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" Evolution of the Baha'i Faith in the United States since 1960 "

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"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; yet they deem Us a stirrer up of strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment...That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled--what harm is there in this?...Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come....Yet do We see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce the happiness of mankind...These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family... Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind." (1)

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(1) Spoken by Baha'u'llah as recorded by E.G. Browne, the English Orientalist, first European to meet Baha'u'llah, during the first of the four interviews which he was granted between April 15-20, 1890 in Bahji near Akka. Baha'u'llah and the New Era, J.E. Esslemont, Baha'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, 1950; p. 50.

## INTRODUCTION

Max Weber observes that throughout history religion has been one of the determinant and dynamic factors of social change. The impact of faith and belief have left their stamp on the different civilizations of the world, whether it be Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish or Christian, just to mention the major religious trends. They had the power to set in motion ideas and principles on which the value system of society would be established.

It has happened all through the history of man, why should it not happen again? It would not be easy to convince people of today, despite an increasing interest in spiritual matters, that the establishment of a future world oriented society might be the outcome of an evolutionary process based on a relatively recent religious message in which the ultimate goal is to prepare man, through a profound transformation of the individual, to live in a future world oriented society.

(1)  
Margaret Mead, in her book, Culture and Commitment, has drawn on her decades of study of primitive cultures and her observations of the accelerating pace of technological change in our developed societies to present a new and challenging explanation of some major social factors such as the origin of the generation gap, rejection of the traditional value system, and the demands made upon all of us to cope with the new situation. In my introduction I will dwell on her analysis because it leads us in a progressive way to the matter which interests us in this study and might give us valuable elements (1) Culture and Commitment, Margaret Mead, (Garden City, New York: Natural History Press/Doubleday and Co. Inc., 1970.)

in our understanding of the Baha'i Faith and the accelerating growth of the Baha'i community in the United States during the 1960s and the start of the 1970s.

M. Mead believes the initial cause of the generation gap and the activism of youth is the emergence for the first time of a world community. Not only has technology linked the entire world physically, but now man is recognizing more clearly those factors he has in common with other men and thus is gaining a sense of mankind as a unit.

People born before World War II grew up in and were conditioned by a world wholly different from that of the 1960s--70s. It was a world in which satellites were not known, no TV had given instant awareness of current events, and no bomb had exploded. But during these years (60s--70s), the United States witnessed important social, cultural, political and economic changes.

The civil rights problem, with riots in Watts, Newark, Detroit, and almost every other major American city in the mid-1960s, gives testimony to the fact that court decisions, governmental legislation and educational efforts had not been able to break down the barriers of discrimination and prejudice. Other minority groups like Indians, Chicanos and Puerto Ricans felt they had to fight their way in too.

Dealing with the situations was greatly complicated by the fact that there were no longer any sets of absolute values to which large numbers of people subscribed. Traditional religion, humanism and science had all been found wanting in solving these problems.

No wonder the new generation lacked confidence in those who still held the seat of power and rejected what America stood for.

Thomas F. O'Dea<sup>(2)</sup> explains this situation of identity in these words after having interviewed people of different religious background:

All of these represent people who are trying to live in and cope with change--change in society, change in thinking and styles of life. The younger ones are looking for a self-definition with which to face life; the older ones are clinging to an old identity rooted in circumstances and beliefs, habits and values now being rendered irrelevant. Other elements besides the religious crises are involved. Personal crises are always to be found in times of social change but in this time of exceptionally rapid social change they are more numerous and more significant. Moreover, beneath the contemporary identity crises hides the void created beneath the institutionalized assumptions by the religious crises itself.

To Margaret Mead, the solution to the isolation experienced by the older and new generation lies in their recognition that they have a need for each other. But it should be on a new basis, and lead to a different result:

...The paths by which we came into the present can never be traversed again...Coming by different roads out of the past, all the peoples of the earth are now arriving in the new world community. No road into the present need be repudiated and no former way of life forgotten. But all these different pasts, our own and all others, must be treated as precursors.<sup>(3)</sup>

Unlike the past cultures, the prefigurative society will be based on the young who represent the future. "The development of prefigurational cultures," M. Mead says, "will depend on the existence of a continuing dialogue in which the young, free to act on their own initiative, can lead their elders in the direction of the unknown."<sup>(4)</sup>

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(2) Article by Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Crisis of Contemporary Religious Consciousness*, in *Religion in America* by William G. McLaughlin and Robert N. Bellah, Boston, 1968; p. 190.

(3) *Culture and Commitment*, p. 93.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 94.

The 1960s were a heaven for new religious movements proposing a spiritual refuge as a solution to unsolved identity problems offering new behavior attitudes towards social and political issues which were difficult to face. Literature touching on spiritual and mystical aspects of life abounded, thus answering a deeply felt need.

The Baha'i Faith seems to offer a vision of the world, a set of teachings and principles in accordance with the aspiration of 20th century man. It asserts the oneness of the human race and advocates total elimination of all types of prejudice whether racial, religious, class or nationalistic. It insists on the equality of rights and privileges of all members of society, whether man or woman, colored or white.

The Baha'i Faith is interesting in the sense that it presents us with a movement which has known a worldwide expansion in a relatively short time. Today, 142 years after its birth in Iran, Baha'i communities are established all over the globe, except behind the Iron Curtain and count among its believers just to mention a few: Eskimos, Maya Indians, Pygmies, French, Germans and Americans. India has actually the largest Baha'i community in the world. Its universality is one of its striking features. Wherever the observer has visited Baha'i communities in France, Mexico, Cameroon, Great Britain and the United States, it has been the diversity of its members and a feeling of unity among them, despite apparent differences of age, color, language and culture, which has left a vivid impression.



Its growth and development in the United States during the 20th century and especially during the last 30 years proves that the tenants of the Baha'i Faith offer answers and open new perspectives to questions as fundamental as: the superiority of races, white against black, emancipation of women, nationalism and worldmindedness, science and religion, questions of specific importance in the 1960s--1970s where a profound dissatisfaction with the establishment swept across the country.

### Methodology

In deciding to undertake this study I knew that one main problem would be access to material and data information. However, this problem, which could have been an insurmountable obstacle in other parts of the world where Baha'i data is practically nonexistent due to the Faith's recent penetration, was solved partly by my contact with the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States, who provided me with material and data information on the American Baha'i community. The material received was from exhaustive and, in many respects, rather limited sources. They were essentially:

- a. Copies of American Baha'i, a periodical published by the National Spiritual Assembly and distributed to all American Baha'i families. This publication contains local and international news concerning the development and growth, as well as statistics and accounts of the current progress of proclamations, plans and campaigns, etc.
- b. Annual reports of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States providing a summary of activities and results obtained.
- c. Report of the Teaching committee of the United States of America.

As a result, in most cases, a general approach rather than a suitable analysis of the subject of study was possible. A pertinent analysis of the population composition by age and sex is almost entirely lacking, a shortcoming which makes it difficult to appreciate the Baha'i phenomenon, although a youth trend can be observed during the years 1968--1973.

Secondly, I have had to rely heavily on Baha'i literature to understand the evolutionary phenomenon since literature written by non-Baha'is on this subject is almost non-existent. Because the information is based on one source this might have the inconvenience of a less objective approach. However, close contact with the Baha'i community in Paris has enabled me to observe the work of the Baha'is, how they go about proclaiming their Faith, how they develop their plan policy on the national level and how it relates to the plan policy of the Baha'i world community as a whole. The interrelation between the individual, the Baha'i administrative order and the plan policy is discussed in this study to comprehend how the Baha'i Faith manages its growth. It has been necessary briefly to develop the historical aspect of the Baha'i Faith intimately linked to its diffusion policy.

A rather interesting aspect of the Baha'i world community is, that the same plan policy is adapted by all the Baha'i institutions in the world. The goals and priorities differ according to the size of the Baha'i population, country, cultural background and a given historical period: the American context of the 1960s, but it works according to the same principles. One of my objectives will be to show how.

The method of organizing and analyzing information will vary depending on what seems to be most important in explaining why diffusion occurred at a given time and in a particular locality. The tenants of the Baha'i Faith will be analyzed in order to understand the role they play in the transformation of the individual believer on whose motivation depends the growth process.

Baha'i historical sources will be used to identify actual diffusion pathways. Baha'i information regarding organizational structure and authority will be incorporated into an analysis of the nature and efficiency of the religion's policy.

I have chosen to work from the expansion plans launched by the Baha'i institution for the efficiency of the study. An effort has been made to restrict the research work in time in order to focus the attention primarily on the 1960s--1970s during which period the Baha'i Faith recorded substantial growth and momentum in the United States, but a brief overview of earlier plans for a better comprehension of the evolutionary phenomenon of the movement turned out to be necessary.

The 1960s--1970s period is of special interest because of specific historical conditions, external to the Baha'i Faith but coinciding with a structural change within the Baha'i movement.

1963 is a milestone in Baha'i history because it coincides with the centenary of its foundation, as well as with the structural development of its administrative order: the election of the Universal House of Justice, the supreme body administering Baha'i activities on the worldwide basis.

To what extent does the Baha'i Faith represent the vehicle to bring about the new communication spoken of by Margaret Mead. Is it capable of answering the needs of different segments of the American society in their quest, the youth for spirituality, the blacks and minority groups for status and equal rights, the women in their battle for emancipation and equal opportunity and rights? And to what extent can it create the favorable conditions and consensus for a future world community? The analysis of its history and growth might provide us with valuable information.

## CHAPTER I

### HISTORY AND BELIEF

#### HISTORY

The Baha'i Faith originated in Persia in 1844 and is today established in all parts of the non-Communist world.

In its early days many observers perceived it as a reform movement to the fanatic Shiat Islam of the middle nineteenth century. However, within a few years, it became apparent that the movement was claiming to be an independent religion. Its prophet founder, the "Bab", which means the "Gate", declared in 1844 that he was none other than the "Mahdi" 12th Iman (successor of Muhammed) who would renew religion and guide the faithful. After his own sayings, his principal mission was to bring tidings and prepare the way for the coming of "Him whom God shall make manifest."

In 1850 he was shot but by then the number of his disciples had grown immensely. Large-scale persecution followed in which more than 20,000 people lost their lives.<sup>(1)</sup>

#### BAHA'U'LLAH

Mirza Husain Ali, who later on would be known as Baha'u'llah (which means Glory of God), was born in Teheran, November 12, 1817. He was the son of a minister. In 1852 Baha'u'llah, who had been an early

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(1) "Des milliers de martyrs," atteste Renan dans les Apotres, "ont accourus pour lui, 'le Bab', avec allegresse, au devant de la mort. Un jour sans pareil, peut-être, dans l'histoire du monde fut celui de la grande boucherie qui se fit des Babis à Teheran." (Les Apotres, Ernest Renan, Paris, 1866, as referred to in Essai sur Le Baha'isme Hyppolyte Dreyfus, Puf de France, 1973.)

disciple of the Bab was thrown into jail and it was while in prison that he became aware of his mission as a messenger of God. He was released in January 1853 and exiled to Baghdad where in 1863 he openly declared his mission. Thirteen years had gone by since the Bab's death and the Babies, many of whom had been exiled with Baha'u'llah, accepted, with a few exceptions, his leadership.

From this date forward, the movement was known as the Baha'i Faith.

The growing number of followers alarmed the Persian government who wanted to see this charismatic leader moved further away from its borders. On its demand, the Ottoman government exiled Baha'u'llah, first to Constantinople and then to Adrianople. It is from this city that he made a public proclamation of his mission in letters (tablets) addressed to the rulers of Persia, Turkey, Russia, Prussia, Austria and Britain, as well as to the pope and to the Christian and Muslim clergy collectively. In 1868 he was again exiled, this time to Akka, Palestine, where he died in 1892. Since then, the Baha'i movement has its holy places in Akka and Haifa.

#### ABDUL'BAHA AND SHOGHI-EFFENDI

Baha'u'llah appointed his eldest son, Abdul'Baha ("Servant of the Glory"), 1844-1921, as the leader of the Baha'i community and the authorized interpreter of his teachings. Abdul'Baha not only administered the affairs of the movement but was also engaged actively in spreading the faith. Having been liberated from prison in 1908 by the revolution of the Young Turks, he travelled to Europe and America in 1911 and 1912.

Abdul'Baha appointed his eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi Rabbani (1896-1957) as his successor, "Guardian of his cause", and

authorized interpreter of the teachings of Baha'u'llah, thus assuring the continued unity of the believers.

The passing of Shoghi-Effendi put an end to the period where one person was invested with the authority. The Baha'i community has developed and known a structural transformation anticipated by Baha'u'llah who in his writings had laid the foundation for an administrative order destined to 1) maintain the unity of the believers and 2) assure the expansion of the movement.

Before examining these institutions and their role, it is necessary to briefly analyze the social implication of the message. This might give us a hint in understanding the growth of the movement. (2)

#### THE MESSAGE AND ITS SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Baha'u'llah insisted: "That His mission is to educate the people of the world to live and work together in order to establish a world civilization in which all human faculties will finally find its adequate and complete expression." (3)

Civilization, Baha'u'llah taught, had evolved to the point where unity of mankind had become the paramount necessity. "The Baha'i faith," in the words of Shoghi-Effendi, "proclaims the necessity and the inevitability of the unification of mankind, asserts that it is gradually approaching and claims that nothing short of the transmuting spirit of God, working through His chosen Mouthpiece in this day can ultimately succeed in bringing it about...It condemns all manner of prejudice and superstition, declares the purpose of religion to be

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(2) See Annex 1 for statistics of growth, 1844-1985.

(3) The Promise of All Ages, George Townsend, Maison d'Edition Baha'i, Brussles, 1970; p. 27

the promotion of amity and concord, proclaims its essential harmony with science, and recognizes it as the foremost agency for pacification and the orderly progress of human society. It unequivocally maintains the principle of equal rights, opportunities and privileges for men and women, insists on compulsory education, eliminates extremes of poverty and wealth, abolishes the institution of priesthood and urges either the creation or the selection of an auxiliary international language."<sup>(4)</sup> These ideas give an outline of the Baha'i program.

Baha'i sacred literature consists of the total corpus of the writings of Baha'u'llah and their interpretation and amplification in the writings of Abdul'Baha and Shoghi-Effendi.

Among the numerous works left by Baha'u'llah is the Kitab i-Agdas (the most holy book), the repository of his laws, the Kitab-i-Iqan (the book of certitude), an exposition of essential teachings on the nature of God and religion.

His works develop two aspects:

- a) The spiritual and ethical growth of man
- b) Present him with a practical guide for the establishment of the unity of mankind,

in other words, "the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth" depends on a radical and complete change of conduct and attitudes. This is a challenge, no doubt, for the American Baha'i community faced with serious social and cultural issues.

