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MESSAGES
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1963-1986
THE THIRD EPOCH
OF THE FORMATIVE AGE
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CCASION WORLDWIDE CELEBRATIONS MOST GREAT JUBILEE COMMEMORATING CENTENARY ASCENSION BAHÁ’U’LLÁH THRONE HIS SOVEREIGNTY WITH HEARTS OVERFLOWING GRAT-
ITUDE HIS UNFAILING PROTECTION OVERFLOWING BOUNTIES JOYOUSLY ANNOUNCE FRIENDS EAST WEST ELECTION SUPREME LEGISLATIVE BODY ORDAINED BY HIM IN HIS MOST HOLY BOOK PROMISED BY HIM RECEIVE HIS INFALLIBLE GUIDANCE. MEMBERS FIRST HISTORIC HOUSE JUSTICE DULY ELECTED BY DELEGATES COMPRISING MEMBERS FIFTY-SIX NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES ARE
CHARLES WOLCOTT ‘AL’Í NAKHJAVÁNÍ H BORRAH KAVELIN IAN SEMPLE LUTFU’LLÁH HAKÍM DAVID HOFMAN HUGH CHANCE AMOZ GIBSON HUSHMAND FATHEAZAM. TO JUBILATION ENTIRE BAHÁ’Í WORLD VICTORIOUS COMPLETION BELOVED GUADIAN’S UNIQUE CRUSADE NOW ADDED HUMBLE GRATITUDE PROFOUND THANKS-
GIVING FOLLOWERS BAHÁ’U’LLÁH FOR ERECTION UNIVERSAL

HOUSE JUSTICE AUGUST BODY TO WHOM ALL BELIEVERS MUST TURN WHOSE DESTINY IS TO GUIDE UNFOLDMENT HIS EMBRYONIC WORLD ORDER THROUGH ADMINISTRATIVE INSTITUTIONS PRESCRIBED BY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH ELABORATED BY 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ LABORIOUSLY ERECTED BY SHOGHI EFFENDI AND ENSURE EARLY DAWN GOLDEN AGE FAITH WHEN THE WORD OF THE LORD WILL COVER THE EARTH AS THE WATERS COVER THE SEA.
Haifa, 22 April 1963HANDSFAITH
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Foreword

On 21 April 1963, one hundred years after Bahá'u'lláh's public declaration of His world-redeeming mission, the first International Bahá'í Convention was held on the majestic slopes of Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel. The purpose of this momentous gathering was to elect, for the first time, the Universal House of Justice, the supreme governing and legislative body of the Bahá'í Faith.

The election of the Universal House of Justice was greeted with great joy by the worldwide Bahá'í community, for it ensured the continuation of divine guidance until the advent of the next Manifestation of God, thereby fulfilling the prophecy that there would come a "Day which shall not be followed by night."

The continuation of divine guidance—the primary theme of this book—is a unique feature of the Bahá'í Faith. Unlike any of the Manifestations of God Who preceded Him, Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, made a Covenant with His followers to direct and channel the forces released by His Revelation, guaranteeing the continuity of infallible guidance after His death through institutions to which all of His followers must turn. In His will and testament Bahá'u'lláh designated His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, His successor, the authoritative Interpreter of His writings, and the Center of His Covenant. In His own will and testament 'Abdu'l-Bahá perpetuated the Covenant through the Administrative Order

ordained in Bahá'u'lláh's writings. 'Abdu'l-Bahá appointed as His twin successors the institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice. He named His eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Cause of God and expounder of the Word of God, while giving the Universal House of Justice the role of legislating on matters not explicitly revealed in the writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and 'Abdu'l-Bahá or dealt with by Shoghi Effendi.

Writing about the Universal House of Justice, 'Abdu'l-Bahá explained that, "Inasmuch as for each day there is a new problem and for every problem an expedient solution, such affairs should be referred to the Ministers of the House of Justice that they may act according to the needs and requirements of the time .... It is incumbent upon all to be obedient unto them." Moreover, 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts in His Will and Testament that "Unto the Most Holy Book every one must turn, and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice. That which this body, whether unanimously or by a majority doth carry, that is verily the Truth and the Purpose of God Himself."

Thus the fundamental purpose of the Universal House of Justice is to ensure the continuity of the divine guidance that flows from the Source of the Faith, to safeguard the unity of its followers, and to maintain the integrity and flexibility of its teachings. Its origin, its authority, its duties, and its sphere of action are all derived from the writings of Baha'u'llah. His writings, along with those of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and of Shoghi Effendi constitute its bedrock foundation and its binding terms of reference.

Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1963-1986: The Third Epoch of the Formative Age brings together letters, cables, telexes, and electronic mail messages sent to Bahá'í institutions and individuals during a twenty-three-year period that the Universal House of Justice has called the Third Epoch of the Formative Age of the Faith. The Formative Age stands between the Heroic Age (1844-1921), which is associated with the ministries of the Báb (the Prophet Herald of the Bahá'í Faith), Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and the Golden Age,
which will witness the dawning of the Most Great Peace, the emergence of a commonwealth of all the nations of the world, and the advent of the Kingdom of God on earth.

The First Epoch of the Formative Age (1921-44/46) saw the birth of the Bahá'í Administrative Order and the primary stages in the erection of its framework. This epoch was characterized by its focus on forming local and national institutions in all the continents, thereby laying the foundation needed to support future systematic teaching activities. The First Epoch also witnessed the initiation of the first Seven Year Plan (1937-44), at the direction of Shoghi Effendi, by the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada. This plan, inspired by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets of the Divine Plan, constituted the Bahá'í community's first systematic teaching campaign and began the initial stage of carrying out 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan in the Western Hemisphere.

The Second Epoch of the Formative Age (1946-63) witnessed the further

development and maturation of the Administrative Order and the execution of a series of teaching plans that carried the Faith beyond the confines of the Western Hemisphere and Europe. Its two most distinguishing characteristics were the rise and steady consolidation of the World Center of the Faith in Haifa, including the appointment of the Hands of the Cause of God, the introduction of the Auxiliary Boards, and the establishment of the International Bahá'í Council, and the simultaneous and often spontaneous prosecution of Bahá'í national plans in both the East and the West. Shoghi Effendi now used the internally consolidated and administratively experienced National Spiritual Assemblies to launch the Ten Year World Crusade (1953-63) in which he summoned the twelve existing National Spiritual Assemblies to participate in one concentrated, united effort to spread the Faith more widely throughout the world. This enterprise resulted in the opening of 131 countries to the Faith, the formation of forty-four National Spiritual Assemblies, and a vast increase in the ethnic diversity of the Bahá'í community.

However, the victorious completion of the Ten Year World Crusade came with a heavy price. In 1957, midway through the Crusade, Shoghi Effendi died unexpectedly of a heart attack. The Bahá'ís were devastated. Not only were they deprived of their Guardian, but they were also deprived of their source of divine guidance. The Guardianship was a hereditary office, and Shoghi Effendi had left no heir.

How would the unity of the Faith be preserved? How could the conflict and contention that has divided other religions be prevented? Clearly, unless the Bahá'í Faith could safeguard its unity, it could never hope to unify a sorely divided world. Into this chasm of doubt and despair stepped the Hands of the Cause of God, whom Shoghi Effendi had appointed and to whom he had referred as the "Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Commonwealth who have been invested by the unerring Pen of the Center of His Covenant with the dual function of guarding over the security, and of insuring the propagation, of His Father's Faith." Through their heroic stewardship they guided the community along the course Shoghi Effendi had set. By the end of the nearly six-year interregnum they had not only preserved the unity of the Faith but also inspired a surge of sacrificial service leading to the Ten Year Crusade's victorious conclusion and crowning achievement, the culminating event of the Second Epoch—the election of the Universal House of Justice.

The Universal House of Justice proclaimed in a letter dated October 1963 that the Third Epoch of the Formative Age had begun. Outlining what would become the distinctive characteristics of the new epoch, it said the Bahá'í Faith "must now grow rapidly in size, increase its spiritual cohesion and executive ability, develop its institutions and extend its influence into all strata of society." Moreover,

its members, must, by constant study of the life-giving Word, and by dedicated service, deepen in spiritual understanding and show to the world a mature, responsible, fundamentally assured and happy way of life, far removed from the passions, prejudices and distractions of present day society.

The Third Epoch called the Bahá'ís of the world to a yet more mature level of functioning that would be consistent with expected vast increases in the

community's size and diversity, its emergence as a model to humankind, and the extension of its influence in the world at large.

The nature of individual and community maturity for which the Universal House of Justice called is evident as one reads the book. Through the releaseof translations and compilations of Bahá'í writings and through a voluminous correspondence in which perplexing questions about various personal and social problems are discussed, the Universal House of Justice guides individuals and communities in their efforts to live a Bahá'í life. Matters of spiritual growth, sexual morality, relations between husband and wife, family life, prejudice, politics, possession of firearms, ranks and stations in the Faith, the tests of Bahá'í community life, and the suffering of humanity are a few of the topics of individual and community life that are addressed. Numerous accounts of the vicious persecution of the Iranian Bahá'ís and of their efforts and the efforts of the Bahá'í communities around the world to help them testify to the spiritual and administrative maturation of the worldwide Bahá'í community.

The increasing maturity of the worldwide Bahá'í community is further evidenced as the Universal House of Justice guides the Bahá'í community to progressively more mature levels of functioning through three major world teaching plans conducted during the Third Epoch of the Formative Age: the Nine Year Plan (1964-73), the Five Year Plan (1974-79), and the Seven Year Plan (1979-86). Among the results and achievements won during these three plans are the Faith's gradual emergence from obscurity, its assumption by the Universal House of Justice of the role of a promoter of world peace, the initiation of activities intended to foster social and economic development, the establishment of the Continental Boards of Counselors and the International Teaching Center, the introduction of assistants to the Auxiliary Boards, and one of the crowning events of the Third Epoch—the construction and occupation of the seat of the Universal House of Justice at the World Center of the Faith.

The publication of Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1963-1986: The Third Epoch of the Formative Age comes ten years after the inauguration of the Fourth Epoch. Although the Bahá'í Faith is well into this new stage of development, and new patterns of growth and change are evident, yet the study of the messages contained in this volume yields a treasure of insight, knowledge, and understanding of the principles guiding the unfoldment of the Bahá'í Faith and the efforts of individuals and communities as they strive to adopt the pattern of life prescribed by Bahá'u'lláh. Moreover, the inclusion of virtually evety major message of the Third Epoch enables one to survey significant developments in the organic growth of the Bahá'í world community, to follow its increasing maturity and acquisition of new powers and capacities, to perceive a continuity in its development, and to detect patterns in the interplay between the forces of light and darkness, between crisis and victory. Individuals, communities, and institutions will find the book an important aid in making decisions as they apply themselves to meeting current challenges and will derive continual inspiration and encouragement from

the majestic pronouncements, authoritative elucidations, and ennobling,

luminous, and loving counsels of the Universal House of Justice. The messages themselves are sufficient proof that the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh is unbroken, that the channel of divine guidance remains open, and that "the Day which shall not be followed by night" has at last dawned upon the world.

National Spiritual Assembly of the
Bahá'ís of the United States

A Note from the Compiler

Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1963-1986: The Third Epoch of the Formative Age brings under one cover 456 letters, cables, telexes, and electronic mail messages from the Universal House of Justice to Bahá'í institutions, to Bahá'ís gathered at special events, to individuals, or—in one case—to the peoples of the world.

A volume long overdue, it enlarges upon and replaces two earlier compilations of messages: Wellspring of Guidance: Messages, 1963-1968, published in 1969, and Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1968-1973, published in 1976. In preparing the new volume several factors were considered. First was the need to make available the messages contained in the first two compilations and to add thirty-six messages from the 1963 through 1973 period that had not been included. Second was the need to publish messages received after 1973. Thus it was decided to publish a new volume that would encompass and expand upon the first two books.

The time frame of the new volume became clear in January 1986 when the Universal House of Justice announced the closing of the Third Epoch (1963-1986) and the inception of the Fourth Epoch, signaled by new developments in the maturation of the institutions of the Faith. Hence Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1963-1986 enables the reader to survey the full sweep of the Third Epoch, beginning with the first message issued by the Universal House of Justice after its establishment in 1963 and ending with the annual Ridván message of 1986. The messages record the progress of the Faith through the Nine, Five, and Seven Year Plans, chronicling extraordinary advances in proclamation, expansion, and consolidation. They reach a climax in the last two years of the Seven Year Plan with the Faith's emergence from obscurity, the release of a statement on peace addressed to the peoples of the world, and the inception of the Fourth Epoch of the Formative Age. These and countless other achievements stand in marked contrast to the contemporaneous persecution of the Bahá'ís of Iran, throwing into sharp relief the interplay between crisis and victory. The dynamic interaction between these two forces is a chief characteristic of the unfoldment of the Bahá'í Faith and a prominent theme in this volume.

Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1963-1986 includes numerous features that have been introduced for the reader's convenience. A table of epochs of the Heroic and Formative Ages of the Bahá'í Faith and a list of significant milestones, anniversaries, and events in the Third Epoch offer a brief overview of recent Bahá'í history. Each message has been given a heading and assigned a number, and the paragraphs or other divisions of text within the messages have been numbered to facilitate reference. An extensive

index is included, its locators corresponding to the numbering system used in the text. Subheadings have been added to many longer messages; spellings have been Americanized; and, for consistency, dates have been given in a day-month-year format. Addressees, salutations, and complimentary closings have been retained, except for a few cases in which confidentiality required their omission. Because the compilation of messages covers almost a quarter of a century, footnotes have been added to explain historical details, allusions, technical terms, sources of most quotations, cross references to other messages on the same topic, and references to further details in the glossary or in other books. To help keep the notes as brief as possible, the titles of many Bahá'í books were abbreviated. A list of abbreviations and the titles they stand for appears at the front of the book. A glossary has been included to give background information and define technical Bahá'í terms. A bibliography provides information about books and compilations referred to in the text and footnotes.

No changes have been made to the texts of the messages without explicit permission from the Universal House of Justice. Extracts from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá that are quoted in the messages have been checked against authenticated sources and authorized translations and have been updated accordingly where appropriate. Noticeable changes in the translations of such extracts are footnoted. The dates of certain cables may differ slightly from those of the same cables published elsewhere because cables of general interest that were addressed to a specific National Spiritual Assembly were usually conveyed to other National Spiritual Assemblies by mail a few days later. In such cases the date of the original cable is used.

Occasionally the reader will encounter references to enclosures or attachments, such as compilations and lists of pioneer assignments given to National Spiritual Assemblies. Such enclosures have been omitted because of space limitations. Most of the compilations have already been published, and, wherever possible, a reference to the published work is given. We would like to express our deepest appreciation to the Universal House of Justice for its assistance in making available many messages that were previously unpublished and particularly for its direction in all phases of the production of this volume. Thanks are due to Ivor Stoakley, Diane Taherzadeh, and Lewis Walker for their assistance with footnotes and glossary entries; to John Walbridge for helpful comments on the glossary; to Dr. Manuchehr Derakhshani for assistance with Persian and Arabic transliterations; to Dr. Betty Fisher and Terry J. Cassiday of the Baha'i Publishing Trust whose insights, scholarship, hard work, and close attention to detail have been invaluable; and to my wife, Amy, for her unwavering encouragement and support. We hope this book will prove to be a useful and convenient source of guidance and inspiration for both individuals and institutions the world over as they strive to serve the Cause of Baha'u'llah and carry the healing balm of His teachings to all humanity.

Geoffry W. Marks

List of Abbreviations

ABL
‘Abdul-Bahá in London

ADJ
The Advent of Divine Justice, 1990 ed.

BA
Bahá’í Administration

BN
Bahá’í News

BNE
Bahá’u'lláh and the New Era

BP
Bahá’í Prayers, 1991 U.S. ed.

BW 9
The Bahá’í World, Volume IX

BW 13
The Bahá’í World, Volume XIII

BW 14
The Bahá’í World, Volume XIV

BW 15
The Bahá’í World, Volume XV

BW 16
The Bahá’í World, Volume XVI

BW 17
The Bahá’í World, Volume XVII

BW 18
The Bahá’í World, Volume XVIII

BW 19
The Bahá’í World, Volume XIX

CC
The Compilation of Compilations

CF
Citadel of Faith

CUHJ
Constitution of the Universal House of Justice

DB
The Dawn-Breakers

DND
Dawn of a New Day

ESW
Epistle to the Son of the Wolf

FSTS
From Strength to Strength

GPB
God Passes By

GWB
Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u'lláh

KA
The Kitáb-i-Aqdas
KI
The Kitáb -i-lqán
LFG
Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand
LG
Lights of Guidance
MA
Messages to America
MBW
Messages to the Bahá’í World
MC
Messages to Canada
MF
Memorials of the Faithful
PB
The Proclamation of Bahá’u'lláh
PDIC
The Promised Day Is Come, 1996 ed.
PM
Prayers and Meditations
PP
The Priceless Pearl
PT
Paris Talks
PUP
The Promulgation of Universal Peace, 1982 ed.
SAQ
Some Answered Questions, 1984 ed.
SBS
Selections from Bahá’í Scriptures
SC
A Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas
SDC
The Secret of Divine Civilization
SWAB
Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdul-Bahá
TANA
Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas
TB
Tablets of Bahá’u'lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas
TDP
Tablets of the Divine Plan, 1992 ed.
TN
A Traveler's Narrative
UD

Unfolding Destiny
WOB
The World Order of Bahá’u'lláh
WT
Will and Testament of ‘Abdul-Bahá
Epochs of the Heroic Age
1844-1853
The First Epoch
The Bábí Dispensation
1853-1892
The Second Epoch
The Ministry of Bahá’u’lláh
1892-1921
The Third Epoch
The Ministry of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá
Epochs of the Formative Age2
1921-1944/46
The First Epoch
1921-1936 Period of Preparation
1937-1944 The first Seven Year Plan of the Bahá’ís of the United States and Canada
1944-1946 Consolidation of victories
1946-1963
The Second Epoch
1946-1953 The second Seven Year Plan of the Baha'is of the United States and plans of varying duration pursued by nine other regional and national Bahá’í communities (Canada; Central America and South America; Australia and New Zealand; India, Pakistan, and Burma; the British Isles; Germany and Austria; Persia; Egypt; Iraq)3
1953-1963 The Ten Year World Crusade
1963-1986
The Third Epoch
1963-1964Year of Preparation
1964-1973Nine Year Plan
1973-1974Year of Preparation
1974-1979Five Year Plan
1979-1986Seven Year Plan
1986-
The Fourth Epoch
1986-1992 Six Year Plan
1992-1993 Holy Year Commemorating the Ascension of Bahá’u’lláh and the Inauguration of His Covenant
1993-1996 Three Year Plan
1996-2000 Four Year Plan
The Third Epoch
Significant Milestones, Anniversaries, and Events
Milestones

Ridván 1963
First election of the Universal House of Justice
April 28-May 2 1963
First Bahá'í World Congress commemorating Bahá'u'lláh's declaration
of His mission and the victorious consummation of the Ten Year World Crusade
Ridván 1964
Inauguration of the Third Epoch with the launching of the Nine Year Plan
Ridván 1973
End of the Nine Year Plan
Naw-Rúz 1974
Beginning of the Five Year Plan
Ridván 1979
End of the Five Year Plan
Beginning of the Seven Year Plan
January 1986
Inauguration of the Fourth Epoch
Ridván 1986
End of the Seven Year Plan
Beginning of the Six Year Plan
Significant Anniversaries
26 March 1966
Fiftieth anniversary of the revelation of the first Tablets of the Divine Plan
April 1963
Centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's public declaration of His Mission
September/
October 1967
Celebration of the centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's proclamation
to the Kings
27 September 1967
Celebration of the centenary of the revelation of the Súriy-i-Mulúk
12 November 1967
Sesquicentennial of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh
31 August 1968
Centenary of the arrival of Bahá'u'lláh in the Holy Land
23 June 1968
Centenary of the passing of Mirza Mihdí, the Purest Branch
28 November 1971
Fiftieth anniversary of the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá
1973
Centenary of the revelation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas
June 1977
Centenary of the termination of Bahá'u'lláh's confinement in 'Akká
July 1982
Fiftieth anniversary of the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf
4 November 1982
Twenty-fifth anniversary of the passing of Shoghi Effendi
Significant Events

Ridván 1963
Convening of 1st International Bahá'í Convention, Haifa, and election of the Universal House of Justice
Ridván 1964
Launching of the Nine Year Plan
July 1964
Dedication of the Mother Temple of Europe, Langenhain, near Frankfurt am Main, Germany
November 1964
Purification of the Most Holy Tomb
October 1967
Opening of a period of proclamation inaugurated by the presentation by the Universal House of Justice to 140 heads of state of a special edition of The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh
Commemoration of the centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's proclamation to the kings with the holding of six intercontinental conferences in Panama City, Panama; Wilmette, Illinois, U.S.A.; Sydney, Australia; Kampala, Uganda; Frankfurt am Main, Germany; and New Delhi, India
Assumption by the Universal House of Justice of representation of the Bahá'í International Community at the United Nations
October 1967
Laying of the foundation stone of the Mother Temple of Latin America, Panama City, Panama
February 1968
Embracing of the Faith by His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II of Western Samoa
Ridván 1968
Convening of the 2nd International Bahá'í Convention, Haifa, and election of the Universal House of Justice
June 1968
Establishment of the Continental Boards of Counselors
August 1968
Commemoration of the centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's arrival in the Holy Land with the holding of First Oceanic Conference, Palermo, Sicily
February 1970
Bahá'í International Community's attainment of consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council
August 1970-
September 1971
Holding of eight oceanic and continental conferences in La Paz, Bolivia; Rose Hill, Mauritius; Monrovia, Liberia; Djakarta, Indonesia; Suva, Fiji; Kingston, Jamaica; Sapporo, Japan; Reykjavik, Iceland
April 28-May 2 1972
Dedication of the Mother Temple of Latin America, Panama City, Panama
June 1972
Announcement of the decision to build the Seat of the Universal House of Justice
September 1972

Murder of three Iranian Bahá'í students in the Philippine Islands
November 1972
Adoption of the Constitution of the Universal House of Justice
March 1973
Purchase of the Mazra'ih Mansion
Ridván 1973
Convening of the 3rd International Bahá'í Convention, Haifa, and election of the Universal House of Justice
Publication of A Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas
May 1973
Announcement of the embracing of the Bahá'í Faith by His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II of Western Samoa
June 1973
Establishment of the International Teaching Center
February 1974
Acceptance of the design for the seat of the Universal House of Justice
Ridván 1974
Launching of the Five Year Plan
January 1975
Acquisition of the House of 'Abdu'lláh Páshá in 'Akká
April 1975
Excavation of the site of the seat of the Universal House of Justice
July 1976-
January 1977
Holding of eight international teaching conferences in Helsinki, Finland; Anchorage, Alaska; Paris, France; Nairobi, Kenya; Hong Kong; Auckland, New Zealand; Bahia, Brazil; and Merida, Mexico.
September 1976
Visit of His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II to the resting-place of Shoghi Effendi in London, England
May 1977
Murder of Rúhu'lláh Taymúr'í-Muqaddam, an Iranian homefront pioneer, in his home by fanatics
October 1977
Laying of foundation stone for Mother Temple of Indian subcontinent, New Delhi, India
December 1977
Initiation of broadcasting by the first Bahá'í radio station, Otavalo, Ecuador
Ridván 1978
Convening of the 4th International Bahá'í Convention, Haifa, and election of the Universal House of Justice
August 1978
Inauguration of Radio Bahá'í Ecuador
December 1978- January 1979
Intensification of the persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran

January 1979
Laying of the foundation stone of the Mother Temple of the Pacific Islands
Naw-Rúz 1979
Launching of the Seven Year Plan
June 1979
Fixing of Counselors' term of service at five years
June-July 1979
Numerous appeals made by Local Spiritual Assemblies around the world to Ayatollah Khomeini, asking him to stop the persecution of the Bahá'ís of Iran
June-August 1979
Addresses by H. Borrah Kavelin, representative of the Universal House of Justice, at a series of significant meetings in North America and Europe about the importance of redeeming the Iranian Bahá'ís sacrifices through service to the Faith
September 1979
Demolition of the House of the Báb in Shiraz
November 1979
Arrest of a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iran
December 1979
Commencement of excavation of the site of the Mother Temple of the Pacific Islands, Apia, Western Samoa
July 1980
Commencement of construction of Mother Temple of the Indian Subcontinent, New Delhi, India
August 1980
Arrest of all nine members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran and two Auxiliary Board members
November 1980
Appointment of a new contingent of Continental Counselors to a five-year term of service
January 1981
Execution of chairman of National Spiritual Assembly of Iran
May 1981
Establishment of a European Branch Office of the Bahá'í International Community
August 1981
Increase in the severity of the persecution of the Bahá'ís of Iran
November 1981
Arrest of six members of National Spiritual Assembly of Iran
Inauguration of Radio Bahá'í Peru
December 1981
Demolition of the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Tákur
Arrest and execution of eight members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran

May-September 1982
Holding of five international conferences in Lagos, Nigeria; Montreal, Canada; Quito, Ecuador; Dublin, Ireland; and Canberra, Australia
July 1982
By-election to replace one member of the Universal House of Justice
December 1982
Establishment of first Bahá’í radio station in North America
January 1983
Occupation by the Universal House of Justice of its permanent seat
April 1983
Opening of the House of ‘Abdu'lláh Páshá to pilgrims
Ridván 1983
Convening of the 5th International Bahá’í Convention, Haifa, and election of the Universal House of Justice
May 1983
Increase in the responsibilities of the International Teaching Center
Public defense of the Bahá’ís of Iran by the President of the United States
June 1983
Execution of seventeen Bahá’ís in Shiraz, including ten women
Call for the youth of the world to vindicate the martyred youth of Shiraz
August 1983
Banning of Bahá’í administration in Iran
September 1983
Sending of an open letter from the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran to the authorities responding to the false charges made against the Bahá’í community
October 1983
Call for Bahá’í involvement in social and economic development activities
April 1984
Attempt to achieve false confessions from the Bahá’ís of Iran by use of torture
Inauguration of Radio Bahá’í Bolivia
August 1984
Dedication of the Mother Temple of the Pacific Islands, Apia, Western Samoa
July 1985
Release of compilation on the Law of Huqúqu’lláh
Establishment of Public Information Office at the Bahá’í World Center
October 1985
Release by the Universal House of Justice of a statement on peace addressed to the peoples of the world
Appointment of a new and expanded contingent of members of the Continental Boards of Counselors
November 1985
Presentation of the peace statement to the Secretary General of the United Nations
December 1985
Emergence of the Bahá’í Faith from obscurity signaled by adoption of a

resolution by the United Nations General Assembly supporting the Iranian Bahá'í community
December 1985-
January 1986
Conference of the Continental Boards of Counselors in the Holy Land with Hands of the Cause of God, members of the Universal House of Justice, and the International Teaching Center
January 1986
Announcement of the beginning of the Fourth Epoch of the Formative Age by the Universal House of Justice in a letter to the Bahá'ís of the world
Inauguration of Radio Bahá'í Panama
January 1986
Setting of date for dedication of Mother Temple of the Indian Subcontinent, New Delhi, India
Invitation from the Universal House of Justice to National Spiritual Assemblies and Continental Counselors to consult about national goals within the framework of the major objectives of the Six Year Plan set by the Universal House of Justice
Ridván 1986
Review by the Universal House of Justice of achievements of the Seven Year Plan, comments on the Faith's emergence from obscurity and the maturation of the institutions of the Cause and announcement of World Center goals of publishing an English translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, education of the Bahá'ís about the law of Huqúqu'lláh, planning for the completion of the remaining buildings on the Arc, and broadening the basis of the international relations of the Faith Launching of the Six Year Plan
MESSAGES
FROM THE
Universal House of Justice
1963-1986
1963–1964
A Year of Preparation
1
Statement of the Universal House of Justice to the
First Bahá'í World Congress
30 APRIL 1963
1.1 "All praise, O my God, be to Thee Who art the Source of all glory and majesty, of greatness and honor, of sovereignty and dominion, of loftiness and grace, of awe and power. Whomsoever Thou wiliest Thou causest to draw nigh unto the Most Great Ocean, and on whomsoever Thou desirest Thou conferrest the honor of recognizing Thy Most Ancient Name. Of all who are in heaven and on earth, none can withstand the operation of Thy sovereign Will. From all eternity Thou didst rule the entire creation, and Thou wilt continue for evermore to exercise Thy dominion over all created things. There is none other God but Thee, the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the All-Powerful, the All-Wise."
1.2Beloved friends: On this glorious occasion, the celebration of the Most

Great Jubilee, we raise our grateful thanks to Bahá'u'lláh for all His bounties showered upon the friends throughout the world. This historic moment marks at one and the same time the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy, the Hundredth Anniversary of the Declaration of the Promised One of all ages, the termination of the first epoch of the Divine Plan of 'Abdu'l-Bahá designed to establish the Faith of God in all the world, and the successful conclusion of our beloved Guardian's world-encircling Crusade, enabling his lovers and loved ones everywhere to lay this glorious harvest of victory in his name at the feet of the Blessed Beauty. This Most Great Jubilee is the crowning victory of the lifework of Shoghi Effendi, Guardian of the Cause of God. He it was, and he alone, who unfolded the potentialities of the widely scattered, numerically small, and largely unorganized Bahá'í community which had been called into being during the Heroic Age of the Faith. He it was who unfolded the grand design of God's Holy Cause, set in motion the great plans of teaching already outlined by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, established the institutions and greatly extended the endowments at the World Center, and raised the Temples of America, Africa, Australasia and Europe, developed the Administrative Order of the Cause throughout the world, and set the Ark of the Cause true on its course. He appointed the Hands of the Cause of God.

1.3The paeans of joy and gratitude, of love and adoration which we now raise to the throne of Bahá'u'lláh would be inadequate, and the celebrations of this Most Great Jubilee in which, as promised by our beloved Guardian, we are now engaged, would be marred were no tribute paid at this time to the Hands of the Cause of God. For they share the victory with their beloved commander, he who raised them up and appointed them. They kept the ship on its course and brought it safe to port. The Universal House of Justice, with pride and love, recalls on this supreme occasion its profound admiration for the heroic work which they have accomplished. We do not wish to dwell on the appalling dangers which faced the infant Cause when it was suddenly deprived of our beloved Shoghi Effendi, but rather to acknowledge with all the love and gratitude of our hearts the reality of the sacrifice, the labor, the self-discipline, the superb stewardship of the Hands of the Cause of God. We can think of no more fitting words to express our tribute to these dearly loved and valiant souls than to recall the Words of Bahá'u'lláh Himself: "Light and glory, greeting and praise be upon the Hands of His Cause, through whom the light of fortitude hath shone forth and the truth hath been established that the authority to choose rests with God, the Powerful, the Mighty, the Unconstrained, through whom the ocean of bounty hath surged and the fragrance of the gracious favors of God, the Lord of mankind, hath been diffused."

1.4 The members of the Universal House of Justice, all being in Haifa at the time of the election, were able to visit the Holy Shrines of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá where they prostrated themselves at the Sacred Thresholds and humbly sought strength and assistance in the mighty task before them. Later in London they have paid homage at the resting-place of Shoghi Effendi, the blessed and sacred bough of the Tree of Holiness.

1.5 As soon as the House of Justice is able to organize its work and deploy its forces it will examine carefully all the conditions of the Cause of God, and

communications will be made to the friends. At this time we call upon the believers everywhere to follow up vigorously the opportunities opened up by the World Crusade. Consolidation and deepening must go hand in hand with an eager extension of the teaching work so that the onward march of the Cause may continue unabated in preparation for future plans. Now that the attention of the public is becoming more and more drawn to the Cause of God the friends must brace themselves and prepare their institutions to sustain the gaze of the world, whether it be friendly or hostile, eager or idle.

1.6The Universal House of Justice greets you all lovingly and joyfully at this time, and asks
you to pray fervently for its speedy development and the spiritual strengthening of its members.

2

Message to National Conventions 1963

7 May 1963

To the annual National Conventions of the Bahá'í World

Beloved friends,

2.1The marvellous happenings which have transpired during and immediately after the twelve days of Ridván attest the greatness of the Cause of God, and fill every Bahá'í heart to overflowing with joy and gratitude. It was in obedience to the summons of the Lord of Hosts Himself that the elected representatives of the fifty-six national and regional communities of the Bahá'í world were called to elect, in the shadow of God's Holy Mountain and in the house of the Center of His Covenant, the members of the Universal House of Justice. It was the Sign of God on Earth, the Dayspring of Divine Guidance, the Guardian of the Cause of God, who gathered more than six thousand Bahá'ís from all parts of the earth to the celebration of the Most Great Jubilee in London.

Events of Spiritual and Administrative Significance

2.2The first of these historic occasions was marked by events of extreme spiritual and administrative significance at the World Center of the Faith. The daily visits of large groups of believers, of many varying backgrounds, to the sacred Shrines in the twin holy Cities; the holding of the First International Bahá'í Convention and the successful accomplishment of its main task; the celebration of the Ridván Feast by some three hundred believers in the company of the Hands of the Cause of God in the precincts of the Haram-i-Aqdas, are events of unique character and untold significance in the history of our beloved Faith.

2.3The celebration of the Most Great Jubilee in London must be described elsewhere. Suffice it to say now that this greatest gathering of Bahá'ís ever held in one place was permeated by a spirit of such bliss as could only have come from the outpourings of the Abhá Kingdom. The review of the progress of the Cause, the presentation of believers from the new races and countries of the world brought within the pale of the Faith during the Beloved Guardian's Ten Year Crusade, of the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, those valiant souls who carried the banner of Bahá'u'lláh to the unopened and often inhospitable regions of the earth, the spontaneous outbursts of singing

of “Alláh-u-Abhá,” the informal gatherings, the constant greetings of Bahá’u’lláhs warriors known to each other only by name and service, the youth gatherings, the unprecedented publicity in the press, on radio and television, the daily stream of visitors to the beloved Guardian’s resting-place, the radiant faces and heightened awareness of the true and real brotherhood of the human race within the Kingdom of the Everlasting Father, are among the outstanding events of this supreme occasion, the crowning victory of the lifework of Shoghi Effendi.

Reaffirmation of Tribute to the Hands of the Cause of God

2.4 The Universal House of Justice wishes to reaffirm at this time the tribute which it felt moved to pay to the Hands of the Cause of God at the World Congress, those precious souls who have brought the Cause safely to victory in the name of Shoghi Effendi. We wish also to remember the devoted work of their Auxiliary Board members, as well as the services of the Knights of Bahá’u’lláh, of the army of pioneers, the members of the National and Regional Spiritual Assemblies, the services and prayers and sacrifices of the believers everywhere, all of which in the sum total have attracted such bounties and favors from Bahá’u’lláh.

2.5 The Universal House of Justice, in several sessions held in the Holy Land and in London, has been able to initiate its work and to make arrangements for the establishment of the Institution in Haifa. It has no officers, and henceforth its communications to the Bahá’í World will be signed Universal House of Justice over an embossed seal.

Second Epoch of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Divine Plan

2.6The Cause of God, launched on the sea of the Divine Plan of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, has achieved, under the superb leadership of its beloved Guardian, a spread throughout the world and a momentum which must now carry it forward on the next stage of its world-redeeming mission, the second epoch of the Divine Plan. The Universal House of Justice, in close consultation with the Hands of the Cause, is examining the vast range of Bahá’í activity and growth in order to prepare a detailed plan of expansion for the whole Bahá’í community, to be launched at Ridván 1964. But there are some objectives to be achieved at once.

Immediate Objectives

2.7The consolidation of the goals and new communities of the Bahá’í world is an urgent and immediate task facing the fifty-six National Spiritual Assemblies, and an essential preparation for the launching of the new plans. Pioneers must be maintained at their posts and all the Local Spiritual Assemblies strengthened through a firm establishment of Bahá’í community life and an active teaching program. Those National Spiritual Assemblies which rest on the basis of a small number of Local Spiritual Assemblies must make great efforts to insure that this number will be increased at Ridván 1964. Pioneers ready to go to consolidation areas, as well as those eager to open new territories, should make their offers through their National Spiritual Assembly.

2.8The great work of teaching must be extended, not only in those areas where mass conversion is beginning, but everywhere. The high intensity of teaching

activity reached at the end of the World Crusade, far from slackening, must now be increased as the friends everywhere draw on the vast spiritual powers released as a result of the celebration of the Most Great Jubilee and the emergence of the Universal House of Justice.

2.9The Ten Year Crusade witnessed the completion of the structure of the Mother Temple of Europe. It is now imperative to complete, without delay, the interior decoration, to install utilities and lay access roads, to landscape grounds and to construct the caretaker's house. This work will cost not less than $210,000.00, but if delayed it will cost considerably more. The House of Justice calls upon the National Spiritual Assemblies to allocate substantial budgets for the immediate completion of this work.

Preview of the New Plan

2.10The plan to be embarked upon next Ridván, the details of which will be announced during the coming year, will include such projects as the extension and embellishment of the endowments at the World Center; collation of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi; continual reinforcement of the ties binding the Bahá'í World to the United Nations; formation of many more National Spiritual Assemblies, both by division of existing Regional Spiritual Assemblies and the development of new Bahá'í communities, together with the purchase of national Hazíratu'l-Quds, Temple sites and national endowments; the opening of new territories to the Faith; detailed plans for National Spiritual Assemblies involving, in some areas, consolidation goals, in others the multiplication of Bahá'í institutes and schools, in others a great enrichment of Bahá'í literature, and in all a vast increase in the number of Bahá'ís, and the holding of oceanic and intercontinental conferences.

2.11 All such expansion and development of the Faith will be dependent upon the Bahá'í Fund. The Universal House of Justice calls the attention of every believer to this vital and pressing matter, and asks the National Spiritual Assemblies to pay special attention to the principle of universal participation, so that every single follower of Bahá'u'lláh may make his offering, however small or great, and thereby identify himself with the work of the Cause everywhere. It is our hope that a constant flow of contributions to the International Fund will make it possible to build up sufficient reserves for the launching of the new plan in 1964.

2.12Beloved friends, we enter the second epoch of the Divine Plan blessed beyond compare, riding the crest of a great wave of victory produced for us by our beloved Guardian. The Cause of God is now firmly rooted in the world. Forward then, confident in the power and protection of the Lord of Hosts, who will, through storm and trial, toil and jubilee, use His devoted followers to bring to a despairing humanity, the life-giving waters of His supreme Revelation.

The Universal House of Justice

3

Seat of the Universal House of Justice;
New Arrangements for Pilgrims
16 June 1963

To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Friends,
3.1 The Universal House of Justice has been deeply moved and its hopes have been raised high by the many messages of love, devotion and eager anticipation which have been received from National Conventions and National Spiritual Assemblies.
3.2 Two decisions have been taken by the Universal House of Justice involving a further development of the institutions at the World Center. The former offices of the International Bahá'í Council at 10 Haparsim Street being inadequate for the far greater volume of work facing the Universal House of Justice, it has been decided to take over the whole of this building (until now called the Western Pilgrim House) as the seat, for the present time, of the Universal House of Justice.
3.3 This decision made it necessary to find other accommodation for the western pilgrims and led directly to the second decision. After careful consideration of the alternatives the House of Justice has decided that the time has come to take the significant step, anticipated by our beloved Guardian, of housing all pilgrims in one place. It was found possible, by slight alterations, to accommodate all pilgrims, without lessening the number, in the former Eastern Pilgrim House and its adjacent buildings. We have therefore established one Pilgrim House, at the Bahá'í Gardens on Mount Carmel. The friends should note that this is where they should go on arrival.
3.4All friends whose pilgrimages have been confirmed for 1963-64 are therefore expected. There are still vacancies after December 1963, but only a very few before that date.
3.5We have asked the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land to continue to be responsible for the program of the pilgrims while they are here, but letters requesting permission to come should be addressed to the Universal House of Justice.
With loving greetings,
In His Service,
The Universal House of Justice
4
Destruction of the 'Ishqábád Temple
25 August 1963
To the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'í World
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
4.1 The whole Bahá'í World will be grief-stricken at the news of the sad fate which has overtaken the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in 'Ishqábád, the first Temple raised to the glory of Bahá'u'lláh. Due to its unsafe condition, resulting from earthquakes, the building has been entirely demolished and the site cleared.
4.2 The building of this edifice, the only structure of its kind to be raised and completed in the lifetime of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was described by the beloved Guardian as "a lasting witness to the fervor and the self-sacrifice of the Oriental believers." This "enterprise," the Guardian further wrote, "must rank not only as the first major undertaking launched through

the concerted efforts of His followers in the Heroic Age of His Faith, but as one of the most brilliant and enduring achievements in the history of the first Bahá'í century."

4.3The Bahá'í center in 'Ishqábád was founded in the days of Bahá'u'lláh. Already during His lifetime preliminary steps had been adopted by the friends of that community to build, in accordance with the provisions of the Most Holy Book, a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

4.4 However, the project had to be postponed until 1902, at the end of the first decade of the Ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, when He initiated its construction, called on the friends in the East to offer their contributions towards the fulfillment of this goal, and personally encouraged and directed its development at every stage. The Báb's cousin, the venerable Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Taqí, the Vakílu'd-Dawlih, offered his total wealth towards this meritorious enterprise, established his residence in that city, and personally supervised its construction.

4.5The laying of the cornerstone of this edifice at a ceremony attended by the delegate of the Czar—the Governor-General of Turkistán—and the initial steps taken to raise this first House of Worship of the Bahá'í World, inspired the friends in America, who, in 1903, eager to demonstrate the quality of their faith, petitioned 'Abdu'l-Bahá for permission to erect the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the West.

4.6In addition to the Temple itself, two schools, one for boys and one for girls, and a pilgrim house were built. The local community, and the activities of the friends throughout the provinces of Turkistan expanded and developed in stature until 1928, when the law expropriating religious edifices was applied to this Temple. However, under the terms of two five-year leases, the Bahá'í community was permitted to continue to use the building as a house of worship. In 1938 the Temple was completely expropriated and converted into an art gallery.

4.7 In 1948 violent earthquakes shook the whole town causing devastation and ruin. The building was seriously damaged. The only section which remained relatively secure was the central rotunda. Heavy yearly rains further weakened the structure to such a degree as to endanger the safety of houses in the vicinity. It was at this point that the authorities decided to demolish the remaining edifice and clear the site.

4.8A reliable report, recently received, indicates that had the Temple been restored to us at this point, we should have had no option but to raze the building ourselves.

4.9Please share this news with the friends but we do not wish National Assemblies, Local Assemblies or individual believers to take any action.

With loving greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

5

The Guardianship

6 October 1963

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Beloved friends,

5.1 We wish to share with you the text of the following resolution:
After prayerful and careful study of the Holy Texts bearing upon the question of the appointment of the successor to Shoghi Effendi as Guardian of the Cause of God, and after prolonged consideration of the views of the Hands of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land, the Universal House of Justice finds that there is no way to appoint or to legislate to make it possible to appoint a second Guardian to succeed Shoghi Effendi.
5.2 Please share this message with the friends in your jurisdiction.
With loving greetings.
The Universal House of Justice

6

Announcement of the Nine Year Plan
October 1963
To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the World
Fellow believers in the Cause of God,
6.1Six years ago when nearing the midway point of the Ten Year Crusade, the Bahá'í World found itself abruptly deprived of the guiding hand of its beloved Guardian. The anguish which then seized our hearts, far from paralyzing the progress of the Cause, stiffened our resolve and fired our zeal to complete the tasks which God, through His Chosen Branch, had laid upon us. The august institution of the Hands of the Cause of God which he had, but recently, in compliance with the instructions of the Master's Will, raised up, kept the people of this Cause faithfully to the path which had been shown to us by the pen of divine guidance, and brought us not only to the triumphal conclusion of that Crusade but to the culminating point of the construction of the framework of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order.
6.2In March 1930 Shoghi Effendi wrote that Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá had "in unequivocal and emphatic language, appointed those twin institutions of the House of Justice and of the Guardianship as their chosen Successors, destined to apply the principles, promulgate the laws, protect the institutions, adapt loyally and intelligently the Faith to the requirements of progressive society, and consummate the incorruptible inheritance which the Founders of the Faith have bequeathed to the world." After long and prayerful consultation, the House of Justice, as the friends have already been informed, found that there is no way in which it can legislate for a second Guardian to succeed Shoghi Effendi. The Universal House of Justice has therefore begun, in humble obedience to the Will of God, and strengthened by daily prayer in the Holy Shrines, to undertake the heavy tasks laid upon it. In the words of our beloved Guardian it "will guide, organize and unify the affairs of the Movement throughout the world" and "will have to consider afresh the whole situation, and lay down the principle which shall direct, so long as it deems advisable, the affairs of the Cause."
The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh
6.3 The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh is unbroken, its all-encompassing power inviolate. The two unique features which distinguish it from all religious covenants of the past are unchanged and operative. The revealed Word, in its original purity, amplified by the divinely guided interpretations of

‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi, remains immutable, unadulterated by any man-made creeds or dogmas, unwarrantable inferences or unauthorized interpretations. The channel of divine guidance, providing flexibility in all the affairs of mankind, remains open through that Institution which was founded by Bahá’u’lláh and endowed by Him with supreme authority and unfailing guidance, and of which the Master wrote: “Unto this body all things must be referred.” How clearly we can see the truth of Bahá’u’lláh’s assertion: “The Hand of Omnipotence hath established His Revelation upon an unassailable, an enduring foundation. Storms of human strife are powerless to undermine its basis, nor will men's fanciful theories succeed in damaging its structure.”

Responsibility of the Institutions

6.4 As the significance of the Cause of God continues in the years ahead to become more clearly apparent to the eyes of men, a great responsibility to watch over its security rests upon all of its institutions. The Institution of the Hands of the Cause of God, charged in the sacred Texts with the specific duties of protecting and propagating the Faith, has a particularly vital responsibility to discharge. In their capacity as protectors of the Faith, the Hands will continue to take action to expel Covenant-breakers and to reinstate those who sincerely repent, subject in each instance to the approval of the Universal House of Justice. Exercising their function of propagating the Faith, the Hands of the Cause will inspire, advise and assist the National Spiritual Assemblies in the work as they did in the time of our beloved Shoghi Effendi, assisted by the members of their Auxiliary Boards who will continue to fulfill those functions outlined for them by him.

6.5 We stand now upon the threshold of the second epoch of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Divine Plan, with the outposts of the Cause established in the remotest corners of the earth, and having already witnessed the beginnings of that entry into the Faith by troops promised by the Master Himself. The foundation of the Kingdom has been securely laid, the framework has been raised. The friends must now consolidate these achievements, safeguard their institutions and gather the peoples and kindreds of the world into the Ark which the Hand of God has built.

Second Global Plan

6.6 Next Ridván will be launched the second of those world-encircling enterprises destined in the course of time to carry the Word of God to every human soul. The Standard-bearers of this Nine Year Plan are the Hands of the Cause of God. The responsibility for directing the work will rest upon the shoulders of the National Spiritual Assemblies, the generals of the Army of Light, under the guidance of the Universal House of Justice.

6.7 As the first step inaugurating this great undertaking we rejoice to announce the formation next Ridván of nineteen National Spiritual Assemblies, resulting in the dissolution of six of the existing Regional National Spiritual Assemblies, and bringing the total number of these pillars of the Universal House of Justice to sixty-nine. The National and Regional National Assemblies now to be formed are:

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of North West Africa, with

its seat in Tunis, comprising Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Spanish Sahara, Rio de Oro, Mauritania, the Canary Is., and Madeira.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of West Africa, with its seat in Monrovia, comprising Liberia, Sénégal, Gambia, Portuguese Guinea, Guinée, Sierra Leone, Mali, Upper Volta, Ivory Coast and Cape Verde Is.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of West Central Africa, with its seat in Victoria, comprising Cameroon, Spanish Guinea, St. Thomas I., Fernando Po I., Corisco I., Nigeria, Niger, Dahomey, Togo, and Ghana.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Uganda and Central Africa, with its seat in Kampala, comprising Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, the Republic of the Congo (ex-Belgian), the Congo Republic (ex-French), Central African Republic, Gabon and Chad.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Kenya, with its seat in Nairobi.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Tanganyika and Zanzibar, with its seat in Dar-es-Salaam, comprising Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Mafia I., and Pemba I.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of South Central Africa, with its seat in Salisbury, comprising Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Bechuanaland.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of South and West Africa, with its seat in Johannesburg, comprising Angola, Southwest Africa, South Africa, Zululand, Swaziland, Basutoland, Mozambique and St. Helena.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Indian Ocean, with its seat in Port Louis, comprising Mauritius, the Malagasy Republic, Réunion I., Seychelles Is., Comoro Is., and the Chagos Archipelago.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Hawaiian Islands, with its seat in Honolulu.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the South Pacific Ocean, with its seat in Suva, comprising the Gilbert and Ellice Is., Nauru I., Fiji, Samoa Is., Tonga Is., and Cook Is.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the South West Pacific Ocean, with its seat in Honiara, comprising the Solomon Is., New Hebrides Is., New Caledonia and Loyalty Is.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of North East Asia, with its seat in Tokyo, comprising Japan, Formosa, Hong Kong and Macau.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Korea, with its seat in Seoul.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Malaysia, with its seat in Kuala Lumpur, comprising Malaya, Singapore, Brunei, Sabah and Sarawak.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Indonesia, with its seat in Djakarta, comprising Indonesia, the Mentawai Is., Portuguese Timor and West Irian.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Vietnam, with its seat in Saigon, and having jurisdiction over the Bahá'ís of Cambodia.
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Thailand, with its seat in Bangkok, and having jurisdiction over the Bahá'ís of Laos.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Philippines, with its seat in Manila.

6.8The detailed goals of the Plan, which will include sixty-nine national plans, have yet to be announced, but they must be such as to develop still further the World Center of the Faith and the work of its institutions; to consolidate those territories which have already been opened to the Faith; to bring God's healing Message to many more of the peoples and territories of the world including all the unopened territories of the Ten Year Crusade and all the remaining independent states of the planet; and to achieve world-wide proclamation of the Faith to mark the Centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's Proclamation to the kings and rulers in 1867-68.

6.9 In the spring of 1968 the next election for the Universal House of Justice will take place.

Third Epoch of the Formative Age

6.10 Beloved friends, the Cause of God, guarded and nurtured since its inception by God's Messengers, by the Center of His Covenant and by His Sign on earth, now enters a new epoch, the third of the Formative Age. It must now grow rapidly in size, increase its spiritual cohesion and executive ability, develop its institutions and extend its influence into all strata of society.

We, its members, must, by constant study of the life-giving Word, and by dedicated service, deepen in spiritual understanding and show to the world a mature, responsible, fundamentally assured and happy way of life, far removed from the passions, prejudices and distractions of present day society. Relying upon God alone, we can promote His Cause and establish His Kingdom on earth. Only thus can we prove our love for Those Who brought this new day into being. Only thus can we prove the truth of Their Divine Mission and demonstrate how valid was Their Sacrifice.

The Universal House of Justice

7

Request for Prayers for Moroccan Bahá'í Prisoners

17 October 1963

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Friends,

7.1 Our Bahá'í friends who were tried at Nador, Morocco, last year and who received sentences of death or life imprisonment are still being held in prison. Their appeal which has been pending for nearly a year still has not been heard. However, we are pleased to report that another Bahá'í prisoner, Muhammad Mannan, of Tangier was recently provisionally released.

7.2 We are calling for believers throughout the world to pray at the Feast of Qawl (23 November) that early favourable action may be taken in the cases of these devoted and steadfast friends whose long suffering on behalf of our Faith has been an inspiration to Bahá'ís everywhere.

7.3 The friends at the World Center will join you on that day by saying prayers at the Holy Shrines for our Moroccan friends.

With loving greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

8

Report on Moroccan Bahá'í prisoners
15 November 1963
To the National Spiritual Assemblies of the
British Isles, France, and the United States
Dear Friends,
8.1 The case of the Bahá'í prisoners in Morocco has passed through three stages:
The arrest, detention and trial which began in April, 1962 and ended on 15 December
1962 when they appeared in court and received their respective sentences.
The second stage began when the verdict was known and widely publicized, attracting the attention of many influential people both within and without Morocco resulting in widespread sympathy on behalf of the prisoners and many petitions to the Moroccan government.
The third stage has been characterized by relative quiet and lack of publicity while all are waiting for the appeal to be heard. We are now in this stage, the most difficult of all.
8.2The Universal House of Justice wishes to share with you a summary of the present situation as it appears from reports received from many sources, and to outline the policies which it believes should govern our immediate actions.
8.3The prisoners, except for one who will be referred to later, are still in prison awaiting their unknown fate with great firmness and patience. For more than a year and a half they have withstood all manner of harassment and difficulty. We are informed that the three sentenced to death have been kept in solitary confinement for twenty-three hours of every day. Because of recent political developments it has become more and more difficult for Bahá'í friends to meet these dear souls in prison, but when it has been possible the Bahá'ís and non-believers alike are astonished that the prisoners are able to demonstrate such exemplary steadfastness and patience.
8.4It is still not known when the appeal will be heard. At first it was promised that it would be among the first cases taken up after the courts reconvened in October. Again, some felt that it would be delayed until the opening of parliament in November. Now it is thought that the appeal will be heard very soon because it has been presented to the Court in such a way that they cannot delay it longer than one month. A favorable result is also anticipated.
8.5 The prisoner in Tangier, Mr. Maanan, has been provisionally released. His release followed a finding by the magistrate of that city that he could not find any convincing evidence in the file proving the charges regarding political subversion and incitement against Islam were justified. In the view of the magistrate the prisoner is guilty of no other crime than that of being a Bahá'i. Nevertheless, the prosecution appealed from this finding, and it was only after later efforts on the part of the legal committee in Morocco that Mr. Ma'anan was released.
8.6Recently there has been a proposal for a change in the law which would provide a penalty of up to three years in prison for persons who are convicted of enticing Muslims to change their faith. While this law cannot be applied

retroactively to the Bahá'í prisoners, it is felt that this change in the law together with the result in the Tangier case will have a favorable effect on the other cases since it indicated the injustice of the convictions and the harshness of the penalties meted out.

8.7We have had many excellent suggestions from all of you as to courses of action which might be taken to secure the release of our fellow Bahá'ís. All have been carefully considered and weighed together in arriving at our present course of action ...

8.8If the appeal should be further delayed, we must reconsider our present policy and do whatever is reasonably required to bring about an early hearing of the appeal. In the meantime the entire Bahá'í world is offering prayers on behalf of the prisoners at the Feast of Qawl.

8.9This letter is for your own information and is not to be circulated.

8.10 With grateful appreciation and with warm Bahá'í love and greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

9

Development of National Bahá'í Funds

15 November 1963

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Friends,

9.1While it is understood that many communities do not have the resources to fully sustain their administrative and teaching work, it is important that each National Assembly make every effort to work out a program and budget which will enable it to become self-sustaining as rapidly as possible.

9.2To accomplish this, the friends should be made to appreciate the bounties which come from regular and systematic contribution to the National Fund. The amount of the contribution is not as important as universal participation. In a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of Central and East Africa dated 8 August 1957 the beloved Guardian said:

9.2a The institution of the National Fund, so vital and essential for the uninterrupted progress of these activities must, in particular, be assured of the wholehearted the ever-increasing and universal support of the mass of believers, for whose welfare, and in whose name, these beneficent activities have been initiated and have been conducted. All, no matter how modest their resources, must participate. ...

9.3National Assemblies needing supplemental assistance for budgets after Ridván, 1964 should direct their appeal to the Universal House of Justice. They should not appeal to another National Assembly except in specific cases authorized by the Universal House of Justice.

9.4We shall pray that the bounties of the Almighty will descend upon the growing Administrative Order of His promised Kingdom on Earth so that we may be enabled to take His healing message to all peoples everywhere.

With loving greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

10

Relationship of Hands of the Cause of God and National Spiritual Assemblies

19 November 1963
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear friends,
10.1 The relationship of the Continental Hands and their respective National Assemblies was clearly delineated in the Message of the beloved Guardian dated 4 June 1957:
10.1a CALL UPON HANDS NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES EACH CONTINENT SEPARATELY ESTABLISH HENCEFORTH DIRECT CONTACT DELIBERATE WHENEVER FEASIBLE AS FREQUENTLY POSSIBLE EXCHANGE REPORTS TO BE SUBMITTED THEIR RESPECTIVE AUXILIARY BOARDS NATIONAL COMMITTEES EXERCISE UNRELAXING VIGILANCE CARRY OUT UNFLINCHINGLY SACRED INESCAPABLE DUTIES. SECURITY PRECIOUS FAITH PRESERVATION SPIRITUAL HEALTH BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITIES VITALITY FAITH ITS INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS PROPER FUNCTIONING ITS LABORIOUSLY ERECTED INSTITUTIONS FRUITION ITS WORLDWIDE ENTERPRISES FULFILMENT ITS ULTIMATE DESTINY ALL DIRECTLY DEPENDENT BEFITTING DISCHARGE WEIGHTY RESPONSIBILITIES NOW RESTING MEMBERS THESE TWO INSTITUTIONS OCCUPYING WITH UNIVERSAL HOUSE JUSTICE NEXT INSTITUTION GUARDIANSHIP FOREMOST RANK, DIVINELY ORDAINED ADMINISTRATIVE HIERARCHY WORLD ORDER BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.
10.2 These highly significant words of the beloved Guardian clearly foreshadow the tremendous importance of the joint responsibility which he placed upon the Hands and the National Assemblies in protecting the believers and fostering the worldwide development of the Faith.
10.3 We stress the necessity of doing everything possible to expedite and facilitate this free play of consultation between the Hands and the National Assemblies within the spirit and framework of these instructions of Shoghi Effendi. The two institutions have joint and complementary functions which can be discharged successfully only if the greatest degree of understanding and cooperation exists between them.
10.4 We are confident that this relationship will be further strengthened and developed in the manner envisioned by the Guardian, and that it will contribute in large measure to the successful achievement of the goals of the Nine Year Plan which is to be inaugurated this coming Ridván.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice
11
Auxiliary Board Members on National Spiritual Assemblies
25 November 1963
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Beloved Friends,
11.1 The Hands of the Cause at their London Conclave last May decided that Auxiliary Board members should be free of administrative responsibilities in order to devote their full energies to their work as Board members. Those Board members serving on National Assemblies were therefore requested to decide, before Ridván 1964, in which capacity they could best serve the Cause.
11.2 In view of this request made by the Hands of the Cause to their Auxiliary Board members, the Universal House of Justice has reached the following decisions:

11.2a 1. National Assemblies in whose areas of jurisdiction Board members reside, should point out to the delegates at Convention that whilst teaching and administrative duties are not mutually exclusive, it is desirable that Auxiliary Board members, whether for teaching or protection, be left free to concentrate on the work allotted to them by the Hands of the Cause in each Continent. The following extract from the Guardian's letter, written through his secretary, could be shared with the delegates for their guidance when casting their votes:

11.2b "The teachers of the Cause can surely become members of any Assembly or committee. There should be no incapacity attached to them. But Shoghi Effendi would just prefer to see them devote all their time to teaching and leave the administrative functions for those who cannot serve as teachers." (Bahá'í News, October 1932)

11.2c 2. Should Board members still be elected on National Assemblies after the above explanation, it should rest with each Board member to decide which of the two functions he feels best suited to perform. The Universal House of Justice, therefore, approves the request made by the Hands of the Cause to their Board members that they choose between the two functions.

11.2d 3. In the event of the resignation of Auxiliary Board members from National Assemblies, this should be considered as good reason for resignation. If, however, the National Assembly, in view of special conditions, should consider such resignations to be detrimental to the interests of the Faith of that National Community, and the Board member should insist upon resigning on the grounds of his membership on the Board, the matter should be at once referred to the Universal House of Justice by the National Spiritual Assembly for examination and final decision. Pending such a decision, the Board member should continue his membership on the National Assembly, and explain his position to the Hands of the Cause in his continent.

11.2e 4. Measures will have to be taken by National Assemblies according to normal procedure to fill any vacancies created in this way. If the vacancy is recognized while Convention is still in session, a by-election could be arranged before Convention disbands.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

12

Release of Moroccan Bahá'í prisoners

18 December 1963

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Friends,

12.1 Following twenty months of close confinement, and one year after hearing sentences of death and imprisonment imposed on them, our brave and steadfast brother believers in Morocco were set free on Friday, 13 December 1963. The long-sought objective has been obtained.

12.2 As we prayed for their release during the Feast of Qawl, now let the entire Bahá'í world join in prayers of thanksgiving for this joyful outcome and that the Blessed Beauty enabled these devoted friends to remain firm in their faith through this trying ordeal.

12.3 In view of the situation which continues to be delicate in Morocco, you are urged not to seek publicity in this matter. If you are contacted by the press, make no statement beyond expressing thankfulness for the just decision.

12.4 Each National Assembly is requested, wherever possible, to express gratification to King Hassan II of Morocco for this just decision of the Supreme Court. This should be done in writing through the Moroccan Embassy, or Consulate, serving your area.

12.5 We also request that wherever you consider it advisable you write letters of appreciation to individuals and organizations within your jurisdiction who offered assistance in connection with this case.

