Pacific Baha'i Communities 1950-1964

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Pacific Bahá'í Communities 1950-1964

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The spread of Bahá'í
communities throughout the Pacific islands may be too recent a phenomenon to yet warrant close historical consideration. Several factors combine, nonetheless, to suggest the usefulness of an initial survey of the Bahá'í contribution to contemporary Pacific religious history. Passing references to Bahá'í activities have appeared in secondary literature, with little supporting detail. Furthermore, these have in some cases suffered from errors of fact and interpretation that signal the need for a more substantial account. A more compelling motivation, beyond matters of historiography, lies in the usefulness for comparative purposes of the observation of a philosophy and practice of religion which combines some motivations shared with traditional Judeo-Christian systems of belief, with approaches to religious teaching and practice (and their expression in propagation and organisation) that originate outside Western traditions. Whether as mission history, as social history, or as a study in comparative religion, a survey of the emergence and consolidation of Bahá'í centres thus implies observance and recognition of alternative paradigms of action and belief in a manner that sheds light on other facets of these contemporary Pacific societies.
Even though the admitted infancy of Pacific Bahá'í communities challenges the possibility of adequate historical construction, and no matter that the sources are uneven and uncollected, and patterns of community and individual action are as yet incomplete and underdeveloped, the attempt is made in this paper to identify the patterns of establishment of Bahá'í communities in the Pacific.

Origins and beliefs

The spread of the Bahá'í movement from the East to the Pacific was more direct than might have been imagined. The Prophet-founder of the Faith, Bahá'u'lláh (Mirza Husayn Ali, 1817-1892), born in Persia and subsequently exiled to the extremities of the Ottoman Empire at the urging of first Persian then Turkish religious authorities, had proclaimed a world-wide mandate for his teachings. He died in Palestine in 1892. But the pivotal doctrine of the "oneness of humanity" that lay at the centre of his pronouncements and writings required of his followers an imparting of his Faith to all corners of the globe.

Another central Bahá'í belief, and one having particular relevance to the study of Bahá'í approaches to Pacific religions, is the "progressive revelation" of religion to humanity from a common Divine source, through a series of messengers. By this belief Bahá'ís profess their recognition not only of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, and Hinduism (to refer to the religious traditions whose originators are well known), but recognition also of the existence of other Prophets in the past, whose personality and detailed teachings are no longer known. The acceptance of a multiplicity of religious teachers in the gradual unfolding of the world's spiritual destiny allowed the Bahá'ís to admit the possibility of the divine origins of primal religions, and of other beliefs based on "custom". This acceptance in turn informed the Bahá'í approach to Pacific belief systems with an underlying sympathy that did not require a detailed knowledge of their specifics. It also removed from the Bahá'í position the possibility of fundamental hostility toward other religions, whether western or non-western.

Bahá'u'lláh's mission was taken up by his son, `Abdu'l-Bahá, named by him the "Centre" of his "Covenant". `Abdu'l-Bahá travelled through Europe and North America expounding on Bahá'u'lláh's teachings about the possibility of "Universal Peace". A series of letters addressed by `Abdu'l-Bahá to the Bahá'ís of North America during the period 1915-17 known as the Tablets of the Divine Plan, listed destinations to which his advanced age prevented him from proceeding: included were eighteen island groups in the South, North and Eastern Pacific Islands. In a sense this list established a program of mission.

By the time of `Abdu'l-Bahá's death in Palestine in November 1921 followers had

reached Australia, the Society Islands and Hawaii - and through Hawaii, the countries of North-East Asia. Within several years there were Bahá'ís also in New Zealand and Fiji. Six decades after the Prophet's death his teachings had spread in some form to all the major Pacific Island groups.

'Abdu'l-Bahá nominated his eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi Rabbani (1897-1957), as his chosen successor, and first "Guardian" of the Bahá'í Faith. During a thirty-six year ministry, Shoghi Effendi directed a program of Bahá'í expansion based on and supplementing the tasks first elaborated in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets of the Divine Plan. It was under Shoghi Effendi's leadership, particularly in the period from 1953 until his death in 1957, that Bahá'ís entered the Pacific Islands in a systematic way. Interpretation in questions of religion relies on the perspective of the observer: to some, the Bahá'ís were supporters of an "eastern" Faith; the Bahá'ís saw themselves, however, as members of a religious movement, admittedly small and new, but global in perspective, philosophy, and practical operation.

Administration

Before examining the movement of Bahá'ís to the Pacific, it is necessary to note the administrative structure established in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, `Abdu'l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi, and subsequently in operation in Bahá'í communities world-wide. Local and national Spiritual Assemblies are elected annually through secret ballot elections for which campaigning and nominations are completely disallowed. Ideally, Spiritual Assemblies comprise the "choicest and most varied and capable" members of the Bahá'í community". Local Assemblies are intended to operate at the "first level of human society", that is, at the grass roots, where the concerns are those of individuals and families. National Assemblies constitute a "second" level of government, and administer the affairs of Bahá'í communities at a broader level. Worldwide leadership is entrusted to the Universal House of Justice, a body elected at five-yearly intervals since 1963. Emphasis in decision-making is placed on consultation, and the rules for consultation discourage the dominance of any individual over the group.

This government by administrative bodies that are elected at local, national, and global levels is accompanied by a second branch of "appointed" individuals, who are empowered to give advice, but not to dictate or command. Within each country,

Auxiliary Board Members are appointed to advise on the progress and well being of the community; Counsellors are appointed at continental level and work with National Assemblies. This administrative pattern is not viewed as an "end in itself", but as an instrument for the ordered application of spiritual teachings to individual and group life. Its brief description here, while diverging from our theme, assists in understanding the authority structure adhered to, and being established by, the Bahá'ís of the Pacific.

Pacific Presence before 1953

The first Bahá'ís to travel to foreign lands to spread their Faith regarded themselves as emissaries rather than missionaries: they did not travel under the instruction or subsidy of a mission board, and because support was moral rather than financial, their number was limited to the few who enjoyed some form of financial independence. Agnes Alexander, who in 1914 had taken the Bahá'í teachings from North America to her native Hawaii (where her Christian missionary family had established itself and attained some local prominence), subsequently settled in Japan, and was instrumental in Bahá'í expansion in North Asia.

Clara and Hyde Dunn relocated from California to Australia, and effectively established Bahá'í communities in Australia and New Zealand. Among their contacts in Auckland was Miss Nora Lee, an English woman who early in 1924 took work in Labasa, Fiji (as a "nanny" to the children of expatriate employees of the sugar industry). Miss Lee maintained contact with New Zealand Bahá'ís until at least 1927, but her subsequent movements and involvement remain unknown. Joseph Perdu, a Bahá'í of Persian/Indian background, who had been travelling in Australia, visited Fiji in July 1950, and converted some Islamic (Ahmadiyih) Fiji-Indians through his eloquent presentation of Bahá'í interpretations of Quranic verses and Islamic traditions. Some among these first converts faced life-threatening family persecution for remaining in their new faith.

The only other Bahá'ís to reside in the Pacific prior to the 1950s were John and Louise Bosch, who ventured from California to Tahiti for five months in 1920. A clergyman situated there is reported to have subsequently corresponded with Abdu'l-Bahá. There were several other respondents to the Bosch's message, included Miss Arianne Drollete (later Vermeesh), Ernest Marchel, and Mr and Mrs Georg Spitze.

American Bahá'í Loulie Mathews placed Bahá'í literature in public libraries during brief stops at Pacific Island ports during a world cruise. Some Australian and North American Bahá'ís in Papua and New Guinea or in the North Pacific, during World War Two. There is speculation that Americans distributed Bahá'í pamphlets while stationed on Malaita in the Solomon Islands. After the war, several Bahá'ís obtained work with the colonial administration in Port Moresby, but little progress appears to have been made.

The Global Crusade

By 1953 there were twelve ‘National’ Bahá'í communities worldwide, for each of which Shoghi Effendi devised a ten-year plan of action as part of a "Global Crusade". Seven of these twelve National communities were allocated tasks within the Pacific. Fifteen "virgin" territories (ie, areas where there were no Bahá'ís) were allocated among these seven "sending" communities: the United States was to open the Caroline Islands and Tonga; India, Pakistan and Burma to open Mariana Islands; Persia to open Solomon Islands; Canada to open Marquesas and Samoa; South America to open Cook Islands; Central America to open Gilbert and Ellice Islands, Marshall Islands and Tuamotu Archipelago; and Australia and New Zealand to open Admiralty Islands, Loyalty Islands, New Hebrides and Society Islands. Because the American Bahá'í community was regarded as the "chief executor" of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's "Divine Plan", its members were free to settle any territory they could enter.

There is no evident patten to the allocation of these territories among the various Bahá'í communities. Ties of language, culture, or government that linked Pacific territories with metropolitan powers were not replicated. The Mariana Islands were allocated to the National Assembly for India, Pakistan and Burma and not - as one might have expected - to that of the United States. Similarly, the Society Islands were allocated to Australia rather than to France, while Samoa (Western and American) was allocated to Canada rather than to Australia and New Zealand. The British Bahá'ís worked in Africa and Europe rather than the Pacific (and also had responsibility for Hong Kong). Such an allocation of tasks appears at first to have been inefficient or even illogical: it did not build on existing established cultural, economic and political ties, and required Bahá'í pioneers to enter societies with which they were completely unfamiliar. The eventual success of their efforts, on the other hand, in places where such success might

not or could not have been imagined, was no doubt evidence of the "organic unity" that could be created between diverse cultural groups.

Pioneers

Propagation of Bahá'í beliefs and values proceeded in at least four phases. The first required successful settlement of "pioneers" in each of the Pacific Island groups. This was followed by a period of contacts with individuals, which occasionally resulted in conversions. A third phase witnessed group conversions, generally within family groups, or clan-structures. Finally, when the numbers of Bahá'ís reached significant levels administrative bodies were established. Each of these phases will now be described in brief. Between October 1953 and October 1955 some 23 Bahá'ís entered the virgin territories and a further six entered consolidation territories.

