

"Blessed is the spot..... where mention of God hath been made"



TEACHING NEWS BULLETIN

ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE

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CONFIRMATORY FIRESIDE

The Aim.

The fundamental purpose of all our teaching efforts is to confirm our contacts in Faith, that they too will, in turn, arise to help spread the Message of Baha'u'llah. True though this fact is, we are well aware that the pattern of confirmation generally includes an initial period during which the enquirer is attracted to the Faith, and a further length of time during which he investigates the teachings for himself and attends meetings and study-classes. The actual reality of spiritual confirmation comes then, after a considerable period of association with the Faith and in most cases with one or two of the believers in particular. It is during the course of the smaller, more intimate Baha'i gatherings called firesides that the real spirit of confirmation is most often manifested. (For full details of the fireside teaching technique, refer to P.29 of the Teaching Manual.)

The Method.

There are as many ways of conducting a confirmatory fireside as there are contacts to be confirmed. The primary consideration is the necessity of filling completely the contacts' spiritual needs and answering to the final degree all questions and doubts that may begin in his mind or heart.

It is in this type of fireside that the contact should be made to feel so completely at ease and in such a friendly and understanding company that he will open his heart freely and fully. It is only when the contact has really had an opportunity to empty himself of all former beliefs, opinions, theories, questions etc. that he is ready to receive the spirit of Faith which will flow through him when he realizes that the final veil has been pulled aside.

This type of fireside should, on the whole, be kept as small as possible - limited to the very closest contacts - or even to the one close contact. There should not be too many of the Baha'is present or the meeting will be over-weighted and may make the contacts hesitate to talk.

The leader (or host) of the fireside should, by careful handling, keep the meeting at a conversational level and should let it wander into almost any avenue that it will. If the contact is closely attracted to the Faith, his very interest in the Cause will be the guiding factor in the meeting. The leader should be prepared, with a number of Baha'i books at hand, to look up certain passages from the Writings which will illustrate his points and give added weight to his answer.

It is often successful for the host to come prepared with several readings from the Writings on aspects of the Faith which he feels will come up during the fireside. He may also wish to ask one or more Baha'is to come prepared to say a few words on one or several phases of the Faith.

General Hints for Success.

Try not to mix contacts of differing temperaments, prejudices or opinions as this may disturb the unity and harmony of the Meeting.

Try to make the contact feel that his growing interest in the Faith is the greatest joy in the world to you, as indeed it is.

Try to infuse into the contact a love of the central

figures of the Faith, enthusiasm for Baha'i Administration, understanding of the Station of the Guardian and love for him, and a keen interest in the affairs and news of the Faith in every part of the globe.

Tell the contact of the activities of the great teachers of the past, of the Hands of the Cause, of the Teaching Plans the world over and of the history of the Faith in the Formative Age.

Share the most recent letters from the Guardian; let the contacts see the eagerness with which you await new ones from him, and make it a special occasion when a letter or cable arrives.

Take this opportunity of speaking about the various ordinances, about prayer, fasting, the Baha'i calendar, - about the many things which, though important, may never come up in ordinary study-class discussion.

Above all, seek full guidance in preparatory prayer. It might be said that the degree of one's real success is in direct proportion to the amount of deeply sincere and passionate prayer.

NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE.