



AFRICA NEWS

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

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

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AFRICAN EDITION

"The Divine Springtime is come, O Most Exalted Pen, for the Festival of the All-Merciful is fast approaching. Bestir thyself, and magnify, before the entire creation, the name of God, and celebrate His praise, in such wise that all created things may be regenerated and made new.. Arise before the nations of the earth, and arm thyself with the power of this Most Great Name, and be not of those who tarry"

- Baha 'u''llah -

DIVINE SPRINGTIME

This year each of us here in Africa, as we turn once again from the prayer and meditation of our Fast days to join with Baha'is everywhere in the world-embracing joy and happiness of Naw Ruz, are surely profoundly aware of the sacredness of this Baha'i year, 109, and of all that is required of us and of those who will soon join us here from across the seas. In the past two years, since the Centenary of the Martyrdom of His Holiness the Bab, we have been privileged to witness, through the unfolding epic drama of our Guardian's cabled announcements, an unprecedented growth in the stature and responsibilities of the Baha'i World Community. In his most recent messages and from the enthralling notes of returning pilgrims from Haifa, we catch a vision of the future progress of our Faith radiant beyond our most inspired imagination.

October, our Guardian has explained, begins the Holy Year of the Centenary of the Birth of Baha'u'llah's Prophetic Mission. In February, the first of the four historic Intercontinental Teaching Conferences, planned for that sacred period, will be convened in the heart of the African Continent, at Kampala, Uganda. This Conference will, while witnessing the vital closing chapters of the present two year Africa Project, open the way, through its deliberations, to the total spiritual conquest, within the decade which will then separate us from the glorious Centenary of the Declaration of Baha'u'llah in 1963, of all the "remaining territories and neighbouring islands, east, south and west of the African Continent." As we stand at the springtime of this spiritually historic year, are we not, each one, wherever he may be across the length and breadth of this widely scattered and diverse African Community of the Most Great Name, called upon to turn to the years ahead with an ever-increasing consciousness of the immeasurable privilege which is ours in serving Him in this Day and with complete dedication to the tremendous responsibilities which this privilege implies?

MOUSSE BANANI

In a cablegram dated March 3rd, and destined to excite the joy of every Baha'i in Africa, our Guardian announced the appointment

of seven additional Hands of the Cause of God, bringing the total to 19. Among these chosen ones, and the first of the recently appointed Hands of the Cause to be designated from the African Community, is our dearly beloved Baha'i brother, Moussa Banani, of Kampala, Uganda, who with his devoted wife, Samiheh Khanum, was privileged during March to make an extended pilgrimage to the Holy Shrines.

All of us are warmly grateful to the Kampala Group for their generous action expressed in the following excerpts from a recent letter. "The dear Bananis, after 24 days of an enviable pilgrimage to Haifa have returned laden with wonderful news of our wonderful Guardian. We sat at their feet and jotted down the notes you will find enclosed. As one of the things that the Guardian has asked of us is to keep in closest touch with our fellow workers in Africa, we are starting by sending these notes to the addresses we have on the African Continent."

AFRICAN HAZIRA In that same message of March 3rd, the Guardian announced the thrilling news that Moussa Banani, during his pilgrimage, was directed to "undertake preliminary measures acquisition property Kampala serve local Haziratu'l-Quds synchronize formation first Assembly heart Africa, be regarded nucleus national administrative headquarters Faith destined arise morrow formation National Spiritual Assembly Central, Eastern territories African Continent." Already news has reached us from the British National Assembly that the property to be purchased for the future Hazira in Kampala will cost approximately £5,500. and that the Guardian has sent the first contribution of \$6,000. (£2,142.). All of the believers in the five National Communities participating in the African Project are being given the honour of contributing to this historic edifice. All of us here in Africa are asked to send our contributions direct to Mr. Banani, who has been designated by the Guardian as the treasurer of this Fund. The purchase of this property is a living symbol of the emerging Community of Africa; let us arise to demonstrate by our united giving that this new continent-wide Community of ours has vigour and a capacity for sacrifice even beyond our estimation and knowledge of its qualities. Send your contributions to: Mr. Moussa Banani, Pioneering Private Bag, Kampala, Uganda, East Africa.