Pioneers were not clerics, and had no ascribed status in the Administrative Order. They had not undergone special training - whether theological or practical - and did not necessarily feel they had been "called" to their work. They mostly possessed middle-class backgrounds, were both retired and subsisting on accumulated funds, or else able to adapt themselves to the environment in which they found themselves. Some were bookkeepers, clerks, health workers, and teachers. A few took whichever itinerant jobs became available. Dulcie Dive, a bookkeeper, managed a store in Rarotonga. Bertha Dobbins, an Adelaide school teacher, established a school in Port Vila. Violet Hoehnke found employment as a nurse with the Health Department in Papua New Guinea. Irene Jackson obtained a secretarial position at the radio station in Suva. Pioneers to Micronesia were invariably associated with the armed services. Virginia Breaks was employed in the Caroline Islands with the government health department. In a few instances pioneers were artists, writers, or incorporated their period as a pioneer into their career path.

Several pioneers established trade stores and other businesses. Rodney Hancock, a New Zealander, established trade stores, an import-export business, and other ventures in Rabaul on New Britain in Papua New Guinea. Alvin Blum, the only American ex-serviceman to return to live in the Solomon Islands having served there during the Second World War, established a number of businesses in Honiara. Some individuals intended pioneering for fixed terms, and remained in the Pacific for periods ranging from several months to several years. Others moved more permanently.

The first settlement of pioneers was not easy to accomplish. The pioneers did not, or in some cases could not, obtain recognition as missionaries, and received no special status from colonial governments. In Western Samoa and Fiji laws provided that religious groups have at least 300 members before they could obtain visas for foreign religious teachers. Numerous religious bodies began entering the Pacific in the post-war period, and colonial governments monitored the progress of each movement closely. Access to the Trust Territory of the United States was made difficult by a law preventing employees from supporting particular religions, and, until 1962, by regulations permitting the entry of military personnel and their families only to the region. In Western Samoa, an application by an American Bahá'í to entry as a missionary was rejected by the government Secretary who seeking to ensure that "the comparative peace surrounding religious matters in Western Samoa" was "not disturbed by the formation of new or disruptive elements".

Aware of such sensitivities, the Bahá'ís themselves sought to enter new countries without unsettling established interests. The pioneers were advised to proceed with great caution, until officials and others became familiar with their reasonable manner of operation. They were to avoid publicity or newspaper coverage, and to avoid contacting public officials or political leaders until levels of trust and confidence with local officials and society had been established. For the first pioneers to the GEIC this relationship based on familiarity did not emerge. Roy Fernie, having arrived in the Gilbert Islands intending to study parapsychological phenomena in connection with Duke University, fell foul of local authorities, firstly through his enthusiasm as an amateur magician and subsequently through their scepticism at his offer to build a school. A charismatic figure who also played the piano and performed magic tricks, he thrilled curious locals with an impromptu show on his first day on the island, and within weeks attracted Sunday audiences of such magnitude as annoyed the resident Catholic priest. Fernie was most likely unaware of the fact that sorcery and magic were practiced widely in Gilbertese culture, but were being actively suppressed by the Catholic mission. Furthermore, Fernie's efforts to establish an English language school, and the fund-raising activities he organised in Turaubu to accomplish it, hindered the capacity of the Turaubu Catholics to raise funds to match those of their rival village, Koinawa.

Significantly, when former Catholic seminarian and mission teacher Peter Kanare Koru became

the first Gilbertese Bahá'í, in Tarawa in 1954, Shoghi Effendi urged him in a letter of welcome be "very discreet in spreading this Message", explaining that the Bahá'ís did not wish to become a "source of discord, or arouse opposition". But events took their own course. It was commonly known that religious bodies required a minimum of 200 members to acquire official recognition. Ieuti suggests that mission authorities pointed out to the British administration that the Fernies did not have this number of Bahá'í followers, and urged they be deported. The mission had on several occasions used its journal, Te Itoi nin Ngaina, to "warn" its members against examining this new religion - an action which had had the opposite effect. Consequently, some two hundred Abaiang residents announced their wish to become Bahá'ís. On 24 September 1955 the government gave legal recognition to a Bahá'í institution, the Tuarabu Local Spiritual Assembly.

In an additional move, landowners on Abaiang who had leased land to the Bahá'ís now requested that they move. Abaiang Island Council, whose members had been working with the Fernies to establish a much-desired school, unexpectedly voted to expel the Americans and Peter Kanare from the island, and Resident Commissioner Bernacchi and District Commissioner Turbott refused to intervene in the matter. The final episode was tragic. The Resident Commissioner prohibited Kanare from remaining on either Tarawa or Abaiang. While waiting for transport to their home island of Tabiteuea, Kanare's wife, then in labour, was denied adequate medical treatment and died soon after childbirth. Roy Fernie was deported from the Colony in November 1955 while Elena Fernie remained on Abaiang until 1956 working with the new, 200-strong, Bahá'í community. Fernie held only good intentions. But on Abaiang he worked too hastily, and was most likely ignorant of the tension that had existed between church and state for nearly a decade on the question of state-run schools. Nowhere in the Pacific was the arrival of Bahá'í pioneers more bitterly opposed.

In hindsight, the level of ignorance among officials in some colonies appears comic: in 1956 a bureaucrat in Papua New Guinea described Bahá'í as "a movement to be watched". It was thought to be expecting an imminent World War, and to be preparing to re-organise the world in the aftermath. "Secret files" containing (invariably inadequate) encyclopedia extracts about Bahá'í were passed over bureaucratic desks as incredulous officials looked for connections with Communism. In the Solomon Islands, officials pondered Alvin Blum's "real motives" for sponsoring into the Protectorate over-qualified Persians to assist with his

business interests. More accurate information gradually filtered through official channels. In 1955, for instance, the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific reassured administrators in British colonies this was "not a militant or political religion and that as a religion there was no objection to it".

Entry to French territories was particularly difficult. French government policy denied non-French citizens long-term residency in French Overseas Territories, and both New Caledonia and the Society Islands had been assigned to the Australian Bahá'ís, none of whom were eligible for permanent residency. Consequently, pioneers to New Caledonia and French Polynesia were itinerant rather than domiciled, and travelled between colonies when their visas expired. Access to the Loyalty Islands was even more challenging, as at first the Australian Bahá'ís did not know they were designated off-limits to all Europeans, including French citizens.

International Support

Committees were established in the metropolitan countries for the purpose of coordinating the movement of pioneers in the Pacific, and to assist them to the extent possible. In Australia, the Adelaide-based "Asian Teaching Committee" corresponded with pioneers in the island groups allocated to Australian and New Zealand responsibility from 1954 until 1959, when the Regional Assembly for the Bahá'ís of the South Pacific was first elected. In an age prior to modern communications facilities, the Asian Teaching Committee's newsletter Koala News kept the Bahá'ís informed of developments throughout the region. Prominent American Bahá'í Mildred Mottahedeh visited the pioneers in Fiji, Samoa, Tahiti, the New Hebrides and other islands in 1954 to encourage them, and to present a first-hand report of conditions.

The first Bahá'í Communities

Where the pioneers were successful, groups of nine or more Bahá'ís were able to form the basic unit of the Bahá'í administrative pattern, the Local Spiritual Assembly, which then provided the collective leadership of Bahá'í affairs at local level. By April 1957 there were 210 Bahá'í centres in the Pacific. The first Local Assemblies were established in the metropolitan centres: in Suva in 1950, Rarotonga in 1956, Honiara and Apia in 1957, Nuku'alofa in 1958,

Port Vila in 1960, and Noumea in 1962. An Assembly established in Papeete in 1958 was not sustained in the early years. Within each island group, additional Local Assemblies were subsequently established in outlying regions. In 1959 the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the South Pacific was established, with jurisdiction over 10 island groups. By 1963 there were thirty-six Local Assemblies, 127 localities, and some 1550 Bahá'ís in the South Pacific (800 of whom were in the Solomon Islands).

Table: Allocation of delegates to the Annual Convention of the Regional Spiritual
Assembly of the South Pacific, 1959-1963

[Note: in converting this document to HTML, the table data below may have been mis-aligned. I.e., some data might be in the wrong columns. -J.W., 2011]

TerritoryLocal Assembly19591960196119621963

Cook IslandsRarotonga21111

FijiSuva12111

Solomon IslandsHoniara22121

HauHui..122

Roroni....1

Auki....1

TongaNuku'alofa22231

Mua..121

Houma....1

Kolonga....1

Vaini....1

SamoaApia22121

Nofoali'i..111

Fasito'outa..111

IliIli...11

Mata'uta....1

Lotoanu'u....1

Samatau....1

PagoPago....1

Magi....1

GEICBetio23131

Tuarubu85262

Kuria.2121

Tebero...11

Bouta..111

Eita..111

Tekaman..1.1

Taku...11

Utiroa....1

Terikiai....1

Makin....1

Bubuti....1

Aobike....1

Bikenibeu....1

New HebridesPort Vila..121

New CaledoniaNoumea....1

Total1919193838

In addition to establishing these new communities in the Pacific, and the establishment of local and national administrative bodies (in anticipation of the later establishment of the Universal Houses of Justice); specific tasks for the decade to 1963 included the translation and publication of literature; acquisition of local and national centres [Hazíratu'l-Quds], endowments and other sites for future Temples [= Houses of Worship, or "Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs"]; and the securing of recognition in law of Bahá'í administrative institutions, properties, and Bahá'í Holy Days.

