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World Conference on Human Rights Affirms Universal and Interdependent Nature of Rights

VIENNA — The nations of the world, meeting here in June at the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights, firmly agreed that human rights are "universal, indivisible and interdependent and inter-related."

In the Conference's final documents, which were adopted by consensus after two weeks of sometimes acrimonious debate, nations also reaffirmed the right to development and the rights of women and girl children, saying that these rights are inalienable and integral.

By making such pronouncements in clear language, the Conference essentially fulfilled the hopes of most non-governmental organizations, which had lobbied hard for recognition of the universality and interdependence of human rights, and for a greater emphasis on the rights of women and girls.

For its part, the Bahá'í International Community delivered three written statements to the Conference, along with two oral statements. The Community identified "unfettered national sovereignty" and "violence against women" as major obstacles to the realization of universal human rights.

In general terms, the Community's statements stressed the theme of human oneness and unity. "In the view of the Bahá'í International Community the organic oneness of humanity is a fundamental social and spiritual truth of our age," said the Community's first statement. "Indeed, the conviction that we are all citizens of one earth, together with a commitment to the well-being and happiness of all mankind, are the foundations for the realization of the ideals expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

(Continued on page 9)



Members of the Bahá'í community of Germany participate in a non-partisan, national demonstration against racism, carrying a banner that says: "Bahá'u'lláh: The Earth is but One Country." Some 100,000 people took part in the demonstration, held 8 November 1992 at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin.

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World Citizenship: A Global Ethic for Sustainable Development

[The following is an edited version of a statement prepared by the Bahá'í International Community for the Commission on Sustainable Development.]

The greatest challenge facing the world community as it mobilizes to implement *Agenda 21* is to release the enormous financial, technical, human and moral resources required for sustainable development. These resources will be freed up only as the peoples of the world develop a profound sense of responsibility for the fate of the planet and for the well-being of the entire human family.

This sense of responsibility can only emerge from the acceptance of the oneness of humanity and will be sustained only by a unifying vision of a peaceful, prosperous world society. Without such a global ethic, people will be unable to become active, constructive participants in the worldwide process of sustainable development.

While *Agenda 21* provides an indispensable framework of scientific knowledge and technical know-how for the implementation of sustainable development, it does not inspire personal commitment to a global ethic. This is not to say that ethics and values were ignored during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) process. The call for unifying values was heard throughout this process,

from heads of state to UN officials to representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and individual citizens.

In particular, the concepts of "our common humanity," "world citizenship" and "unity in diversity" were invoked to serve as the ethical undergirding for *Agenda 21* and the Rio Declaration.

The world community has, thus, already come to a basic accord on the need for a global ethic to vitalize *Agenda 21*. We suggest that the term "world citizenship" be adopted to encompass the constellation of principles, values, attitudes and behaviors that the peoples of the world must embrace if sustainable development is to be realized.

World citizenship begins with an acceptance of the oneness of the human family and the interconnectedness of the nations of "the earth, our home." While it encourages a sane and legitimate patriotism, it also insists upon a wider loyalty, a love of humanity as a whole. It does not, however, imply abandonment of legitimate loyalties, the suppression of cultural diversity, the abolition of national autonomy, nor the imposition of uniformity. Its hallmark is "unity in diversity."

World citizenship encompasses the principles of social and economic justice, both within and between nations; non-adversarial decision-making at all levels of society; equality of the sexes; racial, ethnic, national and religious harmony; and the willingness to sacrifice for the common good. Other facets of world citizenship promote human honor and dignity, understanding, amity, cooperation, trustworthiness, compassion and a desire to serve.

Fostering world citizenship is a practical strategy for promoting sustainable development. So long as disunity, antagonism and provincialism characterize the social, political and economic relations within and among nations, a global, sustainable pattern of development can not be established. Over a century ago Bahá'u'lláh warned, "The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established." Only upon a foundation of genuine unity, harmony and understanding among the diverse peoples and nations

Perspective

Note to our readers:

Starting with this issue, ONE COUNTRY will change its system for dating issues. In conformity with the generally accepted practice in the publishing world, the new system will reflect the time period for which the issue is current, instead of the time period covered by that issue. The date for this issue, for example, shows it is current for the period July-September 1993. Under the old system, it would have been dated April-June 1993. The issue and volume numbers remain in sequence.

of the world, can a sustainable global society be erected.

We, therefore, recommend that world citizenship be taught in every school and that the oneness of humanity — the principle underlying world citizenship — be constantly asserted in every nation.

The concept is not new. It is both implicit and explicit in a host of UN documents, charters and agreements, including the opening words of the UN Charter itself: "We the peoples of the United Nations . . ." It is already being promoted around the world across all cultures by diverse NGOs, academics, citizens' groups, entertainers, educational programs, artists, and the media. These efforts need to be greatly increased. A carefully planned and orchestrated, long-term campaign to foster world citizenship, involving all sectors of society — local, national and international — needs to be put into place.

For example, education — formal, non-formal, and informal — is indisputably the most effective way to shape values, attitudes, behaviors and skills that will equip the peoples of the world to act in the long-term interests of the planet and humanity as a whole. The United Nations, governments and educational agencies should seek to make the principle of world citizenship part of the standard education of every child.

The details of educational programs and activities incorporating this principle

will vary a great deal within and among nations. However, if world citizenship is to be understood as a universal principle, all programs must have certain aspects in common. Based on the principle of the oneness of the human race, they should cultivate tolerance and brotherhood, nurturing an appreciation for the richness and importance of the world's diverse cultural, religious and social systems and strengthening those traditions that contribute to a sustainable, world civilization.

They should teach the principle of "unity in diversity" as the key to strength and wealth both for nations and for the world community. They should foster an ethic of service to the common good and convey an understanding of both the rights and the responsibilities of world citizenship.