With warm and loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

13

The Bahá'í Funds

18 December 1963

To the Bahá'ís of East and West

Dear friends,

13.1 With the rapid approach of the launching of the Nine Year Plan, the Universal House of Justice feels that it is timely to lay clearly before the Bahá'ís of all countries, the needs of the Fund at all its levels: local, national, continental and international.

13.2 The continual expansion of the Faith and the diversification of the activities of Bahá'í communities make it more and more necessary for every believer to ponder carefully his responsibilities and contribute as much and as regularly as he or she can. Contributing to the Fund is a service that every believer can render, be he poor or wealthy; for this is a spiritual responsibility in which the amount given is not important. It is the degree of the sacrifice of the giver, the love with which he makes his gift, and the unity of all the friends in this service which bring spiritual confirmations. As the beloved Guardian wrote in August 1957: "All, no matter how modest their resources, must participate. Upon the degree of self-sacrifice involved in these individual contributions will directly depend the efficacy and the spiritual influence which these nascent administrative institutions, called into being through the power of Bahá'u'lláh, and by virtue of the Design conceived by the Center of His Covenant, will exert."

13.3 Not only the individual's responsibility to contribute is important at this time, but also the uses to which the fund is put and the areas in which it is expended.

13.4 Much of the present rapid expansion of the Faith is taking place in areas of great poverty where the believers, however much they sacrifice, cannot produce sufficient funds to sustain the work. It is these very areas which are the most fruitful in teaching, and a sum of money spent here will produce ten times—even a hundred times—the results obtainable in other parts of the world. Yet in the past months the Universal House of Justice has had to refuse a number of appeals for assistance from such areas because there just was not enough money in the International Fund.

13.5 It should therefore be the aim of every local and national community to become not only self-supporting, but to expend its funds with such wisdom and economy as to be able to contribute substantially to the Bahá'í International Fund, thus enabling the House of Justice to aid the work in fruitful but impoverished areas, to assist new National Assemblies to start their work, to contribute to major international undertakings of the Nine Year Plan such as Oceanic Conferences, and to carry forward the work of beautifying the land surrounding the Holy Shrines at the World Center of the Faith.
13.6 Nor should the believers, individually or in their Assemblies, forget the vitally important Continental Funds which provide for the work of the Hands of the Cause of God and their Auxiliary Boards. This divine institution, so assiduously fostered by the Guardian, and which has already played a unique role in the history of the Faith, is destined to render increasingly important services in the years to come.
13.7 In the midst of a civilization torn by strifes and enfeebled by materialism, the people of Bahá are building a new world. We face at this time opportunities and responsibilities of vast magnitude and great urgency. Let each believer in his inmost heart resolve not to be seduced by the ephemeral allurements of the society around him, nor to be drawn into its feuds and short-lived enthusiasms, but instead to transfer all he can from the old world to that new one which is the vision of his longing and will be the fruit of his labors.
With loving greetings,
The Universal House of Justice
1964-1973
The Nine Year Plan
14
Launching of the Nine Year Plan
April 1964
To the Bahá'ís of the World
Dearly loved Friends,
14.1 The divinely propelled process, described in such awe-inspiring words by our beloved Guardian, which began six thousand years ago at the dawn of the Adamic cycle and which is destined to culminate in "the stage at which the light of God's triumphant Faith shining in all its power and glory will have suffused and enveloped the entire planet," is now entering its tenth and last part.
14.2 The Ten Year Crusade, so recently consummated in a blaze of victory and rejoicing, constituted the entire ninth part of this process. It saw the Cause of God leap forward in one mighty decade-long effort to the point at which the foundations of its Administrative Order were laid throughout the world, thus preparing the way for that awakening of the masses which must characterize the future progress of the Faith.
14.3 From the beginning of this Dispensation the most urgent summons of the Word of God, voiced successively by the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, has been to teach the Cause. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in His own words, "spent His days and nights in promoting the Cause and urging the peoples to service."

Shoghi Effendi, discharging the sacred mission laid upon him, raised the Administrative Order of the Faith, already enshrined within the Sacred Writings, and forged it into a teaching instrument to accomplish through a succession of plans, national, international, and global, the entire Divine Plan of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and he clearly foresaw in the “tremendously long” tenth part of the process already referred to, a series of plans to be launched by the Universal House of Justice, extending over 'successive epochs of both the Formative and Golden Ages of the Faith.”

14.4 The first of these plans is now before us. Opening at Ridván 1964, while the memories of the glorious jubilee of 1963 still surge within our hearts, it must, during its nine-year course, witness a huge expansion of the Cause of God and universal participation by all believers in the life of that Cause.

World Center Goals

14.5 At the World Center of the Faith the tasks of the Plan include publication of a synopsis and codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Most Holy Book; formulation of the Constitution of the Universal House of Justice; development of the Institution of the Hands of the Cause of God, in consultation with the body of the Hands of the Cause, with a view to the extension into the future of its appointed functions of protection and propagation; continued collation and classification of the Bahá’í Sacred Scriptures as well as of the writings of Shoghi Effendi; continued efforts directed towards the emancipation of the Faith from the fetters of religious orthodoxy and its recognition as an independent religion; the preparation of a plan for the befitting development and beautification of the entire area of Bahá’í property surrounding the Holy Shrines; extension of the existing gardens on Mount Carmel; development of the relationship between the Bahá’í Community and the United Nations; the holding of Oceanic and Intercontinental Conferences; the coordination of worldwide plans to commemorate, in 1967/68, the centenary of Bahá’u’lláh’s Proclamation to the kings and rulers which centered round His revelation of the Súriy-i-Mulúk in Adrianople.

International Goals

14.6 In the world community the Plan involves the opening of seventy virgin territories and the resettlement of twenty-four; the raising of the number of National Spiritual Assemblies, the pillars sustaining the Universal House of Justice, to one hundred and eight, nine times the number which embarked on the first historic World Crusade in 1953; increasing the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies to over thirteen thousand seven hundred, scattered throughout the territories and islands of the world, at least one thousand seven hundred of them to be incorporated; the raising of the number of localities where Bahá’ís reside to over fifty-four thousand; the building of two more Mashriqu’l-Adhkár s, one in Asia and one in Latin America; the acquisition of thirty-two Teaching Institutes, fifty-two national Hazíratu’l-Quds, fifty-four national Endowments, and sites for sixty-two future Temples; wide extension of recognition by civil authorities of the Bahá’í Holy Days and Bahá’í Marriage Certificates; the translation of literature into one hundred and thirty-three more languages, and its enrichment

in major languages into which translations have already been made; the establishment of four new Bahá'í Publishing Trusts, and a vast increase in the financial resources of the Faith.

The Role of the Individual

14.7 The healthy development of the Cause requires that this great expansion be accompanied by the dedicated effort of every believer in teaching, in living the Bahá'í life, in contributing to the Fund, and particularly in the persistent effort to understand more and more the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. In the words of our beloved Guardian, "One thing and only one thing will unfailingly and alone secure the undoubted triumph of this sacred Cause, namely the extent to which our own inner life and private character mirror forth in their manifold aspects the splendor of those eternal principles proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh."

Twin Objectives of the Plan

14.8 Expansion and universal participation are the twin objectives of this initial phase of the second epoch of the Divine Plan, and all the goals assigned to the sixty-nine National Communities are contributory to them. The process of cooperation between National Spiritual Assemblies, already initiated by the beloved Guardian, will, during the course of this Plan, apply to over two hundred specific projects and will further strengthen this process which may well assume great importance in future stages of the Formative Age.

14.9 Once more, dear friends, we enter the battle but with an incomparably greater array than that which embarked upon the World Crusade in 1953. To that small force of twelve national communities, now veteran campaigners, have been added fifty-seven new legions, each under the generalship of a National Spiritual Assembly, each destined to become a veteran of this and future campaigns. That Crusade began with slightly more than six hundred Local Spiritual Assemblies, the greater part of which were situated in Persia, North America and Europe; the home fronts now comprise nearly four thousand six hundred Local Spiritual Assemblies scattered throughout the continents and islands of the world. We begin this Plan with a tremendous momentum, exemplified by the addition, since last Ridván, of over four thousand new centers and thirteen National Spiritual Assemblies, and by the beginning, in several countries, of that entry by troops into the Cause of God prophesied by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and so eagerly anticipated by Him.

Standard-Bearers of the Plan

14.10 The Standard-Bearers of this Nine Year Plan are those same divinely appointed, tried and victorious souls who bore the standard of the World Crusade, the Hands of the Cause of God, whose advice and consultation have been invaluable in the working out of this Nine Year Plan. Supported by their "deputies, assistants [and] advisers," the members of the Auxiliary Boards, they will inspire and protect the army of God, lead through every breach to the limit of available resources and sustain those communities struggling over intractable or stony ground, so that by 1973 the celebrations befitting the centenary of the Revelation of the Most Holy Book may be undertaken by a victorious, firmly established, organically united world community, dedicated to the service of God and the final triumph of His Cause.

14.11 Therefore let each of the sixty-nine communities seize its tasks, at once consider how best to accomplish them within the allotted span, raise its band of pioneers, consecrate itself to unremitting labor and set out on its mission. Now is the golden opportunity. For whatever convulsions the waywardness of a godless and materialistic age may yet precipitate in the world, however grievous may be the effects of the rolling up of the present order on the plans and efforts of the Community of the Most Great Name, we must seize the opportunities of the hour and go forward confident that all things are within His mighty grasp and that, if we but play our part, total and unconditional victory will inevitably be ours.

The Universal House of Justice

15

Convention Greetings 1964

19 April 1964

To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

15.1 OCCASION RIDVÁN FESTIVAL EXTEND LOVING GREETINGS HANDS DELEGATES FRIENDS PRESENT HISTORIC CONVENTIONS LAUNCHING FIRST ENTERPRISE SECOND EPOCH UNFOLDMENT 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S DIVINE PLAN. HAIL FORMATION THIRTEEN ADDITIONAL NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES TESTIFYING RESISTLESS DEVELOPMENT WORLD ORDER BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. CONVEY ALL FRIENDS JOYFUL NEWS DEDICATION MOTHER TEMPLE EUROPE JULY FOURTH. ASSURE ARDENT PRAYERS VICTORIES BOUNTIFUL FAVORS COURSE PLAN NOW LAUNCHED.

The Universal House of Justice

16

Guidelines for the Nine Year Plan

14 May 1964

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Friends,

16.1 We have been receiving with deep joy and gratification, reports of the Conventions held throughout the Bahá'í world during the Ridván period just concluded and the national and regional elections resulting in the formation of sixty-nine National Spiritual Assemblies.

16.2 The announcement of the goals of the Nine Year Plan has received universally a warm response. Individuals, Conventions and Assemblies have pledged loyalty and given assurance of the execution of the assigned goals with determination and dedication. In two cases a goal has already been declared accomplished.

16.3 If your Assembly has been given what appears to be a heavy task, particularly in terms of homefront goals, you should consider how this can be phased so that your teaching program is conducted systematically. When you do work out such an internal plan we would appreciate receiving a copy.

16.4 We feel that at this time certain guidelines could be given to the National Spiritual Assemblies to assist them in the understanding and attainment of the goals assigned to them.

16.5 New and Unsettled Territories: this aspect of the Plan is of vital importance. It involves the establishment of points of light in new territories, the further diffusion of the radiance of the Faith of God and is

directly linked with the prestige and international status of the Faith. It is essential that the enthusiasm generated at the Conventions be capitalized upon and the pioneers who have offered their services are directed wisely and energetically to the posts to be opened and resettled.

16.6 Acquisition of Properties: as prices generally are soaring everywhere it is important that properties called for in the Plan be purchased as soon as funds are made available. Your National Assembly is no doubt conscious of the fact that wherever a Hazíratu'l-Quds has been allocated it should be a modest structure, acquired in a dignified location within the civil limits of the town or city named in the Plan. However, a Temple site could be near the city, as it is not essential that it be located within the civil limits of the city.

16.7 National Endowments: the object here is not to buy an extensive property. A token piece of land, possibly donated by a believer, is all that is required for the moment.

16.8 Teaching Institute: this is essentially an activity aimed at deepening the knowledge of the friends to prepare them for active participation in the teaching work. In some countries it may continue to be an activity conducted either in local Bahá'í Centers or possibly housed in hired quarters, like most Summer Schools. However, in other countries, and particularly in mass teaching areas, it may have to be a modest structure acquired or erected in the rural areas where the majority of the believers reside rather than in capital cities, to obviate transportation expenses for those attending.

16.9 Recognition of the Faith: such goals as national and local incorporations, as well as applications to obtain recognition of the Bahá'í Marriage Certificate and Bahá'í Holy Days, should be embarked upon only when circumstances are propitious and there is reasonable assurance that the goal can be attained.

16.10 New Languages: the translation of Bahá'í literature into new languages should be carefully coordinated with the settlement of pioneers in areas using such languages. Therefore, this is a goal which must be pursued vigorously and without delay so that the teaching work may proceed effectively in these areas.

16.11 If in the pursuit of any of the above or other goals your Assembly should experience any difficulty or need any clarification, you are welcome to write to us at once.

16.12 We assure you of our constant prayers at the Holy Shrines for the befitting discharge of your responsibilities under the Nine Year Plan.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

17

Dedication of the Mother Temple of Europe,

Langenhain, Germany

July 1964

To the beloved of God gathered in the European Teaching Conference called on the occasion of the dedication of the Mother Temple of Europe

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

17.1 We have just witnessed the dedication of the Mother Temple of Europe-a project of untold significance and tremendous potential for the spread of the light of God's Faith in that Continent. One of the major achievements called for by our beloved Guardian at the outset of the Ten Year Crusade, this Mashriqu'l-Adhkár was triumphantly raised during its closing years as the fruit of long and arduous labors in the face of determined opposition and upon the sacrificial gifts of believers from all parts of the world. Now dedicated in the opening months of the Nine Year Plan; it forms a striking link between these two great crusades, demonstrating afresh the organic progress of the Cause whereby the efforts exerted in one period bear fruit in the next, which in turn endow the Bahá'í Community with new and greater capacities for the winning of still greater victories.

17.2 You are now gathered in this Conference to deliberate on ways and means of accomplishing the goals which are set before you. Let every believer, as he considers in detail these various goals, bear in mind four supreme objectives: to carry the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to every stratum of society, not only in the towns and cities but also in the villages and country districts where the virus of materialism has had much less effect on the lives of men; to take urgent, wise and well-considered steps to spread the Faith to those countries of Eastern Europe in which it has not yet become established; to reinforce strongly the heroic band of pioneers in the islands of the Mediterranean and the North Sea—islands which are to play such an important role in the awakening of the entire continent—as well as to prosecute energetically the goals you are called upon to achieve in other continents and oceans; and to foster the cooperation between National Communities and between National Spiritual Assemblies and the Hands of the Cause of God which has contributed so markedly to the work of the Faith on that Continent and is so essential for its future development.

17.3 Above all let every European Bahá'í have ever-present in his mind that these are the five years during which Bahá'u'lláh sojourned on the soil of that Continent a century ago. Let him resolve so to deepen his knowledge of the Faith and so to increase his standards of self-sacrifice and dedication to the Cause as to play his part in building a Community which will be worthy of this supreme bounty and which will be a beacon light to the peoples of this fear-wracked world.

17.4 In 1953 Shoghi Effendi wrote that the Continent of Europe had "at last at this critical hour—this great turning point in its fortunes—entered upon what may well be regarded as the opening phase of a great spiritual revival that bids fair to eclipse any period in its spiritual history."

Those who have been privileged to witness the extraordinary strengthening and consolidation of the Cause in Europe during the course of the last eleven years are well aware of the reservoir of spiritual potential that has been building up and the transformation of the life of the European Bahá'í Community that has ensued. May the completion and dedication of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár be the signal for the unleashing of this potential, bringing about on the European mainland and in the islands around its shores a quickening of the process of

individual conversion comparable to those events which have transpired with such astonishing suddenness in other continents of the globe.

The Universal House of Justice

18
Teaching the Masses

13 July 1964

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

18.1 When the masses of mankind are awakened and enter the Faith of God, a new process is set in motion and the growth of a new civilization begins. Witness the emergence of Christianity and of Islam. These masses are the rank and file, steeped in traditions of their own, but receptive to the new Word of God, by which, when they truly respond to it, they become so influenced as to transform those who come in contact with them.

18.2 God's standards are different from those of men. According to men's standards, the acceptance of any cause by people of distinction, of recognized fame and status, determines the value and greatness of that cause. But, in the words of Bahá'u'lláh: "The summons and the message which We gave were never intended to reach or to benefit one land or one people only. Mankind in its entirety must firmly adhere to whatsoever hath been revealed and vouchsafed unto it." Or again, "He hath endowed every soul with the capacity to recognize the signs of God. How could He, otherwise, have fulfilled His testimony unto men, if ye be of them that ponder His Cause in their hearts." In countries where teaching the masses has succeeded, the Bahá'ís have poured out their time and effort in village areas to the same extent as they had formerly done in cities and towns. The results indicate how unwise it is to solely concentrate on one section of the population. Each National Assembly therefore should so balance its resources and harmonize its efforts that the Faith of God is taught not only to those who are readily accessible but to all sections of society, however remote they may be.

18.3 The unsophisticated people of the world—and they form the large majority of its population—have the same right to know of the Cause of God as others. When the friends are teaching the Word of God they should be careful to give the Message in the same simplicity as it is enunciated in our Teachings. In their contacts they must show genuine and divine love. The heart of an unlettered soul is extremely sensitive; any trace of prejudice on the part of the pioneer or teacher is immediately sensed.

18.4 When teaching among the masses, the friends should be careful not to emphasize the charitable and humanitarian aspects of the Faith as a means to win recruits. Experience has shown that when facilities such as schools, dispensaries, hospitals, or even clothes and food are offered to the people being taught, many complications arise. The prime motive should always be the response of man to God's message, and the recognition of His Messenger. Those who declare themselves as Bahá'ís should become enchanted with the beauty of the Teachings; and touched by the love of Bahá'u'lláh. The declarants need not know all the proofs, history, laws, and principles of the Faith, but in the process of declaring themselves they must, in addition to catching the

spark of faith, become basically informed about the Central Figures of the Faith, as well as the existence of laws they must follow and an administration they must obey.

18.5 After declaration, the new believers must not be left to their own devices. Through correspondence and dispatch of visitors, through conferences and training courses, these friends must be patiently strengthened and lovingly helped to develop into full Bahá'í maturity. The beloved Guardian referring to the duties of Bahá'í Assemblies in assisting the newly declared believer has written: "... the members of each and every Assembly should endeavor, by their patience, their love, their tact and wisdom, to nurse, subsequent to his admission, the newcomer into Bahá'í maturity, and win him over gradually to the unreserved acceptance of whatever has been ordained in the teachings."

Expansion and Consolidation—Simultaneous Processes

18.6 Expansion and consolidation are twin processes that must go hand in hand. The friends must not stop expansion in the name of consolidation. Deepening the newly enrolled believers generates tremendous stimulus which results in further expansion. The enrollment of new believers, on the other hand, creates a new spirit in the community and provides additional potential manpower that will reinforce the consolidation work.

18.7 We would like to share with you some of the methods used by National Assemblies in various continents that have proved useful in teaching the masses, and attach a list. Certain of these may be valuable in your area, in addition to any methods you may yourself devise.

18.8 We are fervently praying that all National and Local Spiritual Assemblies, supported by the individual believers, will achieve outstanding success in the fulfillment of this glorious objective.

18.9 Please share this communication with all the friends.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

Teaching the Masses

Annex

18.10 1. Materials are sent at once to the new believers. In some places this material is in the form of printed cards, mainly in color, portraying a Bahá'í theme or principle. This helps the new believer to know that his declaration has been accepted and to feel that he now belongs to the new Faith.

18.11 2. Training courses of about 2 weeks duration are held. To facilitate attendance and reduce cost, a number of villages are grouped together as one zone in which the course is held. The students to the courses are usually selected, so that the more capable participate, and teaching is facilitated. Transportation expenses, feeding and accommodation are provided, if it is found that the participants are unable to cover such expenses themselves. The material to be taught is prepared ahead of time, presented in simple language, and translated into the vernacular. After the course, the more promising students are picked out, and with their consent, are requested to undertake teaching projects for a limited period. It is sometimes found

that long-term projects are also useful. These projects generally are carefully planned as to their duration, places to be visited, and material to be taught. If the traveling teachers are not able to cover their expenses, traveling and living expenses are provided by the Fund for the execution of a given and temporary teaching project.

18.12 3. Shorter training courses in the form of conferences over a long weekend are held.

18.13 4. These activities-training courses and conferences-are repeated as frequently as possible and are not dependent upon the acquisition of Teaching Institutes. In the absence of such Institutes, these courses and conferences are normally held in Bahá'í homes or hired quarters, such as schools, etc. In order to facilitate the physical catering and accommodation of the participants they are sometimes asked to come to the course with their eating utensils and bedding.

18.14 5. In the visits made to the villages, the visiting teacher meets with the Local Communities to give them basic Bahá'í knowledge, such as living the Bahá'í life, the importance of teaching, prayer, fasting, Nineteen Day Feasts, Bahá'í elections, and contributions to the Fund. The question of contributions to the Fund is of utmost importance, so that the new believers may quickly feel themselves to be responsible members of the Community. Each National Assembly must find ways and means to stimulate the offering of contributions, in cash or kind, to make it easy for the friends to contribute and to give proper receipts to the donors.

18.15 These are but suggestions based on experience which may help you in your efforts to teach and deepen the spiritually starved multitudes in your area.

18.16 In the course of carrying out such a tremendous spiritual campaign among the masses, disappointments will well be encountered. We tabulate a few instances that have been brought to our notice:

Visiting pioneers or teachers may find in some places newly enrolled believers not so enthusiastic about their religion as expected, or not adjusting to standards of Bahá'í life, or they may find them thinking of material benefits they may hope to derive from their new membership. We should always remember that the process of nursing the believer into full spiritual maturity is slow, and needs loving education and patience.

Some teaching committees, in their eagerness to obtain results, place undue emphasis on obtaining a great number of declarations to the detriment of the quality of teaching.

Some traveling teachers, in their desire to show the result of their services, may not scrupulously teach their contacts, and in some rare cases, if, God forbid, they are insincere, may even give false reports.

18.17 Such irregularities have happened and can be repeated, but must not be a source of discouragement. By sending a team of teachers to an area, or by sending at intervals other teachers to those areas, and through correspondence and reports, such situations can be detected and immediately adjusted. The administration of the Faith must at all times keep in close touch with the teaching work.

To sum up:
Teaching the waiting masses is a reality facing each National Assembly.
The friends must teach with conviction, determination, genuine love, lack of prejudice, and in a simple language addressed to the heart.
Teaching must be followed up by training courses, conferences, and regular visits to deepen the believers in their knowledge of the Teachings.
The close touch of the National Office or Teaching Committees with the work is most essential, so that through reports and correspondence not only is information obtained and verified, but stimulation and encouragement is given.
Expansion and consolidation go hand in hand.

19

Universal Participation

September 1964

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

19.1 In our message to you of April, 1964, announcing the Nine Year Plan, we called attention to two major themes of that Plan, namely "a huge expansion of the Cause of God and universal participation by all believers in the life of that Cause."

19.2 The enthusiastic vigor with which the believers throughout the world, under the devoted guidance of their National Spiritual Assemblies, have, arisen to meet the challenge of the Plan, augurs well for the huge expansion called for. We now ask you to bend your efforts and thoughts, with equal enthusiasm, to the requirements of universal participation.

19.3 In that same message we indicated the meaning of universal participation: "the dedicated effort of every believer in teaching, in living the Bahá'í life, in contributing to the Fund, and particularly in the persistent effort to understand more and more the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. In the words of our beloved Guardian, 'One thing and only one thing will unfailingly and alone secure the undoubted triumph of this sacred Cause, namely the extent to which our own inner life and private character mirror forth in their manifold aspects the splendor of those eternal principles proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh.'"

19.4 "Regard the world as the human body," wrote Bahá'u'lláh to Queen Victoria. We can surely regard the Bahá'í world, the army of God, in the same way. In the human body, every cell, every organ, every nerve has its part to play. When all do so the body is healthy, vigorous, radiant, ready for every call made upon it. No cell, however humble, lives apart from the body, whether in serving it or receiving from it. This is true of the body of mankind in which God "hast endowed each and all with talents and faculties," and is supremely true of the body of the Bahá'í World Community, for this body is already an organism, united in its aspirations, unified in its methods, seeking assistance and confirmation from the same Source, and illumined with the conscious knowledge of its unity. Therefore, in this organic, divinely guided, blessed and illumined body the participation of every believer is of the utmost importance, and is a source of power and vitality as yet unknown to us. For extensive and deep as has been the sharing

in the glorious work of the Cause, who would claim that every single believer has succeeded in finding his or her fullest satisfaction in the life of the Cause? The Bahá'í World Community, growing like a healthy new body, develops new cells, new organs, new functions and powers as it presses on to its maturity, when every soul, living for the Cause of God, will receive from that Cause, health, assurance and the overflowing bounties of Bahá'u'lláh which are diffused through His divinely ordained order.

19.5 In addition to teaching every believer can pray. Every believer can strive to make his "own inner life and private character mirror forth in their manifold aspects the splendor of those eternal principles proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh." Every believer can contribute to the Fund. Not all believers can give public talks, not all are called upon to serve on administrative institutions. But all can pray, fight their own spiritual battles, and contribute to the Fund. If every believer will carry out these sacred duties, we shall be astonished at the accession of power which will result to the whole body, and which in its turn will give rise to further growth and the showering of greater blessings on all of us.

19.6 The real secret of universal participation lies in the Master's oft expressed wish that the friends should love each other, constantly encourage each other, work together, be as one soul in one body, and in so doing become a true, organic, healthy body animated and illumined by the spirit. In such a body all will receive spiritual health and vitality from the organism itself, and the most perfect flowers and fruits will be brought forth.

19.7 Our prayers for the happiness and success of the friends everywhere are constantly offered at the Holy Shrines.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

20

Development of the Institution of the Hands of the Cause of God

November 1964

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Beloved friends,

20.1 Once again the World Center of our Faith has been the scene of historic events, affecting profoundly the immediate prosecution of the Nine Year Plan and the future development of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. The occasion was the gathering in the Holy Land, for a period of fourteen days, of the Hands of the Cause of God to discuss their vital responsibilities, and particularly as Standard-Bearers of the Nine Year Plan.

20.2 The Universal House of Justice took advantage of this opportunity not only to receive the advice, opinions and views of the Hands on the progress of the Nine Year Plan but to consult them on the highly important goal announced at Ridván 1964 under World Center Goals as "Development of the Institution of the Hands of the Cause of God, in consultation with the body of the Hands of the Cause, with a view to the extension into the future of its appointed functions of protection and propagation."

20.3 It was apparent that the elucidation of this vital goal, affecting as

it does the relationship of the Hands of the Cause of God to all other institutions of the Cause, was imperative to the prosecution of the all-important teaching work and the development of the Bahá'í World Order.

20.4 Accordingly, the Universal House of Justice gave its full attention to this matter and, after study of the sacred texts and hearing the views of the Hands of the Cause themselves, has arrived at the following decisions:

20.4aThere is no way to appoint, or to legislate to make it possible to appoint, Hands of the Cause of God.

20.4b Responsibility for decisions on matters of general policy affecting the Institution of the Hands of the Cause, which was formerly exercised by the beloved Guardian, now devolves upon the Universal House of Justice as the supreme and central institution of the Faith to which all must turn.

20.5 It is with great joy that we are able to share with you the initial steps now taken to attain the goal.

Continental Zones

20.6 The assignment of the Hands to various continents remains unchanged but, in order to expedite the work, the continents of Asia and the Western Hemisphere will each be divided into zones for the day-to-day work of the Hands, one or more Hands being responsible for each zone. Asia will consist of two zones: the Middle East comprising the countries from and including Pakistan westwards and also Asiatic USSR; and South and East Asia comprising the remainder of the continent. The Western Hemisphere will consist of three zones: North America, Central America (including Mexico) and the Antilles, and South America. The Hawaiian Islands will be in the Australasian continental area, as listed in the recently issued statistical summary.

Increases in Membership of Auxiliary Boards

20.7 The number of members of the Auxiliary Boards for the propagation of the Faith will be increased in every continent, raising the total number of Auxiliary Board members in Africa from eighteen to twenty-seven; in Asia from fourteen to thirty-six; in Australasia from four to nine; in Europe from eighteen to twenty-seven; and in the Western Hemisphere from eighteen to thirty-six.

20.8 The Hands of the Cause in each continent are called upon to appoint one or more members of their Auxiliary Boards to act in an executive capacity on behalf of and in the name of each Hand, thereby assisting him in carrying out his work.

Freeing Hands of the Cause from Elected or Appointed positions

20.9 The exalted rank and specific functions of the Hands of the Cause of God make it inappropriate for them to be elected or appointed to administrative institutions, or to be elected as delegates to national conventions. Furthermore, it is their desire and the desire of the House of Justice that they be free to devote their entire energies to the vitally important duties conferred upon them in the Holy Writings. The importance of close collaboration between the Hands of the Cause and National Spiritual Assemblies cannot be overstressed, and a separate communication is being addressed to National Assemblies on this subject, supplementing guidance given in earlier letters.

20.10 We anticipate announcing at Ridván 1965 plans for Oceanic and Intercontinental Conferences, an overall plan for worldwide proclamation of the Faith during 1967-68, the centenary year of the revelation of the Súriy-i-Mulúk, involving cooperation of National and Local Assemblies throughout the world, and conditions of entry for a competition for the design of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of Panama.

20.11 Teaching the masses is the greatest challenge now facing the followers of Bahá'u'lláh. No work is more important than that of carrying His Message with utmost speed to the bewildered and thirsting peoples of a spiritually parched world. Now, as the Hands return to their various continents, reinforced by a wider and more efficient organization of their work, we are confident that the whole Bahá'í world will, with rising enthusiasm and ever-increasing success, press forward with the teaching work, greatly increase the flow of pioneers, more widely participate in the financial support of the work of the Cause and add rapidly to the list of goals already accomplished.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

21

Relationship of Hands of the Cause of God and the National Spiritual Assemblies

November 1964

To National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'í World

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

21.1 The gathering in the Holy Land of the Hands of the Cause of God has been an occasion of vital significance to the Faith. Please share the enclosed general message, as soon as possible, with all believers under your jurisdiction.

We now wish to elaborate the recent decisions as they affect the relationship between the Institution of the Hands of the Cause and yourselves, the National Spiritual Assemblies of the world.

21.3 It is of the utmost importance that the Hands of the Cause and National Spiritual Assemblies be fully informed of the situation of the Cause in the areas for which they are responsible. We ask you therefore to work out with the Hands in your continent more efficient and easier methods of communication. The sharing of National Assembly minutes with the Hands of the Cause is entirely a matter for each National Spiritual Assembly to decide, but it is vitally important for you to regularly provide the Hands of the Cause with all information which is necessary to their work, including copies of pertinent committee reports.

21.4 The Hands of the Cause are preparing a schedule of proposed meetings with National Assemblies and will also be inviting members of National Assemblies to meet them in conferences with their Board members from time to time, a form of consultation which has been found most effective wherever it has been practised.

21.5 Members of Auxiliary Boards should be freed from administrative responsibilities including serving on Committees and as delegates to

conventions. In the event of any member of a National Assembly accepting appointment to a Board, the National Assembly should accept this as valid reason for that member's resignation from the Assembly; should a Board member be elected to a National Assembly, he must choose on which body he will serve.

21.6 We ask each National Assembly to extend a warm and cordial invitation to the Hands of its continent to attend its national convention. All Hands of the Cause present should be given the freedom of the convention. If no continental Hands can attend a convention they may appoint one or two Board members to act as special deputies for that convention, who will, of course, be warmly welcomed and given the courtesy of taking part in convention as deputies of the Hands.

21.7 The increase in the numbers of Board members will inevitably be reflected in an increase in the needs of the Continental Funds. This is a matter for discussion with the Hands in your continent, and we feel sure that you will do your utmost to meet the new requirements, bearing in mind the importance which the beloved Guardian attached to direct contributions to these Funds by National and Local Spiritual Assemblies, as well as by individual believers.

21.8

The fostering of this important relationship between the exalted body of the Hands of the Cause and the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'í world will inevitably strengthen the foundation and functioning of the Cause of God and enable its embryonic world order to grow as a healthy tree under whose shade all mankind will eventually find security and peace.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

22

Appointment of Five Continental Pioneer Committees

8 February 1965

To the National Spiritual Assemblies of Australia, the British Isles, Germany, Persia and the United States

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

22.1 To intensify the prosecution of the Nine Year Plan we call upon your Assemblies to appoint Pioneer Committees respectively for Australasia, Africa, Europe, Asia and the Americas for raising up and deploying the huge army of pioneers necessary to win the goals of the Plan.

22.2 The importance of this step is emphasized by the need, during the coming Bahá'í year, to settle no less than four hundred and two pioneers in teaching and consolidation areas—twenty-eight for Australasia, seventy-one for Africa, sixty-seven for Europe, one hundred and sixty-eight for Asia, and sixty-eight for the Americas.

22.3 These Pioneer Committees, to be appointed by and be responsible to your respective National Assemblies, will have functions set forth in the enclosed outline. Since they are essentially service committees, a membership of three will suffice. The secretary should be a competent and knowledgeable Bahá'í having time, ability and facilities for carrying on a volume of correspondence. All members of the committee should have organizing ability as

well as an aptitude for dealing with problems in a warm and loving Bahá'í way.

22.4 The Pioneer Committees will in no way infringe upon or substitute for existing committees which your Assemblies may have already appointed to deal with the teaching and pioneer requirements of either internal or external goals assigned to your Assembly. Rather they will supplement the work of existing committees of all National Assemblies in the respective continental areas, provide an effective means of exchange of vital information, and assist in the processing of pioneer applications and the transfer of pioneers to goal areas.

22.5 The Pioneer Committees should be appointed immediately, and, as soon as acceptances have been received and the committees organized, you should send us the names of the committee members and the address of the committee for inclusion in a dossier to be sent to all National Assemblies as an addendum to the Ridván message.

22.6 The Pioneer Committees should be prepared to assume their full responsibilities and functions at Ridván so that no time will be lost in the rapid transfer of pioneers to their posts, thus avoiding any possible dampening of their spirits.

22.7 In the meantime, we will be forwarding additional information and instructions which will enable the committees to swing into action at Convention time. Since announcement of the appointment of these committees will be a part of the Ridván message, your Assembly should wait until the Convention to inform the friends of these plans.

22.8 Time is of the essence. It is imperative that we have the names of Pioneer Committee members and the address of the committee within thirty days of your receipt of these instructions.

22.9 Assuring you of prayers at the Holy Shrines.

Deepest love,

The Universal House of Justice

Pioneer Committees

Responsibilities and Functions

22.10 I. To assist National Spiritual Assemblies and their relevant committees in the following respects:

Information on availability and qualifications of pioneers.

Act as a clearing house for information both continentally and intercontinentally.

Determine travel and subsistence budgets needed.

Supply information on needs for pioneers in various localities within their respective continental areas, this information to be furnished initially by the Universal House of Justice, and any later needs to be cleared through the Universal House of Justice.

Supply information on the types of pioneering service needed in specific localities, such as: for teaching in mass conversion areas, or for deepening in administration; also special qualifications for pioneers to specific localities (e.g., language, ethnic background, work opportunities, etc.), and useful information about the territory itself (e.g., climate, geography, living conditions, visas and governmental regulations).

22.11 II. To assist prospective pioneers in the following respects:
Place them in contact with the National Assemblies and/or national committees responsible for settling or consolidating specific localities in which pioneers would like to serve or are qualified to serve.
Furnish useful information (such as that set forth in items I. d and e above) which will enable the prospective pioneers to determine where, when and how they can best volunteer their services.
Work out, in consultation with the relevant National Assembly and the prospective pioneer, such assistance budgets as may be necessary.
22.12 The Committee will obtain the information called for above from the various National Assemblies (or their committees) in their continental areas, and there should be an exchange of vital information between the five Pioneer Committees.
22.13 Pioneer Committees will in no case assume direct responsibility for filling goals. Their function is in the nature of secondary assistance to the responsible or assisting National Assembly (or national committee). If a National Assembly can fill a goal without assistance, it need not consult a Pioneer Committee, but should keep the relevant Pioneer Committee informed as to the status of pioneer goals.
22.14 Pioneer Committees will clear with the prospective pioneer's own National Assembly before offering his services.
22.15 Foremost is the Pioneer Committee's responsibility to expedite and facilitate the transfer of pioneers from the place where they are to the goal areas where they will serve. Only such procedures as will be useful to this purpose should be adopted.
23
Election and Infallibility of the
Universal House of Justice
9 March 1965
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Netherlands
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
23.1 We are glad that you have brought to our attention the questions perplexing some of the believers. It is much better for these questions to be put freely and openly than to have them, unexpressed, burdening the hearts of devoted believers. Once one grasps certain basic principles of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh such uncertainties are easily dispelled. This is not to say that the Cause of God contains no mysteries. Mysteries there are indeed, but they are not of a kind to shake one's faith once the essential tenets of the Cause and the indisputable facts of any situation are clearly understood.
23.2 The questions put by the various believers fall into three groups. The first group centers upon the following queries: Why were steps taken to elect a Universal House of Justice with the foreknowledge that there would be no Guardian? Was the time ripe for such an action? Could not the International Bahá'í Council have carried on the work?
The Election of the Universal House of Justice
23.3 At the time of our beloved Shoghi Effendi's death it was evident, from the circumstances and from the explicit requirements of the Holy Texts,

that it had been impossible for him to appoint a successor in accordance with the provisions of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. This situation, in which the Guardian died without being able to appoint a successor, presented an obscure question not covered by the explicit Holy Text, and had to be referred to the Universal House of Justice. The friends should clearly understand that before the election of the Universal House of Justice there was no knowledge that there would be no Guardian. There could not have been any such foreknowledge, whatever opinions individual believers may have held. Neither the Hands of the Cause of God, nor the International Bahá’í Council, nor any other existing body could make a decision upon this all-important matter. Only the House of Justice had authority to pronounce upon it. This was one urgent reason for calling the election of the Universal House of Justice as soon as possible.

23.4 Following the passing of Shoghi Effendi the international administration of the Faith was carried on by the Hands of the Cause of God with the complete agreement and loyalty of the National Spiritual Assemblies and the body of the believers. This was in accordance with the Guardian’s designation of the Hands as the “Chief Stewards of Bahá’u’lláh’s embryonic World Commonwealth.”

23.5 From the very outset of their custodianship of the Cause of God the Hands realized that since they had no certainty of divine guidance such as is incontrovertibly assured to the Guardian and to the Universal House of Justice, their one safe course was to follow with undeviating firmness the instructions and policies of Shoghi Effendi. The entire history of religion shows no comparable record of such strict self-discipline, such absolute loyalty and such complete self-abnegation by the leaders of a religion finding themselves suddenly deprived of their divinely inspired guide. The debt of gratitude which mankind for generations, nay, ages to come, owes to this handful of grief-stricken, steadfast, heroic souls is beyond estimation.

23.6 The Guardian had given the Bahá’í world explicit and detailed plans covering the period until Ridván 1963, the end of the Ten Year Crusade. From that point onward, unless the Faith were to be endangered, further divine guidance was essential. This was the second pressing reason for the calling of the election of the Universal House of Justice. The rightness of the time was further confirmed by references in Shoghi Effendi’s letters to the Ten Year Crusade's being followed by other plans under the direction of the Universal House of Justice. One such reference is the following passage from a letter addressed to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles on 25 February 1951, concerning its Two Year Plan which immediately preceded the Ten Year Crusade:

23.6a On the success of this enterprise, unprecedented in its scope, unique in its character and immense in its spiritual potentialities, must depend the initiation, at a later period in the Formative Age of the Faith, of undertakings embracing within their range all National Assemblies functioning throughout the Bahá’í world—undertakings constituting in themselves a prelude to the launching of worldwide enterprises destined to be embarked upon, in future epochs of that same Age, by the Universal House of Justice, that will

symbolize the unity and coordinate and unify the activities of these National Assemblies.

23.7 Having been in charge of the Cause of God for six years, the Hands, with absolute faith in the Holy Writings, called upon the believers to elect the Universal House of Justice, and even went so far as to ask that they themselves be not voted for. The sole, sad instance of anyone succumbing to the allurements of power was the pitiful attempt of Charles Mason Remey to usurp the Guardianship.

Principles Governing the Election of the House of Justice

23.8 The following excerpts from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá state clearly and emphatically the principles with which the friends are already familiar from the Will and Testament of the Master and the various letters of Shoghi Effendi, and explain the basis for the election of the Universal House of Justice. This Tablet was sent to Persia by the beloved Guardian himself, in the early years of his ministry, for circulation among the believers.

23.9 ... for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is in a tempest of dangers and infinitely abhors differences of opinion... Praise be to God, there are no grounds for differences.

23.10The Báb, the Exalted One, is the Morn of Truth, the splendor of Whose light shineth through all regions. He is also the Harbinger of the Most Great Light, the Abhá Luminary. The Blessed Beauty is the One promised by the sacred books of the past, the revelation of the Source of light that shone upon Mount Sinai, Whose fire glowed in the midst of the Burning Bush. We are, one and all, servants of Their threshold, and stand each as a lowly keeper at Their door.

23.11My purpose is this, that ere the expiration of a thousand years, no one has the right to utter a single word, even to claim the station of Guardianship. The Most Holy Book is the Book to which all peoples shall refer, and in it the Laws of God have been revealed. Laws not mentioned in the Book should be referred to the decision of the Universal House of Justice. There will be no grounds for difference ... Beware, beware lest anyone create a rift or stir up sedition. Should there be differences of opinion, the Supreme House of Justice would immediately resolve the problems. Whatever will be its decision, by majority vote, shall be the real truth, inasmuch as that House is under the protection, unerring guidance and care of the one true Lord. He shall guard it from error and will protect it under the wing of His sanctity and infallibility. He who opposes it is cast out and will eventually be of the defeated.

23.12The Supreme House of Justice should be elected according to the system followed in the election of the parliaments of Europe. And when the countries would be guided, the Houses of Justice of the various countries would elect the Supreme House of Justice.

23.13At whatever time all the beloved of God in each country appoint their delegates, and these in turn elect their representatives, and these representatives elect a body, that body shall be regarded as the Supreme House of Justice.

23.14The establishment of that House is not dependent upon the conversion of

all the nations of the world. For example, if conditions were favorable and no disturbances would be caused, the friends in Persia would elect their representatives, and likewise the friends in America, in India, and other areas would also elect their representatives, and these would elect a House of Justice. That House of Justice would be the Supreme House of Justice. That is all.

(Makátíb-i-'Abdu'l-Bahá, Vol. III, pp. 500–501)

23.15 The friends should realize that there is nothing in the Texts to indicate that the election of the Universal House of Justice could be called only by the Guardian. On the contrary, 'Abdu'l-Bahá envisaged the calling of its election in His own lifetime. At a time described by the Guardian as "the darkest moments of His [the Master's] life, under 'Abdu'l-Hamíd's regime, when He stood ready to be deported to the most inhospitable regions of Northern Africa," and when even His life was threatened, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote to Hájí Mírzá Taqi Afnán, the cousin of the Báb and chief builder of the 'Ishqábád Temple, commanding him to arrange for the election of the Universal House of Justice should the threats against the Master materialize. The second part of the Master's Will is also relevant to such a situation and should be studied by the friends.

The Authority of the Universal House of Justice

23.16 The second series of problems vexing some of the friends centers on the question of the infallibility of the Universal House of Justice and its ability to function without the presence of the Guardian. Particular difficulty has been experienced in understanding the implications of the following statement by the beloved Guardian:

23.16aDivorced from the institution of the Guardianship the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh would be mutilated and permanently deprived of that hereditary principle which, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá has written, has been invariably upheld by the Law of God. "In all the Divine Dispensations," He states, in a Tablet addressed to a follower of the Faith in Persia, "the eldest son hath been given extraordinary distinctions. Even the station of prophethood hath been his birthright." Without such an institution the integrity of the Faith would be imperiled, and the stability of the entire fabric would be gravely endangered. Its prestige would suffer, the means required to enable it to take a long, an uninterrupted view over a series of generations would be completely lacking, and the necessary guidance to define the sphere of the legislative action of its elected representatives would be totally withdrawn.

("The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh," The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 148)

23.17Let the friends who wish for a clearer understanding of this passage at the present time consider it in the light of the many other texts which deal with the same subject, for example the following passages gleaned from the letters of Shoghi Effendi:

23.17aThey have also, in unequivocal and emphatic language, appointed those twin institutions of the House of Justice and of the Guardianship as their chosen Successors, destined to apply the principles, promulgate the laws,

protect the institutions, adapt loyally and intelligently the Faith to the requirements of progressive society, and consummate the incorruptible inheritance which the Founders of the Faith have bequeathed to the world.
(Letter dated 21 March 1930, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 20)

23.17bIt must be also clearly understood by every believer that the institution of Guardianship does not under any circumstances abrogate, or even in the slightest degree detract from, the powers granted to the Universal House of Justice by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, and repeatedly and solemnly confirmed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will. It does not constitute in any manner a contradiction to the Will and Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, nor does it nullify any of His revealed instructions. It enhances the prestige of that exalted assembly, stabilizes its supreme position, safeguards its unity, assures the continuity of its labors, without presuming in the slightest to infringe upon the inviolability of its clearly defined sphere of jurisdiction. We stand indeed too close to so monumental a document to claim for ourselves a complete understanding of all its implications, or to presume to have grasped the manifold mysteries it undoubtedly contains. ...
(Letter dated 27 February 1929, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 8)

23.17cFrom these statements it is made indubitably clear and evident that the Guardian of the Faith has been made the Interpreter of the Word and that the Universal House of Justice has been invested with the function of legislating on matters not expressly revealed in the teachings. The interpretation of the Guardian, functioning within his own sphere, is as authoritative and binding as the enactments of the International House of Justice, whose exclusive right and prerogative is to pronounce upon and deliver the final judgement on such laws and ordinances as Bahá'u'lláh has not expressly revealed. Neither can, nor will ever, infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain of the other. Neither will seek to curtail the specific and undoubted authority with which both have been divinely invested.
("The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh," The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 149-50)

23.17dEach exercises, within the limitations imposed upon it, its powers, its authority, its rights and prerogatives. These are neither contradictory, nor detract in the slightest degree from the position which each of these institutions occupies.
("The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh," The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 148)

23.17eThough the Guardian of the Faith has been made the permanent head of so august a body he can never, even temporarily, assume the right of exclusive legislation. He cannot override the decision of the majority of his fellow-members …
("The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh," The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 150)

23.18Above all, let the hearts of the friends be assured by these words of Bahá'u'lláh:

23.18aThe Hand of Omnipotence hath established His Revelation upon an unassailable, an enduring foundation. Storms of human strife are powerless to,

undermine its basis, nor will men's fanciful theories succeed in damaging its structure.
(The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 109)
and these of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:
23.18bVerily, God effecteth that which He pleaseth; naught can annul His Covenant; naught can obstruct His favor nor oppose His Cause! He doeth with His will that which pleaseth Him and He is powerful over all things! …
(Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas, Vol. III, p. 598)
23.19 It should be understood by the friends that before legislating upon any matter the Universal House of Justice studies carefully and exhaustively both the Sacred Texts and the Writings of Shoghi Effendi on the subject. The interpretations written by the beloved Guardian cover a vast range of subjects and are equally as binding as the Text itself.
Interpretations of the Guardian
and Elucidations of the Universal House of Justice
23.20 There is a profound difference between the interpretations of the Guardian and the elucidations of the House of Justice in exercise of its function to "deliberate upon all problems which have caused difference, questions that are obscure and matters that are not expressly recorded in the Book." The Guardian reveals what the Scripture means; his interpretation is a statement of truth which cannot be varied. Upon the Universal House of Justice, in the words of the Guardian, "has been conferred the exclusive right of legislating on matters not expressly revealed in the Bahá'í writings." Its pronouncements, which are susceptible of amendment or abrogation by the House of Justice itself, serve to supplement and apply the Law of God. Although not invested with the function of interpretation, the House of Justice is in a position to do everything necessary to establish the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh on this earth. Unity of doctrine is maintained by the existence of the authentic texts of Scripture and the voluminous interpretations of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi together with the absolute prohibition against anyone propounding "authoritative" or "inspired" interpretations or usurping the function of Guardian. Unity of administration is assured by the authority of the Universal House of Justice.
23.21"Such," in the words of Shoghi Effendi, "is the immutability of His revealed Word. Such is the elasticity which characterizes the functions of His appointed ministers. The first preserves the identity of His Faith, and guards the integrity of His law. The second enables it, even as a living organism, to expand and adapt itself to the needs and requirements of an ever-changing society."
(Letter dated 21 March 1930, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 23)
23.22 Every true believer, if he is to deepen in his understanding of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh must needs combine profound faith in the unfailing efficacy of His Message and His Covenant, with the humility of recognizing that no one of this generation can claim to have embraced the vastness of His Cause nor to have comprehended the manifold mysteries and potentialities it contains. The words of Shoghi Effendi bear ample testimony to this fact:
23.22aHow vast is the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh! How great the magnitude

of His blessings showered upon humanity in this day! And yet, how poor, how inadequate our conception of their significance and glory! This generation stands too close to so colossal a Revelation to appreciate, in their full measure, the infinite possibilities of His Faith, the unprecedented character of His Cause, and the mysterious dispensations of His Providence.
(Letter dated 21 March 1930, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 24)

23.22b We are called upon by our beloved Master in His Will and Testament not only to adopt it [Bahá'u'lláh's new world order] unreservedly, but to unveil its merit to all the world. To attempt to estimate its full value, and grasp its exact significance after so short a time since its inception would be premature and presumptuous on our part. We must trust to time, and the guidance of God's Universal House of Justice, to obtain a clearer and fuller understanding of its provisions and implications. …
(Letter dated 23 February 1924, published in Bahá'í Administration, p. 62)

23.22cAs to the order and the management of the spiritual affairs of the friends, that which is very important now is the consolidation of the Spiritual Assemblies in every center, because on these fortified and unshakeable foundations, God's Supreme House of Justice shall be erected and firmly established in the days to come. When this most great Edifice shall be reared on such an immovable foundation, Gods purpose, wisdom, universal truths, mysteries and realities of the Kingdom, which the mystic revelation of Bahá'u'lláh has deposited within the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, shall gradually be revealed and made manifest.
(Letter dated 19 December 1923—translated from the Persian)

23.23 Statements such as these indicate that the full meaning of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as well as an understanding of the implications of the World Order ushered in by that remarkable document can be revealed only gradually to men's eyes, and after the Universal House of Justice has come into being. The friends are called upon to trust to time and to await the guidance of the Universal House of Justice, which, as circumstances require, will make pronouncements that will resolve and clarify obscure matters.

The Authority to Expel Members of the House of Justice

23.24 The third group of queries raised by the friends concerns details of functioning of the Universal House of Justice in the absence of the Guardian, particularly the matter of expulsion of members of the House of Justice. Such questions will be clarified in the Constitution of the House of Justice, the formulation of which is a goal of the Nine Year Plan. Meanwhile the friends are informed that any member committing a "sin injurious to the common weal," may be expelled from membership of the House of Justice by a majority vote of the House itself. Should any member, God forbid, be guilty of breaking the Covenant, the matter would be investigated by the Hands of the Cause of God, and the Covenant-breaker would be expelled by decision of the Hands of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land, subject to the approval of the House of Justice, as in the case of any other believer. The decision of the Hands in such a case would be announced to the Bahá'í world by the Universal House of Justice.

23.25 We are certain that when you share this letter with the friends and they have these quotations from the Scriptures and the Writings of the Guardian drawn to their attention, their doubts and misgivings will be dispelled and they will be able to devote their every effort to spreading the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, serenely confident in the power of His Covenant to overcome whatever tests an inscrutable Providence may shower upon it, thus demonstrating its ability to redeem a travailing world and to upraise the Standard of the Kingdom of God on earth.

With loving greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

24

Ridván Message 1965

Ridván 1965

The Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

24.1 The tide of victory which carried the Bahá'í World community to the celebrations of the Most Great Jubilee is still rising. A ceaseless shower of divine confirmation rains upon our efforts, its evidences apparent in the many noteworthy achievements of the few brief months since the launching of the Nine Year Plan. The most spectacular of these is the increase in the number of centers where Bahá'ís reside from fifteen thousand one hundred and sixty-eight at Ridván 1964 to twenty-one thousand and six at the present time, an increase of nearly six thousand in one year. No less remarkable is the progress of the teaching work in India where the number of believers now exceeds a hundred and forty thousand, an increase of more than thirty thousand since Ridván 1964 Pioneers are moving to those few remaining territories of the earth as yet unillumined by the light of God's new Revelation; "the vast increase" in the size of the Cause, called for at the launching of the Plan, appears to be developing, while in country after country the institutions and endowments of the Faith are being steadily and firmly established.

World Center Goals

24.2 During the past twelve months the goals assigned to the World Center have been actively pursued. Basic decisions and actions to implement the goal of "Development of the Institution of the Hands of the Cause of God, with a view to extension into the future of its appointed functions of protection and propagation," have already been conveyed to the friends. Following their meeting in the Holy Land last October, the members of this august body, the Standard-Bearers of this Nine Year Plan as well as of the beloved Guardian's Ten Year Crusade, already laden with honors and services, have arisen with renewed and matchless vigor to rouse the spirits of the friends to meet the supreme teaching challenge, to lend their counsel and assistance to the administrative bodies, and to diffuse the divine fragrances and love of God through all the world. The increase in the numbers of Board members and the new executive arrangements will, it is confidently anticipated, enable the beloved Hands to discharge their important duties with even greater effectiveness and give them more time to travel and teach.

24.3 A preliminary survey of the conditions affecting the construction of

the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of Latin America, one of the two edifices to be erected during the Plan, has already been undertaken, and we now invite Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í architects to submit designs for the Panama Temple. The terms and conditions of the submission, and the specifications of the structure, may be obtained from the National Spiritual Assembly of Panama, whose choice of design will be subject to the ultimate approval of the Universal House of Justice. It is our hope that the construction of this sacred House of Worship, in a location accorded such special significance by both the Master and the Guardian, will be speedily accomplished, so that its beacon of spiritual light may radiate to all the Americas.

Worldwide Achievements

24.4 During the past twelve months the following new territories have been opened to the Faith: in the continent of Africa, Gabon, Ifni, Mali, Mauritania, Rodrigues Island and Upper Volta; in the continent of America, Aruba Island, Cozumel Island, Guadeloupe, Las Mujeres Island, Prince of Wales Island and St. Vincent; in the continent of Asia, the Ryukyu Islands; in the continent of Australasia, the Line Islands; in the continent of Europe, the Isle of Wight, the East and West Frisian Islands. The following territories have been reopened: in the continent of Africa, Mafia Island; in the continent of America, Antigua, French Guiana and Martinique; West Irian in the continent of Asia; and Admiralty Islands in Australasia. National Hazíratu'l-Quds have been acquired in nine places, the seats of National Spiritual Assemblies, and land has been acquired in two others on which to build this institution. Six National Spiritual Assemblies have become incorporated and the Faith has been recognized in Cambodia, a country destined to have its own National Spiritual Assembly during the Nine Year Plan. National Endowments have been acquired in eight countries; six Teaching Institutes have been established, and land has been acquired for six others; a Bahá'í Publishing Trust for the provision of literature in the French language has been established in Brussels; Bahá'í Holy Days have been recognized in three territories; Bahá'í literature has been published in the following eleven new languages: lbibio-Efik in the continent of Africa, Aguacateca, Athabascan, Cariña and Motilon-Yukpa in the continent of America, Kenyah, Melanau and Temiar in the continent of Asia, and Ghari, Marshallese and Motua in Australasia. The progress of the Cause in Borneo makes possible the achievement of a goal supplementary to the Plan, namely the establishment at Ridván 1966 of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Brunei.

Two Conditions of the Bahá'í World Community

24.5 The passage of the first year of the Plan discloses two conditions in the Bahá'í World community. The first, within the Faith itself, is its capacity to accomplish all and any definitive goals assigned to it, goals such as the purchasing of Hazíratu'l-Quds, Temple Sites, Endowments, or the incorporation of Spiritual Assemblies; such objective and highly important goals as these, by which the Cause is established physically, legally and socially in the world, are now taken in its stride by the Administrative Order. It should be noted, moreover, that the accomplishment of many goals of this type, involves inter-Assembly cooperation, an international activity vital to

the development of world order.

24.6 The second condition apparent after the passage of the first year of the Plan, involves the relationship of the Cause to humanity. Almost universally there is a sense of an impending breakthrough in large-scale conversion. Reports of the Hands of the Cause and of Board members constantly mention it; many National Spiritual Assemblies believe that they have reached the shores of this ocean. And, indeed, entry into the Cause by troops has been a fact in some areas for a number of years. But greater things are ahead. The teaching of the Faith must enkindle a world-encircling fire in whose light the Cause and the world—protagonists of the greatest drama in human history—are clearly illumined. Destiny is carrying us to this climax; we must gird ourselves for heroism.

Four Immediate Tasks

24.7 Four challenging and immediate tasks present themselves. The first is to raise and dispatch, during the coming year, no less than four hundred and sixty pioneers who will open the fifty-four remaining virgin territories of the Plan, resettle the eighteen unoccupied ones, reinforce areas where the numbers and cohesion of the Bahá'í communities are at present inadequate to launch effective teaching plans, and support and extend the work in the areas of mass teaching. Let every believer consider this challenge, be he, in the words of the beloved Guardian, "in active service or not, of either sex, young as well as old, rich or poor, whether veteran or newly enrolled ..."

24.8 To assist the pioneer efforts of the friends and their transfer to their Posts during the next twelve months we announce the formation of five Continental Pioneer Committees, namely: Pioneer Committee for Africa appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles; Pioneer Committee for the Americas appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States; Pioneer Committee for Asia appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Persia; Pioneer Committee for Australasia appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Australia; Pioneer Committee for Europe appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Germany.

24.9 These Committees will in no way infringe the responsibilities of other Pioneer Committees, or of National Spiritual Assemblies, who are in charge of the teaching work, and under whose jurisdiction they will function. They are established to facilitate and assist the work of these national bodies by providing effective exchange of vital information, both continentally and intercontinentally, by assisting in the routing of pioneer offers and in the transfer of pioneers to their posts.

24.10 A careful estimate has been made of the pioneer needs of every area during the next twelve months and the result, including those for the seventy-two areas mentioned above, is a call for four hundred and sixty-one pioneers; eighty-six for Africa, ninety-six for the Americas, one hundred and ninety-one for Asia, twenty- nine for Australasia, and fifty-nine for Europe. Each National Spiritual Assembly has been consulted as to its pioneer needs and these have been made known to all National Spiritual Assemblies as well as to the five Continental Pioneer Committees, who will be kept currently informed of

progress by the National Spiritual Assemblies. The friends, therefore, are urged to consult their National Spiritual Assemblies for information about pioneer needs and responsibilities both of their own communities and in general.

24.11 For the first time in Bahá'í history, an International Deputization Fund has been established at the World Center under the administration of the Universal House of Justice. From it supplementary support will be given to specific pioneering projects when other funds are not available. All friends, and particularly those who are unable to respond to the pioneer call are invited to support this Fund, mindful of the injunction of Bahá'u'lláh, "Center your energies in the propagation of the Faith of God. Whoso is worthy of so high a calling, let him arise and promote it. Whoso is unable, it is his duty to appoint him who will, in his stead, proclaim this Revelation, Whose power hath caused the foundations of the mightiest structures to quake, every mountain to be crushed into dust, and every soul to be dumbfounded."

24.12 The second challenge facing us is to raise the intensity of teaching to a pitch never before attained, in order to realize that "vast increase" called for in the Plan. Universal participation and constant action will win this goal. Every believer has a part to play, and is capable of playing it, for every soul meets others, and, as promised by Bahá'u'lláh, "Whosoever ariseth to aid Our Cause God will render him victorious ..." The confusion of the world is not diminishing, rather does it increase with each passing day, and men and women are losing faith in human remedies. Realization is at last dawning that "There is no place to flee to" save God. Now is the golden opportunity; people are willing, in many places eager, to listen to the divine remedy.

24.13 The third challenge is to acquire as rapidly as possible all the remaining National Hazíratu'l-Quds, Temple Sites, National Endowments and Teaching Institutes called for in the Plan. The speedy conclusion of these projects will save tremendous expense later and endow the Faith with increasingly valuable properties. These basic possessions are the embryos of mighty institutions of the future, but it is this generation, which, for its own protection and as its gift to posterity, must acquire them. We call upon the National Spiritual Assemblies charged with responsibility in this field to accord it high priority. A further, but equally important consideration, is, that the achievement of this goal in the early years of the Plan will liberate the energies and resources of the growing world community for a concentrated, resolute and relentless pursuit in its later stages of great victories whose foundations are now being laid.

The Centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's Proclamation to the Kings

24.14 The fourth challenge is to prepare national and local plans for the befitting celebration of the centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's proclamation of His Message in September/October, 1867, to the kings and rulers of the world, celebrations to be followed during the remainder of the Nine Year Plan by a sustained and well-planned program of proclamation of that same Message to the generality of mankind.

