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II. Extract from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

The moment this Divine Message is carried forward by the American believers from the shores of America and is propagated through the continents of Europe, of Asia, of Africa and of Australasia, and as far as the islands of the Pacific, this community will find itself securely established upon the throne of an everlasting dominion.... A party speaking their languages, severed, holy, sanctified and filled with the love of God, must turn their faces to and travel through the three great Island groups of the Pacific Ocean -- Polynesia, Micronesia and Melanesia, and the islands attached to these groups, such as New Guinea, Borneo, Java, Sumatra, Philippine Islands, Solomon Islands, Fiji Islands, New Hebrides, Loyalty Islands, New Caledonia, Bismarck Archipelago, Ceram, Celebes, Friendly Islands, Samoa Islands, Society Islands, Caroline Islands, Low Archipelago, Marquesas, Hawaiian Islands, Gilbert Islands, Moluccas, Marshall Islands, Timor and the other islands. With hearts overflowing with the love of God, with tongues commemorating the mention of God, with eyes turned to the Kingdom of God, they must deliver the glad tidings of the manifestation of the Lord of Hosts to all the people....

(Tablets of the Divine Plan Revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the North American Bahá'ís (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980), pp. 38-39) [Ed. - pp.

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41

in online (1993) version] [2]

III. Extracts from letters written by Shoghi Effendi

Those distant islands, the object of our Master's love and tender care, occupy a warm and abiding place in our hearts, and their very names evoke within us so high a sense of hope and admiration that the passing of time and vicissitudes of life can never weaken or remove.

(18 January 1923 to the Bahá'ís of the Pacific Islands) [3]

The successful termination of this Plan, the first-fruit of the newly established and properly functioning Administrative Order in those distant lands, will pave the way for the launching of still greater enterprises, destined to carry the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the Islands of the Pacific in the vicinity of that continent. For the mission entrusted to the care of the adherents of the Faith in Australia and New Zealand is by no means confined to the mainland of Australia and the islands of New Zealand, but should embrace, as it unfolds, in the years to come, the islands of the Antipodes, where the banner of the Faith still remains to

be unfurled and its Message is as yet undelivered.

(11 May 1948 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand, published in "Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, 1923-1957" (Sydney: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Australia, 1970), p.

72

) [4]

The Plan, now operating with increasing momentum in that far-off continent, is designed to enable its prosecutors to lay the first foundations of the structure which the members of these communities must rear in the years to come. As these primary pillars of a divinely ordained, steadily evolving, spiritually propelled order are successively erected and sufficiently consolidated,

and the agencies designed for the launching of a systematic campaign aiming at the future proclamation of the Faith to the masses inhabiting these far-flung territories multiply, a simultaneous effort should be exerted, and measures should be carefully devised, by the national elected representatives

of these same communities, for the launching of the initial enterprises destined to carry the Message of the Faith, beyond the confines of these territories, to the Islands of the Pacific, lying in their immediate neighbourhood.

For whatever may be the nature of the future successive crusades which the American and Canadian Bahá'í Communities may, under the Divine Plan of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, launch in the course of the opening decades of the second Bahá'í century, and however extensive the range of their operations, and no matter how far-reaching the future campaigns which the Bahá'í community, centred in the heart of the British Isles, may undertake throughout the widely-scattered dependencies

of the British Crown, the responsibility devolving upon the national elected representatives of the Bahá'ís of the Australasian continent for the introduction of the Faith and its initial establishment in the Islands of the Pacific, linking them, on the one hand, with their sister-communities

in the American continents and on the other hand, with the communities in South-Eastern Asia, remains clear and inescapable.

(28 June 1950 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand, published in "Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, 1923-1957", pp.

85

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) [5]

The manifold and ever multiplying activities in which the Australian, New Zealand and Tasmanian Bahá'í communities are so devotedly and unitedly engaged are the object of my constant solicitude, and evoke, as they steadily expand, feelings of gratitude and admiration in my heart....

