

Study Guide to "Promoting Entry by Troops"

Exported from Holy-Writings.com on 2026-06-18 — 1 clipping

Introduction

This study guide has been designed to assist individuals in studying a statement and a new compilation entitled "Promoting Entry by Troops" prepared by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice. In its cover letter, the Universal House of Justice indicated that these materials were intended to assist the National Spiritual Assemblies and all the friends to:

understand
welcome
initiate
sustain the process of entry by troops.

The Universal House of Justice urges the friends "to study this compilation, to understand the coherence of its statements, and to use its counsels to lend a renewed impetus to the spread of the Faith and the establishment of the institutions of the Cause of God."

The Universal House of Justice is convinced that "entry by troops will soon become an established pattern for the growth of the Faith in country after country." This is "a phenomenon which the Bahá'í Communities, by their own activities, can prepare for and help to bring about."

Once the process of entry by troops has begun, it can continue. The Bahá'í community can expect to witness a steady stream of new active believers and a growing maturation of Bahá'í institutions if it wisely uses its resources and plans for expansion and consolidation.

Statement on promoting entry by troops

This statement prepared by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice helps us to focus our attention on how the Faith grows, what spurs on its growth, and how individuals and Assemblies can effectively play a part in that process.

The comments are compiled into four sections. The first covers characteristics of growth in the Bahá'í community. The second identifies factors contributing to that growth. The third section of the statement identifies "specific activities that contribute directly to the process of entry by troops." Finally, there are concluding remarks about the forces shaping the destiny of the Cause and the immediate challenge facing the believers.

The following questions are presented to stimulate further discussion on the issues covered in the statement. They should also help to focus attention on the opportunities and challenges in each national community.

Questions for discussion

Some characteristics of growth

Organic growth

1. Why is it natural for the Faith to grow more rapidly in some areas of the world than in others?
2. How can a national community best prepare for "universal, rapid and massive growth of the Cause"?
3. What are the signs of growth in your own national Bahá'í community?

Dynamics of crisis and victory

4. What does the history of our Faith teach us about the relationship between crisis and victory?
5. How did our response to the recent wave of persecutions in Írán reflect the maturation of our administrative institutions?

Impact of social decline

6. Why will mankind's suffering influence large numbers of people to enter the Cause of God?
7. How should the Bahá'í community respond to this suffering?
8. What are some the spiritual values for which people are searching?

Emergence from obscurity

9. In what ways has the Bahá'í Faith begun to emerge from obscurity in recent years?
10. What kinds of opportunities are presented to the Faith as it emerges from obscurity?
11. What are some of the urgent challenges facing the Bahá'í community as the Lesser Peace approaches?

Factors contributing to growth

12. Why does a mere increase in the number of believers not necessarily connote progress of the Cause?
13. How does the transformation of souls help to consolidate communities and attain new models of life?
14. In what ways can a new model of life be demonstrated?

Commitment to spiritual

transformation

15. What is individual spiritual transformation?
16. How does this transformation affect the Bahá'í community?
17. How would you define "the true spirit of teaching"?

Love and unity

18. Why is love and unity fundamental to attracting large numbers of people to the Cause?
19. How can an individual believer express love for the institutions of the Faith?

Universal participation

20. What is a good definition for "universal participation"?
21. What are some ways that a Local Spiritual Assembly can help more believers to participate in Bahá'í activities?

Balance between expansion and consolidation

22. Why is consolidation of the community so essential in the teaching work?
23. What are some of the benefits of properly consolidating the community?

Bahá'í community as a model

24. In what ways should the Bahá'í community be distinctive from the world at large?
25. What are "the potentialities inherent in the administrative system" of the Faith?
26. How are we assured that God will assist us in the teaching work?

Promoting entry by troops

Strengthening of Spiritual Assemblies

27. Why is strengthening the Local Spiritual Assemblies an important task in preparing for entry by troops?
28. How do teaching and administration reinforce each other?
29. In what ways can your Local Spiritual Assembly be strengthened?

Efficient administration and prompt

consolidation

30. How can a National Spiritual Assembly establish "an efficient teaching structure" in its national community?

31. What are some of the more important administrative principles as they relate to teaching?

32. What can a Local Spiritual Assembly do to consolidate large numbers of new believers into the community?

Strategic--flexible teaching plans

33. What are some of the dangers of concentrating our efforts and resources on one strata or section of society?

34. How can a national community ensure that its efforts are reaching "all sections of society"?

35. What "methods" or "approaches" to teaching are now being used in your national community?

Reaching people of capacity

36. What is a good definition for "people of capacity"?

37. Why is it important to exert special effort in reaching people of capacity?

38. What are some methods that a community can adopt to reach people of capacity?

Relating the Faith to contemporary social and humanitarian issues

39. What are some of the current issues facing your country?

40. How do the Bahá'í Teachings address these issues?

41. What can your Bahá'í community do to educate your fellow countrymen about the Bahá'í response to those issues?

Goal-directed behaviour

42. In what ways can Local Spiritual Assemblies collaborate with their National Spiritual Assemblies in achieving the goals of the teaching plans?

43. Why is it important to have both teaching organized by institutions and teaching initiated by individual believers?

44. What does it mean to "teach not only as intensively as possible but also as well as possible"?

Concluding remarks

45. How is the Great Plan of God shaping the destiny of mankind?

46. What is the role of the Bahá'í community in God's plan?

COMPILATION ON PROMOTING ENTRY BY TROOPS

The compilation itself contains 49 extracts from letters written by or on behalf of Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice. A careful study of these extracts should assist individuals and Bahá'í institutions to prepare for and ultimately sustain the process of entry by troops. These extracts can answer many of the most pressing questions we have about entry by troops.

The tables on the following pages are intended to assist the reader in finding answers to six important questions about teaching and the process of entry by troops. These questions are:

When will entry by troops take place?

What contributes to bringing large numbers of people into the Cause?

What are the prerequisites for entry by troops?

What is teaching?

How can teaching be more effective?

Why is consolidation so important?

The table on page 7 provides selected answers to the first three questions all related to the process of entry by troops. Page 8 lists selections from the compilation that help us to define both the process and the goal of teaching. The tables on pages 9 and 10 identify specific activities or endeavours that can improve our teaching. Finally, the question of the relationship between expansion and consolidation is covered on page 11.

The selected extracts in the following tables are not exhaustive, but are intended to list some relevant answers to each of the above questions. The study guide is not designed to provide the answers to all possible questions about teaching or entry by troops. Individuals or study groups can draw up two additional tables to formulate their own questions and identify extracts that can provide answers to those questions.

When will entry by troops take place?

What contributes to bringing large numbers of people into the Cause?

What are the prerequisites for entry by troops?

No.

Quotation

Extract

1

"For

it is only when the [divine] spirit [of the Cause] has thoroughly permeated the world that the people will begin to enter the Faith in large numbers."

[2]

2

"...

for only by manifesting the greatness of their love for and patience with each other can they [the friends] hope to attract large numbers to their ranks."

[8]

3

When

"the people of the world see a shining example set by us

[9]

4

"Until

the public sees in the Bahá'í Community a true pattern, in action, of something better than it already has, it will not respond to the Faith in large numbers."

[10]

5

When

"they see in our individual and community life acts, and the atmosphere, that bespeak the love of God."

[11]

6

"...

the maturity of the Bahá'ís within their Communities, functioning according to Bahá'í laws and in the proper spirit of unity

[12]

7

"...
the disintegration of society and the suffering it will bring in its wake."

[13]

8

"When
the old forms are seen to be hopelessly useless, the people will stir from
their materialism and spiritual lethargy, and embrace the Faith."

[13]

9

"...
the spirit of real love for Bahá'u'lláh, for His Faith and its
Institutions, and the believers for each other"

[15]

10

"...
only to the degree that they [the Bahá'ís] mirror forth in their
joint lives the exalted standards of the Faith will they attract the masses to
the Cause of God."

[16]

11

"The
Bahá'ís know that the tide will turn and come in, after mankind
has suffered, with mighty waves of faith and devotion."

[19]

12

"When
the true spirit of teaching, which calls for complete dedication, consecration
to the, noble mission, and living the life, is fulfilled, not only by the
individuals, but by the Assemblies also, then the Faith will grow by leaps and
bounds."

[20]

13

"Universal
participation and constant action.

[24]

14

Strengthening

and development of Local Spiritual Assemblies is a vital objective. ...
Success in this one goal ... will heighten the capacity of the Faith to deal
with entry by troops ...

[30]

What
is teaching?

No.

Quotation

Extract

1

"Action
inspired by confidence in the ultimate triumph of the Faith ..."

[5]

2

"Dear
Mr and Mrs ___ have a great ability for kindling in the hearts the love of
God."

[11]

3

"Above
all, the Healing Message must ... be vividly, systematically brought to the
attention of the masses ..."

[12]

4

"...
Bahá'u'lláh's valiant Knights ... are vying with each other for
the spiritual conquest of the unsundered territories and islands on the
surface of the globe."

[18]

5

"...
the vital process of individual conversion for which the entire machinery of

the Administrative Order has been primarily and so laboriously erected."

[22]

6

"Expansion
and consolidation are twin processes that must go hand in hand."

[23]

7

"The
paramount goal of the teaching work at the present time is to carry the message
of Bahá'u'lláh to every stratum of human society and every walk
of life."

[26]

8

"Teaching
the Faith embraces many diverse activities, all of which are vital to success,
and each of which reinforces the other ..."

[31]

9

"...
consolidation is an essential and inseparable element of teaching ..."

[34]

10

"...
the paramount purpose of all Bahá'í activity is teaching. All
that has been done or will be done revolves around this central activity ..."

[40]

11

"Teaching
is the food of the spirit: it brings life to unawakened souls and raises the
new heaven and the new earth ..."

[40]

12

"It
is not enough to proclaim the Bahá'í message, essential as that

is. It is not enough to expand the rolls of Bahá'í membership, vital as that is. Souls must be transformed, communities thereby consolidated, new models of life thus attained."

[44]

13

"Our primary response must be to teach--to teach ourselves and to teach others at all levels of society, by all possible means, and without further delay."

[44]

14

"A unity in diversity of actions is called for, a condition in which different individuals will concentrate on different activities ... because each person cannot do everything and all persons cannot do the same thing."

[45]

How
can teaching be more effective?

No.

Quotation

Extract

1

"Above all, the Healing Message must ... be vividly, systematically brought to the attention of the masses, in their hour of grief, misery and confusion."

[12]

2

BY:

"A more audacious assertion of the challenging verities of the Faith"

"a more convincing presentation of its distinguishing truths"

"a fuller exposition of the character, the aims, and the achievements of its rising Administrative system ..."

"a more direct and intimate contact and association with the leaders of public thought whose activities and aims are akin to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh ..."

"a more determined effort to exploit ... the talents and abilities of the rank and file of the believers ..."

[12]

3

"Let them put more effort into perfecting their purely Bahá'í relationships, become more united, more spiritually educated, more skilled in fulfilling their administrative tasks ..."

[14]

4

"... how unwise it is to solely concentrate on one section of the population ..."

[23]

5

"Expansion and consolidation are twin processes that must go hand in hand. ... Deepening the newly enrolled believers generates tremendous stimulus which results in further expansion."

[23]

6

"From among the believers native to each country, competent travelling teachers must be selected and teaching projects worked out ..."

[25]

7

"The same presentation of the teachings will not appeal to everybody; the method of expression and the approach must be varied in accordance with the outlook and the interests of the hearer."

[26]

8

"... it is the purity of heart, detachment, uprightness, devotion and love of the teacher that attracts the divine confirmations and enables him ... to win the hearts of his fellowmen to the Cause of God."

[26]

9

"Efforts

to reach the minorities should be increased and broadened to include all minority groups ..."

[29]

10

"Strengthening

and development of Local Spiritual Assemblies is a vital objective. ... Success in this one goal ... will heighten the Capacity of the Faith to deal with entry by troops ..."

[30]

11

"Teaching

the Faith embraces many diverse activities, all of which are vital to success, and each of which reinforces the other ..."

[31]

12

"If

the friends will but persist in their efforts, the cumulative effect of years of work will suddenly appear."

[33]

13

"...

your Assembly ... should do everything in its power to ensure that increasing numbers of native believers are deepened in the verities of the Faith and encouraged to teach not only through the means recently opened to them, but through the variety of approaches which are possible in different parts of the country and among different strata of ... society."

[37]

14

"While

taking the fullest advantage of a workable method in one area, the friends should be open to other methods and not blindly insist upon doing the same thing everywhere. If such flexibility is understood, your community will surely grow in numbers and strength."