24.15 A review of the historic proclamation by Bahá'u'lláh, as described by Shoghi Effendi in God Passes By, reveals that its "opening notes" were "sounded during the latter part of Bahá'u'lláh's banishment to Adrianople," and that, six years later, it "closed during the early years of His incarceration in the prison-fortress of 'Akká." These "opening notes" were the mighty and awe-inspiring words addressed by Him to the kings and rulers collectively in the Súriy-i-Mulúk, "the most momentous Tablet revealed by Bahá'u'lláh." It was penned some time during the months of September and October, 1867, and was followed by "Tablets unnumbered … in which the implications of His newly-asserted claims were fully expounded." "Kings and emperors, severally and collectively; the chief magistrates of the Republics of the American continent; ministers and ambassadors; the Sovereign Pontiff himself; the Vicar of the Prophet of Islám; the royal Trustee of the Kingdom of the Hidden Imám; the monarchs of Christendom, its patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, priests and monks; the recognized leaders of both the Sunní and Shí'ah sacerdotal orders; the high priests of the Zoroastrian religion; the philosophers, the ecclesiastical leaders, the wise men and the inhabitants of Constantinople—that proud seat of both the Sultánate and the Caliphate; the entire company of the professed adherents of the Zoroastrian, the Jewish, the Christian and Muslim Faiths; the people of the Bayán; the wise men of the world, its men of letters, its poets, its mystics, its tradesmen, the elected representatives of its peoples; His own countrymen"; all were "brought directly within the purview of the exhortations, the warnings, the appeals, the declarations and the prophecies which constitute the theme of His momentous summons to the leaders of mankind ..." "Unique and stupendous as was this proclamation, it proved to be but a prelude to a still mightier revelation of the creative power of its Author, and to what may well rank as the most signal act of His ministry the promulgation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas." In this, the Most Holy Book, revealed in 1873, Bahá'u'lláh not only once more announces to the kings of the earth collectively that "He Who is the King of Kings hath appeared" but addresses reigning sovereigns distinctively by name and proclaims to the "Rulers of America and the Presidents of the Republics therein" that "the Promised One hath appeared." Such was the proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh to mankind. As He Himself testified, "Never since the beginning of the world hath the Message been so openly proclaimed."

24.16 The celebration of this fate-laden centenary period will open with a visit, in September 1967, on the Feast of Mashíyyat, by a few appointed representatives of the Bahá'í World to the site of the house in Adrianople, where the historic Súriy-i-Mulúk was revealed.

Six Intercontinental Conferences

24.17 Immediately following this joyful and pious act, six Intercontinental Conferences will be simultaneously held during the month of October in Panama City, Wilmette, Sydney, Kampala, Frankfurt, and New Delhi. The host and convenor of each Conference will be the National Spiritual Assembly in whose area it takes place. The following Hands of the Cause of God will represent the Universal House of Justice at these Conferences: Panama City—

Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, who will, on that occasion, lay the foundation stone of the Temple; Wilmette—Leroy Ioas; Sydney—Ugo Giachery; Kampala—'Alí-Akbar Furútan; Frankfurt—Paul Haney; New Delhi—Abu'l-Qásim Faizi.

24.18 All National Spiritual Assemblies are called upon to arrange befitting observances, on a national and local scale, of the opening of the centenary period during September/October, 1967, and between the above Conferences and Ridván 1968, at which time the second International Convention for the election of the Universal House of Justice will be held at the World Center.

24.19 The successful carrying out of all these plans will constitute a befitting commemoration, commensurate with the resources of the Bahá'í World community, of the sacred event they recall.

A Period of Proclamation

24.20 These six Conferences, like the epoch-making event whose centenary they commemorate, will sound the "opening notes" of a period of proclamation of the Cause of God extending through the remaining years of the Nine Year Plan to the centenary, in 1973, of the Revelation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, and activity which calls for the ardent and imaginative study of all National and Local Spiritual Assemblies throughout the world.

24.21 The international scene will witness the holding of Oceanic Conferences forecast by Shoghi Effendi. The first one will be held during August 1968 on an island in the Mediterranean Sea to commemorate Bahá'u'lláh's voyage upon that sea, a hundred years before, from Gallipoli in Turkey to the Most Great Prison in 'Akká. In the subsequent years of the Nine Year Plan, others will be held in the Atlantic Ocean, in the Caribbean Sea, the Pacific Ocean, and the Indian Ocean.

24.22 In calling upon all National Spiritual Assemblies to consider now the appointment of National Proclamation Committees charged with laying feasible and effective plans for the proclamation of the Faith throughout the entire centenary period, we can do no better than call attention to the following passage from a letter written by our beloved Guardian in connection with the celebrations of the centenary of the birth of the Bahá'í Era:

24.22a An unprecedented, a carefully conceived, efficiently coordinated, nation-wide campaign, aiming at the proclamation of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, through speeches, articles in the press, and radio broadcasts, should be promptly initiated and vigorously prosecuted. The universality of the Faith, its aims and purposes, episodes in its dramatic history, testimonials to its transforming power, and the character and distinguishing features of its World Order should be emphasized and explained to the general public, and particularly to eminent friends and leaders sympathetic to its cause, who should be approached and invited to participate in the celebrations. Lectures, conferences, banquets, special publications should, to whatever extent is practicable and according to the resources at the disposal of the believers, proclaim the character of this joyous Festival.

Gathering Momentum of the Process Launched in 1953

24.23 The majestic process launched by our beloved Guardian in 1953, when

he called the widely scattered, obscure Bahá'í World community to embark upon that first, glorious, world-encompassing crusade, is gathering momentum, and posterity may well gaze with awe upon the development, by so small a fraction of the human race and in a world entangled in opposition, enmity and disruption, of the very pattern and sinews of world order. This divinely propelled and long-promised development must continue its historic course until its final consummation in the glories and splendors of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, the Kingdom of God on earth.

The Universal House of Justice

25

Passing of the Hand of the Cause of God Leroy Ioas

22 July 1965

To the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States

25.1 GRIEVE ANNOUNCE PASSING OUTSTANDING HAND CAUSE LEROY IOAS. HIS LONG SERVICE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY UNITED STATES CROWNED ELEVATION RANK HAND FAITH PAVING WAY HISTORIC DISTINGUISHED SERVICES HOLY LAND. APPOINTMENT FIRST SECRETARY GENERAL INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE GUARDIAN FAITH TWO INTERCONTINENTAL CONFERENCES ASSOCIATION HIS NAME BY BELOV GUARDIAN OCTAGON DOOR BÁB'S SHRINE TRIBUTE SUPERVISORY WORK DRUM DOME THAT HOLY SEPULCHRE NOTABLE PART ERECTION INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES BUILDING ALL ENSU HIS NAME IMMORTAL ANNALS FAITH. LAID TO REST BAHÁ'Í CEMETERY CLOSE FELLOW HANDS ADVISE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL SERVICES. …

The Universal House of Justice

26

Purification of the Most Holy Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh,
the Qiblih of the Bahá'í World

11 November 1965

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

26.1ANNOUNCE BAHÁ'Í WORLD REMOVAL FROM IMMEDIATE PRECINCTS HOLY SHRINE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH REMAINS MÍRZÁ DÍYÁ'U'LLÁH YOUNGER BROTHER MÍRZÁ MUHAMMAD-'ALÍ HIS ACCOMPLICE IN EFFORTS SUBVERT FOUNDATIONS COVENANT GOD SOON AFTER ASCENSION BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. THIS FINAL STEP IN PROCESS PURIFICATION SACRED INTERNATIONAL ENDOWMENTS FAITH IN BAHJÍ FROM PAST CONTAMINATION WAS PROVIDENTIALLY UNDERTAKEN UPON REQUEST FAMILY OLD COVENANT-BREAKERS A PROCESS WHOSE INITIAL STAGE WAS FULFILLED BY 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ WHICH GATHERED MOMENTUM EARLY YEARS BELOVED GUARDIAN'S MINISTRY THROUGH EVACUATION MANSION ATTAINED CLIMAX THROUGH PURIFICATION HARAM-I-AQDAS AND NOW CONSUMMATED THROUGH CLEANSING INNER SANCTUARY MOST HALLOWED SHRINE QIBLIH BAHÁ'Í WORLD PRESAGING EVENTUAL CONSTRUCTION BEFITTING MAUSOLEUM AS ANTICIPATED BELOVED SIGN GOD ON EARTH.

The Universal House of Justice

27

Reasons for Delay in Translating and Publishing
the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

6 December 1965

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

27.1 We have received a number of inquiries as to the translation and publication of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas from friends who are unable to read it in its original form. We feel the following extract from a letter written on behalf of the beloved Guardian by his secretary dated 27 December 1941, addressed to the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma clarifies this question:

27.1aThe reason it [the Kitáb-i-Aqdas] is not circulated amongst all the Bahá'ís is, first, because the Cause is not yet ready or sufficiently matured to put all the provisions of the Aqdas into effect and, second, because it is a book which requires to be supplemented by detailed explanations and to be translated into other languages by a competent body of experts. The provisions of the Aqdas are gradually, according to the progress of the Cause, being put into effect already, both in the East and the West. ...

27.2 As is well known, the beloved Guardian has already given in God Passes By, pp. 214-15, a summary of the contents of this Most Holy Book, and included the codification of all the laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas as one of the objectives of the Ten Year Crusade. It is the intention of the Universal House of Justice to achieve this objective by publishing a synopsis and codification of these laws during the current Nine Year Plan.

27.3 Much of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas has already been translated by the beloved Guardian and has been given to the friends in the West, although not designated, in every case, as coming from the Most Holy Book. We give you below a list of such references for your guidance:

Gleanings from the Writings
of Bahá'u'lláh
Sections XXXVII, LVI, LXX, LXXI,
LXXII, XCVIII, CV, CLV, CLIX,
and CLXV

The Promised Day is Come
pp. 26 (1st para.), 36-37 (until the end of 2nd para.), 40 (2nd para.), and 84-85 (until the end of 1st para.)

The Challenging Requirements of the Present Hour
pp. 16-17 (until the end of 1st para.)

Bahá'í Administration
p. 21 (1st para.)

The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh
p. 134 (2nd para.)

The Bahá'í Community (1963 edition)
p. 4 (2nd & 3rd paras.)

Star of the West, Vol. XIV
pp. 112-14

27.4 The two reasons given by the Guardian in the extract of the letter quoted above need further amplification:

27.4a 1. As regards the first reason, regarding the timeliness of putting into effect all the provisions of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, it must be borne in mind that the beloved Guardian further stated:

... the Laws revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in the Aqdas are, whenever practicable and not in direct conflict with the Civil Law of the land,

absolutely binding on every believer or Bahá'í institution whether in the East or in the West. Certain laws, such as fasting, obligatory prayers, the consent of the parents before marriage, avoidance of alcoholic drinks, monogamy, should be regarded by all believers as universally and vitally applicable at the present time. Others have been formulated in anticipation of a state of society destined to emerge from the chaotic conditions that prevail today. When the Aqdas is published this matter will be further explained and elucidated. What has not been formulated in the Aqdas, in addition to matters of detail and of secondary importance arising out of the application of the Laws already formulated by Bahá'u'lláh, will have to be enacted by the Universal House of Justice. ...
(Bahá'í News, October 1935)
The Guardian has further written:
It should be noted in this connection that this Administrative Order is fundamentally different from anything that any Prophet has previously established, inasmuch as Bahá'u'lláh has Himself revealed its principles, established its institutions, appointed the person to interpret His Word and conferred the necessary authority on the body designed to supplement and apply His legislative ordinances. Therein lies the secret of its strength, its fundamental distinction, and the guarantee against disintegration and schism. ...
(The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 145)
27.4b 2. As to the second reason given by the beloved Guardian in the extract referred to above, it
must be noted that the supplementary material to go with the publication of the laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas may well include the following items, all of which require careful research and translation:
The Annex to the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Questions and Answers. (God Passes By, p. 219)
Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh in "elaboration and elucidation of some of the laws He [Bahá'u'lláh] had already laid down." (God Passes By, p. 216)
Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh establishing "subsidiary ordinances designed to supplement the provisions of His Most Holy Book." (God Passes By, p. 216)
The Letters and Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi in interpretation of the laws and ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.
Other explanations and footnotes that may be required in elucidation of the provisions of that Book.
27.5 We hope the foregoing will clarify the matter for the friends....
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice
28
Call for Pioneers
10 December 1965
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
28.1ANNOUNCE ALL BELIEVERS REJOICE RESPONSE BAHÁ'Í WORLD PIONEER CALL RAISED RIDVÁN MESSAGE REQUIRING 460 PIONEERS COURSE CURRENT YEAR. THUS FAR 93 SETTLED POSTS INCLUDING 15 VIRGIN TERRITORIES ST. ANDRES ISLAND PROVIDENCIA

ISLAND MARMARA ISLAND CHAD NIGER CAYMAN ISLANDS TURKS AND CAICOS ISCHIA GOTLA
ALASKA PENINSULA BARBUDA ST. KITTS-NEVIS INNER HEBRIDES BORNHOLM CAPRI 35
ADDITIONAL SETTLED SAME GOALS 167 MORE ARISEN AND IN PROCESS SETTLING TOTALLING
295 SOULS RESPONDED CALL. FURTHER 200 BELIEVERS NEEDED NEXT FOUR SWIFTLY
PASSING MONTHS FILL REMAINING GOALS. FATE PIONEER PLAN HANGING BALANCE PRAYING
FERVENTLY HOLY SHRINES REQUIRED NUMBER HEROIC SOULS PROMPTLY ARISE MEET
CHALLENGE CRITICAL HOUR URGE NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES NEEDING FUNDS EXECUTE
ASSIGNMENTS APPLY IMMEDIATELY INTERNATIONAL DEPUTIZATION FUND. IMPERATIVE
SETTLE ALL TERRITORIES ANNOUNCED RIDVÁN EXCEPT THOSE DEPENDENT FAVORABLE
CIRCUMSTANCES. VIRGIN AND RESETTLEMENT TERRITORIES PRIORITY CONFIDENT SPIRIT
DEVOTION FRIENDS GLORIOUS FAITH ENSURE BRILLIANT VICTORY THIS PRIMARY OBJECTIVE
SO VITAL NINE YEAR PLAN.

The Universal House of Justice

29

Observance of Bahá'í Holy Days

28 January 1966

To National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá’í Friends,

29.1 From time to time questions have arisen about the application of the law of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas on the observance of Bahá’í Holy Days. As you know, the recognition of Bahá’í Holy Days in at least ninety-five countries of the world is an important and highly significant objective of the Nine Year Plan, and is directly linked with the recognition of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh by the civil authorities as an independent religion enjoying its own rights and privileges.

29.2 The attainment of this objective will be facilitated and enhanced if the friends, motivated by their own realization of the importance of the laws of Bahá’u’lláh, are obedient to them. For the guidance of believers we repeat the instructions of the beloved Guardian:

29.2aHe wishes also to stress the fact that, according to our Bahá’í laws, work is forbidden on our nine Holy Days. Believers who have independent businesses or shops should refrain from working on these days. Those who are in government employ should, on religious grounds, make an effort to be excused from work; all believers, whoever their employers, should do likewise. If the government, or other employers, refuse to grant them these days off, they are not required to forfeit their employment, but they should make every effort to have the independent status of their Faith recognized and their right to hold their own religious Holy Days acknowledged.

(From letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the American National Spiritual Assembly, dated 7 July 1947—Bahá’í News, No. 198, p. 3)

29.2b

29.2bThis distinction between institutions that are under full or partial Bahá’í control is of a fundamental importance. Institutions that are entirely managed by Bahá’ís are, for reasons that are only too obvious, under the obligation of enforcing all the laws and ordinances of the Faith, especially those whose observance constitutes a matter of conscience. There is no reason, no justification whatever, that they should act otherwise ... The

point which should be always remembered is that the issue in question is essentially a matter of conscience, and as such is of a binding effect upon all believers. ...
(From letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the American National Spiritual Assembly, dated 2 October 1935—Bahá'í News, No. 97, p. 9)
29.3 In addition, steps should be taken to have Bahá'í children excused, on religious grounds, from attending school on Bahá'í Holy Days wherever possible. The Guardian has said: 29.3a
29.3aRegarding children: at fifteen a Bahá'í is of age as far as keeping the laws of the Aqdas is concerned—prayer, fasting, etc. But children under fifteen should certainly observe the Bahá'í Holy Days, and not go to school, if this can be arranged, on these nine days.
(From letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the American National Spiritual Assembly, dated 25 October 1947)
29.4 National Assemblies should give this subject their careful consideration, and should provide ways and means for bringing this matter to the attention of the believers under their jurisdiction so that, as a matter of conscience, the mass of believers will uphold these laws and observe them.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice
30
Further Thoughts about Mass Teaching
2 February 1966
To all National Spiritual Assemblies Engaged in Mass Teaching Work
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
30.1 Since writing to the National Spiritual Assemblies of the world regarding the importance of teaching the masses, we have received reports from all over the world indicating the steady increase in the number of believers, the concentration of the friends on the more receptive areas, however remote these may have been, and the opening up of new and challenging fields for expansion and service. In this letter we wish once again to stress the importance of this subject, share with you our thoughts regarding the supreme need to preserve the victories you have already won and the necessity to pursue the vital work in which you are engaged and to which the eyes of your sister communities in East and West are turned with admiration.
30.2 It has been due to the splendid victories in large-scale conversion that the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh has entered a new phase in its development and establishment throughout the world. It is imperative, therefore, that the process of teaching the masses be not only maintained but accelerated. The teaching committee structure that each National Assembly may adopt to ensure best results in the extension of its teaching work is a matter left entirely to its discretion, but an efficient teaching structure there must be, so that the tasks are carried out with dispatch and in accordance with the administrative principles of our Faith. From among the believers native to each country, competent traveling teachers must be selected and teaching projects worked out. In the words of our beloved Guardian, commenting upon the teaching work in Latin America: "Strong and sustained support should be given to the vitally

needed and highly meritorious activities started by the native ... traveling teachers, ... who, as the mighty task progresses, must increasingly bear the brunt of responsibility for the propagation of the Faith in their homelands."

30.3 While this vital teaching work is progressing each National Assembly must ever bear in mind that expansion and consolidation are inseparable processes that must go hand in hand. The interdependence of these processes is best elucidated in the following passage from the writings of the beloved Guardian: "Every outward thrust into new fields, every multiplication of Bahá'í institutions, must be paralleled by a deeper thrust of the roots which sustain the spiritual life of the community and ensure its sound development. From this vital, this ever-present need attention must, at no time, be diverted; nor must it be, under any circumstances, neglected, or subordinated to the no less vital and urgent task of ensuring the outer expansion of Bahá'í administrative institutions. That this community ... may maintain a proper balance between these two essential aspects of its development ... is the ardent hope of my heart." To ensure that the spiritual life of the individual believer is continuously enriched, that local communities are becoming increasingly conscious of their collective duties, and that the institutions of an evolving administration are operating efficiently, is, therefore, as important as expanding into new fields and bringing in the multitudes under the shadow of the Cause.

30.4 These objectives can only be attained when each National Spiritual Assembly makes proper arrangements for all the friends to be deepened in the knowledge of the Faith. The National Spiritual Assemblies in consultation with the Hands of the Cause, who are the Standard-Bearers of the Nine Year Plan, should avail themselves of the assistance of Auxiliary Board members, who, together with the traveling teachers selected by the Assembly or its Teaching Committees, should be continuously encouraged to conduct deepening courses at Teaching Institutes and to make regular visits to Local Spiritual Assemblies. The visitors, whether Board members or traveling teachers should meet on such occasions not only with the Local Assembly but, of course, with the local community members, collectively at general meetings and even, if necessary, individually in their homes.

30.5 The subjects to be discussed at such meetings with the Local Assembly and the friends should include among others the following points:

the extent of the spread and stature of the Faith today;

the importance of the daily obligatory prayers (at least the short prayer);

the need to educate Bahá'í children in the Teachings of the Faith and encourage them to memorize some of the prayers;

the stimulation of youth to participate in community life by giving talks, etc. and having their own activities, if possible;

the necessity to abide by the laws of marriage, namely, the need to have a Bahá'í ceremony, to obtain the consent of parents, to observe monogamy; faithfulness after marriage; likewise the importance of abstinence from all intoxicating drinks and drugs;

the local Fund and the need for the friends to understand that the voluntary act of contributing to the Fund is both a privilege and a spiritual obligation.

There should also be discussion of various methods that could be followed by the friends to facilitate their contributions and the ways open to the Local Assembly to utilize its local Fund to serve the interests of its community and the Cause;
the importance of the Nineteen Day Feast and the fact that it should be a joyful occasion and rallying point of the entire community;
the manner of election with as many workshops as required, including teaching of simple methods of balloting for illiterates, such as having one central home as the place for balloting and arranging for one literate person, if only a child, to be present at that home during the whole day, if necessary;
last but not least, the all-important teaching work, both in the locality and its neighboring centers, as well as the need to continuously deepen the friends in the essentials of the Faith. The friends should be made to realize that in teaching the Faith to others they should not only aim at assisting the seeking soul to join the Faith, but also at making him a teacher of the Faith and its active supporter.

30.6 All the above points should, of course, be stressed within the framework of the importance of the Local Spiritual Assembly, which should be encouraged to vigorously direct its attention to these vital functions and become the very heart of the community life of its own locality, even if its meetings should become burdened with the problems of the community. The local friends should understand the importance of the law of consultation and realize that it is to the Local Spiritual Assembly that they should turn, abide by its decisions, support its projects, cooperate wholeheartedly with it in its task to promote the interests of the Cause, and seek its advice and guidance in the solution of personal problems and the adjudication of disputes, should any arise amongst the members of the community.

30.7 As the Universal House of Justice intends to have on file a full record of the progress of the teaching work in large-scale conversion areas, we request you to send us any published material, such as forms, cards, pamphlets, pictures, audiovisual aids, deepening booklets, etc. that you are currently using, with adequate explanations by your Assembly as to how they are being used, and any comments you may wish to make about their usefulness. Your National Assembly should also feel free to share with us your problems and needs as well as any recommendations you may have. We are looking forward to receiving a prompt reply to this letter, as we feel that an early evaluation of the methods used in various fields of teaching is vital and essential at this time.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice

31

Call for Pioneers and Traveling Teachers
18 March 1966
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,

31.1 The message of the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'í world this Ridván will raise a call for volunteers to engage in traveling

teaching in all parts of the world and for whatever periods of time are possible. The purpose is to develop a band of international teachers who will, by the very fact of being visitors from other countries, stimulate interest on the various homefronts which they visit.

31.2 The Continental Pioneer Committees for Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australasia and Europe have been given the additional function of assisting National Assemblies to make the most efficient use of any who may volunteer to travel and teach in countries other than their own. The procedures to be followed are attached to this letter. As you will note we are extending the use of the International Deputization Fund to deserving international teaching projects which cannot otherwise be financed.

31.3 This advanced information is given to National Assemblies so that they may be prepared to accept and utilize the offers of traveling teachers as soon as they arise.

31.4 It is requested that the subject of traveling teachers be placed on the Agenda for consultation at the National Convention, and that the friends be given every encouragement to respond to this call.

31.5 Since the announcement of this plan is a part of the Ridván message, your Assembly should wait until the Convention before announcing it to the friends.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

31.6 P.S. The locale of the Pioneer Committee for Africa is being changed to Uganda effective at

Ridván. For the time being please contact the Committee in care of that National

Assembly.

32

Fiftieth Anniversary of the Revelation of the
Tablets of the Divine Plan

22 March 1966

To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

32.1JOYOUSLY HAIL FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY REVELATION FIRST OF TABLETS DIVINE PLAN CHARTER PROPAGATION FAITH THROUGHOUT WORLD. PRAYING SHRINES OBSERVANCE OCCASION MAY BE SOURCE RENEWED ENTHUSIASM DEDICATION FRIENDS ACCOMPLISH GOAL WIN FRESH LAURELS SHARE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES CANADA ALASKA HAWAII.

The Universal House of Justice

33

Passing of Jessie Revell, Member of the
International Bahá'í Council

15 April 1966

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

33.1WITH PROFOUND GRIEF ANNOUNCE PASSING JESSIE REVELL HER TIRELESS STEADFAST DEVOTION FAITH SINCE BEFORE MASTER'S VISIT AMERICAN CONTINENT EARNED LOVE TRUST ADMIRATION SHOGHI EFFENDI CROWNED BY APPOINTMENT INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL DISTINGUISHED BY SERVICE TREASURER BOTH APPOINTED ELECTED COUNCILS. URGE NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS TRIBUTE UNFORGETTABLE

EXEMPLARY SERVICES FAITH....
The Universal House of Justice
34
Ridván Message 1966
Ridván 1966
The Bahá'ís of the World
Dearly loved Friends,
34.1 The Fiftieth Anniversary of the revelation by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in March and April 1916, of the first Tablets of the Divine Plan, has witnessed the conclusion of a feat of pioneering unparalleled in the annals of the Cause. A year ago the call was raised for four-hundred-and-sixty-one pioneers to leave their homes within twelve months and scatter throughout the planet to broaden and strengthen the foundations of the world community of Bahá'u'lláh. There is every hope that with the exception of thirty-four posts whose settlement is dependent upon favorable circumstances all the pioneer goals will be filled by Ridván or their settlement will be assured by firm commitments. The gratitude and admiration of the entire Bahá'í world go out to this noble band of dedicated believers who have so gloriously responded to the call. These pioneers, who have arisen for the specified goals, have been reinforced by a further forty-five believers who have settled in the goal territories, while sixty-nine more have left their homes to reside in twenty-six other countries already opened to the Faith. All told, in the course of the year, five-hundred-and-five Bahá'ís have arisen to pioneer beyond their homelands, the largest number ever to do so in any one year in the entire history of the Cause.
34.2 This is a resounding victory, and in the light of the Master's statement in the first of the Tablets of the Divine Plan, "It has often happened that one blessed soul has become the cause of the guidance of a nation," of wonderful portent for the future. Its immediate results are the opening of twenty-four new territories to the Faith, the resettlement of four others, and the consolidation of ninety-three more. The newly opened territories are: Chad and Niger in Africa; Alaskan Peninsula, Barbuda, Cayman Islands, Chiloé Island, Providencia Island, Quintana Roo Territory, Saba, St. Andrés Island, St. Eustatius, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lawrence Island, Tierra del Fuego, and Turks and Caicos Islands in the Americas; Laccadive Islands and Marmara Island in Asia; Niue Island in Australasia; and Bornholm, Capri, Elba, Gotland, Inner Hebrides, and Ischia in Europe.
34.3 The resettled territories are: Corisco Island and Spanish Guinea in Africa and Maldive Islands and Nicobar Islands in Asia.
34.4 As announced last Ridván, the first Convention of the Bahá'ís of Brunei will be held this year, during the second weekend of the Ridván period, when the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Brunei will be elected. Hand of the Cause Collis Featherstone will represent the World Center of the Faith on this historic occasion.
Formation of Nine National Assemblies at Ridván 1967
34.5 A further result of the confirmations which have rewarded the tremendous teaching effort of the past two years is the call now made by the

House of Justice for the formation at Ridván 1967 of the following nine National Spiritual Assemblies: in Africa—the National Spiritual Assembly of Algeria and Tunisia with its seat in Algiers; the National Spiritual Assembly of Cameroon Republic with its seat in Victoria and with Spanish Guinea, Fernando Po, Corisco and São Tomé and Príncipe Islands assigned to it; the National Spiritual Assembly of Swaziland, Mozambique and Basutoland with its seat in Mbabane; the National Spiritual Assembly of Zambia with its seat in Lusaka. In the Americas—the National Spiritual Assembly of the Leeward, Windward and Virgin Islands with its seat in Charlotte Amalie. In Asia—the National Spiritual Assembly of Cambodia with its seat in Phnom Penh; the National Spiritual Assembly of Eastern and Southern Arabia with its seat in Bahrayn; the National Spiritual Assembly of Taiwan with its seat in Taipei. In Australasia—the National Spiritual Assembly of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands with its seat in Tarawa. These nine new National Spiritual Assemblies constituting, together with the new National Spiritual Assembly of Brunei, ten additional pillars of the Universal House of Justice, will bring to seventy-nine the number which will take part during Ridván 1968 in the second International Convention for the election of that Institution.

Tribute to the Hands of the Cause of God

34.6 This momentous year cannot be allowed to pass without mention of the tireless and dedicated services of the beloved Hands of the Cause, the Standard-Bearers of the Nine Year Plan, and the able support rendered them by their Auxiliary Boards. The special missions which they have discharged on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, the teaching tours they have undertaken, the conferences they have organized, their constant work at the World Center, and above all their never-ending encouragement of the friends and watchfulness over the welfare of the Cause of God, have given distinction and effective leadership to the work of the entire community. The grievous loss which they sustained in the passing of Hand of the Cause Leroy Ioas is shared by the whole Bahá'í world.

Threefold Purpose of the Intercontinental Conferences

34.7 The splendid achievements in the pioneering and teaching fields, together with the enthusiastic attention given to the preparation of plans for the befitting celebration of the centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's proclamation of His Message to the kings and rulers of the world, have sealed with success the first, and opened the way for the second phase of the Nine Year Plan, a phase in which the Bahá'í world must prepare and arm itself for the third phase, beginning in October 1967 when the six intercontinental conferences will sound the "opening notes" of a period of proclamation of the Cause of God extending through the remaining years of the Nine Year Plan to the centenary, in 1973, of the revelation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. The threefold purpose of these conferences is to commemorate the centenary of the opening of Bahá'u'lláh's Own proclamation of His Mission, to proclaim the Divine Message, and to deliberate upon the tasks of the remaining years of the Nine Year Plan.

Five Tasks of the Second Phase of the Nine Year Plan

34.8 Five specific tasks face the Bahá'í world as it enters this second

phase of the Plan:
The first is to complete the settlement of the pioneers, and the dispatch of others wherever needed.
The second is intensive preparation for the third phase of the Plan through development of new teaching measures and expansion of the various Bahá'í funds at international, national and local levels.
The third is acceleration of the provision of Bahá'í literature, particularly its translation and publication in those languages in which, as yet, none has been published or the supply is inadequate.
The fourth is the acquisition of the remaining national Hazíratu'l-Quds, Temple sites, national endowments and teaching institutes called for in the Plan, before the developing inflation now affecting nearly the whole world adds too greatly to the financial burden of acquiring these properties.
The fifth is development of the Panama Temple Fund. The Universal House of Justice is initiating this Fund with a contribution of $25,000, and now calls upon the believers and Bahá'í communities to contribute liberally and continuously until the funds for the completion of this historic structure are assured. Such contributions should be sent directly to the National Spiritual Assembly of Panama. More than fifty designs have been received, and the House of Justice is now considering the recommendations of the National Assembly. The choice will be announced and the friends will be kept fully informed of the progress of this highly significant and inspiring project.

Our Challenge—To Raise the Intensity of Teaching

34.9 Every individual follower of Bahá'u'lláh, as well as the institutions of the Faith, at local, national, continental and world levels, must now meet the challenge to raise the intensity of teaching to a pitch never before attained, in order to realize that vast increase called for in the Plan.

For those believers living in countries where they have freedom to teach their Faith, this challenge is the more sharply pointed by the oppressive measures imposed on the Faith elsewhere. In Persia the believers are denied their elementary rights and the Faith is still largely proscribed. In Iraq the national and one local Hazíratu'l-Quds have been seized and the activities of the friends severely restricted. In Egypt Bahá'í properties are still confiscated and recently several believers were imprisoned for a period, and are now awaiting trial. New oppression has broken out in Indonesia where the national Hazíratu'l-Quds has been seized and organized activities of the believers have been forbidden. In yet other countries the believers are subject to restrictions and surveillance. The friends in all cases are steadfast and confident, looking forward to their emancipation and the eventual triumph of the Cause.

34.10 The challenge to the local and national administrative institutions of the Faith is to organize and promote the teaching work through systematic plans, involving not only the regular fireside meetings in the homes of the believers, the public meetings, receptions and conferences, the weekend, summer and winter schools, the youth conferences and activities, all of which are so vigorously upheld at present, but in addition through a constant stream of visiting teachers to every locality. The forces released by this latter

process have been extolled by Bahá'u'lláh in these words:

34.10aThe movement itself from place to place, when undertaken for the sake of God, hath always exerted, and can now exert, its influence in the world. In the Books of old the station of them that have voyaged far and near in order to guide the servants of God hath been set forth and written down.

while 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the Tablets of the Divine Plan, says:

34.10bTeachers must continually travel to all parts of the continent, nay, rather, to all parts of the world …

34.11 Such plans must be initiated and developed now, during this period of preparation, so that they may be fully operative by the beginning of the proclamation period from which time they must be relentlessly pursued until the end of the Plan.

34.12 The Universal House of Justice attaches such importance to this principle of traveling teaching that it has decided to develop it internationally, and now calls for volunteers to offer their services in this field. By their visits to lands other than their own, these friends will lend a tremendous stimulus to the proclamation and teaching of the Cause in all continents. It is hoped that such projects will be self-supporting, since the International Deputization Fund will still be needed for pioneering. However, when a proposal which is considered to be of special benefit to the Faith cannot be financed by the individual or the receiving National Assemblies, the House of Justice will consider a request for assistance from the Deputization Fund. Offers, which may be for any period, should be made to one's own National Spiritual Assembly or to the Continental Pioneer Committees, which have been given the additional task of assisting National Assemblies to implement and coordinate this new enterprise. Let those who arise recall the Master's injunction to "travel like 'Abdu'l-Bahá … sanctified and free from every attachment and in the utmost severance."

Consolidation—Coequal with Expansion

34.13 Simultaneous and coequal with this vast, ordered and ever-growing teaching effort, the work of consolidation must go hand in hand. In fact these two processes must be regarded as inseparable parts of the expansion of the Faith. While the work of teaching inevitably goes first, to pursue it alone without consolidation would leave the community unprepared to receive the masses who must sooner or later respond to the life-giving message of the Cause. The guidance of our beloved Guardian in this vital matter is, as ever, clear and unambiguous: "Every outward thrust into new fields, every multiplication of Bahá'í institutions, must be paralleled by a deeper thrust of the roots which sustain the spiritual life of the community and ensure its sound development. From this vital, this ever-present need attention must, at no time, be diverted; nor must it be, under any circumstances, neglected, or subordinated to the no less vital and urgent task of ensuring the outer expansion of Bahá'í administrative institutions."

A proper balance between these two essential aspects of its development must, from now on, as we enter the era of large-scale conversion, be maintained by the Bahá'í Community. Consolidation must comprise not only the establishment of Bahá'í administrative institutions, but a true deepening

in the fundamental verities of the Cause and in its spiritual principles, understanding of its prime purpose in the establishment of the unity of mankind, instruction in its standards of behavior in all aspects of private and public life, in the particular practice of Bahá'í life in such things as daily prayer, education of children, observance of the laws of Bahá'í marriage, abstention from politics, the obligation to contribute to the Fund, the importance of the Nineteen Day Feast and opportunity to acquire a sound knowledge of the present-day practice of Bahá'í administration.

The Urgent Need for an Increased Flow of Funds

34.14 The onward march of the Faith requires, and is indeed dependent upon, a very great increase in contributions to the various funds. All the goals assigned to the World Center of the Faith, and particularly those dealing with the development and beautification of the properties surrounding the Holy Shrines and the extension of the gardens on Mount Carmel entail heavy expenditures. The building of the two Temples called for in the Plan will require further large sums, and the worldwide process of teaching and consolidation now to be intensified must be sustained by a greatly increased and uninterrupted flow of funds. The International Deputization Fund must be maintained and expanded, not only for further pioneering needs, but in order to assist and develop the traveling teacher program now called for. Since only those who have openly proclaimed their recognition of Bahá'u'lláh are permitted to contribute financially to the establishment of His World Order, it is apparent that more, much more is required from the few now so privileged. Our responsibilities in this field are very great, commensurate indeed with the bounty of being the bearers of the Name of God in this day.

The Individual's Challenge

34.15 The challenge to the individual Bahá'í in every field of service, but above all in teaching the Cause of God is never-ending. With every fresh affliction visited upon mankind our inescapable duty becomes more apparent, nor should we ever forget that if we neglect this duty, "others" in the words of Shoghi Effendi, "will be called upon to take up our task as ministers to the crying needs of this afflicted world." Now, it seems, we may well be entering an era of the longed-for expansion of our beloved Faith. Mankind's growing hunger for spiritual truth is our opportunity. While reaching forth to grasp it we would do well to ponder the following words of Bahá'u'lláh:

34.15a Your behavior towards your neighbor should be such as to manifest clearly the signs of the one true God, for ye are the first among men to be recreated by His Spirit, the first to adore and bow the knee before Him, the first to circle round His throne of glory.

34.16 As humanity plunges deeper into that condition of which Bahá'u'lláh wrote, "to disclose it now would not be meet and seemly," so must the believers increasingly stand out as assured, orientated and fundamentally happy beings, conforming to a standard which, in direct contrast to the ignoble and amoral attitudes of modern society, is the source of their honor, strength and maturity. It is this marked contrast between the vigor, unity and discipline of the Bahá'í community on the one hand, and the increasing confusion, despair and feverish tempo of a doomed society on the

other, which, during the turbulent years ahead will draw the eyes of humanity to the sanctuary of Bahá'u'lláh's world-redeeming Faith.

34.17 The constant progress of the Cause of God is a source of joy to us all and a stimulus to further action. But not ordinary action. Heroic deeds are now called for such as are performed only by divinely sustained and detached souls. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Commander of the hosts of the Lord, in one of the Tablets of the Divine Plan, uttered this cry: "O that I could travel, even though on foot and in the utmost poverty, to these regions and, raising the call of 'Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá' in cities, villages, mountains, deserts and oceans, promote the Divine teachings! This, alas, I cannot do. How intensely I deplore it." And He concluded with this heart-shaking appeal, "Please God, ye may achieve it."

The Universal House of Justice

35

The Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice

27 May 1966

To an individual Bahá'í

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

35.1 ... You query the timing of the election of the Universal House of Justice in view of the Guardian's statement: "... given favorable circumstances, under which the Bahá'ís of Persia and of the adjoining countries under Soviet rule, may be enabled to elect their national representatives ... the only remaining obstacle in the way of the definite formation of the International House of Justice will have been removed." On 19 April 1947 the Guardian, in a letter written on his behalf by his secretary, replied to the inquiry of an individual believer about this passage: "At the time he referred to Russia there were Bahá'ís there, now the Community has practically ceased to exist; therefore the formation of the International House of Justice cannot depend on a Russian National Spiritual Assembly. But other strong National Spiritual Assemblies will have to be built up before it can be established."

The Provisions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will

35.2 You suggest the possibility that, for the good of the Cause, certain information concerning the succession to Shoghi Effendi is being withheld from the believers. We assure you that nothing whatsoever is being withheld from the friends for whatever reason. There is no doubt at all that in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá Shoghi Effendi was the authority designated to appoint his successor, but he had no children and all the surviving Aghsán had broken the Covenant. Thus, as the Hands of the Cause stated in 1957, it is clear that there was no one he could have appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Will. To have made an appointment outside the clear and specific provisions of the Master's Will and Testament would obviously have been an impossible and unthinkable course of action for the Guardian, the divinely appointed upholder and defender of the Covenant. Moreover, that same Will had provided a clear means for the confirmation of the Guardian's appointment of his successor, as you are aware. The nine Hands to be elected by the body of the Hands were to give their assent by secret ballot to the

Guardian's choice. In 1957 the entire body of the Hands, after fully investigating the matter, announced that Shoghi Effendi had appointed no successor and left no will. This is documented and established.

A Sign of Infallible Guidance

35.3 The fact that Shoghi Effendi did not leave a will cannot be adduced as evidence of his failure to obey Bahá'u'lláh—rather should we acknowledge that in his very silence there is a wisdom and a sign of his infallible guidance. We should ponder deeply the writings that we have, and seek to understand the multitudinous significances that they contain. Do not forget that Shoghi Effendi said two things were necessary for a growing understanding of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: the passage of time and the guidance of the Universal House of Justice.

The Infallibility of the Universal House of Justice

35.4 The infallibility of the Universal House of Justice, operating within its ordained sphere, has not been made dependent upon the presence in its membership of the Guardian of the Cause. Although in the realm of interpretation the Guardian's pronouncements are always binding, in the area of the Guardian's participation in legislation it is always the decision of the House itself which must prevail. This is supported by the words of the Guardian: "The interpretation of the Guardian, functioning within his own sphere, is as authoritative and binding as the enactments of the International House of Justice, whose exclusive right and prerogative is to pronounce upon and deliver the final judgement on such laws and ordinances as Bahá'u'lláh has not expressly revealed. Neither can, nor will ever, infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain of the other. Neither will seek to curtail the specific and undoubted authority with which both have been divinely invested.

35.5 "Though the Guardian of the Faith has been made the permanent head of so august a body he can never, even temporarily, assume the right of exclusive legislation. He cannot override the decision of the majority of his fellow-members, but is bound to insist upon a reconsideration by them of any enactment he conscientiously believes to conflict with the meaning and to depart from the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh's revealed utterances."

35.6 However, quite apart from his function as a member and sacred head for life of the Universal House of Justice, the Guardian, functioning within his own sphere, had the right and duty "to define the sphere of the legislative action" of the Universal House of Justice. In other words, he had the authority to state whether a matter was or was not already covered by the Sacred Texts and therefore whether it was within the authority of the Universal House of Justice to legislate upon it. No other person, apart from the Guardian, has the right or authority to make such definitions. The question therefore arises: In the absence of the Guardian, is the Universal House of Justice in danger of straying outside its proper sphere and thus falling into error? Here we must remember three things: First, Shoghi Effendi, during the thirty-six years of his Guardianship, has already made innumerable such definitions, supplementing those made by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and by Bahá'u'lláh Himself. As already announced to the friends, a careful

study of the Writings and interpretations on any subject on which the House of Justice proposes to legislate always precedes its act of legislation. Second, the Universal House of Justice, itself assured of divine guidance, is well aware of the absence of the Guardian and will approach all matters of legislation only when certain of its sphere of jurisdiction, a sphere which the Guardian has confidently described as "clearly defined." Third, we must not forget the Guardian's written statement about these two Institutions: "Neither can, nor will ever, infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain of the other."

35.7 As regards the need to have deductions made from the Writings to help in the formulation of the enactments of the House of Justice, there is the following text from the pen of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

35.7aThose matters of major importance which constitute the foundation of the Law of God are explicitly recorded in the Text, but subsidiary laws are left to the House of Justice. The wisdom of this is that the times never remain the same, for change is a necessary quality and an essential attribute of this world, and of time and place. Therefore the House of Justice will take action accordingly.

35.7bLet it not be imagined that the House of Justice will take any decision according to its own concepts and opinions. God forbid! The Supreme House of Justice will take decisions and establish laws through the inspiration and confirmation of the Holy Spirit, because it is in the safekeeping and under the shelter and protection of the Ancient Beauty, and obedience to its decisions is a bounden and essential duty and an absolute obligation, and there is no escape for anyone.

35.7cSay, O people: Verily the Supreme House of Justice is under the wings of your Lord, the Compassionate, the All-Merciful, that is, under His protection, His care, and His shelter; for He has commanded the firm believers to obey that blessed, sanctified and all-subduing body, whose sovereignty is divinely ordained and of the Kingdom of Heaven and whose laws are inspired and spiritual.

35.7dBriefly, this is the wisdom of referring the laws of society to the House of Justice. In the religion of Islam, similarly, not every ordinance was explicitly revealed; nay not a tenth part of a tenth part was included in the Text; although all matters of major importance were specifically referred to, there were undoubtedly thousands of laws which were unspecified. These were devised by the divines of a later age according to the laws of Islamic jurisprudence, and individual divines made conflicting deductions from the original revealed ordinances. All these were enforced. Today this process of deduction is the right of the body of the House of Justice, and the deductions and conclusions of individual learned men have no authority, unless they are endorsed by the House of Justice. The difference is precisely this, that from the conclusions and endorsements of the body of the House of Justice whose members are elected by and known to the worldwide Bahá'í community, no differences will arise; whereas the conclusions of individual divines and scholars would definitely lead to differences, and result in schism, division, and dispersion. The oneness of the Word would be destroyed, the unity of the

Faith would disappear, and the edifice of the Faith of God would be shaken.

The Continuity of Authority

35.8 In the Order of Bahá'u'lláh there are certain functions which are reserved to certain institutions, and others which are shared in common, even though they may be more in the special province of one or the other. For example, although the Hands of the Cause of God have the specific functions of protection and propagation, and are specialized for these functions, it is also the duty of the Universal House of Justice and the Spiritual Assemblies to protect and teach the Cause—indeed teaching is a sacred obligation placed upon every believer by Bahá'u'lláh. Similarly, although after the Master authoritative interpretation was exclusively vested in the Guardian, and although legislation is exclusively the function of the Universal House of Justice, these two Institutions are, in Shoghi Effendi's words, "complementary in their aim and purpose." "Their common, their fundamental object is to ensure the continuity of that divinely appointed authority which flows from the Source of our Faith, to safeguard the unity of its followers and to maintain the integrity and flexibility of its teachings." Whereas the Universal House of Justice cannot undertake any function which exclusively appertained to the Guardian, it must continue to pursue the object which it shares in common with the Guardianship.

The Principle of Inseparability

35.9 As you point out with many quotations, Shoghi Effendi repeatedly stressed the inseparability of these two institutions. Whereas he obviously envisaged their functioning together, it cannot logially be deduced from this that one is unable to function in the absence of the other. During the whole thirty-six years of his Guardianship Shoghi Effendi functioned without the Universal House of Justice. Now the Universal House of Justice must function without the Guardian, but the principle of inseparability remains. The Guardianship does not lose its significance nor position in the Order of Bahá'u'lláh merely because there is no living Guardian. We must guard against two extremes: one is to argue that because there is no Guardian all that was written about the Guardianship and its position in the Bahá'í World Order is a dead letter and was unimportant; the other is to be so overwhelmed by the significance of the Guardianship as to underestimate the strength of the Covenant, or to be tempted to compromise with the clear texts in order to find somehow, in some way, a Guardian."

Our Part—Fidelity, Integrity, and Faith

35.10 Service to the Cause of God requires absolute fidelity and integrity and unwavering faith in Him. No good but only evil can come from taking the responsibility for the future of God's Cause into our own hands and trying to force it into ways that we wish it to go regardless of the clear texts and our own limitations. It is His Cause. He has promised that its light will not fail. Our part is to cling tenaciously to the revealed Word and to the Institutions that He has created to preserve His Covenant.

35.11 It is precisely in this connection that the believers must recognize the importance of intellectual honesty and humility. In past dispensations many errors arose because the believers in God's Revelation were overanxious to

encompass the Divine Message within the framework of their limited understanding, to define doctrines where definition was beyond their power, to explain mysteries which only the wisdom and experience of a later age would make comprehensible, to argue that something was true because it appeared desirable and necessary. Such compromises with essential truth, such intellectual pride, we must scrupulously avoid.

35.12 If some of the statements of the Universal House of Justice are not detailed the friends should realize that the cause of this is not secretiveness, but rather the determination of this body to refrain from interpreting the teachings and to preserve the truth of the Guardian's statement that "Leaders of religion, exponents of political theories, governors of human institutions ... need have no doubt or anxiety regarding the nature, the origin, or validity of the institutions which the adherents of the Faith are building up throughout the world. For these lie embedded in the teachings themselves, unadulterated and unobscured by unwarrantable inferences, or unauthorized interpretations of His Word."

Authoritative Interpretation and Individual Understanding

35.13 A clear distinction is made in our Faith between authoritative interpretation and the interpretation or understanding that each individual arrives at for himself from his study of its teachings. While the former is confined to the Guardian, the latter, according to the guidance given to us by the Guardian himself, should by no means be suppressed. In fact such individual interpretation is considered the fruit of man's rational power and conducive to a better understanding of the teachings, provided that no disputes or arguments arise among the friends and the individual himself understands and makes it clear that his views are merely his own. Individual interpretations continually change as one grows in comprehension of the teachings. As Shoghi Effendi explained: "To deepen in the Cause means to read the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and the Master so thoroughly as to be able to give it to others in its pure form. There are many who have some superficial idea of what the Cause stands for. They, therefore, present it together with all sorts of ideas that are their own. As the Cause is still in its early days we must be most careful lest we fall under this error and injure the Movement we so much adore. There is no limit to the study of the Cause. The more we read the Writings, the more truths we can find in them and the more we will see that our previous notions were erroneous." So, although individual insights can be enlightening and helpful, they can also be misleading. The friends must therefore learn to listen to the views of others without being overawed or allowing their faith to be shaken, and to express their own views without pressing them on their fellow Bahá'ís.

The Covenant—the Cord to which All Must Cling

35.14 The Cause of God is organic, growing and developing like a living being. Time and again it has faced crises which have perplexed the believers, but each time the Cause, impelled by the immutable purpose of God, overcame the crisis and went on to greater heights.

35.15However great may be our inability to understand the mystery and the implications of the passing of Shoghi Effendi, the strong cord to which all

must cling with assurance is the Covenant. The emphatic and vigorous language of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will and Testament is at this time, as at the time of His own passing, the safeguard of the Cause:

35.16Unto the Most Holy Book every one must turn and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice. That which this body, whether unanimously or by a majority doth carry, that is verily the truth and the purpose of God Himself. Whose, doth deviate therefrom is verily of them that love discord, hath shown forth malice and turned away from the Lord of the Covenant. ...” And again: “... All must seek guidance and turn unto the Center of the Cause and the House of Justice. And he that turneth unto whatsoever else is indeed in grievous error.”

The Universal House of Justice: Recipient of Divine Guidance

35.17 The Universal House of Justice, which the Guardian said would be regarded by posterity as “the last refuge of a tottering civilization,” is now, in the absence of the Guardian, the sole infallibly guided institution in the world to which all must turn, and on it rests the responsibility for ensuring the unity and progress of the Cause of God in accordance with the revealed Word. There are statements from the Master and the Guardian indicating that the Universal House of Justice, in addition to being the Highest Legislative Body of the Faith, is also the body to which all must turn, and is the “apex” of the Bahá’í Administrative Order, as well as the “supreme organ of the Bahá’í Commonwealth.” The Guardian has in his writings specified for the House of Justice such fundamental functions as the formulation of future worldwide teaching plans, the conduct of the administrative affairs of the Faith, and the guidance, organization and unification of the affairs of the Cause throughout the world. Furthermore in God Passes By the Guardian makes the following statement: “the Kitáb-i-Aqdas ... not only preserves for posterity the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest, but ordains, in addition to the function of interpretation which it confers upon His Successor, the necessary institutions through which the integrity and unity of His Faith can alone be safeguarded.” He has also, in “The Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh,” written that the members of the Universal House of Justice “and not the body of those who either directly or indirectly elect them, have thus been made the recipients of the divine guidance which is at once the lifeblood and ultimate safeguard of this Revelation.”

35.18 As the Universal House of Justice has already announced, it cannot legislate to make possible the appointment of a successor to Shoghi Effendi, nor can it legislate to make possible the appointment of any more Hands of the Cause, but it must do everything within its power to ensure the performance of all those functions which it shares with these two mighty Institutions. It must make provision for the proper discharge in future of the functions of protection and propagation, which the administrative bodies share with the Guardianship and the Hands of the Cause; it must, in the absence of the Guardian, receive and disburse the Huqúqu’lláh, in accordance with the following statement of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Disposition of the Huqúq, wholly or partly, is permissible, but this should be done by permission of the

authority in the Cause to whom all must turn"; it must make provision in its Constitution for the removal of any of its members who commits a sin "injurious to the common weal." Above all, it must, with perfect faith in Bahá'u'lláh, proclaim His Cause and enforce His Law so that the Most Great Peace shall be firmly established in this world and the foundation of the Kingdom of God on earth shall be accomplished.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

36

Pioneering and a Program of Consolidation

5 June 1966

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

36.1 The historic and dazzling accomplishment last year of a feat in pioneering unparalleled in the annals of our Faith should not blind us either to the need of filling the remaining gaps which are still open, or to the ever-present necessity of reinforcing the settled territories with a well-conceived program of consolidation.

36.2The tasks that lie ahead of us in this particular field of Bahá'í activity are as follows:

As pointed out in the Ridván Message, the settlement of the minimum number of pioneers called for under last year's goals should be completed. A recent letter has been sent to all National Assemblies responsible for supplying manpower, calling on them to find and dispatch as soon as possible the pioneers to the few remaining territories for which no offers have as yet been received and to expedite the completion of those projects which are in process.

The pioneers who have already settled or are settling in their posts, particularly in virgin and unoccupied territories must be reminded that their movement to their goals is far from being a short stay designed to class a particular territory or island as opened, or label it as having received one or more pioneers, even if, in some cases, new believers native to the land have been enrolled. It is basically and clearly intended to establish the Faith of God securely and firmly in the hearts of people of the area and to ensure that its divinely ordained institutions are understood, adopted and operated by them. The perseverance of the pioneers in their posts, however great the sacrifices involved, is an act of devoted service, which, as attested by our teachings, will have an assured reward in both worlds. The admonitions of the Guardian on this subject are too numerous to cite and amply demonstrate the vital nature of this clear policy.

The pioneers and settlers, as well as the National Assemblies responsible for the administration of the Faith in areas assigned to them, should ever bear in mind that in the initial stages of the establishment of the Faith in any territory, the obscurity surrounding the work of the pioneer or the local Bahá'ís is in itself a protection to the Faith. Patience, tact and wisdom should be exercised. Public attention should not be attracted to the Faith until such time as the believers see the Faith touch more and more of the hearts of receptive souls responding to its Divine Call.

As the numbers fixed last year for settlers in goal areas were minimum figures, each National Assembly should carefully assess the needs of the territories assigned to its jurisdiction. If more pioneers are needed for any of these territories, a full report should at once be sent to the House of Justice, including recommendations as to numbers required and preferred nationalities of the prospective pioneers.

The practical aspects of these pioneering projects are of vital importance. The financial responsibilities assigned under last year's goals do not end because the pioneer has arrived at his post. These responsibilities continue until the objectives are permanently and securely attained. In any case where the National Assembly assigned the responsibility is unable to meet its obligation, application to fill the ascertained need should at once be made to the House of Justice for assistance from the Deputization Fund.

36.3 We assure you of our prayers at the Holy Shrines that the friends in every land may rise above their local and personal problems, realize the needs of the Cause of God at this juncture of its inexorable onward development, and offer on the altar of sacrifice their measure of service and assistance with complete self-abnegation and wholehearted devotion to His infinitely precious Cause.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

37

Message to Youth—Three Fields of Service

10 June 1966

To the Bahá'í Youth in every Land

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

37.1 In country after country the achievements of Bahá'í youth are increasingly advancing the work of the Nine Year Plan and arousing the admiration of their fellow believers. From the very beginning of the Bahá'í Era, youth have played a vital part in the promulgation of God's Revelation. The Báb Himself was but twenty-five years old when He declared His Mission, while many of the Letters of the Living were even younger. The Master, as a very young man, was called upon to shoulder heavy responsibilities in the service of His Father in Iraq and Turkey, and His brother, the Purest Branch, yielded up his life to God in the Most Great Prison at the age of twenty-two that the servants of God might "be quickened, and all that dwell on earth be united." Shoghi Effendi was a student at Oxford when called to the throne of his guardianship, and many of the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, who won imperishable fame during the Ten Year Crusade, were young people. Let it, therefore, never be imagined that youth must await their years of maturity before they can render invaluable services to the Cause of God.

A Time of Decision

37.2 For any person, whether Bahá'í or not, his youthful years are those in which he will make many decisions which will set the course of his life. In these years he is most likely to choose his life's work, complete his education, begin to earn his own living, marry and start to raise his own family. Most important of all, it is during this period that the mind is most

questing and that the spiritual values that will guide the person's future behavior are adopted. These factors present Bahá'í youth with their greatest opportunities, their greatest challenges, and their greatest tests—opportunities to truly apprehend the Teachings of their Faith and to give them to their contemporaries, challenges to overcome the pressures of the world and to provide leadership for their and succeeding generations, and tests enabling them to exemplify in their lives the high moral standards set forth in the Bahá'í Writings. Indeed the Guardian wrote of the Bahá'í youth that it is they "who can contribute so decisively to the virility, the purity, and the driving force of the life of the Bahá'í community, and upon whom must depend the future orientation of its destiny, and the complete unfoldment of the potentialities with which God has endowed it."

An opportunity unique in human history

37.3 Those who now are in their teens and twenties are faced with a special challenge and can seize an opportunity that is unique in human history. During the Ten Year Crusade—the ninth part of that majestic process described so vividly by our beloved Guardian—the Community of the Most Great Name spread with the speed of lightning over the major territories and islands of the globe, increased manifoldly its manpower and resources, saw the beginning of the entry of the peoples by troops into the Cause of God, and completed the structure of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh. Now, firmly established in the world, the Cause, in the opening years of the tenth part of that same process, is perceptibly emerging from the obscurity that has, for the most part, shrouded it since its inception, and is arising to challenge the outworn concepts of a corrupt society and proclaim the solution for the agonizing problems of a disordered humanity. During the lifetime of those who are now young the condition of the world, and the place of the Bahá'í Cause in it, will change immeasurably, for we are entering a highly critical phase in this era of transition.

Three Fields of Service

37.4 Three great fields of service lie open before young Bahá'ís, in which they will simultaneously be remaking the character of human society and preparing themselves for the work that they can undertake later in their lives.

37.5 First, the foundation of all their other accomplishments is their study of the teachings, the spiritualization of their lives and the forming of their characters in accordance with the standards of Bahá'u'lláh. As the moral standards of the people around us collapse and decay, whether of the centuries-old civilizations of the East, the more recent cultures of Christendom and Islam; or of the rapidly changing tribal societies of the world, the Bahá'ís must increasingly stand out as pillars of righteousness and forbearance. The life of a Bahá'í will be characterized by truthfulness and decency; he will walk uprightly among his fellowmen, dependent upon none save God, yet linked by bonds of love and brotherhood with all mankind; he will be entirely detached from the loose standards, the decadent theories, the frenetic experimentation, the desperation of present-day society, will look upon his neighbors with a bright and friendly face and be a beacon light and a haven for all those who would emulate his strength of character and

assurance of soul.

37.6 The second field of service, which is linked intimately with the first, is teaching the Faith, particularly to their fellow-youth, among whom are some of the most open and seeking minds in the world. Not yet having acquired all the responsibilities of a family or a long-established home and job, youth can the more easily choose where they will live and study or work. In the world at large young people travel hither and thither seeking amusement, education and experiences. Bahá'í youth, bearing the incomparable treasure of the Word of God for this Day, can harness this mobility into service for mankind and can choose their places of residence, their areas of travel and their types of work with the goal in mind of how they can best serve the Faith.

37.7 The third field of service is the preparation by youth for their later years. It is the obligation of a Bahá'í to educate his children; likewise it is the duty of the children to acquire knowledge of the arts and sciences and to learn a trade or a profession whereby they, in turn, can earn their living and support their families. This, for a Bahá'í youth, is in itself a service to God, a service, moreover, which can be combined with teaching the Faith and often with pioneering. The Bahá'í community will need men and women of many skills and qualifications; for, as it grows in size the sphere of its activities in the life of society will increase and diversify. Let Bahá'í youth, therefore, consider the best ways in which they can use and develop their native abilities for the service of mankind and the Cause of God, whether this be as farmers, teachers, doctors, artisans, musicians or any one of the multitude of livelihoods that are open to them.

37.8 When studying at school or university Bahá'í youth will often find themselves in the unusual and slightly embarrassing position of having a more profound insight into a subject than their instructors. The Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh throw light on so many aspects of human life and knowledge that a Bahá'í must learn, earlier than most, to weigh the information that is given to him rather than to accept it blindly. A Bahá'í has the advantage of the divine Revelation for this Age, which shines like a searchlight on so many problems that baffle modern thinkers; he must therefore develop the ability to learn everything from those around him, showing proper humility before his teachers, but always relating what he hears to the Bahá'í teachings, for they will enable him to sort out the gold from the dross of human error.

Bahá'í Consultation—Tracing New Paths of Human Corporate Action

37.9 Paralleling the growth of his inner life through prayer, meditation, service and study of the teachings, Bahá'í youth have the opportunity to learn in practice the very functioning of the Order of Bahá'u'lláh. Through taking part in conferences and summer schools as well as Nineteen Day Feasts, and in service on committees, they can develop the wonderful skill of Bahá'í consultation, thus tracing new paths of human corporate action. Consultation is no easy skill to learn, requiring as it does the subjugation of all egotism and unruly passions, the cultivation of frankness and freedom of thought as well as courtesy, openness of mind and wholehearted acquiescence in a majority decision. In this field Bahá'í youth may demonstrate the

efficiency, the vigor, the access of unity which arise from true consultation and, by contrast, demonstrate the futility of partisanship, lobbying, debate, secret diplomacy and unilateral action which characterize modern affairs. Youth also take part in the life of the Bahá'í community as a whole and promote a society in which all generations—elderly, middle-aged, youth, children—are fully integrated and make up an organic whole. By refusing to carry over the antagonisms and mistrust between the generations which perplex and bedevil modern society they will again demonstrate the heating and life-giving nature of their religion.