They should emphasize the importance of the United Nations in promoting global cooperation and understanding; its universal goals, objectives and programs; its immediate relevance to the peoples and nations of the world; and the role that it must increasingly assume in our ever-contracting world.

Campaigns to raise public awareness of the challenges of world citizenship could also be launched. They should make use of the full range of media and the arts, including television, video, film, radio, electronic networks, books, magazines, posters, flyers, theater and music.☺

So long as disunity, antagonism and provincialism characterize the social, political and economic relations within and among nations, a global, sustainable pattern of development can not be established.



The President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, received a copy of a statement on Bahá'u'lláh from Seosamh Watson (shown at left), the chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ireland. The presentation took place at Aras an Uachtaráin on 15 March. The statement, produced for the 1992-1993 Bahá'í Holy Year, discusses the station of Bahá'u'lláh as a religious figure and the impact of His writings.



The first World Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in 1893, was an event of "geo-historical" importance, says author Richard Seager. It reflected the emerging sense of globalism at the turn of the century. Shown is an official photo of the Parliament, taken on 21 September 1893.

Centennial celebration aims to bring together faith communities and social scientists in search of spiritual solutions to critical global issues

1893 "Parliament of Religions" to be commemorated in Chicago

CHICAGO — After working for more than a decade to help national planners forecast the future in some 40 countries, Gerald O. Barney and the Institute for 21st Century Studies came to some rather sobering conclusions.

"In country after country, we found that economists and planners were assuming that they will be able to import a little more oil each year," said Dr. Barney, who is executive director of the Institute. "But when you add up the amounts of oil that all of the countries are counting on, there just isn't that much oil in the whole world.

"Another thing they were assuming — and again this was in every single country — was that they would all export more than they will import. But, again, when you look at the world as a whole, there is no way all countries can export more than they will import. It is a physical impossibility."

Politicians, planners and economists, Dr. Barney said, are counting on such assumptions to help meet the rising tide of economic expectations that are increasingly felt by the great mass of the world's peoples.

"The development model that we have derives from the desire of almost everyone to live the good life as depicted on television and in the movies," Dr. Barney said. "This is true not just in the United States but in Bangladesh and elsewhere. But the

simple fact of the matter is it would take an increase in our global economic activity by a factor of ten to meet that demand."

Very few scientists believe that the world's ecological system can bear economic activity on such a scale, Dr. Barney said.

Although trained as a nuclear physicist and well schooled in politics — he was lead author in the ground-breaking *Global 2000* study done for U.S. President Jimmy Carter in the 1970s — Dr. Barney has also concluded that science, technology and politics alone are inadequate to address the deep and interconnected problems facing humanity in the future.

Instead, he and other board members of the Institute have concluded that the "perceptions, values and attitudes we learn from our faith traditions hold the key to what we must do to make the world a better place."

"A significant part of the global 'problematique' is related to what we believe, to our perceptions of who we are, and how we are related to each other and to the earth, and to the Divine," Dr. Barney said.

And so it was three years ago that, upon hearing of plans to convene a Parliament of the World's Religions here in 1993, Dr. Barney began a collaboration with organizers of the Parliament.

Their goal is to bring together repre-

sentatives of the world's religious communities in an effort to address the "critical issues" of security, justice and sustainable development from a spiritual point of view — and in doing so begin the kind of dialogue between spiritual leaders and social thinkers that might offer a path to a more sustainable future. "The Parliament is the one place where I can see these issues coming together," said Dr. Barney.

Most Diverse Interfaith Gathering

Scheduled to run from 28 August to 5 September, the Parliament promises to be one of the largest interfaith gatherings ever assembled. As of late July, more than 2800 participants had pre-registered, substantially more than at other commemorations of the 1893 Parliament. [See page 6.]

"In terms of the number of world class religious and spiritual leaders who are coming, the Parliament will undoubtedly have the most broad representation and depth of any interfaith gathering ever," said Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, executive director of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions.

Among those expected to attend are the Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa, theologian Hans Kung, Swami Chidananda Saraswati of the Divine Life Society of India and Abdullah Omar Jaseef, secretary-general of the Muslim World League.

As such, Dr. Gómez-Ibáñez believes that the Parliament of World's Religions will offer unprecedented opportunities for interreligious dialogue, understanding, and — as noted by Dr. Barney — discussions on how religion can better address the critical issues of our day.

"The most important thing about the Parliament is that it represents a chance for religions to demonstrate that they are not only interested in coming together in an effort to understand each other," said Dr. Gómez-Ibáñez, "but also that this understanding is the basis for world peace and the preservation of the planet."

Dr. Barney will lead the plenary session on the Parliament's second day, presenting to the gathering the results of his research, which is summarized in a report entitled: "Global 2000 Revisited: What Shall We Do?" The aim is to focus the discussions on how the world's religions can realistically address world problems.

The Parliament will conclude with a special two-day "Assembly of Religious and

Spiritual Leaders," which is expected to ratify a "Declaration of Global Ethics."

"This declaration has been produced over the last year and a half in consultation with theologians and thinkers from all of the world's religions," said Dr. Gómez-Ibáñez. "The idea is to present to the world those ethical principles which the religions can all agree on."

"For example, at the UN World Conference on Human Rights in June, there was a debate about whether human rights are universal or particularistic. The document we are working on makes it clear that it is the belief of the world's religions that human rights are universal," said Dr. Gómez-Ibáñez.

Centenary of 1893 Parliament

The Parliament celebrates the centenary of the World's Parliament of Religions, which was held here in 1893. The first Parliament is viewed by historians as the dawning place of modern interfaith dialogue. For the first time, religious leaders from many and diverse traditions were brought together officially.