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(4) The World Order of Baha'u'llah, Baha'i Publishing Committee, New York, N.Y., 1938.



## BELIEF

Baha'is believe in a God who is completely transcendent and unknowable. God is "beyond every human attribute such as corporal existence, ascent and descent." They differ here from Jewish, Christian and Muslim mystics who believe that knowledge of and even union with God are attainable. God the creator is coeternal with creation itself, which is the manifestation of God's unknowable essence. To the Baha'is, divine manifestation also occurs in the form of prophets or messengers, often termed Divine educators, who are considered mirrors of God's reflection. Each such manifestation is both part of God's unity and a distinct individuality. While all "true" religions are essentially one, their messages differ, depending on the level of society and civilization in the age in which they are revealed.

Faith is essential to Baha'i spiritual life, and is based on the free choice of an individual. On reaching maturity--21 years of age, the children of Baha'is must decide for themselves if they wish to join the community. It is not an automatic thing and the parents can in no way make this decision for the child. "Independent search for the truth" is a fundamental principle which emphasizes the new approach the Baha'i Faith wants to give to religion. It is not hereditary, it should be appreciated, understood and put into acts. The quality of the members are important, not their quantity. Prayers and meditation are part of daily life and help relate the creatures to their creator.

Baha'is believe in the unity of man and religion, in universal education and world peace.

## CHAPTER II

### BAHA'I DIFFUSION POLICY--ITS ORIGIN

#### THE TABLETS OF THE DIVINE PLAN

Until 1916 the diffusion of the Baha'i message was governed by direct instructions from the charismatic leaders (the Bab, Baha'u'llah and Abdul'Baha) to individual followers.

During the lifetimes of the Bab and Baha'u'llah, directions for diffusion were given to the Persian Baha'is and in the years from 1844 to 1892 the Baha'i Faith was established in 15 countries. In 1916 and 1917 however, the structure of the Baha'i diffusion process began to undergo a profound change. Abdul'Baha then the charismatic leader of the Baha'i community, wrote a series of messages<sup>(1)</sup> to the Baha'is of the United States in which he invested them with a special expansion mission. These plans are the foundation of the future strategies of world campaigns which the Baha'is have adopted as their method of expansion policy even to this day.

How did it happen that Abdul'Baha gave the Baha'is of the U.S.A. special responsibilities in proclaiming his father's message to the world? (It should be mentioned that a number of American Baha'is from 1937 onward would leave their country and settle in territories and countries not yet open to the Baha'i Faith.)

The following observations might answer this question:

(1) Les tablettes du plan divin par Abdul'Baha. Baha'i Canada 1981.

a) U.S.A. was the first country in the Occident to respond to Baha'u'llah's teachings in 1893 and the first pilgrims to visit Abdul'Baha in Akka were a group of American Baha'is in 1898. Some of them would stay for several months in the "Holy family" and on leaving this special environment would return to their country infused with the message of Baha'u'llah.

b) America, being a melting pot of different races, cultures, religions, and less attached to tradition, could seem to offer the ideal soil for a new religious experience based on a multiracial experience.

c) The trip which Abdul'Baha undertook from April to December, 1912 to this country familiarized him with the qualities and weaknesses of the American society.

He spoke in numerous gatherings invited by the Unitarian Church, the Baptists, the Theosophical Society, etc;<sup>(2)</sup> and much publicity was being given at that time to the growing Baha'i community and its world embracing principles.

At the time of the passing of Abdul'Baha, the organization of the Administrative Order was fully defined but not yet established among his followers. The responsibility for carrying out the instructions was placed by Abdul'Baha upon his grandson, Shoghi-Effendi, to whom he assigned the function of Guardian of the Cause. Obedience to the authority of the Guardian was definitely enjoined upon all Baha'is by Abdul'Baha, but this authority carried with it nothing of an arbitrary or personal character, being limited as to purpose and method by the writings of Baha'u'llah and Abdul'Baha. The Guardian unifies the efforts to bring into complete application those principles of world administration already clearly defined.

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(2) Baha'i World 1950-1954, Vol. XII, Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1956, p; 669.

The main idea underlying the Baha'i administrative system is the full participation of the individual believer in the affairs of his locality and decision making procedure. Baha'i authority is measured by self-sacrifice and not by arbitrary power. The local group, involving as it does men and women in all the normal activities and relations of life, is the foundation upon which rests the entire evolution of the Cause. The local Baha'i community is given official recognition only after its number of adult declared believers exceeds nine. Up to this point, the community exists as a group which can have local activities but no right of jurisdiction on its members. The individual, wherever he is, feels his sacred responsibility of sharing his faith with others.

In what way does the Administrative Order relate to the individual Baha'i and motivate him to take actions leading to the expansion of the movement?

#### DIFFUSION POLICY

Since its origin, the Baha'i Faith has followed an expansionist policy but it was not until the first seven year plan that organized and efficient strategies were developed in the Baha'i communities in order to accomplish the goals.

The expansion plans as it would appear from this study should not only be conceived in terms of demographic growth. The Baha'is rarely mention their total numbers believing that it is not the quantity but the quality which is important and rather, they give statistics in terms of administrative units. These units, as will be shown, play a major role in the diffusion of the Baha'i Faith. Their expansionist

policy is also aimed at dissemination of the principles and the beliefs of the Faith. This definitely means that the religion solicits new adherents but it also means that Baha'i energy is expended on activities which encourage adoption of Baha'i principles by non-Baha'i agencies. The Baha'is' work and relationship to the United Nations is one example. In 1970 a consultative status was granted to the Baha'i International Community by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).<sup>(3)</sup>

Baha'is anticipate a dramatic collapse in present day civilization and values and believe that the New World Order, as described by their founder-Prophet, will take its place. This explains, on the one hand, the extreme mobility of the believers who do not hesitate to leave their homes and settle in other areas where they can serve their ideal. In the Baha'i terminology, these people are referred to as "pioneers". "Say teach ye the Cause of God O people of Baha, for God hath prescribed unto everyone the duty of proclaiming his message and regardeth it as the most meritorious of all deeds."<sup>(4)</sup> This policy has allowed the establishment, in a relatively short time, of Baha'i centers all over the free world and has emphasized the importance of reaching minority groups.<sup>(5)</sup> The ultimate victory of the Baha'i Faith, say the Baha'is, depends on the adherence of all races and ethnicities. "Unity in diversity" is a key phrase in the Baha'i community. This principle is inherent in the writings of Baha'u'llah and is the foundation of his message.

Already at an early stage of its development, the expansion policy of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States referred to ----

(3) The Baha'i World 1954-1963, XII, pp.788-802 and The Baha'i World 1968-1973, XIV, pp. 358-377.

(4) Baha'u'llah as quoted by Shoghi-Effendi, The Advent of Divine Justice, Bahai Publishing Trust, Wilmette, p. 38.

(5) Statistics Annex 1.

teaching projects among blacks and Indians. Much effort would go into these undertakings instead of concentrating on a more homogenous group which, no doubt, would have facilitated the spread during a century when race prejudice seemed a tremendous obstacle for the expansion of a movement advocating racial unity.

### THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

How does the Baha'i Faith maintain its doctrinal unity?

Its goal, as defined earlier, is unity of mankind. It is devoid of nationalism. It is not a cultural expression of a dominant power imposing itself on weaker ones.

The social structure of the Baha'i community worldwide as well as nationally (this is true for the U.S.A. also) is essentially determined by the relation to this "Administrative Order" which inspires the interactions, rights, duties, attitudes, behavior of the Baha'is. The Baha'i's commitment to his administrative order is essential and vital for two reasons:

- 1) it bestows upon him rights in the context of the Baha'i society (Baha'i election, voting right and decision-making.)
- 2) it imposes responsibilities and a certain conduct motivated by its laws.

### THE INSTITUTIONS

The Administrative Order with its different institutions can in no way be confused with an administrative machinery or a bureaucratic one, say the Baha'is.

The efficiency of its "machinery" is determined by the extent to which the members of the institutions reflect the moral and ethic values defined by Baha'u'llah. Dedication, honesty and humility are important features Baha'is look for in their fellow Baha'is when electing them for an office. Nature of profession, wealth, race, age, sex and status in the community and other such distinctions are not decisive factors.

The members of local and national institutions work for the Faith in their spare time and are not remunerated. Thus we notice that the Baha'is, despite their commitment to work in a local or national office, are professionally engaged in the global society to earn a living as any other citizen. They have no material prerogative nor a different status. They have no power or influence as an individual over the other believers and consider themselves at the service of the community.

Shoghi-Effendi comments on the attitude and responsibility of members in these words:

The duties of those whom the Friends have freely and conscientiously elected as their representatives are no less vital and binding than the obligations of those who have chosen them. Their function is not to dictate, but to consult, and consult not only among themselves, but as much as possible with the Friends whom they represent. They must regard themselves in no other light but that of chosen instruments for a more efficient and dignified presentation of the Cause of God. They should never be led to suppose that they are the central ornaments of the body of the Cause, intrinsically superior to others in capacity or merit, and sole promoters of its teachings and principles. They should approach their task with extreme

humility, and endeavour, by their openmindedness, their high sense of justice and duty, their candour, their modesty, their entire devotion to the welfare and interests of the Friends, the Cause, and humanity, to win, not only the confidence and the genuine support and respect of those whom they serve, but also their esteem and real affection. (6)

The Baha'i election takes place on the 21st of April, date of the declaration of Baha'u'llah, once a year for the local and national bodies, every 5 years for the International body (The Universal House of Justice). The electoral process excludes parties or factions, nomination and campaigning for office. Every Baha'i who has attained his 21st birthday is a potential candidate. The election is secret and the elector is responsible before "God" for his choice of nine people.

Thus, according to Baha'i administrative procedure, the election process, the holding of office, and the responsibility of the elected bodies towards their supporters differ with what we are familiar with in today's electoral system.

First of all, what characterizes the Baha'i election is a prayerful attitude. It is inconceivable to prepare for an election without having prayed and meditated. This inspires the delegates in their choice of the nine people they want to see in office. All through the year as well, the Baha'i will try to observe his fellow Baha'i in view of this election.

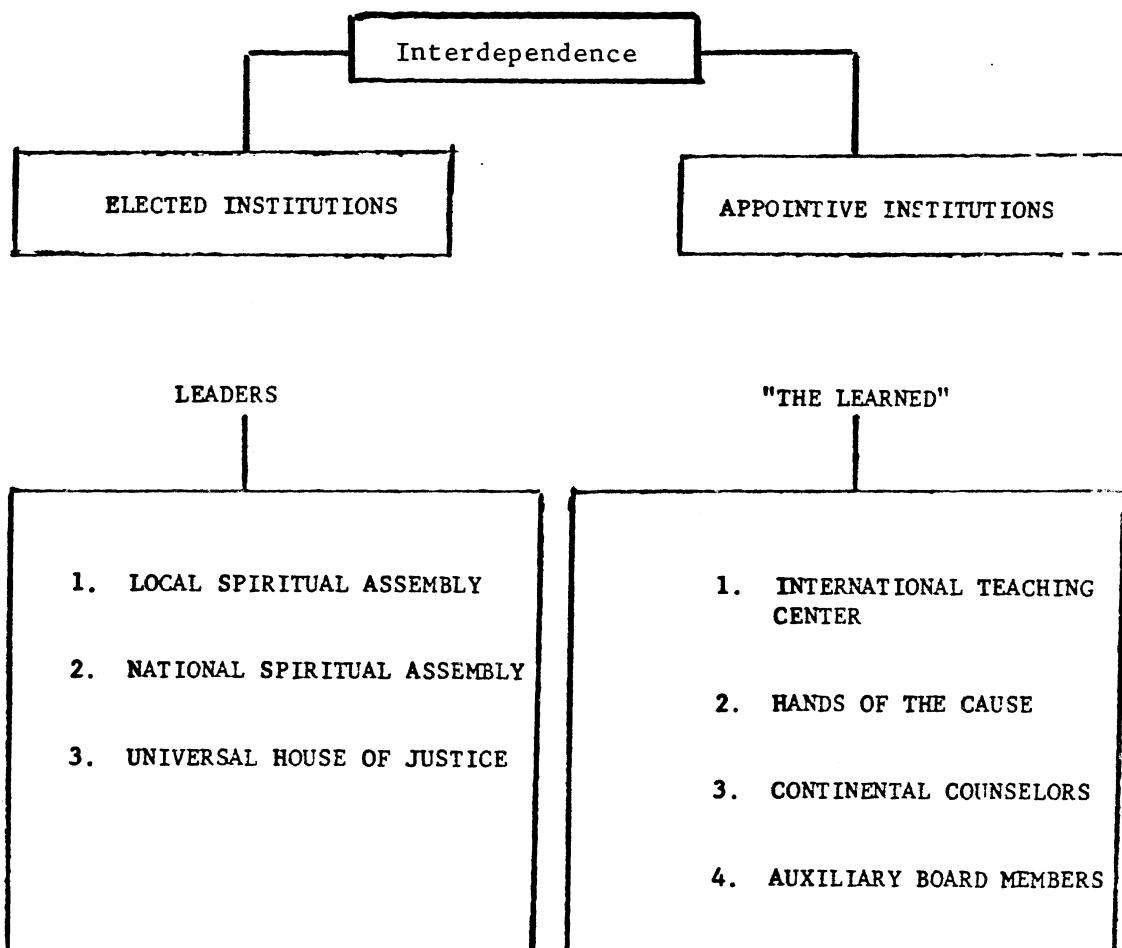
Secondly, the elected assembly members are not responsible towards their supporters (voters) neither individually nor as a body. They consider themselves responsible for the affairs of the community before "God".

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(6) Baha'i Administration, Baha'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, 1950, p. 44.



The yearly election gives a possibility for the community to change members of the institutions if they are not satisfied and this has at least the advantage of maintaining a dynamic in a guiding body which easily might become static in time.