37.10 The Nine Year Plan has just entered its third year. The youth have already played a vital part in winning its goals. We now call upon them, with great love and highest hopes and the assurance of our fervent prayers, to consider, individually and in consultation, wherever they live and whatever their circumstances, those steps which they should take now to deepen themselves in their knowledge of the divine message, to develop their characters after the pattern of the Master, to acquire those skills, trades and professions in which they can best serve God and man, to intensify their service to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and to radiate its message to the seekers among their contemporaries.

The Universal House of Justice

38

Formation of Three More
National Spiritual Assemblies at Ridván 1967

1 September 1966

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

38.1JOYFULLY ANNOUNCE FORMATION AT RIDVÁN 1967 ADDITIONAL NEW NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES BELIZE SEAT BELIZE, LAOS SEAT VIENTIANE, SIKKIM SEAT GANGTOK, CALLING UPON NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES GUATEMALA, THAILAND, INDIA RESPECTIVELY CALL FIRST CONVENTIONS ELECTION NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES. SIKKIM ASSEMBLY SUPPLEMENTARY ACHIEVEMENT NINE YEAR PLAN. CHANGED SITUATION CAMBODIA REQUIRES POSTPONEMENT FORMATION NATIONAL ASSEMBLY THAT COUNTRY. ADDITION ABOVE NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES RAISES TOTAL THROUGHOUT THE WORLD TO EIGHTY-ONE WHOSE MEMBERS WILL PARTICIPATE SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION. OFFERING PRAYERS OF GRATITUDE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH SUPPLICATING DIVINE CONFIRMATIONS EXPANSION CONSOLIDATION THESE TERRITORIES ASSURING SOLID FOUNDATION FUTURE PILLARS UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE.

The Universal House of Justice

39

Incorporation of the National Spiritual Assembly of Italy

22 December 1966

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

39.1JOYFULLY ANNOUNCE INCORPORATION ITALIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE PROCESS RECOGNITION FAITH HEART CHRISTENDOM.

The Universal House of Justice

40

Development of the Bahá'í World Center and the
Needs of the Bahá'í International Fund

7 March 1967

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Beloved friends,

40.1 The time has now come in the progress of the Nine Year Plan when the Bahá'í world must devote a greater effort towards the development of the Faith at its World Center.

40.2 Nearly all the accessible unsettled territories of the Plan have now been Settled, bases have been established throughout the world for the future expansion of the Faith; a program of progressive consolidation is being pursued hand-in-hand with continued expansion; plans for the construction of the Panama Temple are well advanced; the Hazíratu'l-Quds, Temple sites and endowments called for in the Plan are being steadily acquired; by the end of the next Ridván period 81 out of the 108 National Spiritual Assemblies called for by 1973 will have been established; and the opening of the period of the proclamation of the Faith is fast approaching.

40.3 Since the Universal House of Justice came into being in 1963, its primary concern at the World Center of the Faith has been with the basic, minimum essentials of undertaking repairs to the Holy Places; establishing its administrative offices; reorganizing the accommodation of pilgrims; gathering its staff, developing a suitable housing program for the Hands of the Cause and their families, the members of the House of Justice and their families, and all other believers serving at the World Center; formulating plans for the expansion of the Gardens and taking the first steps in their initiation; collating the Sacred Texts and the letters of Shoghi Effendi and indexing them; and fostering relations with the Government of the State of Israel and with the United Nations.

40.4 The increased burden which these essential steps have imposed upon the International Fund we have endeavored to keep at a minimum so that, in the early stages of the Plan, the maximum resources could be utilized in the teaching work throughout the world.

40.5 However, we must now embark upon certain major undertakings vital to the future progress of the Cause. Extensive beautification of the sacred endowments surrounding the Holy Shrines in Bahjí and Haifa, as well as at the site of the future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár on Mount Carmel must be undertaken, both for its own sake and for the protection of these lands which are situated within the boundaries of rapidly expanding cities; the work of classifying and codifying the Holy Texts must be urgently prosecuted; the arrangements for pilgrimage may have to be greatly expanded to provide for the ever-increasing number of applications from East and West; the Intercontinental Conferences and the International Convention must be held and paid for; and the auxiliary institutions of the Universal House of Justice must begin to unfold so that the ever-growing and increasingly complex work of the World Center of the Faith may continue to be efficiently discharged. Moreover, the vital assistance given by the International Fund to the work of the Hands of the Cause and National Spiritual Assemblies must be maintained.

40.6 The minimum budget requirements of the International Fund have nearly doubled since 1963, and if in addition we are to be enabled to undertake these

developments, a much greater flow of funds will be needed than is now available.

40.7 We call upon every National Spiritual Assembly to consider now the amount that it can allocate as a contribution to the International Fund in its budget for the coming year. In some cases this may mean that contributions made hitherto will be doubled, trebled, or even more greatly increased. Please write as soon as your decision has been made, and not later than 21 April, telling us the estimated amount of your allocation.

40.8 This is a vitally important matter, and we shall pray in the Holy Shrines that the friends throughout the world will respond wholeheartedly to this call.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

41

Commemoration of the Revelation of
the Súriy-i-Mulúk

17 March 1967

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

41.1 In the 1965 Ridván Message from the Universal House of Justice we announced that in September 1967, on the Feast of Mashíyyat, a few appointed representatives of the Bahá'í world would visit the site of the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Adrianople where the Súriy-i-Mulúk was revealed. We have decided that the six Hands of the Cause of God who will represent the Universal House of Justice at the Intercontinental Conferences in October are the ones to make this visit. Immediately following this historic act they will proceed to their respective Conferences.

41.2 For the protection of the Faith it is essential that no one, except the Hands, travel to Turkey on this occasion.

41.3

National Spiritual Assemblies are requested to make this announcement at the National Convention this year, and to repeat it in their newsletters and at other times and places as may be appropriate.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

42

Ridván Message 1967

Ridván 1967

The Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

42.1 At the conclusion of the third year of the Nine Year Plan we acknowledge with thankful hearts the evidences of Divine favor with which Bahá'u'lláh unfailingly sustains and confirms the dedicated efforts of His servants everywhere, and we unhesitatingly affirm our confidence that the community of the Most Great Name can and will, by its determination and sacrificial efforts, achieve complete victory.

Worldwide Achievements

42.2 Last year the call was raised for the formation, in 1967, of eleven new National Spiritual Assemblies. All will be elected during the Ridván period. We welcome with great joy the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís of Algeria and Tunisia with its seat in Algiers; Cameroon Republic with its seat in Victoria; Swaziland, Lesotho and Mozambique with its seat in Mbabane; Zambia with its seat in Lusaka; Belize with its seat in Belize; the Leeward, Windward and Virgin Islands with its seat in Charlotte Amalie; Eastern and Southern Arabia with its seat in Bahrayn; Laos with its seat in Vientiane; Sikkim with its seat in Gangtok; Taiwan with its seat in Taipei; the Gilbert and Ellice Islands with its seat in Tarawa. The World Center of the Faith will be represented at each National Convention by a Hand of the Cause of God, who will present a message from the Universal House of Justice welcoming the new national community and assigning it its share of the goals of the Nine Year Plan.

42.3 At this Ridván eighty-one of the 108 National Spiritual Assemblies, and more than six thousand of the 13,737 Local Spiritual Assemblies called for by 1973 will have been established; of a required 54,102 localities where Bahá'ís reside, 28,217 are reported; fifteen of the sixty-five National Incorporations called for have been achieved; seventeen of fifty-two National Hazíratu'l-Quds, seven of sixty-two Temple sites, thirteen of fifty-four National Endowments, fourteen of thirty-two Teaching Institutes, have been acquired; of the 973 Local Incorporations called for in the Plan, 123 have been completed; Local Hazíratu'l-Quds acquired are, twenty-four in India, seventeen in Kenya, nine in Uganda, two in South Africa, two in Turkey and a number in Congo (Kinshasa), while land for eight others has been acquired in Kenya, for four in Cameroon, for two in Pakistan and for one in Mauritius; in eight countries Local Endowments supplementary to those called for in the Plan have been acquired.

42.4 Iceland, Korea, Liberia, Luxembourg and Rhodesia now recognize the Bahá'í Marriage Certificate; the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Hawaii, Iceland, Italy, Kenya and Luxembourg recognize Bahá'í Holy Days. A Summer School has been established in Liberia, and one, beyond the requirements of the Plan, in Canada, while land for others has been acquired in Argentina, Ethiopia and Samoa. Twenty-five new languages have been added to the list of those in which Bahá'í literature is available, bringing the total number to 397. The number of territories now opened to the Faith has reached 311, including the recently settled virgin areas of Chiloé Archipelago, Bonaire, Phoenix Islands and St. Martin, and two territories in addition to those called for in the Plan, namely Melville Island in Australasia and Montserrat in the Windward Islands.

42.5 After protracted frustration the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia has finally gained possession of the historic fortress of Chihríq, that bleak and lonely citadel which was the last earthly residence of the blessed Báb, and from which He was led forth to His martyrdom in Tabríz. Realization of the long-sought recognition of the Faith in Italy is a wonderful victory, resulting not only in the incorporation of the National Spiritual Assembly, but also of all Local Spiritual Assemblies in Italy and the ability to establish

that National Spiritual Assembly's Publishing Trust. In Iceland the Faith has been recognized as one of the island's religions. This provides not only for incorporation of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Reykjavik but authorizes the chairman of that Assembly to perform Bahá'í marriages and Bahá'í burials, exempts the Faith from certain taxes, permits the observance of Bahá'í Holy Days and paves the way for incorporation of the National Spiritual Assembly of that country when it will be formed. The full number of Local Spiritual Assemblies, Groups and Localities called for in the Plan has been established in fifty-three territories and islands under the direction of twenty-six National Spiritual Assemblies; five territories have formed the required number of Local Spiritual Assemblies and seven have reached the specified number of Localities.

42.6 Since the call was raised a year ago, international traveling-teaching, ranging over the five continents and affecting nearly all national communities, has been undertaken. Seventy-eight projects have been completed in Europe, forty-three in America, twenty-seven in Asia, twenty-five in Australasia which, with those in Africa brings the total number to about two hundred. It is greatly hoped that this stimulating activity, so dear to the beloved Master's heart, will be constantly expanded.

42.7 Sustaining all these visible achievements is a constant activity throughout the world of teaching and administration-a perpetual movement, like the ceaseless surge of the sea, within the Bahá'í community, which is the real cause of its growth. National and Local Spiritual Assemblies facing difficult problems, devising new plans, shouldering responsibility for a community growing in numbers and consciousness, Committees striving to accomplish objectives, Bahá'í Youth in eager and dedicated activity, individual Bahá'ís and families making efforts for the Cause, to give the Message, or hold a fireside, these constant services attract the confirmation of Bahá'u'lláh, and the more they are supported by prayers and intense dedication and the more extensive they become, the more they release into the world a spiritual charge which no force on earth can resist, and which must eventually bring about the complete triumph of the Cause. It is this organic vitality of the Faith, so readily felt at the World Center, whose exhilaration we wish every believer to share.

Work at the World Center

42.8 At the World Center of the Faith codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and collation of other important Texts has continued. Work on the highly important task of formulating the Constitution of the Universal House of Justice is well advanced. Development and extension of the gardens surrounding the sacred Shrines in both Haifa and Bahjí is continuing. Publication of The Bahá'í World, Volume 13 has been undertaken; this book covers nine years, from 1954 to 1963, almost the entire period of the Ten Year Crusade, and includes a comprehensive article on the beloved Guardian by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum. A planned development of relationships with the United Nations is being actively pursued. An important supplementary achievement is the establishment of an International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center whose function is to provide teaching and deepening aids to all National Spiritual

Assemblies, as well as to store and index audiovisual records.

Service of the Hands of the Cause of God

42.9 Throughout the year the services of the beloved Hands of the Cause have shone with an unfailing light. Their constant encouragement of National Spiritual Assemblies and of believers everywhere to pursue the goals of the Plan and to obtain a deeper understanding of the true meaning of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation is contributing in no small measure to the progress of that Plan and must exercise a lasting effect on the development of the Bahá'í community. These few gallant and dedicated believers, whose place in history is forever assured by virtue of their appointment to their high office, are indeed a precious legacy left to us by our beloved Guardian, and as the years go by there is increasingly added to the honor and respect which is their due by reason of their exalted rank, the love and admiration of the friends evoked by their constant services.

42.10 In response to special needs two changes have been made in the disposition of the Hands during the year, Hand of the Cause John Robarts returning to the Western Hemisphere with a special assignment to his native Canada, and Hand of the Cause William Sears returning to Africa. In addition we are delighted to announce that Hand of the Cause Tarázu'lláh Samandarí, whose eyes were blessed by beholding Bahá'u'lláh, will represent the Universal House of Justice at the Intercontinental Conference in Chicago, replacing the late Hand of the Cause Leroy Ioas.

The Panama Temple

42.11 In the international sphere the great project of raising the Panama Temple has begun with choice of a design submitted by Mr. Peter Tillotson, an English architect. Mr. Robert McLaughlin, sometime member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Dean Emeritus of the School of Architecture of Princeton University, who served as a member of the Technical Advisory Board for the construction of the interior of the Mother Temple of the West in Wilmette, has been appointed Architectural Consultant to the Universal House of Justice for the building of the Temple. He and Mr. Tillotson have visited the site together, and are working in close cooperation. Pictures and drawings of the new Temple will be published shortly, and the friends will be kept informed of the progress of construction of this House of Worship "situated between the two great oceans," a location which 'Abdu'l-Bahá indicated would become very important in the future and whence the Teachings, once established, "will unite the East and the West, the North and the South."

Pioneer Goals

42.12 The brilliant pioneering feat of the second year of the Plan is beginning to reveal its beneficent effects, but pioneers are still urgently needed and will continue to be needed in all parts of the world for consolidation and development of the Faith in the newly won territories as well as for those resettled during the opening years of the Plan. The immediate requirement is for 209 pioneers to settle in eighty-seven territories named on the attached list, and the call is now raised for the speedy achievement of this task. Service in this highly meritorious field is open to every believer

and all those who are moved to respond to this particular call are asked to consult the list of territories and to make their offers to their own National Spiritual Assembly. Full details of the requirements in each territory have been sent to the National Spiritual Assemblies concerned and to the Pioneer Committees.

The Homefronts—Solid Bases for Expansion

42.13 The constant need for pioneers no less than the approaching worldwide proclamation render it imperative to pay special attention, in every continent, to the homefronts, for they are the sources of manpower and of administrative experience, the solid bases from which all expansion begins, both at home and abroad. The largest increases in numbers of Local Spiritual Assemblies, of Groups, and of believers, are called for on the homefronts, and these tasks must be vigorously pursued. Some National Spiritual Assemblies have phased these important goals, assigning a specified number for achievement each year, thus ensuring a planned and flexible approach to the total requirements. Such a systematic and determined prosecution of the homefront goals is highly recommended.

The Fund—Our Honor and Challenge

42.14 The pressing and ever-growing needs of the Bahá'í Fund are called to the attention of all believers. There are great projects already under way or lying ahead which require very large amounts of money for their realization. The Panama Temple—the first only of the two called for in the Nine Year Plan—the beautification and development of the World Center itself, involving a necessary and inevitable increase in facilities to serve the growing needs of the Faith; support of the vital teaching program in many parts of the world; establishment and development of new National Spiritual Assemblies—all these urgently require the support of the friends everywhere through sustained and sacrificial contributions. As inflation spreads around the world, the consequent increase in the cost of living is balanced, at least in the more affluent countries, by a corresponding increase in personal incomes. The expenses of the Bahá'í Fund are inevitably and seriously affected by this inflationary condition which can only be relieved by contributions, both of larger amounts and from a larger number of contributors. The House of Justice believes that the financial needs of the Cause should be met by universal participation in giving and urges National and Local Spiritual Assemblies to pursue this goal with vigor and imagination, recalling to the friends the plea of the beloved Guardian to every believer "unhesitatingly, to place, each according to his circumstances, his share on the altar of Bahá'í sacrifice." The fact that only we, the Bahá'ís, can contribute financially to the Cause is both our honor and our challenge.

Centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's Summons to the Kings

42.15 As we approach the third phase of the Nine Year Plan there opens before us a prospect of enthralling opportunities such as to thrill the heart of every ardent follower of Bahá'u'lláh. For more than a century we have toiled to teach the Cause; heroic sacrifices, dedicated services, prodigious efforts have been made in order to establish the outposts of the Faith in the chief countries, territories and islands of the earth and to raise the

framework of the Administrative Order around the planet. But the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh remains, as yet, unknown to the generality of men. Now at last, at long last, the worldwide community of the Most Great Name is called upon to launch, on a global scale and to every stratum of human society, an enduring and intensive proclamation of the healing message that the Promised One has come and that the unity and well- being of the human race is the purpose of His Revelation. This long-to-be-sustained campaign, commencing next October in commemoration of the centenary of the sounding of the "opening notes" of Bahá'u'lláh's own proclamation, and gathering momentum throughout the remainder of the Nine Year Plan, may well become the spearhead of other plans to be launched continually until humanity has recognized and gratefully acclaimed its Redeemer and its Lord.

42.16 A hundred years ago Bahá'u'lláh Himself addressed the kings, rulers, religious leaders and peoples of the world. The Universal House of Justice feels it its bounden duty to bring that Message to the attention of the world's leaders today. It is therefore presenting to them, in the form of a book, the essence of Bahá'u'lláh's announcement. Entitled The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh, a special edition will be presented to Heads of State during the opening of the proclamation period and a general edition will be available to the friends in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

42.17 The Hands of the Cause of God, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, Ugo Giachery, Tarázu'lláh Samandarí, 'Alí-Akbar Furútan, Paul Haney, Abu'l-Qásim Faizi, who will represent the Universal House of Justice at the Intercontinental Conferences in October to be held in Panama, Sydney, Chicago, Kampala, Frankfurt and New Delhi respectively, will gather at the World Center in September, a few days before the Feast of Mashíyyat. The members of the House of Justice will join these Hands in supplication at the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahjí and will meet with them for consultation in the Mansion. From that Holy Spot these Hands of the Cause will make a special pilgrimage on behalf of the entire Bahá'í world to Adrianople where the Súriy-i-Mulúk was revealed. One hundred years after the historic event which it is their purpose to commemorate, they will, on 27 September gather in the House of Bahá'u'lláh for prayer and meditation, while the members of the Universal House of Justice will, in the Most Holy Shrine at Bahjí, share in the same commemoration and pray for the success of the Conferences and of the Proclamation program. The entire Bahá'í world will, between the Conferences and Ridván 1968, commemorate the centenary of the opening of that wonderful period in human history when the clouds of Divine bounty showered in lavish profusion their treasures upon men and the portalsof the Kingdom were thrown open, disclosing to all who had eyes to see, a new heaven and a new earth, and the new Jerusalem coming down from God.

42.18 Immediately after the Feast of Mashíyyat the Hands of the Cause will travel from Adrianople to their Conferences, each bearing the precious trust of a photograph of the Blessed Beauty, which it will be the privilege of those attending the Conferences to view. These distinguished Hands will, on their own behalf, each address the Conference which they attend, and will bear a

message to each Conference from the Universal House of Justice whom they represent.

42.19 These six Conferences, convened to commemorate the opening of Bahá'u'lláh's own Proclamation and to inaugurate a period of proclamation of His message by the entire company of His followers, will doubtless demonstrate yet again the spirit of joy which pervades such gatherings of the friends and will reinforce them in their determination to seize whatever means and opportunities they may find to raise the Divine call. Honored by the presence of Hands of the Cause, these Conferences, focal points of the love and prayers of the friends everywhere, magnets to attract the spiritual powers which alone can confirm their work, will, it is confidently hoped, be potent sources of unity spiritual enthusiasm and realistic planning. National Spiritual Assemblies are called upon to ensure that they are represented at the Conference held in their continent so that they may share their plans for proclamation with other National Spiritual Assemblies as well as discuss with them the remaining goals of the Nine Year Plan.

42.20 To all those friends in so many countries, suffering in varying degrees from restrictions and oppression which will either prevent altogether, or greatly inhibit their public commemoration and subsequent proclamation programs, we send a special message of love and assurance. To them we convey the love and admiration of their fellow believers, who, in gratitude for their greater freedom, are determined to blaze abroad such a proclamation of the Divine Message as may well pave the way for the eventual emancipation of the entire body of the Faith.

Proclamation, Expansion, and Consolidation—Interrelated Processes

42.21 Worldwide proclamation, the unknown sea on which we must soon sail, will add another dimension to our work, a dimension which will, as it develops, complement and reinforce the twin processes of expansion and consolidation. This pattern of teaching, emerging so soon after the completion of the framework of the Administrative Order, may well be the means of advancing the vital work of consolidation and of rendering more effective the teaching wisdom which has been gained in a hundred years, and more particularly since the beloved Guardian called us to systematic and planned activity. Therefore, in those countries where we are free to publicize our religion, this activity must become part of our regular work, included in budgets, assigned to National and Local Committees for study and implementation and above all for coordination with the programs operating to achieve the goals of the Nine Year Plan. Every effort of proclamation must be sustained by teaching, particularly locally where public announcements should be related to such efforts. This coordination is essential, for nothing will be more disheartening than for thousands to hear of the Faith and have nowhere to turn for further information.

The Nature of Deepening

42.22 The beloved Guardian wrote, "To strive to obtain a more adequate understanding of the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's stupendous Revelation must, it is my unalterable conviction, remain the first obligation and the object of the constant endeavor of each one of its loyal adherents,"

a statement which places the obligation of deepening in the Cause firmly on every believer. It is therefore upon the nature of deepening, rather than upon the desirability of pursuing it, that we wish to comment.

42.23 A detailed and exact knowledge of the present structure of Bahá'í Administration, or of the By-laws of National and Local Spiritual Assemblies, or of the many and varied applications of Bahá'í law under the diverse conditions prevailing around the world, while valuable in itself, cannot be regarded as the sort of knowledge primarily intended by deepening. Rather is suggested a clearer apprehension of the purpose of God for man, and particularly of His immediate purpose as revealed and directed by Bahá'u'lláh, a purpose as far removed from current concepts of human well-being and happiness as is possible. We should constantly be on our guard lest the glitter and tinsel of an affluent society should lead us to think that such superficial adjustments to the modern world as are envisioned by humanitarian movements or are publicly proclaimed as the policy of enlightened statesmanship—such as an extension to all members of the human race of the benefits of a high standard of living, of education, medical care, technical knowledge—will of themselves fulfill the glorious mission of Bahá'u'lláh. Far otherwise. These are the things which shall be added unto us once we seek the Kingdom of God, and are not themselves the objectives for which the Báb gave His life, Bahá'u'lláh endured such sufferings as none before Him had ever endured, the Master and after Him the Guardian bore their trials and afflictions with such superhuman fortitude. Far deeper and more fundamental was their vision, penetrating to the very purpose of human life. We cannot do better, in this respect, than call to the attention of the friends certain themes pursued by Shoghi Effendi in his trenchant statement "The Goal of a New World Order." "The principle of the Oneness of Mankind" he writes, "implies an organic change in the structure of present-day society, a change such as the world has not yet experienced." Referring to the "epoch-making changes that constitute the greatest landmarks in the history of human civilization," he states that "... they cannot but appear, when viewed in their proper perspective, except as subsidiary adjustments precluding that transformation of unparalleled majesty and scope which humanity is in this age bound to undergo." In a later document he refers to the civilization to be established by Bahá'u'lláh as one "with a fullness of life such as the world has never seen nor can as yet conceive."

42.24 Dearly loved friends, this is the theme we must pursue in our efforts to deepen in the Cause. What is Bahá'u'lláh's purpose for the human race? For what ends did He submit to the appalling cruelties and indignities heaped upon Him? What does He mean by "a new race of men"? What are the profound changes which He will bring about? The answers are to be found in the Sacred Writings of our Faith and in their interpretation by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and our beloved Guardian. Let the friends immerse themselves in this ocean, let them organize regular study classes for its constant consideration, and as reinforcement to their effort, let them remember conscientiously the requirements of daily prayer and reading of the Word of God enjoined upon all

Bahá'ís by Bahá'u'lláh.

42.25 Such dedicated striving on the part of all the friends to deepen in the Cause becomes imperative with the approach of the proclamation program. As this becomes effective more and more attention will be directed to the claims of Bahá'u'lláh and opposition must be expected. "HOW GREAT, HOW VERY GREAT IS THE CAUSE!" wrote the Master; "HOW VERY FIERCE THE ONSLAUGHT OF ALL THE PEOPLES AND KINDREDS OF THE EARTH! ERELONG SHALL THE CLAMOUR OF THE MULTITUDE THROUGHOUT AFRICA, THROUGHOUT AMERICA, THE CRY OF THE EUROPEAN AND THE TURK, THE GROANING OF INDIA AND CHINA BE HEARD FROM FAR AND NEAR. ONE AND ALL THEY SHALL ARISE WITH ALL THEIR POWER TO RESIST HIS CAUSE. THEN SHALL THE KNIGHTS OF THE LORD, ASSISTED BY HIS GRACE FROM ON HIGH, STRENGTHENED BY FAITH, AIDED BY THE POWER OF UNDERSTANDING AND REINFORCED BY THE LEGIONS OF THE COVENANT, ARISE AND MAKE MANIFEST THE TRUTH OF THE VERSE: 'BEHOLD THE CONFUSION THAT HATH BEFALLEN THE TRIBES OF THE DEFEATED!'"

42.26 Mindful of the countless expressions of Divine love found in our Scriptures and aware of the extraordinary nature of the crisis facing humanity, we call the friends to a new realization of the very great things which are expected from us in this Day. We recall that the Blessed Beauty, Bahá'u'lláh, as well as His "Best-Beloved", before Him and 'Abdu'l-Bahá after Him bore Their sufferings in this world in order that mankind might be freed from material fetters and "attain unto true liberty," "Might prosper and flourish," "attain unto abiding joy, and be filled with gladness," and we pray that the endeavors of the friends may be the means by which this glory and felicity will speedily come to pass.

The Universal House of Justice

43

Release of a Compilation on Teaching the Masses

11 May 1967

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

43.1 We have recently made a compilation from the writings of the Guardian and from letters written on his behalf regarding the importance and nature of the teaching work among the masses. Attached is a copy of this compilation, which we sincerely recommend to you for your earnest study. The extracts have been arranged chronologically.

43.2 It is our hope and belief that this compilation will guide and assist you in better appreciating the manner of the presentation of the teachings of the Faith; the attitude that must govern those responsible for enrolling new believers; the need to educate the newly enrolled Bahá'ís, to deepen them in the teachings and to wean them gradually away from their old allegiances; the necessity of keeping a proper balance between expansion and consolidation; the significance of the participation of the native believers of each country in the teaching work and in the administration of the affairs of the community; the formulation of budgets within the financial capabilities of the community; the importance of fostering the spirit of self-sacrifice in the hearts of the friends; the worthy goal for each national community to become self-supporting;

the preferability of individuality of expression to absolute uniformity, within the framework of the Administrative Order; and the lasting value of dedication and devotion when engaged in the teaching work.

43.3 We are confident that the implementation of these principles as set forth in the writings of the Guardian will aid you in your teaching work.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

44

Sesquicentennial of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh

25 June 1967

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

44.1 12 November 1967, will mark the 150th anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's birth. We call the entire Bahá'í world to joyful celebration, befitting an event so momentous to the fortunes of humanity.

44.2 The Universal House of Justice feels that the coincidence of this great occasion with the opening of the proclamation period provides a splendid opportunity for bringing to public attention both the spiritual and social import of the Cause. Not only its message, but the historical fact of a new Revelation, with all its implications of a new and worldwide civilization, should be made clear.

44.3 Let the friends not hesitate to welcome to their observances, even to those of a devotional character, the non-Bahá'í public, many of whom may well be attracted by the prayers and expressions of gratitude of the believers, no less than by the exalted tone of passages from Bahá'í Writings.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

45

The Nature and Purpose of Proclamation

2 July 1967

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

45.1 In just over three months the period of the worldwide proclamation of the Faith will be opened at the six Intercontinental Conferences called to celebrate the centenary of the revelation of the Súriy-i-Mulúk. Those conferences will provide an opportunity for representatives of the National Spiritual Assemblies to exchange ideas and coordinate plans for the proclamation which will continue throughout the remaining four and a half years of the Plan.

45.2 The stimulating effect of this interchange of ideas will produce greatly increased momentum throughout the world, but inasmuch as many projects must be worked out before that date, we feel a few additional comments on the nature and purpose of proclamation will be helpful now.

45.3 Proclamation comprises a number of activities, of which publicity is only one. The Universal House of Justice itself will be conveying the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the heads of all states, but, in addition to this, one of the most important duties of each National Spiritual Assembly is to acquaint

leaders of thought and prominent men and women in its country with the fundamental aims, the history and the present status and achievements of the Cause. Such an activity must be carried out with the utmost wisdom, discretion and dignity. Publicity connected with such approaches must be weighed very carefully, as it may be unwise or discourteous. This is, of course, a long-range program, for such things cannot be rushed, but it must be given constant attention.

45.4 Another aspect of proclamation is a series of teaching programs designed to reach every stratum of human society—programs that should be pursued diligently and wisely, using every available resource.

45.5 Publicity itself should be well-conceived, dignified and reverent. A flamboyant approach which may succeed in drawing much initial attention to the Cause, may ultimately prove to have produced a revulsion which would require great effort to overcome. The standard of dignity and reverence set by the beloved Guardian should always be upheld, particularly in musical and dramatic items; and photographs of the Master should not be used indiscriminately. This does not mean that activities of the youth, for example, should be stultified; one can be exuberant without being irreverent or undermining the dignity of the Cause.

45.6 Every land has its own conditions, thus the kind of proclamation activity to be followed in each country should be decided by its National Spiritual Assembly. National Spiritual Assemblies need not follow or copy programs initiated in other countries.

45.7 In all proclamation activities, follow-up is of supreme importance. Proclamation, expansion and consolidation are mutually helpful activities which must be carefully interrelated. In some places it is desirable to open a teaching campaign with publicity—in others it is wiser to establish first a solid local community before publicizing the Faith or encouraging contacts with prominent people. Here, again, wisdom is needed.

45.8 We have been elated by the enthusiasm with which the Bahá'í community is preparing for the challenging months and years ahead, and we eagerly await those days but a few short months away which will open a period of such promise for the diffusion of God's Word.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

46

Message to the Six Intercontinental Conferences

October 1967

To the Six Intercontinental Conferences

Dearly loved Friends,

46.1 On this, the hundredth anniversary of the sounding in Adrianople of the opening notes of Bahá'u'lláh's proclamation to the rulers, leaders and peoples of the world, we recall with profound emotion the circumstances surrounding the Faith of God at that time. In a land termed by Him the "Land of Mystery," the Bearer of God's Revelation had arisen to carry that Faith a stage further in its divinely ordained destiny.

46.2 Internally, the infant Cause of God was convulsed by a crisis from

whose shadows emerged the majestic figure of Bahá'u'lláh, the visible Center and Head of a newly established Faith. The first pilgrimages were made to His Residence, a further stage in the transfer of the remains of the Báb was achieved, and above all the first intimations were given of the future station of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant and of the revelation of the new laws for the New Day. Externally, the full significance of the new Revelation was proclaimed by no one less than its Divine Bearer, His followers began openly to identify themselves with the Most Great Name, the independent character of the Faith became established and its fearless exponents took up their pens in defense of its fair name.

46.3 Now, a hundred years later, the friends gathered in the six Intercontinental Conferences to commemorate the events of the past, privileged to gaze upon the portrait of their Beloved, must consider the urgent needs of the Cause today. As the Bahá'í world enters the third phase of the Nine Year Plan we are called upon to proclaim once again that Divine Message to the leaders and masses of the world, to aid the Faith of God to emerge from obscurity into the arena of public attention, to demonstrate through steadfast adherence to its laws the independent character of its mission and to brace ourselves in preparation for the attacks that are bound to be directed against its victorious onward march. Upon our efforts depends in very large measure the fate of humanity. The hundred years' respite having ended, the struggle between the forces of darkness—man's lower nature—and the rising sun of the Divine teachings which draw him on to his true station, intensifies day by day.

46.4 The Centenary campaign has been opened by the Universal House of Justice presenting to 140 Heads of State a compilation of Bahá'u'lláh's Own proclamation. The friends must now take the Message to the rest of humanity. The time is ripe and the opportunities illimitable. We are not alone nor helpless. Sustained by our love for each other and given power through the Administrative Order-so laboriously erected by our beloved Guardian—the Army of Light can achieve such victories as will astonish posterity.

46.5 We pray at the Holy Shrines that these Intercontinental Conferences will be centers of spiritual illumination inspiring the friends to redouble their efforts in further expanding and consolidating the Faith of God, to arise to fill the remaining pioneer goals, to undertake traveling teaching projects, and to offer generously of their substance to the various funds, particularly to the vital project of erecting the Panama Temple, the foundation stone of which is being laid by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum during the course of these Conferences.

46.6 As humanity enters the dark heart of this age of transition our course is clear—the achievement of the assigned goals and the proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh's healing Message. It is our ardent hope that from these Conferences valiant souls may arise with noble resolve and in loving service to ensure the successful and early accomplishment of the sacred tasks that lie ahead.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

47
Inauguration of the Third Phase of the Nine Year Plan
15 October 1967
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
47.1 The following cable has just been sent to the United States National Spiritual Assembly for publication in Bahá'í News. Please share it with all friends in your jurisdiction.
47.2HEARTS FILLED PROFOUND GRATITUDE REJOICE ANNOUNCE INAUGURATION THIRD PHASE NINE YEAR PLAN THROUGH SUCCESSFUL CONSUMMATION SIX INTERCONTINENTAL CONFEREN ATTENDED BY 9,200 BELIEVERS INCLUDING NEARLY ALL HANDS CAUSE LARGE NUMBER BOAR MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVES ALMOST ALL NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES BAHÁ'Í WORLD OVER 140 TERRITORIES AND HOST OF ASIAN AFRICAN AMERINDIAN TRIBES. INESTIMABLE PRIVILEGE CONFERRED PARTICIPANTS THROUGH VIEWING PORTRAIT ABHÁ BEAUTY. SPIRIT HOLY LAND AND ADRIANOPLE CONVEYED SIX DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVES HOUSE JUSTICE. FIRST PRESENTATIONS BEHALF HOUSE JUSTICE PROCLAMATION BOOK HEADS OF STATE MADE BEFORE AND DURING CONFERENCE. FRUITFUL DELIBERATIONS HELD PROCLAMATION EXECUTION REMAINING GOALS PLAN. SOLIDARITY BAHÁ'Í WORLD FURTHER EVINCED THROUGH INGENIOUS SCHEME TELEPHONIC EXCHANGE GREETINGS ALL SI CONFERENCES. SPIRITUAL POTENCIES THIS NEW PHASE REINFORCED THROUGH FORMAL LAYING BY AMATU'L-BAHÁ OF CORNERSTONE MOTHER TEMPLE LATIN AMERICA. OVER 230 OFFERS MADE AT CONFERENCES JOIN RANKS VALIANT PIONEERS CAUSE. RAISE SUPPLIANT HANDS BAHÁ'U'LLÁH ENDOW FRIENDS EVERY LAND FRESH MEASURE CELESTIAL STRENGTH ENABLE THEM PURSUE WITH INCREASED VISION UNABATED RESOLVE GLORIOUS GOALS AHEAD UNTIL THIS NEW PERIOD PROCLAMATION YIELDS ITS SHARE IN DIVINELY PROPELLED PROCESS ESTABLISHMENT KINGDOM GOD HEARTS MEN.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice
48
Announcement of the Resignation of Dr. Lutfu'lláh Hakím from the Universal House of Justice
15 October 1967
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
48.1 After a lifetime of devoted and self-sacrificing service to the Cause of God Dr. Lutfu'lláh Hakím has asked the Universal House of Justice to accept his resignation from that Institution because his health and advancing age make it increasingly difficult for him to participate as effectively as he would wish in its work.
48.2 The Universal House of Justice has regretfully accepted Dr. Hakím's resignation, but in view of the imminence of the next election, has asked him to continue to serve as a member until that time, and Dr. Hakím has kindly consented to do so.
48.3 Having served the Master Himself in the Holy Land, as well as accompanying Him during His historic visits in England and Scotland, and been intimately associated with Shoghi Effendi in his youth, Dr. Hakím was called again to the World Center by the beloved Guardian in 1950 for important service

at the World Center and was later appointed to the first International Bahá'í Council, of which he was the Eastern Assistant Secretary. He continued to serve on that body and then on the Universal House of Justice with undiminished devotion but with increasing difficulty during the subsequent sixteen years, earning the love and admiration of his co-workers.

48.4 Please share this announcement with the friends in your area.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

49

Assumption by the Universal House of Justice of
Representation of the Bahá'í International Community
at the United Nations

17 October 1967

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

49.1MORROW SIX INTERCONTINENTAL CONFERENCES INAUGURATING PROCLAMATION PERIOD ANNOUNCE BAHÁ'Í WORLD SIGNIFICANT STEP DEVELOPMENT RELATIONS UNITED NATIONS THROUGH ASSUMPTION BY UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE FUNCTION REPRESENTATION BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CAPACITY NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION AT UNITED NATIONS. TAKE THIS OCCASION
EXPRESS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY UNITED STATES AND MILDRED MOTTAHEDEH GRATEFUL LOVI APPRECIATION MANY YEARS DEVOTED TIRELESS SUCCESSFUL SERVICES AS REPRESENTATIVE AND OBSERVER RESPECTIVELY.

The Universal House of Justice

50

Laying of the Foundation Stone of
the Panama Temple

23 October 1967

To National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

50.1 We are happy to share with you the joyous news that the Foundation Stone of the Mother Temple of Latin America has been laid by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum on behalf of the Universal House of Justice.

50.2 This inaugurates the next phase in the planning and construction of this important edifice which will culminate in the commencement of the erection of the Temple itself in January, 1969. During the current phase the final working plans and specifications will be drafted, bids will be obtained and contracts for construction will be placed. All this will call for funds in ever-increasing amounts.

50.3We therefore call upon all National Spiritual Assemblies to:

Inform the National Spiritual Assembly of Panama of the amount of your budget allocation for the Panama temple during this year and when they may expect contributions to be received.

Transmit as soon as possible all available funds, either accumulated or earmarked, directly to the National Spiritual Assembly of Panama.

Encourage all Local Spiritual Assemblies and individuals to contribute to this project.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

51

Selection of Traveling Teachers

26 October 1967

To National Spiritual Assemblies Engaged in Mass Teaching

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

51.1 We have been watching with keen interest the development of the teaching work among the masses, and from time to time have offered suggestions to guide and assist the efforts of National Spiritual Assemblies engaged in this highly meritorious activity.

51.2 Many National Spiritual Assemblies in carrying out their plans for expansion and consolidation have found it necessary to select a number of believers for service as traveling teachers. While we appreciate the valuable services these traveling teachers have already rendered we are nevertheless deeply conscious of the problems facing your National Assemblies in your desire to carry out your teaching programs with as much dispatch as possible. The purpose of this letter is to draw your attention to the fact that these problems could well be minimized if the selection of such teachers were done with great care and discretion.

51.3 It must be realized that people who are mostly illiterate cannot have the benefit of reading for themselves the written word and of deriving directly from it the spiritual sustenance they need for the enrichment of their Bahá'í lives. They become dependent, therefore, to a large extent on their contacts with visiting teachers. The spiritual calibre or moral quality of these teachers assumes, therefore, great importance. The National Spiritual Assembly or the Teaching Committees responsible for the selection of these teachers should bear in mind that their choice must depend, not only on the knowledge or grasp of the teachings on the part of the teachers, but primarily upon their pure spirit and their true love for the Cause, and their capacity to convey that spirit and love to others.

51.4 We are enclosing some extracts from the Writings which will no doubt assist you in your deliberations on this vital subject. What wonderful results will soon be witnessed in the areas under your jurisdiction if you devise ways and means to ensure, as far as circumstances permit, that the traveling teachers you are encouraging to circulate among the friends will all be of the standard called for in these quotations—pure and sanctified souls, with nothing but true devotion and self-sacrifice motivating them in their services to God's Holy Cause. We also suggest that the study of quotations such as these should form part of the courses offered at your Teaching Institutes for the deepening of the friends.

51.5 We wish to assure you once again of our fervent prayers at the Holy Shrines for the solution of your problems and the removal of all obstacles from the path you are so valiantly pursuing.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

52

Extracts on Teaching the Masses

31 October 1967
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
52.1 We have recently sent to those National Spiritual Assemblies which are engaged in mass teaching the enclosed extracts from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá and from the letters of Shoghi Effendi. We feel that they will also be of great assistance to all other National Spiritual Assemblies.
52.2 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. An eager response to the teachings will often be found in the most unexpected quarters, and any such response should be quickly followed up, for success in a fertile area awakens a response in those who were at first uninterested.
52.3 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 interests of the hearer. An approach which is designed to appeal to everybody will usually result in attracting the middle section, leaving both extremes untouched. No effort must be spared to ensure that the healing Word of God reaches the rich and the poor, the learned and the illiterate, the old and the young, the devout and the atheist, the dweller in the remote hills and islands, the inhabitant of the teeming cities, the suburban businessman, the laborer in the slums, the nomadic tribesman, the farmer, the university student; all must be brought consciously within the teaching plans of the Bahá'í Community.
52.4 Whereas plans must be carefully made, and every useful means adopted in the furtherance of this work, your Assemblies must never let such plans eclipse the shining truth expounded in the enclosed quotations: that it is the purity of heart, detachment, uprightness, devotion and love of the teacher that attracts the divine confirmations and enables him, however ignorant he be in this world's learning, to win the hearts of his fellowmen to the Cause of God.
With loving greetings,
The Universal House of Justice
Teaching the Masses
Annex
52.5Whoso ariseth, in this Day, to aid Our Cause, and summoneth to his assistance the hosts of a praiseworthy character and upright conduct, the influence flowing from such an action will, most certainly, be diffused throughout the whole world.
(Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, Rev. ed. [Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1983], sec. 131, p. 287)
52.6 Whoso ariseth to teach Our Cause must needs detach himself from all earthly things, and regard, at all times, the triumph of Our Faith as his supreme objective. ... And when he determineth to leave his home, for the sake of the Cause of his Lord, let him put his whole trust in God, as the best provision for his journey, and array himself with the robe of virtue. ...
52.7 If he be kindled with the fire of His love, if he forgoeth all

created things, the words he uttereth shall set on fire them that hear him. ...
(Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, sec. 157, pp. 334-35)

52.8 I swear by Him Who is the Most Great Ocean! Within the very breath of such souls as are pure and sanctified far-reaching potentialities are hidden. So great are these potentialities that they exercise their influence upon all created things.
(Bahá'u'lláh, cited in Shoghi Effendi, The Advent of Divine Justice [Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1984], p. 23)

52.9 He is the true servant of God, who, in this day, were he to pass through cities of silver and gold, would not deign to look upon them, and whose heart would remain pure and undefiled from whatever things can be seen in this world, be they its goods or its treasures. I swear by the Sun of Truth! The breath of such a man is endowed with potency, and his words with attraction.
(Bahá'u'lláh, cited in Shoghi Effendi, The Advent of Divine Justice, p. 23)

52.10 The most vital duty, in this day, is to purify your characters, to correct your manners, and improve your conduct. The beloved of the Merciful must show forth such character and conduct among His creatures, that the fragrance of their holiness may be shed upon the whole world, and may quicken the dead, inasmuch as the purpose of the Manifestation of God and the dawning of the limitless lights of the Invisible is to educate the souls of men, and refine the character of every living man ...
('Abdu'l-Bahá, cited in Shoghi Effendi, The Advent of Divine Justice, p. 26)

52.11 Whensoever ye behold a person whose entire attention is directed toward the Cause of God; whose only aim is this, to make the Word of God to take effect; who, day and night, with pure intent, is rendering service to the Cause; from whose behavior not the slightest trace of egotism or private motives is discerned—who, rather, wandereth distracted in the wilderness of the love of God, and drinketh only from the cup of the knowledge of God, and is utterly engrossed in spreading the sweet savours of God, and is enamored of the holy verses of the Kingdom of God—know ye for a certainty that this individual will be supported and reinforced by heaven; that like unto the morning star, he will forever gleam brightly out of the skies of eternal grace. But if he show the slightest taint of selfish desires and self love, his efforts will lead to nothing and he will be destroyed and left hopeless at the last.
('Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, [Rev. ed.] [Haifa: Bahá'í World Center, 1982], pp. 71-72)

52.12 The aim is this: The intention of the teacher must be pure, his heart independent, his spirit attracted, his thought at peace, his resolution firm, his magnanimity exalted and in the love of God a shining torch. Should he become as such, his sanctified breath will even affect the rock; otherwise there will be no result whatsoever. As long as a soul is not perfected, how can he efface the defects of others. Unless he is detached from aught else save God, how can he teach severance to others!

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Tablets of the Divine Plan: Revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to the North American Bahá’ís, Rev. ed. [Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1980], p. 51)

52.13 One thing and only one thing will unfailingly and alone secure the undoubted triumph of this sacred Cause, namely the extent to which our own inner life and private character mirror forth in their manifold aspects the splendour of those eternal principles proclaimed by Bahá’u’lláh.
(Shoghi Effendi, from a letter dated 24 September 1924 to the Bahá’ís of America, published in Bahá’í Administration: Selected Messages, 1922-1932 [Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1980], p. 66)

52.14 ... having attained sufficiently that individual regeneration—the essential requisite of teaching—let us arise to teach His Cause with righteousness, conviction, understanding and vigor. Let this be the paramount and most urgent duty of every Bahá’í. ...
(Shoghi Effendi, from a letter dated 24 November 1924 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, published in Bahá’í Administration, p. 67)

52.15 The first and most important qualification of a Bahá’í teacher is, indeed, unqualified loyalty and attachment to the Cause. Knowledge is, of course, essential, but compared to devotion it is secondary in importance.

52.16 What the Cause now requires is not so much a group of highly cultured and intellectual people who can adequately present its Teachings, but a number of devoted, sincere and loyal supporters who, in utter disregard of their own weaknesses and limitations, and with hearts afire with the love of God, forsake their all for the sake of spreading and establishing His Faith. ...
(From a letter dated 14 November 1935 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Teaching Committee of the United States and Canada, published in Bahá’í News, No. 102 [August 1936], p. 2)

52.17 They must remember the glorious history of the Cause, which ... was established by dedicated souls who, for the most part, were neither rich, famous, nor well educated, but whose devotion, zeal and self-sacrifice overcame every obstacle and won miraculous victories for the Faith of God. ...
(From a letter dated 29 June 1941 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma, published in Dawn of a New Day [New Delhi: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, n.d. (1970)], p. 89)

52.18 ... what raised aloft the banner of Bahá’u’lláh was the love, sacrifice, and devotion of His humble followers and the change that His teachings wrought in their hearts and lives.
(From a letter dated 20 June 1942 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles, published in Unfolding Destiny, [London: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1981], p. 152)

52.19 It is the quality of devotion and self-sacrifice that brings rewards in the service of this Faith rather than means, ability or financial backing.
(From a letter dated 11 May 1948 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand)

52.20 One wise and dedicated soul can so often give life to an inactive community, bring in new people and inspire to greater sacrifice. He hopes that

whatever else you are able to do during the coming months, you will be able to keep in circulation a few really good Bahá'í teachers.
(From a letter dated 30 June 1952 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of Central America)
53
Plans for Commemorating the Sesquicentennial
of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh at the
First Oceanic Conference, Palermo, Sicily
12 November 1967
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
53.1OCCASION HUNDRED FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY BIRTH BLESSED BEAUTY WE CONTEMPLATE WITH HEARTS OVERFLOWING GRATITUDE INESTIMABLE BOUNTIES CONFERRED BY GOD THRO HIS SUPREME MANIFESTATION ENSURING FULFILLMENT GLORIOUS LONG PROMISED KINGDOM NOW EVOLVING WOMB TRAVAILING AGE DESTINED CONFER PEACE UNDREAMT FELICITY MANKIND. ANNOUNCE CONVOCATION TWENTY-THIRD TO TWENTY-FIFTH AUGUST 1968 FIRST OCEANIC CONFERENCE BAHÁ'Í WORLD PALERMO SICILY HEART SEA TRAVERSED GOD'S MANIFESTATION CENTURY AGO PROCEEDING INCARCERATION MOST GREAT PRISON. TWOFOI PURPOSE CONFERENCE CONSIDER MOMENTOUS FULFILLMENT AGE-OLD PROPHECIES TRIUMPH GOD'S MESSENGER OVER EVERY GRIEVOUS CALAMITY AND CONSULT PLANS PROPAGATION CAUSE ISLANDS LANDS BORDERING MEDITERRANEAN SEA. PARTICIPANTS INVITED HOLY LAND IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING CONFERENCE ATTEND COMMEMORATION ARRIVAL LORD H THESE SACRED SHORES RECONSECRATE THEMSELVES THRESHOLD HIS SHRINE PROSECUTION GLORIOUS TASKS AHEAD.
The Universal House of Justice
54
Safeguarding the Letters of Shoghi Effendi
December 1967
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
54.1 As the friends are already aware, one of the goals of the Nine Year Plan is continued collation and classification of the Bahá'í Sacred Scriptures, as well as the writings of Shoghi Effendi.
54.2 We have already pointed out to the friends on several occasions that the application of Bahá'í laws, the elucidation and extension of basic administrative principles, and the all-important function of legislating on matters not explicitly recorded in our teachings are dependent upon a careful study by the Universal House of Justice of the revealed and pertinent words of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as well as the illuminating interpretations and directions of Shoghi Effendi.
54.3 Through the labors of the beloved Guardian himself, and the collaboration of the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia, great strides have already been taken to collate the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Even up to the present time, a special National Committee in Persia is assiduously and regularly engaged in classifying the Holy Texts of the Founder of our Faith, and the Center of the Covenant in fulfillment of the goal of the Nine Year Plan referred to above. The writings of the Guardian, however, apart from his general communications already published, which

consist to a large extent of letters written by him or on his behalf to various National Spiritual Assemblies, Local Spiritual Assemblies, groups of believers and individual Bahá'ís, have only been partly collated. Although many National Spiritual Assemblies and individual believers have already sent the originals or copies of their letters from the Guardian to the Holy Land, and quite a number of these have been published at different times in Bahá'í News and other news bulletins, it is our confirmed opinion that there are many such letters that have still not been shared with us which may contain a new application of a principle, an already enunciated guideline rephrased to apply in a new situation, a further elucidation of a Bahá'í law, a fresh light thrown on a many-sided issue or some wise counsel in a personal problem.

54.4 Your National Spiritual Assembly is requested, therefore, to check carefully first in its own archives or files of correspondence with the Guardian, for any letters addressed to its body or to its subsidiary institutions, written by Shoghi Effendi or on his behalf, and not yet forwarded to the Holy Land. At the end of this letter we indicate the number and description of Shoghi Effendi's letters falling into this category and pertaining to your area, which we have in our archival files, so that you need to take action in sending us only the text of letters not included in this listing.

54.5You are also requested to appeal to the friends under your jurisdiction, calling on those who were privileged to have received letters from the Guardian but have not as yet sent their texts to the Holy Land to take immediate steps to do so. In assisting the friends and your National Spiritual Assembly in carrying out this important project we offer the following points for your consideration:

54.5a 1. Recipients of letters from the Guardian have the inherent right of deciding to keep the letters themselves, or to have them preserved for the future in their families. To assist the Universal House of Justice, however, in its efforts to study and compile the letters of the Guardian, the friends are urged to provide, for dispatch to the Holy Land, photostatic copies of their communications from the Guardian if they wish to keep the originals themselves.

54.5b 2. If they are not in a position to provide such copies, they should kindly allow National Spiritual Assemblies to undertake this project on our behalf.

54.5c 3. If facilities for obtaining clear photostatic or Xerox copies are not available in any area, National Spiritual Assemblies are requested to make carefully typed or handwritten copies of such letters, with a certification on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly concerned that the copies are true and exact.

54.5d 4. Should any believer possess letters so personal and confidential that he does not wish to disclose their contents to any institution other than the Universal House of Justice, he is invited to send either the originals or copies of such letters, marked confidential, directly to the Universal House of Justice, by registered mail, with any instructions he wishes to be followed.

54.6 We hope these guidelines will help you in promoting a project

directly linked with the vital functions of the Universal House of Justice. You are free to quote from this letter as you wish, in any appeal you address to the believers.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

55

Relationship of Bahá'ís to Politics

8 December 1967

To an individual Believer

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

55.1 ... we will gladly attempt to clarify some of the points which bewilder you in the relationship of Bahá'ís to politics. This is a matter of very great importance, particularly in these days when the world situation is so confused; an unwise act or statement by a Bahá'í in one country could result in a grave setback for the Faith there or elsewhere—and even loss of the lives of fellow-believers.

Viewing the World's Problems in the Light of God's Purpose for Man

55.2 The whole conduct of a Bahá'í in relation to the problems, sufferings and bewilderment of his fellowmen should be viewed in the light of God's purpose for mankind in this age and the processes He has set in motion for its achievement.

55.3 When Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed His Message to the world in the nineteenth century He made it abundantly clear that the first step essential for the peace and progress of mankind was its unification. As He says, "The well-being of mankind, its peace and security are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established." (The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 203) To this day, however, you will find most people take the opposite point of view: they look upon unity as an ultimate almost unattainable goal and concentrate first on remedying all the other ills of mankind. If they did but know it, these other ills are but various symptoms and side effects of the basic disease—disunity.

55.4 Bahá'u'lláh has, furthermore, stated that the revivification of mankind and the curing of all its ills can be achieved only through the instrumentality of His Faith. "The vitality of men's belief in God is dying out in every land; nothing short of His wholesome medicine can ever restore it. The corrosion of ungodliness is eating into the vitals of human society; what else but the Elixir of His potent Revelation can cleanse and revive it?" (Gleanings, XCIX) "That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician. This, verily, is the truth, and all else naught but error." (Gleanings, CXX) In similar vein, the beloved Guardian wrote:

55.4a Humanity, whether viewed in the light of man's individual conduct or in the existing relationships between organized communities and nations, has, alas, strayed too far and suffered too great a decline to be redeemed through the unaided efforts of the best among its recognized rulers and

statesmen—however disinterested their motives, however concerted their action, however unsparing in their zeal and devotion to its cause. No scheme which the calculations of the highest statesmanship may yet devise, no doctrine which the most distinguished exponents of economic theory may hope to advance, no principle which the most ardent of moralists may strive to inculcate, can provide, in the last resort, adequate foundations upon which the future of a distracted world can be built. No appeal for mutual tolerance which the worldly-wise might raise, however compelling and insistent, can calm its passions or help restore its vigor. Nor would any general scheme of mere organized international cooperation, in whatever sphere of human activity, however ingenious in conception or extensive in scope, succeed in removing the root cause of the evil that has so rudely upset the equilibrium of present-day society. Not even, I venture to assert, would the very act of devising the machinery required for the political and economic unification of the world—a principle that has been increasingly advocated in recent times—provide in itself the antidote against the poison that is steadily undermining the vigor of organized peoples and nations. What else, might we not confidently affirm, but the unreserved acceptance of the Divine Program enunciated, with such simplicity and force as far back as sixty years ago, by Bahá'u'lláh, embodying in its essentials God's divinely appointed scheme for the unification of mankind in this age, coupled with an indomitable conviction in the unfailing efficacy of each and all of its provisions, is eventually capable of withstanding the forces of internal disintegration which, if unchecked, must needs continue to eat into the vitals of a despairing society.
(The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 33-34)

Two Processes at Work

55.5 We are told by Shoghi Effendi that two great processes are at work in the world: the great Plan of God, tumultuous in its progress, working through mankind as a whole, tearing down barriers to world unity and forging humankind into a unified body in the fires of suffering and experience. This process will produce in God's due time, the Lesser Peace, the political unification of the world. Mankind at that time can be likened to a body that is unified but without life. The second process, the task of breathing life into this unified body—of creating true unity and spirituality culminating in the Most Great Peace—is that of the Bahá'ís, who are laboring consciously, with detailed instructions and continuing divine guidance, to erect the fabric of the Kingdom of God on earth, into which they call their fellowmen, thus conferring upon them eternal life.

55.6 The working out of God's Major Plan proceeds mysteriously in ways directed by Him alone, but the Minor Plan that He has given us to execute, as our part in His grand design for the redemption of mankind, is clearly delineated. It is to this work that we must devote all our energies, for there is no one else to do it. So vital is this function of the Bahá'ís that Bahá'u'lláh has written: "O friends! Be not careless of the virtues with which ye have been endowed, neither be neglectful of your high destiny. Suffer not your labors to be wasted through the vain imaginations which certain hearts have devised. Ye are the stars of the heaven of understanding, the

breeze that stirreth at the break of day, the soft-flowing waters upon which must depend the very life of all men, the letters inscribed upon His sacred scroll. With the utmost unity and in a spirit of perfect fellowship, exert yourselves, that ye may be enabled to achieve that which beseemeth this Day of God." (Gleanings, XCVI)

55.7 Because love for our fellowmen and anguish at their plight are essential parts of a true Bahá'í's life, we are continually drawn to do what we can to help them. It is vitally important that we do so whenever the occasion presents itself, for our actions must say the same thing as our words—but this compassion for our fellows must not be allowed to divert our energies into channels which are ultimately doomed to failure, causing us to neglect the most important and fundamental work of all. There are hundreds of thousands of well-wishers of mankind who devote their lives to works of relief and charity, but a pitiful few to do the work which God Himself most wants done: the spiritual awakening and regeneration of mankind.

Our Task—Building Up the Bahá'í System

55.8 It is often through our misguided feeling that we can somehow aid our fellows better by some activity outside the Faith, that Bahá'ís are led to indulge in politics. This is a dangerous delusion. As Shoghi Effendi's secretary wrote on his behalf. "What we Bahá'ís must face is the fact that society is rapidly disintegrating—so rapidly that moral issues which were clear a half century ago are now hopelessly confused, and what is more, thoroughly mixed up with battling political interests. That is why the Bahá'ís must turn all their forces into the channel of building up the Bahá'í Cause and its administration. They can neither change nor help the world in any other way at present. If they become involved in the issues the governments of the world are struggling over, they will be lost. But if they build up the Bahá'í pattern they can offer it as a remedy when all else has failed." (Bahá'í News, No. 241, p. 14) "We must build up our Bahá'í system, and leave the faulty systems of the world to go their own way. We cannot change them through becoming involved in them; on the contrary they will destroy us." (Bahá'í News, No. 215, p. 1)

55.9 Other instructions from the Guardian, covering the same theme in more detail, can be found on pages 24 and 29 to 32 of Principles of Bahá'í Administration (1963 edition); you are no doubt already familiar with these.

55.10 The key to a true understanding of these principles seems to be in these words of Bahá'u'lláh: "O people of God! Do not busy yourselves in your own concerns; let your thoughts be fixed upon that which will rehabilitate the fortunes of mankind and sanctify the hearts and souls of men. This can best be achieved through pure and holy deeds, through a virtuous life and a goodly behavior. Valiant acts will ensure the triumph of this Cause, and a

saintly character will reinforce its power. Cleave unto righteousness, O people of Bahá! This, verily, is the commandment which this wronged One hath given unto you, and the first choice of His unrestrained Will for every one of you." (Gleanings, XLIII).

