

AFRICA NEWS

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

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English Edition

"The progress being made in Africa is truly miraculous, as if a
special benediction from on High is being extended to this work."

(The Guardian to Philip Hainsworth, August 30, 1951)

(Through his Secretary)

LOUIS
GREGORY

The following cablegram from our beloved Guardian was received in
America on August 6, 1951:

"Profoundly deplore grievous loss dearly beloved, noble-minded,
golden-hearted Louis Gregory, pride example Negro adherents Faith; keenly feel
loss one so loved, admired, trusted (by) 'Abdu'll-Bahá. Deserves rank first
Hand (of the) Cause his race. Rising Bahá'í generation African continent will
glory his memory, emulate his example. Advise hold memorial gathering Temple
token recognition unique position, outstanding services."

Mr. Gregory passed away on July 30th at the age of seventy-seven, after a
lifetime of Baha'i service. He was a lawyer by profession, and an outstanding
Bahá'í teacher, administrator, and writer. He served for some years on the
American National Spiritual Assembly. He was a pioneer in the path of racial
amity, setting a high example both to Bahá'is and all his fellow Americans. He
was known and loved by all American Bahá'is and indeed around the Bahá'í world.

The British National Assembly has asked the Bahá'í Groups in Dar-es-
salaam and Kampala to hold memorial meetings for Mr. Gregory, if possible at the
same time as the Temple gathering, for we feel it only fitting that Africa
should join her voice in recognition of this unique servant, whose passing and
elevation to the rank of a Hand of the Cause is already infusing new spirit into
the Africa Crusade. Our Africa Committee has also invited the U.S. Africa
Committee to prepare an article on Mr. Gregory's life, which may be kept as a
permanent record by the rising generation of Bahá'is in Africa.

OPENING PHASE
ESTABLISHED

From the hills of Kampala each morning at dawn the prayers
of our small Group of pioneers rise up to Bahá'u'lláh, -
truly a light over Africa to inspire the whole Bahá'í world.

Now comes back to them the response of the Dayspring of Divine Guidance, in
this thought-provoking letter from our Guardian, dated October 2, 1951:

"Dear Bahá'í Friends, Your letter of September 9th brought great joy to the
heart of our beloved Guardian.

"... The Guardian attaches the greatest importance to your presence in Uganda, and feels that your group, and the prospect of an Assembly in Tanganyika, have now firmly established the opening phase of the Africa work, so important, and so evidently blessed from on High.

"His thoughts and prayers are constantly with you all, and the historic services you are rendering are deeply appreciated by him, and by all the Bahá'ís in East and West.

"He feels sure you will be successful, and is eager to receive news of the progress of your work.

"With Bahá'í love, R. Rabbani."

"May the Spirit of Bahá'u'lláh sustain and overshadow you always, aid you to extend steadily the range of your historic and exemplary activities and services, consolidate your splendid achievements, and enrich the annals of our glorious Faith, now entering upon so important a stage in its evolution in the African Continent.

"Your true and grateful brother, Shoghi."

"MOST VITAL"
COMMITTEE

To the U.S. Africa Committee the Guardian has sent the following important message, dated September 7th, 1951:

"Dear Bahá'í Friends, Your letter of July 23rd brought great joy to the heart of the Guardian, as it was evident your Committee is a live wire and really determined to get results. As you know, this corresponds with the Guardian's own nature!

"He was delighted to hear of the plans being pressed regarding Mr. Foster, and of the possibility Mrs. Stephens may get out there too ...

"He attaches great importance to the contact work in the States with African students. This is a field many friends can take part in at home.

"He wishes you all every success in your work, and considers you are one of the most vital committees functioning in the Bahá'í work.

"Every effort should be made to get as many pioneers out to Africa as possible and as soon as possible.

"Also, you should keep in closest touch with the British Africa Committee, your counterpart in England.....

"With loving greetings, R. Rabbani."

"May the Almighty bless continually your highly meritorious efforts, aid you to lend a great impetus to the enterprise, so auspiciously launched in the African continent, stimulate the departure and settlement of pioneers, and assist them to win great and memorable victories in this new, this vast and fertile field of Bahá'í pioneer activity.

"Your true and grateful brother, Shoghi."

WILLIAM
FOSTER

The following thrilling letter from the Guardian to Mr. Foster, dated June 4, 1951, has just reached us. Mr. Foster was the first Negro believer to volunteer for Africa, before last Convention, and his assignment to Liberia was reported last issue. We pray that the Guardian's hopes for Mr. and Mrs. Foster may soon be fulfilled.

"Dear Bahá'í Brother, Your letter of May 2nd was received by our beloved Guardian and brought him great joy.

"The decision you have taken to go to Africa and teach the Cause is momentous and is worthy of the great race you belong to. The Guardian has been eagerly awaiting a Negro pioneer, and feels that Bahá'u'lláh will surely bless your enterprise and assist you in this work you are planning for His Faith.

"You are fortunate to have a wife by your side kindled with the same enthusiasm and determination, and your joint labours will be a tremendous asset to the new campaign in Africa.

"The Guardian has recently called upon India and Persia to open up further territories, and he feels that this pioneer effort - the first in Bahá'í history linking five NSA's in an international undertaking - is truly historic and of the greatest importance.