"The Parliament was really a first of its kind event in the history of the world," said Dr. Richard H. Seager, a lecturer on religion at Harvard University, who has recently written a book about the Parliament, *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism*. "It represents the first formal, public, global interfaith meeting in the world," Dr. Seager said. "It is generally seen as the beginning of the interfaith dialogue movements."

The first Parliament was held at the Colombian Exposition of 1893, which sought to showcase the social, political and moral achievements of the new world.

As such, said Dr. Seager, the Parliament in many ways reflected the emerging sense of globalism at the end of the nineteenth century, and the great optimism about the future. "Even 50 or 100 years before — and people at the time said this very explicitly — such a Parliament could not have happened. But with the inventions of the steamship and the telegraph, it could happen."

The Parliament brought together some 4000 men and women from 41 denominations and religious traditions. It lasted for 17 days in September of 1893. Dr. Seager said the Parliament gave an all-important boost to Eastern religions in the West. Major religious leaders from the Hindu and Buddhist traditions, for example, appeared in North America for the first time.☉

The Bahá'í connection

CHICAGO — For the worldwide Bahá'í community, the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions offers not only an important opportunity to discuss the critical social issues of the times, it also provides a chance to commemorate an important moment in the history of the Bahá'í Faith.

Although no Bahá'ís were present at the World's Parliament of Religions in 1893, it was at the first Parliament that the name of Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, was mentioned in a public talk for the first time in the western hemisphere.

The first mention of Bahá'u'lláh's name in the Americas came during the presentation of a paper by Henry Harris Jessup, a Protestant missionary in "northern Syria." The Rev. Jessup wrote of Bahá'u'lláh's "Christ-like" call for humanity to regard "all nations as one, and all men as brothers."

"Historically, this is very meaningful to us," said Patricia Swanson, Director of the Bahá'í International Community's Office of Public Information in New York. "But the main reason we are participating is to share Bahá'í insights on contemporary critical issues with other members of the world's religious and spiritual communities. Most of the ideas being discussed at the Parliament are addressed directly by the Bahá'í teachings."

Bahá'í leaders will participate in the Assembly of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, said Ms. Swanson, who is working with representatives of the United States Bahá'í community and the local Bahá'í community of Chicago to coordinate Bahá'í participation. Bahá'ís have also been selected to make more than 30 presentations.

They include: "Race Unity: Lessons from the American Bahá'í Experience," by Dr. Robert Henderson; "Bahá'u'lláh's Vision of World Order," by Rebequa Getahoun; and "Women's Spiritual Destiny: a Bahá'í Perspective," by Judge Dorothy W. Nelson.☉



Courtesy of the Brahma Kumaris

Contemporary religious leaders gathered at Global Cooperation House in London on 27 January to launch the "Year of Interreligious Understanding and Cooperation." Hugh Adamson, Secretary General of the Bahá'í Community of the United Kingdom (shown first row, fourth from right) was on hand to represent the worldwide Bahá'í community.

Chicago meeting not the only event commemorating the 1893 Parliament

The upcoming meeting in Chicago is one of several commemorations of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions. As part of the centennial celebration of the first Parliament, an ad hoc committee of international interfaith organizations has called for the observance of a "Year of Interreligious Understanding and Cooperation."

The Year was launched with a commemoration in London in January, and will be celebrated with a major conference in Bangalore, India, in late August on the anniversary of the 1893 Parliament. Subsidiary events will be held in New Delhi, India, and in Ise, Japan.

The Bangalore event is called "Sarva-Dharma-Sammelana in Bangalore" (Religious People Meeting Together). Scheduled to run from 19-22 August, it is billed as an opportunity to "join in a worldwide celebration of the unity of the human family."

Four international interfaith organizations have formed an ad hoc committee to plan the conference: the International Association for Religious Freedom; the World Congress of Faiths; the Temple of Understanding; and the World Conference on Religion and Peace.

The theme in Bangalore is "Sharing Visions of Interfaith Cooperation in the Next Century," and some 500 people have pre-registered. A related "Centennial Festival" will be held in New Delhi on 27

August. The event in Japan will celebrate the rebuilding of the Ise Grand Shrine. It runs for four days, starting on 27 August.

Bahá'í Involvement

Bahá'ís are planning to be heavily involved in the Chicago Parliament [see box on page 5], and to be represented at events in India. The Bahá'í community of India will present a paper, written by Mr. A.K. Merchant and entitled "Interreligious Dialogue — the Challenge of Building Mutual Trust and Friendship — a Bahá'í Perspective," at the event in Bangalore. As well, Mrs. Zena Sorabjee, a well-known figure in the Indian Bahá'í community, has been asked to be a keynote speaker at one of the plenary sessions in Bangalore. Bahá'ís are also planning to be present in New Delhi.

In London, the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom were closely involved with the launch, on 27 January 1993, of the "Year of Interreligious Understanding and Cooperation." More than 700 people gathered for the launch, which was held at Global Cooperation House, the national headquarters of the Brahma Kumaris. Mr. Douglas Martin, as Director-General of the Office of Public Information of the Bahá'í International Community, was a keynote speaker. Bahá'í input was also involved in the workshops there, which focused on themes of justice, non-violence, honesty, love, respect and humility. ☉

Commission on Sustainable Development continues new era of global partnership

UNITED NATIONS — In an echo of last year's Earth Summit, the first meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development underscored the new sense of international partnership among nations — and non-governmental organizations — that is emerging as the global community seeks to address the problems of environment and development worldwide.

Proposed in June 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro and given life by the United Nations General Assembly last December, the Commission is charged with monitoring the implementation of *Agenda 21*, a sweeping program of action adopted in Rio and aimed at promoting sustainable development.

And during the Commission's first substantive meeting, held in New York from 14 to 25 June, it was clear from the remarks of the representatives of governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that the sense of partnership established in Rio at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) continues to grow and flourish — despite some setbacks in the year since the Summit.