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice
56
Election of the Universal House of Justice Ridván 1968
22 April 1968
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
56.1ANNOUNCE BAHÁ'Í WORLD NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE AMOZ GIBSON 'ALÍ NAKHJAVÁNÍ HUSHMAND FATHEAZAM IAN SEMPLE CHARLES WOLCOTT DAVID HOFMAN H. BORRAH KAVELIN HUGH CHANCE DAVID RUHE.
The Universal House of Justice
57
Message to National Conventions—1968
9 May 1968
To all National Bahá'í Conventions
57.1WITH JOYFUL MEMORY OF DEDICATED SPIRIT MATURE DELIBERATIONS SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION HAIL GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY NATIONAL CONVENTIONS AS CRUCIAL MIDWAY POINT NINE YEAR PLAN APPROACHES GALVANIZE BELIEVERS DIRECT ALL EFFORTS ACHIEVEMENT EVERY REMAINING GOAL AND SIMULTANEOUSLY EXTEND ACCELERA UNIVERSAL PROCLAMATION DIVINE MESSAGE. WITH UTMOST LOVE CALL UPON ALL BAHÁ'ÍS FOR SACRIFICIAL OUTPOURING ENERGIES RESOURCES ADVANCEMENT REDEEMING ORDER BAHÁ'U'LLÁH SOLE REFUGE MISDIRECTED HEEDLESS MILLIONS. WORLD CENTER FAITH SCENE PROLONGED PRAYERFUL CONSULTATION WITH ASSEMBLED HANDS CAU GOALS PLAN INCLUDING FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIVE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTION HANDS VIEW EXTENSION FUTURE GOD-GIVEN DUTIES PROTECTION PROPAGATION. SUPPLICATING CONTINUALLY HOLY SHRINES LORD HOSTS BOUNTIFULLY REWARD DEDICATED ARDENT LOVI COMPLETE GLORIOUS VICTORY.
The Universal House of Justice
58
Announcement of Decision to Establish Eleven
Continental Boards of Counselors
21 June 1968
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
58.1REJOICE ANNOUNCE MOMENTOUS DECISION ESTABLISH ELEVEN CONTINENTAL BOARDS COUNSELORS PROTECTION PROPAGATION FAITH THREE EACH FOR AFRICA AMERICAS ASIA ON EACH FOR AUSTRALASIA EUROPE. ADOPTION THIS SIGNIFICANT STEP FOLLOWING CONSULTATION WITH HANDS CAUSE GOD ENSURES EXTENSION FUTURE APPOINTED FUNCTIO THEIR INSTITUTION. CONTINENTAL BOARDS ENTRUSTED IN CLOSE COLLABORATION HANDS CAUSE WITH RESPONSIBILITY DIRECTION AUXILIARY BOARDS AND CONSULTATION NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES. HANDS CAUSE GOD WILL HENCEFORTH INCREASE INTERCONTINENTAL SERVICES ASSUMING WORLDWIDE ROLE PROTECTION PROPAGATION FAI MEMBERS AUXILIARY BOARDS WILL REPORT BE RESPONSIBLE TO CONTINENTAL BOARDS COUNSELORS. HANDS CAUSE RESIDING HOLY LAND IN ADDITION SERVING LIAISON BETWEEN UNIVERSAL HOUSE JUSTICE AND CONTINENTAL BOARDS COUNSELORS WILL ASSIST FUTURE ESTABLISHMENT INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTER HOLY LAND FORESHADOWED WRITINGS BELOVED GUARDIAN. DETAILS NEW DEVELOPMENTS BEING CONVEYED BY LETTER. FERVENTLY SUPPLICATING HOLY THRESHOLD DIVINE CONFIRMATIONS FURTHER STEP IRRESISTIBLE UNFOLDMENT MIGHTY ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.
The Universal House of Justice

59
Establishment of Continental Boards of Counselors
24 June 1968
To the Bahá'ís of the World
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
59.1 The majestic unfoldment of Bahá'u'lláh's world-redeeming administrative system has been marked by the successive establishment of the various institutions and agencies which constitute the framework of that divinely created Order. Thus, more than a quarter of a century after the emergence of the first National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'í world the Institution of the Hands of the Cause of God was formally established, with the appointment by the beloved Guardian, in conformity with the provisions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament, of the first contingent of these high-ranking officers of the Faith. Following the passing of the Guardian of the Cause of God, it fell to the House of Justice to devise a way, within the Administrative Order, of developing "the Institution of the Hands of the Cause with a view to extension into the future of its appointed functions of protection and propagation," and this was made a goal of the Nine Year Plan. Much thought and study has been given to the question over the past four years, and the texts have been collected and reviewed. During the last two months, this goal, as announced in our cable to the National Conventions, has been the object of prolonged and prayerful consultation between the Universal House of Justice and the Hands of the Cause of God. All this made evident the framework within which this goal was to be achieved, namely:
59.1aThe Universal House of Justice sees no way in which additional Hands of the Cause of God can be appointed.
59.1bThe absence of the Guardian of the Faith brought about an entirely new relationship between the Universal House of Justice and the Hands of the Cause and called for the progressive unfoldment by the Universal House of Justice of the manner in which the Hands of the Cause would carry out their divinely conferred functions of protection and propagation.
59.1cWhatever new development or institution is initiated should come into operation as soon as possible in order to reinforce and supplement the work of the Hands of the Cause while at the same time taking full advantage of the opportunity of having the Hands themselves assist in launching and guiding the new procedures.
59.1dAny such institution must grow and operate in harmony with the principles governing the functioning of the Institution of the Hands of the Cause of God.
59.2 In the light of these considerations the Universal House of Justice decided, as announced in its recent cable, to establish Continental Boards of Counselors for the protection and propagation of the Faith. Their duties will include directing the Auxiliary Boards in their respective areas, consulting and collaborating with National Spiritual Assemblies, and keeping the Hands of the Cause and the Universal House of Justice informed concerning the conditions of the Cause in their areas.
59.3 Initially eleven Boards of Counselors have been appointed, one for each of the following areas: Northwestern Africa, Central and East Africa,

Southern Africa, North America, Central America, South America, Western Asia, Southeastern Asia, Northeastern Asia, Australasia and Europe.

59.4 The members of these Boards of Counselors will serve for a term, or terms, the length of which will be determined and announced at a later date, and while serving in this capacity, will not be eligible for membership on national or local administrative bodies. One member of each Continental Board of Counselors has been designated as Trustee of the Continental Fund for its area.

59.5 The Auxiliary Boards for Protection and Propagation will henceforth report to the Continental Boards of Counselors who will appoint or replace members of the Auxiliary Boards as circumstances may require. Such appointments and replacements as may be necessary in the initial stages will take place after consultation with the Hand or Hands previously assigned to the continent or zone.

59.6 The Hands of the Cause of God have the prerogative and obligation to consult with the Continental Boards of Counselors and National Spiritual Assemblies on any subject which, in their view, affects the interests of the Cause. The Hands residing in the Holy Land will act as liaison between the Universal House of Justice and the Continental Boards of Counselors, and will also assist the Universal House of Justice in setting up, at a propitious time, an international teaching center in the Holy Land, as anticipated in the Guardian's writings.

59.7 The Hands of the Cause of God are one of the most precious assets the Bahá'í world possesses. Released from administration of the Auxiliary Boards, they will be able to concentrate their energies on the more primary responsibilities of general protection and propagation, "PRESERVATION [of the] SPIRITUAL HEALTH [of the] BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITIES" and the "VITALITY [of the] FAITH" of the Bahá'ís throughout the world. The House of Justice will call upon them to undertake special missions on its behalf, to represent it on both Bahá'í and other occasions and to keep it informed of the welfare of the Cause. While the Hands of the Cause will, naturally, have special concern for the affairs of the Cause in the areas in which they reside, they will operate increasingly on an intercontinental level, a factor which will lend tremendous impetus to the diffusion throughout the Bahá'í world of the spiritual inspiration channeled through them—the Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Commonwealth.

59.8 With joyful hearts we proclaim this further unfoldment of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh and join our prayers to those of the friends throughout the East and the West that Bahá'u'lláh may continue to shower His confirmations upon the efforts of His servants in the safeguarding and promotion of His Faith.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

60

First Appointments
to Continental Boards of Counselors
24 June 1968

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá’í Friends,

60.1 We list below the names of those who have been appointed to the first Continental Boards of Counselors for the Protection and Propagation of the Faith:

Northwestern Africa

Husayn Ardikání (Trustee, Continental Fund), Muhammad Kebdani, William Maxwell.

Central and East Africa

Oloro Epyeru, Kolonario Oule, Isobel Sabri, Mihdí Samandarí, ‘Azíz Yazdí (Trustee, Continental Fund).

Southern Africa

Seewoosumbur-Jeehoba Appa, Shidan Fat’he-Aazam (Trustee, Continental Fund), Bahíyyih Ford.

North America

Lloyd Gardner, Florence Mayberry, Edna True (Trustee, Continental Fund).

Central America

Carmen de Burafato, Artemus Lamb, Alfred Osborne (Trustee, Continental Fund).

South America

Athos Costas, Hooper Dunbar (Trustee, Continental Fund), Donald Witzel.

Western Asia

Masíh Farhangí, Mas'úd Khamsí, Hádí Rahmání (Trustee, Continental Fund), Manúchihr Salmánpúr, Sankaran-Nair Vasudevan.

Southeast Asia

Yan Kee Leong, Khudárahm Paymán (Trustee, Continental Fund), Chellie Sundram.

Northeast Asia

Rúhu’lláh Mumtází (Trustee, Continental Fund), Vicente Samaniego.

Australasia

Suhayl ‘Alá'í, Howard Harwood, Thelma Perks (Trustee, Continental Fund).

Europe

Erik Blumenthal, Dorothy Ferraby (Trustee, Continental Fund), Louis Hénuzet.

60.2Please share this list with the friends.

With loving Bahá’í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

61

Message to first National Youth Conference in the United States

26 June 1968

To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States

61.1WARMLY ACKNOWLEDGE CONFIDENT JOYOUS MESSAGE FROM BAHÁ’Í YOUTH GATHERED PRECINCTS MOTHER TEMPLE WEST. MOVED THEIR DETERMINATION SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES SERVE BELOVED FAITH CALL ON THEM BOLDLY CHALLENGE INVITE CONFUSED CONTEMPORARIES ENTRAPPED MORASS MATERIALISM TO EXAMINE PARTAKE LIFEGIVING POWER CAUSE JOIN ARMY BAHÁ’U’LLÁH CONFRONT NEGATIVE FORCES OF A SOCIETY SADLY LACKING SPIRITUAL VALUES. ASSURE YOUTH ARDENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES GUIDANCE CONFIRMATION THEIR COURAGEOUS EFFORTS.

Universal House of Justice

62
Passing of the Hand of the Cause of God
Hermann Grossmann
9 July 1968
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
62.1DEEPLY REGRET ANNOUNCE PASSING HAND CAUSE HERMANN GROSSMANN. GREATLY ADMIRED BELOVED GUARDIAN HIS GRIEVOUS LOSS DEPRIVES COMPANY HANDS CAUSE OUTSTANDING COLLABORATOR AND BAHÁ'Í WORLD COMMUNITY STAUNCH DEFENDER PROMOTER FAITH. HIS COURAGEOUS LOYALTY DURING CHALLENGING YEARS TESTS PERSECUTIONS GERMANY OUTSTANDING SERVICES SOUTH AMERICA IMMORTALIZED ANNALS FAITH. INVITE ALL NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS BEFITTING HIS EXALTED RANK EXEMPLARY SERVICES. REQUEST THOSE RESPONSIBLE MOTHER TEMPLES ARRANGE SERVICES AUDITORIUM.
Universal House of Justice
63
Message to the First Oceanic Conference,
Palermo, Sicily
August 1968
To the Hands of the Cause of God and the Bahá'í Friends assembled in
Palermo, Sicily, at the First Bahá'í Oceanic Conference
Dearly loved Friends,
63.1 The event which we commemorate at this first Bahá'í Oceanic Conference is unique. Neither the migration of Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees to the region of Aleppo, nor the journey of Moses towards the Promised Land, nor the flight into Egypt of Mary and Joseph with the infant Jesus, nor yet the Hegira of Muhammad can compare with the voyage made by God's Supreme Manifestation one hundred years ago from Gallipoli to the Most Great Prison. Bahá'u'lláh's voyage was forced upon Him by the two despots who were His chief adversaries in a determined attempt to extirpate once and for all His Cause, and the decree of His fourth banishment came when the tide of His prophetic utterance was in full flood. The proclamation of His Message to mankind had begun; the sun of His majesty had reached its zenith and, as attested by the devotion of His followers, the respect of the population and the esteem of officials and the representatives of foreign powers, His ascendancy had become manifest. At such a time He was confronted with the decree of final exile to a remote, obscure and pestilential outpost of the decrepit Turkish empire.
63.2 Bahá'u'lláh knew, better than His royal persecutors, the magnitude of the crisis, with all its potentiality for disaster, which confronted Him. Consigned to a prison cell, debarred from access to those to whom His Message must be addressed, cut off from His followers save for the handful who were to accompany Him, and deprived even of association with them, it was apparent that by all earthly standards the ship of His Cause must founder, His mission wither and die.
63.3 But it was the Lord of Hosts with Whom they were dealing. Knowing the sufferings which faced Him His one thought was to instil confidence and fortitude into His followers, to whom He immediately dispatched sublime Tablets

asserting the power of His Cause to overcome all opposition. “Should they attempt to conceal its light on the continent,” is one of His powerful utterances on this theme, “it will assuredly rear its head in the midmost heart of the ocean, and, raising its voice, proclaim ‘I am the lifegiver of the world!’” All the afflictions which men could heap upon Him were thrown back from the rock of His adamantine will like spray from the ocean. His patient submission to the affronts of men, His fortitude, His divine genius transformed the sombre notes of disaster into the diapason of triumph. At the nadir of His worldly fortunes He raised His standard of victory above the Prison City and poured forth upon mankind the healing balm of His laws and ordinances revealed in His Most Holy Book. “Until our time,” comments ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, “no such thing has ever occurred.”

Our Part—Building Bahá’u’lláh’s Order

63.4 Contemplating this awe-inspiring, supernal episode, we may obtain a clearer understanding of our own times, a more confident view of their outcome and a deeper apprehension of the part we are called upon to play. That the violent disruption which has seized the entire planet is beyond the ability of men to assuage, unaided by God's revelation, is a truth repeatedly and forcibly set forth in our Writings. The old order cannot be repaired; it is being rolled up before our eyes. The moral decay and disorder convulsing human society must run their course; we can neither arrest nor divert them.

63.5 Our task is to build the Order of Bahá’u’lláh. Undeflected by the desperate expedients of those who seek to subdue the storm convulsing human life by political, economic, social or educational programs, let us, with single-minded devotion and concentrating all our efforts on our objective, raise His Divine System and sheltered within its impregnable stronghold, safe from the darts of doubtfulness, demonstrate the Bahá’í way of life. Wherever a Bahá’í community exists, whether large or small, let it be distinguished for its abiding sense of security and faith, its high standard of rectitude, its complete freedom from all forms of prejudice, the spirit of love among its members and for the closely knit fabric of its social life. The acute distinction between this and present-day society will inevitably arouse the interest of the more enlightened, and as the world's gloom deepens the light of Bahá’í life will shine brighter and brighter until its brilliance must eventually attract the disillusioned masses and cause them to enter the haven of the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh, Who alone can bring them peace and justice and an ordered life.

The Mediterranean—Past History and Spiritual Potential

63.6 The great sea, on one of whose chief islands you are now gathered, within whose hinterland and islands have flourished the Jewish, the Christian and Islamic civilizations is a befitting scene for the first Oceanic Bahá’í Conference. Two millenniums ago, in this arena, the disciples of Christ performed such deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice as are remembered to this day and are forever enshrined in the annals of His Cause. A thousand years later the lands, bordering the southern and western shores of this sea witnessed the glory of Islam’s Golden Age.

63.7 In the day of the Promised One this same sea achieved eternal fame

through its association with the Heroic and Formative Ages of His Cause. It bore upon its bosom the King of kings Himself, the Center of His Covenant crossed and recrossed it in the course of His epoch-making journeys to the West, during which He left the indelible imprint of His presence upon European and African lands; the Sign of God on earth frequently journeyed upon it. It enshrines within its depths the mortal remains of the Hand of the Cause of God Dorothy Baker and around its shores lies the dust of apostles, martyrs and pioneers. Forty-six Knights of Bahá'u'lláh are identified with seven of its islands and five of its territories. Through such and many other episodes, Mediterranean lands—ancient home of civilizations—have been endowed with spiritual potentiality to dissolve the encrustations of those once glorious but now moribund social orders and to radiate once again the light of Divine guidance.

63.8 Through dedicated, heroic and sacrificial deeds during the course of the beloved Guardian's ministry, the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh was established in this area. Eight pillars of the Universal House of Justice were raised, the first of an even larger number to be established now and during the course of future plans, to include, as envisioned by Shoghi Effendi, National Spiritual Assemblies in major islands of that historic sea.

The Need for a Dramatic Upsurge in Effective Teaching

63.9 The timing of such exciting developments is dependent upon the outcome of the Nine Year Plan. At this midway point of that Plan, although great strides have been made, more than half the goals are still to be won. The greatest deficiencies are in the opening of new centers where Bahá'ís reside and the formation of Local Spiritual Assemblies, which inevitably affects the ability to establish National Spiritual Assemblies. A dramatic upsurge of teaching—effective teaching—is necessary to make up the leeway; pioneers are needed, teachers must travel, funds must be provided. It is our hope that there will be engendered at this Conference, through your enthusiasm, prayers and spirit of devotion, a great spiritual dynamic to reinforce that grand momentum which, mounting steadily during the next four years, must carry the community of the Most Great Name to overwhelming victory in 1973.

63.10 Dear friends, within a few short days the observance of the Centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's arrival in the Holy Land will take place. The hearts and minds of the entire Bahá'í world will be focused on the Most Holy Shrine, where those privileged to attend this commemoration will circumambulate that Holy Spot and raise their prayers to the Lord of the Age. Let them remember their fellow-believers at home and supplicate from the depths of their souls for such bounties and favors to descend upon the friends of God everywhere as to cause them to rise as one man to demonstrate their love for Him Who suffered for them, by such deeds of sacrifice and devotion as shall outshine the deeds of the past and sweep away every obstacle from the onward march of the Cause of God.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

64

Passing of Dr. Lutfu'lláh Hakím, Member of the

Universal House of Justice
12 August 1968
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
64.1 We share with you the following cable which we have just sent to the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia:
GRIEVE ANNOUNCE PASSING LUTFU'LLÁH HAKÍM DEDICATED SERVANT CAUSE GOD. SPECIAL MISSIONS ENTRUSTED HIM FULL CONFIDENCE REPOSED IN HIM BY MASTER AND GUARDIAN HIS CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH EARLY DISTINGUISHED BELIEVERS EAST WEST INCLUDING HIS COLLABORATION ESSLEMONT HIS SERVICES PERSIA BRITISH ISLES HOLY LAND HIS MEMBERSHIP APPOINTED AND ELECTED INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL HIS ELECTION UNIVERSAL HOUSE JUSTICE WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED IMMORTAL ANNALS FAITH BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. INFORM BELIEVERS HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL MEETINGS ALL CENTERS. CONVEY ALL MEMBERS HIS FAMILY EXPRESSIONS LOVING SYMPATHY ASSURANCE PRAYERS PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM.
64.2 In view of Dr. Hakím's long and devoted record of services to the faith other National Spiritual Assemblies are requested to hold memorial gatherings. Special commemorative services should also be held in the four Mother Temples of the Bahá'í World.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice
65
Passing of the Hand of the Cause of God
Tarázu'lláh Samandarí
4 September 1968
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
65.1WITH SORROWFUL HEARTS ANNOUNCE PASSING HAND CAUSE GOD SHIELD HIS FAITH DEARLY LOVED TARÁZU'LLÁH SAMANDARÍ NINETY-THIRD YEAR HIS LIFE ON MORROW COMMEMORATION CENTENARY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S ARRIVAL HOLY LAND. FAITHFUL TO LAST BREATH INSTRUCTIONS HIS LORD HIS MASTER HIS GUARDIAN HE CONTINUED SELFLESS DEVOTED SERVICE UNABATED UNTIL FALLING ILL DURING RECENT TEACHING MISSION. UNMINDFUL ILLNESS HE PROCEEDED HOLY LAND PARTICIPATE CENTENARY. EVER REMEMBERED HEARTS BELIEVERS EAST WEST TO WHOSE LANDS HE TRAVELED BEARING MESSAGE HIS LORD WHOSE COMMUNITIES HE FAITHFULLY SERVED THIS PRECIOUS REMNANT HEROIC AGE WHO ATTAINED PRESENCE BLESSED BEAUTY YEAR HIS ASCENSION NOW LAID REST FOOT MOUNTAIN GOD AMIDST THRONG BELIEVERS ASSEMBLED VICINITY VERY SPOT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FIRST TROD THESE SACRED SHORES. REQUEST ALL NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES HOLD MEMORIAL SERVICES INCLUDING FOUR MOTHER TEMPLES BAHÁ'Í WORLD BEFITTING LONG LIFE DEDICATED EXEMPLARY SERVICE LORD HOSTS BY ONE ASSURED CENTER COVENANT LOVING WELCOME PRESENCE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH ABHÁ KINGDOM. EXTEND LOVING SYMPATHY ASSURANCE PRAYERS MEMBERS DISTINGUISHED FAMILY.
The Universal House of Justice
66
Results of the Palermo Conference
8 September 1968
To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

66.1 The glorious Conference in Palermo concluded with a burst of eager enthusiasm of determined and dedicated believers who have pledged to do their part in winning the remaining goals of the Nine Year Plan. More than 125 offered to pioneer and more than 100 volunteered to do travel teaching. In addition, there was a generous outpouring of material resources to finance teaching projects. Had the entire Bahá'í world been able to participate in the Mediterranean Conference we have no doubt that all the goals would be quickly won.

66.2 With this in mind we wish to impress upon the friends who could not attend the Conference, and who will surely—through reports and personal contact with those who did—sense the enthusiasm generated there, that all believers have the privilege to share in the pioneering work, in the travel teaching program and in contributing to the Fund.

66.3 We announced at the Conference that the International Deputization Fund, so far used to aid pioneering and travel teaching on an international level, will henceforth be available to assist such projects on the national level in those areas where support is vitally important to the winning of the goals of the Nine Year Plan. We are concerned that, although we are now approaching the midway point of the Plan we must yet form an additional 6,997 Local Spiritual Assemblies (76% of the goal), and take the Faith to over 22,800 new localities (59% of the goal). Obviously, hundreds of pioneers and traveling teachers will be required, many of whom will serve in their own countries.

66.4 Those who cannot pioneer or do travel teaching will want to participate by contributing to the International Deputization Fund. Let them remember Bahá'u'lláh's injunction: "Center your energies in the propagation of the Faith of God. Whoso is worthy of so high a calling, let him arise and promote it. Whoso is unable, it is his duty to appoint him who will, in his stead, proclaim this Revelation ..." Let the Bahá'ís of the World join in the true spirit of universal participation and win all the victories while there is yet time. Let each assume his full measure of responsibility that all may share the laurels of accomplishment at the end of the Plan.

66.5 Our fervent prayer is that this one-hundredth anniversary of the final banishment of Bahá'u'lláh will mark a significant turning-point in the fortunes of the Nine Year Plan.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

67

Letter to Youth—Pioneering and Education

9 October 1968

To the Bahá'í Youth in Every Land

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

67.1 In the two years since we last addressed the youth of the Bahá'í world many remarkable advances have been made in the fortunes of the Faith. Not the least of these is the enrollment under the banner of Bahá'u'lláh of a growing army of young men and women eager to serve His Cause. The zeal,

the enthusiasm, the steadfastness and the devotion of the youth in every land has brought great joy and assurance to our hearts.

67.2 During the last days of August and the first days of September, when nearly two thousand believers from all over the world gathered in the Holy Land to commemorate the Centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's arrival on these sacred shores, we had an opportunity to observe at first hand those qualities of good character, selfless service and determined effort exemplified in the youth who served as volunteer helpers, and we wish to express our gratitude for their loving assistance and for their example.

67.3 Many of them offered to pioneer, but one perplexing question recurred: Shall I continue my education, or should I pioneer, now? Undoubtedly this same question is in the mind of every young Bahá'í wishing to dedicate his life to the advancement of the Faith. There is no stock answer which applies to all situations; the beloved Guardian gave different answers to different individuals on this question. Obviously circumstances vary with each individual case. Each individual must decide how he can best serve the Cause. In making this decision, it will be helpful to weigh the following factors:

67.3a • Upon becoming a Bahái one's whole life is, or should become devoted to the progress of the Cause of God, and every talent or faculty he possesses is ultimately committed to this overriding life objective. Within this framework he must consider, among other things, whether by continuing his education now he can be a more effective pioneer later, or alternatively whether the urgent need for pioneers, while possibilities for teaching are still open, outweighs an anticipated increase in effectiveness. This is not an easy decision, since oftentimes the spirit which prompts the pioneering offer is more important than one's academic attainments.

67.3B• One's liability for military service may be a factor in timing the offer of pioneer service.

67.3c• One may have outstanding obligations to others, including those who may be dependent on him for support.

67.3d• It may be possible to combine a pioneer project with a continuing educational program. Consideration may also be given to the possibility that a pioneering experience, even though it interrupts the formal educational program, may prove beneficial in the long run in that studies would later be resumed with a more mature outlook.

67.3e• The urgency of a particular goal which one is especially qualified to fill and for which there no other offers.

67.3f• The fact that the need for pioneers will undoubtedly be with us for many generations to come, and that therefore there will be many calls in future for pioneering service.

67.3g• The principle of consultation also applies. One my have the obligation to consult others, such as one's parents, one's Local and National Assemblies, and the pioneering committees.

67.3h• Finally, bearing in mind the principle of sacrificial service and the unfailing promises Bahá'u'lláh ordained for those who arise to serve His Cause, one should pray and meditate on what his course of action will be. Indeed, it often happens that the answer will be found in no other way.

67.4 We assure the youth that we are mindful of the many important decisions they must make as they tread the path of service to Bahá'u'lláh. We will offer our ardent supplications at the Holy Threshold that all will be divinely guided and that they will attract the blessings of the All-Merciful.

Deepest Bahá'í love,

The Universal House of Justice

68

Ridván Message1969

Ridván 126 [1969 A.D.]

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

68.1 The continued progress of the Cause of God stands in vivid contrast to the chronic unrest afflicting human society, a contrast which the events of the past year, both within and without the Faith, have only served to intensify. Amidst the disintegration of the old order the Cause of God has pursued its majestic course, extending the range of its activities and influence and accomplishing a further development of its administrative system.

A Year of Remarkable Activity

68.2 Opening with the convening, in the Holy Land, of the Second International Convention for the election of the Universal House of Justice, the year has witnessed a remarkable activity in the Cause. The most significant and far-reaching development was undoubtedly the appointment of the eleven Continental Boards of Counselors, which fulfilled the goal of the Nine Year Plan calling for the development of the Institution of the Hands of the Cause of God with a view to the extension into the future of its appointed functions of protection and propagation. This step, taken after full consultation with the Hands of the Cause, has, at one and the same time, strongly reinforced the activities of that Institution and made it possible for the Hands themselves to extend the range of their individual services beyond the continental sphere, thereby making universally available to the friends the love, the wisdom and the spirit of dedication animating the Guardian's appointees. We wish to pay tribute at this time to the exemplary manner in which the Counselors, under the guidance of the Hands, have embarked upon their high duties.

The Palermo Conference

68.3 In August, the first Oceanic Bahá'í Conference, held in Palermo, commemorated Bahá'u'lláh's voyage on the Mediterranean Sea on His way to the Most Great Prison. Attendants at this Conference came immediately afterwards to the Qiblih of their Faith to pay homage at the Shrine of its Founder and to commemorate with deep awareness of its spiritual import the long prophesied arrival of the Lord of Hosts on the shores of the Holy Land. This gathering of more than two thousand believers presented an inexpressibly poignant contrast to the actual arrival of Bahá'u'lláh one hundred years before, rejected by the rulers of this earth and derided by the local populace. Such is the conquering power of His Message, such is the undefeatable might of the King of Kings.

68.4 That same message is now being proclaimed by His followers from end to end of the world. Already one hundred and twenty-two Heads of State have been presented with the special edition of The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh, and copies have been received by thousands more officials and leaders.

68.5 Taking full advantage of the designation of 1968 as Human Rights Year by the United Nations, Bahá'í communities throughout the world have not only strengthened the ties between the Bahá'í International Community and the United Nations, but have at the same time proclaimed the Faith and its healing message. In country after country the Cause has been featured for the first time in modern mass communications media. The volume of this call to the peoples of the world is increasing day by day and must so continue, penetrating every stratum of society, until the conclusion of the Plan and beyond.

Eight Oceanic and Continental Conferences

68.6 As a stimulus and aid to this vital work as well as to the promotion of all the goals of the Plan, we announce the holding between August 1970 and September 1971 of a series of eight Oceanic and Continental Conferences, as follows: La Paz, Bolivia, and Rose Hill, Mauritius, in August 1970; Monrovia, Liberia, and Djakarta, Indonesia, in January 1971; Suva, Fiji, and Kingston, Jamaica, in May 1971; Sapporo, Japan, and Reykjavik, Iceland, in September 1971.

Areas of Progress in the Nine Year Plan

68.7 A review of the progress of the Nine Year Plan discloses that great strides have been made in the acquisition of Hazíratu'l-Quds, Temple sites and Teaching Institutes, in translation of Bahá'í literature into more languages and in the incorporation of Local and National Spiritual Assemblies. The site of the Panama Temple has been prepared for construction which will begin as soon as final plans and specifications and the placing of the contract have been approved.

Formation of Twelve National Spiritual Assemblies

68.8 As a result of the accelerated pace of expansion and consolidation which has been initiated, and which, if fostered and fed, will become a full tide of victorious achievement, we joyfully announce the formation of twelve more National Spiritual Assemblies, two during Ridván 1969: the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Burundi and Rwanda with its seat in Bujumbura and the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Papua and New Guinea with its seat in Lae, and ten during Ridván 1970: six in Africa, the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís of the Congo Republic (Kinshasa); Ghana; Dahomey, Togo and Niger; Malawi; Botswana; and Gambia, Senegal, Portuguese Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands; one in the Americas, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Guianas; one in Asia, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Near East; and two in Australasia, the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís of Tonga and the Cook Islands; and Samoa. Thus at Ridván 1970 the number of National Spiritual Assemblies will be raised to ninety-three.

Opening the Door of Pilgrimage

68.9 In harmony with the worldwide growth of the Cause the World Center of

the Faith is also developing rapidly. The pilgrims, the beloved Guardian has said, are the lifeblood of this World Center and it has long been our cherished hope and desire to be able to grant the bounty of pilgrimage to the Holy Land to all who can avail themselves of it. It is therefore with great joy that we now find it possible to open the door of pilgrimage to a much greater number of believers. Beginning in October of this year the size of each group of friends to be invited will be quadrupled and the number of groups each year will be increased so that nearly six times the present number of pilgrims will have the opportunity each year to pray in the Shrines of the Central Figures of their Faith, to visit the places hallowed by the footsteps, sufferings and triumphs of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and to meditate in the tranquillity of these sacred precincts, beautified with so much loving care by our beloved Guardian.

68.10 This increased flow of pilgrims will greatly augment the spiritual development of the Bahá'í World Community which now, after five years of strenuous labor and bearing the laurels of outstanding victories, is entering the fourth phase of the Nine Year Plan.

The Great Need for More Believers, Localities, Assemblies

68.11 The great, the most pressing need, at this stage of the Plan, is a rapid increase in the number of believers, and a major advance in the opening of the additional localities as well as in the formation of the well-grounded Local Spiritual Assemblies called for in the Plan. This worldwide activity, the hallmark of the fourth phase of the Plan, answering the tremendous opportunities offered by the present condition of mankind, will be strongly reinforced by the continuance of proclamation, is the essential foundation for the erection of the remaining National Spiritual Assemblies, and will increasingly witness to the benefits of international traveling teaching and inter-Assembly cooperation. Above all, it requires a sacrificial outpouring by the friends of contributions in support of the Funds of the Faith, and the raising up of a mighty host of pioneers.

68.12 During the second year of the Plan the Bahá'í world achieved its greatest feat of organized pioneering when a total of five hundred and five believers arose to settle in the unopened and weakly held territories of the earth. This magnificent achievement must now be surpassed. The call is raised for seven hundred and thirty-three believers to leave their homes and settle in territories of the globe in dire need of pioneer support or as yet unopened to the Faith. These devoted believers, who should arise without delay, are needed to settle, during the fourth phase of the Plan, in 184 specified territories of the globe: 48 in Africa, 40 in the Americas, 40 in Asia, 18 in Australasia and 38 in Europe. Although primary responsibility has been assigned to those national Bahá'í communities most able to provide pioneers, all should ponder in their hearts whether they too cannot respond to this call, either by going themselves or by deputizing, in response to Bahá'u'lláh's injunction, those who can go in their stead. Detailed information is being sent to National Spiritual Assemblies to ensure that this vital mobilization of Bahá'í warriors is accomplished as quickly as possible.

Our Commitment to Complete Victory

68.13 Beloved friends, the Nine Year Plan is well advanced, our work is blessed by the never-ceasing confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh, and the entire Bahá'í World Community is committed to complete victory. That happy consummation, now faintly discernible on the far horizon, will be reached through hard work, realistic planning, sacrificial deeds, intensification of the teaching work and, above all, through constant endeavor on the part of every single Bahá'í to conform his inner life to that glorious ideal set for mankind by Bahá'u'lláh and exemplified by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. In contemplating the Master's divine example we may well reflect that His life and deeds werenot acted to a pattern of expediency, but were the inevitable and spontaneous expression of His inner self. We, likewise, shall act according to His example only as our inward spirits, growing and maturing through the disciplines of prayer and practice of the Teachings, become the wellsprings of all our attitudes and actions. This will promote the accomplishment of God's purpose; this will ensure the triumph of His Faith and enable us to build up the present motion of
the Cause into a grand momentum whose force will carry the community of the Most Great Name to glorious victory in 1973 and onwards to the as yet unapprehended vistas of the Most Great Peace.
The Universal House of Justice
69
Guidance on Self-Defense
26 May 1969
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
69.1 We have reviewed your letter of 11 April, asking about the teachings of the Faith on self-defense and any guidance on individual conduct in the face of increasing civil disorder in North American cities.
69.2 From the texts you already have available it is clear that Bahá'u'lláh has stated that it is preferable to be killed in the path of God's good pleasure than to kill, and that organized religious attack against Bahá'ís should never turn into any kind of warfare, as this is strictly prohibited in our Writings.
69.3 A hitherto untranslated Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, however, points out that in the case of attack by robbers and highwaymen, a Bahá'í should not surrender himself, but should try, as far as circumstances permit, to defend himself, and later on lodge a complaint with the government authorities. In a letter written on behalf of the Guardian, he also indicates that in an emergency when there is no legal force at hand to appeal to, a Bahá'í is justified in defending his life. In another letter the Guardian has further pointed out that the assault of an irresponsible assailant upon a Bahá'í should be resisted by the Bahá'í, who would be justified, under such circumstances, in protecting his life.
69.4 The House of Justice does not wish at the present time to go beyond the guidelines given in the above-mentioned statements. The question is basically a matter of conscience, and in each case the Bahá'í involved must use his judgement in determining when to stop in self-defense lest his action

deteriorate into retaliation.

69.5 Of course the above principles apply also in cases when a Bahá'í finds himself involved in situations of civil disorder. We have, however, advised the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States that under the present circumstances in that country it is preferable that Bahá'ís do not buy nor own arms for their protection or the protection of their families.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

70

New Appointments to Continental Boards of Counselors

10 July 1969

To National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

70.1 With great joy we announce that we have decided to increase the total number of members of the Continental Boards of Counselors for the Protection and Propagation of the Faith to thirty-eight by adding John McHenry III to the Continental Board of Counselors in North East Asia and Mas'úd Khamsí to the Continental Board of Counselors in South America, raising the number of Counselors on each Board to three and four, respectively.

70.2 We also rejoice to announce the appointment of Mrs. Shirin Boman to the Continental Board of Counselors of Western Asia to fill a vacancy on that Board.

70.3 The devoted efforts of all eleven Continental Boards of Counselors during the first year of their service to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh have been most exemplary and praiseworthy. We are deeply grateful for the loyalty, steadfastness and devotion which have characterized the activities of all members in reinforcing the vitally important work of the Hands of the Cause of God.

70.4 Please share these glad tidings with the friends.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

71

Formation of an Additional
National Spiritual Assembly during Ridván 1970

11 August 1969

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

71.1 In the brief space of time following the announcement of the formation of six new National Spiritual Assemblies in Africa next Ridván, the succession of victories, resulting from the prodigious efforts exerted by the devoted friends, impels us to announce that a seventh National Spiritual Assembly will be formed in Africa at Ridván, 1970. The new National Spiritual Assembly including Congo (Brazzaville), Chad, Central African Republic and Gabon, will have its seat in Bangui. This will leave Uganda with its own separate National Spiritual Assembly.

71.2 Please share this joyous news with the believers. We know the friends throughout the world join us in our supplications for the continued,

uninterrupted prosecution and speedy fulfillment of the goals, terminating in the ultimate triumph of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice
72
Work of Continental Boards of Counselors and Their Auxiliary Board Members
1 October 1969
To the Continental Boards of Counselors and National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
72.1 A number of questions have been raised concerning the work of the Counselors and Auxiliary Board members, and it has been suggested that Auxiliary Board members be permitted to work regularly with National Spiritual Assemblies and national committees. We have carefully considered again the various factors involved and have decided that we must uphold the principle that such direct consultations should be exceptional rather than the rule.
Spiritual Assemblies and Auxiliary Board Members:
A Clarification of Roles
72.2 It is the responsibility of Spiritual Assemblies, assisted by their committees, to organize and direct the teaching work, and in doing so they must, naturally, also do all they can to stimulate and inspire the friends. It is, however, inevitable that the Assemblies and committees, being burdened with the administration of the teaching work as well as with all other aspects of Bahá'í community life, will be unable to spend as much time as they would wish on stimulating the believers.
72.3 Authority and direction flow from the Assemblies, whereas the power to accomplish the tasks resides primarily in the entire body of the believers. It is the principal task of the Auxiliary Boards to assist in arousing and releasing this power. This is a vital activity, and if they are to be able to perform it adequately they must avoid becoming involved in the work of administration. For example, when Auxiliary Board members arouse believers to pioneer, any believer who expresses his desire to do so should be referred to the appropriate committee which will then organize the project. Counselors and Auxiliary Board members should not, themselves, organize pioneering or travel teaching projects. Thus it is seen that the Auxiliary Boards should work closely with the grass roots of the community: the individual believers, groups and Local Spiritual Assemblies, advising, stimulating and assisting them. The Counselors are responsible for stimulating, counselling and assisting National Spiritual Assemblies, and also work with individuals, groups and Local Assemblies.
72.4 It is always possible, of course, for Counselors to depute an Auxiliary Board member to meet with a National Spiritual Assembly for a particular purpose, but this should not become a regular practice. Similarly, if the National Spiritual Assembly agrees, it may be advisable for an Auxiliary Board member to meet occasionally with a national committee to clarify the situation in the area and share information and ideas thoroughly. But this also should not become regular. Were it to do so there would be grave danger

of inhibiting the proper working of these two institutions, vitiating and undermining the collaboration that must essentially exist between the Continental Boards of Counselors and National Spiritual Assemblies. It would diffuse the energies and time of the Auxiliary Board members through their becoming involved in the administration of teaching. It could lead to the Auxiliary Board member's gradually taking over the direction of the national committee, usurping the function of the National Assembly, or to his becoming merely a traveling teacher sent hither and thither at the direction of the committee or National Assembly.

Sharing Information, Reports, and Recommendations

72.5 It is, of course vital that information be shared fully and promptly, as has been explained in the compilation on the work of Auxiliary Board members that was circulated on 25 March 1969. The ways of ensuring this should be worked out by the Counselors and National Spiritual Assemblies and methods may vary from area to area.

72.6 Reports and recommendations for action, however, are quite different. Auxiliary Board members should send theirs to the Counselors and not to National Assemblies or national committees directly. It is possible that the Counselors may reject or modify the recommendation; or, if they accept it and pass it on to the National Spiritual Assembly, the National Assembly may decide to refuse it. For an Auxiliary Board member to make recommendations directly to a national committee would lose the benefit of knowledge and experience in a wider field than that of which the Auxiliary Board member is aware, and would short-circuit and undermine the authority of both the Counselors and the National Assembly.

Advice—the Province of Counselors and Auxiliary Board

72.7 Similarly, although an Auxiliary Board member can and should receive information from the National Assemblies and national committees, his primary source of information about the community should be his own direct contacts with Local Spiritual Assemblies, groups and individual believers. In this way the Counselors as well as the National Spiritual Assemblies have the benefit of two independent sources of information about the community: through the Auxiliary Board members on the one hand, and through the national committees on the other.

72.8 Assemblies sometimes misunderstand what is meant by the statement that Counselors and Auxiliary Board members are concerned with the teaching work and not with administration. It is taken to mean that they may not give advice on administrative matters. This is quite wrong. One of the things that Counselors and Auxiliary Board members should watch and report on is the proper working of administrative institutions. The statement that they do not have anything to do with administration means, simply, that they do not administer. They do not direct or organize the teaching work nor do they adjudicate in matters of personal conflict or personal problems. All these activities fall within the sphere of responsibility of the Spiritual Assemblies. But if an Auxiliary Board member finds a Local Spiritual Assembly functioning incorrectly he should call its attention to the appropriate Texts; likewise if, in his work with the community, an Auxiliary Board member finds that the teaching work is

being held up by inefficiency of national committees, he should report this in detail to the Counselors who will then decide whether to refer it to the National Spiritual Assembly concerned. Similarly, if the Counselors find that a National Spiritual Assembly is not functioning properly, they should not hesitate to consult with the National Spiritual Assembly about this in a frank and loving way.

72.9 It is the Spiritual Assemblies who plan and direct the work, but these plans should be well known to the Counselors and Auxiliary Board members, because one of the ways in which they can assist the Assemblies is by urging the believers continually to support the plans of the Assemblies. If a National Spiritual Assembly has adopted one goal as preeminent in a year, the Auxiliary Board members should bear this in mind in all their contacts with the believers and should direct their attention to the plans of the National Assembly, and stimulate them to enthusiastically support them.

72.10 The Counselors in each continental zone have wide latitude in the carrying out of their work. Likewise they should give to each Auxiliary Board member considerable freedom of action within his own allocated area. Although the Counselors should regularly direct the work of the Auxiliary Board members, the latter should realize that they need not wait for direction; the nature of their work is such that they should be continually engaged in it according to their own best judgement, even if they are given no specific tasks to perform. Above all the Auxiliary Board members should build up a warm and loving relationship between themselves and the believers in their area so that the Local Spiritual Assemblies will spontaneously turn to them for advice and assistance.

72.11 We assure you all of our fervent prayers in the Holy Shrines for the blessings of Bahá'u'lláh upon the strenuous and highly meritorious services that you are performing with such devotion in His path.

The Universal House of Justice

73

Appeal to Increase Teaching Efforts amidst Catastrophic Events of the Day

16 November 1969

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dear Friends,

73.1 In the worsening world situation, fraught with pain of war, violence and the sudden uprooting of long-established institutions, can be seen the fulfillment of the prophecies of Bahá'u'lláh and the oft-repeated warnings of the Master and the beloved Guardian about the inevitable fate of a lamentably defective social system, an unenlightened leadership and a rebellious and unbelieving humanity. Governments and peoples of both the developed and developing nations, and other human institutions, secular and religious, finding themselves helpless to reverse the trend of the catastrophic events of the day, stand bewildered and overpowered by the magnitude and complexity of the problems facing them. At this fateful hour in human history many, unfortunately, seem content to stand aside and wring their hands in despair or else join in the babel of shouting and protestation which loudly

objects, but offers no solution to the woes and afflictions plaguing our age.

73.2 Nevertheless a greater and greater number of thoughtful and fair-minded men and women are recognizing in the clamor of contention, grief and destruction, now reaching such horrendous proportions, the evidences of Divine chastisement, and turning their faces towards God are becoming increasingly receptive to His Word. Doubtless the present circumstances, though tragic and awful in their immediate consequences, are serving to sharpen the focus on the indispensability of the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh to the needs of the present age, and will provide many opportunities to reach countless waiting souls, hungry and thirsty for Divine guidance.

73.3 It is these opportunities which we must seize before it is too late. What is needed now is the awakening of all believers to the immediacy of the challenge so that each may assume his share of the responsibility for taking the Teachings to all humanity. Universal participation, a salient objective of the Nine Year Plan, must be pressed toward attainment in every continent, country and island of the globe. Every Bahá'í, however humble or inarticulate, must become intent on fulfilling his role as a bearer of the Divine Message. Indeed, how can a true believer remain silent while around us men cry out in anguish for truth, love and unity to descend upon this world?

73.4 We all know how often the Master and the beloved Guardian called upon the friends to consciously strive to be more loving, more united, more dedicated and prayerful than ever before in order to overcome the atmosphere of present-day society which is unloving, disunited, careless of right and wrong and heedless of God. "... when we see the increasing darkness in the world today," the Guardian's secretary wrote on his behalf, "we can fully realize that unless the Message of Bahá'u'lláh reaches into the hearts of men and transforms them, there can be no peace and no spiritual progress in the future."

The Necessity of Individual Teaching Goals

73.5 The Nine Year Plan is the current stage in the achievement of that sublime objective. It is now imperative for every Bahá'í to set for himself individual teaching goals. The admonition of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to lead at least one new soul to the Faith each year and the exhortation of Shoghi Effendi to hold a Bahá'í fireside in one's home every Bahá'í month are examples of individual goals. Many have capacities to do even more, but this alone will assure final and complete victory for the Plan.

73.6 We call upon the friends to join with us in prayer during the Feast of Sultán that we will all become so imbued with zeal, courage and enthusiasm that from this day to the end of the Nine Year Plan nothing will be able to stay the victorious onward march of the followers of the Most Great Name. May our efforts be worthy of the blessings and confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

74

Acquisition of Property Adjacent to Bahjí

18 November 1969

To National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá’í Friends,

74.1 Enclosed please find our letter of 16 November 1969 addressed to the Bahá’ís of the World. Please share this letter with all believers in your jurisdiction as soon as possible.

74.2 After several years of protracted negotiations with agencies of the Israel Government both in Jerusalem and Haifa, an important property adjacent to Bahjí and embracing the Master's teahouse has been acquired. On 17 November we cabled the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States as follows:

74.2a WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS ANNOUNCE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS INITIATED NEARLY TWO DECADES AGO BY BELOVED GUARDIAN WITH AUTHORITIES STATE ISRAEL RESULTING OWNERSHIP VITALLY NEEDED PROPERTY SURROUNDING ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ’S TEAHOUSE IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORHOOD MOST HOLY TOMB FOUNDER FAITH. ACQUISITION MUCH DESIRED LAND EXTENDING GARDENS BAHJÍ FACILITATED THROUGH EXCHANGE PROPERTY DEDICATED SOME THIRTY-SIX YEARS AGO TO HOLY TOMB BAHÁ’U’LLÁH BY DEVOTED SERVANT CAUSE HÁJÍ ‘ALÍ YAZDÍ.
Universal House of Justice

74.3 The successful conclusion of these negotiations initiated during the lifetime of the beloved Guardian was made possible through the acceptance by the Government, as even exchange, of an endowment property given to the Faith in 1933 by the late Hájí ‘Alí Yazdí. The significance of the specific piece of land donated by this venerable soul becomes apparent when reading the following quotation from the IN MEMORIAM article about him in The Bahá’í World, Volume 9 [624-25]:

74.3aHe will forever be remembered, amongst other things, as the establisher of Bahá’í endowments in the vicinity of ‘Akká through his gift of a tract of land dedicated to Bahá’u’lláh’s Holy Tomb in Bahjí. ...

74.4 It is a glowing tribute to the memory of this devoted servant of the Blessed Beauty that his gift should play such an important part in securing this valuable additional safeguard for the Most Holy Tomb.

74.5 Please also convey the news of this victory to the friends.

With loving Bahá’í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice

75
Comments on the Guardianship and the
Universal House of Justice
7 December 1969
To an individual Bahá’í

Dear Bahá’í Friend,

75.1 Your recent letter, in which you share with us the questions that have occurred to some of the youth in studying “The Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh,” has been carefully considered, and we feel that we should comment both on the particular passage you mention and on a related passage in the same work, because both bear on the relationship between the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice.

75.2 The first passage concerns the Guardian’s duty to insist upon a reconsideration by his fellow members in the Universal House of Justice of any

enactment which he believes conflicts with the meaning and departs from the spirit of the Sacred Writings. The second passage concerns the infallibility of the Universal House of Justice without the Guardian, namely Shoghi Effendi's statement that "Without such an institution [the Guardianship] ... the necessary guidance to define the sphere of the legislative action of its elected representatives would be totally withdrawn."

75.3 Some of the youth, you indicate, were puzzled as to how to reconcile the former of these two passages with such statements as that in the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá which affirms that the Universal House of Justice is "freed from all error."

Seeking the Writings' Unity of Meaning

75.4 Just as the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá does not in any way contradict the Kitáb-i-Aqdas but, in the Guardian's words, "confirms, supplements, and correlates the provisions of the Aqdas," so the writings of the Guardian contradict neither the revealed Word nor the interpretations of the Master. In attempting to understand the Writings, therefore, one must first realize that there is and can be no real contradiction in them, and in the light of this we can confidently seek the unity of meaning which they contain.

75.5 The Guardian and the Universal House of Justice have certain duties and functions in common; each also operates within a separate and distinct sphere. As Shoghi Effendi explained, "... it is made indubitably clear and evident that the Guardian of the Faith has been made the Interpreter of the Word and that the Universal House of Justice has been invested with the function of legislating on matters not expressly revealed in the teachings. The interpretation of the Guardian, functioning within his own sphere, is as authoritative and binding as the enactments of the International House of Justice, whose exclusive right and prerogative is to pronounce upon and deliver the final judgement on such laws and ordinances as Bahá'u'lláh has not expressly revealed." He goes on to affirm, "Neither can, nor will ever, infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain of the other. Neither will seek to curtail the specific and undoubted authority with which both have been divinely invested." It is impossible to conceive that two centers of authority, which the Master has stated "are both under the care and protection of the Abhá Beauty, under the shelter and unerring guidance of His Holiness, the Exalted One, could conflict with one another, because both are vehicles of the same Divine Guidance.

75.6 The Universal House of Justice, beyond its function as the enactor of legislation, has been invested with the more general functions of protecting and administering the Cause, solving obscure questions and deciding upon matters that have caused difference. Nowhere is it stated that the infallibility of the Universal House of Justice is by virtue of the Guardian's membership or presence on that body. Indeed, 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will and Shoghi Effendi in his "Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh" have both explicitly stated that the elected members of the Universal House of Justice in consultation are recipients of unfailing Divine Guidance. Furthermore the Guardian himself in The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh

asserted that “It must be also clearly understood by every believer that the institution of Guardianship does not under any circumstances abrogate, or even in the slightest degree detract from, the powers granted to the Universal House of Justice by Bahá’u’lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, and repeatedly and solemnly confirmed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His Will. It does not constitute in any manner a contradiction to the Will and Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, nor does it nullify any of His revealed instructions.”

75.7 While the specific responsibility of the Guardian is the interpretation of the Word, he is also invested with all the powers and prerogatives necessary to discharge his function as Guardian of the Cause, its Head and supreme protector. He is, furthermore, made the irremovable head and member for life of the supreme legislative body of the Faith. It is as the head of the Universal House of Justice, and as a member of that body, that the Guardian takes part in the process of legislation. If the following passage, which gave rise to your query, is considered as referring to this last relationship, you will see that there is no contradiction between it and the other texts: “Though the Guardian of the Faith has been made the permanent head of so august a body he can never, even temporarily, assume the right of exclusive legislation. He cannot override the decision of the majority of his fellow members, but is bound to insist upon a reconsideration by them of any enactment he conscientiously believes to conflict with the meaning and to depart from the spirit of Bahá’u’lláh revealed utterances.”

75.8 Although the Guardian, in relation to his fellow members within the Universal House of Justice, cannot override the decision of the majority, it is inconceivable that the other members would ignore any objection he raised in the course of consultation or pass legislation contrary to what he expressed as being in harmony with the spirit of the Cause. It is, after all, the final act of judgement delivered by the Universal House of Justice that is vouchsafed infallibility, not any views expressed in the course of the process of enactment.

75.9 It can be seen, therefore, that there is no conflict between the Master's statements concerning the unfailing divine guidance conferred upon the Universal House of Justice and the above passage from “The Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh.”

The Process of Legislation

75.10 It may help the friends to understand this relationship if they are aware of some of the processes that the Universal House of Justice follows when legislating. First, of course, it observes the greatest care in studying the Sacred Texts and the interpretations of the Guardian as well as considering the views of all the members. After long consultation the process of drafting a pronouncement is put into effect. During this process the whole matter may well be reconsidered. As a result of such reconsideration the final judgement may be significantly different from the conclusion earlier favored, or possibly it may be decided not to legislate at all on that subject at that time. One can understand how great would be the attention paid to the views of the Guardian during the above process were he alive.

The Universal House of Justice in the Absence of the Guardian

75.11 In considering the second passage we must once more hold fast to the principle that the teachings do not contradict themselves.

75.12 Future Guardians are clearly envisaged and referred to in the Writings, but there is nowhere any promise or guarantee that the line of Guardians would endure forever; on the contrary there are clear indications that the line could be broken. Yet, in spite of this, there is a repeated insistence in the Writings on the indestructibility of the Covenant and the immutability of God's Purpose for this Day.

75.13 One of the most striking passages which envisage the possibility of such a break in the line of Guardians is in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas itself:

The endowments dedicated to charity revert to God, the Revealer of Signs. No one has the right to lay hold on them without leave from the Dawning-Place of Revelation. After Him the decision rests with the Aghsán [Branches], and after them with the House of Justice—should it be established in the world by then—so that they may use these endowments for the benefit of the Sites exalted in this Cause, and for that which they have been commanded by God, the Almighty, the All-Powerful. Otherwise the endowments should be referred to the people of Bahá, who speak not without His leave and who pass no judgement but in accordance with that which God has ordained in this Tablet, they who are the champions of victory betwixt heaven and earth, so that they may spend them on that which has been decreed in the Holy Book by God, the Mighty, the Bountiful.

75.14 The passing of Shoghi Effendi in 1957 precipitated the very situation provided for in this passage, in that the line of Aghsán ended before the House of Justice had been elected. Although, as is seen, the ending of the line of Aghsán at some stage was provided for, we must never underestimate the grievous loss that the Faith has suffered. God's purpose for mankind remains unchanged, however, and the mighty Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh remains impregnable. Has not Bahá'u'lláh stated categorically, "The Hand of Omnipotence hath established His Revelation upon an unassailable, an enduring foundation." While 'Abdu'l-Bahá confirms: "Verily, God effecteth that which He pleaseth; naught can annul His Covenant; naught can obstruct His favor nor oppose His Cause!" "Everything is subject to corruption; but the Covenant of thy Lord shall continue to pervade all regions." "The tests of every dispensation are in direct proportion to the greatness of the Cause, and as heretofore such a manifest Covenant, written by the Supreme Pen, hath not been entered upon, the tests are proportionately severe. ... These agitations of the violators are no more than the foam of the ocean, ... This foam of the ocean shall not endure and shall soon disperse and vanish, while the ocean of the Covenant shall eternally surge and roar." And Shoghi Effendi has clearly stated: "The bedrock on which this Administrative Order is founded is God's immutable Purpose for mankind in this day." "... this priceless gem of Divine Revelation, now still in its embryonic state, shall evolve within the shell of His law, and shall forge ahead, undivided and unimpaired, till it embraces the whole of mankind."

Two Authoritative Centers

75.15 In the Bahá'í Faith there are two authoritative centers appointed to which the believers must turn, for in reality the Interpreter of the Word is

an extension of that center which is the Word itself. The Book is the record of the utterance of Bahá'u'lláh, while the divinely inspired Interpreter is the living Mouth of that Book—it is he and he alone who can authoritatively state what the Book means. Thus one center is the Book with its Interpreter, and the other is the Universal House of Justice guided by God to decide on whatever is not explicitly revealed in the Book. This pattern of centers and their relationships is apparent at every stage in the unfoldment of the Cause. In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas Bahá'u'lláh tells the believers to refer after His passing to the Book, and to "Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root." In the Kitáb-i- Aqdas (the Book of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant), He makes it clear that this reference is to 'Abdu'l-Bahá . In the Aqdas Bahá'u'lláh also ordains the institution of the Universal House of Justice, and confers upon it the powers necessary for it to discharge its ordained functions. The Master in His Will and Testament explicitly institutes the Guardianship, which Shoghi Effendi states was clearly anticipated in the verses of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, reaffirms and elucidates the authority of the Universal House of Justice, and refers the believers once again to the Book: "Unto the Most Holy Book everyone must turn, and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice," and at the very end of the Will He says: "All must seek guidance and turn unto the Center of the Cause and the House of Justice. And he that turneth unto whatsoever else is indeed in grievous error."

75.16 As the sphere of jurisdiction of the Universal House of Justice in matters of legislation extends to whatever is not explicitly revealed in the Sacred Text, it is clear that the Book itself is the highest authority and delimits the sphere of action of the House of Justice. Likewise, the Interpreter of the Book must also have the authority to define the sphere of the legislative action of the elected representatives of the Cause. The writings of the Guardian and the advice given by him over the thirty-six years of his Guardianship show the way in which he exercised this function in relation to the Universal House of Justice as well as to National and Local Spiritual Assemblies.

75.17 The fact that the Guardian has the authority to define the sphere of the legislative action of the Universal House of Justice does not carry with it the corollary that without such guidance the Universal House of Justice might stray beyond the limits of its proper authority; such a deduction would conflict with all the other texts referring to its infallibility, and specifically with the Guardian's own clear assertion that the Universal House of Justice never can or will infringe on the sacred and prescribed domain of the Guardianship. It should be remembered, however, that although National and Local Spiritual Assemblies can receive divine guidance if they consult in the manner and spirit described by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, they do not share in the explicit guarantees of infallibility conferred upon the Universal House of Justice. Any careful student of the Cause can see with what care the Guardian, after the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, guided these elected representatives of the believers in the painstaking erection of the Administrative Order and in

the formulation of Local and National Bahá'í Constitutions.

75.18 We hope that these elucidations will assist the friends in understanding these relationships more clearly, but we must all remember, that we stand too close to the beginnings of the System ordained by Bahá'u'lláh to be able fully to understand its potentialities or the interrelationships of its component parts. As Shoghi Effendi's secretary wrote on his behalf to an individual believer on 25 March 1930, "The contents of the Will of the Master are far too much for the present generation to comprehend. It needs at least a century of actual working before the treasures of wisdom hidden in it can be revealed. …"

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

76

Release of a Compilation on Bahá'í Funds

1 January 1970

National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís of the World

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

76.1 In order to assist the friends everywhere in the proper appreciation of the importance and meaning of contributing to Bahá'í Funds, and to remind them as well as all Assemblies of the underlying principles that must govern the offering and administration of these funds, we have made a compilation of extracts from the Guardian's letters on this subject which we are now sharing with you.

76.2 You may use these extracts in any manner you deem advisable, at conferences, in summer schools, in deepening classes, and in your newsletters and circular letters.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

77

Noninterference in Political Affairs

8 February 1970

To National Spiritual Assemblies in Africa

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

77.1 For long centuries the African Continent, or rather that great part of it which lies south of the Sahara, remained relatively isolated from the rest of the world, untroubled and scarcely touched by the surging conflicts of the nations to the north and east. Now, rapidly emerging into the main stream of international interest, the African peoples, who were compared by Bahá'u'lláh to the black pupil of the eye through which "the light of the spirit shineth forth," are being swept by the heady enthusiasms of new-found independence, torn by the conflicting forces of divergent political interests, their vision obscured by the haze of materialism and the dust of nationalistic passions and age-old tribal rivalries.

77.2 In the midst of the storm and stress of the battles of selfish interests being waged about them, stand the followers of the Most Great Name, their sight attracted to the rising Sun of God's Holy Cause, their hearts

welded together in a bond of true unity with all the children of men, and their voices raised in a universal song of praise to the Glory of God and the oneness of mankind, calling on their fellowmen to forget and forgo their differences and join them in obedience and service to God's Holy Command in this Day.

77.3 The Army of the Cause, advancing at the bidding of the Lord, to conquer the hearts of men, can never be defeated, but its rate of advance can be slowed down by acts of unwisdom and ignorance on the part of its supporters. We are writing you this letter to help in clarifying some of the issues that have, in the past, blurred the vision of some of the believers, and caused them to commit errors of judgement which have retarded the progress of the Faith in their countries.

The Principle of Noninterference in Political Affairs

77.4 One of these issues, and by far the most important, is a lack of appreciation of the implications of the Bahá'í principle of noninterference in political affairs. We find that 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi have given us clear and convincing reasons why we must uphold this principle. These reasons are summarized below for the study and deepening of the friends. It is our hope that these observations will not only help the friends to intelligently and radiantly follow the holy teachings on this matter, but will help them to explain the Bahá'í attitude to those who may question its wisdom and usefulness:

77.4aThe Faith of God is the sole source of salvation for mankind today. The true cause of the ills of humanity is its disunity. No matter how perfect may be the machinery devised by the leaders of men for the political unity of the world, it will still not provide the antidote to the poison sapping the vigor of present-day society. These ills can be cured only through the instrumentality of God's Faith. There are many well-wishers of mankind who devote their efforts to relief work and charity and to the material well-being of man, but only Bahá'ís can do the work which God most wants done. When we devote ourselves to the work of the Faith we are doing a work which is the greatest aid and only refuge for a needy and divided world.

77.4bThe Bahá'í Community is a worldwide organization seeking to establish true and universal peace on earth. If a Bahá'í works for one political party to overcome another it is a negation of the very spirit of the Faith. Membership in any political party, therefore, necessarily entails repudiation of some or all of the principles of peace and unity proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh. As 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated: "Our party is God's party—we don't belong to any party."

77.4c If a Bahá'í were to insist on his right to support a certain political party, he could not deny the same degree of freedom to other believers. This would mean that within the ranks of the Faith, whose primary mission is to unite all men as one great family under God, there would be Bahá'ís opposed to each other. Where, then, would be the example of unity and harmony which the world is seeking?

77.4dIf the institutions of the Faith, God forbid, became involved in politics, the Bahá'ís would find themselves arousing antagonism instead of love. If they took one stand in one country, they would be bound to change the views of

the people in another country about the aims and purposes of the Faith. By becoming involved in political disputes, the Bahá'ís instead of changing the world or helping it, would themselves be lost and destroyed. The world situation is so confused and moral issues which were once clear have become so mixed up with selfish and battling factions, that the best way Bahá'ís can serve the highest interests of their country and the cause of true salvation for the world, is to sacrifice their political pursuits and affiliations and wholeheartedly and fully support the divine system of Bahá'u'lláh.