The assistance they have so spontaneously and enthusiastically extended to the newly established centre in the Fiji Islands, constituting the opening phase of the crusade destined to be systematically launched by them in the Pacific Islands -- a territory with which their spiritual destiny is irrevocably linked -- has been particularly gratifying and merits unstinted praise. To have undertaken this additional task, with such determination and fervour, while immersed in the labours associated with the prosecution of their Plan, is surely an evidence of their youthful vitality, their unbounded devotion to the interests of the Faith, and their eager desire to emulate the example of their sister-communities which have initiated, over and above their prescribed tasks, enterprises beyond the confines of their respective homelands.

(1 March 1951 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand, published in "Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, 1923-1957", pp.

92

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They cannot, however, ensure the success of the Plan they have devised, unless the unity and solidarity of those who are participating in its execution, and above all, the harmony of the body directing its operation, are safeguarded, maintained and consolidated. Time is pressing. The issues involved are momentous.... The inauguration of the first organized Crusade, in which several Bahá'í National Spiritual Assemblies, in no less than four continents of the globe, will be intimately associated, for the purpose of proclaiming the Message of Bahá'u'lláh in the South Pacific Islands as well as in South-Eastern Asia, must directly depend upon the successful conclusion of the Plan now envisaged....

(15 October 1951 to the National Spiritual Assembly of India, Pakistan and Burma, published in "Dawn of a New Day" (New Delhi: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, n.d. [1970]), p.

150

) [7]

This Community, which owes its birth to the revelation of the Tablets of the Divine Plan, must now brace itself, during the fleeting months that lie ahead, for a supreme, a concerted and sustained effort to ensure the attainment of the objectives of the present Plan, and thereby acquire the

spiritual potentialities essential to the launching of a mighty Crusade, in collaboration with the Trustees of the Plan conceived by the Centre of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant, and with its neighbouring sister communities in Latin America and in the Indian subcontinent, destined to culminate in the fullness of time in the spiritual conquest of the multitudinous Islands of the South Pacific Ocean.

(20 November 1951 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand, published in "Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, 1923-1957", p.

98

) [8]

I have noted, with particular gratification, the simultaneous advance made in the extension of the teaching activities of the steadfast and self-sacrificing members of this forward-looking, highly promising community, as well as in the consolidation of the institutions which they are laboriously establishing throughout that far-away continent and its neighbouring islands. I rejoice at the remarkable vitality, courage and determination which they are increasingly demonstrating in enlarging the limits of the Faith and in implanting its banner beyond the confines of that continent, over and above the task assigned to them in accordance with the provisions of their Plan, and in territories where they are destined to exert a notable influence through their collective efforts and achievements in the years immediately ahead....

The multiplication and consolidation of the administrative institutions of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh throughout Australia, New Zealand and Tasmania, as its followers in those regions must undoubtedly be well aware, constitutes the primary foundation for, and the necessary prelude to, the firm establishment of the institutions of His Administrative Order, beyond the confines and in the neighbourhood of these territories, and amidst the highly diversified tribes and races inhabiting the numerous and widely scattered islands and archipelagos of the South Pacific Ocean.

(3 June 1952 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand, published in "Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, 1923-1957", p.

105

) [9]

...to the members of the youthful yet vigorously functioning community, championing the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh in the Antipodes, who, by reason of their close proximity, are expected to contribute a substantial share to the establishment of the institutions of the Faith in the numerous and widely scattered islands and archipelagos of the South Pacific Ocean....

(30 June 1952 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, published in "Messages to the Bahá'í World, 1950-1957" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971), p.