"The clear and resounding message of

Rio is that we all share one world and we must work together to ensure its sustainable development," said Carol Browner, the administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, who was among the 40-some ministerial level environmental officials who addressed the Commission.

The focus of the meeting was to establish the Commission's overall program of work.

It was decided that the Commission will meet for two or three weeks each year. Between each meeting will be held inter-sessional meetings on various sub-topics of *Agenda 21*, such as forestry or education. As well, special inter-sessional meetings will be held each year on the specific topics of finance and technology transfer, which emerged as core issues during the meeting.

Local Origins, Global Problems

Developing nations, especially, were concerned that developed nations follow through on commitments made in Rio to provide both more money for sustainable development in their countries, and on promises by the industrialized countries to share environmentally sound technologies with less industrialized ones.

"Global environmental pollution cannot be dealt with without tackling its local



Dignitaries and onlookers, shown at left, gathered on World Environment Day (5 June) in Rio de Janeiro to deposit the soil of 15 nations into the Peace Monument, shown above. Last year at the Earth Summit, the monument was dedicated and the soil from some 40 nations was deposited into the structure, which stands as a lasting reminder of the Summit and the Global Forum. A five-meter hourglass-shaped sculpture of concrete and ceramics, the monument was commissioned by the Bahá'í International Community. Soil this year was sent by the governments of Chile, China, Colombia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Myanmar, Nepal, Senegal, Sweden, Syria, Thailand, Tunisia, Uruguay and Zaire.



origins," said Shri Kamal Nath, India's Minister for Environment and Forests. "Unfortunately, enough has not been translated into action. The key to success in all sectorial programs will be the resolution of cross-sectorial issues, particularly the adequate and predictable flow of new and additional financial resources, and the transfer of environmentally sound technology on acceptable and affordable terms."

Although potentially contentious, the discussion on these and other issues proceeded cordially — and many remarked on the new sense of partnership between the north and south.

"The Commission on Sustainable Development is working in a spirit of international cooperation," said Ambassador Ronaldo Mota Sardenberg of Brazil. "The meeting is open and frank in nature, and this seems to be a good omen."

The Role of NGOs

The recognition that NGOs have a key role to play in sustainable development, which emerged as a major theme in Rio, was further reinforced during the Commission. Many government delegates once again specifically took note of the overall role of NGOs in promoting sustainable development.

"We also need another group" to implement *Agenda 21*, said Ros Kelly, Australia's Minister for Environment, Sport and Territories. "We need the NGOs. Because in most of our communities, they are pushing

the environmental debate."

At the Commission meeting itself, NGOs were allowed a high level of involvement. In an apparent effort to encourage a wider involvement by NGOs, organizations that did not have consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) were allowed to make oral statements.

Since there were only a select number of time slots, NGOs were told to choose among themselves as to who would make presentations. This encouraged a process of collaboration and cooperation among NGOs, as they worked to draw up joint statements. As well, in the view of many, it opened up new opportunities for "southern" NGOs who have often been left out of the United Nations process at meetings in the past.

At the same time, however, some NGO representatives said that this mode of operation had drawbacks. By forcing NGOs to speak only in groups, organizations who did not wish to join coalitions or make joint statements were in effect left out of the process and the Commission was deprived of individual voices and solitary points of view.

For its part, the Bahá'í International Community prepared a statement for the Commission on the integral connection between education for world citizenship and sustainable development. [See page 2.]

An Integrating Force

"We see the importance of this meeting in its very existence — that there is now an international forum where the governments of the world can address issues of sustainable development," said Lawrence Arturo, the director of the Bahá'í International Community's Office of the Environment.

"Further, what we see is the emergence of sustainable development as an integrating theme at the United Nations, and the Commission has a catalytic role in this trend. Sustainable development is a concept that encompasses not only issues of development and environment, but also health, human rights, the advancement of women, and peace and security.

"Agenda 21 is the most comprehensive global action plan ever adopted by the world community, and the Commission is responsible for overseeing its implementation. That means that its influence can be profound — if it encourages courageous new steps in support of sustainable development," said Mr. Arturo. ☉

In Myanmar, an exhibit of Bahá'í books and photographs was formally opened by the Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs, U Kyaw Aye, during a ribbon-cutting ceremony on 22 March at the National Bahá'í Center in Yangon.





A special classical music concert for delegates to the U.N. World Conference on Human Rights was sponsored by the Bahá'í International Community on 18 June. Especially facilitated by the efforts of the Bahá'í community of Austria, the concert was held in the Palais Palfy and featured violinist Bijan Khadem-Missagh and pianist Walter Delahunt. Both are Bahá'ís, and the theme of the concert was "the oneness of humanity."

World Conference on Human Rights Affirms Universal and Interdependent Nature of Rights

(Continued from page one)

The Community also stressed the importance of education in promoting human rights—and especially moral education. "Education in spiritual values is necessary not only to protect women but, indeed, to foster respect for all people, so that human honor and dignity may be preserved and a global ethos may evolve in which all human rights are upheld," said one of the Community's statements.

"The Bahá'í International Community is convinced that nothing short of an infusion of spiritual values can effect the transformation of individuals and institutions that will ensure respect for the human rights of all people."

Convened from 14 to 25 June, the Conference had been viewed as a major opportunity to review and assess the progress made in the field since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The last such World Conference on Human Rights was held 25 years ago in Teheran.

Yet despite a year-long preparatory process, which included regional human rights meetings around the world, the outcome of the Conference seemed very much in doubt until its final hours.

A number of nations argued that human rights were not strictly universal, but rather should be judged more narrowly to take into account a particular region or nation's cul-

tural, ethnic or religious heritage. Also controversial was the degree to which civil and political rights should be given precedence over social, economic and cultural rights, such as the right to development.