[37]

15

"Every individual believer ... is summoned to this field of action; for it is on the initiative, the resolute will of the individual to teach and to serve, that the success of the entire community depends."

[40]

16

"Well-grounded in the mighty Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, sustained by daily prayer and reading of the Holy Word, strengthened by a continual striving to obtain a deeper understanding of the divine Teachings, illumined by a constant endeavour to relate these Teachings to current issues, nourished by observance of the laws and principles of His wondrous World Order, every individual can attain increasing measures of success in teaching."

[40]

17

"The key to the conversion of people to the Faith is the action of the individual Bahá'í conveying the spark of faith to individual seekers, answering their questions and deepening their understanding of the Teachings."

[43]

18

"A unity in diversity of actions is called for, a condition in which different individuals will concentrate on different activities ... because each person cannot do everything and all persons cannot do the same thing."

[45]

19

"... there is another category of diversity which must be built up and without which the Cause will not be able adequately to meet the challenges being thrust upon it. Its membership, regardless of ethnic variety, needs now to embrace increasing numbers of people of capacity. ... Enrolling significant numbers of such persons is an indispensable aspect of teaching the masses ..."

[45]

20

"... the mutuality of teaching and administration must be fully understood and widely for each reinforces the other."

[48]

"Deepening

the knowledge of the new believer in the verities of the Faith is the most vital part of teaching; but deepening is not merely the imparting of knowledge--it requires also to imbue the soul of the person with the love of Bahá'u'lláh so that his faith may grow day by day and he becomes a steadfast believer."

[49]

Why

is consolidation important?

No.

Quotation

Extract

1

"...

each National Assembly must ever bear in mind that expansion and consolidation are inseparable processes that must go hand in hand ..."

[25]

2

"This

teaching work must include prompt, thorough and continuing consolidation so that all victories will be safeguarded ..."

[32]

3

"It

should be pointed out that, especially if they [the travelling teachers] are assigned to expansion work, they must remember that consolidation is an essential and inseparable element of teaching ..."

[34]

4

"Consolidation

is as vital a part of the teaching work as expansion."

[35]

5

"Proper

consolidation is essential to the preservation of the spiritual health of the community, to the protection of its interests, to the upholding of its good name, and ultimately to the continuation of the work of the expansion itself."

[35]

6

"Deepening

the knowledge of the new believer in the verities of the Faith is the most Vital part of teaching; but deepening is not merely the imparting of knowledge--it requires also to imbue the soul of the person with the love of Bahá'u'lláh so that his faith may grow day by day and he becomes a steadfast believer."

[49]

OVERVIEW

OF THE ENTRY BY TROOPS DOCUMENT OF THE HOUSE OF JUSTICE

EXTERNAL FACTORS ASSISTING OCCURRENCE OF ENTRY BY TROOPS.

1. Organic growth of the Faith, it grows in bursts.
2. The operation of the principle of Crisis and then Victory.
3. Social decline as the old world order gets worse the new world order becomes the obvious way and attracts people to the Faith.
4. Emergence of the Faith from obscurity--many people now know of the Faith through crisis in Írán and other problems. We are a larger community of people now.

GROWTH FACTORS ASSISTING OCCURRENCE OF ENTRY BY TROOPS

1. Spiritual transformation of us as Bahá'ís. Following his teachings and laws. Obeying the institutions.
2. Love and unity in the Bahá'í community--most important.
3. Universal participation--everyone doing something for the Faith.
4. Balance between expansion (teaching) and consolidation (deepening). Both processes go together in unity of action.
5. Bahá'í community being a model for people to follow.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTING DIRECTLY TO THE PROCESS.

- 1 Strengthening the Local Assemblies--having them meet regularly hold children and women's classes, Feast and Holy Days etc.

2. Efficient administration and prompt consolidation. The National and local Assembly must be quick and effective in their work.

3. Strategic teaching plans. These are well thought out plans having follow up and perseverance into the future. Example--have we followed up the 'Ocean of Light Project'.

4 Reaching People of Capacity. The leaders and ordinary people who have influence in a society.

5. Relating the Faith to social and humanitarian issues in the community. The Faith helping people and communities improve their lives, etc. Bahá'ís need to inspire education and health projects, and economic development.

6. Goal directed behaviour. Develop and follow plans such as the three year plan. Each Bahá'í needs daily, weekly and monthly goals, teaching plans, to live the life, etc.

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