36

) [10]

EARTHLY SYMBOLS BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S UNEARTHLY SOVEREIGNTY MUST NEEDS ERE DECADE SEPARATING TWO MEMORABLE JUBILEES DRAWS CLOSE BE RAISED AS FAR NORTH AS FRANKLIN BEYOND ARCTIC CIRCLE AS FAR SOUTH AS FALKLAND ISLANDS MARKING SOUTHERN EXTREMITY WESTERN HEMISPHERE AMIDST REMOTE LONELY INHOSPITABLE ISLANDS ARCHIPELAGOES SOUTH PACIFIC INDIAN ATLANTIC OCEANS MOUNTAIN FASTNESSES TIBET JUNGLES AFRICA DESERTS ARABIA STEPPES RUSSIA INDIAN RESERVATIONS NORTH AMERICA WASTELANDS SIBERIA MONGOLIA AMONGST ESKIMO GREENLAND ALASKA NEGROES AFRICA BUDDHIST STRONGHOLDS HEART ASIA LAPPS FINLAND POLYNESIANS SOUTH SEA ISLANDS NEGRITOS ARCHIPELAGOES SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN.

(8 October 1952 cable to the Bahá'ís of the East and the Bahá'ís of the West, published in "Messages to the Bahá'í World, 1950-1957", p.

44

) [11]

I feel particularly gratified by the substantial participation in this epoch-making Conference of the members of a race [black race] dwelling in a continent which for the most part has retained its primitive simplicity and remained uncontaminated by the evils of a gross, a rampant and cancerous materialism undermining the fabric of human society alike in the East and in the West, eating into the vitals of the conflicting peoples and races inhabiting the American, the European and the Asiatic continents, and alas threatening to engulf in one common catastrophic convulsion the generality of mankind. I acclaim the preponderance of the members of this same race at so significant a Conference, a phenomenon unprecedented in the annals of Bahá'í Conferences held during over a century, and auguring well for a corresponding multiplication in the number of the representatives of the yellow, the red and brown races of mankind dwelling respectively in the Far East, in the Far West and in the islands of the South Pacific Ocean, a multiplication designed ultimately to bring to a proper equipoise the divers ethnic elements comprised within the highly diversified world-embracing Bahá'í Fellowship.

(February 1953 to the African Intercontinental Conference, published in "Messages to the Bahá'í World, 1950-1957", p.

136

) [12]

This new milestone [the successful conclusion of their teaching plan] in the history of the Faith in Australasia signalizes the opening of a new chapter in the progressive unfoldment of the Mission of these communities -- a Mission that embraces both their homelands as well as the neighboring

Island of the South Pacific Ocean and where their most brilliant exploits, testifying to their heroism and devotion, must be achieved and their greatest victories won.

(23 June 1953 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand, published in "Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, 1923-1957", p.

115

) [13]

...lastly, the South Pacific area, the home of the one remaining race not as yet adequately represented in the Bahá'í world community, occupying spiritually so strategic a position owing to its proximity to the Bahá'í communities already firmly entrenched in South America, in the Indian subcontinent and in Australasia, at once challenging the resources of no less than eight National Spiritual Assemblies, and the theatre destined to witness the noblest and the most resounding victories which the chosen executors of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan have been called upon to win in the service of the Cause of God -- all these have now, in accordance with the requirements of an irresistibly unfolding Plan, been added, completing thereby the full circle of the world-wide obligations devolving upon a Community invested with spiritual primacy by the Author of the immortal Tablets constituting the Charter of the Master Plan of the appointed Centre of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant.

(25 June 1953, published in "Citadel of Faith: Messages to America 1947-1957"

(Wilmette: Bahá'í

Publishing Trust, 1980), pp.

113

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) [14]

The community of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in the Antipodes is approaching a milestone of great significance [the establishment of the National Spiritual Assembly of New Zealand] in the course of its development

through the emergence of this major institution, destined to play a notable part in the evolution of the Administrative Order of the Faith in the Pacific Area.

(24 July 1955 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand, published in "Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, 1923-1957", p.