In the end, though, the more than 160 governments at the Conference reached a broad consensus on the nature of human rights. They agreed, for example, that the "existence of widespread poverty inhibits the full and effective enjoyment of human rights" and that "its immediate alleviation and eventual elimination must remain a high priority."

The Conference also upheld the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in ensuring the full and effective enjoyment of human rights. "While recognizing that the primary responsibility for standard-setting lies with States, the Conference also appreciates the contribution of non-governmental organizations," stated the final document. "In this respect, the Conference emphasizes the importance of continued dialogue and cooperation between governments and non-governmental organizations."

The framework for the conclusion was in many ways set by the opening address of United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who called for the Conference to confirm that human rights are the "quintessential values through which we affirm that we are a single human community."

Human Rights Conference

"As an absolute yardstick, human rights constitute the common language of humanity," Mr. Boutros-Ghali said. "Adopting this language allows the peoples of the United Nations to understand others and to be the authors of their own history."

The Bahá'í Contribution

The statements prepared by the Bahá'í International Community addressed three key items on the Conference agenda: the identification of obstacles to human rights (Item 9); the relationship between development, democracy and the universal enjoyment of all human rights (Item 10); and the full realization of all human rights for both women and men (Item 11).

In the statement addressing item 9 the Community identified several obstacles to human rights: the exercise of unfettered national sovereignty; the lack of adequate mechanisms to enforce adherence to the provisions of international human rights conventions; and a lack of awareness of human rights, particularly among those entrusted with administering justice on the local level.

"Despite the establishment of international standards for human rights, many nations cling to the view that respect for those rights should be granted or withheld at the discretion of national governments," said the statement. "This attitude ignores

the operation of forces that are drawing the world together and paving the way for the establishment of a new order based on the recognition that what happens to one member of the human family happens to us all."

In the statement under agenda item 10, which considered the relationship between development, democracy and the universal

"As an absolute yardstick, human rights constitute the common language of humanity, Adopting this language allows the peoples of the United Nations to understand others and to be the authors of their own history."

—Boutros Boutros-Ghali

enjoyment of all human rights, the Community said that the systems of civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights are "one and indivisible."

Specifically, the Community said, the common thread to such rights lies in the "right of each individual to investigate reality for himself or herself, and to benefit from the results of this exploration."

Some members of the Bahá'í delegation to the World Conference on Human Rights pose together in front of a display set up by the Bahá'í International Community at the NGO Forum.



Although defined historically by the "conviction that each person has not only the right but the responsibility to 'know and worship God,'" the statement said, the issue is not a theological one. Rather, this right of independent investigation lies at the foundation of all that we call "culture" and is an "inalienable feature of human life."

Accordingly, the statement continued, the exercise of innate intellectual, aesthetic, moral and spiritual faculties that characterize human nature must be granted such that individuals "enjoy access to whatever benefits, protections and opportunities can reasonably be provided by the society in which he or she lives."

"Without economic rights, the exercise of civil or social rights is severely attenuated," the statement said. "Without cultural rights, an individual or community will have the greatest difficulty in exercising political or economic rights to a degree that meets the essential requirements of their respective situations."

Ultimately, the Community said, "the

entire range of human rights under discussion derives its integrity from the right of every human being on earth to explore reality to the fullest extent of the resources available to such an effort."

The Rights of Women

In the statement addressing human rights for women, the Community focused on the need to change the attitudes that tolerate violence towards women. The Community believes that spiritual education — with a special focus on the principles of justice and the equality of women and men — is the surest means to change these attitudes.

"Beliefs and practices that contribute to the oppression of women must be reexamined in the light of justice," the statement on Agenda Item 11 said. "When properly understood, the principle of the fundamental equality of men and women will eventually transform all social relations, allowing each person to develop his or her unique gifts and talents. The utilization of everyone's strengths will foster the maturation of society."❶

In Iran, Bahá'í graves are desecrated in the latest round of persecution

NEW YORK — The graves of Bahá'ís in a Bahá'í cemetery in Teheran, Iran, have been ignominiously dug up and the bodies removed from their resting sites, apparently to make way for the construction of a municipal cultural center. This action follows the arbitrary confiscation of the cemetery in 1983 and the subsequent public auction of its marble tombstones and memorials.

The Bahá'í International Community learned on 30 June that the bodies of Bahá'ís interred in one section of the cemetery have been callously loaded into trucks and removed to a destination unknown to the Bahá'ís. Excavations by bulldozer have begun in order to prepare for the construction of a building which is reportedly to be known as the Cultural Center of Khavaran.

Earlier this year, the United Nations Special Representative on Human Rights in Iran uncovered a previously secret Iranian Government document, which was drawn up by the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council and signed by Iranian President Ali Khamenei in 1991. The document called for Iran's Bahá'ís to be treated "such that their progress and development shall be blocked" and then spelled out a series of oppressive guidelines for eradicating the Faith from the land of its birth.

"We intensely deplore this disgraceful assault to the memory of our departed Bahá'í brethren and the humiliating treatment of the last resting places of our co-religionists in Teheran," said Techeste Ahderom, the main representative of the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations. "These actions in Teheran exemplify the implementation of the blueprint for the destruction of the Bahá'í community and while hardly surprising, they are nevertheless outrageous."

Since the Iranian revolution in 1979, more than 200 Bahá'ís have been executed or killed in Iran, hundreds have been imprisoned, and thousands have been deprived of jobs, pensions, and/or education.❷

The bodies of Bahá'ís interred in one section of a cemetery in Teheran have been callously loaded into trucks and removed to an unknown destination.

