



AFRICA NEWS

Issued by The Africa Committee of the National
Spiritual Assembly for the Bahá'ís of
the British Isles.

*"The earth is but one country, and
mankind its citizens."—Bahá'u'lláh.*

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"My covenant with you is now accomplished. Gird up the loins of endeavour and arise to diffuse my Cause. Be not dismayed at the sight of the degeneracy and perversity of this generation for the Lord of the Covenant shall assuredly assist you even as the cloud that rains its bounty upon the earth, traverse the land from end to end, and shower upon its people the blessings which the Almighty, in His mercy, has deigned to confer upon you. Raise the cry: Awake, awake, for lo! the Gate of God is open and the morning light is shedding its radiance upon all mankind. The Promised One is made manifest, prepare the way for Him, oh people of the earth. Deprive not yourselves of its redeeming grace, nor close your eyes to its effulgent glory."

The Bab

Numerous quotations could be cited from the sacred writings of Baha u'llah and Abdul baha and from the letters and cables of our dearly beloved Guardian emphasising the necessity, nay the absolute urgency, of pioneering for the glory and triumph of our beloved Faith. What is of the utmost importance is not simply to read those words and cherish their precious meaning but to act upon them resolutely and with determination, so that we can be in the vanguard of heroes, martyrs and saints. Could there be any greater honour than that, or any more noble goal to attain?

With the final session of the Inter-Continental Conference in Kampala the friends dispersed to their own lands, wondering how best they could serve the cause of Baha'u'llah, when lo! the Guardian's special message to the three East African Assemblies arrived, followed shortly after by a special message which was received through the Secretary General of the International Baha'i Council by the three Assemblies of East Africa (see AFRICA NEWS, English Edition)

The goal was set and the spirit of determination was generated. Immediate steps were taken, meetings for the purpose of studying the Guardian's cables and letters were held, and it is gratifying to report here that from Kampala Mr. and Mrs. Collison and Dunduzi Chisiga made a hurried departure for Ruanda Urundi with Baha'u'llah as their only support and guide. Later Ali Nakhjawani left Uganda

with three African pioneers, Max Kanyerezi for French Equatorial Africa, Enoch Olinga for the British Cameroons, and Sampson Mungono for the Belgian Congo. This is a brave undertaking and could only be praised through the prayers of the friends for the confirmation of the efforts of the Uganda believers.

We are very pleased to mention Agripina Olei, the first African woman at the Kampala Conference to volunteer to pioneer, has now gone back to her home village, Ngariam in Teso, where the Faith had not yet been taken. She is successfully teaching there and has extended her activities further. John Mbatiah, a Kikuyu Baha'i, has gone pioneering to Moroto.

From Kenya Fred Schechter obtained a visa for French Somaliland, Mr. and Mrs. Laws are on their way to Basutoland, Clare Gung is on her way to Southern Rhodesia and expects to be there some time in October. Ted Cardell, after spending a couple of months in England with his family, will be on his way to South West Africa. Tahireh Vatanparast is making every effort, and we pray that she will soon be confirmed and on her way to a pioneering post.

Thus, although at the beginning of the year it was very doubtful whether even an Assembly would be formed in Nairobi, that little band of devoted servants will have contributed towards the opening of three virgin territories and consolidated a fourth.

Dar es Salaam held two meetings especially to study the Guardian's cables and messages and their implications. Eleven pioneer offers have been received and all of them are pursuing plans for settlement. The prayers of all the friends in every land are now asked on behalf of those who are privileged to settle and those whose hearts are aching to traverse in the name of Baha'u'llah, so that the efforts of the former and the hopes of the latter may be finally consummated in the service and the spreading of the Light of the Lord.

Many more must arise if we, the Baha'is of to-day, take the initiative and benefit by the outpourings of divine grace in this Holy Year. Coordinated action and concentrated effort must be our motto and our guiding light.

WELCOME NAIROBI!

The birth of an Assembly is the highmark of a Baha'i group, not only from the administrative point of view but also as it signifies the establishment of a pinpoint for the reflection and diffusion of the light of Baha'u'llah and His teachings. Nairobi is the youngest of the three East African Assemblies but it is taking its rightful place with exemplary zeal and enthusiasm and an unequalled sense of responsibility.