The two pillars of the Baha'i administration are:



- ° Act collectively
- ° Have powers:
  - Legislative
  - Administrative
  - Judiciary Powers

- ° Act individually
- ° Have no legislative, administrative or judiciary powers
- ° Do not have sacerdotal functions  
nor
- ° Authoritative interpretation
- ° But play "a vital role"

## THE ELECTED INSTITUTIONS

### The Universal House of Justice

The provenance, the authority, the duties, the sphere of action of the Universal House of Justice all derive from the revealed Word of Baha'u'llah which together with the interpretation of Abdul'Baha and Shoghi-Effendi constitute the binding term of reference of the Universal House of Justice.<sup>(7)</sup>

The Baha'is believe that the spiritual law which is the essence of their religion and the foundation of its institutions stems from two sources:

- 1) The ordinances revealed by Baha'u'llah (developed and interpreted by Abdul'Baha and Shoghi-Effendi)
- 2) The decisions of the Universal House of Justice--the supreme legislator--a body composed of 9 members elected by all National Assemblies of the world every five years. It is up to this body to promulgate the ordinances and regulations not clearly explained in the Sacred Writings. This provides a flexibility to Baha'i administration enabling it to adapt itself to the changing conditions of the society. All decisions made by the Universal House of Justice has the same value as the Sacred Texts themselves. (Will and Testament of Abdul'Baha)

Thus the Baha'is underline that

- a) Its authority originates from the Divine Law.
- b) It forms a united institution free from national tendencies

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(7) Baha'i Word 1968-73, p. 556.

as its members do not have to justify their decisions to those who elect them but to God to whom they are accountable.

The composition of the Universal House of Justice (1985) is as follows:

2 Iranians

5 Americans (4 white and 1 black)

2 English

Its functions are as follows:

- 1) It has to legislate on matters not explicitly revealed in the sacred writings.
- 2) It has to legislate on new questions arising as a result of the development of the world community in order to unify the actions of all national institutions of the Baha'i Faith.
- 3) It has to elaborate expansion plans .

#### NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

On the national scale, each year Baha'is elect delegates to a national convention that elects a National Spiritual Assembly with jurisdiction over the entire country. This institution is in constant contact with the Universal House of Justice and acts as an intermediary between the summit and the base (local institutions and groups).

It orientates and develops expansion projects on the national level and is the custodian of Baha'i standards.

Elected to this office for 1985 in the United States are:

- 1 Iranian origin
- 6 American (2 black)
- 1 Chinese origin
- 1 Indian origin

This confirms the multiracial membership among the Baha'is of the United States, but which also testifies to the fact that the Anglo Saxons are more numerous.

#### THE LOCAL ASSEMBLY

The Baha'i Faith has no clergy, no priests, no missionaries. But it is a sacred duty for a Baha'i to transmit the message to whoever shares an interest. As soon as there are two Baha'is in the same locality they form a group which works in collaboration with the National Assembly or a committee appointed by this institution.

As soon as 9 people have joined the group they form a local spiritual assembly. In the United States today there are 119,400 localities and 31,000 local assemblies.

The Local Assembly has two spheres of action:

- 1) Promoting the Message among the population of its jurisdiction. This point will be developed further in our analysis dealing with the growth in expansion in general.
- 2) It is the custodian for the respect of Baha'i standards and community life such as marriage, divorce, religious instruction of children, etc.;, and assures that holidays and special events are celebrated in the community according to the Baha'i calendar. (8)

---- (8) The Bab in 1844 developed a new calendar based on the solar year with 19 months each of which have 19 days. This calendar inaugurates the Baha'i era.

The Local Assembly is autonomous but works in close collaboration with its National Spiritual Assembly in aspects concerning the global Baha'i community--national plans of expansion, for instance.

But how does the individual Baha'i relate to his local assembly which very easily could become a body out of touch with the believers? History has shown that institutional religion in time loses its primarily evolutionary potentialities.

The Baha'is interviewed are convinced that this will not happen and hold that the 19 day feast, an institution prescribed by Baha'u'llah acts as a regulator and a bridge between the community and the Local Assembly.

#### THE 19 DAY FEAST

The 19 day feast takes place on the first day of each Baha'i month every 19 days and is celebrated in all Baha'i communities all over the world. It is divided into three distinct parts:

- a) Spiritual readings from the Baha'i sacred writings.
- b) Administrative: Reports are given by the secretary of the local spiritual assembly on decisions made by this body. Teaching projects are discussed and "It is," say the Baha'is interviewed, "the opportunity for the members of the community to express their opinion and consult with their 'leaders' on any subject they wish." It is, as a matter of fact, a sacred duty for each individual to attend this meeting because the contribution of each Baha'i is considered of primary importance. The individual is the foundation on which the Baha'i system works. The

ideas come from the base and the 19 day feast provides this opportunity for communication. It eliminates, say the Baha'is, the risk of the institutions to become centers of power and encourages the active participation of everyone in the affairs of the community.

It should, however, be kept in mind that the Baha'i Faith is still in its early years and the community is still insignificant in most areas. The Baha'is feel they have a mission. They are infused with their belief and this creates strong bonds between the members. Belonging to a minority group demands a quality of life in accordance with the standards of the group which is necessary for its future development.

Only time will tell to what extent the Baha'i administration is capable of adapting itself to a changing world.

#### APPOINTIVE INSTITUTIONS

The chart on page 21 shows the interaction and relation between the two pillars of the Administrative Order. Their functions are different but complimentary. The appointive institutions have no authority, no power of decision but are invested with a spiritual quality. People appointed to these institutions are, in most cases, believers who have rendered great services to the movement as teachers or "pioneers". Except for the institution of the "Teaching Center" whose primary task it is to establish the expansion plans on a worldwide basis for the approval of the Universal House of Justice, the other institutions' duties are directly concerned with:

- a) propagation of the Faith
- b) stimulating the believers to acquire a better understanding of their Baha'i identity.

They play a considerable role in knitting the dispersed groups together by regular visits and act as centers of communication. At their different level of consultation and interaction with the elected institutions they provide valuable councils and ideas for the elaboration of teaching plans.

Again the policy adapted for the apointment of these institutions is based on a one year or 5 year mandate. This protects the community against the influence and domination of too strong personalities. It permits "new blood" to stimulate the communities' actions in view of the accomplishment of the planned goals.

#### IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Demographic expansion through numerical increase, geographical dispersion and compositional diversity has been a Baha'i policy since the earliest days of the Faith.

In what way has this policy been implemented?

The commitment of the believer to his "sacred obligation" of promoting the message creates a positive climate for the implementation of organized plans. It should be underlined that not all Baha'is find in themselves a "missionary soul" or want to make sacrifices. Their status as Baha'is is in no way jeopardized for this reason. On the other hand, dedicated support for plan objectives does not insure the individual believer of a higher standing in the group.<sup>(9)</sup> He obtains

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(9) There is one exception to this statement: Any believer who moved to an unopened territory or country during the first year of the 10-year plan (1953-1963) was designated as a knight of Baha'u'llah, a title which conferred prestige on its bearer.

no authority, no element of power. At the most, he can hope for a certain amount of sympathy and admiration. His dedication might at a later date open the door for his election to a local or a national institution. But again, as it has been noted before, being a member of these institutions do not confer special prerogatives, but is a position that engenders respect. Therefore, what motivates him are values of a different nature, inspired by his faith in Baha'u'llah.

This is clearly stated by the Guardian in these words:

"Whether it be by an open and bold assertion of the fundamental verities of the Cause, or the adoption of a less direct and more cautious method of teaching; whether by the dissemination of our literature or the example of conduct, our one aim and sole object should be to help in the eventual recognition by all mankind of the Baha'i Revelation? Whatever method he adopts, and however indirect the course he chooses to pursue, every true believer should regard such a recognition as the supreme goal of his endeavor. Whilst consciously labouring towards the attainment of this end, he should, by supporting every branch of the administrative activities of his national and local Assemblies, seek and obtain the fullest information on the character and extent of the worldwide progress of the Cause, and strive to contribute his share towards the strengthening of the spirit of solidarity among the components of the Baha'i world."<sup>(10)</sup>

From this perspective it seems that the degree to which the Baha'i Faith successfully executes its plans may be a reasonable

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(10) Principles of Baha'i Administration, Fletcher and Son, Baha'i Publishing Trust, 4th Edition, 1976, p. 23.



indicator of the strength and dynamism of the Faith and the level of commitment of its believers.

## CHAPTER III

### GROWTH AND EXPANSION

#### International Responsibilities of the American Baha'i Community

#### THE PLANS

##### First seven year plan -- 1937-1944

This plan called for the establishment of at least one Baha'i community in every country in the Western Hemisphere. This responsibility must have siphoned off a significant number of Baha'is from larger Baha'i communities.

##### Second seven year plan -- 1946-1953

This plan embraced four objectives: multiplication of Baha'i centers throughout the Americas and bolder proclamation of the Faith to the masses; formation of three National Assemblies in Canada, Central America and South America as well as more active proclamation in Europe where the Baha'i communities were still few.

##### The ten year plan -- 1953-1963

This plan is also referred to as the World Crusade. Among its goals the most challenging one was the establishment of the faith in 131 new countries among the European countries and the whole African continent (See Statistic Annex I for figures.) and territorial divisions. Any observer must be impressed with the performance of the Baha'i plan strategy. A little more than 30 years separate us from the moment when the first pioneer was installed on the African continent and in most European countries. Since then most African countries have obtained their independance. Cameroon, for instance, received its first Baha'i pioneer in 1952 and during a visit to that country last year I learned that the Baha'i Faith in that country counted 30.000 members. This is the general trend in all African countries.

## GROWTH AND EXPANSION IN THE UNITED STATES

The first seven year plan, 1933-1944, as far as domestic goals were concerned, concentrated on ensuring that each state had at least one local assembly by the end of the plan in 1944. Twenty-six states had none at the beginning of the plan. The objective of the expansion was not just aimed at increasing the number of believers or assemblies but followed a specific expansion policy: implantation in every state yet taking into account the uneven distribution of population in the different states. This pattern favoring a planned dispersion rather than numbers only will be predominant in all Baha'i plans. For instance, the plan made it equally important to form an Assembly in Nevada with only 110,000 inhabitants as to form an Assembly in Texas with 6,400,000.

Until 1936, conversion was the major reason for the increase of Baha'i centers in the country. From 1936, the migrations of Baha'is from one part of the country with larger Baha'i population such as New York and Los Angeles were the principal mechanism whereby local Spiritual Assemblies were established in states which lacked them.

The second seven year plan, 1946-1953 and the ten year crusade, 1953-1963, established domestic goals that simply reinforced the prevailing geographic distribution. The former called for an increase in the number of local assemblies from 131 (1944) to 175 by 1953. The final result was 169 by 1953. The latter called for an increase from 169 to 300 by 1963. The first Indian Assembly was formed in Pinespring, Arizona in 1962. Twenty-six American Indian tribes were at this point represented among the enrolled believers.

The Baha'i annual reports of 1962 states "Efforts to reach the Negro and other minority groups in our population has been little rewarding. However, an intensive proclamation program was commenced in Greenville, South Carolina with the hope that concentrated effort might provide a 'breakthrough in teaching Negroes in the South'."

NUMBER OF STATES WITH HIGH, MEDIUM AND LOW

CONCENTRATIONS OF BAHAI'S

U.S.A. 1900 to 1976

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Low</u> | <u>Medium</u> | <u>High</u> |
|-------------|------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1900        | 42         | 3             | 3           |
| 1906        | 37         | 3             | 8           |
| 1916        | 33         | 6             | 9           |
| 1926        | 33         | 5             | 10          |
| 1936        | 30         | 7             | 11          |
| 1944        | 19         | 21            | 8           |
| 1950        | 16         | 19            | 13          |
| 1964        | 14         | 21            | 13          |
| 1970        | 13         | 19            | 16          |
| 1976        | 17         | 21            | 16          |

The table above confirms the growth of the Baha i population and its implantation policy in the different states. One can notice a gradual trend away from the heavy concentration of Baha'is in a few states during the 1900 and 1936 period, but this was not caused by specific planned objectives Through the 8 following years this trend accelerated and has remained stable since 1944.

The rapid change was the outcome of the expansionist objective outlined in the 7 year plan. This goal precipitated large scale dispersion because at the beginning of the planning period almost half the states had no resident Baha'i.

The general trend can be developed as follows: By 1900 the dominant Baha'i population was established in the North east, very quickly challenged by a growing Baha'i population on the West-coast. Until 1936 both seems to be of roughly equal importance. Florida came in third and remained until the 1960s the only southern state with a Baha'i presence of some importance.

After 1936 the whole West emerged as a dominant region while the North-east declined sharply. 1968-70 sees the impressive rise of the Baha'i representation in the South.. States like Illinois had shown a persistent strength during the whole period. No doubt, that the decision of building the first Baha'i Temple in the West on the shores of lake Michigan, in the suburb of Wilmette, destined to become the Mother Temple of the North American hemisphere, indicates that there must have been a strong community in this area capable in time to accomplish this goal. To-day this building, magnificent in structure, is receiving visitors from all over the world and is the pivot around which the Baha'i community is turning. The National Spiritual Assembly has its offices in a part of this building.

#### Explanation for change

How to explain the shift in population density during the first 30 years of the 19th century and the emergence of a growing Baha'i presence on the West-coast. The plan policy had not yet been elaborated. Therefore the Baha'is must have tried to combine two factors in their choice for a new home:

- a. Their desire to serve and promote their Faith
- b. The region where the economical opportunities seem to be most favourable.

This explains why a massive number moved out of New York, initially

the core community, towards states like California. It should be noticed that the Baha'i immigrant followed the trend of the American immigrant in general in his desire to move West.

The dramatic shift in the regional distribution of Baha'i strength and presence, which have occurred in the 20th century, can be said to have been the result of changing economic and social conditions interacted with the Baha'i dispersion policy. Another example is the shift in the late 1960s towards a massive Baha'i population in the Southern states until then totally under represented, made possible by the prevailing historical conditions of that period combined with a specific plan policy. (see p.54 comments)

### THE NINE YEAR PLAN

The nine year plan, 1964-1973, inaugurated by the Universal House of Justice, witnessed a growth in number of enrollments which in 1963 totaled 1,371 and in 1971 reached its peak with 20,000 enrollments.

The table on the following page illustrates the growth data.

The enormous acceleration in enrollments was also the result of vast teaching projects among the blacks in South Carolina. The percentage of enrollments among youth emphasizes the trend towards a younger Baha'i community, i.e., 15-30 years age group.

In 1948, the Baha'i community had 5,987 believers, 186 being youth.

The first year of the nine year plan shows a regular growth which can be explained by the increase of believers and their dedication to promoting the faith. This can be considered a natural growth.

In 1970, the numbers were doubled from 20,000 to 40,000. Youth accounted for one quarter of the Baha'i population and this trend continued the following year. (3)

The growth rate during the period of 1948 to 1963 was around 5,000 new members and between 1963 to 1972 there were an additional 48,000 new Baha'is.

These figures come from the First draft of national membership: National Office, Wilmette, Illinois. They must be used with prudence

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(3) Baha'i Annual Reports for each year published by National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha's of the United States, Wilmette, Illinois.

since we have no way to determine at what time during the year this first draft has been established. It should also be kept in mind that the difference between the total of new enrollments and the total national membership comes from the fact that transfer of Baha'is from other countries and settling in the U.S.A. are accounted for in total membership.

GROWTH TABLE

| Year    | Adults | Youth | Total | Total<br>Membership | Youth |
|---------|--------|-------|-------|---------------------|-------|
| 1963/64 | 994    | 375   | 1371  | 12,156              | 1150  |
| 1964/65 | 751    | 340   | 1091  | 14,429              | 1496  |
| 1965/66 | 822    | 357   | 1179  | §                   | §     |
| 1966/67 | 912    | 504   | 1416  | 15,461              | 2082  |
| 1967/68 | §      | 668   | 1773  | 17,765              | §     |
| 1968/69 | §      | §     | §     | 20,265              | §     |
| 1969/70 | §      | §     | 3773  | 23,994              | 3444  |
| 1970/71 | §      | 7,765 | 17628 | 40,221              | 9373  |
| 1971/72 | §      | 7,333 | 14741 | 59,372              | 14460 |

(4)

§ = Figures not available.

(4) National office



OBJECTIVES OF THE NINE YEAR PLAN 1964-1973

1) The plan called for an increase in local Spiritual Assemblies from 300 in 1964 to 600 in 1972. The total number achieved was 824 (224 in excess of the goal).

The Baha'is resided in 4,809 localities, 1,809 more than called for and over 3,000 more than existed at the beginning of the plan.

2) Baha'i holy days and the right to perform Baha'i marriages were to be officially recognized in every state by the end of the plan. (5)

3) Intensified teaching started in 1962 among Negroes in the Southern States culminating in "mass conversion" during the 1970-1972 period.

4) Youth population, age 15-30, within the Baha'i communities grows regular and represents in the 1970-1972 period 50% of the enrollments.

The majority of the goals assigned to the American Community in the nine year plan were accomplished during the period from 1968 to 1973, and in several instances the accomplishments surpassed the objectives.

An analysis of this phenomenon leads to two major factors:

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(5) Obtaining official recognition of Baha'i holy days and the right to perform marriages in the different states had been part of the earlier plans too.

- 1) Internal to the Baha'i community -- strategy
- 2) External: prevailing historic conditions of a given period.

INTERNAL TO THE BAHAI COMMUNITY:

In 1967<sup>(6)</sup> the Universal House of Justice called for a worldwide proclamation of the Faith. "This call galvanized the American community to its roots," the National Spiritual Assembly reported,<sup>(7)</sup> and assisted the community in embarking upon a simultaneous series of multifarious activities designed at once to call the attention of the non-Baha'i public to the Faith and to further expand and consolidate the community. Some of the major activities fall into three categories:

- 1) the proclamation project which took the Message of Baha'u'llah to various strata of American society.
- 2) the five year youth program
- 3) the concerted teaching campaign in the Southern states designed to bring into the Baha'i community large numbers of black people.

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(6) This year was the centennial of Baha'u'llah's proclamation to the kings of his time--1867-68.

(7) The Baha'i World, 1968-1973, p. 226.

PROCLAMATION PROJECT

This project concentrated mainly on official recognition of the Baha'i Faith and its American community. The activities were oriented to create goodwill, to emphasize the interest and efforts the Baha'is made toward a solution of the civil rights problem.

As such, the American National Assembly directed its community to focus its attention upon Human Rights since the United Nations had proclaimed 1968 International Human Rights Year.

The American Baha'i community adopted the statement "Human Rights Are God-Given Rights", embodying the Baha'i position.

Wide distribution of the book Proclamation of Baha'u'llah to government officials and prominent persons continued through the entire period and was largely responsible for the immeasurable increase in publicity and interest by the media.

This book was delivered to President Lyndon B. Johnson on behalf of the Universal House of Justice. His acknowledgement below shows that the Baha'i faith had already gained prestige and that its goals and visions to a certain extent had fostered the respect of political leaders in the U.S.A.: "I am pleased to acknowledge the growing good you do. Yours have been a work of love. You have sown seeds of righteousness and justice, and your humanity will reap rich harvest from your soil. Your purpose is the purpose of America, your hope the hope of men of goodwill everywhere. All thoughtful and farsighted men respect the mission of your faith. For every one of us looks forward to that day when the earth will truly be one country--and mankind its citizens." (8)

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(8) Baha'i World, 1963-68, p. 231.

The creation in 1968 of the Louis G. Gregory<sup>( 9)</sup> award "for service to humanity" increased respect for the Baha'i community's efforts and work towards a better understanding of minorities and of human rights. Recipients were: the Xerox Corporation for its educational television projects on the history and contributions of black Americans (1968), Dr. James A. Olivero, executive director of Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory for his work among children of minorities (1970); Mr. Roy Wilkins, executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, for his extensive work in the field of human rights (1972).

The national Baha'i community develops a rhythm of campaigns upon the rising sensitivities of the American populace through a succession of name days which it celebrates and publicizes:

|                    |    |           |
|--------------------|----|-----------|
| Race Unity Day     | in | June      |
| World Peace Day    | in | September |
| United Nations Day | in | October   |
| World Religion Day | in | January   |
| Human Rights Day   | in | September |

It should be mentioned that from 1921 the Baha'is had organized Amity meetings and looked upon themselves as pioneers in this field.

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( 9) For more than 40 years Louis Gregory, a black member of the Baha'i movement since 1909 served as the chief spokesman for racial unity in the American Baha'i community.

## YOUTH ACTIVITIES

During the years 1963 to 1968, within the American nation as a whole, youth in huge numbers were shaken by a new awareness of the decay and corruption of their society. A new youth culture grew to claim the allegiance of millions of young people who had rejected the old order.

Its positive elements affected the Baha'i community as a whole, revitalizing and strengthening it and advancing Baha'i youth to new levels of commitment, service and action. Its negative elements were largely eliminated by the laws and standards of the Baha'i Faith and the guidance of the Administrative Order.

The Baha'i Faith, no doubt presented the youth and minority groups with an inspiring challenge: the building of a new age based on a new set of values relevant to their deeprooted aspirations.

The Administrative Order used its structure to channel the youths' energy and creativity. The success of the expansion policy can no doubt be attributed to the Baha'i institutions' understanding of the crisis of both as well as the civil rights problem. Furthermore, in accepting the youth as a group of responsible people with a mission to fulfill ("The youth can move the world") they confirmed their confidence in their capability and made them feel they were needed, that they were important.

The Baha'i faith does create a positive psychological climate which tends to develop the potentialities of the individual.

In June 1966, the Baha'i youth received a message from the Universal House of Justice. This was the first letter addressed directly to the youth in the Baha'i history and it shows a certain awareness of the potentialities of a class group and the necessity of giving certain values and guidelines to a vulnerable and influencable part of humanity.

What strikes the reader is the constant reminders of the responsibility of the youth in remaking a better world. "Indeed," the Guardian wrote of the Baha'i Youth, it is they "who can contribute so decisively to the virility, purity, and the driving force of the life of the Baha'i community, and upon whom must depend the future orientation of its destiny, and the complete unfoldment of the potentialities with which God has endowed it."<sup>(10)</sup>

This letter became a standard of youth identity and set a tone for youth activities.

A mighty crescendo of activity among Baha'i youth coupled with increased receptivity to the teachings by their non-Baha'i contemporaries resulted in a significant development during the period 1963 to 1968. The upward trend in the enrollment of youth indicated that a period of rapid expansion of the Faith was in progress. During the one year of 1966-1967 the United States Baha'i community increased by 13% while the increase among youth was nearly 35%.<sup>(11)</sup>

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(10) Baha'i World, 1963-1968, p. 259.

(11) Ibid.

## II FIVE YEAR YOUTH PROGRAM

On October 9, 1968, The Universal House of Justice addressed a second general letter to the Baha'i youth stimulating them to action. The five year plan was initiated by the National Spiritual Assembly at the suggestion of the youth united at the first National Baha'i Youth Conference ever held in the U.S.A. on June 22 and 23, 1968. Present were more than 500 Baha'i youth from 34 states.<sup>(12)</sup>

The goals of the five year plan were:

- a) Deploy 500 from their ranks to fill homefront and foreign goals.
- b) Settle 350 of these in teams throughout the southern states of America.
- c) Send at least five pioneers to Africa and twenty to Latin America.  
(This last point does not concern our study, but is interesting because the international responsibility is everpresent in Baha'i plans.)
- d) Double the number of Baha'i college clubs from 61 to 122 with at least one in every state.  
(To be noticed again that the diffusion policy does not take into account the distribution of colleges, but insists on the implantation in every state.)
- e) Establish 20 high school clubs.
- f) Inaugurate a traveling-teacher program to include circuit teaching by teams and musical groups.
- g) Establish special service projects directed towards minority teaching.

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(12) Baha'i world, 1968-1973, p. 327.

h) Study of the Baha's teachings and principles to improve personal development.

(To develop the standard of conduct of the individual believer in accordance with the values of Baha'u'llah's message has always been part of the Baha'i plans aimed at the creation of a better world.)

The scope of the plan underlines the importance the Baha'i institutions put on the active participation and collaboration of the youth in the global plan policy.

The implication of youth is essential not only to find new adherents, but to promote the Baha'i ideal among their contemporaries in all stratas of society. The emergence of a specific youth culture makes this approach more relevant. A desire for a more peace-loving society based on love and brotherhood inspired the Hippy movement of the 1960s. It became important to share with others, to live with others in communities. Happiness and pleasure became keywords. The musical play "Hair" conveys in an excellent way the aspirations of the youth and their contempt for the traditional value system of their elders. The class group becomes the reference and determines dress, taste and friends. The youth had gained a new strength in their number, the result of the Baby Boom of the 50s. They became a political force to take into account as well as an economical force creating a specific youth market with special needs.

The youth is an ideal target for the Baha'i movement. They are looking for answers to fundamental questions: purpose of life, sex, marriage, career and attitudes to adopt concerning social and political questions like civil rights, emancipation of women,



intermarriages, nuclear war, etc.

Certain points of the youth plan are directed towards reaching massively youth in college and high school. The American campus . . . offers a good opportunity for holding club meetings and discussion groups and thus it is a free forum of confrontation of ideas.

The riots and disorder which sweep across the United States campuses are an expression for the malaise felt by many students. What had happened is that the war, the race issue, the befouled environment and all the other perceived gaps between professed ideals and reality have precipitated a crisis for all authority. At the same time the American college undergoes a profound change from an elite sort of educational institution towards larger universities with 10,000 to 20,000 students and even more, state-supported and comprehensive, urban and both graduate and undergraduate.

In 1951, American private colleges enrolled over half of the American college population. Since then, public universities now account for over 60% of the total college student body. In 1960, over 40% of the students enrolled in the almost 2000 American colleges and universities were enrolled in 143 universities. Sixty of these had over 10,000 students and half were publicly enrolled. It was here in the large state universities that the basic trends of American education were forming.<sup>(13)</sup> Columbia University experienced a very serious institutional crisis from 1966--68. The students' work with the poor brought them into direct opposition to the administration's community policies. Many students

(13) Campus Power Struggle, Howard S. Becker, Aldine publishing Co. Chicago 1970. p. 4 - 14

were politicized by the Vietnam War and became antagonized by the university's contribution to military research. (14) It resulted in student sit-ins, occupations and barricading of university buildings by about 800 students as well as a strike by 5,000 active students. The Afro-American students took over Hamilton Hall and it was here that Stokely Carmichael visited them. Black students found themselves in a totally white-dominated world incorporated into a white student body whose interest after 1964 changed from involvement with civil rights to activities directed towards the Vietnam war. The concern with black power has consequently won growing support among black students. Before 1965 they were negroes, today they are black--a profound psychological transformation.

They have been among the major forces initiating sit-ins during 1967-68 at different universities such as San Francisco State College, Columbia, Boston and Northwestern universities.

The American university, however, until the middle 1960s, counted few minority group students. Pressure from militant groups, like the "Young Lords party" of Puerto Rican obedience, opens the doors to these havens of education and forces the college administration to establish special study programs or departments for these students. One example is the creation of the Heston community college in the South Bronx in 1969 for Puerto Ricans and open admission to the city university of New York.

The Baha'is believe they have adequate answers and a solution to offer. The youth conference uniting more than 500 youth has one purpose to create among the participants the favorable conditions (14) The Dynamics of a Student Revolution by Ellen Kay Treinberger, p. 27-55, article published in Campus Power Struggle edited by Howard S. Becker, Chicago 1970.

which will infuse them with their spiritual mission and a desire to serve.

It must be kept in mind that the Baha'i youth population in 1968 could be estimated at 2500. To find 500 young Baha'is willing to fill home front goals or foreign goals seemed quite absurd. Five years later, however, their number had almost doubled and they had gained awareness of their potentialities not only as agents for transmission but also as fully integrated members working in the administrative units within the Baha'i administration.

Point b. specifies the need for the majority to settle in the Southern states. This underlines the importance the Baha'i attach in reaching the rural black population of the South, where interesting results already had been obtained. As from 1962 intensive teaching programs had been launched culminating in 1968--70 with large scale enrollments. The Baha'is refer to this as a phenomenon of mass conversion. How many among the total number of enrollments, around 20,000 for this 2-year period, were blacks, is not known, but it must have been a considerable amount. No doubt, the Baha'i principles appealed to the down-trodden looking for identity and striving for emancipation. In order to create a credibility, the strategy of interracial teaching groups and teams were adopted. Music became an important feature of the youth culture. Musical groups were formed inventing new systems of rock and roll, hard rock, etc. creating a link between the different factions of the youth class, "a universal language."

Musical Baha'i groups were also formed during these years. Seals and Crofts was one of them and several of their hits became

well-known at the time, such as "One Planet, one people, please", inspired by the Baha'i teachings of unity or "Try your love"--love being seen as a remedy for the problems of a divided society. The Baha'i Institutions seems to have understood that it was vital for the movements' future to reach the youth not yet settled in their ways and still aspiring to serve an ideal.

The last goal of the youth plan is important, because the personal motivation to accomplish the goals called for in the plan depends on the extent to which each individual Baha'i has understood the claim of the Baha'i Faith and to what extent he wants to conform to its demands. Acquiring a new system of values is a long and painful process because it means acquiring a new identity and shedding long-standing habits. Deepening programs are offered during this period. "The Dynamic Force of Example" is a work that discusses ways in which Baha'is can translate their faith into action, further their individual spiritual development, attract new believers and promote the advancement of the world Order of Baha'ullah. Despite the seemingly rigid plan structure, the youth had all the liberty to chose the field of service and expression. This must have been a very appealing point to the young people rejecting the traditional structure system, any structure was felt as constraint.

In the Baha'i Faith they found a new way of communication. There was a need for their opinion which is essential for the construction of the future society.

### III. SOUTHERN STATES -- MINORITY TEACHING

A. Study of the Annual Reports of the National Spiritual Assembly shows particular concern with teaching of minority groups as the Blacks in the rural states of the South and Indians in the reservations.

The first intensive program was launched in the South in 1962. The growth was regular until 1969/70 where within six months large scale enrollments took place in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and South Carolina.<sup>(15)</sup> How many of the total enrollment registered during this period can be attributed to the Blacks of the southern states, the data information we have at hand does not convey. It must have been a large percentage since the Annual Report refers to this phenomenon as "Mass Conversion."

This trend continued during the following year but was less spectacular.

The Baha'is, no doubt, accelerated their teaching effort among the blacks hoping that their message of unity could act as a bridge for unity and reconciliation in these years of profound cleavage.

Numerous militant groups emerged, like the Black Panthers, born in a ghetto of Oakland, California, advocating Black against White as the only road to emancipation. Black is beautiful became a keyword and a way to restore black identity.

The Baha'is are convinced that the only road to social peace and prosperity for the different segments of the American society lies in the extent to which they can successfully create an environment of full cooperation leading to a social structure in which each and every individual will not only have full expression of his opinion, but will have the obligation of participation in the administration of the society.

B. Teaching among Indians

The Annual Report 1967-68 mentions that by this year six local Spiritual Assemblies were existent or newly formed within Indian areas. The number of pioneers on Indian reservations increased from 20 to 30 during the year.

This shows a progress from 1961-62 Annual Report with no local Assembly yet formed on Indian reservations. 10 pioneers were established by then on Indian reservations and 26 tribes were represented among the enrolled believers.

C. Teaching among Spanish-speaking population

By 1972 little organizational focus had been concentrated on this significant segment of the american population.

The Annual Report, 1972 gives no statistical information, but mentions some teaching work along the Mexican border in migrant worker camps around the country and in cities with special concentrations of Spanish speaking people.

The result must be unimportant since it is not mentioned.

## COMMENTS

The analysis made of the plan and its objectives shows that strategies used and developed by the National Spiritual Assembly explains part of the growth registered during the plan.

The second factor, external to the Baha'i community: namely the prevailing historic condition of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s is not any less a determining factor because it provides a fertile ground for the diffusion of the Baha'i Message.

The growth in the South was initiated by a fortuitous combination of national receptivity to non-traditional spiritual movements and a particularly intense Baha'i teaching effort that happened to be launched in that region.

The implication of youth in a global program and in a specific program had the advantage of respecting the youth as a group with special potentialities, aspirations and certain needs which only they could detect and answer.

It is not the purpose here to try to analyze each point of the five year youth program, but rather to show the diversity of its tasks, which keep in mind the spiritual growth of the individual and his participation in planned proclamation activities.

An adult believer, who served actively with youth in this period affirms: "Baha'i youth respected the authority of Baha'i institutions and trusted the integrity of adult Baha'is...They vitalized and strengthened the community and gave invaluable support and assistance...the Baha'i spirit, young and old, demonstrated its power to meld into dynamic unity elements locked in a cycle of accelerating animosity

outside the refuge of the Faith of Baha'u'llah..." (16)

Undoubtedly the success registered can be attributed to the quality of team work uniting different generations and ethnic groups in their work towards a common goal.

At the end of the Nine year plan the following regional breakdown can provide us with a picture of the implantation in four major regions:

| Region       | Number of localities<br>where Baha'i lives |
|--------------|--|
| Northeastern | 1,058                                      |
| Southern     | 1,729                                      |
| Central      | 1,310                                      |
| Western      | 1,123                                      |
| Total        | 5,220                                      |

The following table summarizes 1972 statistics on Local Spiritual Assemblies per region:

| Region       | No. of A.S.L.<br>at April 21, 1972 | New A.S.L.<br>since April 21<br>& before April 20, 1973 | A.S.L.<br>lost |
|--------------|------------------------------------|---|----------------|
| Northeastern | 89                                 | 9   | 1              |
| Southern     | 336                                | 17  | 11             |
| Central      | 142                                | 14  | 3              |
| Western      | 270                                | 30  | 7              |
| Total        | 837                                | 60  | 22             |

In the plan's last year the Universal House of Justice allowed localities that reached nine or more adults to form their Local Spiritual Assembly any time during the year. Ordinarily this can only happen on the 21st of April of the year.



The Southern region comes far ahead in both tables. However, the column of the preceding table: New Local Assemblies could announce a shift in the future Baha'i population distribution. Western regions come in first. In the chapter dealing with Growth and Expansion, p.33, a special attention has been given to the reasons for the marked shift in Baha'i population distribution which has been explained as the result of changing economic and social historical conditions interacted with the Baha'i policy dispersion.

The enrollment statistics of youth, p. 32, give an idea of the outcome of the five year plan. The Universal House of Justice in a Message to the American National Convention <sup>(17)</sup> in April 1973 describes as one of the three "highly portentous developments" to have taken place during the nine year plan "the advancement of youth to the forefront of the teaching work."<sup>(18)</sup>

(17) National Convention elects the National Spiritual Assembly for the following year.

(18) Baha'i World, 1968-1973, p. 325.

## Chapter IV

### FIVE YEAR PLAN 1974-1979

Although there was no dramatic growth of the community in this period it could confidently be said that knowledge of the Baha'i Faith was widely disseminated because of the unprecedented range and intensity of proclamation activities. The Baha'is profited from opportunities like the fiftieth anniversary of the National Spiritual Assembly, the observance of International Women's year in their activities with the United Nations and the bicentennial of the United States to organize activities involving the national Baha'i community.

Despite the growing ability in using mass media for propagation, the reports of the National Spiritual Assembly of these years show marked concern as to the increase in enrollments and number of Local Spiritual Assemblies.

The Plan called for the increase in number of localities from 5,301 to 7,000 and Local Spiritual Assemblies from 822 to 1,400.

#### GROWTH PER YEAR

|                               | 1974/75 | 1975/76 | 1976/77 | 1977/78 | 1978/79 |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Localities                    | 5301    | 5644    | 5904    | 5827    | 7041    |
| Local Spiritual<br>Assemblies | 822     | 920     | 942     | 1004    | 1489    |

(1.)

The table above shows that the 5 year plan accomplished its quantitative goals with an increase of 81% growth rate in number of localities and a 33% increase for local spiritual Assemblies. The growthrate is slow except for the final year of the plan with a gain

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(1 ) American Baha'i, June 1978.

of 485 local spiritual assemblies as compared to 64 the year before.

Indian Assemblies during the same period increased from 12 to 31, an increase of 158%.

The major objectives fall into the following categories:

- a) consolidation of the believers
- b) diffusion policy
- c) youth activities

#### CONSOLIDATION

The great increase in enrollment of the previous plan appears to have provided the National Spiritual Assembly with a problem. Many of the new Baha's did not quite understand what it meant to be a Baha'i, identifying themselves with new standards, celebrating other holidays than the ones traditionally observed in the global society.

So the following plan stipulates the necessity of consolidating the new Baha'is. It has already been underlined that the active participation in the Administrative Order is the condition for the establishment and development of the New World Order proposed by Baha'ullah.

With the entry of thousands of Blacks with little or no education from the Southern States it is easy to understand that the National Assembly adopted another orientation which would be directed toward States with a more educated population. This would mean adepts in the future who would be able to respond to the responsibilities which the Faith imposes on them and who at later dates might become teachers and pioneers.

(FIVE YEAR PLAN)

ASSEMBLY AND LOCALITY GROWTH -- BY STATE

| NATIONAL<br>TEACHING<br>COMMITTEE | 5 YEAR<br>PLAN<br>GOALS | # of LSA's<br>as of<br>6/20/76 | LSA's<br>as of<br>6/20/79 | Growth | # of<br>LOCALITIES<br>Ridvan<br>1976 | # of<br>LOCALITIES<br>as of<br>6/20/79 | Growth | Update of<br>Annual Report<br>Appendix C<br>6/20/79 (rev) |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--------|--------------------------------------|--|--------|---|
| NATIONAL                          | 1400                    | 822                            | 1489                      | 667    | 5307                                 | 7041                                   | 1740   |   |
| INDIAN                            | 25                      | 12                             | 31                        | 19     |                                      |  |        |   |
| INCORPORATED                      | 400                     | 268                            | 412                       | 144    |                                      |  |        |   |
| ALABAMA                           |                         | 10                             | 16                        | 6      | 75                                   | 96                                     | 21     |   |
| ARIZONA                           |                         | 19                             | 44                        | 25     | 99                                   | 162                                    | 63     |   |
| ARKANSAS                          |                         | 10                             | 4                         | -6     | 73                                   | 88                                     | 15     |   |
| CALIFORNIA                        |                         | 157                            | 263                       | 106    | 445                                  | 607                                    | 162    |   |
| COLORADO                          |                         | 19                             | 32                        | 13     | 71                                   | 90                                     | 19     |   |
| CONNECTICUT                       |                         | 8                              | 19                        | 11     | 90                                   | 101                                    | 11     |   |
| DELAWARE                          |                         | 3                              | 2                         | -1     | 18                                   | 19                                     | 1      |   |
| DIST. OF COLUMBIA                 |                         | 1                              | 1                         | 0      | 1                                    | 1                                      | 0      |   |
| FLORIDA                           |                         | 43                             | 64                        | 21     | 170                                  | 249                                    | 79     |   |
| GEORGIA                           |                         | 22                             | 80                        | 58     | 205                                  | 327                                    | 122    |   |
| IDAHO                             |                         | 5                              | 10                        | 5      | 43                                   | 62                                     | 19     |   |
| ILLINOIS                          |                         | 36                             | 87                        | 51     | 273                                  | 383                                    | 110    |   |
| INDIANA                           |                         | 15                             | 14                        | -1     | 94                                   | 126                                    | 32     |   |
| IOWA                              |                         | 7                              | 12                        | 5      | 90                                   | 88                                     | -2     |   |
| KANSAS                            |                         | 8                              | 11                        | 3      | 51                                   | 73                                     | 22     |   |
| KENTUCKY                          |                         | 4                              | 7                         | 3      | 42                                   | 53                                     | 11     |   |
| LOUISIANA                         |                         | 14                             | 11                        | -3     | 62                                   | 83                                     | 21     |   |
| MAINE                             |                         | 7                              | 8                         | 1      | 59                                   | 64                                     | 5      |   |
| MARYLAND                          |                         | 13                             | 24                        | 11     | 50                                   | 91                                     | 41     |   |
| MASSACHUSETTS                     |                         | 21                             | 29                        | 8      | 163                                  | 185                                    | 22     |   |
| MICHIGAN                          |                         | 25                             | 36                        | 11     | 233                                  | 270                                    | 37     |   |
| MINNESOTA                         |                         | 12                             | 16                        | 4      | 99                                   | 122                                    | 23     |   |
| MISSISSIPPI                       |                         | 4                              | 5                         | 1      | 66                                   | 67                                     | 1      |   |
| MISSOURI                          |                         | 11                             | 19                        | 8      | 113                                  | 136                                    | 23     |   |
| MONTANA                           |                         | 9                              | 12                        | 3      | 50                                   | 59                                     | 9      |   |
| NEBRASKA                          |                         | 3                              | 9                         | 6      | 39                                   | 49                                     | 10     |   |
| NEVADA                            |                         | 10                             | 9                         | -1     | 26                                   | 33                                     | 7      |   |
| NEW HAMPSHIRE                     |                         | 8                              | 13                        | 5      | 60                                   | 78                                     | 18     |   |
| NEW JERSEY                        |                         | 13                             | 17                        | 4      | 189                                  | 195                                    | 6      |   |
| NEW MEXICO                        |                         | 15                             | 26                        | 11     | 71                                   | 105                                    | 34     |   |
| NEW YORK                          |                         | 26                             | 45                        | 19     | 246                                  | 323                                    | 77     |   |
| NORTH CAROLINA                    |                         | 10                             | 23                        | 13     | 184                                  | 204                                    | 20     |   |
| NORTH DAKOTA                      |                         | 5                              | 6                         | 1      | 22                                   | 30                                     | 8      |   |
| OHIO                              |                         | 20                             | 23                        | 3      | 168                                  | 224                                    | 56     |   |
| OKLAHOMA                          |                         | 8                              | 17                        | 9      | 80                                   | 110                                    | 30     |   |
| OREGON                            |                         | 27                             | 44                        | 17     | 87                                   | 166                                    | 79     |   |
| PENNSYLVANIA                      |                         | 10                             | 13                        | 3      | 176                                  | 238                                    | 62     |   |
| RHODE ISLAND                      |                         | 2                              | 5                         | 3      | 20                                   | 25                                     | 5      |   |
| SOUTH CAROLINA                    |                         | 55                             | 182                       | 127    | 345                                  | 490                                    | 155    |   |
| SOUTH DAKOTA                      |                         | 2                              | 7                         | 5      | 43                                   | 43                                     | 0      |   |
| TENNESSEE                         |                         | 3                              | 6                         | 3      | 52                                   | 67                                     | 15     |   |
| TEXAS                             |                         | 36                             | 74                        | 38     | 259                                  | 341                                    | 82     |   |
| UTAH                              |                         | 3                              | 4                         | 1      | 19                                   | 32                                     | 13     |   |
| VERMONT                           |                         | 3                              | 4                         | 1      | 32                                   | 38                                     | 6      |   |
| VIRGINIA                          |                         | 15                             | 30                        | 15     | 83                                   | 132                                    | 49     |   |
| WASHINGTON                        |                         | 40                             | 70                        | 30     | 148                                  | 214                                    | 66     |   |
| WEST VIRGINIA                     |                         | 3                              | 3                         | 0      | 38                                   | 54                                     | 16     |   |
| WISCONSIN                         |                         | 20                             | 28                        | 8      | 167                                  | 210                                    | 43     |   |
| WYOMING                           |                         | 2                              | 5                         | 3      | 22                                   | 38                                     | 16     |   |

## DIFFUSION POLICY

The plan's objectives were oriented toward 3 states chosen among the ones visited by Abdul'Baha in 1912. Thus, California, Illinois and New York were singled out for proclamation campaigns in the hope of making a massive penetration.

The table on opposite page gives an indication of growth by state from 1974 to 1979. The report of the teaching committee is interesting because it conveys the result obtained during the 5 year plan. The growth is considerable in the 3 states singled out for massive proclamation activities: California with a gain of 106 Local Spiritual Assemblies and 162 localities; Illinois with a growth of 51 Local Spiritual Assemblies and 110 localities; and New York did less well with only a gain of 19 Local Spiritual Assemblies but with 77 localities.

