

The HOME FRONT

A News Bulletin

No.4.

"THE NEED OF THE HOUR"

December, 1956.

With the approach of Teaching Conference, the National Teaching Committee wishes to share with all the friends our appraisal of the position on the Home Front. You will see from the chart given in the centre of this Bulletin that there are 50 GAPS to be filled between now and Ridván, if the British Community is to achieve its goals. 50 GAPS present us with a tremendous challenge: more pioneers are needed; more travelling teachers; more, much more, individual teaching; and the most intensive prayers for our goals.

50 GAPS - and yet if we look at the places where these gaps occur, they are centres of large populations. Hundreds and thousands of people are living in these towns, and some are seeking, as we ourselves sought in the past; seeking for a sign of order in the prevailing chaos of the world; for the warmth of true friendship in the bleakness of loneliness; for a sense of stability and confidence for their children's future, for something greater than themselves, which can make human life the precious and wonderful thing it was destined by God to be. Are there none of us eager to arise as pioneers to take the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to these people?

50 GAPS - and hundreds and thousands of people, some of whom are waiting for that Bahá'í visitor, that travelling teacher who will be the person to bring new joy into their lives with the Message of Bahá'u'lláh. Can we not, all of us, dedicate ourselves afresh to the splendid privilege of teaching the Cause of God?

50 GAPS to be filled by Ridván. In meditating on this challenge, let us think of the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "The Kingdom of God is possessed of limitless potency. Audacious must be the army of life if the confirming aid of that Kingdom is to be repeatedly vouchsafed unto it....Vast is the arena, and the time ripe to spur on the charger within it."

Now is the time to reveal the force of one's strength, the stoutness of one's heart and the might of one's soul".

Beloved friends, the need is for pioneers, teaching and yet more teaching, and intensive prayer. To each and every one of us this represents a challenge and a responsibility.

THE INDIVIDUAL BAHÁ'Í MUST ARISE

"It is primarily a task that concerns the individual believer, wherever he may be, and whatever his calling, his resources, his race, or his age. Neither the local or national representatives of the Community, no matter how elaborate their plans, or persistent their appeals, or sagacious their counsels, nor even the Guardian himself, however much he may yearn for this consummation, can decide where the duty of the individual lies, or supplant him in the discharge of that task. The individual alone must assess its character, consult his conscience, prayerfully consider all its aspects, manfully struggle against the natural inertia that weighs him down in his effort to arise, shed, heroically and irrevocably, the trivial and superfluous attachments which hold him back, empty himself of every thought that may tend to obstruct his path, mix, in obedience to the counsels of the Author of His Faith, and in imitation of the One Who is its true Exemplar, with men and women, in all walks of life, seek to touch their hearts, through the distinction which characterizes his thoughts, his words and his acts, and win them over tactfully, lovingly, prayerfully and persistently, to the Faith he himself has espoused.

"...To act, and act promptly and decisively, is the need of the present hour and their inescapable duty".

—From the Guardian's letter to the American Bahá'is,
July 19, 1956.

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"I used to feel that there were certain jobs I just could not do, but now I am sure that if a job in the service of the Faith needs doing and any Bahá'í arises sincerely to do it God will make up for his deficiencies and increase his capacity as He wills. I suppose I ought to have known that long ago, but it is funny how there is a difference between knowing with your mind and really knowing. Perhaps that is what Faith is".

— Ian Semple

BRITAIN GOES TO SCHOOL

In November, 1955, our dear Dr. Grossmann, Hand of the Cause of God, having completed his tour of Baha'i Communities suggested that "neighbouring centres should come together more often," as our "lilliputian centres give no idea to new contacts of Baha'i community life, which is essential." "If this kind of regional co-operation could be stressed," he wrote, "I feel work would go ahead more quickly and encourage the isolated believers and pioneers".

How pertinent was this suggestion and how prophetic of the Weekend Schools which were soon to appear in every corner of Britain! Since Summer School, 1956, there have been nine such Schools on the mainland and one in Shetland. Here is the bare record of activity which, perhaps more than any other, has fed that fire we are striving to ignite in the hearts of ourselves and our countrymen.