LIBYA OPENED Exciting news has reached us, both from Egypt and from Mahmoud Hussein Ismail, one of our Baha'i friends in Tripolitania, that Dr. Hussein Gollestaneh, of Cairo, has now arrived at his pioneer post in Benghazi, Libya, and that he is busy making efforts to establish himself there in the medical profession. Dr. Gollestaneh, 29 years of age, a graduate of Cairo University, and a member of one of Egypt's oldest Baha'i families, formerly lived and taught the Faith in the southern Sudan and has long been an active member of the Egyptian National Youth Committee. Dr. Gollestaneh now becomes not only the first Baha'i to settle on Libyan soil, but also the first Egyptian believer to pioneer in one of the territories of Africa assigned by the Guardian to Egypt. We joyfully welcome Hussein to the pioneer field and eagerly look forward to the entry of many more of the Egyptian friends into the pioneer ranks of the Africa Project during this, its second and final year.

ASSEMBLY STATUS Ever since the pioneers began to congregate in Kampala and Dar-es-Salaam ten months ago, there has been enthusiastic, determined activity by both Communities in their eagerness to

diffuse the Teachings of their beloved Faith and to fill the heart of their Guardian with gladness and satisfaction. Several times in recent months the Guardian has indicated informally that he looks forward with happiness to the day, soon at hand, when Spiritual Assemblies in these capital cities of East Africa can be formed. Now, in a cablegram to the British National Assembly, on February 2nd, he states, "Advise build up Kenya. Urge formation Assemblies Kampala, Dar-es-Salaam."

Long before these words reached the two Groups, plans and teaching activities had set in motion for the fulfillment of this wish. In Kampala, Frederick Bigabwa and Crispian Kajubi, the first African believers of the Plan, have eagerly accepted the responsibility of teaching several of the firmly attracted contacts at a class conducted entirely in their own language, Buganda. In Dar-es-Salaam, a special study-class on the fundamental tenets and principles of the Faith has been inaugurated for six of the closest friends of the Faith. Both Communities are confident that with the prayers of all the friends in Africa their efforts will be blessed.

PIONEER RESPONSIBILITIES From the pilgrims' notes of Mr. and Mrs. Banani, one vital sentence stands out to enlighten and guide all those who have been drawn to the pioneer field in Africa. "The pioneers have four responsibilities, devotion, detachment, steadfastness, and unity." Let this message fill the hearts of all who labour here with new strength and resolve.

PIONEERS EN ROUTE From the American Baha'i News and the British National Assembly News Sheet, we glean the joyful information that Prof. and Mrs. Rex Collison of Geyserville, California, U.S.A., are en route to their pioneer post in Kampala, Uganda. They have travelled via Britain and have met with the friends in London at the New Ruz Feast and have helped with the teaching work there as well.

Mr. and Mrs. Collison, believers with many years of rich Baha'i experience on the Geyserville Spiritual Assembly, at the Geyserville Baha'i Summer School, and in the teaching field in Northern California, come to Africa under the auspices of the United States Africa Committee and are the third and fourth American believers to pioneer within the Africa project, the first two being Ethel Stevens in the Gold Coast and William Foster in Liberia.

PIONEER NEWS These words quoted from a recent letter from Eric in Northern Rhodesia tell the story of his pioneer blessings, "The address above is that of the P.W.D. by whom I am now employed as a Building Foreman (Electrician). I was engaged in Lusaka and posted immediately to Livingstone. I am in single living quarters and Terry is with me. He has started school here and does quite well. He has been very 'game' all along, and I am most grateful that he is with me.. We were in Lusaka, the capital, for a week, and there is little to tell of it as it can be thoroughly viewed on foot in half an hour.. Yes, we have seen the Victoria Falls, by bus last Sunday, and they are awesome beyond my description.. Of course, people here know that I am a Baha'i; so my actions must be befitting. My trust is in Baha'u'llah, who will surely show the way." Eric's new address is Box 7, Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia, East Africa.