Perhaps unaware of this methodical and multi-national approach to mission, Charles Forman has considered the growth of Bahá'í communities in the Pacific "surprising":

Stemming from a reformist movement in Islam and appealing mostly to intellectuals in the West, with a message of interreligious unity and international, interracial harmony, they seemed poorly adapted to growth among vigorously Christian, practical peoples with little cosmopolitan experience. Yet a certain amount of response was forthcoming from some youths of wider experience and

education and from some village folk among whom their missionaries settled. They had some noticeable response in Fiji, Kiribati, the Solomons, Tonga, Samoa, and Vanuatu. Probably their greatest single increase came in 1966 when they won the adherence of Tommy Kabu, leader of an important modernising movement in the Purari river area of Papua, along with many of his followers.

While true that some "Western intellectuals" had become Bahá'ís, it would not be correct to limit the Faith's appeal to such a group: "eastern intellectuals" also became Bahá'ís. Most importantly, to correct the impression being offered by Forman, the majority of the religion's adherents were - and still are - villagers and peasants living in rural environments, whether in Africa, Asia, Central and South America, or in the Pacific.

The lack of "cosmopolitan experience" among Islanders in the 1950s may have made more difficult the task the first Bahá'ís in the Pacific had in communicating the full implications of Bahá'í teachings - such as the unity of God and of His Prophets, the principle of independent and rational investigation in the pursuit of "truth", the elimination of all forms of superstition and prejudice, the equality of the sexes, compulsory education, abolition of extremes of poverty and wealth, and the adoption of an auxiliary international language. These and other principles, seen by Bahá'ís as necessary to the establishing of a "permanent and universal peace", and based on a conception of religion as providing the basis for order and progress in society, nevertheless remained at the core of the pioneers' message, no matter how remote the clan, village or island being addressed. Presuming that Forman's image of Bahá'í - both as religion and as community - reflects that held by the majority of writers on contemporary religion in the Pacific, an effort will be made in this paper to broaden it by taking into consideration additional evidence.

Propagation

The first Pacific Islander Bahá'ís

A second phase in the propagation process comprised a period of isolated contacts with individuals, and sporadic conversions. The techniques adopted by the Bahá'ís to spread their message were relatively straightforward. News that a new European was in town, who spoke of a religion that was in some ways similar to Christianity, but

in other ways different, was sufficient to attract initial inquirers. The first islanders to adopt the new Faith, as Forman observed, were often educated young men, who encountered the pioneers in the colonial capitals. One such convert was Tommy Kabu (1922? -1969) from the I'ai tribe of the Papuan Gulf's Purari people. Intent on effecting cultural, social and economic development among the Purari, Kabu had embraced the Bahá'í Teachings as the vehicle for change, but had died before significant advances had been made.

A common theme in the conversion of the Papuan, Tommy Kabu, the New Irelander Apelis Mazakmat, the Malaitan Hamuel Hoahania, and the Gilbertese Peter Kanare Koru, was their attraction to the racial equality practiced by the pioneers, and their desire to implement such equality in their societies.

The first converts in Samoa and Tonga were well educated, and some had trained in theological colleges. Niuoleava Tuataga, born about 1941 into a family of planters at Talimatau in Western Samoa, and educated at a Catholic mission school and at the LMS Malua theological College, became a Bahá'í after meeting Suhayl Ala'i, a pioneer in Pago Pago, in 1958. Lisiata Maka, born in 1920, a costing clerk, licensed lawyer, and legal adviser in Tonga's lower court and supreme court, having become a Bahá'í 1957, completed substantial translations of Bahá'í Scriptures into Tongan, and later assisted in obtaining legal incorporation for Local Assemblies in Tonga, and for the Suva-based Regional Assembly. He was among the first Islanders elected to the Regional Assembly, and was later appointed to the Continental Board of Counsellors.

In the Solomon Islands a government dresser and former SSEM teacher/evangelist, Hamual Hoahania, was contemplating a return to custom religion when he encountered Alvin and Gertrude Blum in Honiara. A chief among the people of Hau Hui on Malaita, with a reputation as one of the most cooperative cocoa producers in the Protectorate, Hamual's conversion precipitated the first mass entry of Pacific Islanders into the Faith after the events in the GEIC in 1954-55.

It has been suggested that islanders who converted to newly arrived religions, including Bahá'í, did so on the basis of discontent with the established missions, and in some cases were the "malcontents" of their societies. While there is no doubt that this may have been so in particular cases, insufficient knowledge has been gathered to establish trends. Kirata suggests that those who accepted the Bahá'í Faith in Kiribati had been just "nominal

Christians". The recollection of the Peter Kaltoli Napakaurana, of Irira Tenuku on Efate, has parallels with incidents in the Solomons, Papua New Guinea and elsewhere:

> During 1953 there were many stories circulating in Port Vila, on Efate Island, and subsequently all over the New Hebrides, about the arrival of a woman missionary who had brought new teachings from God. This person was Mrs Bertha Dobbins. In 1954, I heard this news inside the Chief's nakamal on Ifira Tenuku (Fila Island), and decided that I should go and find out for myself the new Message. So one Sunday morning, I went to visit this woman missionary. She explained some of the sacred verses in the Bible, and I heard the name Bahá'u'lláh for the first time. I was very interested in her explanations. Some time later, I went back to Mrs Dobbins and told her that I wished to join the Bahá'í Faith.

The absence of a priesthood meant that the community was not divided into "clergy" and "laity". Furthermore, having no clergy, the Bahá'ís did not seek to recruit young men to be the equivalent of "catechists" or as candidates for training as clerics. Appreciation of the absence of such opportunities may even had discouraged a certain number of potential converts. This may or may not have contributed to the initial attraction to, then drift from, the Bahá'í community of such noted islanders as Bill Gina and Francis Kikolo in the Solomons. The British administration in the Solomons Islands felt the conversion of Bill Gina, the best educated Solomon Islander of his time, presented a "very real possibility" that the Bahá'ís would "expand at the expense of the Methodist Mission". Gina, however, returned to a secure position in the Methodist Mission. Francis Kikolo also withdrew his membership. In Papua New Guinea Elliot Elijah demonstrated considerable interest at the same time that Mazakmat joined; and in Fiji Ratu Meli Loki became a Bahá'í for a period.

As Bahá'í communities grew in size, pioneers ventured out of the towns to speak about the Faith, generally in villages where a link had been established, or from which they had received an invitation. In Papua New Guinea Apelis Mazakmat, who met Vi Hoehnke while teaching at a school on Manus, was attracted by the Bahá'í teaching of racial equality. To the European missionaries in the Nalik area, Mazakmat (1920-1986) epitomised the post-war "native trouble-maker". Of mixed Catholic/Methodist

parentage, he clashed with a Catholic priest in 1949 who refused to wed him to a Methodist woman. He joined the movement early in 1956, after learning more about it from Rodney Hancock in Rabaul. Mazakmat took Hancock to some New Ireland villages, and introduced him to friends he thought would be interested in the Bahá'í teachings. Of the several villages Hancock spoke in, the response in Madina was the most immediate, and several people joined. The formation of a nine-member "Local Assembly" in Medina in 1957 was noted with curiosity.

Early expansion in the Solomon Islands similarly followed an invitation to the Bahá'ís. Hamuel Hoahania received overtures from the Takataka, a "custom" society which had never accepted Christianity, to learn more about the Bahá'í Faith. A Takataka chief, Waiparo, who had known Alvin Blum, had instructed them prior to his death to "look for the man who was to come with the Bahá'í Faith and to accept it". The situation was complex, as police intelligence felt Waiparo was looking for a religion through which he could avoid paying government taxes. Late in 1962 Gertrude Blum spent three weeks on Malaita during which time there were eighty declarations in four villages. Some 300 Malaitans subsequently became Bahá'ís, a success that prompted some SSEM mission workers who had been attempting to attract these people for a considerable period of time to spread false rumours about the Bahá'ís and the pioneers. By 1963 there were fifteen Bahá'í groups in the Solomon Islands, four of which had reached ‘Assembly’ status (Honiara and Roroni on Guadalcanal and Auki and Hau Hui on Malaita); nine of the eleven other localities were on Malaita.

An expedition to Tanna in the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) was less successful than the work on Malaita which had inspired it. A young American who had recently become a Bahá'í in Australia arrived in the New Hebrides early in 1962. Shortly after, he visited Tanna to teach the cargo community at Sulphur Bay known as John Frum. This people, through their interpretation of the American military presence on Tanna prior to and during the second World War, had developed expectations that Americans would at some future time deliver to them a large cache of Western goods, and sustained an ideology which rejected the Presbyterian Church on the island, and demonstrated ambivalent attitudes toward colonial authority and sovereignty. Despite the British administration's reservations about the American's impact on the cultists' expectations, Slaughter and New Hebridean Bahá'í Taumoe Kalsakau approached customary chiefs and cultists, as well as Catholic, Adventist and Presbyterian clergy to present Bahá'í literature.

The lack of clerical offices and the consequent lack of "career" opportunities within the Bahá'í structure has been noted. By having no clergy, the Bahá'ís presented a peculiar case to colonial bureaucracies. The Fijian government, in particular, refused to allow Bahá'í "travel teachers" to visit the Crown Colony", despite being acquainted with the fact that the Bahá'ís could not furnish clergy who may well have qualified for entry.

In some places the third phase of growth comprised family or sub-clan conversion. Rarely did an entire family, or an entire clan, choose to change religion, and this "fracturing" of social units, which remains prevalent in Pacific societies, was attributed to the actions of the Bahá'ís (or missionaries, in the case of other denominations), rather than attributed to the conscious and free actions of Pacific Islanders.

The converts on New Ireland in Papua New Guinea were drawn from several of Nalik's seven clans, and included the area's supreme malanggan carvers, Michael Homerang, (Mohokala clan) and Sinaila (Mohomaraba clan). Early in 1958 there were a further 10 conversions, and some 30-40 over the next four years. According to Hancock, the Methodist mission had "given up" the Medina people, as many were "drunkards who had their own brews and stills", and many responded simply because he, by staying in village houses and eating off the same plates and with the same spoons as the villagers, broke with the traditional "missionary" habit of eating and sleeping separately.