127

) [15]

With feelings of exultation, joy, and pride I hail the convocation of this history-making Convention of the Bahá'ís of North-East Asia, paving the way for the emergence of a Regional Spiritual Assembly

with an area of jurisdiction embracing Japan, Korea, Formosa, Macao, Hong Kong, Hainan Island and Sakhalin Island.

This auspicious event, which posterity will regard as the culmination of a process initiated, half a century ago, in the capital city of Japan, under the watchful care and through the direct inspiration of the Centre of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, marks the opening of the second chapter in the history of the evolution of His Faith in the North Pacific area. Such a consummation cannot fail to lend a tremendous impetus to its onward march in the entire Pacific Ocean, a march which will now, no doubt, be greatly accelerated by the simultaneous emergence of the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of South-East Asia and of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of New Zealand.

(April 1957 to the Convention of North East Asia, published in "Japan Will Turn Ablaze" rev. ed. (Japan: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1992), p.

80

) [16]

In the Pacific area, where Bahá'í exploits bid fair to outshine the feats achieved in any other ocean, and indeed in every continent of the globe -- now competing for the palm of victory with the African continent itself -- preliminary measures have been undertaken for the formation of no less than three of the thirteen National and Regional Spiritual Assemblies which are to be established in the course of this year's Ridván festivities. These three Assemblies, the seats of which are to be located in Japan, in Indonesia and in the Dominion of New Zealand, are destined to function in regions where the yellow, the brown and white races predominate, and in which the majority of the inhabitants belong either to the Buddhist, the Muslim or Christian Faiths. In so vast and promising an area, blessed by the labours of two Hands of the Cause of God, the number of localities where Bahá'ís reside, which in the concluding years of the Apostolic Age of the Faith had barely reached ten, has now swelled to over two hundred and ten, scattered over no less than forty islands. It already boasts over seventeen hundred believers of the brown race alone, more than fifty Local Spiritual Assemblies, five national Haziratu'l-Quds, three Bahá'í schools, twenty-one incorporated Local Spiritual Assemblies, four states where Bahá'í national endowments have been established, a site purchased for its first projected Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, three territories where the Bahá'í Marriage Certificate is recognized, and three others where Bahá'í children have been allowed to observe the Bahá'í Holy Days, as well as the translation of Bahá'í literature into no less than fifty of the languages current among its indigenous population. It, moreover, prides itself on the initiation of teaching activities

in no less than a hundred of the four hundred islands constituting one of its numerous southern archipelagos.

(April 1957 to the United States Convention, published in "Messages to the Bahá'í World, 1950-1957", p.

111

) [17]

The formation of the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of North-East Asia is to be acclaimed as an event of far-reaching historic significance, whose repercussions cannot be confined to the Pacific area, but are bound to affect the immediate fortunes of the entire Bahá'í world. The emergence of this epochal institution, however transitional its character, represents the culmination of a fifty-year-old process that has had its inception in the days of the Centre of the Covenant, during the last decades of the Heroic Age of the Bahá'í Dispensation.

The rise and expansion of the Administrative Order of the Faith in the northern regions of the vast Pacific Ocean fills a great gap, and constitutes a notable parallel to the rise of similar institutions in the Antipodes, establishing thereby a spiritual equilibrium destined to affect, to a marked degree, the destinies of the Faith throughout the islands of the Pacific Ocean, in the years immediately ahead.

(15 July 1957 to the National Spiritual Assembly of North East Asia, published in "Japan Will Turn Ablaze", pp.

84

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The great and signal honour, conferred upon their homeland through the selection of one of the most highly advanced, the most populous, and one of the most progressive of its cities -- enjoying already the distinction of being the first among them to be opened to the Message of Bahá'u'lláh and to be warmed by the rising Sun of His Revelation -- as the site of the Mother Temple of the Antipodes, and indeed of the whole Pacific area, moreover, proclaims their right to be considered the vanguard of His hosts, and the defenders of the stronghold of the Administrative Order of His Faith, in that vast area of the globe, an area endowed with unimaginable potentialities, and which, owing to its strategic position, is bound to feel the impact of world-shaking forces, and to shape, to a marked degree through the experience gained by its peoples in the school of adversity, the destinies of mankind.