September 7th-9th	Lerwick	October 20th-21st	London
" 29th-30th	Birmingham	November 3rd-4th	Torquay
October 6th-7th	Leeds	" 10th-11th	Cardiff
" 6th-7th	Liverpool	" 10th-11th	Edinburgh
" 19th-21st	Belfast	December 8th-9th	Blackpool

ALL HAIL TO PIONEERS AND STUDENTS

Joyfully we report fresh reinforcements in many Goals and small communities. Joan Benfield is now in Cambridge and the Nikanpours are in their own home in Newcastle. Jack and Esta Singer have settled in Bournemouth. For some whose projects are not yet consummated, we ask your earnest prayers: for Yvonne and Charles Macdonald who have rented a flat in Belfast and must now sell their home; for Dora and Betty McWilliams who have found their ideal home in Torquay but cannot go until their Liverpool house is sold; for Shirin Hakimian who is undergoing interviews for admission to medical school.

Persian students and nurses continue to take up their studies on our Home Front. We rejoice at their settlement in key towns. Shaheen Azadeh and Parveen Arfaie are in Northampton, and Iran Mousazadeh arrived in Reading last June and will make their ninth member. Mahin Tofigh transferred to Portsmouth lately as a pioneer. Miss S. Adl has arrived in Hull. Three youths are also most welcome: Ellaheh Sahihi in Nottingham and Rahmatolah Sana and Parvaneh Khalili in Brighton.

Below Numbers.

Dublin.	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♀	♀	♀
Edinburgh.	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♀	♀
Cardiff	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♀
Birmingham	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♀

Lapsed Assemblies

Northampton.	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂
Glasgow.	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♀
Torquay.	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♀	♀	♀	♀
Newcastle.	♂	♂	♂	♂	♀	♀	♀	♀	♀
Brighton.	♂	♂	♂	♂	♀	♀	♀	♀	♀
Cheadle.	♂	♂	♂	♂	♀	♀	♀	♀	♀
Blackburn.	♂	♂	♂	♂	♀	♀	♀	♀	♀

Goal Towns

Reading.	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂
Portsmouth.	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♀
Leicester.	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♀	♀
Eccles.	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♂	♀	♀
Cambridge	♂	♂	♂	♀	♀	♀	♀	♀	♀
Northdown R.D.	♂	♂	♂	♀	♀	♀	♀	♀	♀

NORTHERN IRELAND REGION

"May the Beloved bless your efforts and those of your dear co-workers and aid you to extend the range of your valued activities, and enable you to win memorable victories in the service of His Faith".

—a recent message from the Guardian.

BELFAST: The great joy of celebrating Ireland's first Baha'i wedding was somewhat tempered by the knowledge that it would lead to the loss of our wonderful worker for the Kingdom, Nancy (Blair) Jordan, now far away in Nebraska, U.S.A., and would set back the attainment of the goal - of preserving Belfast's Assembly status. But already the goal seems secure; Rustom Jamshidi, a Persian Baha'i youth from Karachi, who will be 21 by Ridvan, is now in Belfast and hopes to enter Queens University to study medicine, and Yvonne and Charles Macdonald are moving into the city.

BANGOR: There is a suggestion that this may become the goal town instead of North Down as Winnie Whelan and Billy Glass may be moving in to form a strong group with David and Gladys Brown. There is a proposal to find a small permanent centre in Bangor; needless to say this will be encouraged.

TEACHING: Firesides continue to be the best medium for teaching - notably one given by Ada Williams at Greenisland with twelve present and discussion going on long after midnight. Belfast's series of weekly public meetings continue.

Lady Hornell spoke on Thursday 8th November to members of the Theosophical Society at Portrush and found a sympathetic and responsive audience. She thus gave up the opportunity of joining, on the same day, a party of eight N. Ireland Baha'is who travelled to Dublin for Ireland's second Baha'i wedding; Ruth Youth and David Hall of the U.S. Marines (not a Baha'i).

WEEKEND SCHOOL: With Marion Hofman, Adib Taherzadeh and Ian Semple all giving of their wonderful best, this was a great experience for all the friends, quite apart from the seed sown among the sixteen contacts who attended. "The Sure Remedy for the World's Sickness" was the theme of the School, which welcomed believers from six localities of Northern Ireland; six from Dublin including John Craven, with his precious direct contact with the Master; and friends from Scotland, Wales, the U.S.A., Persia and Pakistan.

—NORTHERN IRELAND R.T.C.