77.4eThe Faith is not opposed to the true interests of any nation, nor is it against any partyor faction. It holds aloof from all controversies and transcends them all, while enjoining upon its followers loyalty to government and a sane patriotism. This love for their country the Bahá'ís show by serving its well-being in their daily activity, or by working in the administrative channels of the government instead of through party politics or in diplomatic or political posts. The Bahá'ís may, indeed are encouraged to mix with all strata of society, with the highest authorities and with leading personalities as well as with the mass of the people, and should bring the knowledge of the Faith to them; but in so doing they should strictly avoid becoming identified, or identifying the Faith, with political pursuits and party programs.

77.5 So vital is this principle of noninterference in political matters, which must govern the acts and words of Bahá'ís in every land, that Shoghi Effendi has written that "Neither the charges which the uninformed and the malicious may be led to bring against them, nor the allurements of honors and rewards" would ever induce the true believers to deviate from this path, and that their words and conduct must proclaim that the followers of Bahá'u'lláh "are actuated by no selfish ambition, that they neither thirst for power, nor mind any wave of unpopularity, of distrust or criticism, which a strict adherence to their standards might provoke."

77.6 "Difficult and delicate though be our task," he continues, "the sustaining power of Bahá'u'lláh and of His Divine guidance will assuredly assist us if we follow steadfastly in His way, and strive to uphold the integrity of His laws. The light of His redeeming grace, which no earthly power can obscure, will if we persevere, illuminate our path, as we steer our course amid the snares and pitfalls of a troubled age, and will enable us to discharge our duties in a manner that would redound to the glory and the honor of His blessed Name."

The Problem of Tribalism

77.7 The second issue which causes difficulties for the African friends in these days is the matter of tribalism. As Bahá'ís they are convinced that mankind is one and must be viewed as one entity, yet, as members of their respective tribes, they find themselves expected by their non-Bahá'í brothers to give their first loyalty to, and even aggressively pursue the interests of their tribe. They live, moreover, in an atmosphere which is only too often one of mistrust, fear and even hatred against the members of other tribes.

77.8 The Bahá'í attitude in such a situation is clearly set forth in

the Writings. As Bahá'ís we are attached to our tribes and clans, just as we are to our families and, on a larger scale, to our nations, but we do not allow this attachment to conflict with our wider loyalty to humanity. The followers of the Faith, the Guardian has clearly stated, will not hesitate to subordinate every particular interest, be it personal, regional or national, to the overriding interests of the generality of mankind, knowing full well that in a world of interdependent peoples and nations the advantage of the part is best to be reached by the advantage of the whole, and that no lasting result can be achieved by any of the component parts if the general interests of the entity itself are neglected."

77.9 In further elucidating this theme he has written: "Let there be no misgivings as to the animating purpose of the worldwide Law of Bahá'u'lláh. ... It does not ignore nor does it attempt to suppress the diversity of ethnical origins, of climate, of history, of language and tradition, of thought and habit, that differentiate the peoples and nations of the world. It calls for a wider loyalty, for a larger aspiration than any that has animated the human race. It insists upon the subordination of national impulses and interests to the imperative claims of a unified world. It repudiates excessive centralization on one hand, and disclaims all attempts at uniformity on the other. Its watchword is unity in diversity ..."

The Example of a Unified Community

77.10 In these days when tribal tensions are increasing in Africa the friends should be vigilant lest any trace of prejudice or hatred, God forbid, may enter their midst. On the contrary, they should endeavor to bring into the Faith an ever larger representation of the various tribes in each country, and through complete lack of prejudice as well as through the love that Bahá'ís have for each other and for their non-Bahá'í neighbors, demonstrate to their countrymen what the Word of God can do. They will thus provide, for the scrutiny of the leaders and rulers of their countries, a shining example of a unified community, working together in full concord and harmony, demonstrating a hope that is attainable, and a pattern worthy to be emulated.

77.11 To discriminate against any tribes because they are in a minority is a violation of the spirit that animates the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. As followers of God's Holy Faith it is our obligation to protect the just interests of any minority element within the Bahá'í community. In fact in the administration of our Bahá'í affairs, representatives of minority groups are not only enabled to enjoy equal rights and privileges, but they are even favored and accorded priority. Bahá'ís should be careful never to deviate from this noble standard, even if the course of events or public opinion should bring pressure to bear upon them.

77.12 The principles in the Writings are clear, but usually it is when these principles are applied that questions arise. In all cases where the correct course of action is not clear believers should consult their National Spiritual Assembly who will exercise their judgement in advising the friends on the best course to follow.

77.13 It is the hope and prayer of the Universal House of Justice that National Spiritual Assemblies in Africa will, in full collaboration with the

Continental Boards of Counselors and Auxiliary Boards in their areas, act as loving shepherds to the divine flock in that mighty Continent, protect the friends from the evil influences surrounding them, guide them in the true and right path, and assist them to attain a continuously deeper understanding, a firmer conviction and a more consuming love for the Cause they are so devotedly seeking to promote and serve.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

78

Attainment of Consultative Status with the
United Nations Economic and Social Council

18 February 1970

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

78.1JOYFULLY ANNOUNCE BAHÁ'Í WORLD ATTAINMENT CONSULTATIVE STATUS UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL THEREBY FULFILLING LONG CHERISHED HOPE BELOVED GUARDIAN AND WORLD CENTER GOAL NINE YEAR PLAN. SUSTAINED PERSISTENT EFFORTS MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS ACCREDITED REPRESENTATIVES BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY UNITED NATIONS DEVOTED SUPPORT BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT WORLD FINALLY REWARDED. SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT ADDS PRESTIGE INFLUENCE RECOGNITION EVER ADVANCING FAITH BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. OFFERING PRAYERS GRATITUDE HOLY SHRINES.

Universal House of Justice

79

The Spirit of Bahá'í Consultation

6 March 1970

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

79.1 We have your letter of 14 January 1970 asking questions about the decision-making process of Spiritual Assemblies.

79.2 It is important to realize that the spirit of Bahá'í consultation is very different from that current in the decision-making processes of non-Bahá'í bodies.

79.3 The ideal of Bahá'í consultation is to arrive at a unanimous decision. When this is not possible a vote must be taken. In the words of the beloved Guardian: "... when they are called upon to arrive at a certain decision, they should, after dispassionate, anxious, and cordial consultation, turn to God in prayer, and with earnestness and conviction and courage record their vote and abide by the voice of the majority, which we are told by our Master to be the voice of truth, never to be challenged, and always to be wholeheartedly enforced."

79.4 As soon as a decision is reached it becomes the decision of the whole Assembly, not merely of those members who happened to be among the majority.

79.5 When it is proposed to put a matter to the vote, a member of the Assembly may feel that there are additional facts or views which must be sought before he can make up his mind and intelligently vote on the proposition. He should express this feeling to the Assembly, and it is for the Assembly to decide whether or not further consultation is needed before voting.

79.6 Whenever it is decided to vote on a proposition all that is required is to ascertain how many of the members are in favor of it; if this is a majority of those present, the motion is carried; if it is a minority, the motion is defeated. Thus the whole question of "abstaining" does not arise in Bahá'í voting. A member who does not vote in favor of a proposition is, in effect, voting against it, even if at that moment he himself feels that he has been unable to make up his mind on the matter.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

80

Commemoration of the Centenary of the Martyrdom of Mírzá Mihdí, the Purest Branch

25 March 1970

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

80.1 In commemoration of the centenary of the martyrdom of the Purest Branch, which falls on 23 June 1970, we call upon the Bahá'ís of the world to unite in prayer for "the regeneration of the world and the unification of its peoples."

80.2 During those days one hundred years ago Bahá'u'lláh was enduring His imprisonment in the Barracks of 'Akká. Upon the tribulations which weighed Him down was heaped the fatal accident which befell His young son, His companion and amanuensis, Mírzá Mihdí, the Purest Branch, whose dying supplication to his Father was to accept his life "as a ransom for those of His loved ones who yearned for, but were unable to attain, His presence." In a Tablet revealed in that grievous hour Bahá'u'lláh sorrows that "This is the day whereon he that was created of the light of Bahá has suffered martyrdom, at a time when he lay imprisoned at the hands of his enemies." Yet He makes clear that the youth passing has a far profounder meaning than His acceptance of the simple request, declaring that "Thou art, verily, the trust of God and His treasure in this land. Erelong will God reveal through thee that which He hath desired." In a prayer revealed for His son He proclaims the purpose underlying the tragedy: "I have, O my Lord, offered up that which Thou hast given Me, that Thy servants may be quickened, and all that dwell on earth be united." Thus upon a youth of consummate devotion who demonstrated such beauty of spirit and total dedication was conferred a unique station in the Cause of God.

80.3 In your recalling the bereavement of Bahá'u'lláh upon the loss of His loved son, and honoring a highly significant event in the Faith, we leave it to the discretion of the Assemblies whether they choose to hold special gatherings of prayer. In the Holy Land at the World Center on Mount Carmel there will be an observance at the grave of Mírzá Mihdí, at which time his pure example and sacrifice for all mankind will be remembered through the words of his glorious Father.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

80.4 For your background and appreciation of the nature of the martyrdom

of the Purest Branch, we refer you to God Passes By, pp. 188-89, and to Bahá'í Holy Places at the World Center, pp. 60, and 70-74, from which the several quotations above are derived.

81

Ridván Message 1970

Ridván 1970

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

81.1 BAHÁ'Í WORLD COMMUNITY ENTERING SEVENTH YEAR NINE YEAR PLAN HAS AMPLY DEMONSTRATED ABILITY SCALE HEIGHTS DEVOTION SACRIFICE WIN ASTONISHING VICTORIES WORLD-REDEEMING WORLD-HEALING WORLD-UNITING FAITH. AT THIS RIDVÁN EXTEND LOVING WELCOME ELEVEN NEW NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES NOW FORMING SEVEN IN AFRICA ONE IN AMERICAS ONE IN ASIA TWO IN AUSTRALASIA RAISING TO NINETY-FOUR NUMBER SUPPORTING PILLARS UNIVERSAL HOUSE JUSTICE. MOVED PAY LOVING TRIBUTE HANDS CAUSE GOD THEIR BRILLIANT SERVICES BLAZING TEACHING TRAILS SURFACE PLANET UPLIFTING ADVISING ASSEMBLIES FRIENDS ALL CONTINENTS. IN VIEW EFFECTIVE REINFORCEMENT THIS NOBLE WORK BY ABLE DEDICATED CONTINENTAL BOARDS COUNSELO THEIR AUXILIARY BOARDS TOGETHER WITH GROWING NEED AND EXPANSION WORLD COMMU ANNOUNCE AUGMENTATION VITAL INSTITUTION THROUGH APPOINTMENT THREE ADDITIONA COUNSELORS IRAJ AYMAN WESTERN ASIA ANNELIESE BOPP BETTY REED EUROPE AND AUTHORIZATION APPOINTMENT FORTY-FIVE ADDITIONAL AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBERS NINE AFRICA SIXTEEN ASIA TWO AUSTRALASIA EIGHTEEN WESTERN HEMISPHERE. CALLING FORMATION FOUR NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES RIDVÁN 1971 LESOTHO SEAT MASERU IVORY COAST MALI AND UPPER VOLTA SEAT ABIDJAN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO SEAT PORT OF SPAIN SOLOMON ISLANDS SEAT HONIARA. NINE YEAR PLAN ALREADY MARKED GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS PIONEERING PROCLAMATION RECOGNITION FAITH UPSURGE YOUTH ACQUISITION PROPERTIES COMMENCEMENT CONSTRUCTION PANAMA TEMPLE DEVELOPMENT WORLD CENTER. URGENT IMMEDIATE VITAL NEED CONCENTRATE ATTENTION INCREASE NUMBER LOCALITIES LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES BELIEVERS FILL REMAINING PIONEER POSTS. LAST RIDVÁN CALL RAISED SEVEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY-THREE PIONEERS MINIMUM REQUIREMENT. FOUR HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-NINE SPECIFIC POSTS STILL UNFILLED. TOTAL VICTORY REQUIRES MORE PIONEERS MORE FUNDS MORE NEW BELIEVERS. HANDS CAUSE COUNSELORS BOARD MEMBERS NATIONAL LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES EVE SINGLE FOLLOWER BAHÁ'U'LLÁH SUMMONED UTMOST EFFORT REMAINING YEARS NINE YEAR PLAN. ACHIEVEMENT THIS STEP MASTER'S DIVINE PLAN WILL ENDOW COMMUNITY CAPACITY ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCIES UNDERTAKE NEXT STAGE IMPLEMENTATION SUPREME PURPOSE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S REVELATION UNIFICATION MANKIND ESTABLISHMENT LONG PROMISED KINGDOM GOD THIS EARTH. ASSURE ARDENT LOVING PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES.

The Universal House of Justice

82

Message to Bolivia and
Mauritius Conferences—August 1970

August 1970

To the Continental Conference in La Paz, Bolivia,
and the Oceanic Conference in Rose-Hill, Mauritius

Beloved friends,

82.1 Our hearts turn with eager expectancy to the twin Conferences now in session in the southern hemisphere. Their convocation so shortly after the

worldwide commemoration of the Centenary of the Martyrdom of the Purest Branch, calls to mind that the promotion and establishment of the Faith of God have always been through sacrifice and dedicated service. Indeed, these very Conferences testify to the creative power, the fruitfulness, the invocation of Divine confirmations which result from sacrificial service to the Cause of God. Although both Bolivia and Mauritius are mentioned specifically in the Tablets of the Divine Plan, the Cause, even thirty-five years ago, was virtually unknown in those areas; today we witness the holding of these historic Conferences.

82.2 Little wonder that South America, whose rulers and presidents were addressed by Bahá'u'lláh in His Kitáb-i-Aqdas, of whose indigenous believers the Master, in those Tablets already referred to, wrote "should they be educated and guided, there can be no doubt that they will become so illumined as to enlighten the whole world," should have exerted a magnetic attraction upon a number of ardent souls in the northern continent, eager to serve in so promising a field. A band of heroic pioneers, bearing the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, gradually penetrated its wide territories, its jungles and mountains. They were followed by others under systematic crusades of two Seven Year Plans and the beloved Guardian's Ten Year Plan and together they became the spiritual conquerors of that continent. The Latin American communities which arose as a result of their pioneer efforts were described by the beloved Guardian as "associates in the execution" of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan. May Maxwell, one of the great heroines of the Faith, attained her longed-for crown of martyrdom in Buenos Aires; Panama became the site of the sixth Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Bahá'í world, and La Paz, Bolivia, is now the scene of this Continental Conference.

82.3 The Indian Ocean, whose furthermost waves lap the shores of the Cradle of our Faith, upon whose waters the Divine Báb traveled in the course of His pilgrimage to Mecca, the heart of Islam, where He openly announced His Mission; whose mighty subcontinent from which it derives its name was the home and assigned province of the ninth Letter of the Living; whose major islands were severally mentioned by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the seventh of His Tablets of the Divine Plan, lay, for most of a century, fallow to the Word of God, a challenge to the promotion of His Faith. This challenge was answered by half a hundred Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, who, in response to the beloved Guardian's call left their homes and wholeheartedly gave themselves to the establishment of the Cause in those parts. They implanted the banner of Bahá'u'lláh upon its atolls, its great islands and ordering territories. Now, in the midmost heart of that huge expanse of sea, Mauritius, an island whose name was enshrined in Bahá'í history during the Heroic Age of our Faith as the source, two years before 'Abdu'l-Bahá's arrival in America, of a contribution to the purchase of the site of the Mother Temple of the West, has been chosen as the venue of this oceanic Conference.

82.4 Not only have the institutions of the Faith been established in this ocean and this continent, but the spirit of the New Day, brilliant even at this early dawn with the light of Bahá'u'lláh's gifts to man, is apparent in the diversity of the attendants, in the brotherhood of erstwhile

strangers—even enemies—and above all in the noble purposes for which you have gathered.

82.5 Your aim is the redemption of mankind from its godlessness, its ignorance, its confusion and conflict. You will succeed, as those before you succeeded, by sacrifice to the Cause of God. The deeds and services required of you now, will shine in the future, even as those of your spiritual predecessors shine today and will forever shine in the annals of the Cause.

82.6 We share with you the spiritual delight of these occasions and assure you of our constant and ardent prayers that your deliberations upon the objectives of the Cause in your areas and the spiritual fellowship which you will enjoy will result in immediate and determined plans to complete the tasks assigned to you ere the rapidly approaching end of the Nine Year Plan. This Plan is the current stage of the Master's Divine Plan and its success must precede those greater triumphs when, as the result of your labors, the divine outpourings will raise up a vast concourse of radiant and devoted servants of Bahá'u'lláh who will establish His Kingdom in this world.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

83

Call for Pioneers

2 August 1970

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

83.1All National Spiritual Assemblies have been aware of the urgency of our Ridván 1969 message to the Bahá'ís of the world when the call was raised for pioneers to settle in territories in need of pioneer support or as yet unopened to the Faith, and have been cognizant of the emphasis which was placed on the need for the believers to arise quickly to ensure the success of the Nine Year Plan in the pioneer field.

83.2 Since that call was raised, no less than 330 of the pioneer posts in the 184 specified territories in the globe have been filled, and in a few of those territories additional pioneers have arrived to supplement the ranks of Bahá'u'lláh's followers at those posts.

83.3 As you will note from the attached list showing the current status of pioneer goals, some 417 pioneers must yet arise and settle in the posts previously assigned. After a recent review of pioneer needs we find it is necessary to call upon the valiant, constantly swelling community of believers throughout all continents to fill yet another 204 pioneer posts where manpower is desperately needed, in some territories in order to win the minimum number of Assemblies or localities called for in the Plan, and in others where vast new mass teaching areas have been opened to the Faith, thus necessitating additional reinforcements who must arrive soon if the precious gains are to be retained. These 204 new pioneer goals have been assigned to specific National Spiritual Assemblies.

83.4 Despite the magnitude of this undertaking and the grave challenge which your communities face in ensuring the homefront goals, we are compelled to point out that each of those goals assigned must be considered as a minimum

requirement. Pioneers unable to go to the goals assigned by their own National Spiritual Assembly should be encouraged to fill goals assigned to other National Assemblies. Of course a self-supporting believer is free to settle as a pioneer in any country he chooses.

83.5 We call upon the friends to act promptly and decisively in this vital international undertaking in which the followers of Bahá'u'lláh are, in all continents of the globe, summoned to participate. The time is short and the effort required is truly formidable.

83.6 We shall offer ardent prayers at the Holy Shrines, supplicating that the waves of pioneers required to complete this urgent task of the present hour shall arise and quickly rush forth into the arena of service.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

84

Release of a Compilation on the Local Spiritual Assembly

11 August 1970

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

84.1 As the Bahá'í Administrative Order rapidly expands throughout the world it behoves everyone associated with it to familiarize himself with its principles, to understand its import and to put its precepts into practice. Only as individual members of Local Spiritual Assemblies deepen themselves in the fundamental verities of the Faith and in the proper application of the principles governing the operation of the Assembly will this institution grow and develop toward its full potential.

84.2 It is because the principles of Bahá'í Administration are new to so many who are now being called upon to serve as members of Local Spiritual Assemblies that we felt the need to make available in brief form some of the texts and instructions which apply. No attempt has been made to put together a complete compilation of all texts from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi, but it is hoped that the enclosed extracts will suffice as an introduction to a more profound study of the subject, and lead to a more efficient functioning of Local Spiritual Assemblies everywhere.

84.3 We call upon you to consider ways and means of sharing this material with the friends, and especially members of Local Spiritual Assemblies, as quickly as possible. In many instances, of course, the material will need to be translated; in other instances many of the quotations included in the compilation may already be available to the friends in their own language.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

85

Formation of Seven National Spiritual Assemblies during Ridván 1971

12 August 1970

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

85.1 The following cable has just been sent to Hands of the Cause Rúhíyyih Khánum and William Sears representing the Universal House of Justice at Conferences in Bolivia and Mauritius:

PLEASE ANNOUNCE TO PARTICIPANTS CONFERENCE JOYOUS NEWS DECISION CALL THREE ADDITIONAL NATIONAL CONVENTIONS NEXT RIDVÁN NAMELY SUDAN CHAD AND CONGO BRAZZAVILLE GABON BRINGING TO SEVEN NEW NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES BEING FORMED AT CLOSE OF SEVENTH YEAR NINE YEAR PLAN. FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES BEHALF NATIONAL COMMUNITIES BAHÁ'Í WORLD REACHING ONE HUNDRED ONE BY NEXT RIDVÁN SUPPLICATING REINFORCEMENT TIES UNITING THEM GREATER CONSECRATION CHALLENGING TASKS STILL AHEAD WIDER PARTICIPATION ALL RANKS FAITHFUL. COMMUNICATING TEXT CABLE ALL NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES.

85.2 Please share this news with the friends.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

86

Message to Pioneers

29 November 1970

To all Pioneers

Dearly loved Friends,

86.1 The spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion that has animated so large a number of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh to leave their homes, move to posts far and near, to foreign lands and on the homefronts, to hoist the banner of the Faith and promote the divine teachings in well-nigh every populated area of the globe, uplifts our hearts and evokes our profound pride and admiration. We are now entering the most challenging and crucial closing period of the Nine Year Plan, that will culminate in the joyous celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh's Most Holy Book, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. What greater gift can we lay at the feet of our Beloved, at that historic moment, than the proclamation of Victory in His Name!

86.2 Our deep appreciation of the vital role which the pioneers play in the onward march of the Army of Light towards victory arouses in us the desire to comfort their hearts, upraise their spirits, and strengthen their loins by calling to their minds the stirring appeal which flowed from the Pen of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

86.2a O that I could travel, even though on foot and in the utmost poverty, to these regions, and, raising the call of "Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá" in cities, villages, mountains, deserts and oceans, promote the Divine teachings! This, alas, I cannot do. How intensely I deplore it! Please God, ye may achieve it.

and the following words of guidance from our beloved Guardian:

86.2b Theirs, at this present hour, unpropitious and unpromising though the immediate prospects may appear, is the duty to plod on, confident and unsparing in their daily efforts, undimmed in their vision, alert and conscious of the sublimity of their calling and of the future glory of their Mission, undistracted by the petty pursuits and temptations of the environment in which they live, exerting their utmost, and playing, each independently, as well as

through their concerted efforts, their part in hastening the advent of the day when their dearly beloved Faith will, at long last, have revealed the full measure of its potentialities, and soared, as destined by Providence, to new heights of power, of eminence and glory.

It is hard for the friends to appreciate, when they are isolated in one of these goal territories, and see that they are making no progress in teaching others, are living in inhospitable climes for the most part, and are lonesome for Bahá'í companionship and activity, that they represent a force for good, that they are like a lighthouse of Bahá'u'lláh shining at a strategic point and casting its beam out into the darkness. This is why he [Shoghi Effendi] so consistently urges these pioneers not to abandon their posts.

However gigantic the task may be, no matter how insuperable the obstacles standing in the way of its accomplishment may appear, and however restricted the means, capacity, and numbers of those called upon to ensure its fulfillment, it surely cannot, by virtue of the divine potency with which it is charged, but be successfully achieved in due time. God's redemptive grace, flowing through the small yet infinitely resourceful band of His faithful servants will, as in the days past, gradually permeate the world, and infuse into the consciousness of peoples and nations alike the realization that nothing short of the divine panacea He Himself has prescribed can cure the ills now so sadly afflicting the whole of mankind. What a higher privilege therefore than to be the instrument, the channel for the transmission of such divine grace. Let us then take courage, and faithfully pursue our mission, and rest ever assured that the promised day of victory, foretold by Bahá'u'lláh as marking the golden age of His Cause, will dawn upon us and upon a world as yet unconscious of the divine potency of His Message.

86.2cAnd finally from the Pen of Glory Itself:

They that have forsaken their country for the purpose of teaching Our Cause—these shall the Faithful Spirit strengthen through its power. A company of Our chosen angels shall go forth with them, as bidden by Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Wise. How great the blessedness that awaiteth him that hath attained the honor of serving the Almighty! By My life! No act, however great, can compare with it, except such deeds as have been ordained by God, the All-Powerful, the Most Mighty. Such a service is, indeed, the prince of all goodly deeds, and the ornament of every goodly act. Thus hath it been ordained by Him Who is the Sovereign Ruler, the Ancient of Days.

86.3To each and every one of you we send our love and assurance of our prayers on your behalf in the Holy Shrines.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

87

Grave Crisis in Bahá'í International Fund

29 December 1970

To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh in every land

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

87.1 We have reached a critical point in the progress of the Nine Year

Plan. In many lands multitudes are thirsty and eager to embrace the Message of Bahá'u'lláh. In others, materially advanced but spiritually backward, a great effort is needed to awaken the people to the light of this New Day. The recently established National Spiritual Assemblies in many lands are occupied in acquiring the Hazíratu'l-Quds, Temple Sites, National Endowments and Teaching Institutes essential for the proper development of the Administrative Order and the deepening of the Bahá'í knowledge of their believers, while in the heart of the Western Hemisphere, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of Panama requires several hundred thousand dollars for its completion. To accomplish these many essential tasks the resources of the Cause are being stretched to their uttermost.

87.2 At this crucial moment, when the activities of the believers and the expenditure of funds should be increased to seize the opportunities which lie before us, the Bahá'í International Fund finds itself plunged into a grave crisis by a steep reduction in contributions. Undoubtedly worldwide economic difficulties are one of the causes of this, but we are confident that the believers throughout the world will respond to this challenge and will make every sacrifice to ensure that the work of the Cause of God goes forward unimpeded.

Demands on the International Fund

87.3 Since 1963 when there were 56 National Spiritual Assemblies, to the present time when there are 94 (soon to be 101), the work of the Cause has expanded so rapidly, both in the teaching field and at the World Center, that the Universal House of Justice has had to increase more than fourfold the annual international budget of the Cause. This year fifty-eight percent of the International Fund is being expended outside the Holy Land on projects such as assistance to National Spiritual Assemblies (56 of which receive a large part, if not all, of their budgets from the World Center), contributions to the work of the Hands of the Cause and the Continental Boards of Counselors, defense of the Cause in lands where it is facing persecution, and our expanded activities at the United Nations.

87.4 In order to meet the present situation the Universal House of Justice must drastically reduce the expenditure of the Bahá'í International Fund until the flow of contributions is restored. While the work on the International Archives Building necessary to protect the precious Tablets and relics from the high humidity and increasingly polluted atmosphere of Haifa city has been completed, the projects of further developing the Gardens in Bahjí and of starting upon an extension of the Terraces below the Shrine of the Báb, as well as additional developments to the office facilities of the World Center, must now be postponed. In addition we are reluctantly compelled to reduce by ten percent the next two quarterly remittances of assistance to National Spiritual Assemblies, and we call upon these Assemblies now to reduce their own expenditure to take account of this.

87.5 These, however, can but be temporary measures designed to minimize the present emergency. The real answer lies, not in restricting the activities of the friends at this time when mankind stands in such dire need of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, but in the universal participation of every

believer in the work of the Cause.

Backbone of the Fund: Universal Participation

87.6 The poor believers vastly outnumber the wealthy ones, and this majority will grow rapidly as mass teaching spreads. Thus, although the work in mass teaching areas will continue to be assisted by the contributions of the friends ,in prosperous lands, and these believers must for the immediate future continue to be the main support of the International Fund, it becomes ever more urgent for the friends in mass teaching areas to finance their own activities to an ever greater degree. The backbone of the Fund must be the regular contributions of every believer. Even though such contributions may be small because of the poverty of the donors, large numbers of small sums combine into a mighty river that can carry along the work of the Cause. Moreover the unity of the friends in sacrifice draws upon them the confirmations of the Blessed Beauty.

87.7 The universal participation of the believers in every aspect of the Faith—in contributing to the Fund, in teaching, deepening, living the Bahá'í life, administering the affairs of the community, and, above all, in the life of prayer and devotion to God—will endow the Bahá'í community with such strength that it can overcome the forces of spiritual disintegration which are engulfing the non-Bahá'í world, and can become an ocean of oneness that will cover the face of the planet.

87.8 We ask every one of you to ponder these matters deeply, and to join us in fervent prayer that this momentary crisis will prove to have been a providential test that will spur the community of the Greatest Name to new heights of dedication and triumphant achievement.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

88

Message to the Monrovia Conference—January 1971

January 1971

To the Friends of God assembled
in the Conference in Monrovia, Liberia

Dearly loved Friends,

88.1 The emergence on the African Continent of a widely spread, numerous, diversified and united Bahá'í community, so swiftly after the initiation of organized teaching plans there, is of the utmost significance and a signal evidence of the bounties which God has destined for its peoples in this day.

88.2 The great victories in Africa, which brought such joy to the Guardian's heart in the last years of his life, resulted from the self-sacrificing devotion of a handful of pioneers, gradually assisted by the first few native believers, all laboring under the loving shadow of the Hand of the Cause Músá Banání. From their efforts there has been raised up an increasing army of African, teachers, administrators, pioneers and valiant promoters of the Divine Cause, whose main task is to bring to all Africa the bounties conferred by the Word of God, bounties of enlightenment, zeal, devotion and eventually the true civilization of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order.

88.3 Many of the gravest ills now afflicting the human race appear in acute form on the African Continent. Racial, tribal and religious prejudice, disunity of nations, the scourge of political factionalism, poverty and lack of education are obvious examples. Bahá'ís have a great part to play—greater than they may realize—in the healing of these sicknesses and the abatement of their worst effects. By their radiant unity, by their "bright and shining" faces, their self-discipline in zealously following all the requirements of Bahá'í law, their abstention from politics, their constant study and proclamation of the Great Message, they will hasten the advent of that glorious day when all mankind will know its true brotherhood and will bask in the sunshine of God's love and blessing.

88.4 That the African believers are fully capable of taking their full share in building the Kingdom of God on earth, their natural abilities and present deeds have fully demonstrated. An African Hand of the Cause of God, even now in the course of a brilliant, triumphal teaching tour of the planet, African Counselors, Board members, national and local administrators and an ever-increasing army of believers testify to the vigor and immense capacity of this highly blessed continent to serve its Lord in the great day of His appearance. That the African believers, so beloved by the Guardian of the Faith, will rise to the challenge facing them and earn the gratitude and goodwill of all mankind by their deeds of dedication and self-sacrifice is the longing of our hearts.

88.5 May this Conference become a sun from which will stream forth to all parts of the vast continent rays of spiritual energy and inspiration, galvanizing the friends to action in the fields of teaching and pioneering in such manner that they will rapidly achieve all the tasks assigned to them under the Nine Year Plan.

88.6 Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

The Universal House of Justice

89

Message to the Oceanic Conference of the South China Seas, Singapore—January 1971

January 197I

To the Friends of God assembled in the
Oceanic Conference in Singapore, Malaysia

Dearly loved Friends,

89.1 The wonderful progress made by the Bahá'í communities of South East Asia towards achievement of the tasks assigned to them under the Nine Year Plan fills our hearts with thankfulness to God and arouses our keenest admiration for the capacities and dedicated services of the friends in all those vast and varied territories. Indeed, so bountiful have been the divine confirmations rewarding their efforts that we are confident of their ability to far exceed the stated objectives and to initiate the opening phase of the next stage of their development, a massive increase in the establishment of the Cause of God among the teeming millions of the islands and ocean-bordering countries of so huge an area of the earth.

89.2 South East Asia, whose gifted and industrious peoples have embraced

four of the world's major religions, have produced in all ages civilizations and cultures representative of the highest accomplishments of the human race, now experiencing with the rest of the world the disruptive, revolutionizing, "vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order … the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed," lies open and receptive to the Word of God, ready once more to nourish in its fertile soil that potent seed and to bring forth, in its own characteristic manner and as an integral part of the world civilization, the institutions, the fabric, the brilliant edifice of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order.

89.3 We now summon the believers of this highly promising area, flushed with the tide of approaching victory, to launch a three-pronged campaign, the main feature of which is to achieve an immediate expansion of the Faith, exceeding the aims of the Nine Year Plan. In addition you are called upon to raise a corps of traveling teachers, whose main objective will be to visit all the communities and groups in the area for the purpose of deepening and consolidating their Bahá'í life, thus preserving the victories won and reinforcing the base for future development. Simultaneously a number of Chinese-speaking believers must arise who, as pioneers and traveling teachers in all the countries of South East Asia, will attract large numbers of the talented Chinese race to embrace and serve the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

89.4 Recognizing your current achievements and fully confident in your determination and ability to continue to attract the divine confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh, we are happy to announce as a supplementary goal of the Nine Year Plan, the establishment, at Ridván, 1972, of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Singapore, an additional supporting pillar of the Universal House of Justice and a new bastion of the Faith in so vital a cross-roads of human activity.

89.5 We pray that your deliberations will engender a new wave of enthusiasm, cement ever more firmly the bonds of love between the many and various national communities of your area and result in practical plans for the implementation of the above tasks.

89.6 We send you all our most loving greetings and look forward eagerly to the report of your conference.

The Universal House of Justice

90

Passing of the Hand of the Cause of God

Agnes Alexander

4 January 1971

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

90.1PROFOUNDLY GRIEVE PASSING ILLUMINED SOUL HAND CAUSE AGNES ALEXANDER LONG-STANDING PILLAR CAUSE FAR EAST FIRST BRING FAITH HAWAIIAN ISLANDS. HER LONG DEDICATED EXEMPLARY LIFE SERVICE DEVOTION CAUSE GOD ANTICIPATED BY CENTER COVENANT SELECTING HER SHARE MAY MAXWELL IMPERISHABLE HONOR MENTION TABLETS DIVINE PLAN. HER UNRESTRAINED UNCEASING PURSUIT TEACHING OBEDIENCE COMMAND BAHÁ'U'LLÁH EXHORTATIONS MASTER GUIDANCE BELOVED GUARDIAN SHINING EXAMPLE ALL FOLLOWERS FAITH. HER PASSING SEVERS ONE MORE LINK HEROIC AGE. ASSURE FAMILY FRIENDS ARDENT PRAYERS HOLIEST SHRINE PROGRESS RADIANT SOUL REQUEST ALL

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES HOLD MEMORIAL MEETINGS AND THOSE RESPONSIBLE HO
SERVICES MOTHER TEMPLES.
Universal House of Justice
91
Participation of the Hands of the Cause of God in
First National Conventions
1 February 1971
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
91.1HAPPY ANNOUNCE FOLLOWING HANDS CAUSE WILL REPRESENT UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE FIRST NATIONAL CONVENTIONS COMING RIDVÁN AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚHÍYYIH KHÁNUM IVORY COAST UPPER VOLTA MALI ZIKRULLAH KHADEM TRINIDAD TOBAGO ADELBERT MÜHLSCHLEGEL LESOTHO 'ALÍ-MUHAMMAD VARQÁ CONGO BRAZZAVILLE GABON ENOCH OLINGA BOTH SUDAN CHAD COLLIS FEATHERSTONE BOTH SOLO ISLANDS SOUTHWEST PACIFIC OCEAN. CONFIDENT PRESENCE PARTICIPATION THESE STANDARD-BEARERS NINE YEAR PLAN HISTORIC FIRST CONVENTIONS WILL ATTRACT DIVINE BLESSINGS ASSIST NEW NATIONAL COMMUNITIES BEFITTINGLY ASSUME SACRED RESPONSIBILITIES.
The Universal House of Justice
92
Formation of Nine Additional National Spiritual
Assemblies during Ridván 1971
11 February 1971
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
92.1REJOICE ANNOUNCE ALL FRIENDS FORMATION DURING RIDVÁN 1972 NINE ADDITIONAL NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES RAISING TOTAL NUMBER PILLARS UNIVERSAL HOUSE JUSTICE TO ONE HUNDRED AND TEN. THREE IN AFRICA MALAGASY REPUBLIC RÉUNION SEYCHELLES THREE IN ASIA EAST PAKISTAN NEPAL SINGAPORE ONE IN AUSTRALASIA NORTHWEST PACIFIC OCEAN COMPRISING GUAM CAROLINES MARIANAS MARSHALLS TWO IN EUROPE ICELAND AND REPUBLIC IRELAND. FOUR OF THESE SEYCHELLES EAST PAKISTAN SINGAPORE NORTHWEST PACIFIC CONSTITUTE SUPPLEMENTARY ACHIEVEME NINE YEAR PLAN. URGE PIONEERS SCHEDULED ALL THESE AREAS SETTLE POSTS WITHOUT DELAY. CALL UPON RESPECTIVE COMMUNITIES BRACE THEMSELVES EXERT SUPREME EFFORT FAST FLEETING WEEKS BEFORE COMING RIDVÁN ESTABLISH AS MANY ASSEMBLIES AS POSSIBLE THEREBY BROADENING STRENGTHENING FOUNDATIONS PROJECTED NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES FOLLOWERS MOST GREAT NAME MAY SEIZE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES PRESENT HOUR AND SPARE NO EFFORT UNTIL GOALS PLAN ARE FULLY ACCOMPLISHED THEREBY ATTRACTING TO THEMSELVES AND THEIR COMMUNITIE INESTIMABLE BLESSINGS ANCIENT BEAUTY.
The Universal House of Justice
93
Warning against the Misuse of Recordings of
'Abdu'l-Bahá's Voice
23 February 1971
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
93.1 The advent and liberal supply of tape and cassette recorders in the markets of the world have opened new doors and placed in almost every land at

the disposal of the friends new methods for the dissemination of Bahá'í material. It is the hope of the Universal House of Justice that the recording of Bahá'í talks, and other audio features, and their wide use among Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís alike, will prove to be a powerful new instrument in the teaching and deepening work everywhere. There is one area, however, where great care must be exercised, and this is in the use of the record of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's voice.

93.2 The Guardian, when referring to this record, requested the friends "to exercise restraint and caution." "In my view," he added, "it should be used only on special occasions and be listened to with the utmost reverence. The dignity of the Cause, I am sure, would suffer from too wide and indiscriminate use of one of the most precious relics of our departed Master."

93.3 We request you to share the contents of this letter, in any manner you deem advisable, with the friends residing under your jurisdiction. We are confident that all the friends will strictly observe the Guardian's exhortation and will not overstep the bounds of courtesy and moderation in the use of a precious relic so lovingly left to us by the Center of God's Covenant.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

94

Principles of Bahá'í Publishing

28 March 1971

To the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'í World

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

94.1 Recognizing the need for a great increase in the provision of Bahá'í literature in all languages, we have reviewed the whole process of Bahá'í publishing including such matters as reviewing, standards of production, sales and distribution, relationships between National Spiritual Assemblies, the international needs of the teaching work and the position of Bahá'í authors. We are both to stimulate the supply of new works and to liberate the channels of publication and distribution. We wish to encourage Bahá'í authors as well as to promote production of the basic texts of the Faith.

94.2 We therefore ask you to study the attached memorandum yourselves, pass it on to your Publishing Trust and/or other agencies concerned, and make it available generally to the friends in whatever way you may find practicable.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

Memorandum on Bahá'í Publishing—Ridván 1971

94.3 The following principles and observations are called to the attention of National Spiritual Assemblies and all those concerned with the production of Bahá'í publications:

Reviewing

Obligatory

94.3a At this early stage of the Cause all works by Bahá'ís which deal with the Faith, whether in the form of books, pamphlets, translations, poems,

songs, radio and television scripts, films, recordings, etc. must be approved before submission for publication, whether to a Bahá'í or non-Bahá'í publisher. In the case of material for purely local consumption the competent authority is the Local Spiritual Assembly, otherwise the National Spiritual Assembly (through its Reviewing Committee) is the approving authority.

A Temporary Measure

94.3b That this measure is both obligatory and temporary is borne out by the following statements of the Guardian:

They must supervise in these days when the Cause is still in its infancy all Bahá'í publications and translations, and provide in general for a dignified and accurate presentation of all Bahá'í literature and its distribution to the general public.

(Principles of Bahá'í Administration, pp. 38-39)

... the administration of the Cause ... should guard against such rigidity as would clog and fetter the liberating forces released by His Revelation. ... ... the present restrictions imposed on the publication of Bahá'í literature will be definitely abolished; ...

(The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 9)

Purpose of Review

94.3c The purpose of review is to protect the Faith from misrepresentation and to ensure dignity and accuracy in its presentation. In general the function of a Reviewing Committee is to say whether the work submitted gives an acceptable presentation of the Cause or not. Reviewers may win the gratitude and good will of authors by calling attention to such things as occasional grammatical or spelling errors, but approval should not be refused on such grounds; all such details are editorial matters for agreement between author and publisher.

Translations

94.3d As regards English, the beloved Guardian's translations are obviously the most authentic and should be used. If, for some particular reason, a Bahá'í author when quoting a passage of the Sacred Text which has been rendered into English by the Guardian, wishes to use a translation other than that made by the beloved Guardian, his request may be referred to the Universal House of Justice. Passages from the Sacred Text not translated by Shoghi Effendi, but already in English and published with approval, may be used. If an author wishes to make his own translation of a passage not already translated by Shoghi Effendi, the new translation may be submitted to the Universal House of Justice for approval.

94.3e With the exception of certain oriental languages such as Turkish, Arabic and Urdu, which are related to the original Persian or Arabic, new translations of the Sacred Text into languages other than English must be made from the Guardian's English translation where it exists. When there is no translation into English by Shoghi Effendi of a particular passage, the National Spiritual Assembly concerned should seek the advice of the Universal House of Justice. When translations already exist, which are not made from the Guardian's English text, but have been published and approved, they may be used.

Reviewing Committees

94.3f It is recommended that Reviewing Committees be small, composed of two or three believers with adequate education and knowledge of the Cause. It is essential that works submitted be dealt with promptly. The standards to be upheld by reviewers are the following: (a) conformity with the Teachings, (b) accuracy, (c) dignity in presentation. The Spiritual Assembly, on the basis of its Reviewing Committee's report, gives or withholds approval of the work.

Approval of Works Already Reviewed Elsewhere

94.3g While a National Spiritual Assembly intending to publish Bahá'í literature is encouraged to accept the review of another National Spiritual Assembly, it is not required to do so and has the right to review any work prior to authorizing its publication or republication by its own Publishing Trust or publisher in its area of jurisdiction. This does not apply to works by Hands of the Cause, which are reviewed in the Holy Land.

94.3h A National Spiritual Assembly which receives for approval a manuscript from outside its area of jurisdiction should inquire whether it has already been submitted for review elsewhere, and in the case of its having been refused approval, the reasons for such refusal.

Bahá'í Publishers

94.3i Bahá'í publishers may not publish any work about the Faith until it has been approved by the National Spiritual Assembly of the country where it is to be published.

94.3j Approval of a work imposes no obligation upon any Bahá'í publisher to publish it.

94.3k Whatever "house styles" Publishing Trusts and other Bahá'í publishers may adopt, transliteration of oriental terms into languages using the Roman alphabet must at present be according to the system chosen by the Guardian and described in volumes of The Bahá'í World.

Cables

94.3l Cables in English should be printed exactly as received, without interpolation.

Editing

94.3m Bahá'í publishers, when accepting a work for publication, will make their own arrangements with the author on all such matters as accuracy of quotations, documentation, grammar and spelling, dates and even the rewriting of passages which the publisher may consider need improving, or he may ask the author to write additional material or to delete part of the original manuscript. Although such matters are entirely between the author and publisher, any addition, deletion or changes which affect the meaning must be submitted for review with the relative context.

Approval Notice

94.3n Although no Bahá'í work may be published without approval, it is not mandatory to print an approval notice in any publication.

Bahá'í Authors

94.3o Bahá'í authors should welcome review of their works, and can greatly assist promptness in review by supplying a sufficient number of copies of the manuscript for each member of the Reviewing Committee to have one.

94.3p Bahá'í authors may submit their works for review to any National Spiritual Assembly, and may send their works, once approved, to any publisher they like, Bahá'í or non-Bahá'í, at home or abroad. It should be remembered, however, that the approval should be given by the National Spiritual Assembly of the country where the work is to be first published. And in the case of a non-Bahá'í publisher the author should insist on use of the system of transliteration at present used by the Faith for languages employing the Roman alphabet.

94.3q It is hoped that Bahá'í authors will provide a constant stream of new works. Introductory books, commentaries, dissertations on various aspects of the Revelation, text books, histories, reviews, audiovisual material are all needed to stimulate study of the Faith and to promote the vital teaching work.

Sale and Distribution of Bahá'í Literature

94.3r 1. Bahá'í publications reviewed and published in one country may be sold or, offered for sale anywhere in the world. This includes the right of the publisher or the author to promote the sale of the publication in any legitimate manner including the right to advise the Bahá'ís in any country of its contents, price and availability. It does not include the right to insist that National Assemblies, their Publishing Trusts or Publishing Committees stock, promote or advertise the publication or offer it for sale. If any National Spiritual Assembly feels that a book would be damaging to the Faith in its country, it may represent this fact to the publisher and author and ask them not to promote it in that particular country. It is hoped that there will be great cooperation among those publishing Bahá'í literature, and Publishing Trusts are encouraged to supply to believers, the book trade and libraries, all Bahá'í publications from any country.

2. Believers should not be prevented from purchasing Bahá'í books reviewed and published in other countries.

3. National Spiritual Assemblies are not obliged to furnish mailing lists of believers to publishers, but publishers may compile their own mailing lists and use them for the announcement and promotion of sale of their Bahá'í books and literature.

4. Five copies of every new book and every new edition (not reprints) should be sent to the World Center.

95

Call for Deepening on the Significance of
the Formative Age

15 April 1971

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

95.1 Our Ridván message this year called attention to the impending fiftieth anniversary of the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "an event which signalized at once the end of the Heroic Age of our Faith, the opening of the Formative Age and the birth of the Administrative Order, the nucleus and pattern of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh."

95.2 We now call upon all National Spiritual Assemblies to formulate and implement plans designed to educate the friends everywhere in their

understanding of the significance of the Formative Age of our Faith. As an aid to this program we attach extracts from the writings of the beloved Guardian on this general theme, and we suggest that these and similar excerpts from the Writings be studied and expounded at the forthcoming Summer Schools, at special sessions of Teaching Institutes, at conferences of the friends, and indeed on any occasions which you may deem suitable.

95.3 We leave it to you to use the wonderful material bequeathed to us by the beloved Guardian on this theme in whatever manner you deem best for your own communities. The study and understanding of this subject will immensely strengthen the faith of the believers as well as their ability to present the message to a waiting world.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

Extracts from the Writings of Shoghi Effendi on the
Significance of the Formative Age of our Faith

April 1971

95.4 The passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, so sudden in the circumstances which caused it, so dramatic in its consequences, could neither impede the operation of such a dynamic force nor obscure its purpose. Those fervid appeals, embodied in the Will and Testament of a departed Master, could not but confirm its aim, define its character and reinforce the promise of its ultimate success.

95.5 Out of the pangs of anguish which His bereaved followers have suffered, amid the heat and dust which the attacks launched by a sleepless enemy had precipitated, the Administration of Bahá'u'lláh's invincible Faith was born. The potent energies released through the ascension of the Center of His Covenant crystallized into this supreme, this infallible Organ for the accomplishment of a Divine Purpose. The Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá unveiled its character, reaffirmed its basis, supplemented its principles, asserted its indispensability, and enumerated its chief institutions. ...

"America and the Most Great Peace"—21 April 1933, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Selected Letters, rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 89.

95.6 With 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension, and more particularly with the passing of His well-beloved and illustrious sister the Most Exalted Leaf—the last survivor of a glorious and heroic age—there draws to a close the first and most moving chapter of Bahá'í history, marking the conclusion of the Primitive, the Apostolic Age of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. It was 'Abdu'l-Bahá Who, through the provisions of His weighty Will and Testament, has forged the vital link which must for ever connect the age that has just expired with the one we now live in—the Transitional and Formative period of the Faith—a stage that must in the fullness of time reach its blossom and yield its fruit in the exploits and triumphs that are to herald the Golden Age of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

95.7 Dearly beloved friends! The onrushing forces so miraculously released through the agency of two independent and swiftly successive

Manifestations are now under our very eyes and through the care of the chosen stewards of a far-flung Faith being gradually mustered and disciplined. They are slowly crystallizing into institutions that will come to be regarded as the hallmark and glory of the age we are called upon to establish and by our deeds immortalize. For upon our present-day efforts, and above all upon the extent to which we strive to remodel our lives after the pattern of sublime heroism associated with those gone before us, must depend the efficacy of the instruments we now fashion—instruments that must erect the structure of that blissful Commonwealth which must signalize the Golden Age of our Faith. "The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh"—8 February 1934, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 98.

95.8 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who incarnates an institution for which we can find no parallel whatsoever in any of the world's recognized religious systems, may be said to have closed the Age to which He Himself belonged and opened the one in which we are now laboring. His Will and Testament should thus be regarded as the perpetual, the indissoluble link which the mind of Him Who is the Mystery of God has conceived in order to insure the continuity of the three ages that constitute the component parts of the Bahá'í Dispensation. The period in which the seed of the Faith had been slowly germinating is thus intertwined both with the one which must witness its efflorescence and the subsequent age in which that seed will have finally yielded its golden fruit.

95.9 The creative energies released by the Law of Bahá'u'lláh, permeating and evolving within the mind of 'Abdu'l-Bahá have, by their very impact and close interaction, given birth to an Instrument which may be viewed as the Charter of the New World Order which is at once the glory and the promise of this most great Dispensation. The Will may thus be acclaimed as the inevitable offspring resulting from that mystic intercourse between Him Who communicated the generating influence of His divine Purpose and the One Who was its vehicle and chosen recipient. Being the Child of the Covenant—the Heir of both the Originator and the Interpreter of the Law of God—the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá can no more be divorced from Him Who supplied the original and motivating impulse than from the One Who ultimately conceived it. Bahá'u'lláh's inscrutable purpose, we must ever bear in mind, has been so thoroughly infused into the conduct of 'Abdu'l- Bahá, and their motives have been so closely wedded together, that the mere attempt to dissociate the teachings of the former from any system which the ideal Exemplar of those same teachings has established would amount to a repudiation of one of the most sacred and basic truths of the Faith.

95.10 The Administrative Order, which ever since 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension has evolved and is taking shape under our very eyes in no fewer than forty countries of the world, may be considered as the framework of the Will itself, the inviolable stronghold wherein this newborn child is being nurtured and developed. This Administrative Order, as it expands and consolidates itself, will no doubt manifest the potentialities and reveal the full implications of this momentous Document—this most remarkable expression of the Will of One of the most remarkable Figures of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh. It will, as its component parts, its organic institutions,

begin to function with efficiency and vigor, assert its claim and demonstrate its capacity to be regarded not only as the nucleus but the very pattern of the New World Order destined to embrace in the fullness of time the whole of mankind.

"The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh"—8 February 1934, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 143-44.

95.11 Dearly beloved friends: Though the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh has been delivered, the World Order which such a Revelation must needs beget is as yet unborn. Though the Heroic Age of His Faith is passed, the creative energies which that Age has released have not as yet crystallized into that world society which, in the fullness of time, is to mirror forth the brightness of His glory. Though the framework of His Administrative Order has been erected, and the Formative Period of the Bahá'í Era has begun, yet the promised Kingdom into which the seed of His institutions must ripen remains as yet uninaugurated. ...

95.12 "The heights," Bahá'u'lláh Himself testifies, "which, through the most gracious favor of God, mortal man can attain in this Day are as yet unrevealed to his sight. The world of being hath never had, nor doth it yet possess, the capacity for such a revelation. The day, however, is approaching when the potentialities of so great a favor will, by virtue of His behest, be manifested unto men."

95.13 For the revelation of so great a favor a period of intense turmoil and widespread suffering would seem to be indispensable. Resplendent as has been the Age that has witnessed the inception of the Mission with which Bahá'u'lláh has been entrusted, the interval which must elapse ere that Age yields its choicest fruit must, it is becoming increasingly apparent, be overshadowed by such moral and social gloom as can alone prepare an unrepentant humanity for the prize she is destined to inherit ...

95.14 As we view the world around us, we are compelled to observe the manifold evidences of that universal fermentation which, in every continent of the globe and in every department of human life, be it religious, social, economic or political, is purging and reshaping humanity in anticipation of the Day when the wholeness of the human race will have been recognized and its unity established. A twofold process, however, can be distinguished, each tending, in its own way and with an accelerated momentum, to bring to a climax the forces that are transforming the face of our planet. The first is essentially an integrating process, while the second is fundamentally disruptive. The former, as it steadily evolves, unfolds a System which may well serve as a pattern for that world polity towards which a strangely disordered world is continually advancing; while the latter, as its disintegrating influence deepens, tends to tear down, with increasing violence, the antiquated barriers that seek to block humanity's progress towards its destined goal. The constructive process stands associated with the nascent Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, and is the harbinger of the New World Order that Faith must erelong establish. The destructive forces that characterize the other should be identified with a civilization that has refused to answer to the expectation of a new age, and is consequently falling into chaos and

decline.

95.15 A titanic, a spiritual struggle, unparalleled in its magnitude yet unspeakably glorious in its ultimate consequences, is being waged as a result of these opposing tendencies, in this age of transition through which the organized community of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh and mankind as a whole are passing. ...

95.16 It is not my purpose to call to mind, much less to attempt a detailed analysis of, the spiritual struggles that have ensued, or to note the victories that have redounded to the glory of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh since the day of its foundation. My chief concern is not with the happenings that have distinguished the First, the Apostolic Age of the Bahá'í Dispensation, but rather with the outstanding events that are transpiring in, and the tendencies which characterize, the formative period of its development, this Age of Transition, whose tribulations are the precursors of that Era of blissful felicity which is to incarnate God's ultimate purpose for all mankind. "The Unfoldment of World Civilization"—11 March 1936, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 168-71.

95.17 The moment had now arrived for that undying, that world-vitalizing Spirit that was born in Shíráz, that had been rekindled in Tihrán, that had been fanned into flame in Baghdád and Adrianople, that had been carried to the West, and was now illuminating the fringes of five continents, to incarnate itself in institutions designed to canalize its outspreading energies and stimulate its growth. The Age that had witnessed the birth and rise of the Faith had now closed. The Heroic, the Apostolic Age of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh, that primitive period in which its Founders had lived, in which its life had been generated, in which its greatest heroes had struggled and quaffed the cup of martyrdom, and its pristine foundations been established—a period whose splendors no victories in this or any future age, however brilliant, can rival—had now terminated with the passing of One Whose mission may be regarded as the link binding the Age in which the seed of the newborn Message had been incubating and those which are destined to witness its efflorescence and ultimate fruition.

95.18 The Formative Period, the Iron Age, of that Dispensation was now beginning, the Age in which the institutions, local, national and international, of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh were to take shape, develop and become fully consolidated, in anticipation of the third, the last, the Golden Age destined to witness the emergence of a world-embracing Order enshrining the ultimate fruit of God's latest Revelation to mankind, a fruit whose maturity must signalize the establishment of a world civilization and the formal inauguration of the Kingdom of the Father upon earth as promised by Jesus Christ Himself. ...

95.19 The last twenty-three years of the first Bahá'í century may thus be regarded as the initial stage of the Formative Period of the Faith, an Age of Transition to be identified with the rise and establishment of the Administrative Order, upon which the institutions of the future Bahá'í World Commonwealth must needs be ultimately erected in the Golden Age that must witness the consummation of the Bahá'í Dispensation. The Charter which

called into being, outlined the features and set in motion the processes of, this Administrative Order is none other than the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, His greatest legacy to posterity, the brightest emanation of His mind and the mightiest instrument forged to insure the continuity of the three ages which constitute the component parts of His Father's Dispensation. ...

95.20 The Administrative Order which this historic Document has established, it should be noted, is, by virtue of its origin and character, unique in the annals of the world's religious systems. ...

95.21 The Document establishing that Order, the Charter of a future world civilization, which may be regarded in some of its features as supplementary to no less weighty a Book than the Kitáb-i-Aqdas; ...

God Passes By, rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1987), pp. 324-28.

95.22 The first seventy-seven years of the preceding century, constituting the Apostolic and Heroic Age of our Faith, fell into three distinct epochs, of nine, of thirty-nine and of twenty-nine years’ duration, associated respectively with the Bábí Dispensation and the Ministries of Bahá’u’lláh and of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. This Primitive Age of the Bahá’í Era, unapproached in spiritual fecundity by any period associated with the mission of the Founder of any previous Dispensation, was impregnated, from its inception to its termination, with the creative energies generated through the advent of two independent Manifestations and the establishment of a Covenant unique in the spiritual annals of mankind.

95.23 The last twenty-three years of that same century coincided with the first epoch of the second, the Iron and Formative, Age of the Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh—the first of a series of epochs which must precede the inception of the last and Golden Age of that Dispensation—a Dispensation which, as the Author of the Faith has Himself categorically asserted, must extend over a period of no less than one thousand years, and which will constitute the first stage in a series of Dispensations, to be established by future Manifestations, all deriving their inspiration from the Author of the Bahá’í Revelation, and destined to last, in their aggregate, no less than five thousand centuries. ...

95.24 During this Formative Age of the Faith, and in the course of present and succeeding epochs, the last and crowning stage in the erection of the framework of the Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh—the election of the Universal House of Justice—will have been completed, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Mother-Book of His Revelation, will have been codified and its laws promulgated, the Lesser Peace will have been established, the unity of mankind will have been achieved and its maturity attained, the Plan conceived by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá will have been executed, the emancipation of the Faith from the fetters of religious orthodoxy will have been effected, and its independent religious status will have been universally recognized, whilst in the course of the Golden Age, destined to consummate the Dispensation itself, the banner of the Most Great Peace, promised by its Author, will have been unfurled, the World Bahá’í Commonwealth will have emerged in the plenitude

of its power and splendor, and the birth and efflorescence of a world civilization, the child of that Peace, will have conferred its inestimable blessings upon all mankind.
"The Challenging Requirements of the Present Hour"—5 June 1947, Citadel of Faith: Messages to America 1947-1957 (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980), pp. 4-6.
96
Ridván Message 1971
Ridván 1971
To the Bahá'ís of the World
Dearly loved Friends,
96.1 On 28 November 1971 the Bahá'í World will commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Center of the Covenant, the Ensign of the Oneness of Mankind, the Mystery of God, an event which signalized at once the end of the Heroic Age of our Faith, the opening of the Formative Age and the birth of the Administrative Order, the nucleus and pattern of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. As we contemplate the fruits of the Master's Ministry harvested during the first fifty years of the Formative Age, a period dominated by the dynamic and beloved figure of Shoghi Effendi, whose life was dedicated to the systematic implementation of the provisions of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and of the Tablets of the Divine Plan—the two charters provided by the Master for the administration and the teaching of the Cause of God—we may well experience a sense of awe at the prospect of the next fifty years. That first half-century of the Formative Age has seen the Bahá'í Community grow from a few hundred centers in 35 countries in 1921, to over 46,000 centers in 135 independent states and 182 significant territories and islands at the present day, has been marked by the raising throughout the world of the framework of the Administrative Order, which in its turn has brought recognition of the Faith by many governments and civil authorities and accreditation in consultative status to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, and has witnessed the spread to many parts of the world of that "entry by troops" promised by the Master and so long and so eagerly anticipated by the friends.
96.2 A new horizon, bright with intimations of thrilling developments in the unfolding life of the Cause of God, is now discernible. The approach to it is complete victory in the Nine Year Plan. For we should never forget that the beloved Guardian's Ten Year Crusade, the current Nine Year Plan, other plans to follow throughout successive epochs of the Formative Age of the Faith, are all phases in the implementation of the Divine Plan of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, set out in fourteen of His Tablets to North America.
Review of Significant Achievements
96.3 The Nine Year Plan is well advanced, and this Ridván will witness the establishment of seven more National Spiritual Assemblies, five in Africa, one in South America and one in the Pacific, bringing the total number of these exalted bodies to 101. Next Ridván the nine already announced will be formed, together with 4 more, one each in Afghanistan, Arabia, the Windward Islands and Puerto Rico, bringing the total to 114, six more than called for in

the Nine Year Plan. The members of all National Spiritual Assemblies which will be elected at Ridván 1972 will take part in the election of the Universal House of Justice at Ridván 1973, when an international convention will be held at the World Center.

96.4 The Mother Temple of Latin America, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of Panama, is scheduled to be completed by December 1971 and its dedication will take place at the following Ridván.

96.5 The wonderful spirit released at the four Oceanic and Intercontinental Conferences, together with the practical benefits which accrued to the Cause from them, reinforce our high hopes that the four Conferences to be held this year will be resounding successes and result in more pioneers, more traveling teachers, greater proclamation of the Message and a raising of the spirits and devotion of the friends.

96.6 Our appeal to the friends in December 1970 for support of the Bahá'í International Fund, which had reached a serious condition due to various unforeseen circumstances, has had a magnificent response from many quarters of the worldwide Bahá'í Community, and we are heartened to believe that this manifestation of devotion and sacrifice, as it continues and becomes more widespread, will resolve the condition that had threatened to adversely affect the attainment of cherished goals of the Nine Year Plan.

Services of the Hands of the Cause of God

96.7 The travels and other services of the Hands of the Cause of God continually evoke our thankfulness and delight, even wonder and astonishment. Their deeds are such as to eclipse the acts of the apostles of old and to confer eternal splendor on this period of the Formative Age. On behalf of all the friends everywhere, we offer them our reverent love and gratitude. It is fitting to record here the passing, after seventy years' exemplary service to the Faith, of the Hand of the Cause Agnes Alexander, whose early services in Hawaii were said by the Master to be greater than if she had founded an empire.

96.8 Restrictive measures, directed against the Faith, and varying in severity from outright oppression to imposition of disabilities make virtually impossible the achievement of the goals of the Nine Year Plan in a number of countries, particularly in the Middle East, in North West Africa, along the fringes of East Africa and certain areas in South East Asia. It is hoped that those Bahá'í communities which enjoy freedom to teach their Faith will so far surpass their own goals as to amply compensate for the disabilities suffered by their less fortunate brothers. The army of traveling teachers must be reinforced and the friends, particularly Bahá'í youth, are called to seriously consider how much time they can offer to the Faith during the remaining two years of the Nine Year Plan. Teaching visits of brief or long duration, deputization of others, the undertaking of such tasks as would free other friends for teaching work, are all means of building up, in unison, that final surge which will carry the Plan to victory.

Two Objectives—Forming Assemblies and Opening Localities

96.9 Two major objectives of the Plan are the formation of new Local Spiritual Assemblies and the opening of new localities. 14,966 Local Spiritual Assemblies are called for; 10,360 are now in existence. 54,503 localities must

claim a Bahá'í resident; 46,334 do so now. The goal is in sight, the time short. However, the growth reflected in the above statistics has not taken place at all levels and in all areas. For while a number of national communities have already achieved, or even surpassed the goals assigned to them, many face extreme difficulties in attaining theirs. With mutual help and an increase in the momentum already generated there is no doubt that the community of the Most Great Name is capable of sweeping on to total victory, thereby gaining a view of those enthralling vistas at present beyond the horizon.

Immediate and Future Tasks

96.10 The twin processes so clearly described by the beloved Guardian in his essay "The Unfoldment of World Civilization"—the steady progress and consolidation of the Cause of God on the one hand and the progressive disintegration of a moribund world on the other—will undoubtedly impose upon us new tasks, the obligation of devising new approaches to teaching, of demonstrating more clearly to a disillusioned world the Bahá'í way of life and making more effective the administrative institutions of the Faith. The authority and influence of National and Local Spiritual Assemblies will have to be strengthened in order to deal with larger Bahá'í communities; the international character of the Cause will need to be developed, while the international teaching agency at the World Center, already referred to in previous general letters, will be established.

96.11 However fascinating such considerations, which are likely to be forced upon our attention in the near future, may be, they must not deflect our energies and will from the immediate task—the goals of the Nine Year Plan. Their achievement is the best preparation for the future and the means of developing new powers and capacities in the Bahá'í Community. We are confident that the Army of Light, growing in strength and unity will, by 1973, the centenary year of the revelation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, have scaled the heights of yet another peak in the path leading ultimately to the broad uplands of the Most Great Peace.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

97

Message to the Caribbean Conference—May 1971

May 1971

To the Friends of God gathered in the Caribbean Conference

Warmest greetings!

97.1 How propitious that on its mountaintop between the two greatest oceans and the two American continents the Mother Temple of Latin America is rising now in Panama, a land blessed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's prophecy that "in the future it will gain most great importance." How splendid that the vision projected in the Divine Plan for the Americas has sprung into such vibrant life in this Caribbean basin, in country after country upon its verdant shores, in island after island across its expanse, all named by the Master in His Tablets. What shall we not witness erelong in these places so charged with destiny through the Master's utterances!

97.2 The Nine Year Plan, the current stage in the unfoldment of the Divine Plan of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, is approaching its triumphant end. This Conference is an occasion to sum up what has been won, to determine to achieve the remaining goals for expansion in these blessed lands, and to consolidate the old and new communities of the Most Great Name. Indeed, the winning of our grand Bahá’í objectives began just yesterday when, in the early years of the Formative Age, a few travelers crossed the Caribbean. Yet it was not until the successive Plans of the beloved Guardian, culminating in the Ten Year Crusade, when 27 Knights of Bahá’u’lláh settled throughout this vast area, that the Cause took firm root. By 1963 the countries and islands of the Caribbean claimed less than 400 localities and only 147 Local Spiritual Assemblies. Now Bahá’ís are to be found in over 2,500 localities, more than 500 Local Assemblies and 16 National Spiritual Assemblies have been formed, and there have been hundreds of concrete achievements which have brought about our recognition as an independent Faith.

97.3 The Americas have been a melting pot and a meeting place for the races of men, and the need is acute for the fulfillment of Gods promises of the realization of the oneness of mankind. Particularly do the Master and the Guardian point to the Afro-Americans and the Amerindians, two great ethnic groups whose spiritual powers will be released through their response to the Creative Word. But our Teachings must touch all, must include all peoples. And, in this hour of your tireless activity, what special rewards shall come to those who will arise, summoned by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Words: “Now is the time for you to divest yourselves of the garment of attachment to this world that perisheth, to be wholly severed from the physical world, become heavenly angels, and travel to these countries.”

97.4 The time is short, the needs many. No effort can be foregone, no opportunity wasted. Praised be God that you have gathered in this Conference to consult upon the vital requirements of this highly significant moment. Our prayers ascend at the Holy Threshold that every session of this historic meeting will attract Divine Blessings, and that each soul, armed with the love of God and imbued with His purpose for a struggling mankind, will arise to activate, beyond all present hopes, the vast spiritual potentialities of the Americas.

97.5 To each of you we send our deepest love.

The Universal House of Justice

98

Message to the
South Pacific Oceanic Conference—May 1971

May 1971

To the Friends of God assembled
in the Conference of the South Pacific Ocean

Dearly loved Friends,

98.1 We send our warmest greetings and deepest love on the occasion of the first Conference in the heart of the Pacific Ocean. Praise be to God that you have gathered to consult on the vital needs of the hour!

98.2 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 heart of the ocean and, raising His voice, proclaim: 'I am the lifegiver of the world!'" we now witness its fulfillment 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!

98.3 At the inception of the Formative Age, the Cause was little known here. Agnes Alexander had brought the Teachings to the Hawaiian Islands. Father and Mother Dunn had only recently arrived in Australia. Later the name of Martha Root was to be emblazoned across the Pacific. Still later, at the beginning of the Ten Year Crusade, a vanguard of twenty-one Knights of Bahá'u'lláh raised His call as they settled in the islands of this great Ocean. The names of these valiant souls, together with the names of the army of pioneers and teachers who followed, will be forever enshrined in the annals of the Faith.

98.4 Their mighty endeavors brought about the enrollment of thousands of the peoples of Polynesia, Micronesia and Melanesia under the banner of the Most Great Name, the opening in Australasia of more than 800 centers and the establishment of ten pillars of the Universal House of Justice. We can but marvel at such triumphs attained despite great difficulties imposed by the vast expanse of ocean separating the island communities, especially when it is recalled that in many of these islands even the Christian Gospel was unknown as late as the 1830s.

98.5 How great is the responsibility to continue spreading the Word of God throughout the Pacific. It was in the Tablets of the Divine Plan that 'Abdu'l-Bahá called for teachers "speaking their languages, severed, holy, sanctified and filled with the love of God," to "turn their faces to and travel through the three great Island groups of the Pacific Ocean—Polynesia, Micronesia and Melanesia ... With hearts overflowing with the love of God, with tongues commemorating the mention of God" to "deliver the Glad Tidings of the manifestation of the Lord of Hosts to all the people."

98.6 The Nine Year Plan, the current phase of the unfoldment of the Divine Plan, is now approaching its final stages. It is incumbent on the friends to assess what has been accomplished and to anticipate and plan for such rapid acceleration of the teaching and consolidation work as is necessary to win all goals by 1973. Time is short; the needs critical. No effort must be spared; no opportunity overlooked.

98.7 Our prayers ascend at the Holy Threshold that every session of this historic meeting will attract Divine blessings, and that the friends will go forth, armed with the love of God and enthusiasm born of the Spirit, fully prepared to scale the heights of victory!

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

99

Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary
of the Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

12 July 1971
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
99.1 We have noted with deep satisfaction that some National Spiritual Assemblies have already initiated plans to befittingly commemorate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the inception of the Formative Age of the Bahá'í Dispensation.
99.2 We feel it would be highly fitting for the three days, 26 to 28 November, during which the Day of the Covenant and the Anniversary of the Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá occur, to be set aside this year by all National Spiritual Assemblies for specially arranged gatherings and conferences, convened either nationally or locally or both, on the three following main themes: The Bahá'í Covenant, The Formative Age, and The Life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
99.3 We hope that these gatherings will serve to intensify the consecration of the workers in the Divine Vineyard in every land, and provide them with the opportunity, especially in the watches of the night of that Ascension, when they will be commemorating the passing hour of our Beloved Master, to renew their pledge to Bahá'u'lláh and to rededicate themselves to the accomplishment of the as yet unfulfilled goals of the Nine Year Plan.
99.4 The Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land, the members of the Universal House of Justice, and all resident and visiting believers at the World Center will, on that memory-laden night, visit the Shrine of that Mystery of God on behalf of the entire Community of the Blessed Beauty and will supplicate for the stalwart champions of the Faith laboring in the forefront of so many fields of service and winning fresh triumphs in His Name, for the self-sacrificing believers without whose support and sustained assistance most of these victories could not be achieved, and for those who will be inspired to join the ranks of the active and dedicated promoters of His glorious Cause at this crucial stage in the development of the Plan, that we may all meet our obligations and discharge our sacred trust, thus making it possible in the latter months of the Plan for our entire resources to be devoted to an even greater expansion of the Faith in its onward march towards the spiritual conquest of the planet.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice
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Message to the North Pacific
Oceanic Conference—September 1971
September 1971
To the Friends of God assembled
in the Conference of the North Pacific Ocean
Dearly loved Friends,
100.1 On the eve of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the opening of the Formative Age of our Faith we call to mind the high hopes often expressed by the beloved Master for the spread of the Cause in this region, His mention in the Tablets of the Divine Plan of many of the territories represented in this

Conference, and the faithful and devoted services of that maidservant of Bahá'u'lláh, the Hand of the Cause Agnes Alexander, who brought the Teachings to these shores in the early years of this century.

100.2 In these days we are witnessing an unprecedented acceleration of the teaching work in almost every part of the globe. In the North Pacific Ocean area great strides have been made in the advancement of the Cause since that historic Asia Regional Teaching Conference in Nikko just sixteen years ago. The next two years witnessed the formation of the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska and of the Regional National Spiritual Assembly of North East Asia. To the Convention in Tokyo at Ridván 1957 the Guardian addressed these prophetic words:

100.2aThis auspicious event, which posterity will regard as the culmination of a process initiated, half a century ago, in the capital city of Japan, ... 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 ...

100.3 Since that time National Spiritual Assemblies have also been firmly established in Korea and Taiwan.

100.4 Hokkaido, the site of this Conference, first heard of the Teachings less than fifteen years ago, and the first aboriginal peoples of this land accepted Bahá'u'lláh just over a decade ago. Now you are the witnesses to the beginnings of a rapid increase in the number of believers. Peoples in other islands and lands of the North Pacific, including the Ryukyus, Guam, the Trust Territories, the western shores of Canada and Alaska and the Aleutians are also enrolling under the banner of the Most Great Name, and next Ridván yet another pillar of the Universal House of Justice is to be raised in Micronesia. We are heartened at the prospect that from the indigenous peoples of this vast oceanic area—the Ainu, the Japanese, the Chinese, the Koreans, the Okinawans, the Micronesians, the American Indians, the Eskimos, and the Aleuts—vast numbers will soon enter the Faith.

100.5 The final hours of the Nine Year Plan are fast fleeting. Praise be to God that you have gathered to consult on ways and means of assuring complete victory so that from these outposts the Teachings may spread to those nearby lands where teeming millions have not as yet heard of the advent of this Most Great Dispensation.

100.6 The sweet perfume of victory is in the air, and we must hasten to achieve it while there is yet time. Vital goals, particularly on the homefronts of Taiwan and Japan, remain to be won, and everywhere the roots of the faith of the believers must sink deeper and deeper into the firm earth of the Teachings lest tempests and trials as yet unforeseen shake or uproot the tender plants so lovingly raised in the islands of this great Ocean and the lands surrounding it.

100.7 As you and the friends in the sister Conference in Reykjavik bring this series of eight Oceanic and Continental Conferences to a triumphant close, our prayers for the success of your deliberations ascend at the Holy Threshold. May God grant you the resources, the strength, and the determination to attain your highest hopes, and enable you to open a new and glorious chapter in the

evolution of His Faith in the North Pacific area.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice

101

Message to the
North Atlantic Conference—September 1971

September 1971
To the Friends assembled
in the North Atlantic Conference in Reykjavik
Dearly loved Friends,

101.1 To each and every one of you in this historic Conference we send our most cordial and loving greetings. The famous island in which you are now gathered, so strategically placed between the two great continents flanking the vast oceanic area which surrounds it, to which the Teachings of Christ were brought a millennium ago, and which, in this Dispensation, was mentioned by the Center of the Covenant in His Tablets of the Divine Plan, first heard the Name of Bahá'u'lláh in 1924 when the Hand of the Cause Amelia Collins stopped briefly in Reykjavik and made the acquaintance of Hólmfríður Árnadóttir who subsequently became the first Bahá'í of Iceland. Eleven years later the beloved Martha Root spent a month in this land which she loved so well. On that occasion, with the help of Hólmfríður, the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh was widely proclaimed in the press, on the radio and from the lecture platform.

101.2 The great Ocean extending from the equator to the Pole and from Europe to North America, which has been both the barrier and the link between the Old and the New Worlds, has played a highly significant part in the later history of mankind. Long before Columbus arrived in the West Indies the Vikings, forebears of Icelanders of today, were plying its northern waters. In later centuries wave upon wave of Europeans sailed from east to west, engaging in one of the most significant migrations in human history. In the twentieth century 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself sailed across it and back, a voyage unique in the religious history of mankind and creating a remarkable parallel with the Light of the Cause itself, beaming from the East across the great Ocean to the heart of the North American Continent, being reflected back again, firing new beacon lights in Europe and in later years diffusing its radiance throughout the world. The great Republic whose eastern shore forms part of the boundary of this Ocean has become the Cradle of the Administrative Order and at this present time the banner of the Most Great Name is being raised in island after island of this Ocean, two of which—Iceland and Ireland—will raise, next Ridván, new pillars of the Universal House of Justice.

101.3 The Faith of God is flourishing in the lands around the North Atlantic; a new wind is blowing, promoting an upsurge of proclamation and teaching. In Europe the youth are afire with enthusiasm and vigor. In Canada and the United States a ground swell of unknown proportions is carrying Bahá'í communities to heights of unprecedented achievement.

101.4 You are gathered in this Conference to consult on ways and means of winning, in the few fleeting months ahead, the remaining goals of the Nine Year

Plan. In Europe particularly there is much to be done, but we have full faith that the friends, galvanized by their love for Bahá'u'lláh and fortified by His promises of Divine assistance, will, with, the enthusiasm which they already display, commit their resources to the tasks ahead and will surely attain the victory.

101.5 The beloved Master prayed that holy souls would arise from the Northern Territories of the West and become signs of God's guidance and standards of the Supreme Concourse. In one of the Tablets of the Divine Plan He refers to an inhospitable island of that area saying:

101.5aShould the fire of the love of God be kindled in Greenland, all the ice of that country will be melted, and its cold weather become temperate—that is, if the hearts be touched with the heat of the love of God, that territory will become a divine rose garden and a heavenly paradise, and the souls, even as fruitful trees, will acquire the utmost freshness and beauty. Effort, the utmost effort is required. ...

101.6 As the friends gathered in Reykjavik and Sapporo bring this worldwide series of Oceanic and Continental Conferences to a triumphant close our thoughts are with you and our prayers on your behalf rise from the Sacred Threshold. May untold blessings and confirmations be showered upon you as you go forth to labor for the advancement of the Cause of God and may your brows be crowned with victory.

The Universal House of Justice

102

Passing of the Hand of the Cause of God

Músá Banání

5 September 1971

To the Hands of the Cause of God,
the Continental Boards of Counselors,
the National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

102.1 The Hand of the Cause Músá Banání passed to the Abhá Kingdom at noon on Saturday, 4 September. The following cable was sent by the Universal House of Justice:

102.1aPROFOUNDLY MOURN PASSING DEARLY LOVED HAND CAUSE MÚSÁ BANÁNÍ RECALL WITH DEEP AFFECTION HIS SELFLESS UNASSUMING PROLONGED SERVICES CRADLE FAITH HIS EXEMPLARY PIONEERING UGANDA CULMINATING HIS APPOINTMENT AS HAND CAUSE AFRICA AND PRAISE BELOVED GUARDIAN AS SPIRITUAL CONQUEROR THAT CONTINENT. INTERMENT HIS REMAINS AFRICAN SOIL UNDER SHADOW MOTHER TEMPLE ENHANCES SPIRITUAL LUSTRE THAT BLESSED SPOT. FERVENTLY PRAYING SHRINES PROGRESS HIS NOBLE SOUL. MAY AFRICA NOW ROBBED STAUNCH VENERABLE PROMOTER DEFENDER FAITH FOLLOW HIS EXAM CHEER HIS HEART ABHÁ KINGDOM. CONVEY FAMILY MOST TENDER SYMPATHIES ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL MEETINGS ALL COMMUNITIES BAHÁ'Í WORLD BEFITTING GATHERINGS MOTHER TEMPLES.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

103

Spiritual Character of Bahá'í Elections

11 November 1971
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá’í Friends,
103.1 A compilation has been made from the writings of the beloved Guardian about the spiritual character of Bahá’í elections. We are sharing these extracts with you to bring to the attention of the friends under your jurisdiction in any manner you deem advisable.
With loving Bahá’í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice
104
Formation of Thirteen New National Spiritual Assemblies during Ridván 1972
7 December 1971
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
104.1HAPPY ANNOUNCE DECISION ADD RWANDA LIST NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES TO BE FORMED NEXT RIDVÁN. REPRESENTATIVES HOUSE JUSTICE FIRST CONVENTIONS AS FOLLOWS HANDS CAUSE AMATU’L-BAHÁ RÚHÍYYIH KHÁNUM WINDWARD ISLANDS UGO GIACHERY PUERTO RICO ‘ALÍ-AKBAR FURÚTAN NEPAL SHU’Á’U’LLÁH ‘ÁLÁ’Í EAST PAKISTAN ADELBERT MÜHLSCHLEGEL RWANDA SEYCHELLES JALÁL KHÁZEH SINGAPORE ENOCH OLINGA ICELAND WILLIAM SEARS IRELAND COLLIS FEATHERSTONE NORTHWEST PACIFIC RAHMÁTU’LLÁH MUHÁJIR MALAGASY REPUBLIC RÉUNION COUNSELOR HÁDÍ RAHMÁNÍ AFGHANISTAN. PRAYING SHRINES OUTSTANDING SUCCESS THESE HISTORIC GATHERINGS ELECTING MEMBERS NEW PILLARS HOUSE JUSTICE FOCAL CENTERS SPIRITUAL INVIGORATION ILLUMINATION NEWLY EMERGING NATIONAL COMMUNITIES.
Universal House of Justice
105
World Center Developments—Erection of Obelisk and Extension of Gardens
13 December 1971
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
105.1JOYOUSLY ANNOUNCE FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS WORLD CENTER. AFTER MANY YEARS DIFFICULT NEGOTIATIONS ERECTION OBELISK MARKING SITE FUTURE MASHRIQU’L-ADHKÁR MOUNT CARMEL COMPLETED THUS FULFILLING PROJECT INITIATED BELOVED GUARDIAN EARLY YEARS CRUSADE. GARDENS BAHJÍ HAIFA EXTENDED BY DEVELOPMENT QUADRANT SOUTHEAST MANSION BAHÁ’U’LLÁH AND ESTABLISHMENT FORMAL GARDEN SOUTHWEST CORNER PROPERTY SURROUNDING SHRINE BÁB.
Universal House of Justice
106
Surpassing the Nine Year Plan Goal for the Number of Bahá’í Localities
14 February 1972
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
106.1OVERJOYED ANNOUNCE FRIENDS EVERY LAND NUMBER LOCALITIES NOW 56645 EXCEEDING BY OVER 2500 ORIGINAL GOAL NINE YEAR PLAN. OFFERING PRAYERS THANKSGIVING SACRED THRESHOLD FOR DIVINE BOUNTIES SURROUNDING SACRIFICIAL EFFORTS LOVE-INTOXICATED SUPPORTERS HIS BLESSED NAME. URGE BELIEVERS THOSE

AREAS WHOSE TEACHING GOALS ARE STILL OUTSTANDING EXERT UTMOST EFFORT COURSE SWIFTLY PASSING REMAINING MONTHS PLAN WIN THEIR GOALS ENABLING THEM JOIN RANKS THEIR VICTORIOUS BRETHREN WHO ARE URGED CONTINUE THEIR VIGOROUS BRILLIANT EXPLOITS IN SERVICE GOD'S INFINITELY GLORIOUS CAUSE.
Universal House of Justice

107

Release of a Compilation on Music and Singing
1 March 1972
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,

107.1 In these days when music and singing are playing such an important and effective part in the teaching work, we feel it appropriate and timely to share with you the enclosed compilation of extracts from the Writings of our Faith on the subject.

107.2 We leave it to your discretion to decide in which manner and to what extent to share the attached extracts with the friends and communities under your jurisdiction.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice

108

Dedication of the Mother Temple of Latin America,
Panama City, Panama
19 March 1972
To the Beloved of God gathered in
the Conference called on the occasion of the
Dedication of the Mother Temple of Latin America
Dear Bahá'í Friends,

108.1 With praise and gratitude to God the whole Bahá'í world acclaims the dedication of the Mother Temple of Latin America, an edifice which glorifies the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh at that point where, the beloved Master asserted, "the Occident and the Orient find each other united through the Panama Canal," where "The teachings, once established ..., will unite the East and the West, the North and the South."

108.2 This historic project, in a hemisphere of infinite spiritual potentiality, fulfils one of the most important goals of the Nine Year Plan, and brings untold joy to the hearts of the friends in every land. Privileged are they who share in the raising of this glorious Silent Teacher with deeds of loving generosity and sacrifice. A crown to the labors of all those who have striven to establish the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in Latin America, this Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, the rallying point for the Bahá'ís of those lands, whether they are of the blessed Indian peoples or represent the other races whose diversity enriches the nations of that hemisphere, will be a fountainhead of spiritual confirmations, and this mighty achievement will endow the Bahá'í Community with new and greater capacities, enabling the friends in Latin America, and particularly in this privileged land of Panama, to win victories that will eclipse all their past achievements.

108.3 The threefold task to which your attention is now directed comprises

the proclamation, expansion and consolidation of the Faith. We urge you to concentrate your deliberations not only on the exchange of ideas for the prosecution of this task, but on ways and means for fostering collaboration among the Bahá'í Communities of Central and South America so that the most fruitful harvest may be gathered in all three aspects of the teaching work and enable you to achieve your remaining goals of the Nine Year Plan.

108.4 Our loving, ardent prayers will be offered at the Sacred Threshold, that the Almighty may inspire your discussions in this historic Conference and crown all your efforts with victory.

The Universal House of Justice

109

Release of a Compilation
on Bahá'í Schools and Institutes

10 April 1972

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

109.1 In view of the increasing importance of Bahá'í summer schools, a number of excerpts from the writings of the beloved Guardian have been compiled which set forth objectives to be attained by and principles underlying the operation of this institution. Many of these objectives and principles apply to Teaching Institutes, and a section of quotations from the Universal House of Justice on these Institutes is included.

109.2 We share these extracts with the friends in the hope that they will be assisted and guided in the development of these vital institutions of the Faith.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

110

Ridván Message 1972

Ridván 1972

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

110.1 The opening of the final year of the Nine Year Plan sees the Bahá'í world community poised for overwhelming victory. With grateful hearts we acknowledge the continuing confirmations which have attended its efforts and the Divine bounties which have never ceased to rain down upon this blessed, this ever-developing embryonic world order.

Review of Significant Achievements

110.2 The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of Panama, the Mother Temple of Latin America, will be dedicated this Ridván. Three beloved Hands of the Cause, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum representing the Universal House of Justice, Ugo Giachery and Zikrullah Khadem will attend this historic ceremony. The imaginative and inspiring concept of the architect, Peter Tillotson, has been wonderfully realized and we extend to the National Spiritual Assembly of Panama on behalf of the entire Bahá'í world, loving congratulations on their achievement.

110.3 Although the dissolution of the National Spiritual Assembly of 'Iráq

has, unhappily, resulted from the persecution of the Faith in that land, the thirteen new National Spiritual Assemblies which will come into being this Ridván will bring the total number of these pillars of the Universal House of Justice to 113.

110.4 The goals requiring acquisition of properties and establishment of Teaching Institutes are well in hand and, in those countries where legal circumstances permit, incorporation of Assemblies and recognition of Bahá'í marriage and Holy Days are making good progress.

Teaching Goals

110.5 It is the teaching goals which must engage our attention and effort. Although more than 260 territories have achieved their assigned goals of localities where Bahá'ís reside, and in some cases have exceeded them, enabling the Bahá'í world community to rejoice in having outstripped on a world scale the total number of localities envisaged in the Plan, there are still some 60 territories where this goal is yet to be won and where its attainment must be given absolute priority between now and Ridván 1973. It is expected that a large number of new Local Spiritual Assemblies will be established at Ridván and immediately after the position of this goal is ascertained a detailed listing of all territories throughout the world which have not yet won their goals for localities and Local Spiritual Assemblies will be sent to every National Spiritual Assembly for urgent release to the friends.

International Cooperation

110.6 It is hoped that during this last year of the Plan the principle of collaboration between National Spiritual Assemblies will be extended far beyond the special tasks set in the Nine Year Plan. Those communities which have already attained their goals or are in clear sight of them should consider the world picture as disclosed by the listing mentioned above and do everything they can, without jeopardizing their own success, to assist their fellow communities with pioneers and traveling teachers, or in any other way possible. Such a process will greatly consolidate the unity and brotherhood of the Bahá'í world community.

Pioneering Goals

110.7 In the meantime we call on all believers everywhere to prayerfully consider their personal circumstances, and to arise while there is yet time, to fill the international pioneer goals of the Plan. There are 267 pioneer needs still to be answered—75 in Africa, 57 in the Americas, 40 in Asia, 30 in Australasia and 65 in Europe.

New Requirements of the Ever-Growing World Order

110.8 The extraordinary advances made since that Ridván of 1964 when the Nine Year Plan was begun, continuing the organized and purposeful process of teaching on a world scale instituted by our beloved Guardian when he launched the Ten Year Crusade, force upon our attention new requirements of this ever-growing world order both for its own organic life and in relation to the disintegrating world society in which it is set. The divergence between the ways of the world and of the Cause of God becomes ever wider. And yet the two must come together. The Bahá'í community must demonstrate in

ever-increasing measure its ability to redeem the disorderliness, the lack of cohesion, the permissiveness, the godlessness of modern society; the laws, the religious obligations, the observances of Bahá'í life, Bahá'í moral principles and standards of dignity, decency and reverence, must become deeply implanted in Bahá'í consciousness and increasingly inform and characterize this community. Such a process will require a great development in the maturity and effectiveness of Local Spiritual Assemblies. The purposes and standards of the Cause must be more and more understood and courageously upheld. The influence of the Continental Boards of Counselors and the work of their Auxiliary Boards must develop and spread through the entire fabric of the Bahá'í community. A vast systematic program for the production of Bahá'í literature must be promoted.

Our Task—Achieving Every Attainable Goal of the Plan

110.9 Our immediate and inescapable task, however, is to ensure that every attainable goal of the Nine Year Plan is achieved. This must be done at all costs. No sacrifice, no deferment of cherished plans must be refused in order to discharge this "Most important" of the many "important" duties facing us. Who can doubt that one last supreme effort will be crowned with success? Even now the national community to bear the laurels of first achieving every task assigned to it, Fiji, leads the procession of rejoicing and victorious communities within the Army of Light. We may well emulate Bahá'í youth whose recent surge forward into the van of proclamation and teaching is one of the most encouraging and significant trends in the Faith, and who storm the gates of heaven for support in their enterprises by long-sustained, precedent and continuing prayer. We are all able to call upon Bahá'u'lláh for His Divine, all-powerful aid, and He will surely help us. For He is the Hearer of prayers, the Answerer.

The Universal House of Justice

111

Elucidation of the Nature of
the Continental Boards of Counselors

24 April 1972

To the Continental Boards of Counselors
and National Spiritual Assemblies

Beloved friends,

111.1 Recently we have received queries from several sources about the nature of the Institution of the Continental Boards of Counselors and its relationship to the Institution of the Hands of the Cause, and we feel it is timely for us to give further elucidation.

111.2 As with so many aspects of the Administrative Order, understanding of this subject will develop and clarify with the passage of time as that Order grows organically in response to the power and guidance of Almighty God and in accordance with the needs of a rapidly developing worldwide community. However, certain aspects are already so clear as to require a proper understanding by the friends.

The Rulers and the Learned

111.3 In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas (the Book of His Covenant) Bahá'u'lláh

wrote “Blessed are the rulers and the learned among the people of Bahá,” and referring to this very passage the beloved Guardian wrote on 4 November 1931:

111.3aIn this holy cycle the “learned” are, on the one hand, the Hands of the Cause of God, and, on the other, the teachers and diffusers of His teachings who do not rank as Hands, but who have attained an eminent position in the teaching work. As to the “rulers” they refer to the members of the Local, National and International Houses of Justice. The duties of each of these souls will be determined in the future.

(Translated from the Persian)

The Learned

111.4 The Hands of the Cause of God, the Counselors and the members of the Auxiliary Boards fall within the definition of the “learned” given by the beloved Guardian. Thus they are all intimately interrelated and it is not incorrect to refer to the three ranks collectively as one institution.

111.5 However, each is also a separate institution in itself. The Institution of the Hands of the Cause of God was brought into existence in the time of Bahá’u’lláh and when the Administrative Order was proclaimed and formally established by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His Will, it became an auxiliary institution of the Guardianship. The Auxiliary Boards, in their turn, were brought into being by Shoghi Effendi as an auxiliary institution of the Hands of the Cause.

111.6 When, following the passing of Shoghi Effendi, the Universal House of Justice decided that it could not legislate to make possible the appointment of further Hands of the Cause, it became necessary for it to create a new institution, appointed by itself, to extend into the future the functions of protection and propagation vested in the Hands of the Cause and, with that in view, so to develop the Institution of the Hands that it could nurture the new institution and function in close collaboration with it as long as possible. It was also vital so to arrange matters as to make the most effective use of the unique services of the Hands themselves.

111.7 The first step in this development was taken in November 1964 when the Universal House of Justice formally related the Institution of the Hands to itself by stating that “Responsibility for decisions on matters of general policy affecting the institution of the Hands of the Cause, which was formerly exercised by the beloved Guardian, now devolves upon the Universal House of Justice as the supreme and central institution of the Faith to which all must turn.” At that time the number of members of the Auxiliary Boards was increased from 72 to 135, and the Hands of the Cause in each continent were called upon to appoint one or more members of their Auxiliary Boards to act in an executive capacity on behalf of and in the name of each Hand, thereby assisting him in carrying out his work.

111.8 In June 1968 the Institution of the Continental Boards of Counselors was brought into being, fulfilling the goal of extending the aforementioned functions of the Hands into the future, and this momentous decision was accompanied by the next step in the development of the Institution of the Hands of the Cause: the continental Hands were to serve henceforth on a worldwide

basis and operate individually in direct relationship to the Universal House of Justice; the Hands ceased to be responsible for the direction of the Auxiliary Boards, which became an auxiliary institution of the Continental Boards of Counselors; the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land were given the task of acting as liaison between the Universal House of Justice and the Boards of Counselors; and the working interrelationships between the Hands and the Boards of Counselors were established. Reference was also made to the future establishment by the Universal House of Justice, with the assistance of the Hands residing in the Holy Land, of an international teaching center in the Holy Land.

111.9 In July 1969 and at Ridván 1970 further increases in the numbers of Counselors and Auxiliary Board members were made.

111.10 Other developments in the Institution of the Hands of the Cause and the Institution of the Continental Boards of Counselors will no doubt take place in future as the international teaching center comes into being and as the work of the Counselors expands.

Distinctions between the Rulers and the Learned

111.11 We have noted that the Hands, the Counselors and the Auxiliary Boards are sometimes referred to by the friends as the "appointive arm" of the Administrative Order in contradistinction to the Universal House of Justice and the National and Local Assemblies which constitute the "elective arm." While there is truth in this description as it applies to the method used in the creation of these institutions, the friends should understand that it is not only the fact of appointment that particularly distinguishes the institutions of the Hands, Counselors and Auxiliary Boards. There are, for instance, many more believers appointed to committees in the "elective arm" than are serving in the so-called "appointive arm." A more striking distinction is that whereas the "rulers" in the Cause function as corporate bodies, the "learned" operate primarily as individuals.

Exclusion of Past Evils and Retention of Beneficial Elements

111.12 In a letter written on 14 March 1927 to the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Istanbul, the Guardian's Secretary explained, on his behalf, the principle in the Cause of action by majority vote. He pointed out how, in the past, it was certain individuals who "accounted themselves as superior in knowledge and elevated in position" who caused division, and that it was those "who pretended to be the most distinguished of all" who "always proved themselves to be the source of contention." "But praise be to God," he continued, "that the Pen of Glory has done away with the unyielding and dictatorial views of the learned and the wise, dismissed the assertions of individuals as an authoritative criterion, even though they were recognized as the most accomplished and learned among men and ordained that all matters be referred to authorized centers and specified Assemblies. Even so, no Assembly has been invested with the absolute authority to deal with such general matters as affect the interests of nations. Nay rather, He has brought all the assemblies together under the shadow of one House of Justice, one divinely appointed Center, so that there would be only one Center and all the rest integrated into a single body, revolving around one expressly designated

Pivot, thus making them all proof against schism and division." (Translated from the Persian.)

111.13 Having permanently excluded the evils admittedly inherent in the institutions of the "learned" in past dispensations, Bahá'u'lláh has nevertheless embodied in His Administrative Order the beneficent elements which exist in such institutions, elements which are of fundamental value for the progress of the Cause, as can be gauged from even a cursory reading of the Guardian's message of 4 June 1957.

111.14 The existence of institutions of such exalted rank, comprising individuals who play such a vital role, who yet have no legislative, administrative or judicial authority, and are entirely devoid of priestly functions or the right to make authoritative interpretations, is a feature of Bahá'í administration unparalleled in the religions of the past. The newness and uniqueness, of this concept make it difficult to grasp; only as the Bahá'í Community grows and the believers are increasingly able to contemplate its administrative structure uninfluenced by concepts from past ages, will the vital interdependence of the "rulers" and "learned" in the Faith be properly understood, and the inestimable value of their interaction be fully recognized.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

112

Message to Bahá'í Unity Conference,
Ganado, Arizona
18 May 1972

Bahá'í Unity Conference
Ganado, Arizona

Beloved friends,

112.1 Praise be to the Almighty that you have gathered in that beautiful spot in a spirit of love and harmony for the purpose of strengthening the bonds of unity between yourselves and among all men.

112.2 The All-Wise Creator of earth and heaven has from the beginning which has no beginning sent to His peoples Divine Messengers to guide them to the Straight Path. These Wise Ones have come to establish the unity of the Kingdom in human hearts. This great evolutionary process of building the organic unity of the human race has entered a new stage with this mighty message of Bahá'u'lláh. His voice is the voice of the Great Spirit. His love for humankind is the force of the New Age.

112.3 He who sends the rain, who causes the sun and the stars to shine, the rivers to flow, the winds to blow and the earth to give forth her bounties has in this Great Day sent to all mankind Bahá'u'lláh. It is this Great One who has opened the door of divine knowledge to every soul. It is His teachings that will establish world unity and bring about universal peace.

112.4 The people of the world are the tools in His hand. They must strive to understand His message and to walk in the path of His divine guidance. Every human being is responsible in this day to seek the truth for himself and

thereafter to live according to that wise counsel. The old ones have all longed for this sweet message. Praise God that you have found it.

112.5 Now awakened to new wisdom, now guided to the straight path, now illumined with this mighty message, strive you day and night to guide and assist the thirsty ones in all lands to the ever-flowing fountain, the wandering ones to this fortress of certainty, the ignorant ones to this source of knowledge and the seekers to that One for whom their hearts long.

112.6 May your consultation reach so high a level of endeavor and purpose that the Great One will open before your faces the doors of the paradise of wisdom and love and cause the light of the Abhá Beauty to shine in your midst.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

113

Establishment of Local Spiritual Assemblies during the Final Year of the Nine Year Plan

28 May 1972

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

113.1 In order to stimulate the teaching work in every land and encourage the friends during this last year of the Nine Year Plan we have decided that as soon as the number of adult believers in any locality reaches or exceeds nine they are permitted to form their Local Spiritual Assembly immediately, rather than wait until 21 April 1973.

113.2 We hope moreover that, especially in the areas where the people are entering the Cause in troops, the implementation of this decision will increase the number of those communities which will, without the need for outside assistance, reelect their Assemblies on the first day of Ridván in 1973 and in succeeding years.

113.3 It is our prayer at the Sacred Threshold that during the months ahead the steadily mounting number of these divine institutions will tremendously reinforce the labors of the valiant servants of the Blessed Beauty in every clime.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

114

Release of a Compilation on the National Spiritual Assembly

4 June 1972

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

114.1 We have just made a compilation of extracts from letters written by Shoghi Effendi or by his secretaries on his behalf about the institution of the National Spiritual Assembly. We have not attempted a complete compilation of all the available texts on the subject, but it is hoped that the enclosed material will be of assistance to members of National Spiritual Assemblies and the friends generally in their appreciation of this vital institution of the Faith.

114.2 We leave it to your discretion to determine in what manner you may wish to share the material with the friends under your jurisdiction.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

115

Announcement of the Decision to Build the Seat of the Universal House of Justice

7 June 1972

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

115.1JOYFULLY INFORM BAHÁ'Í WORLD RANGE AND ACCELERATION GROWTH CAUSE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH LOCAL NATIONAL LEVELS AND RESULTANT EXPANSION ACTIVITIES WORLD CENTER IMPEL US NOW ANNOUNCE ERE COMPLETION NINE YEAR PLAN DECISION INITIATE PROCEDURE SELECT ARCHITECT DESIGN BUILDING FOR SEAT UNIVERSAL HOUSE JUSTICE ENVISAGED BELOVED GUARDIAN ON FAR FLUNG ARC HEART MOUNT CARMEL CENTERING SPOT CONSECRATED RESTING PLACES SISTER BROTHER MOTHER BELOVED MASTE CONSTRUCTION THIS CENTER LEGISLATION GOD'S WORLD-REDEEMING ORDER WILL CONSTITUTE FIRST MAJOR STEP DEVELOPMENT AREA SURROUNDING HOLY SHRINE SINCE COMPLETION INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES BUILDING. MOVED PAY TRIBUTE EXPRESS HEARTFELT GRATITUDE OUTSTANDING SERVICES ROBERT MCLAUGHLIN IN PREPARATION FOR THIS HISTORIC UNDERTAKING. FERVENTLY PRAYING PROJECT NOW INITIATED MAY DURING YEARS IMMEDIATELY AHEAD PROGRESS UNINTERRUPTEDLY SPEEDILY ATTAIN MAJESTIC CONSUMMATION.

The Universal House of Justice

116

Plans for Commemorating the Centenary of the Revelation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

30 June 1972

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

116.1 At Ridván 1973 we shall, God willing, witness the successful conclusion of the nine-year-long, world-encircling enterprise which inaugurated the second epoch of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan. The victorious culmination of this initial stage of the tenth part of the majestic process set in motion over six thousand years ago will prepare the way for the next stage in the series of crusades destined to achieve the penetration of the Light of God's Faith into the remaining territories of the planet and the erection of the entire machinery of Bahá'u'lláh's Administrative Order throughout the world.

116.2 On the Twelfth Day of Ridván, the members of the National Spiritual Assemblies gathered in the Holy Land for the Third International Convention will participate in the commemoration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Revelation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. To enable all believers throughout the world to share in the observance of this highly significant centenary, national and local celebrations for Bahá'ís only should be held on that day.

116.3 We call upon each community to undertake, during the period between the First Day of the Most Great Festival and the commemoration of the

Declaration of the Blessed Báb, a widespread proclamation campaign which would include publicity on the completion of the Nine Year Plan and the holding of the third International Convention at the Bahá'í World Center in the Holy Land.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

117

Exhortation to Blot Out Every Last Trace of Prejudice

13 July 1972

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

117.1 The blessings of the Ancient Beauty are being showered upon the followers of the Greatest Name. Our efforts to serve Him and humanity are being crowned with victories throughout the world. As we give thanks for these splendid achievements, as the Cause of God spreads in every land, as our institutions become more perfected, as the number of believers increases over the face of the planet, our individual lives must increasingly mirror forth each day the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and we must so live our lives that all will see in us a different people. The acts we perform, the attitudes we manifest, the very words we speak should be an attraction, a magnet, drawing the sincere to the Divine Teachings.

117.2 Bahá'u'lláh tells us that prejudice in its various forms destroys the edifice of humanity. We are adjured by the Divine Messenger to eliminate all forms of prejudice from our lives. Our outer lives must show forth our beliefs. The world must see that, regardless of each passing whim or current fashion of the generality of mankind, the Bahá'í lives his life according to the tenets of his Faith. We must not allow the fear of rejection by our friends and neighbors to deter us from our goal: to live the Bahá'í life. Let us strive to blot out from our lives every last trace of prejudice—racial, religious, political, economic, national, tribal, class, cultural, and that which is based on differences of education or age. We shall be distinguished from our non-Bahá'í associates if our lives are adorned with this principle.

117.3 If we allow prejudice of any kind to manifest itself in us, we shall be guilty before God of causing a setback to the progress and real growth of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. It is incumbent upon every believer to endeavor with a fierce determination to eliminate this defect from his thoughts and acts. It is the duty of the institutions of the Faith to inculcate this principle in the hearts of the friends through every means at their disposal including summer schools, conferences, institutes and study classes.

117.4 The fundamental purpose of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is the realization of the organic unity of the entire human race. Bearing this glorious destiny in mind, and with entire reliance on the promises of the Blessed Beauty, we should follow His exhortation:

117.4aWe love to see you at all times consorting in amity and concord within the paradise of My good-pleasure, and to inhale from your acts the fragrance of friendliness and unity, of loving-kindness and fellowship. …

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice
118
Embryonic Nature of Local Spiritual Assemblies
30 July 1972
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Bolivia
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
118.1 In reply to your letter of 4 July asking guidance as to what is a functioning Local Spiritual Assembly, we offer you the following comments:
118.2 Local Spiritual Assemblies are at the present newly born institutions, struggling for the most part to establish themselves both in the Bahá'í community and in the world. They are as yet only embryos of the majestic institutions ordained by Bahá'u'lláh in His Writings. This is also true of National Spiritual Assemblies. In the following passage written by the Secretary of the Guardian on his behalf this point is elucidated:
118.2aThe Bahá'í Administration is only the first shaping of what in future will come to be the social life and laws of community living. As yet the believers are only just beginning to grasp and practice it properly. So we must have patience if at times it seems a little self-conscious and rigid in its workings. It is because we are learning something very difficult but very wonderful—how to live together as a community of Bahá'ís, according to the glorious teachings.
(From letter dated 14 October 1941 to two believers)
118.3 What we find expounded in the writings of our Faith is the lofty station Local Spiritual Assemblies must attain in their gradual and at times painful development. In encouraging these Assemblies to attain this aim, there is no harm in the National Spiritual Assembly mentioning certain minimum requirements from time to time, provided it is clear that nonattainment of such standards, which by their very nature must be continuously revised with changing conditions, do not justify the withdrawal of recognition from any weak Assemblies. It would not be profitable therefore for the Universal House of Justice to lay down universal minimum standards for properly functioning Local Spiritual Assemblies, as these must necessarily differ from country to country, and even from district to district within the same country, in the process of the evolution of these Assemblies into Houses of Justice, as envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh.
Salient Objectives of the Local Spiritual Assembly
118.4 Among the more salient objectives to be attained by the Local Spiritual Assembly in its process of development to full maturity are to act as a loving shepherd to the Bahá'í flock, promote unity and concord among the friends, direct the teaching work, protect the Cause of God, arrange for Feasts, anniversaries and regular meetings of the community, familiarize the Bahá'ís with its plans, invite the community to offer its recommendations, promote the welfare of youth and children, and participate, as circumstances permit, in humanitarian activities. In its relationship to the individual believer, the Assembly should continuously invite and encourage him to study the Faith, to deliver its glorious message, to live in accordance with its

teachings, to contribute freely and regularly to the Fund, to participate in community activities, and to seek refuge in the Assembly for advice and help, when needed.

118.5 In its own meetings it must endeavor to develop skill in the difficult but highly rewarding art of Bahá'í consultation, a process which will require great self-discipline on the part of all members and complete reliance on the power of Bahá'u'lláh. It should hold regular meetings and ensure that all its members are currently informed of the activities of the Assembly, that its secretary carries out his duties, and its treasurer holds and disburses the funds of the Faith to its satisfaction, keeping proper accounts and issuing receipts for all contributions. Many Assemblies find that some of their activities such as teaching, observance of Feasts and anniversaries, solution of personal problems, and other duties are best dealt with by committees appointed by the Assembly and responsible to it.

The Bahá'í quality of leadership

118.6 In all cases submitted for its consideration the Assembly must uphold the standard of justice in delivering its verdict, and in all its dealings with the community and the outside world it must strive to evince the qualities of leadership. The following quotation from a letter of the Guardian summarizes in simple terms the immediate goal every Assembly should set for itself in its efforts to pursue the exalted standard of perfection inculcated in our writings:

118.6aThe first quality for leadership, both among individuals and Assemblies is the capacity to use the energy and competence that exists in the rank and file of its followers. Otherwise the more competent members of the group will go at a tangent and try to find elsewhere a field of work where they could use their energy.

118.6bShoghi Effendi hopes that the Assemblies will do their utmost in planning such teaching activities and that every single soul will be kept busy.

(From letter dated 30 August 1930 written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada)

118.7 In the compilation of texts we sent to all National Spiritual Assemblies in August 1970, and in the By-Laws of a Local Spiritual Assembly, you will find all the objectives Local Spiritual Assemblies must aim at achieving in their process of growth and development. We recommend that you restudy these documents carefully and discuss this highly important problem with the Counselors of your zone, who will be only too glad to help you encourage the development of Local Spiritual Assemblies in your country.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

119

Passing of Ishráq-Khávarí, Preeminent Bahá'í scholar

6 August 1972

To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iran

119.1GRIEVED LOSS PREEMINENT SCHOLAR VALUED PROMOTER FAITH ISHRÁQ-KHÁVARÍ. HIS PRECIOUS INDEFATIGABLE SERVICES OVER SEVERAL DECADES WON HIM APPRECIATION BELOVED GUARDIAN. HIS SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTIONS IMMORTALIZED THROUGH NUMEROU

USEFUL COMPILATIONS TREATISES BEARING ELOQUENT TRIBUTE HIS DEVOTION DEDICATION CAUSE GOD. URGE HOLD APPROPRIATE MEMORIAL GATHERINGS ASSURE RELATIVES FRIENDS FERVENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES.

The Universal House of Justice

120

Release of a Compilation on Newsletters

24 August 1972

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

120.1 It is clear from the writings of our beloved Guardian that the initiation, regular publication and distribution of a Bahá'í newsletter by each National Spiritual Assembly is one of its vital functions and a means of promoting understanding and unity among the friends, of stimulating their interest and deepening their knowledge of the teachings, and of coordinating the activities of the Faith.

120.2 In order to assist National Spiritual Assemblies to properly assess the importance of this activity and take effective steps to ensure that such a newsletter is issued and widely distributed among the friends, we attach a compilation of extracts on this subject from the letters written by the Guardian or on his behalf. We urge you to study these extracts carefully and consider, as called for, ways and means of improving the standard, ensuring the regular release and facilitating the circulation of your news bulletin. We realize, of course, that in some countries it is necessary to issue the bulletin in more than one language.

120.3 A section of the attached extracts also deals with local newsletters. In some countries it may be feasible and desirable to encourage the issue of such bulletins by responsible Local Spiritual Assemblies.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

121

Martyrdom of Three Iranian Bahá'í students
in the Philippine Islands

19 September 1972

To the Bahá'ís of the World

121.1 With feelings of deep sorrow we relate to the Bahá'í world the distressing circumstances surrounding the murder of three Iranian Bahá'í students, pioneers to the Philippine Islands.

121.2 Parvíz Sádiqí, Farámarz Vujdání and Parvíz Furúghí were among a number of Iranian Bahá'í youth who answered the call for pioneers. With eleven others they registered at the Universities in Mindanao with the intention of completing their studies and proclaiming the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. These three had conceived the plan of making teaching trips to a rural area inhabited by Muslims. When on 31 July the authorities of Mindanao State University were notified that they had left the campus the previous day and had not yet returned, search parties were immediately formed and the assistance of the police and local authorities obtained. After inquiries and search, led entirely by President Tamano of Mindanao State

University, the bodies of the three young men were found in a shallow grave. They had been shot, grievously mutilated and two had been decapitated. The bodies were removed and given Bahá'í burial in a beautiful plot donated for the purpose.

121.3 Immediately upon receipt of the tragic news, Vicente Samaniego, Counselor in Northeast Asia, in close cooperation with the National Spiritual Assembly of the Philippines, acted vigorously on behalf of the Bahá'ís and was given the utmost cooperation and sympathy by the authorities, police, military and civil. A convocation was called, attended by more than 900 students, faculty members and University officials. Prayers were said in English, Arabic and Persian. The President of the University gave a talk in which he said that the murdered Iranian students are not ordinary students, for with them is the Message of Bahá'u'lláh which is the way to unity. The Council of the Student Body asked that their new Social Hall be renamed Iranian Student Memorial Hall. Three thousand people marched in the funeral procession and six hundred went to the burial site to attend the interment.

121.4 A dignified burial was conducted by the Bahá'ís in the presence of University authorities and friends.

121.5 The relatives and friends of these three young men, who gave their lives in the service of the Blessed Beauty, are assured of the loving sympathy and prayers of their fellow believers. The sacrifice made by these youth adds a crown of glory to the wonderful services now being performed by Bahá'í youth throughout the world. Bahá'u'lláh Himself testifies:

121.5aThey that have forsaken their country in the path of God and subsequently ascended unto His presence, such souls shall be blessed by the Concourse on High and their names recorded by the Pen of Glory among such as have laid down their lives as martyrs in the path of God, the Help in peril, the Self-Subsistent.

The Universal House of Justice

122

Release of a Compilation on Bahá'í life

24 November 1972

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

122.1 We are asking the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom to send you by surface mail one copy of their compilation The Pattern of Bahá'í Life, and attached we are sending you an addendum consisting of quotations from the letters and writings of the beloved Guardian.

122.2 These extracts are shared with you with the thought that you may be able to use them in assisting the believers to attain a fuller understanding of what it means to be a Bahá'í and to guide and aid them to pattern their personal lives in accordance with the Teachings.

122.3 You are free to use this material in whatever way is appropriate and best suited to the needs of your community. For example, you may wish to purchase copies of The Pattern of Bahá'í Life and use them with printed or mimeographed copies of the attached compilation, or you may prefer to issue a compilation of your own. The important thing is that the moral and spiritual

admonitions contained in our writings be widely disseminated, properly understood, and the friends encouraged to follow them. Shoghi Effendi has pointed out:

122.3aHumanity, through suffering and turmoil, is swiftly moving on towards its destiny; if we be loiterers, if we fail to play our part surely others will be called upon to take up our task as ministers to the crying needs of this afflicted world.

122.3bNot by the force of our numbers, not by the mere exposition of a set of new and noble principles, not by an organized campaign of reaching—no matter how worldwide and elaborate in its character—not even by the staunchness of our faith or the exaltation of our enthusiasm, can we ultimately hope to vindicate in the eyes of a critical and sceptical age the supreme claim of the Abhá Revelation. One thing and only one thing will unfailingly and alone secure the undoubted triumph of this sacred Cause, namely the extent to which our own inner life and private character mirror forth in their manifold aspects the splendor of those eternal principles proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

123

Adoption of the Constitution
of the Universal House of Justice

26 November 1972

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

123.1 The following cable has just been sent to the United States Bahá'í News for publication.

123.2WITH GRATEFUL JOYOUS HEARTS ANNOUNCE ENTIRE BAHÁ'Í WORLD ADOPTION PROFOUNDLY SIGNIFICANT STEP IN UNFOLDMENT MISSION SUPREME ORGAN BAHÁ'Í WORLD COMMONWEALTH THROUGH FORMULATION CONSTITUTION UNIVERSAL HOUSE JUSTI AFTER OFFERING HUMBLE PRAYERS GRATITUDE ON DAY COVENANT AT THREE SACRED THRESHOLDS BAHJÍ HAIFA MEMBERS GATHERED COUNCIL CHAMBER PRECINCTS HOUSE BLESSED MASTER APPENDED THEIR SIGNATURES FIXED SEAL ON INSTRUMENT ENVISAGED WRITINGS BELOVED GUARDIAN HAILED BY HIM AS MOST GREAT LAW FAITH BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. FULLY ASSURED MEASURE JUST TAKEN WILL FURTHER REINFORCE TIES BINDING WORLD CENTER TO NATIONAL LOCAL COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT WORLD RELEASE FRESH ENERGIES INCREASE ENTHUSIASM CONFIDENCE VALIANT WORKERS HIS DIVINE VINEYARD LABORING ASSIDUOUSLY BRING MANKIND UNDER SHELTER HIS ALL-GLORIOUS COVENANT.

123.3 Please share this joyous news with the friends. It is anticipated that the Constitution will be published at Ridván.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

124

Activities for the Year Preceding the Global Plan to be Launched Ridván 1974

14 January 1973

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

124.1 As the Bahá'í world approaches the triumphant conclusion of the Nine Year Plan it gives us the utmost gratification to see that a few National Spiritual Assemblies have already formulated plans for activity during the coming Bahá'í year.

124.2 The next global plan will be launched at Ridván 1974 and you will therefore have twelve months to prepare for it. We call upon you all to take the greatest possible advantage of that year to:

124.2aStrengthen the foundations of your achievements through developing and enriching Bahá'í community life, fostering youth activity and through all means suited to your circumstances; and

124.2bContinue expansion of the Faith, trying new openings and possibilities not fully explored when you were under the pressure of other priorities.

124.3 Obviously conditions differ in the various areas under the jurisdiction of the National Spiritual Assemblies, and the goals which each Assembly adopts must be suited to its particular circumstances and possibilities, but, as the beloved Guardian once pointed out, "The broader the basis" of such a campaign, and "the deeper its roots, the finer the flower into which it shall eventually blossom."

124.4 We ask you to make your plans now and to send us your report of them to reach us as soon as possible and not later than 1 April 1973 so that we may present a consolidated summary to the International Convention. We feel that such a summary will be an inspiration and a source of new ideas to the delegates when they are consulting upon the challenges that lie before the Bahá'í community in the years ahead and which must be faced during the next global plan. Moreover, the achievements of the coming year, added to the great victories of the Nine Year Plan, will enable the worldwide Bahá'í community to enter with even greater assurance upon the next stage of its ever-unfolding destiny.

124.5 We pray at the Holy Shrines that the blessings of Bahá'u'lláh may guide and assist you with a fresh measure of His divine grace in the few months separating us from the glorious festivities of next Ridván.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Universal House of Justice

125 Announcement of the Completion of the Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

19 January 1973

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

125.1JOYFULLY ANNOUNCE COMPLETION SYNOPSIS CODIFICATION KITÁB-I-AQDAS FOR PUBLICATION RIDVÁN SYNCHRONIZING CELEBRATION HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY REVELATION MOST HOLY BOOK FULFILLING WORLD CENTER GOAL NINE YEAR PLAN. CONFIDENT RELEASE THIS PUBLICATION ENVISAGED BY BELOVED GUARDIAN AND WHOSE MA FEATURES HE OUTLINED WILL CONSTITUTE ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT STEP PATH LEADING BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY FULL MATURITY ESTABLISHMENT WORLD ORDER BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.

The Universal House of Justice

126

Obeying the Law of God in One's Personal Life

6 February 1973
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
126.1 The following is an excerpt from a letter written recently in response to questions from an individual believer. As it is of general interest we are sending it to you so that you may share it with the friends within your jurisdiction in whatever manner you judge wise and necessary.
126.2Just as there are laws governing our physical lives, requiring that we must supply our bodies with certain foods, maintain them within a certain range of temperatures, and so forth, if we wish to avoid physical disabilities, so also there are laws governing our spiritual lives. These laws are revealed to mankind in each age by the Manifestation of God, and obedience to them is of vital importance if each human being, and mankind in general, is to develop properly and harmoniously. Moreover, these various aspects are interdependent. If an individual violates the spiritual laws for his own development he will cause injury not only to himself but to the society in which he lives. Similarly, the condition of society has a direct effect on the individuals who must live within it.
126.3As you point out, it is particularly difficult to follow the laws of Bahá'u'lláh in present-day society whose accepted practice is so at variance with the standards of the Faith. However, there are certain laws that are so fundamental to the healthy functioning of human society that they must be upheld whatever the circumstances. Realizing the degree of human frailty, Bahá'u'lláh has provided that other laws are to be applied only gradually, but these too, once they are applied, must be followed, or else society will not be reformed but will sink into an ever worsening condition. It is the challenging task of the Bahá'ís to obey the law of God in their own lives, and gradually to win the rest of mankind to its acceptance.
The Effect of Obedience to the Laws of Bahá'u'lláh on Lne's life
126.4 In considering the effect of obedience to the laws on individual lives, one must remember that the purpose of this life is to prepare the soul for the next. Here one must learn to control and direct one's animal impulses, not to be a slave to them. Life in this world is a succession of tests and achievements, of falling short and of making new spiritual advances. Sometimes the course may seem very hard, but one can witness, again and again, that the soul who steadfastly obeys the law of Bahá'u'lláh, however hard it may seem, grows spiritually, while the one who compromises with the law for the sake of his own apparent happiness is seen to have been following a chimera: he does not attain the happiness he sought, he retards his spiritual advance and often brings new problems upon himself.
126.5To give one very obvious example: the Bahá'í law requiring consent of parents to marriage. All too often nowadays such consent is withheld by non-Bahá'í parents for reasons of bigotry or racial prejudice; yet we have seen again and again the profound effect on those very parents of the firmness of the children in the Bahá'í law, to the extent that not only is the consent ultimately given in many cases, but the character of the parents can be affected and their relationship with their child greatly strengthened.

126.6Thus, by upholding Bahá'í law in the face of all difficulties we not only strengthen our own characters but influence those around us.

The Bahá'í Teachings on Sexual Intercourse

126.7The Bahá'í teaching on sexual intercourse is very clear. It is permissible only between a man and the woman who is his wife. In this connection we share with you extracts from four letters written on behalf of the Guardian which throw light on various aspects of the matter. One of them contains the paragraph that you quote in your letter.

126.7aWith reference to the question you have asked concerning the Bahá'í attitude towards the problem of sex and its relation to marriage:

The Bahá'í Teachings on this matter, which is of such vital concern and about which there is such a wide divergency of views, are very clear and emphatic. Briefly stated the Bahá'í conception of sex is based on the belief that chastity should be strictly practised by both sexes, not only because it is in itself highly commendable ethically, but also due to its being the only way to a happy and successful marital life. Sex relationships of any form, outside marriage, are not permissible therefore, and whoso violates this rule will not only be responsible to God, but will incur the necessary punishment from society.

The Bahá'í Faith recognizes the value of the sex impulse, but condemns its illegitimate and improper expression such as free love, companionate marriage and others, all of which it considers positively harmful to man and to the society in which he lives. The proper use of the sex instinct is the natural right of every individual, and it is precisely for this very purpose that the institution of marriage has been established. The Bahá'ís do not believe in the suppression of the sex impulse but in its regulation and control.

(From a letter dated 5 September 1938, to an individual believer)

126.7bThe question you raise as to the place in one's life that a deep bond of love with someone we meet other than our husband or wife can have is easily defined in view of the teachings. Chastity implies both before and after marriage an unsullied, chaste sex life. Before marriage absolutely chaste, after marriage absolutely faithful to one's chosen companion. Faithful in all sexual acts, faithful in word and in deed.

The world today is submerged, amongst other things, in an over-exaggeration of the importance of physical love, and a dearth of spiritual values. In as far as possible the believers should try to realize this and rise above the level of their fellowmen who are, typical of all decadent periods in history, placing so much overemphasis on the purely physical side of mating. Outside of their normal, legitimate married life they should seek to establish bonds of comradeship and love which are eternal and founded on the spiritual life of man, not on his physical life. This is one of the many fields in which it is incumbent on the Bahá'ís to set the example and lead the way to a true human standard of life, when the soul of man is exalted and his body but the tool for his enlightened spirit. Needless to say this does not preclude the living of a perfectly normal sex life in its legitimate channel of marriage.