They formed their Assembly with ten eligible Baha'is and three youth. At the beginning of May Mr. and Mrs. Laws and Mr. Fred Schechter arrived from America. New Baha'is accepted in Nairobi since the date of the establishment of the Assembly number eight, despite the prevailing difficulties in Kenya, so that altogether they have believers from the following tribes: Maragoli, Jalu, Masai, Zulu, Mkamba, Ki'uyu, Mluhya, Mtaita, and Mugwere, and Mugishu from Uganda. No sooner had they formed their Assembly and settled themselves to the task of consolidation than the call came for pioneers to open the virgin territories. Fourteen of the then eighteen accepted Baha'is volunteered, of which the Africa Committee released only five.

Two new centres have been opened in Kisumu and Mombasa, with six and three declared believers respectively. Extension teaching has been made possible through the indefatigable efforts of Messrs. Afshar and Timothy Kagota, who in December 1952 paid their first visit to the Nyanza Province. The second visit was an all-pioneer one on their way from Nairobi to Kampala. The third visit was made by Mr. and Mrs. Laws, Mr. Ted Cardell, and Mr. Francis Jumba in July, when the first declarations were received. The fourth visit was made by Mr. Aziz Yazdi, Miss Gung, Mr. Jumba and Miss Irone Bennett in August for the purpose of deepening the new believers. The fifth visit was by Aziz and Suraya Yazdi, Dr. Mehdi Samandari and Mr. Kagota, when nineteen new contacts eagerly listened to the message for the first time and all the declared believers were further deepened.

Mombasa heard of the Faith for the first time in April, when Mr. Larby Matthew was on leave there. This was later reinforced by Mr. Ted Cardell, Mr. Fred Schechter, Miss Bennett, and Miss Vatanparast. A second visit was made by Mr. Yazdi and Mr. Schechter in June. The third visit by Mr. Schechter, who was then on his way to pioneer in French Somaliland. The fourth visit was made by an all-African team in August, Mr. Jacob Kisombe, Mr. Agwa, Mr. Matthew and Mr. Ouna. The last named found work there and stayed on to continue teaching the Baha'i Faith. Another visit is planned for next month.

The Baha'is of Nairobi are certainly setting the pace, and by their exemplary devotion are contributing towards the consolidation of the Faith in Nairobi and its extension in Nyanza province and the coastal area.

UGANDA

Ten new Assemblies were formed in the Teso district, one was formed in Mbale district, and one formed in Jinja, thus the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies in Uganda is now thirteen. Our warmest congratulations are offered to the newly formed Assemblies and we pray for their consolidation and the confirmation of all their endeavours to serve the Cause of God in their respective areas and subsequently in the whole of this continent.

The Uganda Teaching Committee has recently adopted a plan which aims at establishing the Faith in fifteen new towns in Uganda. Furthermore, they have been called upon by the Africa Committee to make four pioneers available, two for Tanganyika Territory and two for Kenya.

The activities of the Uganda Baha'is have reached beyond the confines of their territory through the visits of Mr. Peter Lugayula Kamala and Dunduzi Chisaga to Tanganyika, the former to Kashasha, Bukoba district, and the latter to Tukuyu in the Southern Highlands Province. Peter's father, brother, and two others responded to the Faith and expressed their desire to become Baha'is, and Dunduzi's brother, Mr. Abraham Chisiga of Tukuyu has also sent his declaration to the Africa Committee, London. These visits of the above devoted friends were later on supported by Mr. and Mrs. Collison and Mr. Nathan Olei, who visited the Bukoba district and met with great success both in Kashasha and in Bukoba itself. Mr. A. Chisiga was visited by Mr. Ennayat Sohaili at the request of the Dar es Salaam Local Assembly.

At Ridvan there were thirty-six voting members and eleven youth in Kampala. To date there are forty-nine voting members and thirty-one youth, a total of eighty. Over thirty believers have volunteered in response to the Guardian's call and ten have already departed to places either outside the Uganda territory or places inside the territory where no Baha'is reside. Daily noon-time classes are held from Monday to Friday attended mostly by the young men who work in town, attendance varying from ten to twenty-five. Every Sunday afternoon likewise is a public meeting, informal and ending in a tea party. There are nineteen tribes represented in the Kampala community. The number of women in the community is eleven, of whom seven are of voting age.