Jean Beattie, Kathleen Hornell, Charles Macdonald, Yvonne Macdonald, and Jane Villiers-Stuart.

"THE MERITORIOUS AND HIGHLY ENVIABLE PILGRIMAGE"

Our Community is on the threshold of great blessings through the pilgrimage of members who will stand in our stead in the Holy Shrines and sit in the presence of our Guardian. Their return will surely infuse the British Baha'is with new spiritual powers and vision. Betty Reed has been invited for the third week of December. In January go Bobbie Leedham, Charles Dunning and Ernest Gregory. (If there be other news of pilgrimages, it has not reached us.) May each pilgrim know that he carries with him the loving thoughts of every British friend.

TEACHING CONFERENCE

January 5th-6th, 1957 in Birmingham

Teaching Conference bids fair to be a memorable occasion. Our hope is to welcome back Hasan Balyuzi from Persia and to hear about "The Cradle of the Faith", and it does seem possible that Betty Reed will return from Haifa to share her treasure. The main themes of the Conference are drawn from the Guardian's last letter to Britain. "The Process Set in Motion" is the central keynote. On Saturday afternoon the N.T.C., E.A.T.C., and Public Relations Committees will conduct sessions on "Igniting a Fire in the Hearts of Our Countrymen". On Sunday morning the Conference will consider "Building the New Communities", with stress on fireside teaching, the question of new believers, the rôle of Groups as the nuclei of Assemblies. "The Call of the Present Hour" on Sunday afternoon will turn to that flow of pioneers and concentration of material resources which must be "unexampled" in our history. For Saturday night the National Assembly has chosen a timely theme: "The Baha'is in the World Today". We urge the friends to descend upon Birmingham in force!

SOME ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio-Visual Material: There are over 2,000 slides available from America, as well as tape recordings, films, photographs, and gramophone records. Inquiries should be addressed to the Audio Visual Education Committee, 126 Evergreen Place, West Englewood, New Jersey, U.S.A., and orders can be sent directly by individual friends or communities. A copy of a recent catalogue will be on display at Teaching Conference.

Nurse Attendant required: By Stella Johnston, Baha'i of N. Ireland, to assist in the care of her father who is elderly but not ill. If interested please write to: "Seawynnds", Seapark, Portstewart, Co. Londonderry, N. Ireland.

"THE PRECIOUS DAYS OF YOUR LIVES"

Words for Meditation and Deepening

"The Word which the Son concealed is made manifest. It hath been sent down in the form of the human temple in this day. Blessed be the Lord Who is the Father! He verily is come unto the nations in His most great majesty. Turn your faces towards Him, O concourse of the righteous".

—Baha'u'llah

"This is a Revelation that infuseth strength into the feeble and crowneth with wealth the destitute.

"With the utmost friendliness and in a spirit of perfect fellowship take ye counsel together and dedicate the precious days of your lives to the betterment of the world and the promotion of the Cause of Him Who is the Ancient and Sovereign Lord of all".

—Baha'u'llah

"Thus the friends of God must manifest the mercy of the Compassionate Lord in the world of existence and must show forth the bounty of the visible and invisible King. They must purify their sight and look upon mankind as the leaves, blossoms and fruits of the tree of creation and must always be thinking of doing good to someone, of love, consideration, affection and assistance to somebody. They must see no enemy and count no one as an ill-wisher".

—Abdu'l-Baha

(References from "Baha'i Revelation", p.30 and 282; "Gleanings" P.184).

SUCCESS AFTER SUCCESS

"Until the Friends begin direct teaching of individuals in Fireside Gatherings, success will not be achieved. This matter has been discussed many times in the presence of the Guardian, and I gather he fully approves this view. I do not mean to indicate I am not in favour of Visual Aids, Publicity, Radio Scripts, Television, etc. They are all good as agents to an end, but certainly not the end itself. They publicize the Faith, they serve to allow the individual to make contacts; they help a teacher, who has students;—but it has become evident, that the Friends think these are the end of teaching, rather than an adjunct. The only way to confirm a soul is through direct close contact, association, and Baha'i love, and teaching; where one can answer the trying and intimate questions. We have not reached the stage of mass conversion as yet. The Faith and its principles are not yet well enough known for that. Thus if the Friends devoted all their time to direct fireside gatherings, they would find success after success".

—Leroy Ioas, Sept.30, 1956.