



Inside:



3

Update on Iran:
Denial of Bahá'í rights
continues, although some
improvements are found



4

The Bahá'í Office of the
Environment is formally
announced; it will focus on
tree projects and small-scale
conservation goals



6

Producing fuel-efficient
cooking stoves in
Mombasa—how grassroots
groups can help the
environment



16

Review: Anthropologist
Joseph Sheppherd finds
wisdom among the
Ntumu people

A visit to the Soviet Union, carrying a message of peace, evokes a warm response



Duane Omid-Varan addresses students and faculty at the University of Kazan in the Soviet Union during The Promise of World Peace tour last December. Mr. Omid-Varan and other members of the tour were the first Westerners to visit Kazan in recent memory.

62 Bahá'ís, in citizen-to-citizen diplomacy, find that spiritual values have strong appeal

KAZAN, USSR — Like many other young people in the Soviet Union, Elaine Goncharova has often discussed the issue of world peace. The topic was a mainstay at the international friendship clubs she participated in during elementary and high schools, and a constant theme of the Communist Party's messages.

The lively 19-year-old student at the University of Kazan was surprised, then, to find so many new ideas about peace in a statement she received last December when a group of 62 Bahá'ís visited this once-closed city in the Tatar autonomous republic of central Russia. The Bahá'ís were the first group of foreigners to visit the region since before World War II.

"This is the first time I've seen such specific and practical suggestions on a course of action," said Ms. Goncharova, adding that the issue of peace had previously been presented only in a political and military context. "But this message offers hope for a future unified world."

The message Ms. Goncharova refers to is *The Promise of World Peace*, a statement on the prerequisites for international peace based on principles of the Bahá'í Faith. Since 1985, when the statement was released, more than one million people have received copies, including most of the world's Heads of State. Disseminated largely by the global network of

(Continued on page 8)

ONE COUNTRY

is published quarterly by the Office of Public Information of the Bahá'í International Community, an international non-governmental organization which encompasses and represents the worldwide membership of the Bahá'í Faith.

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The Promise of World Peace

To say that world peace is on the horizon hardly raises an eyebrow anymore. In the last two years, a succession of dramatic events—from the settlement of several intense regional conflicts to the political upheavals in Eastern Europe—has given new hope to the prospects for peace.

Five years ago, however, a prediction that peace was at hand seemed the product of wishful thinking. Cold war tension between the super-powers was the highest in

Perspective

20 years, with seemingly intractable differences on arms control and ideology. At the same time, more than a dozen regional "hot" wars raged around the world.

Against this backdrop, if for no other reason, *The Promise of World Peace* is a remarkable document.

Written in early 1985 when East-West and regional tensions were near their zenith, this statement from the Universal House of Justice, the international governing council of the Bahá'í Faith, asserted unequivocally that world peace was not only inevitable, but within our collective grasp. It warned that mankind must choose whether the path to peace is to be through consultative effort or, by negligence, through catastrophic events.

In the context of recent events, that statement now seems prophetic.

The Promise of World Peace is also remarkable for its bold analysis of the global processes that are leading towards peace—and for its outline of the principles that can hasten its arrival.

Peace, wrote the House of Justice, will not come about simply through new treaties, or even the machinery of collective security. Rather, peace will involve changes in our basic human values—Bahá'ís would use the term "spiritual" values—and the way those values are applied in solving social problems.

In *The Promise of World Peace*, the House of Justice outlined the most important of these values. They include the elimination of racism, an end to discrimi-

nation against women, and closing the gap between the rich and the poor. A greater consciousness of human oneness was stressed, as was the recognition of religion's potential contribution in the transformation of human attitudes.

The statement was addressed to "The Peoples of the World," and indicated that these new attitudes would come as much from the grassroots as from governments. And, indeed, the changes now occurring in the world seem driven more by pressure from below than edicts from above.

This issue of *ONE COUNTRY* features two stories on the impact the document has had, along with excerpts from it. On the cover is a report from the Soviet Union, where copies of the *The Promise of World Peace* have been distributed among ordinary citizens for the first time. As the story notes, their warm response has been typical of the reaction throughout the world.

Inside is an item about the first endowed Bahá'í chair, being established at the University of Maryland. Although of interest to those who follow religious news or peace studies, the event is doubly significant because its inspiration came from one

...the changes now occurring in the world seem driven more by pressure from below than edicts from above.

scholar's study of *The Promise of World Peace*.

Most Bahá'ís believe that the release and distribution of *The Promise of World Peace* has contributed to fostering the attitudes for peaceful change that are currently sweeping the globe.

Certainly, it has galvanized around the issue the worldwide community of more than 5 million Bahá'ís. Since 1985, Bahá'ís have organized literally thousands of local, regional and national peace conferences, lectures, fairs and other events.

Through the network of nearly 20,000
(Continued next page)

UN human rights panel finds continued discrimination in Iran

GENEVA — Despite some improvements, the long-persecuted 300,000-member Bahá'í community in Iran still faces discrimination in employment, education, and travel, and continues to lack the right to meet for worship, according to a report issued here in February by Mr. Reynaldo Galindo Pohl, special representative to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

On March 7, partly in response to this report, the Commission approved a resolution mandating Mr. Pohl to continue his first-hand investigation of the human rights situation in Iran. Early this year, Mr. Pohl visited Iran on behalf of the Commission.