Local Bahá'í Administration

In the fourth phase, converts established Local Assemblies, and began to administer their own affairs. Authority with the Bahá'í community is invested in groups, rather than in individuals, and decisions are made through consultation, rather than by decree. Whereas pioneers continued to liaise with their respective home Teaching Committees, and provided counsel to local, and inexperienced Bahá'í communities, responsibility for local matters was devolved to administrative institutions. Island teaching committees were established to plan propagation activities to outer islands and remoter villages and whenever the number of members in a local civil area reached nine or more a Local Assemblies were established.

In 1957 Regional
Assemblies had been established in North East Asia and South East Asia, and similar regional bodies operated throughout Africa and Central and South America. In each case, delegates to an annual national convention were allocated among the Local Assemblies throughout the region, according to the size of their memberships. By 1959 there were sufficient local assemblies scattered across the Pacific to establish a Regional Assembly for the Pacific Islands. By virtue of its numerical strength in proportion to the other Assemblies, Tuarubu Assembly on Abaiang in the Gilbert Islands was eligible to send eight of the nineteen delegates to convention, yet because of its remoteness, the prospect of doing so was limited. This disproportionately large Bahá'í community, being in such a remote region, was potentially an administrative burden, and a cause for concern, since it was the task of the delegates to elect the Regional Assembly, yet none of the eight Gilbertese was able to attend convention to meet representatives of the other Bahá'í communities.

Some pioneers were
apprehensive at how the lack of familiarity with the community's regional administrative affairs and personnel on the part of so many delegates might affect the composition of the Regional Assembly in its first years (and by implication, hinder its administrative effectiveness). The stipulation that Bahá'í elections be absolutely free of electioneering and nomination meant that the subject could not easily be broached. Nevertheless, although the Regional Assembly was elected in successive years under a variety of such hindrances, its administrative capacity was never questioned. Irene Jackson, the Assembly's founding secretary, was annually re-elected, facilitating the consolidation of its secretariat in Suva.

The Assembly faced several
major obstacles to its effective functioning. The paucity of transport and communication facilities across vast distances made the election of delegates to an annual regional convention immensely difficult. Even where voting by mail was possible, the delegates in one location were poorly equipped to assess the merits of Bahá'ís living elsewhere. Further obstacles included lack of budget and manpower. The Regional Assembly's budget in its first year of existence was 1,295 pounds, including 25 pounds for propagation activities in each territory.

For each Bahá'í
community the Regional Assembly developed a four-year plan of action (1959-1963) and appointed an "Island Teaching

Committee", as well as committees with such diverse portfolios as a temple site, legal issues, a library, a newsletter, publishing, audio-visual, and child education. It also appointed a committee to overseas its Suva property (Headquarters = Hazíratu'l-Quds). The Assembly, in addition, decided on the printing of enrolment and registration cards; and adopted a budget. The Island Teaching Committees had the tasks of encouraging Bahá'í communities in their various activities with a view to establishing new Local Assemblies and increasing the number of Bahá'ís; making propagation plans in consultation with the Regional Assembly; providing regular reports to the Regional Assembly; preparing translations, and holding "summer schools".

Reports to the Regional Assembly were often in pencil, on pages torn from exercise books, in halting English. Throughout the Pacific the pattern of Bahá'í administration was learnt gradually: elections were not always held on 20 April (the prescribed date for the holding of Bahá'í elections - Ridvan); the distinctions between eligible (Bahá'ís, male and female, aged 21 or more) and ineligible voters (non-Bahá'ís, non-adults) in Bahá'í elections were not necessarily observed; the procedure for elections (secret, democratic voting without nominations or electioneering) was not always adhered to; and the notion of the equal participation by women in all facets of Bahá'í activities was not everywhere practiced. Where discrepancies occurred, efforts were made to rectify the practice at subsequent elections.

Despite such limitations, fourteen of twenty Local Assemblies in the region were totally run by islanders by July 1962. The formation of thirty-six Local Assemblies by 1963 meant that no less than 324 adult Bahá'ís, of both sexes, were directly involved in the administration of their local Bahá'í communities. While this rapid localisation was in some ways advantageous, it also brought difficulties. Few Islander Bahá'ís had a deep knowledge of Bahá'í administration, and within a few years there were many areas in which the numbers were adequate to form Local Assemblies, but the ability to do so was lacking. The administrative and leadership structure of this community had been localised at almost the same speed as it was propagated. Few Pacific Islanders, however, were elected to the Regional Assembly in the first five years.

Table: Regional Spiritual Assembly Membership 1959-1963

19591960196119621963

A. BlumA. BlumA. BlumA. BlumA. Blum

I. JacksonI. JacksonI. JacksonI. JacksonI. Jackson

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S. Ala'iS. Ala'iS. Ala'iS. Ala'iS. Ala'i

D. DiveD. DiveD. DiveD. DiveL. Ala'i

G. BlumE. BlakelyE. BlakelyE. BlakelyE. Blakely

L. MakaJ. RussellTuakihekoloL. MakaTuakihekolo

S. PercivalW. KhanW. KhanS. PercivalS. Percival

W. KhanM. RowlingM. RowlingM. RowlingM. Rowling

With the establishment of
Local Assemblies, Island Teaching Committees, and the Regional Assembly, the movement of Bahá'í teachers to outer regions became more closely coordinated. The major method in Bahá'í propagation in the Pacific was termed "travel
teaching", in which individuals, communities or committees made a plan to travel to a particular location, to talk with receptive individuals or villages. Towards the end of the World Crusade (1963) there was a steady stream of Bahá'í visitors to the Pacific. Some were figures of international renown, able to conduct radio interviews, audiences with government leaders, and public meetings. Others filled humbler roles, visiting Bahá'í communities and encouraging them in their efforts. The difficulty in acquiring visas, however, continued to obstruct the movement of both Europeans and Islanders.

Social Change

The Bahá'í strategy for
mission, to the extent that there was one, did not consist of acquiring land and building mission stations, and establishing educational and health facilities through which to minister the surrounding population. It comprised, rather the sharing of the Bahá'í principles with those willing to give a hearing, seeking their positive response, and incorporating them at the local level into the process of creating Bahá'í communities. If schools were to appear they would emerge from indigenous rather from imposed aspirations; if meeting houses were built, or conferences convened, the activities would have as their basis an attraction of hearts and minds, and have as their focus the discussion of human and social relationships.

Several items of
correspondence exist indicating the manner in which Bahá'í Pacific Islanders approached inter-religious encounter. A travel teacher reported the process as used in Western Samoa in 1962:

At the beginning
of our lectures, we read that law about the Sabbath Day
from the Bible, adding the social laws of Moses, and then
confined the talk about the confirmation of the laws from
that time on until Bahá'u'lláh give us the new laws to
suit the need of the people of this generation which will
make them live in harmony, peace and justice. Five new
believers enrolled after our lecture.

Exchanges concerning
Christian doctrines, as well as the linkage between Christian
belief and islander culture, were often at the heart of
exchanges. Timeon Leaiti, reported his visit home to the Ellice
Islands, having become a Bahá'í in the Gilbert Islands:

When I first
arrived here, my family you know were all Christians and
they tried to change my opinion. They said "you must
turn back to the L.M.S. then you will get peace, but I
said no, I am a Bahá'í Faith. A Christmas day came, and
the head of the L.M.S. (old Beru men) in the Maneaba
needed myself for talking about my Faith. I did, but
their hearts were very hard..."

New Hebridean Bahá'ís
who sought to "travel teach" on outer islands were
subject to close inquiry by church members. On Tongoa in 1962
Toaro Pakoa was called before a "session meeting" of
the Presbyterian Church Council, who wanted to know how he could
espouse another religion, having been baptised a Presbyterian.
Travel teachers to Aneityum and Tanna received similar treatment.
Consequently, it was not easy to find volunteers for such trips,
and Bertha Dobbins assessment was:

"It would be
better if the natives themselves were helped to carry the
message to their waiting brothers and sisters in other
islands. The whole of the teaching here has been held up
on account of means to get to places and people must be
prepared to stay for a while in each area."

Few pioneers appear to
have made a study of the traditional culture of the peoples whom
they now lived, contenting themselves with familiarity with the
customs and habits of everyday life, and leaving to the islanders
the task of interpreting what modifications were required in
custom to satisfy the values and standards of their newly adopted
Faith.

This placement of

spiritual before material development precluded the premature evolution of Bahá'í schools, transport systems, and medical services, which many mission societies regarded as essential requisites to the task of church building. Occasionally Pacific Bahá'í communities were judged ineffective because such expectations were not met. The Solomon Islands colonial administration, for instance, anticipated a surge in membership in the Western Solomons following the conversion of Belshazzar Gina, providing that the Bahá'ís provided health and medical services equal to those run by the established mission societies. In similar vein, the Anglican Bishop of Melanesia warned the annual conference of the Melanesian Brotherhood in 1962 against "new sects" that had "no hospitals, no doctors or nurses, no schools and no teachers", and which were therefore "fruitless". Even census reports noted which religions were providing educational facilities.

Several Pacific Bahá'í communities persevered in the establishment of schools. Education was prized by all Islanders keen for their children to participate in the expanding possibilities beyond the village, and the Bahá'í writings emphasised the importance of education for both sexes. But this eagerness was frequently dampened by the lack of resources available within the Bahá'í community. On Malaita in the Solomon Islands, the Hau Hui Bahá'ís wanted a school, and were prepared to build it on land donated by Hamuel.