Crispin Pemberton-Pigott, head of New Dawn Engineering in Swaziland, stands next to a row of freshly produced diamond mesh fence-making machines. New Dawn specializes in designing and producing hand-operated manufacturing equipment for the small entrepreneur in Africa.



In Swaziland, New Dawn Engineering makes appropriate, labor-“unsaving” devices

“In my view, appropriate technology takes advantage of the resources that are available in a given region, and it maximizes the creation of wealth. We live in a country where labor is in surplus. Therefore, if you don’t use labor extensively here, you are wasting your resources.”

— Crispin Pemberton-Pigott

MANZINI, Swaziland — A quintessential inventor, Crispin Pemberton-Pigott carried an electronic calculator in his hand as he gave a guided tour of his factory in this small southern African nation.

Although adept at using it to calculate such tidbits as the strength of a steel beam or the load-bearing capacity of an earthen brick, Mr. Pemberton-Pigott is equally proficient at estimating the potential economic returns from the small-scale manufacturing machines that New Dawn Engineering produces.

He pointed to a cooking oil press that New Dawn makes. Operating something like a giant garlic press, the machine allows a single person to produce a high quality, cold-pressed cooking oil from inexpensive sunflower or other seeds.

“This is a radically modified Bielenberg oil press,” he said, switching on his calculator. “We sell this for just about 1200 Dollars, and it’s quite economical for that price.”

He then began punching buttons on the small device. “Let’s say you decide to

use sunflower seeds,” says the 42-year-old Canadian native. “They cost you about 200 South African Rand per ton to grow. From each ton of seeds, I can get about 420 bottles of oil using this machine.

“Now,” he continues, all the while punching more buttons and noting that there are about three Rand to the Dollar, “the 420 bottles are worth about 2.75 Rand each. In addition you get between 280 and 600 Rand worth of chicken feed — that is the value of the pressed seed cake that you have left over at the end.

“So take at least 280 plus 420 times 2.75,” he says, making the final calculations. “That’s a minimum of R1435 income in ten days. So you can see that it is a good investment. You can pay back the cost of the machine in about one month.”

Economic calculations such as this lie at the heart of the success of New Dawn Engineering, which is rapidly gaining notice in the region for its innovative, appropriate and environmentally sound approach to technology. The company makes about a dozen relatively inexpensive, labor-intensive manufacturing machines, which can be used by small business to turn out products such as cooking oil, wire fencing,

Appropriate
Technology

and earthen bricks.

The company was honored this year as one of four corporate finalists in The Green Trust Environment Awards for southern Africa.

"Certainly, from all the entries we saw, their approach looks like a very novel and sensitive and appropriate level of technology, which is potentially usable for a lot of home-based industries," said Prof. Brian Huntley, executive director of the National Botanical Institute of South Africa, who was one of the judges of The Green Trust contest. "The company makes machines that people can buy without a lot of capital investment, and that is the kind of thing we need in this part of the world."

For Mr. Pemberton-Pigott, who owns and operates New Dawn with his wife, Margaret, this is precisely his goal: to produce well-made machines that take advantage of what is one of Africa's greatest resources — labor — while at the same time doing as little harm to the environment as possible.

"In my view, appropriate technology takes advantage of the resources that are available in a given region, and it maximizes the creation of wealth," said Mr. Pemberton-Pigott. "We live in a country where labor is in surplus. Therefore, if you don't use labor extensively here, you are wasting your resources."

"We have dreadful cases of people importing equipment at very, very high prices," Mr. Pemberton-Pigott continued.

"The equipment then sits here and puts people out of work. We can show you, in economic terms, that it is cheaper to use labor-based production. It requires less capital investment, it uses more labor, and it yields more profits."

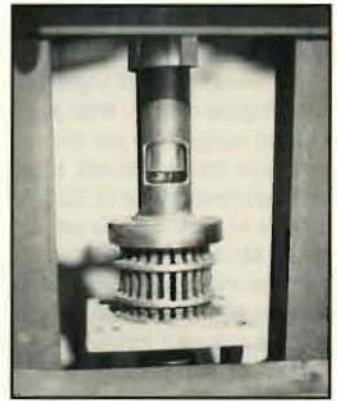
The Pemberton-Pigotts founded New Dawn in 1984, while living in Transkei. In 1985, they moved to Swaziland. The couple had lived in Swaziland for two years in the late 1970s, while working to help set up a national rural water supply.

As of July 1993, the company has sold more than 1,500 of its machines. The most popular units are the fence-making machines, which make up about 75 percent of their sales. New Dawn produces hand-operated devices that make diamond mesh fencing, square mesh fencing, barbed wire, "pig" wire and chicken wire. They have also sold several hundred brick-making machines and about 100 cooking oil presses.

His customers report that they are well satisfied.

"We are currently building a chicken house and we are doing it very, very cheaply, using one of Crispin's brick machines," said Arne Utermark, director of the Christian Blind Mission, which operates the Ekululameni Adult Rehabilitation Network in Mzimba, Swaziland. "It works beautifully. All you need is simple soil and a little cement, and that cuts down greatly on expenditures."