ETHEL STEVENS From Kumasi in the Gold Coast, Ethel Stevens writes of her job as a domestic science teacher at the Kumasi College of Technology and of her efforts to demonstrate through the

example of her life the glorious principles of our Faith. Pioneering entirely alone, far distant from her husband, home and family, Ethel requests the prayers of all the friends for the many tests and trials which have lain along her path of service, trials which are her sacrifice and her richest blessing, the blessing of every Baha'i who toils alone in some far-distant corner of His vineyard. Ethel is most anxious to correspond with the many Baha'is scattered across Africa and to exchange with them news and the spiritual joy of meeting new friends. Please, write to: Mrs. Ethel Stevens, C/o Kumasi College of Technology, Kumasi, Gold Coast, West Africa.

TED CARDELL With his beaming smile and ever-ready camera, Ted Cardell, of Nairobi, Kenya, descended on the Dar-es-Salaam Community in March for five wonderful, joy-filled days of Baha'i fellowship. Travelling on a photographic tour of Zanzibar and Dar-es-Salaam for his paper, Ted had many interesting stories to tell of the numerous and varied contacts he has been able to make for the Faith since his arrival in East Africa. Through his work, social contacts and participation in the activities of several inter-racial associations, Ted has succeeded in successfully establishing himself in his pioneer post.

Ted has developed an interesting contact technique which combines the two all-important factors in teaching, sociability and instruction. Every Sunday Ted takes a carload of young African men on a picnic with him into the Kenya countryside. While driving and later eating and enjoying the beauties of nature, Ted has been able to tell them a considerable amount about the Faith and gradually stimulated their continuing interest in it.

While in Dar, Ted greatly assisted with the teaching work of the Community there by the combination of his informality, friendliness and rich sense of humour and his serious, sincere and informative talks about the importance of the Faith and of every person's investigations of it. In a recent letter Ted speaks of his visit, "It is difficult for me to express the gratitude and happiness I feel at the bounty which Baha'u'llah has bestowed upon me in granting the blessing of a few precious days with you all. Only those who have been isolated from the presence of the Baha'is can ever understand.. Little did I realize the tempo which life had reached during those few days.. I was particularly glad to meet so many Africans in your homes and especially was impressed with their interest and naturalness when discussing the beloved Message of Baha'u'llah, and their happy confidence of a loving welcome at all times. May Baha'u'llah grant great confirmations to all your loving devotion and service and enable you to complete your Assembly in time for Ridvan, for such fruits especially will delight our Guardian's heart."

Ted's selfless labours have been richly rewarded, for he has now written, "I found a telegram awaiting my return, 'Pilgrimage permitted, Shoghi.' I have now asked the Guardian's permission for a 19 day stay to complete the photography of the Shrines and am awaiting his reply with a longing heart." The entire Baha'i world will most certainly reap a rich benefit from Ted's forthcoming visit to Haifa at Ridvan this year, for his beautiful photographs will assuredly bring joy and inspiration to all our hearts.

INTRODUCTIONS In order that all of us living in Africa can come to know and love each other better and that we can begin to

visualize ourselves and our Communities as integral parts of one dynamic, rapidly expanding continent-wide Community of Baha'u'llah, we plan from time to time to introduce to you all, through the pages of Africa News, some of the Communities and isolated believers who are labouring for his Cause in Africa. This month we invite you to meet the friends in:

ETHEOPIA. The Addis Abeba Spiritual Assembly members were scattered during the Etheopian war for a time and the Assembly temporarily dissolved. In 1945, the Community gathered once again to reconstitute its Assembly; and since that time, this staunch little group of believers has steadfastly carried on its activities and teaching work and has enlarged its numbers and deepened its roots in the soil of Etheopia.

Sabri Elias, who has faithfully pioneered in Addis Abeba for a total period of seven years now writes this interesting account of the Community there. "Our number is 14 in the capital city with a few believers in other parts of the country. We have in our Community representatives of many nationalities; Etheopian, Egyptian, Sudanese, Arabs from Yemen, American and Czechoslovakian. Every fortnight we hold a teaching meeting. One such gathering was held to commemorate the passing of our dear Baha'i brother Louis Gregory. A cablegram was sent to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States on that occasion in expression of our condolence.. Our American brother, Mr. David Talbot, who accepted the Faith in Addis Abeba, is one of our most enthusiastic believers and has delivered many valuable lectures at our meetings. He is now acting as our foreign correspondent. We have recently been honoured by a visit from Mrs. Asma Bikar, one of the first women to serve on the Cairo Spiritual Assembly, who was here visiting her sister, the wife of Mr. Gila Makhail, our Chairman. The language difficulty in our consultation periods is off-set by our love for the Cause and the spirit of harmony which animates our meetings."