The resolution specifically asked that Mr. Pohl report on the situation of minority groups, including the Bahá'ís, and that he present that report to the U.N. General Assembly later this year.

In testimony before the Commission on 28 February, a representative of the Bahá'í International Community thanked the

Commission for its support over the last ten years, the period since the latest outbreak of persecutions in Iran started. "The Bahá'í community has placed its trust in the moral authority of the international community acting through the United Nations General Assembly and this Commission," said Wytze Bos, the Bahá'í spokesman. "We have not been disappointed."

Mr. Pohl's report, which was released on 26 February, concluded that although there was some "de facto" tolerance of Bahá'ís in Iran, serious problems remain.

Holy Places Remain Confiscated

Bahá'í holy places remain confiscated, Mr. Pohl reported, Bahá'í students continue to be denied admission to universities, and Bahá'ís are still prevented from leaving the country. In addition, he wrote, Bahá'ís are also being refused the right to inherit various assets and have difficulties in burying their dead.

Mr. Pohl also outlined several examples of the day-to-day discrimination and threat of persecution that Bahá'ís experience. One Bahá'í, he wrote, was sentenced to a year's imprisonment simply for being a Bahá'í.

"The Bahá'ís are unable to meet as members of their faith," Mr. Pohl wrote. "They are not allowed to use the premises to which they formerly had access...and are not allowed to enter all offices owned by them."

Since 1979, more than 200 Bahá'ís have been killed in Iran and hundreds more imprisoned in a campaign of systematic persecution by the government. However, over the last two years, this campaign has grown less violent. The most recent executions were of two Bahá'ís in December 1988. Currently, about ten Bahá'ís remain in prison.

On February 27, the United States Congress also passed a resolution and calling on Iran to uphold its commitments to various international human rights accords on freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The resolution specifically mentions the Bahá'ís.☺

One Bahá'í was sentenced to a year's imprisonment simply for being a Bahá'í.

Promise of Peace

(Continued from previous page)

Bahá'í communities worldwide, more than one million copies of the statement itself have been disseminated. Many have gone to leaders of thought, and copies have been presented to virtually all the world's Heads of State. The statement has also been published whole or in part in numerous local newspapers and magazines.

The reaction to these presentations has been almost universally positive. In private conversation and public statements, influential thinkers have praised the document for its unique contribution to the ongoing discussion about how to achieve peace.

In the eyes of future historians it will no doubt stand associated with—and reflective of—the short and turbulent period at the end of the 20th century when sudden shifts in humanity's thinking opened the door to a lasting and universal peace for our planet.☺

Environment office formally established

Emphasis will be on trees and tree-planting, and improving links between international expertise and grassroots projects

NEW YORK — Following through on its increasing commitment to environmental conservation, the Bahá'í International Community has formally announced the establishment of an Office of the Environment.

Headquartered near the United Nations, the office seeks to provide a link between environmental expertise at the international level and the growing body of community-based conservation projects around the world.

In this capacity, the Office of the Environment will establish a resource center and clearinghouse that will make information available about small-scale, locally based environmental projects to conservation-minded groups at the grassroots level.

The office will also work to stimulate conservation activity among the more than 20,000 local Bahá'í communities worldwide, and to encourage links between Bahá'í communities and other groups.

"Many Bahá'í communities already have proven experience in organizing small-scale environment or development projects, and many also have a good track record of working with other organizations," said Mr. Lawrence Arturo, director of the Office of the Environment. "We hope to further support and encourage that kind of activity."

Announced in London

The establishment of the Office of the Environment was formally announced in London at a December luncheon commemorating the 100th anniversary of the birth of Richard St. Barbe Baker, who was well-known for his pioneering work in tree-planting, agroforestry, and conservation.

Sponsored by the Bahá'í International Community Office of the Environment in collaboration with several international conservation groups, the luncheon was patterned after a series of similar luncheons

The newly appointed advisory group for the Office of the Environment. Shown, left to right, are: Firouz Sobhani, a technical advisor to the U.N. Sudano-Sahelian Office; Hugh Locke, director of the Bahá'í International Community's Office of Public Information in New York; Mona Grieser, an independent development consultant; Lawrence Arturo, director of the Office of the Environment; Hasan Sabri, head of the Office of Social and Economic Development at the Bahá'í World Center; and Falairiva Taafaki, an independent development consultant.



held each year in the 1950s and 1960s for the London diplomatic community by Dr. Baker. At those events, called World Forestry Charter Gatherings, Dr. Baker presented his assessment of the world's forestry situation.

The 15 December event, like the earlier gatherings, brought together diplomats and representatives of environmental groups for a world forestry status report, as delivered by Charles J. Lankester, principal technical advisor to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In his report, Mr. Lankester warned of the increasingly dire situation of the world's forests. (*See accompanying special supplement to ONE COUNTRY, which carries Mr. Lankester's speech.*)

Initially, the Office of the Environment will focus on trees as a foundation to conservation activities. "Trees play a significant role in satisfying human needs and in conservation efforts," said Mr. Arturo. "They benefit the community by providing food, fuel, fodder, fiber, shelter and pharmaceuticals. In addition, trees help to protect and improve the soil and regulate the water cycle. They also reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, addressing the problem of global warming."

Conservation Education

The office will also devote attention to encouraging environmental education and training at the community level. "We are already working on a conservation-oriented curriculum, which will be offered to the more than 600 Bahá'í schools and learning centers around the world," said Mr. Arturo. "We see environmental education and training as essential to helping to create the vision for a renewed earth as a means to stimulate local activity and support."