The desire of the first Bahá'í pioneers to the Gilbert and Ellice Islands to establish a school showed the extent to which the school was a contested site. All Gilbertese were anxious that their children receive adequate schooling. For Bahá'í parents, the need was particularly felt since mission schools, although funded by the administration, frequently refused to teach the children of Bahá'ís. Government educational facilities were, moreover, inadequate to meet demand. The danger that one's children might not become educated influenced some Bahá'í parents to recant their faith, but there were sufficient numbers to continue. The first Bahá'í school, at Tuarubu on Abaiang, had two government registered teachers and approximately 30 students. But disillusionment set in once Elena Fernie left in 1956, and some parents returned their boys to the Island's Catholic secondary school.

Four schools were established about the beginning of 1961, and by 1963 there were eight Bahá'í primary schools - in Abaiang, Tuarabu, Tabiteuea, Eita, Utiroa, Taku, Tabetuea. But this hardly constituted an

"education system": schoolteachers were paid in coconuts; Abaiang school was held in the teacher Taam's house. In 1962 some Gilbertese by-passed the Regional Assembly and petitioned the United States National Assembly for assistance in building a Bahá'í college. The North American Assembly was told, after consulting the South Pacific Regional Assembly, that Islanders in such remote places held the notion that Americans had the means to solve all their problems; no college was built.

Application of Bahá'í Laws

As noted at the outset, Bahá'í beliefs were not necessarily antagonistic to custom, and some of the largest concentrations of Bahá'ís have emerged on islands such as Tanna in Vanuatu and Malaita in the Solomon Islands, where custom has remained particularly strong. This is not to say, on the other hand, that customary laws were in complete accord with Bahá'í laws, and some accommodations of the former to the latter have had to be made, in the application of Bahá'í laws in the Pacific context.

In Bahá'í communities in Western societies, the application of Bahá'í laws concerning alcohol and drugs, marriage, and political involvements were already well established: in the Pacific, new interpretations had to be established. Whereas the consumption of alcohol and habit-forming drugs is forbidden (the smoking of tobacco is tolerated), many Pacific Bahá'ís, both islanders and in some instances Europeans, suffered alcohol dependency, and Assemblies at local and regional level spent considerable energy determining the limits after which counselling ceased and administrative sanctions were applied. Similarly, whereas Bahá'í law only condones marriages between one man and one woman, to which all living parents grant their consent, relationships in Pacific cultures varied widely - often involving "companionate marriage" prior to formalities in order to establish the fertility of the couple, and in other instances approving of concubinage, or the taking of several spouses. Bahá'í laws were applied compassionately: new converts were granted extended periods in which to align their personal status with Bahá'í standards, and polygamous marriages contracted prior to conversion were not disbanded (although additional partners could not be acquired).

Bahá'ís do not become involved in partisan politics, believing that such systems are premised on conflict and cannot ultimately achieve social unity. The question as to what constituted "partisan politics"

in the Pacific, however, remained open to examination. Islanders who became Bahá'ís continued their chiefly roles, and participation in customary offices was practised freely. For Bahá'ís of high rank, such as Pa Ariki Terito (d.1995), one of Raratonga's six Ariki, the pressure from kin to participate in emerging western-style political parties was undoubtedly considerable. Across the Pacific, several ambitious Bahá'ís withdrew from the community to do so.

The Bahá'í Teaching that the rights of women are equal to those of men constituted a significant challenge to Pacific Bahá'í communities. Dulcie Dive, a part-Maori New Zealander who arrived in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, in October 1953, and remained there until shortly before her death in 1962, wrote: "religion here has always been taught by men. It was a man who brought Christianity to the Cook Islands, not a woman. The people here will take religion from a man. Probably if I had had a husband the Faith may have been further advanced than just half hearted as it is at present". Both Dulcie Dive, and Gretta Jankko - a Finnish Bahá'í who arrived in the Marquesas from Canada in March 1954 - survived the brutal attacks of deranged young men. Ms Jankko was subsequently advised to leave the Marquesas, and had returned to Finland by February 1955.

Growth 1963-1992

David Barrett's "World Religious Statistics" in the 1988 Britannica Book of the Year (1988, p.303), enumerated 59,000 Bahá'ís in Oceania, but the exact size of Pacific Island Bahá'í populations remains hard to establish. In Kiribati, for instance, the 1985 national census indicated that 1503 Gilbertese, 2.38% of the total population of 63,045 were Bahá'ís, while a Bahá'í source, suggests a figure, in 1987, of 17.9%. In Tonga the proportion of the national population that are Bahá'í rose from 3.9% in 1983 to 6.3% in 1987. In Tuvalu the Bahá'í population rose in this period from 3% to 5.8%, and in the Marshall Islands, from 2% to 11.5%. Similar growth rates are reported in other Pacific nations, although poor progress in the French Overseas Territories (New Caledonia, Loyalty Islands, French Polynesia and the Marquesas Islands) and the Cook Islands (a Polynesian nation in free association with New Zealand), is so far without easy explanation.

In absolute terms, the Papua New Guinea Bahá'í Community has the largest membership in the Pacific, approximately 30,000. In addition to being a rapidly growing community, it is geographically dispersed: by 1991 there

were Bahá'í Communities in 87 of the country's 88 districts, at least 3 LSAs in each of its 19 provinces, and a total of 259 LSAs nation-wide. In recent years the press has covered such activities as National Convention, participation of Papua New Guinean Bahá'ís in the Centenary of the passing of Bahá'u'lláh in Haifa and Akka, and a seminar on "work ethics and productivity" sponsored by the Port Moresby LSA.

National Communities

The Regional Spiritual Assembly of the South Pacific Islands, established in 1959, provided the basis for the subsequent emergence in 1964 of two Regional authorities, one based in Honiara, for the South West Pacific Ocean (Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Loyalty Is, New Hebrides); the other continuing in Suva, administering the South Pacific Ocean (Fiji, Gilbert and Ellice Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, Nauru). From these regional bodies individual national Assemblies emerged between 1967 and 1985. By 1988 there were 730 Local Assemblies in Australasia and a total of 2,866 localities. In 1992 these futures had risen to 876 and 4,094.

In the years 1964-1973 national Bahá'í communities in the Pacific conducted individualised plans of action which combined goals for numeric growth, administrative consolidation, and the acquisition of physical infrastructure. Properties were acquired for Hazirat'ul-Quds, future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár sites, and endowments. The Pacific Bahá'ís undertook responsibility for raising almost half of the expected cost of these properties, with the Australian and New Zealand communities raising the remainder.

Considerable progress was made in Western Samoa. Head of State Malieatoa Tanumafili II, having received a formal presentation of the Bahá'í Teachings in 1967, quietly became a believer, and made his profession public in 1973. Land for a future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár (Houses of Worship) had been purchased in Apia in 1965, and the domed Maota Tapua'i Bahá'í I Samoa was completed in 1984. Close relations between the royal families of Western Samoa and Tonga, and the high chiefs of Fiji, have resulted in members of these families either becoming Bahá'ís, or having intimate knowledge of the Bahá'í Teachings. Of particular significance have been the visits to other Polynesian royal and chiefly families by Princess Tosi Malietoa, daughter of the Western Samoan monarch. In 1993 Sir Julius Chan (then deputy Prime Minister and now Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea), reported to Parliament on his visit to the Bahá'í World Centre while in

Israel on state business. Amata Kabua, President of the Marshall Islands, is another government leader who has a close relationship with Bahá'í institutions nationally and internationally.

The institutions of the Learned

In addition to expansion of elected administrative bodies, the institutions of the appointed, or "learned", also grew. A three-member Continental Board of Counsellors for Australasia was first appointed in 1968. The eleven members appointed in 1995 included the first Papua New Guinean member (Erama Ugaia), a Western Samoan (Afemata Moli Chang), and a Marshallese (Betra Majmeto). Although the first two Auxiliary Board members for the Pacific Islands appointed in 1954, were Australians, indigenous members were filling such positions within a decade. Samoan Bahá'í Niu Tuataga was appointed an Auxiliary Board member in 1964, and a Tongan Bahá'í, Mosese Hokafonu, in 1968. By 1968 the Australasian Auxiliary Board had 9 members; by 1986 it comprised eighty-one.

Official Recognition

In the 1980s the Bahá'í Faith received increasing official recognition by governments and agencies in the Pacific. In May 1981 the Pacific Conference of Churches sent a letter to the UN Secretary-General expressing its concern at the treatment of Bahá'ís in Iran. Since 1978 the Bahá'í International Community has participated in conferences of the South Pacific Commission, an inter-governmental body that promotes the economic and social well being and advancement of the peoples of the Pacific islands. In 1985 The Promise of World Peace was presented directly or indirectly to the leaders of most Pacific territories, and in 1986 Pacific Bahá'í communities were active participants in the International Year of Peace. The 18th Guam Legislature passed resolution 214 "Relative to recognising the International Year of Peace as designated for 1986 by the United Nations, the promise of world peace as exemplified by the Bahá'í Faith, and acknowledging the importance of world peace to everyone.

Social and Economic Development

In the 1990s the Pacific Bahá'í Communities are focusing on community development as much as on expansion. Some Pacific traditions privilege male roles over female, or one ethnic group over others; and some

Pacific states continue to lack the infrastructure and public policy to adequately promote education. The Bahá'í Communities therefore face the challenge of entering into dialogue with these traditions for the purpose of promoting racial and gender equality, and explaining and demonstrating the value of education for all children and youth of both sexes. A number of schools have been established, some through individual initiative, such as one at Middle Bush on Santo in northern Vanuatu. Others, such as a high school in Kiribati, are a joint venture between the Australian and New Zealand National Assemblies. In the Marshall Islands the Bahá'ís operate state schools under contract with the government.

Conclusion

This chapter commenced by pointing out that literature on Pacific Bahá'í Communities remains scant, and that such literature as does exist errs for the most part in either the presentation of facts, or in the presentation of the Faith's origins, modus operanti, and aspirations. In then sketching a brief history of the Bahá'í Faith in various Pacific Islands, the chapter presents a view of these communities which suggests they have a clarity of purpose, and a coherence in administrative form and spiritual mission, as might be desired by any religious community seeking to establish itself permanently amongst societies that take matters of faith so seriously.