The emergence of a new Regional Spiritual Assembly in the North Pacific area, with its seat fixed in the capital city of a country which, by reason of its innate capacity and the spiritual receptivity it has acquired, in consequence of the severe and prolonged ordeal its entire population has providentially experienced, is destined to have a preponderating share

in awakening the peoples and races inhabiting the entire Pacific area, to the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, and to act as the vanguard of His hosts in their future spiritual conquest of the main body of the yellow race on the Chinese mainland -- the emergence of such an Assembly may be said to have, at long last, established a spiritual axis, extending from the Antipodes to the northern islands of the Pacific Ocean -- an axis whose northern and southern poles will act as powerful magnets, endowed with exceptional spiritual potency, and towards which other younger and less experienced communities will tend for some time to gravitate.

A responsibility, at once weighty and inescapable, must rest on the communities which occupy so privileged a position in so vast and turbulent an area of the globe. However great the distance that separates them; however much they differ in race, language, custom, and religion; however active the political forces which tend to keep them apart and foster racial and political antagonisms, the close and continued association of these communities in their common, their peculiar and paramount task of raising up and of consolidating the embryonic World Order of Bahá'u'lláh in those regions of the globe, is a matter of vital and urgent importance, which should receive on the part of the elected representatives of their communities, a most earnest and prayerful consideration.

The Plan, which it is the privilege of the Australian Bahá'í community to energetically prosecute, must, simultaneously, be assured of the unqualified, the systematic and whole-hearted support of its members....

Whilst addressing itself to the meritorious twofold task with which it is now confronted, this wide-awake, swiftly expanding, steadily consolidating, highly promising community must lend whatever assistance is possible to its newly emerged sister community in the South, and enable her, as her institutions develop and become firmly grounded, to share, in a befitting manner, in the collective enterprises that must, sooner or later, be launched and carried to a successful conclusion by the island communities situated in the Northern and Southern regions as well as in the heart of the Pacific Ocean.

May this community which, with its sister community in the North, has had the inestimable privilege of being called into being in the lifetime of, and through the operation of the dynamic forces released by, the Centre of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant, continue, with undimmed vision, with redoubled vigour, and unwavering fidelity and constancy, to discharge its manifold and ever increasing duties and responsibilities, and lend, as the days go by, an impetus such as it has not lent before, in the course of almost two score years of its existence, to the propagation of the Faith it has so whole-heartedly espoused and is now so valiantly serving, and play a memorable and distinctive part in hastening the establishment, and in ensuring the gradual efflorescence and ultimate fruition, of its divinely appointed embryonic World Order.

(19 July 1957 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia, published in "Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, 1923-1957", pp.

138

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IV. Extracts from letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi

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In connection with the teaching work throughout the Pacific area, he fully believes that in many cases the white society is difficult to interest in anything but its own superficial activities. The Bahá'ís must identify themselves on the one hand, as much as they reasonably can, with the life of the white people, so as not to become ostracized, criticized and eventually ousted from their hard-won pioneer posts. On the other hand, they must bear in mind that the primary object of their living there is to teach the native population the Faith. This they must do with tact and discretion, in order not to forfeit their foothold in these islands which are often so difficult of access....

He attaches great importance to teaching the aboriginal Australians, and also in converting more Maoris to the Faith, and hopes that the Bahá'ís will devote some attention to contacting both of these minority groups....

The most important thing of all in connection with the pioneer work, is to ensure that the believers who, at such cost of sacrifice and effort, have at last succeeded in gaining entry to these far-flung and difficult territories, should remain there at all costs.

(16 June 1954 to the NSA of Australia and New Zealand, published in "Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, 1923-1957", p.