For example, Mr. Arturo said, the office is working with more than 35 national Bahá'í communities on five continents to encourage local support for Earth Day 1990. To be commemorated April 22, Earth Day 1990 is a global event aimed at increasing international environmental awareness and action.

Mr. Arturo said the office was intentionally located in New York to help develop the growing links between the Bahá'í community and other international environmental organizations, including various United Nations environment programs. The office is also organizing a worldwide network of volunteer consultants capable of providing

technical assistance in the field.

In recent years, local Bahá'í communities have initiated more than 50 conservation projects in at least 30 countries. These projects range from on-going tree-planting and reforestation efforts to the local manufacture of fuel-efficient stoves (*see related story on next page*); from rural research centers investigating the application of appropriate technologies like bio-gas and solar energy to the introduction of conservation curricula at selected primary and tutorial schools.

"Bahá'is view the protection and preservation of the environment in the broad-

"Trees play a significant role in satisfying human needs and in conservation efforts. They benefit the community by providing food, fuel, fodder, fiber, shelter and pharmaceuticals. In addition, trees help to protect and improve the soil and regulate the water cycle. They also reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, addressing the problem of global warming."

est possible sense," said Mr. Arturo. "We believe that the efforts to break down barriers that limit fruitful and harmonious cooperation among men and women, whether in the form of nationalism, racism, sexism or religious and class prejudice, must be included as a fundamental component of the environmental movement."

Integrative Approach

"Our approach to environmental preservation is holistic and integrative," he added. "It is based on a new vision for humanity and the natural environment that emphasizes spiritual values, unity of effort, and the establishment of a self-sustaining, ever-advancing civilization."

The Office of the Environment can be contacted by writing to: Bahá'í International Community, Office of the Environment, 866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 120, New York, NY, 10017, USA. ☉

Vincent Wangara, right, coordinator of the jiko stove project for the Mombasa Bahá'í community, displays three types of vermiculite-lined charcoal cookers, called "jikos" in Kiswahili. A new design, these types use less fuel than traditional jikos.



New Design for Traditional "Jiko" Stoves, Made by Community Groups, Offers One Answer to Deforestation in East Africa

MOMBASA, Kenya—In this and other large cities in Kenya, nearly every home is equipped with a simple charcoal-burning brazier called a "jiko." Even in homes with gas or electric stoves, the jikos are preferred, often leaving the more expensive appliances unused. Kenyans say jiko-cooked food tastes better—not to mention the delicious smoky fragrance of meat and vegetables cooking over hot coals.

Unfortunately this tradition, if not controlled, will denude the forests of Kenya. Wood fuel, including both charcoal and fuelwood, accounts for about 75 percent of the energy base in Kenya—a statistic which is unlikely to change much in the future, owing to the cost of importing fossil fuels. And much of the charcoal in this equation goes into the jikos.

An association of environmental groups in Kenya, known as the Kenyan Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (KENGO), has launched a country-wide program to replace traditional jiko cookers with a newer, more fuel-efficient design. Although the improved jikos cost more, they make a day's supply of charcoal last twice as long. Because the heat is con-

centrated under the cooking pot, food cooks twice as fast—saving both time and fuel.

For the last several years, the Bahá'í community of Mombasa has participated in this program. "KENGO encourages people to use the new type of jiko, so we began to make the jikos, as a group effort," said Vincent Wanjara, who coordinates the Bahá'í jiko project. "They invited the Bahá'ís to participate in this project, and it has been a good experience for us."

Although the Bahá'í jiko project is strictly small-scale, operating out of a back room of the Bahá'í Center here, it illustrates the kind of initiative that local Bahá'í communities have taken in addressing problems of the environment and development, said Lawrence Arturo, director of the newly established Bahá'í International Community Office of the Environment.

"This is the type of activity we encourage," said Mr. Arturo. "Although the Bahá'í project in Mombasa is small, it emerged from a genuine concern about problems in that country."

That spirit has impressed others. "When I think of the Bahá'ís, it's not the size but the impact that they have," said Mr. Jimoh Omo-

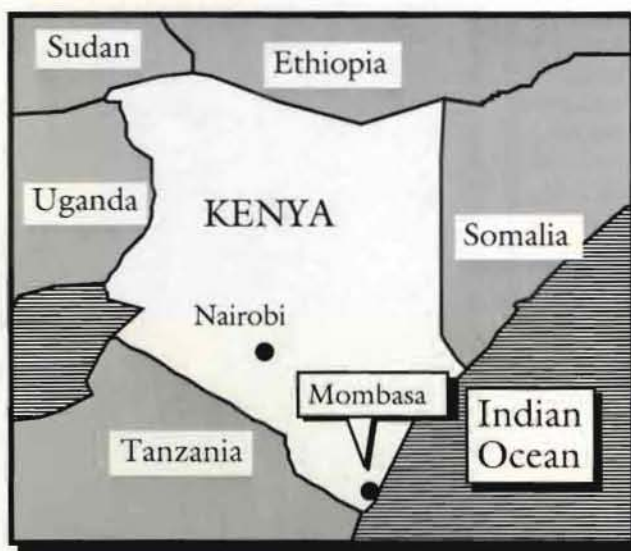
Fadakah, executive director of the African Network of Environmental NGOs (ANEN). "I wouldn't like to exaggerate it, but they are one of the mainstream groups here."