All other states except South Carolina and Georgia kept a smooth progress. South Carolina, as a matter of fact, progressed considerably more than any other state. It should be kept in mind that the Baha'i population in this state had grown considerably in the early 1970s and that the Baha'i teachings found, as indicated earlier, an especially fertile ground here.

The final year of the plan witnessed a marked recovery with enrollments exceeding any other year. The annual reports indicate 5,417 new enrollees.<sup>(2)</sup> About 18,000 enrollees were registered for the total plan. Data information as to the composition of the new believers are not available, and it is not possible to know to what extent the youth trend of the late 1960s to early 1970s continued. Certain reports, however, indicate a slow down in number of youth  
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(2) - Annual Report, 1979.

enrollees.

The Plan policy had fixed goals for achieving 25 Indian Assemblies on Indian reservations by 1979 which was accomplished. Teaching among Spanish-speaking people continued and Baha'i reports mention the growing interest from this group as well as indicate numerous enrollments from Chicago. In 1979 a conference specially designed for examining the vital issues connected with teaching Spanish-speaking people was called.

Data information is lacking and it is impossible at this point to give an estimation of numbers. The Baha'i American however, made this remark: "The rapid expansion of the Faith has also increased the diversity within our Baha'i community. We now have large numbers of believers who are Spanish-speaking and we have Baha'is of varying degrees of literacy." (3)

However, it should be kept in mind that the contribution of youth in the accomplishment of the achieved goals is enormous and the youth activities during this period conveys the efforts deployed by this population group.

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(3) The American Baha'i, January 1970.

## YOUTH ACTIVITIES

The major concern of the National Spiritual Assembly is, as mentioned before, directed toward the necessity for the individuals to develop a full understanding of the new values stipulated in the Baha'i writings.

50% of the enrollments of the early 1970s had occurred among youth. Taking into account that Baha'i moral standards are very strict, favoring marriage against free unions, forbidding the use of drugs and alcoholic beverages, encouraging respect for parents, etc., it is obvious then, that some young people, after the first enthusiasm had worn off, backed out, finding these standards too difficult to accept and maintain. Other factors were that the late 1970s forced other political and economic issues than the late 1960s and the search for mystical experiences as well as opposition against the establishment had declined.

The specific goals given to the youth call for a) consolidating programs in order to develop the distinctive characteristics of Baha'i life and b) expansion programs.

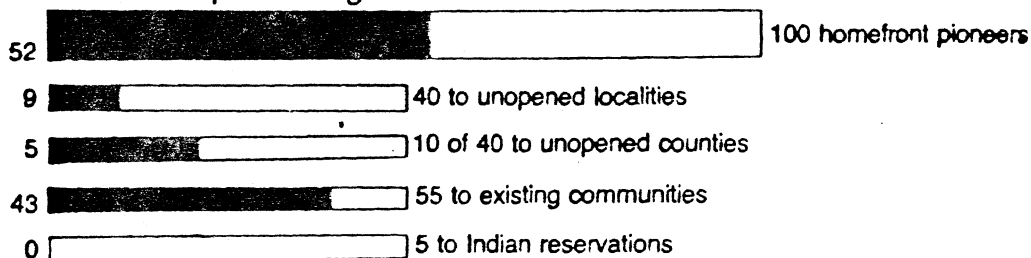
Among these were to supply 25 international pioneers and 100 homefront pioneers, establish 350 college clubs and 100 youth clubs,<sup>(4)</sup> as well as helping the global Baha'i plan in all areas.

The graph on page 59 gives an idea of the objectives to be obtained by the first two years youth program, 1974-1976, of which 11 out of 13 were accomplished.

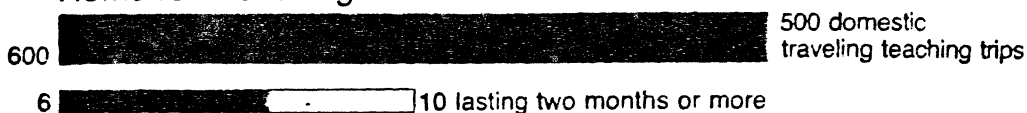
(4) Baha'i World, 1973-76, p. 206.

## Progress of the Two Year Youth Program

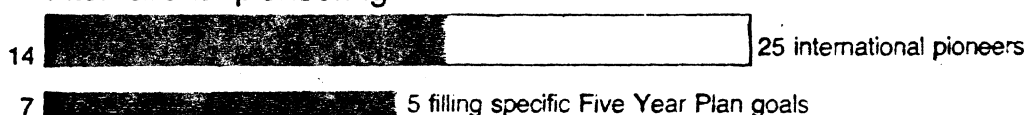
### Homefront pioneering



### Homefront teaching



### International pioneering



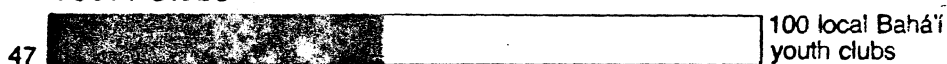
### International teaching



### College clubs



### Youth Clubs



Source: American Baha'i, March 1976.

The goals of this 2 year youth program (1974 - 76) is a continuation of the 5 year youth program of the foregoing plan. The results obtained by the youth were significant and there was no reason to change a strategy which proved successful.

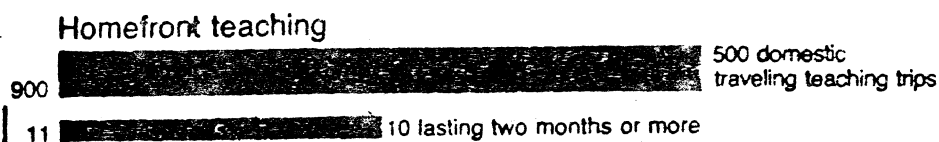
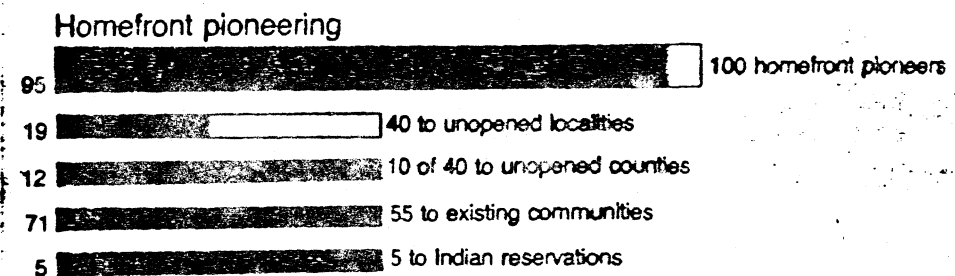
The goals remained more or less identical with major objectives in mind:

a. Stimulate the youth to work on goals alongside the rest of the Baha'i community, by contributing to homefront pioneering, which means to move out of ones' town or locality, thus contributing to form a local assembly elsewhere.



b. Encourage young people to undertake teaching trips. In the Baha'i view this provides the opportunity and means of self-development in the knowledge and practise of their Faith in order to communicate its world-embracing principles to others. Teaching trips of college students through specially chosen areas with musical groups explain the success registered during the year and many of the newly formed local assemblies in South Carolina with an increase of 127, Georgia with an increase of 58 and California with an increase of 106 assemblies during the 5 year plan can be attributed to the participation of youth and their more informal way of teaching. (for growth see p.54)

PLAN AS ACCOMPLISHED



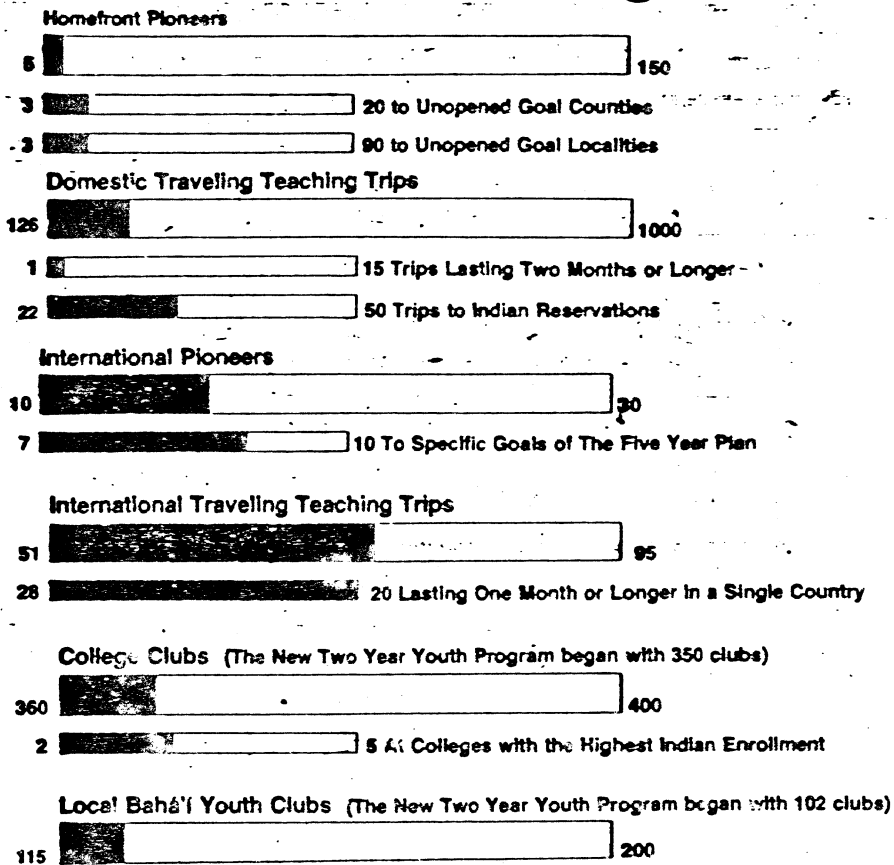
c. All the international goals given to the youth were accomplished. One of the interesting features of the Baha'i Faith is this missionary spirit which has permitted the Baha'i religion to be established by ordinary people without receiving an allowance or salary in all the countries around the world. It should be mentioned that the United States Peace Corps set up in March 1961 by Kennedy attracted a great number of youth infused with the idea of serving and helping underdeveloped countries and areas in their struggle for development. "Help people in underdeveloped areas to do for themselves the necessary jobs to develop their countries" became the keyword of the Peace Corps.

The Baha'is are not inventing anything new, but a real sacrifice was necessary since the youth in most cases were depending on themselves for their livelihood which implied finding a job on the spot. With no arrangement between governments this was not an easy matter.

d. And finally the goal to increase the number of college clubs and local Baha'i clubs shows the concern of reaching the youth in general and underlines that there is here a fertile ground for exchanging ideas and teaching the Baha'i message.

1977 - 1979

## **Two Year Youth Program:**



Source: American Baha'i, Dec. 1977

### Second two year youth plan 1977-1979

The results obtained by the youth encouraged the National Spiritual Assembly to stimulate and encourage this age group to double their efforts. This new plan is more ambitious and in some cases like homefront teaching the goals doubled, including projects in South Carolina, Arizona, South Dakota and on Indian reservations. The Baha'i youth appear again to have had an important impact on the outcome of the plan thus underlining the results and success of the youth as teachers in general and the impact of musical groups and

team work in the expansion process. The groups proposed songs like "World citizens", inspired directly from the Baha'i principles of unity and brotherhood:

Glory not in this that you love your country,  
glory in this that you love mankind.  
We're the fruits of only one tree  
and the leaves of just one branch.

Another theme "Give me the strength to carry Baha'i all over the world" makes allusion to each person's responsibility in acting as an agent for the transmission of the message. Another theme conveys the ideas of the oneness of religion:

God is one, man is one and all the Religions are one, etc....

Reaching youth through local and university clubs still proved to be effective and shows that the American youth of 1978 were still receptive and concerned with spiritual matters.

Through the music the themes relating to the different aspects of the Baha'i Faith came across easily to the audience, whether blacks of the Southern states or the students or youth of the bigger urban centers.

Two letters addressed to the American Baha'i journal in July 1978, and of which we quote a few lines are interesting because they give a testimony as to the capacity of the Baha'i Faith to act as a source for personal transformation and the effect of teaching as a sense of fulfillment and purpose.

"Dear friends, I belong to a community that has just completed the 10-week "Comprehensive Deepening program: a process for personal transformation", which is presently being offered in New York, California and Illinois. I would like to encourage any Baha'i who is offered this program to take it. I, for one, have finally begun to understand how Baha'ullah's prescription for living is the natural way for unity on all levels, from self to world. I have also found a way through this program, to internationalize by Baha'i beliefs so that I find myself living the life and teaching always. And my teaching is successful. Suddenly many people seem to be drawn to the Faith through me".

It should be kept in mind here that all Baha'i plans mention as

one specific goal of the plan: Study of the Baha'i teachings and principles to improve personal development. What seems to be important in the message

the letter wants to convey is that through this program the person has been able to translate into action and identify herself with principles and a new value system, so far interlectually understood but not assimilated. The Baha'is insists on the importance of "Living the life" in accordance with the principles, it is the example and not the words which will make its effect.

The other letter shares with the reader a teaching experience and end with these words:

"The youth in our communities play a vital role in uprising the banner of Baha'ullah for all to see. They and their contribution to our communities are not to be underestimated by either adult believers or their own often timid and strongly self-critical judgment. Arise, youth of America and the world. Give your spirit resources, skills, efforts and time. You can set the world on fire".

This letter exalts the vital role the youth play and has to play in the transmission of the Baha'i message. It emphasizes the great potentialities of the young and their responsibility in creating a future world community. And finally it invokes the spiritual qualities inherent to the youth: idealisme, courage, opthimisme, love and hope. They have the potential to change the world, because of these above mentioned characteristics.

The youth culture of the 1960s is one example of the impact of the youth movement on the history of a given period in the United States.

No doubt, that the message of the letter galvanized many young people and made them believe that they had a special mission to fulfil, and that only they could accomplish it.

## POPULATION COMPOSITION

Baha'i policy stresses the importance of recruiting all kinds of people, but in fact, it is extremely rare for any subgroup of a total population not to contain social, economic or demographic biases. When people from a certain demographic or socio-economic stratum dominate a group's membership, it is natural to assume that the values or beliefs upon which the group is founded have a greater appeal for these specific parts of society.

On the other hand, it should also be kept in mind that it is easier to approach people of one's own class, having a certain background in common and where a better communication system exists.