TANGANYIKA

Dar es Salaam community started the Baha'i year with twenty-four members. The African membership represented nine tribes and the community as a whole was representative of eight nationalities. In addition to what has been reported earlier as regards the response to the Guardian's call for pioneers the community has continuously shown great interest and enthusiasm for the 10-year Crusade and its objectives. As soon as the Guardian announced that the National Convention held in Florence had decided upon the acquisition of a piece of land for the Mashri'k'u'l Adhkar of Rome the community, with the approval of the Assembly, started a Temple Fund. Contributions to this fund will eventually be sent to the Treasurer of this sacred undertaking.

The activities of the Baha'is of Dar es Salaam have been most heartening. Extension teaching work was started in six localities in the neighbourhood of the town and good results are already proving that the venture was very much worthwhile. Regular meetings in Dar es Salaam are held every Sunday with a very comprehensive course covering the prophecies and the fulfilment thereof, the social principles for the complete transformation of humanity and the coming of the Kingdom of the Father and the spiritual mission of Baha'u'llah. The history of the Faith and the spiritual mission of Baha'u'llah and the Bab occupy a prominent place in the course, which will be ended by seven talks on the Will and Testament of Abdul Baha, the New World Order, and the present day Baha'i administration. These meetings are very well attended and a fine group of contacts is drawing closer every day. Social functions will be held every fifth Sunday for the purpose of creating a friendly atmosphere and an informal relationship between the students and the Baha'is.

The community is indeed proud of its translation work, which is the result of the devoted and selfless labours of our dear and distinguished brother, Mr. Leslie Matola. He has already translated a prescribed pamphlet into Yao which is now in the hands of the printers, thus becoming the first pamphlet of the thirty-one African languages set as a goal for the British Baha'i community in the 10-year Crusade. Mr. Matola has already earned the undying gratitude of this and future generations by his wonderful translations of "Baha'u'llah and the New Era" and "Baha'i Prayers" into both Swahili and Yao, and the translation of some special Baha'i prayers and the pamphlet entitled "Baha'u'llah" into Swahili.

One of the Dar es Salaam friends, Mr. Gabriel Mussa, a representative of the Yao tribe, passed away on September 21st, after a long illness. He was buried on the 22nd, and the prayers of the friends are asked for the progress of his soul in the Abha Kingdom.

Dar es Salaam has seen an influx of pioneers who either came to settle in Tanganyika or passed through on their way to other lands in Africa. The highlight of the year was the visits of that most distinguished company of the Hands of the Cause of God, Mr. Mason Remoy, President of the International Baha'i Council, Mrs. Dorothy Baker, Mr. Mussa Banani, and Mr. Zikr'u'l Khadem; the latter two were accompanied by their wives. Their visit to Dar es Salaam has opened a new vista in the activities and the teaching work of the community and great benefits were harvested through their short stay.

The Dar es Salaam community has recently had the privilege of meeting Mr. Alfred Kafanabo from Bukoba. Mr. Kafanabo first heard of the Baha'i Faith when he met with Mr. and Mrs. Collison during

their visit to the Bukoba district in May. Mr. Kafanabo has now declared himself as a Baha'i and his declaration has been sent to the Africa Committee, London.

Dar es Salaam, as one of the three East African Assemblies, is forging ahead and consolidating its position, and in this its problems are numerous and varied. The prayers of the friends are asked for the removal of difficulties and elimination of all obstacles from its path, and that the triumph of the Cause may be finally consummated.

Editorial Note

The Editorial Committee begs to apologise for the long lapse since our last issue of AFRICA NEWS as it was deprived of the valuable and active efforts of its previous secretary, Mrs. Isobel Sabri, who has been away visiting the United States since April. We wish to acknowledge our gratitude for all that she has done and the magnificent contribution she has made to making AFRICA NEWS quite an institution which was missed by all.

The Editorial Committee for this year, as appointed by the Africa Committee, London, is as follows:

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| Mr. Morris Cooper | Chairman |
| Mr. P.K.G. Nayar | Treasurer |
| Mr. Hassan Sabri | Secretary |

Please make sure that there is some news from your town or district for inclusion in the next issue, which we hope will be published by the first week in November. AFRICA NEWS is your organ, so make good use of it. The Editorial Secretary's address is P.O. Box 1668, Dar es Salaam, Tanganyika.