Mr. Omo-Fadakah believes that even modest development projects like the Bahá'í jiko-manufacturing effort, serve not only the environmental movement, but also the cause of peace. "Peace is the prerequisite for any type of human development," he said. "peace can be found in all local communities, and in the way that individuals begin to relate to each other."

"This seems to me to be the essence of Bahá'í philosophy, and I happen to agree with it—educating the people to the importance of peace and to the importance of doing things in their own way, in their own local communities and without aggression towards anybody," Mr. Omo-Fadakah added.

Mr. Omo-Fadakah said the new jikos provide one of the answers to the energy problem because they use fuel more efficiently. "You can conserve more trees by using jiko and the charcoal than if you were just cutting trees down all the time" for the older, inefficient stoves, he said.

The Mombassa Bahá'í community learned how to make the new jikos through training courses at the local government



Farmer's Training Institute, which is part of the program that KENGO established to involve local groups and organizations.

Caroline Jeza, a member of the Mombassa Local Spiritual Assembly, the nine-member Bahá'í administrative council for the Bahá'í community, uses a fuel-efficient jiko for her daily cooking. "It conserves heat, so that you use much less charcoal than otherwise. Using and making jikos gives us a way to contribute, both to the country and the environment."

The new jikos have several features that make them more efficient. First, they use a vermiculite or clay lining, and about an inch of cement on the bottom, below where the fire is lighted under the charcoal, to conserve heat.

Each jiko also features a small side door with a latch, where paper is inserted to start the charcoal burning. The door locks in the heat.

In addition, the new design lasts longer. Old-model jikos are quickly eaten away by the corrosive ash and high temperatures. They need replacing every six months; the new ones are good for up to four years.

Mrs. Sara Tesha, who works full-time for a local utility company in addition to managing a busy household, is happy with her new stove, not only for its energy-saving aspects, but for its convenience. "Instead of filling the jiko with charcoal three times, I fill it only once to cook an entire meal," she said. "It has made life easier for me, because my charcoal-consuming is not as much as before." ❁

"You can conserve more trees by using jiko and the charcoal than if you were just cutting trees down all the time..."



Mrs. Sara Tesha cooks vegetables and garlic on her jiko stove, working to create a dinner of meat, vegetables and rice that will feed her family for two or more meals.

In addition to copies of *The Promise of World Peace*, Bahá'ís visiting the Soviet Union late last year presented a hand-carved Hawaiian royal calabash to the people of the Soviet Union. Standing left to right in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, where the calabash will stay, are Ina Oren, foreign relations director of the museum; an assistant to Ms. Oren; Dr. Gary Morrison, secretary general of the Bahá'í community of the Hawaiian Islands; Robert Palmer, director of the tour; and Larisa Sansoneta, director of the School for Planetary Thinking, which hosted the Bahá'í visit. The calabash, carved by one of Hawaii's master craftsmen, Stewart Medeiros, is created in the style associated with Queen Lili'uokalani, who ruled Hawaii in the late Nineteenth century. It is composed of five stacked calabash bowls carved from Norfolk pine.



Citizen-to-citizen diplomacy wins a warm response in the Soviet Union

(Continued from front page)

nearly 20,000 Bahá'í communities, the statement and its distribution represent a contribution to the modern peace movement, a movement which today seems to be reshaping the world.

A 12-day visit to Moscow and Kazan last November and December by 62 Bahá'ís from eight countries provided another opportunity to share the statement at the grassroots level. And, although enthusiasm for the statement was perhaps heightened by the new spiritual and intellectual freedom in the Soviet Union, the warm response was not atypical. Around the world, people from every background have found value in the statement.

The organizers of the trip, who are not Bahá'ís, were so impressed by the peace statement that they built a special tour around it. Youth Ambassadors International, based in Washington state, USA, invited the Bahá'í youth of Hawaii on an exclusive visit to share the peace message with the Soviets.

"In our personal life, we are Christians," said Ed Johnson, who, with his wife, Linda, started and operates Youth Ambassadors. "But our organization is a religious, and when I read the Bahá'í peace message

it was a statement that I could very easily agree with, because in my heart, I felt the same way."

The Johnsons, who have helped send more than 2,000 individuals on cultural or professional exchanges between the United States and the Soviet Union since 1985, said that their Soviet partner for this trip, the School for Planetary Thinking, working

**"We have a vacuum which needs to be filled.... We just need religious truths to fill the vacuum."
— Shamiel Fattakh**

under the auspices of the Foundation for Social Innovation, in Moscow, had also reviewed the peace statement and found it compatible with its own goals.

"It would give anyone who reads it tremendous hope for the future," said Mr. Johnson. "And I saw a great enthusiasm and receptivity on the part of the Soviet people on the trip."

Bahá'ís believe the message has universal appeal. "Although it is issued by a reli-

gious body, the statement is not a sectarian document," said Dr. Gary Morrisson, secretary of the Bahá'í community of the Hawaiian Islands, which co-sponsored the Soviet tour. "It addresses issues that are not always associated with the peace process — such as our understanding of the oneness of humanity, and the explanation for the paralysis that has for so long blocked peace — and so it always seems to shed new light on how people can live in harmony."

During the trip, the Bahá'ís met with Soviet citizens at schools, universities, factories and even at an orphanage which is partially supported by the KGB, the Soviet Committee for State Security. At every encounter, the peace statement was distributed. And this usually lead to an extended discussion not only of the ideas in the peace statement, but of religion in general.