"He will ardently pray that the way may speedily open for you to go to a goal country in Africa, and he urges you to persevere in your efforts. We all have weak points, but when we arise to serve Bahá'u'lláh He helps us overcome them in a truly miraculous way!

"With warmest Bahá'í love, R. Rabbani."

"May the Almighty bless, guide and sustain you always, enable you to fulfil your heart's desire, set a noble example to the Negro believers, and win great and memorable victories in that promising Continent.

"Your true brother, Shoghi."

NEW VICTORIES

The Gold Coast has been claimed for Bahá'u'lláh and Kenya has been reinforced - such is October's good news!

Mrs. Ethel Stephens, first American pioneer and first of her race to reach African soil, embarked from New York on the French liner, "Liberty", on October 13th. Her sailing was the result of a courageous decision - in which she, the U.S. Africa Committee, and the American N.S.A. fully shared - to send her although her entry permit for the Gold Coast had not yet been received. Through strenuous co-operation of the American and British Committees, she was granted a visitor's visa and proceeded by air from London to Accra on October 22nd as scheduled. While in England she was guest of honour at meetings of the believers in Oxford and London, and spoke for an African Evening arranged by the Oxford Bahá'ís at the British Council.

Mrs. Stephens endeared herself to the English Bahá'ís who were privileged to meet her, and all were impressed by her splendid qualifications for the great work she has undertaken. Her preparation has included five years' close association with African students at Hampton Institute, Virginia, some of whom have been "foster sons" to Dr. and Mrs. Stephens. One of her "sons", Rassim Wurie of Sierra Leone, has become a Bahá'í and is a member of the U.S. Committee. More recently Mrs. Stephens attended the Institute on Contemporary Africa at Northwestern University last July, where she made invaluable contacts for her African pioneering and gathered material which has already been shared at Summer Schools and is now available, through the U.S. Committee, to Local Assemblies wishing to conduct a study of Africa. The prayers of the friends are asked, that this dedicated believer may be confirmed to win great victories for the Cause in the Gold Coast.

Ted Cardell has sent back a long and exciting report of his flight from London to Nairobi, October 7th to 11th, and of his visits with the friends in Rome, Cairo, and Khartoum. His journey added fresh proof of the worldwide unity and strength of our Faith, coming as it did at the very hour of the outbreak of

new international difficulties. The loving welcomes he received on his way have truly enriched Baha'i history and we gratefully salute our fellow-believers who extended to Ted their overwhelming hospitality. Ted's report will be shared in the first African edition of our "Africa News", which is to appear on November 15th. Meantime, we know that the friends will join in supporting him with their prayers, in these early weeks whilst the problems of pioneer settlement in a new land are being solved. We rejoice to think that his labours will now reinforce our dear co-worker in Kenya, Mrs. Marguerite Preston.

PIONEERS NEED OUR HELP

We learn from the U.S. Africa Committee ("Bahá'í News", September, p.5) that "the total number of American believers who have volunteered for pioneer work in Africa has now risen to 23. In this group there are a number of believers with technical and professional skill which should be much in demand in Africa. Some skills represented are in the fields of engineering, nutrition, physical therapy, agriculture, animal husbandry, etc. The Committee is vigilantly pursuing all possible avenues to assure the early departure of some of these friends to the Africa area."

Due to the severe restrictions on Bahá'í funds in these days of austerity, most of our eager American pioneers must find jobs before they can enter the African field. We know of many who are striving with great energy to fulfil the Guardian's call "to get as many pioneers out to Africa as possible and as soon as possible".

Nor let us forget the volunteers in Persia, India, Egypt, and Britain who also are earnestly striving to reach Africa. The vast continent awaits them. The desire to serve is intense and planted in the hearts of many who have arisen to pioneer. Only the means have not as yet been found.

It is really an urgent necessity for all who read these lines to focus on this great challenge, and to lend all possible support that doors may open wide for the many new pioneers who long to reach their chosen goal.

CONTACT WITH AFRICAN BAHÁ'IS

A letter has just gone out, on October 3rd, addressed "To the Bahá'is in Africa". It inaugurated the project which our Guardian has entrusted to the British N.S.A.: "To maintain steady correspondence with, fan the zeal, seek the counsel and secure the assistance of the budding and scattered communities in the North, in the South and the Heart of that vast but promising and slowly awakening continent". Accompanying the letter was a Summary of Developments of the Africa Project, copy of which is enclosed for those who did not receive the original mailing. It will be seen, on page 3 of this Summary, that there are now twenty-five African countries united in the Africa Crusade! Already the powers latent in this far-flung army of Bahá'u'lláh can be felt, and we thrill to the Guardian's assurance that "a special benediction from on High is being extended to this work".

AFRICA NEWS

In a fortnight the first African Edition of "Africa News" will be published in Dar-es-salaam, and it will appear monthly on the 15th from then on. Our English Edition will continue on the 1st of each month. We hope by December to improve our journal's appearance with a masthead now being prepared. The committee in Dar-es-salaam which will edit and produce the African Edition is as follows: Jalal Nakhjawani, Chairman; Isobel Sabri, Secretary; and Hassan Sabri. We are truly grateful to these pioneers for their eager spirit in accepting this important assignment.

Bahá'is throughout Africa are cordially invited to send news of their activities directly to the Dar committee. Please address: Mrs. Isobel Sabri, P.O. Box 1668, Dar-es-salaam, Tanganyika, B.E.A.