There is a danger in concluding too rapidly the type of people or group of people interested by the Baha'i movement and classifying them accordingly. The Baha'i Faith in the United States has seen its population composition change considerably since the early 1960s, which might indicate that the appeal contained in the message is of a larger dimension than it appears to be during its relatively slow expansion of its earlier years.

Unfortunately, good contemporary data describing the Baha'i population are almost entirely lacking. One survey was conducted in December 1968 before the explosive Baha'i growth (Spring 1969 to Spring 1972) and can therefore not be considered representative of the present situation, but will give us an indication.

In the early years the typical Baha'i was elderly, female, in majority Anglo-Saxon, and from Protestant background. The numerous volumes of the Baha'i World have articles relating lifestories of many of these earlier Baha'is.

The picture changed slowly with the plan policy of putting special efforts on reaching different stratum of the population, facilitated by the change of values in the American society faced with major social and cultural problems.

The following tables are not designed to assess the population composition of the total membership, but to assess the population composition of new declarants during December 1968. (See p.68)

The 1968 survey exposed an extremely young age structure among new declarants, characterized as single and educated.

Concluding that the Faith appealed more to single people with academic orientation would be dangerous, but no doubt the Baha'i Message provided this population group with arguments and solutions to social and cultural problems they were facing at a time when traditional religion and values had lost their impact.

The following tables give us an indication of the racial and religious background of non-Baha'i Enrollees during December 1968.

Minority groups have little representation except for Blacks. The Baha'i Faith at this point has not succeeded in infiltrating the different ethnic groups of the American society except among Indians and Spanish-speaking people where special efforts will continue during the 1974-79 plan. But a diversity of religious background shows that the Baha'i Faith is capable of

integrating and absorbing people from diverse religious experience.

This is no doubt due to the Baha'i Faith's assertion that "Revelation is progressive" and not absolute.

What is interesting and new in the theory of "progressive revelation" is to observe by this process the links and harmony which exist between the different prophets and their message.

Baha'u'llah explains that the great religious systems are born from the same source. Their roles are complimentary. Only the non-essential aspects like social laws and temporal values change according to the need of the population and the epoque in which the prophet appears. This notion defines the role of various religions within successive phases of the evolution of the human race and gives the same importance to all.

Furthermore, to become a member of the Baha'i Faith presupposes acceptance of the mission and veracity of the major religious systems. That means that a Jew who wants to become a Baha'i must accept Christ, Mohammad, Buddha and Krishna as prophets of God.

This condition no doubt discourages easy conversion and could explain the slow growth and expansion in tradition-bound populations. This tolerant explanation of the religious history creates a mutual confidence and respect for the religious background of each individual Baha'i, and develops a favorable environment for unity among the members.

It is possible to conclude that the Baha'i Faith did provide its members with a means to overcome religious prejudice.



THE EDUCATIONAL AND MARITAL STATUS OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO BECAME  
BAHA'IS DURING DECEMBER, 1968 <sup>a</sup>

STUDENT STATUS

| Current Student Status | New Baha'i Enrollees | U.S. Population |
|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| High School Student    | 23%                  | 10%             |
| College Student        | 30                   | 5               |
| Non-Student (Age 15+)  | 47                   | 55              |

EDUCATION ATTAINMENT OF NON-STUDENTS

| Educational Attainment       | New Baha'i Enrollees<br>Who were not Students | U.S. Population<br>Aged 25+ |
|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Completed Elementary School  | 100%  | 83%                         |
| Graduated from High School   | 82  | 50                          |
| Completed Two Years College  | 30  | 19                          |
| Completed Four Years College | 42  | 10                          |

MARITAL STATUS

| Marital Status | New Baha'i Enrollees | U.S. Population<br>Aged 14+ |
|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Single         | 65%                  | 24%                         |
| Married        | 26                   | 66                          |
| Widowed        | 4                    | 7                           |
| Divorced       | 5                    | 3                           |

Source: "A Statistical Comparison of the Background of Newly Enrolled Baha'is with the U.S. Population," unpublished statistical compilation prepared by the Department of Personnel and Administrative Services, Wilmette, Illinois, National Baha'i Center, 1969.

<sup>a</sup>The percentage breakdowns of Baha'i enrollees are based on a survey of all people who joined the Faith in December, 1968. During that month there were 193 enrollments; 160 of them (88%) responded to the survey.

THE RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF THOSE PEOPLE  
WHO BECAME BAHAI'S DURING DECEMBER, 1968 <sup>a</sup>

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| RACIAL BACKGROUND |                             |                        |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| <u>Race</u>       | <u>New Baha'i Enrollees</u> | <u>U.S. Population</u> |
| White             | 87%                         | 87.77%                 |
| Black             | 13                          | 10.55                  |
| Other             | --                          | 1.68                   |

| RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND |                             |                                     |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <u>Religion</u>      | <u>New Baha'i Enrollees</u> | <u>U.S. Population<br/>Aged 14+</u> |
| Protestant           | 65%                         | 67%                                 |
| Catholic             | 15                          | 26                                  |
| Jewish               | 4                           | 3                                   |
| Baha'i (Family)      | 7                           | --                                  |
| Mixed                | 3                           | --                                  |
| Other                | --                          | 1                                   |
| None                 | 7                           | 3                                   |

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Source: "A Statistical Comparison of the Background of Newly Enrolled Baha'is with the U.S. Population," unpublished statistical compilation prepared by the Department of Personnel and Administrative Services, Wilmette, Illinois, National Baha'i Center, 1969.

<sup>a</sup> The percentage of breakdowns of Baha'i enrollees are based on a survey of all people who joined the Faith in December, 1968. During that month there were 193 enrollments: 160 of them (88%) responded to the survey.

### PERSPECTIVE

The expansion and growth of the Baha'i community has proved that its message is not just addressing a specific historical period, like the one of the 1960s--70s, although it found an especially fertile ground during these years as our research has shown. It has resisted the different social and political crisis continuing its growth process. In 1985, the United States counts 1.785 Local Spiritual Assemblies as compared to 1,489 at the end of the 5 year plan in 1979. Second and third generation Baha'is have become a reality and testify to the Baha'i Faith viability.

This proves that the Baha'i message responds to the spiritual need of modern man as well as providing him with a pattern for a new society.

A major cause of the global expansion has been the fundamental belief that 1) in the near future the whole of mankind will become united, first in terms of political, social and economic allegiance, and afterwards in terms of adherence to a single spiritual truth, 2) the individual believer has an obligation to participate in the development process. Thus the plan policy has drawn on an immense reservoir of Faith, which has resulted in a total commitment and willingness to sacrifice personal comfort and interest.

Our study has equally pointed out that the Baha'is come from diverse segments of the population and that they are fully integrated in the global society. They are not marginalized. They have taken public stands and fought for social problems of the moment: one

example is civil rights because this principle was implicit in the Founder's writings and not because it could bring them much support or favorable opinion from the leading classes.

On the other hand, the pioneer work benefitted the Baha'is as a group and today the official recognition in the United States of the Baha'i Faith as an independent religion, has no doubt, been the result of the Baha'is patient and "unselfish" participation at the national and grassroot levels in the promotion of a certain number of social issues.

Their contribution covers the issue of equality of rights and privileges of men and women and promotes the active participation of the women in the affairs of the society, an issue the Baha'is take beyond the social and economic implications believing that "Unity of Mankind and Universal Peace" can only be established when men and women considered as the two wings of a bird, will be equally strong and used in harmony. They are both necessary and complementary.

#### WOMEN

The Baha'is were not alone in advocating the equality of the sexes in all areas of life. It is probably not too far wrong to say that feminism has been taken up as the main liberal cause largely displacing racial problems in the 1970s. Women's movements had already been active all over the country for many years. In 1915 the Womens' Peace Party testifies to the desire of women to contribute to the welfare of society. Jane Adams received the Nobel Prize for her contribution to peace in 1931. An enormous amount of literature

was published in the 1960s--1970s such as The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution," testifying to the burning actuality of the question. Shulamith Firestone writes: "The end goal of the feminist revolution must be, unlike that of the first feminist movement, not just the elimination of male privilege but of sex distinction itself...genital differences between human beings would no longer matter culturally."(5)

The Baha'is are far from agreeing with the above point of view and recognize the institution of marriage as sacred and the family to be the foundation of a healthy society. The education of women is considered of primary importance because the mother is the first educator of man. This shows that the Baha'is still believe that the foremost role of a woman is her role as a mother and the responsibility she carries in bringing up the future generation, on whose shoulders will be placed the choice and direction of human affairs. The establishment of world peace, say the Baha'is, does indeed depend upon mothers adequately educated and imbued with high ideals to pass on to their offspring.

The education of the mother is also an important factor contributing to the mental health of the family as a whole. The uneducated woman loses her intellectual ties with the children as their own education advances. The husband frequently outgrows his wife, and the sense of partnership withers.

However, the Baha'is work for and advocate equal pay for equal work, and encourage Baha'i women to get higher education in order to hold important positions believing that their contribution to the advancement of civilization is indispensable.

--  
(5) The Dialectic of Sex : The Case for feminist Revolution by Shulamith Firestone, (New York: William Morrow and Company, inc, 1970) PP. 11-12

Again, the Bahai' message attacks a traditional behavior system, well-rooted in the mentality of "masculine dominates feminine". The Baha'i community again acts as a pioneer group and as a model applying this principle in its administration and in its grassroot communities, creating schools and institutions for the education and training of Baha'i women. South Carolina has several of these institutes and a Baha'i radio station.

The Baha'i Faith is thus capable of changing mentalities. It does not believe that this can be obtained by force or sanction, the consentment to adhere or to become a Baha'i is individual and by choice. Individual investigation of "Truth" as the Baha'i says, is fundamental for the success and progress of the movement as our study has shown. It should be mentioned that there are no difficulties implied if one wants to leave the Baha'i community and every year a number of resignations are effected. The withdrawals totaled 490 for the year 1985. Enrollments registered 2,759. The individual carries the responsibility and is the stone on which the Baha'i administration is built, if he ceases to believe, to act, why hold him back. It will only weaken the edifice. This attitude could be one of the reasons why the Baha'is rarely refer to themselves in terms of numbers but rather refer to their growth in number of local spiritual assemblies and localities in which Baha'is reside. This confirms the analysis of the tremendous social implication of the Baha'i teachings and principles.

#### PERSECUTION

Our study has shown that the growth of the Baha'i expansion also can be attributed to external conditions of specific periods,

certain internal to the country itself as was the case of the 1960--70 period, others can have an implication despite their happening in a distant country. The recent severe persecution of the Baha'i in Iran, the cradle of the Bahai' Faith, can be classified among the latter and has dynamized the American Baha'i community to a greater teaching effort and has given a new dimension to the sacred responsibility with which each Baha'i feels he is invested.

Persecution of members of religious groups has historically proved beneficial in strengthening the bonds between the adherents, creating a solidarity and fortifying their faith and belief in the veracity of its statement. This has been true for the American community which has engaged in a tremendous proclamation effort to make the Faith known by intellectuals, politicians and medias to gain their support in favor of their coreligion members in Iran.

The Baha'i Faith since its origin has known opposition with more or less severe implications in the country of its birth, but the persecution has become dramatic since the 1979 Islamic revolution. In addition to the confiscation and widespread destruction of sacred and holy places, including the house of the BAB in Shiraz where he made his declaration, a place which for the Baha'is can be compared to the Ka'ba in Mecca for the Muslim and the holy church in Jerusalem for the Christians. Pilgrimage to this house has always been a profound desire for every Baha'i so it is easy to conclude that the destruction of this holy place was felt as an attack against the whole Baha'i world community, which was not slow in reacting. What better way to help them and to make their sacrifice worthwhile than

to accelerate teaching efforts everywhere and give a little more of ones' time and effort for this purpose.

Another aspect of the persecution has been that a large number of refugees have settled in different parts of the world, several thousands in the United States. For the year 1985 alone the number reaches 1,057 with a concentration in the Los Angeles area.

The Baha'i population and the Baha'i Faith in the U.S.A. can be considered to have received with the new-comers a new dynamic which guarantees its immediate development and interior strength. It should also be kept in mind that many of the Iranian refugees are from families where the ancestors were companions of the Bab, Baha'ullah and Abdul'Baha and had suffered with them. The heroic and charismatic momentum of the Baha'i Faith will thus be kept alive and inspire the Baha'i community in its work towards its destiny, which they believe to be unity of mankind.

The Iranian Baha'is who have arrived in the United States during the Islamic revolution can be divided into two groups:

1) the ones who have been able to leave with their own means--many of these are economically well-off and can be said to have left the country in the early 1980s, and 2) another group which has left the country via Pakistan and can be considered United Nations refugees. These will have a harder time acclimating themselves in the new environment for cultural and economic reasons.

#### CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE

Our study has pointed out that the American Baha'i community since the early stages of the implantation in their country has been



occupied in promoting principles and ideas to prepare the way for a more peace-loving society.

The year 1986, declared by the United Nations, as International Peace Year, has given rich occasion for activities in the United States. A peace statement on this occasion was prepared by the Universal House of Justice with the intention of a massive distribution aimed at leaders of the nation as well as intellectuals, with the hope of reaching ultimately as many Americans as possible. Each local institution was given the goal of reaching, initially, the influential people of their town or villages, hoping that their interest and goodwill could facilitate and encourage a more general distribution of the message entitled "THE PROMISE OF WORLD PEACE".

The reaction has been favorable in general as proven by the resolution in favor of the "Promise of World Peace" adopted by the City Council of the City of Cambridge on June 2, 1986. (see annex p. 84) It states among other things:

Resolved: That "The Promise of World Peace", a letter to the peoples of the world by the Universal House of Justice, the governing Council of the Baha'is of the world, is a valuable resource for all citizens who yearn for peace, and that study of this document is enthusiastically encouraged.

This resolution could be of a tremendous importance and have a far-reaching impact, because of the importance of Cambridge which houses Harvard University and leading personalities of thought.

The Promise of World Peace was presented to President Reagan on December 10, 1986, who received the members of the National Spiritual Assembly with these words:

There is perhaps no more tragic cause today than that of the Baha'is of Iran. The government has engaged in rampant religious persecution, especially against Baha'is. Since 1979, 178 Baha'is have been put to death, 767 are imprisoned, some 10,000 made homeless and over 25,000 forced to flee the country. Only the continued world outcry can bring an end to their suffering. (6)

The accelerated teaching efforts have given a new credibility and dimension to the American Baha'i community who believes that the doors which have opened are the direct cause of the martyrs and the persecution in Iran. Not many modern religions can claim martyrs and not many if any have adepts ready to give their life instead of recanting their Faith. In any case, the Baha'is believe that their Faith draws a new dynamic from the persecutions and any observer of the Baha'i phenomenon cannot deny the evidence of this assumption.