At a high school in Kazan, ethics teacher Sonya Graburov asked for permission to use *The Promise of World Peace* in the classroom. "This peace message offers us some new material for discussion," she said. "For instance: Is world peace inevitable? Is man's selfish and aggressive conduct a true expression of man, or a distortion? Can the human race eliminate prejudices and the disparity between rich and poor?"

Shamiel Fattakh, producer of a Soviet television program for young people, said the receptivity to both the peace message, and to the ideas of the Bahá'í Faith in general, should not be surprising, given recent Soviet history.



"We've been busy since the revolution fine-tuning our minds to culture, history, art and literature, all the while having to suppress the spiritual side of our nature," Fattakh said. "We have a vacuum which needs to be filled, and that vacuum is lined with strong Soviet spiritualism. We just need religious truths to fill the vacuum."

At the University of Kazan, administrators brought 250 students together with the Bahá'ís, leading to extended small-group discussions about the peace message and the Bahá'í Faith. Alexei Kolpakov, a graduate student in biology, felt that the message contained a practical application of religion. "I think the Bahá'í concept of a spiritual foundation for world leadership is essential," Kolpakov said. "We must let human values help find solutions to social problems." — *With reporting in the Soviet Union by Annette Donner.* ☉



Participants of "The Promise of World Peace Tour," shown in the lecture hall of Kazan University. Sponsored by Youth Ambassadors International of Washington state, USA, the Bahá'í Community of the Hawaiian Islands, and the School for Planetary Thinking of Moscow, USSR, the tour brought 62 Bahá'ís from eight nations to the Soviet Union for a 12-day visit emphasizing citizen diplomacy and world peace.

To The Peoples of the World:

Excerpts from the Bahá'í Peace Statement

Written in 1985 by the international governing council of the Bahá'í Faith, this document was addressed to "The Peoples of the World" and reflects Bahá'í thinking on the prerequisites for world peace. Titled *The Promise of World Peace*, the statement has been given to virtually all the world's Heads of State, as well as to ordinary citizens everywhere. More than one million copies have so far been distributed.

The Great Peace towards which people of goodwill throughout the centuries have inclined their hearts...is now at long last within the reach of the nations. For the first time in history it is possible for everyone to view the entire planet, with all its myriad diversified peoples, in one perspective. World peace is not only possible but inevitable. It is the next stage in the evolution of this planet....

Yet barriers persist. Doubts, misconceptions, prejudices, suspicions and narrow self-interest beset nations and peoples in their relations one to another....

Indeed, so much have aggression and conflict come to characterize our social, economic and religious systems, that many have succumbed to the view that such behavior is intrinsic to human nature and therefore ineradicable.

With the entrenchment of this view, a paralyzing contradiction has developed in human affairs. On the one hand, people of all nations proclaim not only their readiness but their longing for peace and harmony.... On the other hand, uncritical assent is given to the proposition that human beings are incorrigibly selfish and aggressive and thus incapable of erecting...a system giving free play to individual creativity and initiative but based on co-operation and reciprocity.

As the need for peace becomes more urgent, this fundamental contradiction, which hinders its realization, demands a reassessment of the assumptions upon which the commonly held view of mankind's historical predicament is based. Dispassionately examined, the evidence reveals that such conduct, far from expressing man's true self, represents a distortion of the human spirit....

The Bahá'í Faith regards the current world confusion and calamitous condition in human affairs as a natural phase in an organic process leading ultimately and irresistibly to the unification of the human race in a single social order whose boundaries are those of the planet. The human race, as a distinct, organic unit, has passed through evolutionary stages of infancy and child-

hood in the lives of its individual members, and is now in the culminating period of its turbulent adolescence approaching its long-awaited coming of age.

A candid acknowledgement that prejudice, war and exploitation have been the expression of immature stages in a vast historical process and that the human race is today experiencing the unavoidable tumult which marks its collective coming of age is not a reason for despair but a prerequisite to undertaking the stupendous enterprise of building a peaceful world....

No serious attempt to set human affairs aright, to achieve world peace, can ignore religion.... Writing of religion as a social force, Bahá'u'lláh* said: "Religion is the greatest of all means for the establishment of order in the world and for the peaceful contentment of all that dwell therein."...

The time has come when those who preach the dogmas of materialism, whether of the east or the west, whether of capitalism or socialism, must give account of the moral stewardship they have presumed to exercise. Where is the "new world" promised by these ideologies? Where is the international peace to whose ideals they proclaim their devotion? Where are the breakthroughs into new realms of cultural achievement produced by the aggrandizement of this race, of that nation or of that particular class? Why is the vast majority of the world's peoples sinking ever deeper into hunger when wealth on a scale undreamed of by the Pharaohs, the Caesars, or even the imperialist powers of the nineteenth century is at the disposal of the present arbiters of human affairs?...

Clearly, a common remedial effort is urgently required. It is primarily a matter of attitude. Will humanity continue in its waywardness, holding to outworn concepts and unworkable assumptions? Or will its leaders, regardless of ideology, step forth and, with a resolute will, consult together in a united search for appropriate solutions?...

