

A F R I C A N E W S

(Issued by the Africa Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly
of the Baha'is of the British Isles)

No. 2

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FIRST PIONEER

We joyfully report that our first pioneer leaves for Tanganyika on January 3rd. Claire Gung has taken a job as Assistant Matron at a school in the Lushoto Mountains, 150 miles from Dar es Salaam - the journey takes two nights and a day. Claire asks for the prayers of the whole Baha'i Community.

PROSPECTIVE PIONEERS

Unfortunately the departure of Philip Hainsworth and Hassan Sabri has had to be postponed. It was found Philip would not be able to obtain an entry permit on the basis reported in the October "Africa News". Both he and Hassan are now energetically searching for jobs that will take them to one of the chosen territories.

A LETTER FROM THE GUARDIAN

The following extract from a letter dated October 20th, 1950 to Philip Hainsworth from the Guardian through his secretary will interest all who follow the progress of the Africa project:

"He feels that in as far as possible the African pioneers should seek to get a job which will take them to one of the countries chosen and ensure employment for them there. It does not seem wise or necessary for a Baha'i to stress the fact he or she is going there to teach. A person's religion is their own business, and they can talk about it privately as much as they like without neglecting their employer's work.

"Also, he feels no rules can be laid down about how to teach. Usually one teaches those receptive souls one finds. The same should apply to the beginning of the work in Africa. Any direct teaching work with the more primitive tribes would have to be done after finding out the best and most tactful way of doing it. The first step is to get to Africa, and, in view of the cost involved, and the state of the Fund, the pioneers should make every effort to get sent out there or at least get employment after arriving, thus relieving the Baha'i Fund as much as possible. If this fails, then of course all the expense will have to be paid by the Fund."

AFRICA CONFERENCE

A Conference is being organised in London, at which the Committee and some of the prospective pioneers will consult about 'THE BAHAI FAITH AND AFRICA'. We publish an open letter to participants and to all interested:

Dear Baha'i Friend,

The Conference on "The Baha'i Faith and Africa", which is to be held on Friday, December 29th at the new Baha'i Centre in London, needs, we feel, a note of explanation.

The launching of the Africa project with the sending of the first Baha'i pioneers from Britain, an event soon to occur, will be a step of tremendous significance to the British Baha'i Community. It will carry us overseas in the first stage of a glorious mission to the Territories of the British Crown. It will open our work in Africa - a continent vast, little known, teeming with promise for the future.

Faced with "so glorious, so fateful an enterprise", which one among us can claim to grasp the problems which will challenge us, or the means most likely to ensure success? We are confident that true Baha'i consultation is the best method for approaching this new and great responsibility, and that the way ahead will be illumined by the searchlight of our sincere and unified endeavour to understand the work which immediately confronts us.

A programme of the Conference is in this issue. You will note that guest speakers, both British and African, have been invited to lead our discussions in the afternoon session. The morning session, however, will be reserved for Baha'i consultation, in which we hope everyone will participate freely and equally. Our procedure will be simple but essential. Under the Chairman's guidance we shall ask that each Baha'i present contribute his full measure to the consultation, that none will take more than his share of the time available, and that all remarks will be directed in a practical and constructive spirit to the theme and subjects before us. Some details of this morning session are given below for your thought and preparation.

And finally, dear friends, we would think of this Conference as the first of many, not charged with the need to solve in advance all the problems that may await us in Africa, but facing up to the very real challenge of the next few months, when the Africa project will be launched, and teaching work will commence in these far-away fields.

"...The mere act of launching upon so glorious, so fateful an enterprise", let us be assured by the Guardian, "will, of necessity, create at this propitious hour the receptivity which will enable a swiftly marching, stout-hearted virile Community, now standing on the threshold of its mission beyond the seas, to attract a fresh measure of celestial potency adequate to its growing needs and its ever-expanding responsibilities."

With loving greetings

Africa Committee

THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH AND AFRICA

A Conference
Friday, December 28, 1950

Bahá'í Centre, 103 Earls Court Rd., W.8

Chairman: Henry F. Backwell
(Resident, Nigeria - retired)

MORNING SESSION

10.0 a.m. - 1.0 p.m. & 2.30 - 3.30 p.m.

INTRODUCING THE FAITH INTO AFRICA: Bahá'í Consultation

Introductory Words and Readings

'The First Step is to get to Africa' - Introductory
comments by John Ferraby, Committee Secretary

Initial Pioneering Activity

Teaching the Faith: The Beginning of the Work

AFTERNOON SESSION

3.30 - 5.0 p.m. & 5.30 - 6.30 p.m.

TALKS AND DISCUSSION: .

'Africa's Need for Spiritual Civilisation' - Talk by
H.V.L. Swanzy, Editor of "African Affairs"

'Aspirations of Modern Africa' - Talk by an African

Open Discussion

Tea 5.0 p.m.

'African Languages' - Talk by an African Languages expert

Open Discussion

Dinner 6.30 - 8.15 p.m.

EVENING SESSION

8.15 - 9.30 p.m.

FILMS ON AFRICA:

'Here is the Gold Coast'

'East African College'

Arranged by the Africa Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly
of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles

"INTRODUCING THE FAITH INTO AFRICA"

Some problems to be discussed in the morning session
of the Conference

First Theme: INITIAL PIONEERING ACTIVITY

The trip out
Getting established in one's job
Getting established in the community and relation
to the Government
Learning to understand and appreciate the African
Wisdom in initial teaching

Second Theme: TEACHING THE FAITH - THE BEGINNING OF THE WORK

Recognising the true teaching opportunity; finding
receptive souls
Choosing the right approach. The place of tact and
restraint in unfolding the Teachings (i.e.
Laws of the Aqdas, monogamy, equality of sexes, etc.)
The Most Challenging Issue is the oneness of mankind:
Nature of the Problem (see "The Advent of
Divine Justice", P.28)
Individual conduct
Relation to the European, the Asian, and
the African
Public activity
Founding a Baha'i Community
Attitude to other religions: African religions,
missionaries, etc.
The political danger: the need for detachment from
all views and a Baha'i standard of
thought, speech and action.
Individual and public teaching activity
The response of the African to the Cause; confirming
the true believer.
Pioneer initiative and responsibility; aiding the
Africa Committee in teaching policy and
other matters.