#### AMERICANIZATION

Today the Baha'i Faith is a global movement. The membership has grown to include 4-5 million believers scattered throughout the world. The administrative system has created a Baha'i confederation with 143 member states and independent territories. On a small scale, the Baha'i Faith can be said to have succeeded in inventing and applying a model for work on a worldwide basis in the Baha'i Administrative Order, which guarantees the same rights and privileges to all its member states.

The United States with a large Baha'i community has no more impact or influence, than Bolivia with a smaller and less sophisticated Baha'i population on the outcome of the election of the Universal House of Justice, the supreme Baha'i institution. Each have 9 votes, (6) Baha'i News no. 658, January 1986, p. 9.

the votes of each National Spiritual Assembly member.

An observer, however, is tempted to note an Americanization of the Baha'i world as a result of important American presence in Baha'i institutions. Does this necessarily mean we are going towards a domination of the Baha'i world by the United States? The Baha'is believe this is impossible because the very nature of Baha'i administration system, advocates a universal participation in the affairs of the community. The election scheduled either once a year for local and national institutions or every 5 years for the Universal House of Justice provides the opportunity to eliminate undesirable individuals lacking the spiritual dimension necessary for office holding in the Baha'i view.

Baha'i expansion policy and the special mission given by Abdul Baha to the American Baha'i community through the tablets of the Divine Plan (p.14), as our study has revealed, have permitted the establishment of American Baha'is all over the world.

The American community every year provides an important number of international pioneers to every part of the world. Statistically, when compared to other countries' contribution in this field, only Iran, the cradle of the Baha'i Faith, can claim to have done better. Iran, with a community of 400,000 to 500,000 Baha'is could easily allow and encourage an important number of their believers to move to virgin territories in order to accomplish the planned goals. The U.S.A. has a small community, but an economically strong community, where each pioneer can take care of himself financially and hope to find work relatively easily. To have an American passport also meant credibility and explains the greater facility of installing American pioneers.

As far as Europe is concerned, the responsibility for this continent was given to the United States, possibly because of the cultural affiliation and European background of many Americans. It was therefore a strategical act to send a pioneer with a Danish ancestry to Denmark, a pioneer with a Spanish ancestry to Spain, a pioneer with Italian ancestry to Italy, etc. It did work and today each European country has an organized Baha'i community, applying the same diffusion policy within its borders as the one described in our study for the United States.

In most cases these believers were key persons in organizing Baha'i activities, instrumental in finding new adherents and as dynamic and devoted Baha'is, they were quickly elected to the National Institution of the country in which they had settled. Many such figures never returned to their country like Dagmar Dole who was the first pioneer to go to Denmark in 1952.

American Baha'is cherish the memory of some outstanding co-religionaries in the person of Agnes Baldwin Alexandre and Mr. and Mrs. John Henry Dunn who respectively settled in Japan and Australia and established the faith in these two countries. Mrs. Alexandre was later on appointed Hand of the Cause (key figures in the appointed institutions, p.21) and Mr. and Mrs. Dunn are well-remembered by today's Australian Baha'i community as Father and Mother Dunn.

Organizational capacity and efficiency of the American pioneer must have given him a certain prestige. But the increasing number of local Baha'is elected to the institutions of the Administrative Order eliminates to a large degree the possibility of domination of Baha'i world affairs by one or a group of countries.

### CONCLUSION

The analysis of the tenets and growth of the Baha'i Faith has indicated its potentiality to develop in a different cultural environment than the one of its origin as well as its ability to integrate and unite different age groups and ethnic components in the building of a new world-oriented society.

It has shown its capacity to transform the believer to conform to new values relevant with the world-mindedness inherent in its teachings. The Baha'i has attained a dimension which goes beyond the attachment to his native country. He has, to use the words of Margaret Mead, recognized more closely the factors he has in common with other men and has gained a sense of mankind as a unit.

There have been, on the intellectual level, many proponents of world unity, but it is doubtful that an intellectual view of the world can create sufficient motivation in people to change long acquired attitudes and conduct patterns.

Harold Taylor among other educational experts gave much attention to the subject of world education. "The conception of education itself, he says, must now be one which locates man intellectually in a universe described by scientist, artist and writers, and in a cultural setting as big as the globe. To enjoy any longer the luxury of defining one's nation, one's society, or oneself in terms of pride of ancestry, social superiority, or power of destruction is not only supremely dangerous to the survival of

the race, but intellectually and socially obsolete." (1)

Education is no doubt an important means in helping to develop new attitudes towards social changes which mankind is confronted with, but does it create the positive affiliation with mankind based on emotional and spiritual values?

The relatively rapid spread of the Baha'i Faith over the world and its continued growth make us believe it is a religious phenomenon which can not be ignored. As we have seen, the Baha'i Faith is not strictly a cult, since it retains a personal God, a legal and emissary as well as exemplary concept of the Prophet and a social as well as mystical experience and orientation to spiritual life.

If religion is the means of ultimate transformation, it must possess expression within three categories as defined by Joachim Wach: "Theoretical (myth and doctrine), practical (worship) and cultus and sociological." (2)

Our study has shown that these three categories can be applied to the Baha'i Faith.

- 1) It has a prophet founder.
- 2) It has its own sacred writings, its own concept of the world and life. The ideal of the new world is described and the basis for its organization laid down.
- 3) The transformation it brings affects the entire structure of the human society as well as the religious experience.

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( 1 ) The World as Teacher, by Harold Taylor, Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1969; p. 3.

( 2 ) Sociology of Religion, by Joachim Wach, University of Chicago Press, 1944; pp. 17-34.

- 4) It has martyrs whose names today are given to Baha'i children all over the world.
- 5) It has its own calendar around which the Baha'i community life is built.

As Professor Chouleur says:

...it gives life a meaning. Let all of mankind be one family, and men "the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch," according to the poetic--and, one hopes, prophetic--words of Baha'ullah. This is a wish that no humanist from the utmost recess of his heart can possibly object to even if he is agnostic. The Baha'i Faith, therefore, stands a very good chance of one day making it to the forefront. (3)

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( 3) La Foi Mondiale, Baha'i Religion Planetaire de l'avenir?,  
by Jacques Chouleur, Annales Universitaires d'Avignon, N° 1, N° 2,  
Nov. 1975.

## ANNEXE



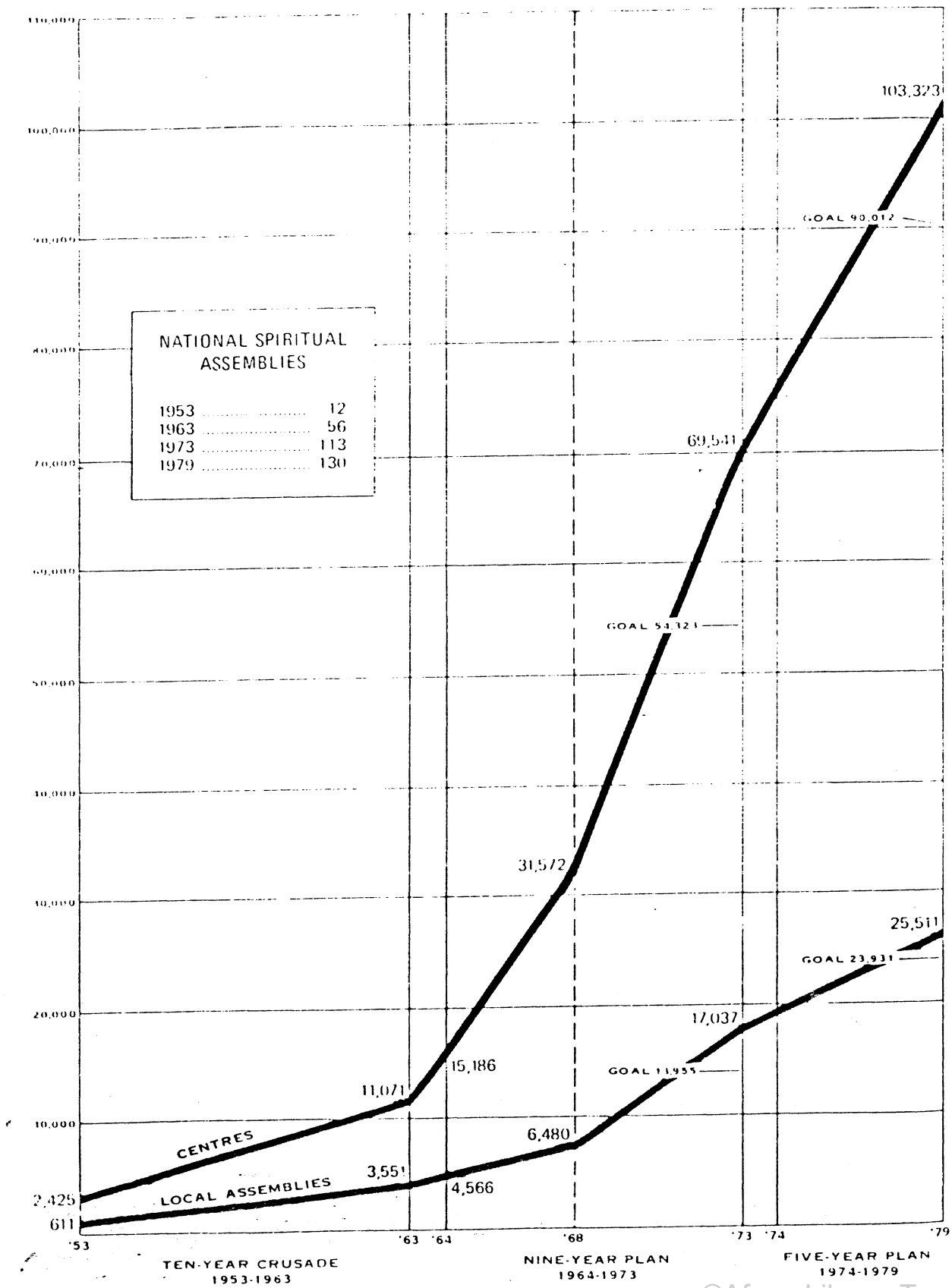
- 82 -  
STATISTIQUES DANS LE MONDE BAH'A'I

|  |                          | Assemblée<br>Nationale                  | Pays, îles<br>Territoires<br>ouverts | Assemblée<br>Locale                | Localités  | Ethnies        | Traduction<br>des<br>Ecrits            |
|--|--------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|----------------|--|
| 1844<br>1853   | Sans<br>Plan             |   | 2                                    |                                    |  |                |  |
| 1892   |                          |   | 15                                   |                                    |  |                |  |
| 1921   |                          | 0                                       | 37                                   |                                    |  |                |  |
| 1937   |                          | 8                                       |                                      |                                    |  |                |  |
| 1939<br>1941<br>1942<br>1943<br>1944<br>1945                                 | Plan<br>de<br>7 ans      |   | 78                                   |                                    |  |                |  |
| 1946<br>1947<br>1948<br>1949<br>1950<br>1951<br>1952                         | Plan<br>de<br>7 ans      |   | 83<br>91<br>94<br>100<br>106<br>124  |                                    |  |                |  |
| 1953<br>1954<br>1955<br>1956<br>1957<br>1958<br>1959<br>1960<br>1961<br>1962 | Croisade<br>de<br>10 ans | 12<br><br>15<br>26                      | 128<br>228<br>236<br>247<br>251      | <br><br>900<br>1000                | 2500<br>2900<br>3200<br>3700<br>4200               | 35             | 89<br>130<br>190<br>230                |
| 1963<br>1964<br>1965<br>1966<br>1967<br>1968<br>1969<br>1970<br>1971         | Plan<br>de<br>9 ans      | 56<br>69<br>70<br>81<br>83<br>94<br>101 | 259<br><br>311<br>317                | <br>4.566<br>6000<br>6828<br>10461 | 11410<br>15186<br>21006<br>28917<br>32600<br>46707 | 71<br><br>1136 | 309<br>340<br>347<br>400<br>428<br>434 |
| 1974<br>1975<br>1976<br>1977<br>1978   | Plan<br>de<br>5 ans      | <br><br>123                             | <br><br>335                          | <br><br>17447                      | <br><br>78448                                      | <br><br>1640   | <br><br>620                            |
| 1979<br>à<br>1986  | Plan<br>de<br>7 ans      | <br>148                                 |                                      | 32854                              | 116707   | 2112           | 757                                    |

# THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD

## THE GROWTH OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

1953-1979





# City of Cambridge

COUNCILLOR ALICE K. WOLF

IN CITY COUNCIL  
June 2, 1986

WHEREAS: Peace and mutual understanding are the most compelling needs in this world of increasingly interdependent nations; and

WHEREAS: The achievement of peace is frequently assumed to be incompatible with human nature, and this assumption leads to despair and a general paralysis of will; and

WHEREAS: This paralysis can only be overcome by educating people, and encouraging their involvement with a wide spectrum of social and interpersonal issues which are the foundations of peace; and

WHEREAS: The Baha'i world community has been in the forefront of such issues for over a century, contributing to social and economic development, to the emancipation of women, and to the elimination of prejudice; and

WHEREAS: The experience of the Baha'i world community at the grass roots level can inspire hope that international peace is possible as well as provide an example of how to lay its foundations; and

WHEREAS: In this International Year of Peace, the City of Cambridge reaffirms its commitment to world peace; therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That "The Promise of World Peace", a letter to the peoples of the world by the Universal House of Justice, the governing Council of the Baha'is of the world, is a valuable resource for all citizens who yearn for peace, and that study of this document is enthusiastically encouraged.

In City Council June 2, 1986.

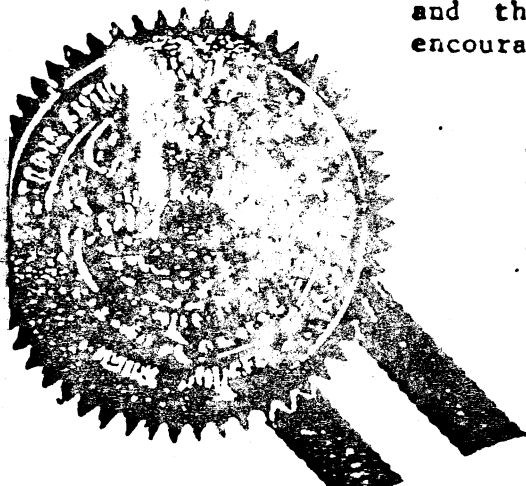
Adopted by the affirmative vote of 9 members.

Attest:- Joseph E. Connarton, Acting City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

*Joseph E. Connarton*  
Joseph E. Connarton, Acting City Clerk



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