At this point, the statement analyzes some of the trends in the world which offer hope,

* The Founder of the Bahá'í Faith



United Nations Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar receives *The Promise of World Peace* from Mme. Rúhiyyih Rabbání, a representative of the Bahá'í Faith, right, on 22 November 1985.

noting that the formation of the United Nations and various regional associations and organizations "all prepare the path to world order." At the same time, the statement notes, there are a number of barriers to peace which deserve special attention. These barriers include racism, the disparity between rich and poor, "unbridled" nationalism, religious strife and the inequality of women and men. The statement then goes on:

...the abolition of war is not simply a matter of signing treaties and protocols; it is a complex task requiring a new level of commitment to resolving issues not customarily associated with the pursuit of peace. Based on political agreements alone, the idea of collective security is a chimera....

...in essence, peace stems from an inner state supported by a spiritual or moral attitude, and it is chiefly in evoking this attitude that the possibility of enduring solutions can be found....

The primary question to be resolved is how the present world, with its entrenched pattern of conflict, can change to a world in which harmony and co-operation will prevail.

World order can be founded only on an unshakeable consciousness of the oneness of mankind, a spiritual truth which all the human sciences confirm. Anthropology,

physiology, psychology, recognize only one human species, albeit infinitely varied in the secondary aspects of life. Recognition of this truth requires the abandonment of every prejudice—prejudice of every kind—race, class, colour, creed, nation, sex, degree of material civilization, everything which enables people to consider themselves superior to others....

In the Bahá'í view, recognition of the oneness of mankind "calls for no less than the reconstruction and demilitarization of the whole civilized world—a world organically unified in all the essential aspects of its life, its political machinery, its spiritual aspiration, its trade and finance, its script and language, and yet infinite in the diversity of the national characteristics of its federated units."...

The implementation of these far-reaching measures was indicated by Bahá'u'lláh: "The time must come when the imperative necessity for the holding of a vast, an all-embracing assemblage of men will be universally realized. The rulers and kings of the earth must needs attend it, and, participating in its deliberations, must consider such ways and means as will lay the foundations of the world's Great Peace amongst men."...

The holding of this mighty convocation is long overdue.... Will not the United

Nations, with the full support of its membership, rise to the high purposes of such a crowning event?...

The source of optimism we feel is a vision transcending the cessation of war and the creation of agencies of international co-operation.... "Unification of the whole of mankind is the hall-mark of the stage which human society is now approaching. Unity of family, of tribe, of city-state, and nation have been successively attempted and fully established. World unity is the goal towards which a harassed humanity is striving. Nation-building has come to an end. The anarchy inherent in state sovereignty is moving towards a climax. A world, growing to maturity, must abandon this fetish, recognize the oneness and wholeness of human relationships, and establish once and for all the machinery that can best incarnate this fundamental principle of its life."...

The experience of the Bahá'í community may be seen as an example of this enlarging unity. It is a community of some three to four million* people drawn from many nations, cultures, classes and creed, engaged in a wide range of activities serv-

* The current figure is more than five million.

ing the spiritual, social and economic needs of the peoples of many lands. It is a single social organism, representative of the diversity of the human family, conducting its affairs through a system of commonly accepted consultative principles, and cherishing equally all the great outpourings of divine guidance in human history. Its existence is yet another convincing proof of the practicality of its Founder's vision of a united world, another evidence that humanity can live as one global society, equal to whatever challenges its coming of age may entail. If the Bahá'í experience can contribute in whatever measure to reinforcing hope in the unity of the human race, we are happy to offer it as a model for study....

We join with all who are the victims of aggression, all who yearn for an end of conflict and contention, all whose devotion to principles of peace and world order promotes the ennobling purpose for which humanity was called into being by an all-loving Creator.

In the earnestness of our desire to impart to you the fervour of our hope and the depth of our confidence, we cite the emphatic promise of Bahá'u'lláh: "These fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come." —
THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

President Giani Zail Singh of India receives the peace statement from Mrs. Zena Sorabjee, a representative of the Bahá'í Faith in India.





A Bahá'í choir from Transkei, shown left, performing at the Bahá'í International Music Festival held in Gaborone, Botswana, 1-3 December 1989. Groups of singers from many African localities competed in the event.

Poet Robert Hayden celebrated at University of Michigan

ANN ARBOR, Michigan, USA — The poetry of Robert Hayden, one of America's leading modernist poets, was celebrated at a conference at the University of Michigan, February 22–25, 1990.

Sponsored by the University, in collaboration with the Association for Bahá'í Studies, the King-Parks-Chavez Fund, Wayne State University and the Michigan councils for the arts and humanities, the four-day conference commemorated the 10th anniversary of Hayden's death with a series of lectures, exhibits, and poetry readings.

The poetry of Hayden, who was born in Detroit in 1913, was influenced by both his African-American roots and his membership in the Bahá'í Faith. He received numerous awards for his work, including election by the American Academy of Poets as a fellow in 1975 and appointment to the post of Consultant to the Library of Congress in 1976–78. ☼

World Meeting calls for Basic Education for All by 2000

JOMTIEN, Thailand — The World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs, held 5–9 March 1990 and jointly sponsored by the UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank, unanimously adopted a declaration and a framework for action calling on all countries to provide basic education for all by the year 2000.

The conference, attended by 1,500 delegates representing governments, intergovernmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), also stressed in its final documents the educational needs of women and girls, the needs of the handicapped, issues of debt and structural adjustment, the role of teachers, and the vital role of NGOs in improving the world education system.

Briefs:

Daniel Wegener, a Bahá'í International Community representative to the United Nations, was selected by the 130 NGOs here as the NGO member of the conference bureau, which presided over the plenary sessions.