ANGOLA Living and radiating a truly devoted Baha'i spirit are our two believers in Luanda, Angola, in the south-west quadrant of the continent. Angola is a Portuguese colonial possession, and it was in Lisbon, Portugal, that Senhora D. Ema Guedes de Melo Rocha and Senhora D. Laura Rodrigues first heard of the Faith and studied its teachings with the help of the Lisbon Spiritual Assembly and Community. Here is one striking example of the way in which the work of every teaching plan overlaps and assists in teaching projects in other parts of the world. The American pioneers and the Portuguese believers in Lisbon, working under the European Teaching Committee of America, have now assisted in the opening of yet another territory of Africa to the Message of Baha'u'llah.

Senhora D. Ema Guedes de Melo Rocha writes, "I have received your bulletins, and I have just begun to understand a little English. I wish to learn more of it so that we can convey to each other our love. I think you very much and wish that our Faith may spread far and wide so that the Cause of Baha'u'llah may be known throughout the world.. While spending my holidays in Lisbon, I came across an American lady who lived in the same hotel as myself and with whom I sympathized immensely. She invited me many times to her place, and the first few lessons in the Baha'i Faith filled my head with pleasure. Little by little, I started to study the books so kindly sent to me. I began to recognize and love the Teachings of Baha'u'llah. I have now become a Baha'i, and my children have many Baha'i friends in Lisbon and in America too.. At the moment

6. we are just two Baha'is in Luanda and our activities are made known to a few of our friends through the pamphlets and books. I have faith that our Cause will be recognized and appreciated and later on we shall not just be two people but one large family. I have a daughter in London married to an English doctor, and she visited the London Baha'i Centre and was very well received. With love to you all."

MESSAGES FROM THE GUARDIAN The Kampala friends were honoured to receive recently two letters from our beloved Guardian, from which excerpts concerning the Africa Project are quoted below.

Through the Guardian's Secretary.

January 1, 1952.

"The privilege you are all having of serving there (in Africa) is very great; however, so meritorious is this service in the eyes of Baha'u'llah, that His bounties and blessings seem to be visibly showering upon you all.

"The Guardian hopes that the Africa Conference will be an outstanding success and that there may be many negro and white African Baha'is attending it as of right, on their own soil."

"Please, tell the new believers that the Guardian extends his personal welcome to them into the service of the Faith of Baha'u'llah, and assures them that he is praying that they may render this Cause, which has been brought to them by loving and devoted hearts from overseas, great services, and that they may be the means of attracting many more of their countrymen to this Message, which can alone insure the peace and brotherhood of mankind."

In the Guardian's own hand.

"May the Almighty whose Faith you are promoting with such zeal, devotion and exemplary perseverance and courage, reward you abundantly for your truly meritorious, historic and valuable labours, guide and sustain you continually, and aid you to consolidate your achievements and win great and memorable victories in the service of His glorious Faith. Your true and grateful brother, Shoghi.

Through the Guardian's Secretary.

February 6, 1952.

"It has brought the greatest joy to his heart to have these dear believers (Mr. and Mrs. Banani) here; and he is prolonging their pilgrimage in order to discuss thoroughly with them the work being done in Uganda, and indeed in Africa, a work to which he attaches the greatest possible importance.

"A source of deep joy and satisfaction was the news of the declaration of Mr. Crispian Kajubi and Mr. Fred Bigabwa. He was so pleased to have photographs of them, and he has placed them in the Mansion, as the two first Baha'is in Uganda representative of the tribes of that country."

"The Guardian feels sure that, with wisdom, dedication, tact and prayer, your Group will be able to spread this Divine Message there to the peoples of all races; and lay, not only a lasting foundation for your own Community, but prepare the way for the great All-Africa Teaching Conference, which will be held there in 1953, and to which the Baha'is all over the world are already looking forward with such eagerness.

In the Guardian's own hand.

"May the spirit of Baha'u'llah powerfully sustain you in your high endeavours, aid you to extend rapidly the range of your historic and meritorious accomplishments, and lend a tremendous impetus to the onward march of our beloved Faith in that vast and promising continent. Your true brother, Shoghi.