The Pacific Bahá'í Communities have emerged rapidly since the years of the World Crusade and have indigenised their institutions rapidly. They have expanded numerically despite resistance from some missionaries and petty colonial officialdom, and now represent the largest of the newer religious communities in a number of Pacific Island countries. Most significantly, they now constitute a strong moral force, capable of forming partnerships with other progressive Pacific communities that aspire to the preparation of these island nations for the challenges of the coming 'Pacific century'.

Endnotes

Note: footnote numbers have been lost in this online version.

This paper was researched in the following government, mission, and Bahá'í archives: Papua New Guinea - PNG; Solomon Islands National Archives - SI; Church of Melanesia Archives, Solomon Islands National Archives - CM; Kiribati National Archives - KI; and New Zealand National Archives - NZ. Bahá'í Archives referred to are: Australia - ABA;

Fiji - FBA; Kiribati - KBA; Samoa - SBA; and Vanuatu - VBA. Early sections of this paper adapt material presented in my "Pacific Bahá'í Communities 1950-1964", in Donald H. Rubinstein (ed), Pacific History: Papers from the 8th Pacific History Association Conference (Guam, 1992) 73-95. For additional material I am most grateful to the National Assemblies of the Bahá'ís of the Cook Islands, Kiribati, New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu.

See, eg, Leslie Newbigin, "The Great Encounter", Missionary Review August 1960, 11; Matthew Cooper, "Langalanga Religion", Oceania, xlii (1972) 2, 113; F.W. Coaldrake, Floodtide in the Pacific (Sydney, 1963); William L. Cook Pacific People Sing Out Strong (New York, 1982); Cliff D. Wright, Christ and Kiribati Cultures, Report of Workshop on Traditional Kiribati Culture and Christian Faith (Tarawa, 1981); Laumua Kofe, "Palagi and Pastors", in Tuvalu: A History (Suva, 1983), 120; Asasela Ravuvu, Vaka i Taukei: The Fijian Way of Life (Suva, 1983), 94; Baranite Kirata, "Spiritual Beliefs", in Kiribati: A Changing Atoll Culture (Suva, 1985); 83-84; Darrell Whiteman, Melanesians and Missionaries (Pasadena, California, 1983); Charles Forman, Island Churches of the South Pacific (,); Kunei Etekiera, "Te Aro, The New Religion", in Talu Alaima et al, Kiribati: Aspects of History, 43; H.P. Lundsgaarde, ‘Post-contact changes in Gilbertese maneaba organisation’, in W. N. Gunson (ed) The Changing Pacific: Essays in Honour of H.E. Maude (Melbourne, 1978), 75, and Howard van Trease (ed), Atoll Politics: The Republic of Kiribati (Suva, 1993). In 1975 Crocombe suggested mentioned Bahá'í missionaries in his list of "foreigners" whose activities in the Pacific Islands required considerable analysis: Ron Crocombe, Missionaries: sacred and secular, Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania, Symposium on mission activities in Oceania, March 1975 (University of the South Pacific Library). More detailed accounts appear in Irene Williams, "The Bahá'í Faith", in E. Afeaki (et al), Religious Co-operation in the Pacific Islands (Suva, 1983); and Teeruro Ieuti, The Kiribati Protestant Church and the New Religious Movements 1860-1985 (Suva, 1992). Most recent statistics appear in Manfred Ernst, Winds of Change: Rapidly Growing Religious Groups in the Pacific Islands (Suva, 1994).

Bahá'u'lláh's chief doctrines centre on the imperative of achieving world peace. He articulated religious values and social and political mechanisms conducive to the rehabilitation of the fortunes of what he termed the prevailing "lamentably

defective" world order. He claimed that all religious revelation has had one common, divine source; that the evolution of human society through successive stages of social and political complexity has necessitated a progressive unfoldment of such divine guidance; and that the Judaic, Christian, Islamic, and even Buddhist and Hindu epochs are complementary, rather than conflicting, components of Divine Revelation. Bahá'u'lláh's texts have been printed individually in English translation, as well as in compilations, eg, Writings of Bahá'u'lláh: a compilation, (New Delhi, 1986), 717pp. His epistles to European leaders are collected in The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh (Haifa, 1972).

Bahá'u'lláh's "Covenant" with his followers is the fundamental source of unity within the Bahá'í community. It requires obedience to the written word of Bahá'u'lláh, and this implies recognition of the authority he conferred on 'Abdu'l-Bahá in his Will and Testament. This same authority 'Abdu'l-Bahá subsequently conferred on Shoghi Effendi, whom he named "Guardian" of the Bahá'í Faith. When the hereditary institution of Guardianship ceased (Shoghi Effendi and his Canadian-born wife Mary Maxwell [Ruhiyyih Khanum] had no children), authority over the Bahá'í community transferred to the Universal House of Justice, an elected body of nine members residing in Haifa, Israel, which was first elected in 1963. As this transfer of authority was explicitly anticipated in the texts of Bahá'u'lláh, and since attempts to usurp it are deemed illegitimate in advance, the unity of the world-wide community is assured.

Letter from the Guardian to an individual Bahá'í, August 11, 1933, in Helen Hornby (comp.), Lights of Guidance (New Delhi, 1983), 8.

Message from the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World, Naw-Rúz 1974, in Helen Hornby (comp.), Lights of Guidance (New Delhi, 1983), 4.

See Graham Hassall, "Outpost of a World Religion: the Bahá'í Faith in Australia 1920-1947", Journal of Religious History, 16 (1991) 3, 315-338.

Idris Hussein, of Islamic Ahmadiyah background, narrowly escaped with his life when he became a Bahá'í in 1956: "Now my father-in-law, backed up by others, planned to kill me. This was well planned. The secret of this planning was brought to my attention by a remarkable youth named Shyam Nand, who later joined the Faith. It was at his home that this darksome deed was devised." Letter to the author 31 December 1986. Z Khan The

Early History of the Bahá'í Faith in Fiji (n.d.) and Idris H. & I. Williams, History of the Bahá'í Faith in Fiji - the Family of Zaitoon Bibi, "Suva", FBA. Nur Ali, the first Bahá'í in Fiji, was a well known and respected public servant in Suva. He died in January 1962 and had the first Bahá'í funeral in Fiji. His obituary appeared in the Fiji Times, 27 January 1962.

Star of the West 11:9, Spring (August) 1920, 152.

Bahá'í World 1946-50, 492.

Ms Drollette lived with the Boschs in California between 1922 and 1924; her father visited the Bahá'ís in San Francisco: Star of the West 15:6, September 1924, 178.

Loulie A. Mathews, The Outposts of a World Religion, n.p. n.d. (after 1935), 11pp.

In the Mariana Islands, Bahá'ís in the U.S. armed forces were stationed on Saipan (Joseph F. Peter, of Chicago), Tinian (Paul Pettit, of Bucyrus, Ohio) and Jo Tierno, of New York; Ernest A. Thayer, of Chicago, visited Eniwetok then Guam in April-May 1945: Bahá'í World 1944-46,.455-6.

There is evidence that a Sergeant Wall of the US Marines had given a Bahá'í pamphlet known as the "No 9 pamphlet" to some Malaitans (communication from Bruce Saunders, 7 March 1993.) A Malaitan Bahá'í, Shebuel Mauala, wrote to Gertrude Blum on 1 May 1960: "I want to ask you about one book call the Bahá'í World Faith. Big one because I meet a man who [is] a teacher for the SSEM a big teacher but he said he see this book from Mr Grifas [Griffiths] a white man about 20 years ago or 30 years." ("ITC 1960" - Honiara).

Excerpt of letter from NSA of the United States, 24 July 1953. "ATC Corresp. with NSAs and ATCs 1953-1959", ABA 0141/0038.

In some instances these plans were changed to meet practicalities. In one case, an Australian, Lilian Wyss, whose contract to work in the Solomon Islands was cancelled when her prospective employers saw a sensationalised press article about her plans, moved instead to Western Samoa. At the same the Iranian and Australian Bahá'ís swapped responsibilities for the Solomon Islands and Mentawai Islands respectively, when Persian Bahá'ís were unable to enter the former but obtained visas for the latter destination: a Persian doctor and his wife entered Indonesia, while an American couple who had been living in New

Zealand moved to Honiara. Lilian Wyss reported "Alvin Blum said I should to the newspaper interview, and if something went wrong, he and Gertrude would go to the Solomons in my place. The Blums then left for the Delhi Conference, I had the interview, and a day after it came out in the newspaper, I had my job cancelled, with two months wages in lieu of cancellation. I cabled the Blums that the Solomons were waiting for them!". Lillian Ala'i (nee Wyss), Interview, Sydney, 6 March 1984.

Territories to which no Bahá'ís had previously travelled were called "virgin", and territories in which Bahá'í communities previously or presently exist were called "consolidation" areas. Of the first 29 pioneers, 18 were female, twelve were without spouses. There were five married couples. Of the 19 single pioneers, three married while in the Pacific. This first group of 29 included nine Australians, eight North Americans, four New Zealanders, four Europeans (Norway, Holland and France), two Indians of Persian descent, and two Central Americans (from North America). Shoghi Effendi gave all pioneers who arrived at "virgin" goals between April 1953 and April 1954 the title "Knight of Bahá'u'lláh", in recognition of their service. This title was also subsequently given to the first pioneers to reach virgin goals after April 1954. By 1963 21 Knights of Bahá'u'lláh had been named for Pacific territories.

In reply to a survey concerning pioneering undertaken in 1962 Irene Jackson observed: "The pioneers in the region had no special training, and had simply answered Shoghi Effendi's call. Their first task had been to learn the lifestyle of the people among whom they settled", Regional Assembly to Bill Maxwell, 29 July 1962, "Regional Spiritual Assembly", FBA.