Wegener said that NGOs were given full status as conference delegates, which allowed NGOs to take an active part in plenary sessions, the drafting committee, and to contribute substantially to the conference's outcome.

"This conference represents a new level of international and inter-sectoral collaboration on an issue of universal concern," Wegener said. "The degree of commitment from all parties was impressive. Global events concurrent with the Conference added to the perception that high ideals can indeed be transformed into action and that we should pay no heed to the barriers to educational progress that have, until recently, appeared to be insurmountable." ☼

First Bahá'í Chair established at University of Maryland; peace studies will be focus

COLLEGE PARK, Maryland, USA — In a collaborative effort aimed at exploring new approaches and alternatives in the search for peace, the Bahá'í community of the United States and the University of Maryland have established the Bahá'í Chair for World Peace.

A special endowed professorship, which will operate under the auspices of the University's Center for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM), the Chair will conduct interdisciplinary research, courses and seminars on peace and Bahá'í studies.

The Chair will also sponsor public discussions on issues of conflict resolution and world problems as outlined in *The Promise of World Peace*, a major Bahá'í statement on the prerequisites for peace.

At ceremonies here 26 January 1990, the United States Bahá'í community presented the University with a cheque for \$300,000 to start the Chair's endowment fund. Another \$50,000 was added by an anonymous donor. About \$1.5 million will be needed to fully endow the Chair.



Dr. Murray E. Polakoff, right, dean of the College of Behavior and Social Science at the University of Maryland, where the new Bahá'í peace chair will be located.

For the University, the new Chair will provide an important component to CIDCM's program, said Dr. Murray E. Polakoff, dean of the College of Behavior and Social Science at the University of Maryland, which oversees the Center. Dr. Polakoff said the Center has already established the Anwar Sadat Chair, which focuses on conflict management in relation to political issues, and the Kahlil Gibran Chair, focusing on peace and literature.

"While those two chairs are fine," said Dr. Polakoff, "we really didn't have anything that gets to the impact of spiritual values on peace, and that is where the Bahá'í Chair came in. We thought that was something well worth doing."

Judge Dorothy Nelson, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, the governing council for the U.S. Bahá'í community, said the professorship is the first Bahá'í chair in the world.

"The University of Maryland already has a world-embracing vision," said Judge Nelson. "And it has a goal of helping graduate students dedicate their lives to the promotion of peace and to the discovery of those spiritual principles that will help us attain peace. So we are extremely pleased to be able to contribute to this process."

The program was first proposed a year ago by Dr. Edward E. Azar, director of the CIDCM, who read *The Promise of World Peace* and believed that it offered concepts "critical for fostering global interdependence, enhancing international development and promoting collective survival."

In a letter to the Universal House of Justice in December 1988, Dr. Azar wrote: "I have been a student and professor of international war and peace in the United States for twenty-five years and I am convinced that the principles you articulate so well in this document have greater validity than some of the values and models we impart in our classrooms in today's U.S. universities." ☉

REVIEW: Tsetse flies and burning frogs—proverbs from the rainforest

(Continued from back page)

technology involved in making those toys, so that a child of 7 or 8 years old can become quite sophisticated at building a model truck with steerable wheels, independent suspension and other features of the real vehicle.

The chapters which focus on Sheppherd's personal experiences are as breezily written and colorful as postcards from a friend on a journey. Through them one shares the author's wonder at the strange world in which he finds himself. These chapters are richly anecdotal, expressing, often humorously and sometimes poignantly, the gulf of understanding that separates people of different cultures.

He describes an event which he later recognized as a test of merit, but not before he had successfully passed it. The village chief told him they were going to see a fish trap downstream, but first there was something upriver he wanted to show him. He handed Sheppherd a truncated stick and told him to board a dugout canoe in the Ntem River. Ahead of him were two other canoes, each carrying three village men with full-sized oars. Sheppherd was to follow—alone.

For three hours he inched along against the rapid current, flailing the water with the stick to keep from being swept downstream. Had he failed, he would have discovered what awaited him there: an awesome waterfall hurtling everything with it to the rocks below.

"Looking down at it from the river bank," Sheppherd writes, "I felt that death over a waterfall was rather a severe consequence for failing an unrequested initiation test. It was inordinately cruel and final. It was like finding your puppy dead, run over in the middle of the road, and someone saying, 'That'll teach him not to run after cars.'" When he returned to the village, however, the chief informed him that he could now stay with them as long as he liked.

The book's title itself is drawn from the proverb, *Man is a leaf of honey*. One of the

Ntumu elders honored Sheppherd with this explanation while packaging honey into a large cone-shaped leaf:

"I will take this leaf of honey back to my village and give it to my first-wife to store. She will drain the honey into a special bottle she keeps. When she is finished she will give the leaf to the children. Each will lick the leaf and find some honey to sweeten the tongue. When the last child has finished, he will throw the leaf out behind the hut where the goats sleep. They will have their turn. The other animals, the chickens, the flies, ants and so on will come and find their share of honey left on the leaf.... Man is a leaf of honey. This is what you need to know about us.... Man is good and man is precious and, like the leaf of honey, his goodness is inexhaustible. When you think that there is none left, there is still some there to find. This you should not forget."

The author's own religious beliefs helped prepare him for his experience. Sheppherd is a member of the Bahá'í Faith, which promotes the unity of humanity and stresses the dignity of all peoples.