Mr. Utermark said his mission, which seeks primarily to train blind people to

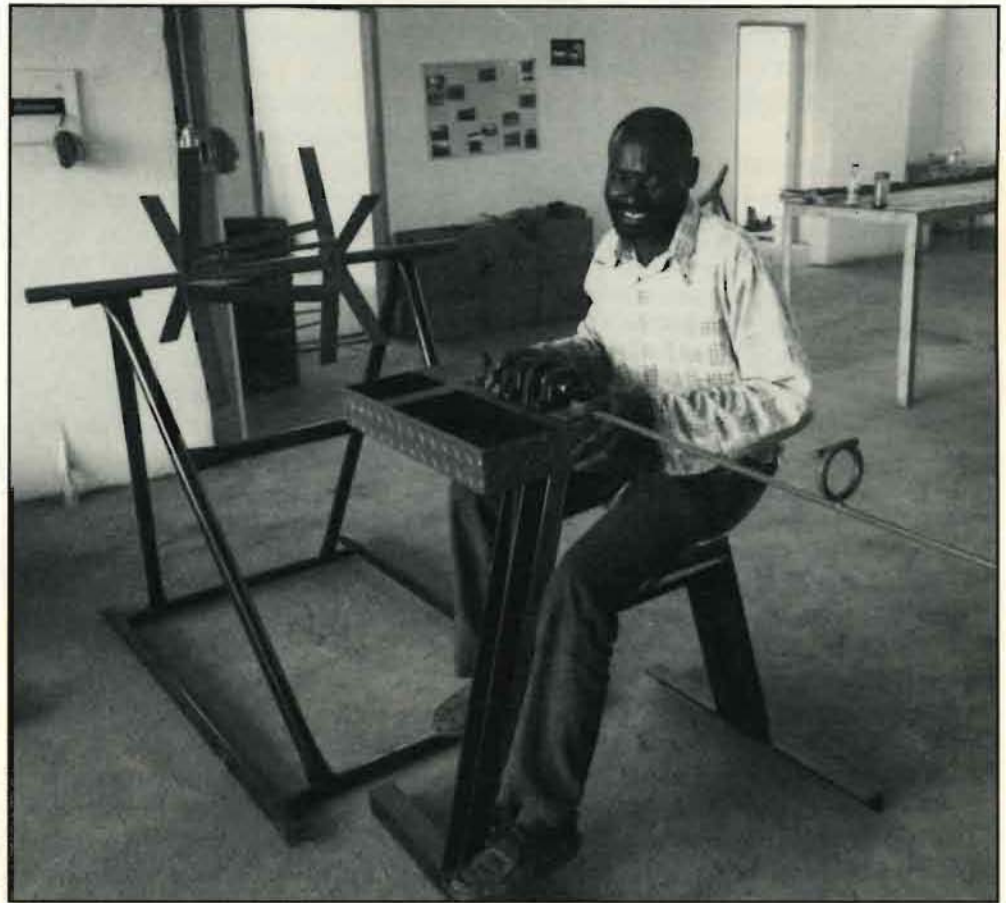


Detail showing the compression chamber of New Dawn's oil-seed press, which produces around 300 liters of sunflower seed oil per ton of seeds and is operated solely by hand. When the central piston is forced down by means of a long, manually operated lever, oil gushes from the slots in the assembly, while compressed seed cake is forced from a hole in the bottom of the press.



The staff of New Dawn Engineering, shown in front of their factory. The building itself was constructed partly by using the company's own brick-making machines, which produce an extremely strong brick from simple soil, mixed with a small amount of cement.

New Dawn's barbed wire making machine relies on pedal power to twist together two strands of wire. With a second operator to roll the wire onto the reel at left, the unit can produce up to 150 meters of finished wire an hour. Mr. Pemberton-Pigott said the machine costs just one percent of what an electric powered machine costs, but will give nearly 11 percent of the output. Shown posing on the machine is Makario Kamenyu Manuel, a machinist at New Dawn.



"The more you are in a rural area, the better these devices are. Because they require nothing in terms of energy. The people operate them all by hand. Talking from an environmental point of view, I would say this is very important."

— Arne Utermark

support themselves, also makes extensive use of New Dawn's square mesh fence-making machines, which are little more than simple jigs around which wire can be bent into a highly serviceable fence.

"Our blind trainees can operate these very easily and earn themselves money," said Mr. Utermark. He explained that the center had two such machines that they used to train people on. Then they help them get machines of their own and set them up in business. "I would guess we have 10 or 15 people who have set up on their own."

"The more you are in a rural area, the better these devices are," Mr. Utermark said. "Because they require nothing in terms of energy. The people operate them all by hand. Talking from an environmental point of view, I would say this is very important. And then the people have jobs."

Jeunesse Searll, the executive director of the Johannesburg-based Trees for Africa Project, said her organization was very pleased with the machines they have purchased from New Dawn.

"At one of our projects in a homeland, we bought one of their diamond mesh

fencing machines and used it to train four people," said Ms. Searll. "Another two were trained by those four. So it has a multiplier effect.

"The machine is very useful because the project is in an environmentally degraded and denuded area, and fencing is needed to keep the livestock away from the trees we are planting," said Ms. Searll. "But more than that, it is a remarkable tool because, in a very simple fashion, it has made a group of people in this very poverty-stricken area able to earn a living by doing something useful and practical."

Both Mr. and Mrs. Pemberton-Pigott are Bahá'ís, and they say that their faith has greatly influenced the philosophy behind New Dawn's product line.

"There is a passage in the Bahá'í writings that says, and I am paraphrasing, that if a person is involved in projects or activities that cause great multitudes of people to help themselves, to become self-supporting, there can be no greater undertaking," said Mr. Pemberton-Pigott. "And this is the philosophy we try to apply in our daily work." ☉

Book Review

(Continued from back page)

World Centre and then delves into the 150 year history of the Bahá'í Faith, beginning with its turbulent birth in Iran.

The third and fourth chapters are devoted entirely to interviews with individual Bahá'ís, who discuss their personal process of discovery and adjustment to a lifestyle wherein Bahá'í principles are applied to daily life.

Gaston Mattheus, who is responsible for restorations at the Bahá'í World Centre said he left the Catholic faith of his youth because of unhappiness with the "back-room politics." The Bahá'í Faith provided answers, he said, but he still found it difficult to accept all of its teachings.

"Some of the things they taught were difficult for me to accept," Mr. Mattheus said. "For example, the love of all mankind; I had suffered under the Nazis, and I hated Germans. Going to a Bahá'í conference in Germany was a test for me. Getting over my prejudice was a big step and it took me several years."