118

) [20]

The Guardian thinks perhaps a different approach to the aborigines might attract them; one of being interested in their lives and their folklore, and of trying to become their friend, rather than trying to change them or improve them.

If you could form a friendship with an aborigine who had more spiritual and mental capacity than the average, you might find that out of this friendship would spring an interest in the Faith; but no doubt great patience is required to enter into the thought of these people, so different from ourselves in background and training.

(9 April 1955) [21]

The wonderful spirit the pioneers from Australia and New Zealand have shown is a source of pride to the Guardian. Already they have garnered many rich prizes for the Faith in the form of such romantic, remote and inaccessible isles as Tonga, the Solomons and the Society Islands. Their determination, devotion and courage are exemplary in every way; and he hopes they will persevere, and not abandon their posts....

Your Assembly should bear in mind the necessity, in the future at any rate, of having firmly grounded Local Assemblies in all of the States of Australia and New Zealand; and also the importance of increasing the representation of the minority races, such as the Aborigines and the Maoris, within the Bahá'í Community. Special effort should be made to contact these people and to teach them; and the Bahá'ís in Australia and New Zealand should consider that every one of them that can be won to the Faith is a precious acquisition.

(24 July 1955 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand, published in "Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, 1923-1957", pp.

123

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The Guardian attaches the utmost importance to the development of the Faith in the Pacific Islands. Wherever an opportunity opens for expansion of the work in one of the Islands, he feels that opportunity should be seized and exploited to the fullest extent. Thus if it is possible for anyone to proceed to the Solomon Islands to assist ... there, it would be very, very helpful.

(14 December 1955 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles, published in "Unfolding Destiny: The Messages from the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith to the Bahá'í Community of the British Isles" (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1981), p.

360

) [23]

He was very happy indeed to hear that the Tongan friends are teaching the Cause themselves to their own people, and assisting you and your dear husband in spreading the Message in those islands. The Polynesians for many centuries, ever since the white man contacted them, have been admired for their fine characteristics and the nobility of their spirit. It would be a great contribution to the world-wide character of our Faith to have people of this race active in its service and representing what their race has to give, as time goes on, in joint Bahá'í national and international councils.

(1 May 1956) [24]

In spite of the fact that ... has been expelled from the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, the remarkable progress of the Faith there has been a source of great satisfaction. It shows that a spiritual receptivity, a purity of heart and uprightness of character exist potentially amongst many of the peoples of the Pacific Isles to an extent equal to that of the tribesmen of Africa. It is indeed an encouraging and awe-inspiring sight to witness the spread of our beloved Faith amongst those whom civilized nations misguidedly term "savages", "primitive peoples" and "uncivilized nations"....

(11 July 1956 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles, published in "Unfolding Destiny", p. 365)
[25]

These great blessings likewise carry with them responsibilities and the Guardian hopes these Friends will arise and spread the Message amongst their own people, far and wide.

This is the way the Faith spread so rapidly in Africa and now in the South Sea Islands. The native Believers became enthused and arose with devotion and consecration and taught their fellow people. The Guardian hopes you will be able to encourage the Friends in the Cape Verde Islands to do the same thing.

(25 May 1957) [26]

As you formulate your plans and carry them out for the work entrusted to you during the next six years, he wishes you to particularly bear in mind the need of teaching the Maoris. These original discoverers of New Zealand are of a very fine race, and they are a people long admired for their noble qualities; and special effort should be made, not only to contact the Maoris in the cities, and draw them into the Faith, but to go to their towns and live amongst them and establish Assemblies in which at least the majority of the believers will be Maoris, if not all. This would be indeed a worthy achievement.

(27 June 1957 to the National Spiritual Assembly of New Zealand, published in "Arohanui: Letters from Shoghi Effendi to New Zealand" (Suva: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), pp.