Referring to the Ntumu proverb about the leaf of honey, Sheppherd concludes: "It is possible for the wisdom at the root of the proverb 'Man is leaf of honey' to be understood by anyone. It is universal. We are all leaves of one tree."

That last phrase is a quote from the Bahá'í writings, and is used often by Bahá'ís to illustrate the oneness and interdependence of humanity.

The Ntumu culture is being eroded by urbanization and economic pressures. Young tribesmen are leaving to find work in the cities; they do not return to the jungle. They are losing their oral traditions, their proverbs which contain the essence of their culture. The Ntumu will not likely continue to exist beyond the next few generations. Joseph Sheppherd made a connection with this sagacious people. *A Leaf of Honey* is his tribute to them, and an attempt to preserve a measure of the calmness, the respect and the dignity that are rapidly being lost to a technological world. Thanks to this book, perhaps, the wisdom of the Ntumu, like the leaf of honey, will endure even when it seems no more is left to find. ☺

"It is possible for the wisdom at the root of the proverb 'Man is leaf of honey' to be understood by anyone. It is universal. We are all leaves of one tree."

Of Tsetse Flies and Burning Frogs— Lessons in Rainforest Etiquette

*A Leaf of Honey
and the
Proverbs of the
Rainforest*

By Joseph
Shepherd

Bahá'í Publish-
ing Trust of the
United Kingdom

London

Hiking through the Cameroon rainforest in single file with Ntumu tribesmen, anthropologist Joseph Sheppherd felt a sudden swat on the back of his head. He ignored it, but was soon hit again by the muscular tribesman following him. A third swat followed shortly.

Sheppherd turned with anger, and screamed, "Why, Why, Why!" His guide, Robert, then explained that the man had been

Review

protecting him from tsetse flies, which carry sleeping sickness. "Robert explained that it was always the duty of the person walking behind to watch and protect the back of the person in front," Sheppherd writes. "It was one of the basic responsibilities of life."

The guide, Sheppherd notes, was surprised that I had not learned that yet.

In his year among the Ntumu people, Joseph Sheppherd encountered many such examples of "rainforest" etiquette. Although outwardly an anthropological study of Ntumu folklore and proverbs, *A Leaf of Honey and the Proverbs of the Rainforest* is also the personal account of a man humbled and enriched by the glimpse of a new world-view, quite distinct from his own. Through one incident after another, the reader gains insights not only into the cultural milieu of the Ntumu, but also into Sheppherd's own shift in attitude as he struggles to understand and befriend an unfamiliar people in an environment far removed from the California desert near the place where he was raised.

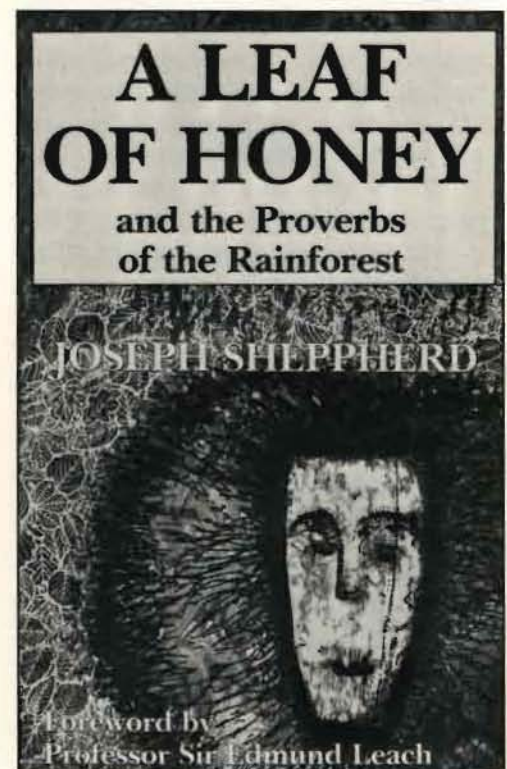
This dual purpose is achieved because the book is divided into alternating chapters, which convey two separate aspects of his experience: an anthropological account and a personal one. Taken together, they form an incisive ethnographic study of the Ntumu culture.

The anthropological account is an outgrowth of his senior year research project at the University of California. These chapters stress anthropological data and offer Sheppherd's findings on the social and spiritual significance of Ntumu proverbs, one genre of their oral tradition. Sheppherd presents a linguistic analysis of these proverbs, recording and codifying

them as they are collected, and showing how they embody the beliefs and practices of Ntumu society, containing the standards and principles by which the Ntumu make sense of their world and govern their affairs.

These chapters are liberally sprinkled with Ntumu wisdom, some of which are easily understood by the Western reader. Others require explanations of Ntumu custom or indigenous natural phenomena before their meaning is clear.

One proverb, *Frogs do not burn with the raffia*, "conveys the cultural feature of forgiveness," Sheppherd writes. "Conflict is something that is usually completely resolvable among the tribesmen. Resentment is not the normal postscript to conflict in Ntumu society. Here the proverb analogizes, 'There



is always something left to draw people together after something has come between them.' The analogy is that when a clump of raffia is burnt, the frogs escape and return after the disturbance is finished."

Throughout the book, detailed sketches, drawn by Sheppherd's own skilled hand, illustrate various tools and artifacts of Ntumu life. Explaining one such series of sketches, Sheppherd notes that Ntumu children do not share their toys; rather they share the

(Continued on page 15)