they have had three visiting teachers who have stayed with them for a few days, and each time they have organised a very intensive and successful teaching programme, with the Welsh R.T.C. The visiting teachers have spoken at firesides, public meetings, Rotary Clubs, United Nations Association, International Friendship League and even for a Sisterhood of a Welsh Chapel. They have had much newspaper publicity, and not long ago Mrs. Meherangiz Munsiff was interviewed on Welsh Television on the Faith. Since the beginning of the year there have been 9 declarations in the South Wales area. The other visitors have been Ali Nakhjavani and Ian Semple.

SALISBURY At the moment the friends are in the middle of preparations for their Weekend School on 12th/13th December. They have drawn up an interesting programme and we wish them every success.

SHEFFIELD Have recently had a Weekend School, but we have not yet heard how it went.

SWINTON Friends from neighbouring communities gave their support to a fashion show compered by Mrs. Munsiff and also a public meeting.

TORQUAY A successful Weekend School has been held here which has also resulted in a declaration. We are very happy to announce that Mr. Joe and Elsie Lee are pioneering to Torquay, and we ask your prayers that they will soon find a home there, as it is proving rather difficult.

WINCHESTER Mrs. Farzar has now found a flat and has been able to settle there with her children. Recently a successful public meeting was held, a report of which appeared in the local paper.

WOKINGHAM They have just helped organise a very successful Weekend School in Reading, and they are doing very fine work in Wokingham.

YORK Golrokh Sabit is one of the five believers who at the moment are each all alone in a Goal Town. We do urge the friends to try and visit them, or if not that, to write to them now and again. Those of us who live in Groups or Assemblies cannot really appreciate how much it means to them to hear from or see a fellow Baha'i.

ASSEMBLY NEWS

BANGOR The Northern Ireland R.T.C. called a conference of all the friends in their region recently, and detailed plans are now being made for an intensive teaching campaign next February.

BELFAST Six copies of Willy Blum's poster were displayed on Great Northern stations last March, but the contract was cancelled on the grounds that they could not accept religious posters. The posters would have to be covered up but no charge would be made for the period up till then. Six months afterwards the posters are still being displayed free of charge, and only recently brought three contacts to the Belfast Centre! On contract the cost would now have exceeded £20.

CAMBRIDGE Eighteen people attended the official opening of their Centre on 14th November. Friends came from Newmarket, Norwich, Nottingham and London. Five nationalities were represented, and there were five contacts present.

We are happy to welcome Miss Homayoun Dastan who has just pioneered to Cambridge, and shortly the friends will also be joined by Mrs. Nikanpour and her two children. We wish them all every happiness and success..

CARDIFF In conjunction with Pontypridd, and the Welsh R.T.C. they have been organising intensive teaching activity in and around Cardiff, and in the last month they have had three declarations.

EDINBURGH Teaching activity in Edinburgh is going ahead very well, and they are also giving all the support they can to the Goal Towns of Aberdeen, Carlisle, Inverness and Motherwell. In particular they are helping to organise the One-Day School to be held in Carlisle on 10th January.

LIVERPOOL During "People to People Week" organised by the International Friendship League, they entertained some students from the Malayan Teachers' Training College who were very eager to find what the Faith was all about.

Madeline Hellaby has recently had an article accepted by the quarterly magazine "Women Speaking", and it is hoped that a quotation from Abdu'l-Baha on the station of women will appear in the January edition.

LONDON In an effort to mobilise the teaching and pioneering goodwill of those believers who are obliged to study or work in London, the the London Assembly has, with the approval of the N.S.A., chosen three suburban towns outside the boundaries of the London community, for development, by extension teaching and pioneering, to Assembly status. It is thought that a number of believers may be willing to live in these towns and travel into town to work daily, as hundreds of thousands of London workers always do. The towns chosen are Epsom, Romford and Watford. There is already one believer in Romford, and three in Epsom and another going there soon.

PORTSMOUTH They have also taken advantage of the opportunities offered by "People to People Week" by giving their assistance to the International Friendship League, being represented at the Lord Mayor's Reception, and taking part in the Service for All Faiths where the Prayer for All Nations was read.