Mrs Dobbins established Nur School in August 1954. It had over 30 pupils and full co-operation from the British Education Office and successive Resident Commissioners, although most families were too poor to pay student fees: see Bahá'í News, November 1959. Forman is incorrect in stating that "Bahá'í started a school in Vila about 1960": Charles W. Forman, "Missionaries and Colonialism: the case of the New Hebrides in the Twentieth Century," Journal of Church and State 14 (1972) 1, 77.

Vi Hoehnke subsequently lived for periods in Port Moresby, Samarai, Rabaul, Wewak, and Goroka before retiring in the mid-1970s at Mt Hagen in the Western Highlands. After many years in Rabaul, Hancock moved to Kimbe, further south on New Britain. ‘Memoirs of Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Vi Hoehnke’, mss, n.d. (possession of the author).

These included the town's first bakery, dry cleaner, soft drink bottler, ice cream manufacturer, and movie house - in addition to a taxi service, motel, among other enterprises on Guadalcanal and later on Malaita. Blum's success on Malaita was noted by Ross: "In 1967 a Bahá'í businessman opened a store in Auki, the Malaita district administrative center, as the nucleus of a development that has expanded to include a cinema and small hotel", Harold M. Ross, "Competition for Baegu Souls: Mission Rivalry on Malaita, Solomon Islands", in James Boutilier (et al, eds), Mission, Church, and Sect in Oceania, (Ann Arbor, Michigan 1978) 165.

National Bahá'í communities charged with sending pioneers to Pacific goals established committees to co-ordinate their placement, and to screen prospective pioneers: The United States National Assembly established an International Teaching Committee in addition to an "Asia Teaching Committee" (newsletter: Newsgram); Canada established a "New Territories Committee" (Round Robin); Australia and New Zealand established an "Asian Teaching Committee" (Koala News); South America established an "Asia Committee of South America"; India, Pakistan and Burma established an "Asia Teaching Committee"; Iran established an "Asia and Pacific Committee of Iran". Candidates whose health appeared deficient, or whose means of material support appeared meagre, were not encouraged to proceed, although since pioneering was voluntary, and no-one was under contract or under obligation to remain for any set period, such screening was not binding. A "Continental Pioneer Committee" for Australasia was first appointed in 1965.

RSA secretary to RSA members 7 June 1962, "Percival", SBA.

Marcia Atwater, an American school teacher, entered in August 1954, but had little contact with the Marshallese before she left in March 1955. Betty Llaas was present March 1956 to July 1959, then Murial Snay from August 1957 to June 1959. In 1960, no Bahá'ís remained: NSA of the United States to RSA, 17 July 1960, "NSA of USA", FBA.

Secretary, Government of Western Samoa to Secretary, Department of Island Territories, Wellington, 18 September 1953. Island Territories series 1/69/63. File LMN 1/10. NZ. Edith Danielson, unable to enter Western Samoa, later settled in the Cook Islands. Ironically, the head of state of Western Samoa, Malieatoa Tanumafilii II, was later to become the first reigning monarch in any part of the world to become a Bahá'í.

International Teaching Centre to all pioneers, 7 December, 1953.

possession Vi Hoehnke.

On 29 March 1949 the District Officer, Gilbert Islands District, reported to the Secretary to Government the efforts of Bishop Terrienne to suppress Catholic involvement in maneaba activities "His Lordship was asked, recently, the reasons for his more latterly change of attitude towards these traditional Gilbertese dances [batere, ruoia, kamei] and he replied that, although batere in itself may not be a pagan practice there is a tendency for natives to undergo certain magic rites in order that they might perform well at the dance and so attract the attention of a member of the opposite sex....His Lordship has announced that maneaba are places of evil and that converts to Roman Catholicism should not frequent them. KI, 41/2.

14 December 1954, in Graham Hassall (ed), Messages to the Antipodes: Communications from Shoghi Effendi to Australasia (Mona Vale, forthcoming).

Teeruro Ieuti, The Kiribati Protestant Church and the New Religious Movements 1860-1985, (Suva, 1992), 101. For detail see chap. 3: "The Bahá'í World Faith".

The
Bahá'í World, 1954-63, 612, 1109, cited in Ieuti, 101.

At a record of discussion held at Honiara on 22 April 1953, for instance, concerning education in the GEIC, attended by the High Commissioner of the Western Pacific, the Resident Commissioner of the GEIC, and other colonial officials, the High Commissioner "expressed the hope that the Colony Government would be able to persuade the Sacred Heart Mission to accept responsibility for the establishment of island type schools in predominantly Roman Catholic Islands, rather than compete with Government in the establishment of Island Schools elsewhere: KI, 42/6/3.

Gordon W. Groves, Biography of Peter Kanere Koru, mss, June 1983 (Possession Ben Ayala, Hawaii). Lundsgaarde has suggested that, in the case of the Gilbert Islands, the arrival of Seventh Day Adventists, the Church of God of South Carolina, the Bahá'ís, and Methodists, had "to some extent resulted in lessening of negative feelings between adherents of the two principal missions", but that in the 1960s most Gilbertese Protestants and Catholics continued to regard these groups as "pagan": Henry P. Lundsgaarde, Social Change in the Southern Gilbert Islands: 1938-1964, mss. Dept. of Anthropology, University of Oregon, 41.

D. Clifton-Bassett to the Assistant Administrator, Port Moresby 14 July 1956. 53 - 68/12/2. PNG.

Confidential Minutes of District Commissioners' Conference 27th to 29th July 1955. 12/1/16. BSIP Records, SI.

In October 1953 Australians Gladys Parke and Gretta Lamprill arrived in Papeete, Tahiti, on visas valid for three months and renewable for a further five, but not renewable for more than eight months in any one year. Neither spoke fluent French, and had vague plans to move on to the Tuamotu Archipelago once their visas expired. They returned to Tahiti four times. Efforts to remain in New Caledonia were as difficult: Margaret Rowling, an Australian, resided in Noumea from April to November 1954. Another Australian, Bill Washington, sought to establish a photographic business in Noumea in 1955 but his visa was not renewed and he was obliged to leave. A Persian family was among the pioneers who later settled for a more extended period in New Caledonia: Shahpur Sohaili, "Pioneering In New Caledonia During the Ten Year Crusade", mss, 1993, possession of the author.

Consequently it was a French Tahitian of recent commitment and poor instruction, Daniel Haumont, who won the honour of being the first Bahá'í to visit the Loyalty Islands - although in less than saintly circumstances. Having himself become a Bahá'í in Tahiti in 1953, Haumont stayed on one of the Loyalty Islands for two weeks from 11 October 1953, before declaring he could not "make his life there" and returning to Tahiti and on to the West Indies. Solomon Islands Bahá'í John Mills visited the island briefly in August 1957 to learn that Haumont had not mentioned his religion to anyone.

Shoghi Effendi, Messages to the Bahá'í World, 106.

Comprising the Bahá'ís of Muri and Arorangi villages.

Charles Forman, Island Churches of the South Pacific, 200.

Shoghi Effendi, World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, (Wilmette, 1938), XI-XII.

Acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith is not accompanied by ritual or ceremony, individuals simply "declare" their belief in Bahá'u'lláh and their willingness to observe Bahá'í law, and sign an administrative card. There is no set procedure to prepare initiates, and essential concepts are usually acquired through participation in the community's activities prior to joining. Study of Bahá'í history, teachings and philosophy are integral parts of the calendar of Bahá'í communities worldwide, irrespective of culture.

"The need in the Caroline Islands is hampered by the government code which

prevents its employees supporting any particular religion. Yet the natives say "when will you send us pioneers?" Single male pioneers should go there and live among the natives in patience. Guam is the center of education for natives in the entire area. If taught there, they will return to their homes with the message...", Bahá'í News 328:12, June 1958.

See Graham Hassall, "The Failure of the Tommy Kabu Movement: a reassessment of the evidence", Pacific Studies, 14:2, March, 1991. Kabu's conversion is noted by J.K. Parratt, "Religious Change in Port Moresby", Oceania, XLI (1970) 2.

From conversation with Suhayl Ala'i, Suva, 9 July 1986.

Tippett has suggested that the theme of "unity of the human race" was crucial to Hoahania's conversion: Alan Tippett, Solomon Islands Christianity, 98.

"The Bahá'í Faith became operative in these islands at the beginning of the 1960s. Since then, the Bahá'í have worked most successfully among those who were only nominal Christians, converting them to the Bahá'í faith. When Christianity was first brought to the islands, some opposition was presented by the islanders, probably influenced to some extent by European traders who had long been established in the area. The Bahá'í faith when it was introduced to the islands encountered a similar suspicion, but this time it was not opposition from the traders but from the Christian churches which had already become successfully rooted in the Kiribati culture." Baranite Kirata, "Spiritual Beliefs", in Kiribati: A Changing Atoll Culture (Suva, 1985) 83.

Peter Kaltoli Napakaurana, ‘Testimonies of Pacific Islanders as to how they heard of the Faith’, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Vanuatu, 3 December 1993, Vila, Vanuatu.

Review of Politico-Religious Trends in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate" (March 1959), BSIP FSC 3, vol 1. List 21.IX. SI.

Gina was educated in New Zealand under the sponsorship of John Goldie, chairman of the Western Solomon Islands Western District. His mobilisation of Solomon Islanders in support of better work conditions in the 1950s antagonised the paternalistic British administration: Colin Alen, District Commissioner, Western Solomons, 19 March 1947, 11/SG/47 BSIP List 4. C91 SI. For one version of events see G. C. Carter, Yours in His Service:

A Reflection on the Life and Times of Reverend Belshazzar Gina of Solomon Islands (Honiara, 1990), 76.