73

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The influence that this Mother Temple of the whole Pacific area will exert when constructed is incalculable and mysterious. The beloved Master told the American friends that their Temple would be the greatest silent teacher, and there is no doubt that this one building has exerted a profound

influence on the spread of the Faith, not only in the United States and the Western Hemisphere, but throughout the world. We can therefore expect that the construction of another "Mother Temple" in the heart of Australasia, and one in the centre of Africa, as well as one in the heart of Europe, will exert a tremendous influence, both locally and internationally.

(19 July 1957 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia, published in "Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, 1923-1957", pp. 135

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36

) [28]

V. Extracts from letters written by the Universal House of Justice

Recalling the promise of Bahá'u'lláh "Should they attempt to conceal His light on the continent, He will assuredly rear His head in the midmost part of the ocean and, raising His voice proclaim: 'I am the lifegiver of the world!'" we now witness its fulfilment in the vast area of the Pacific Ocean, in island after island mentioned by the Master in the Tablets of the Divine Plan. How great is the potential for the Faith in localities blessed by these references!

(May 1971 to the South Pacific Oceanic Conference, published in "Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1968-1973" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976), p.

74

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How great is your place in Bahá'í history! How bright are the prospects for the future of the Cause so lovingly nurtured for more than half a century by hundreds of stalwart steadfast believers, spiritual heirs of Hyde and Clara Dunn, who in direct response to the Tablets of the Divine Plan forsook their home and went to pioneer in Australia, and whose names, Shoghi Effendi wrote, were "graven in letters of gold" upon his heart. In March 1951, when in the entire Pacific area there was but one National Spiritual Assembly, the beloved Guardian predicted that "The prizes destined for the heroic warriors, battling for the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the Southern Hemisphere, and particularly Australasia, are glorious beyond compare. The assistance to be vouchsafed to them from on high in their struggle for its establishment, its recognition and triumph is ready to be poured forth in astonishing abundance."

(January 1977 to the Friends assembled at the International Teaching Conference in Auckland) [30]

The period between now and the end of the current five year term of the Continental Boards of Counsellors is one of tremendous promise for the Cause of God. Australasia is an area of great potentiality for the expansion and consolidation of the Faith. The scattering of its peoples over vast areas of ocean is in itself a challenge to the Bahá'ís to devise ways of linking their communities so that an astonishing example of functioning unity in diversity, covering an area from the far east to the far west, from the north to the south will be given to the entire world. Few areas have such potentiality for entry by troops and for the establishment of soundly based, flourishing Bahá'í communities; in few areas do the Bahá'ís have such opportunities for immediately affecting the destinies of the peoples among whom they live and labour. It is our eager hope that the voice of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout Australasia will exert an ever-increasing influence on the life of society around them and on the peace of mankind.

(19 June 1988 to an individual) [31]

Canberra, where you are now meeting, is at the southern pole of the spiritual axis referred to in the beloved Guardian's last message to the Bahá'ís of Australia as "extending from the Antipodes to the northern islands of the Pacific Ocean". Referring to the National Spiritual Assemblies at the northern and southern poles of that axis, Shoghi Effendi went on to say:

A responsibility, at once weighty and inescapable, must rest on the communities which occupy so privileged a position in so vast and turbulent an area of the globe. However great the distance that separates them; however much they differ in race, language, custom, and religion; however active the political forces which tend to keep them apart and foster racial and political antagonisms, the close and continued association of these communities in their common, their peculiar and paramount task of raising up and of consolidating the embryonic World Order of Bahá'u'lláh in those regions of the globe, is a matter of vital and urgent importance, which should receive on the part of the elected representatives of their communities, a most earnest and prayerful consideration.

These guidelines, penned a quarter of a century ago, are as valid today as when they were written, and can be taken to heart by all Bahá'í communities on either side of the axis.

(2 September 1982 to the Friends gathered at the Asian-Australasian Bahá'í Conference in Canberra) [32]

Note:

1. To individuals unless otherwise noted.

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