ALL OTHER NEWS ITEMS

Pioneers As you will have read in the N.T.C. Letter, 42 pioneers have gone to various parts of the British Isles in response to the urgent appeal made at Teaching Conference last January. This is a truly wonderful achievement. About half of these pioneers are British and half Persian, and among them is included no less than 19 youth. Although there is still a need for pioneers to reinforce the Goal Towns, the major part of the pioneering task has been accomplished, and is undoubtedly proof of the love and devotion of the friends to the Cause of Baha'u'llah.

Pioneers to Portugal At the beginning of October we said a fond farewell to Irene Bennett who left to pioneer to this country at the request of the Hands of the Cause in Haifa, and now similarly we have to say goodbye to Jan Coppen who also left for Portugal on 30th November. Her devoted services in Cambridge will long be remembered, and the friends there will undoubtedly miss her very much. But Portugal is in sore need of the services of these two dear friends of ours, and we are happy to feel that two believers from Britain have been asked to go.

Pioneer to Finland Our dear Knight of Baha'u'llah Brigitte Hasabblatt has left these shores for Finland. Her valuable services in the British Isles, and particularly in the Shetlands, will never be forgotten, and we feel that Finland is much blessed with her presence there.

Philip and Lois Hainsworth We would like to express our deep appreciation of the many teaching trips that they have made during their leave from Uganda, almost from the moment they set foot in England. Among the towns they have visited are: Cambridge, Chester, Liverpool, Norwich, Nottingham, Leicester, Oxford, Peterborough, Reading and Wokingham. Soon they will be leaving us again, with their children, for their pioneering post in Kampala and they take with them our love and best wishes.

An Apology We very much regret that due to an oversight the full name of Ida Kouchekezadeh was not given in our last issue when announcing the news that she had pioneered to Cambridge, and we apologise most sincerely for this mistake. However we are very glad to tell you that she has found some very nice accommodation, and writes that she very happy in Cambridge.

TEACHING CONFERENCE This is to be held on 16th and 17th January in Sheffield, at the Ancient Order of Foresters Hall, Trippet Lane, Sheffield 1. You will be receiving more details about this very soon.

THE NINETEEN DAY FEAST

Recently the N.T.C. had the privilege of consulting with the N.S.A., and the consultation touched on many aspects of our teaching work, but in particular the importance of holding the Nineteen Day Feast, described by the Guardian as the foundation of the World Order of Baha'u'llah.

'Abdu'l-Baha writes: "The Nineteen Day Feast was inaugurated by the Bab and ratified by Baha'u'llah in His Holy Book, the Aqdas, so that people may gather together and outwardly show fellowship and love, that the Divine mysteries may be disclosed. The object is concord, that through this fellowship hearts may become perfectly united, and reciprocity and mutual helpfulness be established."

The Nineteen Day Feast is the meeting of the members of a local Baha'i community, held every Baha'i month. It is the only Baha'i gathering, attendance of which is highly recommended by Baha'u'llah for every believer, and should be regarded by the believers as the very heart of their spiritual activity.

Anything concerning the affairs of the community may be discussed, and this is the proper occasion for members of the community to make suggestions ask questions, offer criticism, or put forward recommendations to be transmitted through the Local Assembly to the National Assembly.

The Spiritual bounties that are so essential to the winning of the Ten Year Crusade, and the deepening of our understanding of the Cause of Baha'u'llah, will be immeasurably helped if ALL communities, not only those with Assembly status, celebrate the Nineteen Day Feast. It may not be realised that the holding of the Feast is the privilege of all - Assemblies, Groups and individuals. Baha'is should regard this Feast as the very heart of their spiritual activity, their participation in the mystery of the Holy Utterance, their steadfast unity one with another in a universality raised high above the limitations of race, class, nationality, sect, and personality, and their privilege of contributing to the power of the Cause in the realm of collective action.

We ask all to give earnest thought to the conduct of the Nineteen Day Feast, and in particular the essential need for the devotional programme to be chosen wisely and from Baha'i scripture.

We cannot stress too strongly the bounties, and the joy and confidence that can flow to the friends when taking part in a devotional that is chosen from the sources laid down by our beloved Guardian. All these matters are quite clearly indicated in "Principles of Baha'i Administration" and we know that all will find benefit from perusing these writings again.