Another well known Fijian religious figure, Ratu Emosi, hosted the Bahá'ís who visited Suva in April 1959 for the formation of the Regional Spiritual Assembly. Emosi, who was then studying Bible prophecy, and who translated a Bahá'í pamphlet "Prophecy Fulfilled" into Fijian, later gained notoriety for his religious practices, and eventually died in a mental asylum.

The Methodist District missionary, Ben Chenoweth, complained that the administration took "little or no trouble over the matter": Chenoweth to Lutton, 1 July 1958, op. cit. His article on the matter appeared as "Another Sect in New Guinea: Bahá'ís and their teachings", The Missionary Review, December 1958. According to Mazakmat the District Education Officer, Brashford, discouraged involvement in a new religion but a New Patrol Officer, Collins, encouraged him. Newman, the Education Officer at Kavieng, informed Mazakmat that the United Nations allowed "freedom of worship" and consequently that "...no-one should stop you from believing in what you want." Interview, 1986.

Patrol officers watched the impact of Bahá'í closely. An excerpt on the Bahá'ís from the District of New Ireland's half yearly report, (October 1958), was placed in a "Native Thought File", T.G. Aitchison, "Native Thought File", 18 February 1959. New Ireland District. 13913 - 51/1/9. TPNG records, PNG.

Irene Jackson to RSA members, 1962, "Percival", FBA.

A
Police report of 30 July 1958 noted a letter from Alvin Blum to Waeparo, which had been intercepted by government headman Puhanikeni, who had "seen that Mr Blum wants to bring the Bahá'í to Takataka. The people thinking that this religion will help them for some reason as tax. The people at Takataka were waiting for this religion", Police Patrol Report, 15 July 1958, CF/DA/13/5. BSIP List 12/III. SI.

Gertrude Blum reported that this had the opposite effect, as SSEM members were themselves becoming dis-enchanted with inter-mission squabbling. Hau Hui LSA wrote "eating with Mrs Blum they are very glad because for many years the European can't eat with any native person. So that is why they are very glad to see the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh for this new age on our island Malaita. Some want the Faith and some want to break the Faith but it is very hard for them because this is the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh...last

month two Europeans from Christian Faith talk against the Faith and they say the Bahá'í Faith is not in many countries - just only Holy Land, America, India, Australia and Fiji...Hau Hui Local Assembly 8 October 1962 in letter to Regional Assembly Members 7 June 1963(?), "Percival", FBA.

The British administration expressed to pioneer Bertha Dobbins its surprise that a young, inexperienced, and American, member, would be allowed to visit such an unpredictable environment: Paul Slaughter to RSA 16 June 1962, "Percival", FBA.

NSA South Pacific to NSA Australia, 17 January 1966. 0045/0012.

Koala
News 24 April 1956, 2; 62:April 1959, 3; Australian Bahá'í Bulletin May 1956, 4; July 1958, 2; May 1959, 2; September 1959, 9.

Interview, Kimbe, New Britain, 12 December 1986.

The difficulties of inter-island travel, for instance, meant that few Islander delegates attended. The return trip from GEIC took three months in 1959 and Gilbertese delegates who attended the 1962 convention spent two weeks on a small vessel on each leg of the journey, in addition to two months spent in Suva after convention waiting for the boat.

"Regional Spiritual Assembly", FBA.

Regional Assembly to Hands of the Cause, 12 May 1959, "World Centre of the Faith - General Correspondence", FBA.

Thus concern in the early years of the nine year plan for additional pioneers who could assist in the formation of local assemblies, in preparation for the establishment of more National bodies: NSA South Pacific to NSA Australia, 4 February 1966. 0045/0012.

Dulcie Dive died in 1962. Nui Tuataga replaced her on the Regional Assembly through a bi-election.

V. Lee to ITC Samoa, 19 November 1962. "ITC File 1962", SBA.

23 June 1962, folder (no title), KBA.

New Hebrides ITC to RSA 1 April 1961, ITC Minute Book 1960-61, VBA.

"Inter-Island Teaching Conference 19022 July 1962", ITC Minute Book 1960, "RSA of the Bahá'ís of the South Pacific", VBA.

Irene Williams wrote " I had no idea of the work expected of me, or how long I had to stay, what the situation was like in

Fiji, and whether I would be able to cope, or would I be like the other white people working there and consider myself superior and keep aloof. I had the ideals, but what about the practice of them in my own life? These were my fears and thoughts as I flew overnight by flying boat via Noumea and then on to Laucala Bay, Suva. The Guardian had written that he wanted the pioneers to be at their posts by 21st March, 1954. I arrived at 4pm on that very day", mss, 1985.

"Review of Politico-Religious Trends", (March 1959), BSIP FSC 3, vol 1. List 21.IX. SI.

F2.1. Bishop's Correspondence, Melanesian Brotherhood 1958-64, CM.

For instance, a report on "Religion" in the 1978 Kiribati census notes of the newer groups "...beginning with the Seventh Day Adventist Mission in 1947, other churches established centres in the Gilberts: the Church of God in the Gilbert Islands (1957), the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís (1967), and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (1975) were registered, and in 1978 claimed between them the adherence of a little under 5% of the population. All except the Bahá'ís are also involved in providing some formal education to children in Kiribati": Eric E. Bailey, Republic of Kiribati. Report on the 1978 census of Population and Housing, vol. III, Ministry of Home Affairs and Decentralization, Bairiki, Tarawa, 1983, p.97-98.

Kiribati:
A Changing Atoll Culture (Suva, 1985), p83, is incorrect in stating that the "Bahá'í Faith became operative in these islands at the beginning of the 1960s".

NSA South Pacific to the Universal House of Justice, 16 July 1966. 0045/0012. ABA

Mabel Sneider complained of some Gilbertese Bahá'ís that "they do not know enough to want to suffer for the Faith", ITC of the GEIC to RSA 15 July 1962, "Percival", FBA.

Regional Assembly to the United States National Assembly, "NSA OF RSA"; Regional Assembly to Bill Maxwell, "Regional Spiritual Assembly", FBA.

RSA To Hands of the Cause, 28 July 1961, "World Centre of the Faith - General Correspondence"; ITC GEIC to RSA 13 July 1962, "Percival", FBA.

Regional Assembly to United States National Assembly, 31 May 1962, "NSA of USA", FBA. According to Ieuto,

"The Bahá'ís could not continue these schools as they did not get approval from the Universal House of Justice, and in the late 1950s they were closed down": The Kiribati Protestant Church, 101. This statement is not correct: the Universal House of Justice was only formed in 1963. Furthermore, as has been shown, the schools continued into the 1960s: another explanation for their closure must be sought.

When asked about the application of Bahá'í marriage laws, the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land replied that, in the case of African Bahá'ís, the Guardian had decided that "actions taken prior to a person becoming a Bahá'í, contrary to the ways of Bahá'í life, need not be changed...we have no right to request any change in the situation surrounding common law marriage. Hands to RSA 1 January 1961, "World Centre of the Faith", FBA.

Cook Islands News 16 June 1964 listed all 6 Rarotongan Ariki as being on the newly formed Cook Islands Party Central Committee: David Stone, Self-Rule in the Cook Islands: The Government and Politics of a New Micro-State, PhD, Australian National University, 1971, 39-40.

D. Dive to S Percival 5 May 1962, "Percival", SBA.

Kiribati, Statistics Office, Ministry of Finance, Bulletin No. 3/85, 1985 Population Census, 25 September 1985.

Bahá'í News, July 87, 4.

Times of Papua New Guinea 7 May, 1992, p5.

Times of Papua New Guinea 28 May, 1992, p 19; 18 June 1992, p22.

Post Courier, 11 July 1995; 19 July, 1995.

The South-West Pacific Assembly devolved into the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Solomon Islands (1971), New Caledonia and Loyalty Islands (1977), and New Hebrides (1977); and the South Pacific Assembly devolved into the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands (1967), Fiji (1970), Samoa (1970), Tonga and Cook Islands (1970), and finally, the Cook Islands (1985). The National Spiritual Assembly of Papua New Guinea was established in 1969. In the North Pacific, National Spiritual Assemblies were established in the Marshall Islands (1977), Mariana Islands (1978), Western Caroline Islands (Yap

& Belau - 1985) and Eastern Caroline Islands (Truk, Pohnpei, Kosrae - 1985).

Universal House of Justice, The Six Year Plan 1986-1992: Summary of Achievements (Haifa, 1993, 114.

NSA South Pacific to NSA Australia, 22 October 1964. (0045/0012)

Michael Day, "A Beacon of Unity", Tusitala, Autumn, 1985, 32-33.

Hansard, 11 August 1993. Sir Julius said ‘I feel that, as a Christian nation, we need to have closer ties with the roots of our religion. My delegation also visited the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel’s third largest city, where I also held talks with members of the Universal House of Justice, the supreme decision making body of the world Bahá'í community.’ Following this visit the Universal House of Justice cabled: ‘Delighted inform friends visit Bahá'í World Centre 12 June 1993 Sir Julius Chan Deputy Prime Minister Papua New Guinea accompanied by Lady Chan during course official visit Israel highly significant that Universal House of Justice met with Sir Julius Chan in response to his request for consultation on future role Papua New Guinea as emerging nation and on destiny Pacific nations set example unity mutual cooperation Sir Julius expressed appreciation achievements Bahá'í community and admiration Bahá'í approach personal social transformation meeting with Sir Julius Chan following earlier meetings Prime Minister Cook Islands and President Marshall islands further evidence remarkable response Pacific leaders principles Bahá'í Faith harbinger future application by world statesmen prescription divine physician healing manifold ills humanity.

These Board Members, appointed by Clara Dunn, were Collis Featherstone and Thelma Perks.

Between 1973 and 1986 the Propagation Board expanded from 36 to 45, and the Protection Board from 27 to 36.

Eighteenth Guam Legislature, 1985 ((first) Regular Session. Resolution No. 214 (LS), 29 November 1985.

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