For others, however, the process of becoming a Bahá'í was easier. The authors asked Pierre Spierckel, a French book-binder, if it was difficult to accept Bahá'í teachings. "Frankly, no, it wasn't," he replied. "The laws that God gives us are made to help us progress and be happy, like the rules a mother gives her child."

"The most difficult ones to obey are not the ones you would think," he said. "I can assure you that it is very difficult never to backbite...and yet Bahá'u'lláh defined it as one of mankind's greatest evils and said that we must utterly avoid it."

The authors also asked how the Faith affected the work, the social life, and the family relationships of interviewees. The answers make clear that the effects have been profound — although not always visible from the outside.

"In our professional work there are situations that are the same whether we are Bahá'ís or not," said a university professor and doctor who practices at a hospital in France. "On the other hand," the doctor said, "being a Bahá'í can help illumine our thinking on youth and old age, suffering, life, death, even things like in-vitro fertilization and abortion."

In addition to interviewing Bahá'ís, the authors also make a survey of what "some of the most gifted minds of the last part of the nineteenth century and our modern age" have said about the Bahá'í Faith.

They note that Edward Granville Browne, a nineteenth century orientalist scholar from England, spent much of his life studying the Bahá'í Faith and that Ivan Turgenev, Izabella Grinevskaya, Sarah Bernhardt, Khalil Gibran and Leo Tolstoy were all familiar with the nascent religion. Tolstoy, for example, wrote late in life that he "sympathized" with the Faith, which "preaches brotherhood and equality between all men, and the sacrifice of material life in the service of God."

The book also covers in some detail the basic teachings of the Faith, as well as episodes from its contemporary history, such as the persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran.

In the end, the authors say very little about what they themselves concluded. Instead, they state that they found their encounter with the Bahá'í Faith "challenging and rewarding," and that as they came to know individual Bahá'ís, "we were sometimes charmed and sometimes irritated, sometimes convinced and sometimes skeptical."

"Some may not agree with the answers" offered by the Bahá'ís, they concluded, "yet they cannot be rejected without thought or discussion. In this the Bahá'í Faith appeared to us to possess a contemporary spiritual value." — Marc Foxhall



Mildred Mottahedeh was honored by the National Council of Women of the United States with a "Women of Honor Award" on 11 May. A noted businesswoman and a long-time member of the Bahá'í Faith, Mrs. Mottahedeh is a woman "whose style of dedication, unique skills and selfless generosity of action are milestones along the progress-path of women's advancement," according to the Council. Mrs. Mottahedeh served for 19 years as a representative to the United Nations for the Bahá'í International Community.

Journalists' eye view of the worldwide Bahá'í Community

The Gardeners of God: An Encounter with Five Million Bahá'ís

By Colette Gouvion and Philippe Jouvion

Oneworld

Oxford

In the history of Bahá'í literature, *The Gardeners of God: An Encounter with Five Million Bahá'ís* is ground-breaking for a very simple reason: it is the first time journalists who are not Bahá'ís have undertaken to write a book-length profile of the Bahá'í Faith and its worldwide community.

Intrigued by what they viewed as the Bahá'í Faith's "unique position in religious history and the modern world," Colette Gouvion and Philippe Jouvion set out with the dual purpose of uncovering Bahá'í history and answering some key questions about the 150-year-old religion.

These questions included: "How does one become a Bahá'í?" How has the Bahá'í Faith grown "during the past twenty-five years, without publicity, without any spectacular press campaigns" from 500,000 to 5,000,000 believers? And "how does being a Bahá'í affect one's daily life?"

To find answers, the authors journeyed from France to the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel, where they visited various offices and private homes, and interviewed numerous members of the Faith. The results are of interest to anyone concerned with how individuals' lives are being transformed by this most modern of religious movements.

For while the history is well researched and delivered in a readable style, the true heart of *Gardeners of God* lies in the personal profiles of the Bahá'ís encountered by the two authors, who, with a self-effacing style that seems uncommon among journalists today, relegate their own judgement to a few sparse phrases and instead allow the reader to access the Bahá'í experience through the eyes of the Faith's followers.

"I couldn't understand why there were so many religions when there was only one God," said Benoit Huchet, a 25-year-old gardener at the World Centre, on why he became a Bahá'í. "I lived in Buddhist temples, in Hindu temples, in mosques, and the feeling I had that there is only one God, that men are all praying to the same God, grew stronger."

"In France I happened to see a book with a title that intrigued me, *One People*,

One Planet, by André Brugiroux," he continued. "I bought it and discovered the Bahá'í Faith, with its doctrine of a progressive revelation by prophets who are God's messengers, the hope of one religion for a united human race. I had found what I was seeking."

The authors of *Gardeners of God*, Mrs. Gouvion and Mr. Jouvion, a mother and son team, are both experienced journalists and researchers. Mrs. Gouvion worked for thirteen years on the French weekly *L'Express*, and for fifteen years was editor-in-chief of the magazine *Marie-Claire*. She is the author of several books including *Les Enfants Problèmes*, *La Symbolique des Rues et les Cités*, and *Le Voix des Nouveaux Paysans*, and is currently editor of the travel magazine, *Partance*. Mr. Jouvion is a professional researcher, freelance reporter and film producer who worked for several years with the Cité des Sciences de la Villette in Paris. He has produced a number of award

Review

The Gardeners of God

An Encounter with Five Million Bahá'ís

COLETTE GOUVION & PHILIPPE JOUVION



winning documentary films.

Originally published in French in 1989, *Gardeners of God* has been translated and this year was published in English by Oneworld Publications Ltd., of Oxford, U.K. The book opens with a straightforward narrative of the authors' initial contacts at the
(Continued on page 15)