(From a letter dated 28 September 1941, to an individual believer)

126.7cConcerning your question whether there are any legitimate forms of

expression of the sex instinct outside of marriage: according to the Bahá'í Teachings no sexual act can be considered lawful unless performed between lawfully married persons. Outside of marital life there can be no lawful or healthy use of the sex impulse. The Bahá'í youth should, on the one hand, be taught the lesson of self-control which, when exercised, undoubtedly has a salutary effect on the development, of character and of personality in general, and on the other should be advised, nay even encouraged, to contract marriage while still young and in full possession of their physical vigor. Economic factors, no doubt, are often a serious hindrance to early marriage, but in most cases are only an excuse, and as such should not be overstressed.

(From a letter dated 13 December 1940, to an individual believer)

126.7dAs regards your question whether it would be advisable and useful for you to marry again: he feels unable to give you any definite answer on that point, as this is essentially a private affair about which you, and the friends around you or your Local Assembly, are in a much better position to judge. Of course, under normal circumstances, every person should consider it his moral duty to marry. And this is what Bahá'u'lláh has encouraged the believers to do. But marriage is by no means an obligation. In the last resort it is for the individual to decide whether he wishes to lead a family life or live in a state of celibacy.

(From a letter dated 3 May 1936, to an individual believer)

126.8You express surprise at the Guardian's reference to "the necessary punishment from society." In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas Bahá'u'lláh prohibits sexual immorality and in the Annex to that Book states that the various degrees of sexual offences and the punishments for them are to be decided by the Universal House of Justice. In this connection it should be realized that there is a distinction drawn in the Faith between the attitudes which should characterize individuals in their relationship to other people, namely, loving forgiveness, forbearance, and concern with one's own sins, not the sins of others, and those attitudes which should be shown by the Spiritual Assemblies, whose duty is to administer the law of God with justice.

126.9A number of sexual problems, such as homosexuality and transsexuality can well have medical aspects, and in such cases recourse should certainly be had to the best medical assistance. But it is clear from the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh that homosexuality is not a condition to which a person should be reconciled, but is a distortion of his or her nature which should be controlled and overcome. This may require a hard struggle, but so also can be the struggle of a heterosexual person to control his or her desires. The exercise of self-control in this, as in so very many other aspects of life, has a beneficial effect on the progress of the soul. It should, moreover, be borne in mind that although to be married is highly desirable, and Bahá'u'lláh has strongly recommended it, it is not the central purpose of life. If a person has to wait a considerable period before finding a spouse, or if ultimately, he or she must remain single, it does not mean that he or she is thereby unable to fulfill his or her life's purpose.

One's Attitude toward the Laws of Bahá'u'lláh

126.10In all this we have been speaking about the attitude that Bahá'ís should have towards the law of Bahá'u'lláh. You, however, as a doctor working mainly as a counselor in family and sexual problems, will mostly be concerned with advising non-Bahá'ís, who do not accept, and see no reason to follow, the laws of Bahá'u'lláh. You are already a qualified practitioner in your field, and no doubt you give advice on the basis of what you have learned from study and experience—a whole fabric of concepts about the human mind, its growth, development and proper functioning, which you have learned and evolved, without reference to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. Now, as a Bahá'í, you know that what Bahá'u'lláh teaches about the purpose of human life, the nature of the human being and the proper conduct of human lives, is divinely revealed and therefore true. However, it will inevitably take time for you not only to study the Bahá'í teachings so that you clearly understand them, but also to work out how they modify your professional concepts. This is, of course, not an unusual predicament for a scientist. How often in the course of research is a factor discovered which requires a revolution in thinking over a wide field of human endeavor. You must be guided in each case by your own professional knowledge and judgement as illuminated by your growing knowledge of the Bahá'í teachings; undoubtedly you will find that your own understanding of the human problems dealt with in your work will change and develop and you will see new and improved ways of helping the people who come to you. Psychology is still a very young and inexact science, and as the years go by Bahá'í psychologists, who know from the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh the true pattern of human life, will be able to make great strides in the development of this science, and will help profoundly in the alleviation of human suffering.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

127

Purchase of Mazra'ih Mansion

15 March 1973

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

127.1OCCASION NAW-RÚZ 130 JOYOUSLY ANNOUNCE BAHÁ'Í WORLD ACQUISITION BY PURCHASE MANSION MAZRA'IH RESULT SEVERAL YEARS PATIENT PERSISTENT DETERMINED NEGOTIATIONS THEREBY ADDING TO BAHÁ'Í ENDOWMENTS HOLY LAND FIRST RESIDENCE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AFTER NINE YEARS SPENT WALLED PRISON CITY 'AKKÁ. CONTROL THIS HOLY SITE REACQUIRED BY BELOVED GUARDIAN AFTER LAPSE MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS WHEN HE SECURED LEASE MANSION 1950 EXTENDED TO PRESENT TIME. PURCHASE INCLUDES LAND AREA APPROXIMATING TWENTY-FOUR THOUSAND SQUARE METRES HIGHLY SUITABLE EXTENSION GARDENS CULTIVATION. OFFERING PRAYER THANKSGIVING SACRED THRESHOLD THIS GREATLY CHERISHED BOUNTY.

Universal House of Justice

128

Ridván Message 1973

Ridván 1973

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

128.1 We announce with joyful and thankful hearts the completion in overwhelming victory of the world-encircling Nine Year Plan. The Army of Light has won its second global campaign; it has surpassed the goals set for expansion and has achieved a truly impressive degree of universal participation, the twin objectives of the Plan. With gratitude and love we testify to the unceasing confirmations which Bahá'u'lláh has showered upon His servants, enabling each and every one of us to offer Him some part of the labor, the devotion, the sacrifice, the supplication which He has so bountifully rewarded. At this Centenary of the Revelation of the Most Holy Book, the Community of the Most Great Name lays its tribute of victory at His feet, acknowledging that it is He Who has bestowed it.

Victories of the Nine Year Plan

128.2 The Cause of God at the end of the Nine Year Plan is immensely more widespread, more firmly founded, and its own international relations more closely knit than in 1964 when the Plan was launched. Ninety-five new territories have been opened to the Faith; the 69 National Spiritual Assemblies which shouldered the world community's task have become 113, 5 more than called for. These embryonic secondary Houses of Justice are supported by more than 17,000 Local Spiritual Assemblies, 3,000 in excess of the goal and 12,000 more than at the beginning of the Plan. Bahá'ís reside in 69,500 localities, 15,000 more than called for, and 54,000 more than in 1964. Bahá'í literature has been translated into 225 more languages bringing the total number to 571; 63 Temple sites, 56 National Hazíratu'l-Quds, and 62 National Endowments have been acquired bringing the total numbers of these properties to 98, 112 and 104 respectively; 50 Teaching Institutes and Summer and Winter Schools are playing their part in Bahá'í education and 15 Publishing Trusts produce Bahá'í literature in major languages of the world. The Mother Temple of Latin America has been built and dedicated. Among those goals whose achievement is dependent on favorable circumstances outside our control are the incorporation of Assemblies and recognition of Bahá'í Holy Days. It is gratifying to record that 90 National Spiritual Assemblies and 1,556 Local Spiritual Assemblies—181 more than the total number called for—are incorporated, while Bahá'í Holy Days are recognized in 64 countries and Bahá'í certification of marriage in 40.

128.3 This great expansion of the Faith required an army of international pioneers. Two major calls were raised, for 461 and 733, which together with others for particular posts made an overall total of 1,344. The Community of the Most Great Name responded with 3,553 who actually left their homes, 2,265 of whom are still at their posts.

Developments at the World Center

128.4 At the World Center of the Faith the collation and classification of the Bahá'í Sacred Scriptures and of the writings of Shoghi Effendi have been carried forward in ever increasing volume, a task supported and enriched by the labors of a special committee appointed by the Persian National Spiritual Assembly. The material at the World Center, includes some 2,600 original Tablets by Bahá'u'lláh, 6,000 by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and 2,300 letters of Shoghi Effendi. There are in addition some 18,000 authenticated

copies of other such Tablets and letters. All these have been studied, important passages from them excerpted and classified, and the subject matter indexed under 400 general headings.

128.5 A Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas—completing the considerable progress made by the beloved Guardian in this task—is being published on the Centenary of the Revelation of the Most Holy Book, which, as already announced, is to be celebrated both in the Holy Land and throughout the Bahá'í world during this Ridván.

128.6 The Constitution of the Universal House of Justice, hailed by Shoghi Effendi as the Most Great Law of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, has been formulated and published.

128.7 The gardens in Bahjí and on Mount Carmel have been significantly extended and plans have been approved for the befitting development and beautification of the entire area of Bahá'í property surrounding the Holy Shrines in Bahjí and Haifa.

Worldwide Proclamation

128.8 The worldwide proclamation of the Faith, an intensive and long-to-be-sustained process initiated during the third phase of the Plan, opened in October 1967 with the commemoration of the Centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's Proclamation to the kings and rulers which had centerd around His revelation of the Súriy-i-Mulúk in Adrianople. This historic event was commemorated at six Intercontinental Conferences held simultaneously around the planet. A further nine Oceanic and Continental Conferences held during the Plan gave great impetus to this proclamation program. The fifteen Conferences were attended by nearly 17,000 believers and attracted great publicity by press and radio and were made the occasion of acquainting dignitaries and notabilities with the Divine Message. The presentation, on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, to 142 Heads of State, of a specially produced book containing the translation into English of the Tablets and passages of Scripture in which Bahá'u'lláh, some hundred years before, had issued His mighty Proclamation to mankind, initiated this campaign, which will continue long beyond the end of the Nine Year Plan.

128.9 The outstanding development in the relationship of the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations was the accreditation of that Community as a nongovernmental organization with consultative status to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. The Bahá'í International Community now has a permanent representative at the United Nations and maintains an office in New York.

Tribute to the Hands of the Cause of God

128.10 The loved and revered Hands of the Cause have rendered sacrificial and distinguished service throughout the Nine Year Plan. They have, in all parts of the world, inspired the friends, assisted National Spiritual Assemblies, promoted the teaching work and played a vital part in the success of the Plan. The lagging fortunes of more than one national community have been revolutionized by a visit of a Hand of the Cause; swift and energetic action, inspired by the Hand, has been followed by astonishing results, completely reversing that community's prospects. They have added distinguished works to

the literature of the Faith.

128.11 The goal of the Plan to develop "The institution of the Hands of the Cause of God, in consultation with the body of the Hands of the Cause, with a view to the extension into the future of its appointed functions of protection and propagation," was accomplished in stages, leading to the establishment of eleven Continental Boards of Counselors, whose members were appointed by the Universal House of Justice and who assumed responsibility for the Auxiliary Boards for protection and propagation. The beloved Hands no longer remained individually identified with any particular continent—except insofar as their residence was concerned—but extended their sphere of action to the whole planet. The Continental Boards of Counselors, advised and guided by the Hands of the Cause of God and working in close collaboration with them, have already, in their brief period of office, performed outstanding and distinguished services.

Three Portentous Developments

128.12 Three highly portentous developments have taken place during the Nine Year Plan, namely, the advance of youth to the forefront of the teaching work, a great increase in the financial resources of the Faith, and an astonishing proliferation of inter-National Assembly assistance projects.

The Advance of Youth

128.13 The first, the heartwarming upsurge of Bahá'í youth, has changed the face of the teaching work; impenetrable barriers have been broken or overpassed by eager teams of young Bahá'ís, dedicated and prayerful, presenting the Divine Message in ways acceptable to their own generation from which it has spread and is spreading throughout the social structure. The entire Bahá'í world has been thrilled by this development. Having rejected the values and standards of the old world, Bahá'í youth are eager to learn and adapt themselves to the standards of Bahá'u'lláh and so to offer the Divine Program to fill the gap left by the abandonment of the old order.

An Increase in Financial Resources

128.14 The vast increase in the financial resources of the Faith called for under the Plan has evoked a heartwarming response from the entire Bahá'í community. Not only the Bahá'í International Fund but the local, national and continental Funds of the Faith have been sacrificially supported. This practical proof of the love which the friends bear for the Faith has enabled all the work to go forward—the support of pioneers and traveling teachers, the raising of Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs and acquisition of Bahá'í properties, the purchase of Holy Places in the Cradle of the Faith and at the World Center, the development of educational institutions and all the multifarious activities of a vigorous, onward-marching, constructive world community. It is of interest that sixty percent of the international funds of the Faith is used to assist the work of National Spiritual Assemblies, to promote the teaching work and to defend the Cause against attacks in many parts of the world. Without such help from the Bahá'í world community many National Assemblies would be paralyzed in their efforts of expansion and deepening. The administration of Huqúqu'lláh has been strengthened in preparation for its extension to other parts of the world. An International Deputization Fund

was established at the World Center to assist pioneers and traveling teachers who were ready to serve but unable to provide their own expenses, and this Fund was later extended to the support of projects on national homefronts. Contribution to the Fund is a service which will never cease to be open to all believers; the growth of the Faith and the rise of its Administrative Order require an ever-increasing outpouring of our substance, commensurate in however small a measure with the bounty and liberality of the outpouring confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh.

International Collaboration

128.15 When the Plan was launched 219 assistance projects were specified whereby national communities would render financial, pioneering or teaching aid to others, generally remote from them geographically. The intention was to strengthen the bonds of unity between distant parts of the Bahá'í world with different social, cultural and historical backgrounds. At the end of the Plan more than 600 such projects had been carried out. Intercommunity cooperation has been further developed in the field of publishing Bahá'í literature, notably in Spanish and French and the languages of Africa. A vast field of fruitful endeavor lies open in this respect.

128.16 In some countries due to lack of freedom, to actual repression in others, to legal and physical obstacles in yet others, certain particular goals—mainly those requiring incorporation or recognitioncould not be won. Foreseeing this, the Universal House of Justice called upon national communities in lands where there is freedom to practice and promote the Faith, to exceed their own goals and thus ensure that the overall goals would be won. It has proved still impossible to begin work on the erection of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Tehran, but contracts have been signed for the preparation of detailed drawings, geological surveys are being made, and everything made ready for immediate action whenever the situation in Persia becomes propitious.

Additional Developments at the World Center

128.17 During the period of the Nine Year Plan a number of important and interesting events, not directly associated with it, have taken place. First and foremost was the commemoration, in the precincts of the Qiblih of the Bahá'í world, of the centenary of the arrival at the prison city of ‘Akká, as foretold in former Scriptures, of the Promised One of all ages.

128.18 The Mansion of Mazra‘ih, often referred to by the beloved Guardian as one of the "twin mansions" in which the Blessed Beauty resided after nine years within the walled prison city of ‘Akká, and dear to the hearts of the believers by reason of its associations with their Lord, has at last been purchased together with 24,000 square metres of land extending into the plain on its eastward side.

128.19 The raising of the obelisk, marking the site of the future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár on Mount Carmel, completes a project initiated by the beloved Guardian.

128.20 The decision has been made and announced to the Bahá'í world, and the initial steps have been taken for the erection on Mount Carmel, at a site on the Arc as purposed by Shoghi Effendi, of the building which shall serve as

the Seat of the Universal House of Justice.
Raising God's Kingdom on Earth
128.21 The progress of the Cause of God gathers increasing momentum and we may with confidence look forward to the day when this Community, in God's good time, shall have traversed the stages predicated for it by its Guardian, and shall have raised on this tormented planet the fair mansions of God's Own Kingdom wherein humanity may find surcease from its self-induced confusion and chaos and ruin, and the hatreds and violence of this time shall be transmuted into an abiding sense of world brotherhood and peace. All this shall be accomplished within the Covenant of the everlasting Father, the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh.
The Universal House of Justice
129
Election of the
Universal House of Justice—Ridván 1973
3 May 1973
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
129.1NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE 'ALÍ NAKHJAVANÍ HUSHMAND FATHEAZAM AMOZ GIBSON IAN SEMPLE DAVID HOFMAN CHARLES WOLCOTT BOR KAVELIN DAVID RUHE HUGH CHANCE.
Universal House of Justice
1973-1974
A Year of Preparation
130
Announcement of the Acceptance of the Faith by
His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II of Western Samoa
7 May 1973
To the Bahá'ís of the World
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
130.1 It is now possible to share with you all the news of an event which crowns the victories with which Bahá'u'lláh has blessed His followers during the Nine Year Plan, an event of which the true significance will be fully understood only in the course of centuries to come: a reigning monarch has accepted the Message of Bahá'u'lláh.
130.2 Among those to whom The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh was presented in 1967 was His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II, the Head of State of the independent nation of Western Samoa in the heart of the Pacific Ocean. His Highness, who had already heard of the Faith, showed immediately that the sacred Words had touched his heart, and the Universal House of Justice thereupon asked the Hand of the Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery, who had presented the book to him, to return to Western Samoa for further audiences with His Highness. Following this visit the Malietoa conveyed his acceptance of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh to the Universal House of Justice and became the first reigning sovereign to enter beneath the shade of this Cause.
130.3 His Highness decided, with the full agreement of the Universal House of Justice, that it was not propitious to make his declaration public at that time. He has been visited from time to time by Hands of the Cause and other

believers, and continual touch with His Highness has been maintained by the House of Justice through Mr. Suhayl ‘Alá'i, a member of the Continental Board of Counselors for Australasia. Gradually the Malietoa has let it be known to those around him that he has accepted Bahá’u’lláh. Now he has judged the time ripe to share this wondrous news with his fellow-believers in all parts of the world, by addressing to the International Bahá’í Convention the gracious and inspiring message of which a copy is enclosed with this letter. ...

With loving Bahá’í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

131

Establishment of the International Teaching Center

5 June 1973

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

131.1ANNOUNCE ESTABLISHMENT HOLY LAND LONG ANTICIPATED INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTER DESTINED EVOLVE INTO ONE THOSE WORLD-SHAKING WORLD-EMBRACING WORLD-DIRECTING ADMINISTRATIVE INSTITUTIONS ORDAINED BY BAHÁ’U’LLÁH ANTICIPATED BY ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ ELUCIDATED BY SHOGHI EFFENDI. MEMBERSHIP THIS NASCENT INSTITUTION COMPRISES ALL HANDS CAUSE GOD AND INITIALLY THREE COUNSELORS WHO WITH HANDS PRESENT HOLY LAND WILL CONSTITUTE NUCLEUS ITS VITAL OPERATIONS. CALLING UPON HOOPER DUNBAR FLORENCE MAYBERRY ‘AZÍZ YAZDÍ PROCEED HOLY LAND ASSUME THIS HIGHLY MERITORIOUS SERVICE. OFFERING PRAYERS HEARTFELT GRATITUDE SACRED THRESHOLD THIS FURTHER EVIDENCE ORGANIC EVOLUTION ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER BAHÁ’U’LLÁH.

With loving Bahá’í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

132

Elucidation of the Duties of the
International Teaching Center and Expansion of the
Continental Boards of Counselors

8 June 1973

To the Bahá’ís of the World

Dear Bahá’í Friends,

132.1 The centennial year of the revelation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas has already witnessed events of such capital significance in the annals of the Bahá’í Dispensation as to cause us to contemplate with awe the rapidity with which Divine Providence is advancing the Cause of the Most Great Name. The time is indeed propitious for the establishment of the International Teaching Center, a development which, at one and the same time, brings to fruition the work of the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land and provides for its extension into the future, links the institution of the Boards of Counselors even more intimately with that of the Hands of the Cause of God, and powerfully reinforces the discharge of the rapidly growing responsibilities of the Universal House of Justice.

132.2 This International Teaching Center now established will, in due course, operate from that building designated by the Guardian as the seat for the Hands of the Cause, which must be raised on the Arc on Mount Carmel in

close proximity to the Seat of the Universal House of Justice.
132.3The duties now assigned to this nascent institution are:
132.3a - To coordinate, stimulate and direct the activities of the Continental Boards of Counselors and to act as liaison between them and the Universal House of Justice.
132.2b - To be fully informed of the situation of the Cause in all parts of the world and to be able, from the background of this knowledge, to make reports and recommendations to the Universal House of Justice and give advice to the Continental Boards of Counselors.
132.3c - To be alert to possibilities, both within and without the Bahá'í community, for the extension of the teaching work into receptive or needy areas, and to draw the attention of the Universal House of Justice and the Continental Boards of Counselors to such possibilities, making recommendations for action.
132.3d- To determine and anticipate needs for literature, pioneers and traveling teachers and to work out teaching plans, both regional and global, for the approval of the Universal House of Justice.
132.4 All the Hands of the Cause of God will be members of the International Teaching Center. Each Hand will be kept regularly informed of the activities of the Center through reports or copies of its minutes, and will be able, wherever he may be residing or traveling, to convey suggestions, recommendations and information to the Center and, whenever he is in the Holy Land, to take part in the consultations and other activities of the Center.
132.5 In addition, we now appoint Mr. Hooper Dunbar, Mrs. Florence Mayberry and Mr. 'Azíz Yazdí to membership of the International Teaching Center, with the rank of Counsellor. These believers, who have been serving with distinction on the Continental Boards of Counselors in South America, North America and Central and East Africa respectively, will henceforth reside in Haifa and will, together with the Hands present in the Holy Land, constitute the nucleus of the operations of the Center.
132.6 Authority for the expulsion and reinstatement of Covenant-breakers remains with the Hands of the Cause of God. All such matters will be investigated locally by the relative Continental Board of Counselors in consultation with any Hand or Hands who may be in the area. The Continental Board of Counselors and the Hands concerned will then make their reports to the International Teaching Center where they will be considered. The decision whether or not to expel or reinstate will be made by the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land who will, as at present, submit their decision to the Universal House of Justice for approval.
132.7 The following changes to the zones of the Continental Boards of Counselors are now made:
132.7a- The number of zones has been raised to twelve by the removal of India, Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Laccadive, Maldive, Andaman and Nicobar Islands from Central Asia.
132.7b- The Philippines, Hong Kong and Macau are transferred from Northeastern Asia to Southeastern Asia.
132.7c- The Caroline Islands and all other Pacific islands lying north of

the equator and between longitudes 140° east and 140° west, with the exception of the Gilbert Islands, will be transferred from the zone of Australasia to the zone of Northeastern Asia. Islands under the jurisdiction of the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska remain in the zone of North America.

132.8 The number of Counselors is now raised to fifty-seven by the appointment of Mr. Friday Ekpe and Mr. Zekrullah Kazemi in Northwestern Africa, Mr. Hushang Ahdieh and Mr. Peter Vuyiya in Central and East Africa, Dr. Sarah Pereira and Mrs. Velma Sherrill in North America, Mr. Rowland Estall and Mr. Paul Lucas in Central America, Mrs. Leonora Armstrong, Mr. Peter McLaren and Mr. Raúl Pavón in South America, Mr. Dipchand Khianra and Mrs. Zena Sorabjee in South Central Asia, Mr. Firaydún Míthāqíyán in Southeastern Asia, Mr. Richard Benson and Miss Elena Marsella in Northeastern Asia and Miss Violet Hoehnke in Australasia. Dr. William Maxwell who has been rendering distinguished service as a member of the Continental Board of Counselors in Northwestern Africa has been obliged to return to the United States.

132.9 Mrs. Zena Sorabjee is appointed Trustee of the new Continental Fund of South Central Asia, while Mr. Hushang Ahdieh and Mr. Mas‘úd Khamsí are appointed the new Trustees of the Continental Funds of Central and East Africa and South America respectively.

132.10 Beyond these significant developments at the World Center of the Faith and on the continental level, it is becoming increasingly necessary in many parts of the world for the Auxiliary Boards to be reinforced. The nature of the work differs from zone to zone and the Universal House of Justice is now consulting the Boards of Counselors on this matter before making an announcement.

132.11 The decisions now announced are the outcome of deliberation extending over a number of years, reinforced by consultations with the Hands of the Cause of God, and especially with the Hands residing in the Holy Land who were requested in 1968 to assist the Universal House of Justice in the establishment of the International Teaching Center, a task that now increases in magnitude as that Center begins its work.

132.12 It is our fervent prayer that the Blessed Beauty will abundantly confirm this latest unfoldment of His divinely-purposed Administrative Order.

The Universal House of Justice

Zones of the Continental Boards of Counselors

As Revised by the Universal House of Justice in May 1973

133.131. Northwestern Africa

All the continent of Africa west of the eastern frontiers of Tunisia, Algeria, Niger and Nigeria plus the Cape Verde Islands.

132.142. Central and East Africa

All the continent of Africa east of the western frontiers of Libya, Chad and the United Cameroon Republic and north of the southern frontiers of Zaïre and Tanzania plus the islands of Fernando Póo, Príncipe, São Tomé and Annobón in the Atlantic Ocean and Zanzibar, Pemba and Mafia Islands in the Indian Ocean.

132.153. Southern Africa

All the continent of Africa south of the northern frontiers of Angola, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique plus the Island of Madagascar and all islands in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans between longitudes 20° west and 80° east and south of the equator with the exception of the Islands of Annobón, Zanzibar, Pemba, and Mafia which are assigned to the zone of Central and East Africa.

132.164. North America

All the continent of America north of the southern frontier of the United States plus all offshore islands in the Pacific and Arctic Oceans including the Aleutian chain and all islands under the jurisdiction of the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska, also Greenland and all offshore islands politically belonging to Greenland, all islands in the Atlantic Ocean west of longitude 40° west and between latitude 60° north and the Tropic of Cancer plus those Bahama Islands lying south of the Tropic of Cancer.

132.175. Central America

All the continent of America south of the northern frontier of Mexico and north of the southern frontier of Panama plus the offshore islands in the Pacific Ocean belonging politically to countries of this zone plus Clipperton Island, all islands in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea south of the Tropic of Cancer except the Bahama Islands which are allocated to the zone of North America and islands belonging politically to Colombia and Venezuela, the islands of Curaçao, Bonaire, Aruba, Trinidad and Tobago which are all allocated to the zone of South America.

132.186. South America

All the continent of South America, the Galápagos Islands, Curaçao, Bonaire, Aruba, Trinidad and Tobago, all islands in the Caribbean and North Atlantic Oceans belonging politically to countries of this zone plus all islands in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans south of the equator and between longitude 120° west and longitude 20° west.

132.197. Western Asia

All the continent of Asia west of the eastern boundaries of Pakistan, Sinkiang, the Mongolian Republic, the Oblasts of Chita and Irkutsk and the Kray of Krasnoyarsk and east of the western boundaries of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, plus those parts of Turkey and Kazakhstan which lie in Europe and including the Transcaucasian S.S.R.s of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as all islands in the Persian Gulf and islands in the Arabian Sea belonging politically to countries of this zone.

132.208. South Central Asia

India, Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Laccadive, Maldive, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

132.219. Southeastern Asia

China south of the northern boundaries of Yünnan, Szechwan, Hupeh, Anhwei and Kiangsu, as well as Burma, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, the Philippines, Hong Kong and Macau. Excluding Portuguese Timor.

132.2210. Northeastern Asia

All the Soviet Union east of the western boundary of the Yakutsk A.S.S.R. and the Oblast of Amur, China east of Sinkiang and north of the southern boundaries of Tsinghai, Kansu, Shensi, Honan and Shantung; Korea, Japan, Taiwan and all

islands belonging politically to those nations plus all islands in the Pacific Ocean north of the equator and between the longitudes of 140° east and 140° west with the exception of the Gilbert Islands and those islands under the jurisdiction of the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska, but including those Caroline Islands lying west of longitude 140° east.

132.2311. Australasia

Australia and New Zealand plus all islands in the Indian and Pacific Oceans lying south of the equator and between the longitudes of 80° east and 120° west including Portuguese Timor and the Gilbert and Ellice Islands but excepting Indonesia.

132.2412. Europe

The entire continent of Europe less those portions of Kazakhstan and Turkey which lie in Europe, plus Iceland and all islands in the Atlantic Ocean north of latitude 60° north which belong politically to nations of the European continent plus all islands in the Atlantic Ocean east of longitude 40° west and between latitude 60° north and the Tropic of Cancer plus all islands of the Mediterranean Sea including Cyprus but excluding islands belonging politically to nations of the African and Asiatic continents.

132.25 Membership of the Continental Boards of Counselors, According to the New Boundaries of May 1973

(New appointments are indicated with an asterisk.)

Northwestern Africa

Husayn Ardikání (Trustee of Continental Fund)

*Friday Ekpe

*Zekrullah Kazemi

Muhammad Kebdani

Central and East Africa

*Hushang Ahdieh (Trustee of Continental Fund)

Oloro Epyeru

Kolonario Oule

Isobel Sabri

Mihdí Samandarí

*Peter Vuyiya

Southern Africa

Seewoosumbur-Jeehoba Appa

Shidan Fat’he-Aazam (Trustee of Continental Fund)

Bahíyyih Winckler

North America

Lloyd Gardner

*Sarah Pereira

*Velma Sherrill

Edna True (Trustee of Continental Fund)

Central America

Carmen de Burafato

*Rowland Estall

Artemus Lamb

*Paul Lucas

Alfred Osborne (Trustee of Continental Fund)
South America
*Leonora Armstrong
Athos Costas
Mas'úd Khamsí (Trustee of Continental Fund)
*Peter McLaren
*Raúl Pavón
Donald Witzel
Western Asia
Iraj Ayman
Masíh Farhangí
Hádí Rahmámí (Trustee of Continental Fund)
Manúchihr Salmánpúr
South Central Asia
Shirin Boman
*Dipchand Khianra
*Zena Sorabjee (Trustee of Continental Fund)
Sankaran-Nair Vasudevan
Southeastern Asia
*Firaydún Mítháqíyán
Khudárahm Paymán (Trustee of Continental Fund)
Vicente Samaniego
Chellie Sundram
Yan Kee Leong
Northeastern Asia
*Richard Benson
John McHenry III
*Elena Marsella
Rúhu'lláh Mumtází (Trustee of Continental Fund)
Australasia
Suhayl ‘Alá'i
*Violet Hoehnke
Howard Harwood
Thelma Perks (Trustee of Continental Fund)
Europe
Erik Blumenthal
Anneliese Bopp
Dorothy Ferraby
Louis Hénuzet (Trustee of Continental Fund)
Betty Reed
133
Youth and Bahá’í Standards of Behavior
9 July 1973
To a Local Spiritual Assembly
Dear Bahá’í Friends,
133.1 We have received your letter of 19 June 1973 and can sympathize with the problems that Bahá’í youth face when trying to live up to the

Bahá'í standards of behavior. It is, perhaps, natural that in the bewildering amoral environment in which Bahá'í youth are growing up they feel the need for specific instructions on which intimacies are permissible and which are not. However, we feel it would be most unwise for any Bahá'í institution to issue detailed instructions about this.

133.2 The Bahá'í youth should study the teachings on chastity and, with these in mind, should avoid any behavior which would arouse passions which would tempt them to violate them. In deciding what acts are permissible to them in the light of these considerations the youth must use their own judgement, following the guidance of their consciences and the advice of their parents.

133.3 If Bahá'í youth combine such personal purity with an attitude of uncensorious forbearance towards others they will find that those who may have criticized or even mocked them will come, in time, to respect them. They will, moreover, be laying a firm foundation for future married happiness.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

134

Formation of the National Spiritual Assembly
of Equatorial Guinea

18 July 1973

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

134.1DELIGHTED ANNOUNCE SUCCESSFUL ELECTION NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY EQUATORIAL GUINEA COUNTRY OPENED FAITH GUARDIAN'S TEN YEAR CRUSADE. NEW ASSEMBLY FORMED NOW RESPONSE REQUIREMENT GOVERNMENT RECOGNITION FAITH. PRAY OFFERED HOLY SHRINES THANKSGIVING AND GUIDANCE ASSISTANCE FRIENDS NEWLY INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY.

The Universal House of Justice

135

Passing of the Hand of the Cause of God John Ferraby

9 September 1973

To the Hands of the Cause of God,
the Continental Boards of Counselors,
the National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

135.1The Hand of the Cause John Ferraby passed away suddenly on 5 September.

The following cable was sent by the Universal House of Justice:

135.1aREGRET SUDDEN PASSING HAND CAUSE JOHN FERRABY. RECALL LONG SERVICES FAITH BRITISH ISLES CROWNED ELEVATION RANK HAND CAUSE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION BAHÁ'Í LITERATURE THROUGH HIS BOOK ALL THINGS MADE NEW. REQUESTING BEFITTING GATHERINGS MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁRS MEMORIAL MEETINGS ALL COMMUNITIES BAHÁ'Í WORLD.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

136

Appointment of the Architect of the Seat of the
Universal House of Justice

17 September 1973
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
136.1DELIGHTED ANNOUNCE APPOINTMENT HUSAYN AMÁNAT BRILLIANT YOUNG BAHÁ'Í ARCHITECT CRADLE FAITH AS ARCHITECT OF BUILDING FOR UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE.
The Universal House of Justice
137
Expansion and Reinforcement of the Auxiliary Boards
7 October 1973
To the Bahá'ís of the World
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
137.1 In order to meet the growing needs of an ever-expanding Bahá'í World Community we have taken two decisions designed to reinforce and extend the services of the Auxiliary Boards.
137.2 First, the number of Auxiliary Board members throughout the world is to be raised to two hundred and seventy, of whom eighty-one will serve on the Auxiliary Boards for the Protection of the Faith and one hundred and eighty-nine will serve on the Auxiliary Boards for the Propagation of the Faith. In all there will be fifty-four Auxiliary Board members in Africa, eighty-one in the Western Hemisphere, eighty-one in Asia, eighteen in Australasia and thirty-six in Europe.
137.3 Secondly, we have decided to take a further step in the development of the institution by giving to each Continental Board of Counselors the discretion to authorize individual Auxiliary Board members to appoint assistants. Such authorization does not have to be given to all the Auxiliary Board members in a zone nor does the number assigned have to be the same for all Board members; indeed certain Boards of Counselors may decide that the present circumstances in their zones do not require them to take advantage of this possibility. Such matters are left entirely to the discretion of each Continental Board of Counselors.
137.4 The exact nature of the duties and the duration of the appointment of the assistants is also left to each Continental Board to decide for itself. Their aims should be to activate and encourage Local Spiritual Assemblies, to call the attention of Local Spiritual Assembly members to the importance of holding regular meetings, to encourage local communities to meet for the Nineteen Day Feasts and Holy Days, to help deepen their fellow-believers' understanding of the Teachings, and generally to assist the Auxiliary Board members in the discharge of their duties. Appointments may be made for a limited period, such as a year or two, with the possibility of reappointment. Believers can serve at the same time both as assistants to Auxiliary Board members and on administrative institutions.
137.5 It is our prayer at the Sacred Threshold that this new development in the institution of the Auxiliary Boards will lead to an unprecedented strengthening of the Local Spiritual Assemblies throughout the world.
The Universal House of Justice
137.6 Numbers of Auxiliary Board Members by Zones
October 1973
Auxiliary Board

for Protection
Auxiliary Board
for Propogation
Africa
Northwestern
3
9
Central and East
13
19
Southern
2
8
18
36
Western Hemisphere
North America
9
18
Central America
9
9
South America
9
27
27
54
Asia
Western
9
18
South Central
3
15
Southeastern
3
15
Northeastern
3
15
18
63
Australasia
9
9
Europe
9

27
TOTAL
81
189
138
Request for Actions in Preparation for Launching
Five Year Plan at Ridván 1974
21 November 1973
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
138.1 Five months separate us from Ridván 1974 when the next global plan will be launched. For a period of five years the attention, resources and energies of the Bahá'í World Community will be directed to achieving the aims of this plan.
138.2 By Naw-Rúz 1974 you will have been notified of the overall goals of the plan and the specific tasks assigned to each of your national communities. Each one of you is therefore urged to arrange for a meeting, at Naw-Rúz or soon after, to which you will invite the Board of Counselors in your zone to be represented and at which the plan can be considered and thorough consultation held on the manner in which each one of your communities will launch it.
138.3 You are asked to give careful consideration as soon as possible to the advisability of holding one or more conferences in conjunction with your Convention or soon after. You may wish to consult the Counselors on this matter. We believe that such conferences would greatly assist in acquainting the friends with the nature and aims of the plan and in enlisting their enthusiasm and resolution to achieve it. All details as to the number of such conferences, their timing, their agendas are left entirely to your discretion, but we recommend that in planning them you attach great importance to the participation of youth so that they may feel wholly identified with the tasks assigned and give their immediate and maximum support to their accomplishment.
138.4 Now is the time to begin directing the thoughts and plans of the friends to the next great demand which will be made upon them, and we assure you of our prayers at the Sacred Threshold that you may be guided and strengthened to take such decisions and make such plans as will enable your communities to anticipate with eagerness and receive with joy the new tasks to be offered them, tasks whose wholehearted and united accomplishment will raise the Community of the Most Great Name to a position where it may have far greater effect upon men's minds and prepare it for further thrilling and awe-inspiring achievements in the pursuit of its ultimate goal of the redemption of mankind.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice
139
Extension of Gardens at Bahjí
4 December 1973
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
139.1REJOICE ANNOUNCE FRIENDS BEAUTIFICATION DURING CONFLICT AGITATING MIDDLE

EAST FOURTH QUADRANT AREA SURROUNDING MOST HOLY SHRINE EMBRACING OLIVE GROV
SOUTHWEST PILGRIM HOUSE BAHJÍ BLESSED SHRINE AND MANSION NOW COMPLETELY
ENCIRCLED BEAUTIFUL GARDENS INSPIRED BY PATTERN HARAM-I-AQDAS CREATED BY
BELOVED GUARDIAN. PRAYING SHRINES SUPPORTERS MOST GREAT NAME EVERY LAND MAY
REDOUBLE EFFORTS PROMOTE INTERESTS PRECIOUS FAITH IN ANTICIPATION FIVE YEAR
GLOBAL PLAN SOON TO BE LAUNCHED.

Universal House of Justice

140

Acceptance of Design for the Seat of the
Universal House of Justice

7 February 1974

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

140.1JOYFULLY ANNOUNCE ACCEPTANCE EXQUISITE DESIGN CONCEIVED BY HUSAYN
AMÁNAT FOR BUILDING TO SERVE AS PERMANENT SEAT UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
MOUNT CARMEL. DECISION MADE TO PROCEED NEGOTIATE CONTRACTS CONSTRUCTION THIS
NOBLE EDIFICE SECOND THOSE BUILDINGS DESTINED ARISE AROUND ARC CONSTITUTE
ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER BAHÁ'Í WORLD.

The Universal House of Justice

1974-1979

The Five Year Plan

141

Launching of the Five Year Plan—Naw-Rúz 1974

Naw-Rúz 1974

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

141.1 A span of eighteen years separates us from the centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's Ascension and the unveiling of His Almighty Covenant. The fortunes of humanity in that period no man can foretell. We can, however, confidently predict that the Cause of God, impelled by the mighty forces of life within it, must go on from strength to strength, increasing in size and developing greater and greater powers for the accomplishment of God's purpose on earth.

141.2 The abundant evidences of Divine confirmation which have rewarded the strenuous and dedicated efforts of the Bahá'í community during the past decade are apparent throughout the earth and give incontrovertible assurance of its capacity to win the good pleasure of Bahá'u'lláh and answer every call made upon it in His service.

141.3 The Five Year Plan to which this community is now summoned is the opening campaign of these critical years. It is the third global plan embarked upon by the Army of Light in its implementation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan, that world-encompassing program disclosed in His perspicuous Tablets and described by the Guardian of the Cause of God as the Charter for the propagation of the Faith throughout the world. It was the Guardian himself, the beloved "sign of God," who, through his exposition and interpretation of the Revelation, through his discipline and education of the Bahá'í community and through a series of national plans assigned to the various units of that community, forged the Administrative Order of the Faith and made it an

instrument for the carrying out of this great Charter, and he himself designed and launched the first global plan, the unique, brilliant and spiritually glorious Ten Year Crusade. The victories of that crusade implanted the banner of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the planet and the following Nine Year Plan reinforced and extended the bastions of the Faith and raised the number of National Spiritual Assemblies—the supporting pillars of the Universal House of Justice—to one hundred and thirteen, a number increased to one hundred and fifteen by the formation at this Ridván of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Hong Kong and South East Arabia.

Major Objectives of the Plan

141.4 This Five Year Plan has three major objectives: preservation and consolidation of the victories won; a vast and widespread expansion of the Bahá'í community; development of the distinctive character of Bahá'í life particularly in the local communities. The achievement of these overall aims requires the accomplishment of particular tasks at the World Center of the Faith, and by national and local communities.

World Center Goals

141.5 At the World Center work will continue on the collation and classification of the Sacred Texts; authorized translations of three compilations of Scripture will be made and published, namely, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, prayers and extracts from the Writings of the Báb, greatly augmenting the fragments of His Utterance now available in the West, and of the Master's works comprising a wide selection from the vast range of subjects illumined by His Divine wisdom; construction will begin on the building on Mount Carmel to serve as the Seat of the Universal House of Justice and it is hoped to complete it during the Five Year Plan; further extension and beautification of the gardens and lands surrounding the Holy Places will take place; strengthening of the relationship between the Bahá'í International Community and the United Nations will continue; and efforts will be constantly made to protect the Faith from persecution and to free it from the restraints imposed by religious orthodoxy.

International Conferences

141.6 In the international sphere the erection of two Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs—one in India and one in Samoa—will be initiated; eight International Teaching Conferences will be held during the middle part of the Five Year Plan; two for the Arctic, one in Anchorage and one in Helsinki during July 1976, one in Paris in August 1976, one in Nairobi in October 1976, one in Hong Kong in November 1976, one in Auckland and one in Bahia, Brazil in January 1977 and one in Mérida, Mexico in February 1977.

National Goals

141.7 Sixteen new National Spiritual Assemblies will be formed, namely the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahamas, Burundi, Cyprus, the French Antilles, Greece, Jordan, Mali, Mauritania, the New Hebrides, Niger, Sénégal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Surinam and French Guiana, Togo, and Upper Volta; their national Hazíratu'l-Quds, Temple sites and endowments must be acquired; the dissemination of news and messages, so vital to the knowledge, encouragement and unity of the Bahá'í community, must be made efficient and

rapid, and in anticipation of a vast expansion in the number of believers, of Local Spiritual Assemblies and of localities where Bahá'ís reside a coordinated program of translating and publishing Bahá'í literature with the eventual aim of providing the Sacred Text and the teachings of the Faith to all mankind is to be developed—a program which will include the founding of six Bahá'í Publishing Trusts and the continued subvention of Bahá'í literature, 409 inter-Assembly assistance projects are scheduled and, at the outset of the Plan, 557 pioneers are called for.

Financial Self-Sufficiency

141.8 One of the distinguishing features of the Cause of God is its principle of nonacceptance of financial contributions for its own purposes from non-Bahá'ís; support of the Bahá'í Fund is a bounty reserved by Bahá'u'lláh to His declared followers. This bounty imposes full responsibility for financial support of the Faith on the believers alone, every one of whom is called upon to do his utmost to ensure that the constant and liberal outpouring of means is maintained and increased to meet the growing needs of the Cause. Many Bahá'í communities are at present dependent on outside help, and for them the aim must be to become self-supporting, confident that the Generous Lord will, as their efforts increase, eventually enable them to offer for the progress of His Faith material wealth as well as their devotion, their energy and love.

Proclamation

141.9 The proclamation of the Faith, following established plans and aiming to use on an increasing scale the facilities of mass communication must be vigorously pursued. It should be remembered that the purpose ofproclamation is to make known to all mankind the fact and general aim of the new Revelation, while teaching programs should be planned to confirm individuals from every stratum of society.

Youth

141.10 The vast reservoir of spiritual energy, zeal and idealism resident in Bahá'í youth, which so effectively contributed to the success of the Nine Year Plan, must be directed and lavishly spent for the proclamation, teaching, and consolidation of the Cause. Spiritual Assemblies are urged to provide consultation and the offer of guidance to Bahá'í youth who seek to plan their lives in such a way as to be of utmost service to the Cause of God.

Education of Children

141.11 The education of children in the teachings of the Faith must be regarded as an essential obligation of every Bahá'í parent, every local and national community and it must become a firmly established Bahá'í activity during the course of the Plan. It should include moral instruction by word and example and active participation by children in Bahá'í community life.

Distinctive Bahá'í Characteristics

141.12 This Five Year Plan must witness the development in the worldwide Bahá'í community of distinctive Bahá'í characteristics implanted in it by Bahá'u'lláh Himself. Unity of mankind is the pivotal principle of His Revelation; Bahá'í communities must therefore become renowned for their demonstration of this unity. In a world becoming daily more divided by

factionalism and group interests, the Bahá'í community must be distinguished by the concord and harmony of its relationships. The coming of age of the human race must be foreshadowed by the mature, responsible understanding of human problems and the wise administration of their affairs by these same Bahá'í communities. The practice and development of such Bahá'í characteristics are the responsibility alike of individual Bahá'ís and administrative institutions, although the greatest opportunity to foster their growth rests with the Local Spiritual Assemblies.

Development of Local Spiritual Assemblies

141.13 The divinely ordained institution of the Local Spiritual Assembly operates at the first levels of human society and is the basic administrative unit of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order. It is concerned with individuals and families whom it must constantly encourage to unite in a distinctive Bahá'í society, vitalized and guarded by the laws, ordinances and principles of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. It protects the Cause of God; it acts as the loving shepherd of the Bahá'í flock.

141.14 Strengthening and development of Local Spiritual Assemblies is a vital objective of the Five Year Plan. Success in this one goal will greatly enrich the quality of Bahá'í life, will heighten the capacity of the Faith to deal with entry by troops which is even now taking place and, above all, will demonstrate the solidarity and ever-growing distinctiveness of the Bahá'í community, thereby attracting more and more thoughtful souls to the Faith and offering a refuge to the leaderless and hapless millions of the spiritually bankrupt, moribund present order.

141.15 "These Spiritual Assemblies," wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "are aided by the Spirit of God. Their defender is 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Over them He spreadeth His Wings. What bounty is there greater than this?" Likewise, "These Spiritual Assemblies are shining lamps and heavenly gardens, from which the fragrances of holiness are diffused over all regions, and the lights of knowledge are shed abroad over all created things. From them the spirit of life streameth in every direction. They, indeed, are the potent sources of the progress of man, at all times and under all conditions."

141.16 During the Five Year Plan Local Spiritual Assemblies which are being formed for the first time are to be formed whenever there are nine or more adult believers in the relevant area; thereafter they must be elected or declared at Ridván. National Spiritual Assemblies are called upon to assign, and encourage the Local Spiritual Assemblies to adopt, goals within the overall framework of the Five Year Plan, to consult with them and to assist them to make great efforts to gradually assume their proper function and responsibilities in the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. The friends are called upon to give their wholehearted support and cooperation to the Local Spiritual Assembly, first by voting for the membership and then by energetically pursuing its plans and programs, by turning to it in time of trouble or difficulty, by praying for its success and taking delight in its rise to influence and honor. This great prize, this gift of God within each community must be cherished, nurtured, loved, assisted, obeyed and prayed for.

141.17 Such a firmly founded, busy and happy community life as is envisioned

when Local Spiritual Assemblies are truly effective, will provide a firm home foundation from which the friends may derive courage and strength and loving support in bearing the Divine Message to their fellowmen and conforming their lives to its benevolent rule.

The Hands of the Cause of God and the International Teaching Center

141.18 The deeds and programs, all these multifarious worldwide activities to which you are summoned have but one aim—the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth. At every stage of this process and at all levels of Bahá'í responsibility, whether individual, local or national, you will be encouraged, advised and assisted by the divinely ordained institution of the Hands of the Cause of God, an institution powerfully reinforced by the successful establishment of the International Teaching Center. Through the emergence of this Center the seal has been set on the accomplishment of the goal, announced nearly ten years ago, of ensuring the extension into the future of the specific functions of protection and propagation conferred upon the Hands of the Cause in the Sacred Text. Through the work of the International Teaching Center, which supervises and coordinates the work of the Boards of Counselors around the world, the love, the guidance, the assistance of the Hands, through the Boards of Counselors, their Auxiliary Board members and their assistants, permeates the entire structure of Bahá'í society.

141.19 The Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic world commonwealth have indeed assured to that growing community, the care for its welfare, for the development of its character, for its spiritual encouragement which are among the duties of their high office.

Our Opportunities

141.20 As the old order gives way to the new, the changes which must take place in human affairs are such as to stagger the imagination. This is the opportunity for the hosts of the Lord. Undismayed and undeterred by the wreckage of "long-cherished ideals and time-honored institutions," now being "swept away and relegated to the limbo of obsolescent and forgotten doctrines," the world community of Bahá'ís must surge forward eagerly, and with ever-increasing energy, to build those new, God-given institutions from which will be diffused the light of the holy principles and teachings sent down by God in this day for the salvation of all mankind.

The Universal House of Justice

142

Elucidation of Five Year Plan Goals

Naw-Rúz 1974

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

142.1 To supplement the message which is being addressed to each of your Communities giving its specific goals under the Five Year Plan, we now share with you a number of elucidations. Certain of the paragraphs which follow may apply to goals which have not been allotted to your community, but it will no doubt be of interest to you to read them in relation to the worldwide scope of the Plan.

Opening Localities

142.2 When choosing localities to be opened to the Faith and when deciding which localities should have Local Spiritual Assemblies, you should bear in mind the need to have the Bahá'í community represented broadly across the area under your jurisdiction. It is likely that some areas will show themselves particularly receptive and numerous Bahá'í communities will speedily arise there, but while fostering such growth you should not neglect those areas in which the Faith is as yet unrepresented.

The Development of Local Spiritual Assemblies

142.3 The institution of the Local Spiritual Assembly is of primary importance in the firm establishment of the Faith, and we hope that you will give particular attention to ensuring that as many as possible, and in increasing numbers, are, in the words of the beloved Guardian, "broad-based, securely grounded" and "efficiently functioning."

142.4 The time has come, we believe, when increasing numbers of Local Spiritual Assemblies should assume responsibility for helping the teaching work of groups, isolated believers, and other Spiritual Assemblies in their neighborhood. Such extension teaching goals should be assigned by the National Spiritual Assembly or one of its teaching committees, or can be spontaneously adopted by Local Spiritual Assemblies, and should be carried out within the framework of the overall teaching plans of the country. It should also be made clear that by being given such goals a Spiritual Assembly is not being given any jurisdiction over believers outside its area, still less over other Local Spiritual Assemblies, but is being called upon to collaborate with them in their work.

The Recognition of Bahá'í Marriage and Holy Days

142.5 The Five Year Plan does not include specific goals for the recognition of Bahá'í marriage certificates or of Bahá'í Holy Days because, in most countries where these goals are not already won, achievement depends upon circumstances beyond our control. Nevertheless, National Spiritual Assemblies should bear in mind the need to increase recognition of the Faith and should be alert to possibilities of winning these goals where they are as yet unattained.

National Incorporation Goals

142.6 There are a number of national incorporation goals of the Nine Year Plan towards the attainment of which considerable progress has already been made. These have not been included as goals of the Five Year Plan although they are still pending, but of course they should be pursued to completion.

Property Acquisitions

142.7 If acquisition of a National Hazíratu'l-Quds is a responsibility assigned to you under the Five Year Plan, you should treat it as an urgent matter in view of the worldwide condition of inflation and rising property costs. Such a building, which must be suitable to serve as the seat of the National Spiritual Assembly, should be purchased as economically as possible. Preferably it should be a freehold detached building, although if such is not obtainable, a semidetached house or an apartment may be considered, or even a property on a long-term lease.

142.8 A site for a future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár can be as small as 8,000

square metres in area if a larger property would be too expensive. It should, if possible, be situated within the city designated or, if this is not feasible, within 25 kilometres from the city.

142.9 A national endowment should be regarded as an investment in real estate owned by the National Spiritual Assembly. It may be anywhere in the country and can be a small, inexpensive piece of land donated by one of the friends, or else acquired out of the resources of the National Fund.

142.10 Where we have given a goal to acquire a Hazíratu'l-Quds which is to serve the entire community in a certain country, it is to be a local Hazíratu'l-Quds at the present time but should be of a size and quality to serve as an administrative center and focal point for the whole community. We envisage that some of such Hazíratu'l-Quds may, at a later date, be converted into National Hazíratu'l-Quds, and this fact should be borne in mind when acquiring them.

142.11 In the goal for local Hazíratu'l-Quds given to some communities we state that a certain number should be large enough to accommodate activities of a number of communities in the surrounding district. While not being at all in the same category as the Hazíratu'l-Quds described in the last paragraph above, these particular buildings are intended to be rather more substantial structures than the average local Hazíratu'l-Quds, and should be located in areas which form easily accessible, central gathering places for districts in which large numbers of Bahá'ís are living. In addition to serving as a local Hazíratu'l-Quds for its own town or village, such a building can be used for district gatherings, for the holding of teaching institutes, conferences, deepening classes, etc., for the larger area, and could possibly accommodate the office of the district teaching committee.

142.12 In general we intend that the local Hazíratu'l-Quds called for in the Plan should be very simple structures to serve as focal points and meeting places for the local communities. It is hoped that land for them can be provided by local believers and that they can be built, for the most part, by the local friends. In certain instances the National Spiritual Assembly may feel justified in giving a small amount of assistance from the National Fund.

142.13 The acquisition of local endowments, which is given as a specific goal to some national communities, is intended to assist in the consolidation of local communities and to foster the spirit of unity and collaboration among the believers. A local endowment can be quite a small piece of land; it can be purchased by the Local Spiritual Assembly or is more usually the gift of one or more of the believers. If the Local Spiritual Assembly is incorporated, the endowment should be registered in its name, but if it is not, the endowment can be held by one or more of the believers on behalf of the community. For example, if one of the believers gives a small piece of land he can continue to hold it in his name, but it will be known that he does so on behalf of the Local Spiritual Assembly and that the land will in time be transferred legally to the Assembly when that is possible. In some countries land is owned by the state or the tribe and only the use of the land can be assigned; in such places the goal can be considered achieved if the Local Spiritual Assembly can obtain

the use of a plot of land in its own name. In some countries, even if the land can be purchased, government regulations require that within a specific time a building must be erected on land held by religious institutions. This problem can be met in several ways: it may be possible for the Spiritual Assembly to obtain the use of, or acquire, a plot of land for agricultural purposes, thus avoiding the need to erect a building; or if the most practical course is to erect on the land a Bahá'í institution such as a local Hazíratu'l-Quds, the Assembly could, in its own records, demarcate a portion of the land to be the endowment, distinct from the portion on which the Hazíratu'l-Quds stands.

Dawn Prayers

142.14 One of the characteristics of Bahá'í society will be the gathering of the believers each day during the hours between dawn and two hours after sunrise to listen to the reading and chanting of the Holy Word. In many communities at the present time, especially in rural ones, such gatherings would fit naturally into the pattern of the friends' daily life, and where this is the case it would do much to foster the unity of the local community and deepen the friends' knowledge of the Teachings if such gatherings could be organized by the Local Spiritual Assembly on a regular basis. Attendance at these gatherings is not to be obligatory, but we hope that the friends will more and more be drawn to take part in them. This is a goal which can be attained gradually.

National Teaching Conferences

142.15 The holding of regular national teaching conferences has proved to be a valuable stimulus to the work in a number of countries, as well as a means for forging more strongly the bonds of unity among the believers. Beyond this, many national communities are presented with a special opportunity to hold a highly effective teaching conference at the time of the eight Intercontinental Conferences which are being called at the midway point of the Plan. Believers traveling to and from these Intercontinental Conferences are likely to be eager to assist the work in the countries through which they pass. Therefore, if you hold a national conference shortly after the Intercontinental Conference which is nearest to you, it may well be attended by believers from other lands who will bring with them the spirit of that Conference, and, by augmenting the numbers attending your national conference will greatly assist its effectiveness as a means of proclaiming the Faith and enthusing those believers who will have been unable to attend the Intercontinental Conferences.

Youth—Specific Periods of Service

142.16 Bahá'í youth should be encouraged to think of their studies and of their training for a trade or profession as part of their service to the Cause of God and in the context of a lifetime that will be devoted to advancing the interests of the Faith. At the same time, during their years of study, youth are often able to offer specific periods of weeks or months, or even of a year or more, during which they can devote themselves to travelteaching or to serving the Bahá'í community in other ways, such as conducting children's classes in remote villages. They should be encouraged to offer such service, which will in itself be admirable experience for the future, and the National

Assembly should instruct an appropriate committee to receive such offers and to organize their implementation so as to derive the greatest possible advantage from them.

External Affairs Work

142.17 A very important activity which has been pursued effectively in all too few countries, is the undertaking by the National Spiritual Assembly of a sustained, planned effort to foster cordial relations with prominent people and responsible government officials and to familiarize them personally with the basic tenets and the teachings of the Faith. Such an activity must be carried out with wisdom and discretion, and requires the constant attention of a responsible committee as well as periodic review by the National Spiritual Assembly itself. Where successful it can effectively forestall opposition to the Faith and smooth the way for many essential aspects of the development of the Bahá'í community.

Pioneer Goals

142.18 Enclosed with this letter you will receive a list of pioneer assistance initially called for at the opening of the Plan. Any National Spiritual Assembly which has pioneers abroad from previous plans is still responsible for helping them to remain at their posts, or for replacing them, if the services they have been rendering are still needed. However, if you have any still unfilled pioneer goals from the Nine Year Plan or from the current year, you may consider them canceled, because such unfilled goals have been taken into consideration in assigning the goals of the Five Year Plan. Best results can be obtained when pioneer projects are arranged in consultation between the sending and receiving National Spiritual Assemblies or their appropriate committees.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

143

Call for Architects for Houses of Worship in India and Western Samoa

1 April 1974

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

143.1 The Universal House of Justice will soon be considering the selection of architects for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs to be erected in India and Samoa.

143.2 Those wishing to be considered as architects for either of these Temples are invited to submit statements of their qualifications. Such submissions may include examples of work previously designed and/or executed and, if desired, any thoughts or concepts of proposed designs for the Temples may be expressed in whatever way the applicant chooses.

143.3 The design of each Temple will be developed by the architect selected in relation to the climate, environment and culture of the area where it is to be built.

143.4 The initiation of construction of these Temples is a goal of the current Five Year Plan, and consequently those interested should forward their submissions at an early date to the Universal House of Justice, Bahá'í

World Center, P. O. Box 155, Haifa 31-000, Israel.
143.5 Please convey the above message to the friends assembled at your Convention and thereafter to the community at large in whatever way you see fit.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice
144
Passing of Covenant-Breaker Charles Mason Remey
5 April 1974
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
144.1CHARLES MASON REMEY WHOSE ARROGANT ATTEMPT USURP GUARDIANSHIP AFTER PASSING SHOGHI EFFENDI LED TO HIS EXPULSION FROM RANKS FAITHFUL HAS DIED IN FLORENCE ITALY IN HUNDREDTH YEAR OF HIS LIFE BURIED WITHOUT RELIGIOUS RITES ABANDONED BY ERSTWHILE FOLLOWERS. HISTORY THIS PITIABLE DEFECTION BY ONE WHO HAD RECEIVED GREAT HONORS FROM BOTH MASTER AND GUARDIAN CONSTITUTES YET ANOT EXAMPLE FUTILITY ALL ATTEMPTS UNDERMINE IMPREGNABLE COVENANT CAUSE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.
The Universal House of Justice
145
Laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas Concerning
Men and Women
28 April 1974
To an individual Believer
Dear Bahá'í Friend,
145.1 The various questions you set forth in your letter of 18 February were noted, and we offer you the following comments.
145.2 The Laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, and indeed all the Teachings of the Faith, form a coherent whole; therefore in order to understand their implications they must be considered in their own context. For example, in the case of intestacy, as you have noted, the eldest son receives preferential treatment in certain respects but, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá has explained in one of His Tablets, he should take into consideration the needs of the other heirs.
145.3 Furthermore it should be remembered that, as Shoghi Effendi has explained (see The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, page 148),
Bahá'u'lláh has deliberately left gaps in the body of His legislative ordinances, to be filled in due course by the Universal House of Justice.
145.4 You should, therefore, when studying the Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, bear these factors in mind, and always remember Bahá'u'lláh's exhortation to "Weigh not the Book of God with such standards and sciences as are current amongst you, for the Book itself is the unerring balance established amongst men. In this most perfect balance whatsoever the peoples and kindreds of the earth possess must be weighed, while the measure of its weight should be tested according to its own standard, did ye but know it."
145.5 The equality of men and women, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá has often explained, is a fundamental principle of Bahá'u'lláh; therefore the Laws of the Aqdas should be studied in the light of this. Equality between men and

women does not, indeed physiologically it cannot, mean identity of function. In some things women excel men, in others men are better than women, while in very many things the difference in sex is of no effect at all. The differences are most apparent in family life. The capacity for motherhood has many far-reaching effects. For example, because of this, daughters receive preference in education over sons. Again, for physiological reasons, women are granted exemptions from fasting that are not applied to men.

145.6 It is apparent from the Guardian's writings that where Bahá'u'lláh has expressed a law as between a man and a woman it applies, mutatis mutandis, between a woman and a man unless the context should make this impossible. For example, the text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas forbids a man to marry his father's wife (i.e., his stepmother), and the Guardian has indicated that likewise a woman is forbidden to marry her stepfather. In the case you cite, however, that of a wife who is found by her husband not to have been a virgin, the dissolution of the marriage can be demanded only "If the marriage has been conditioned on virginity"; presumably, therefore, if the wife wishes to exercise such a right in respect to the husband, she would have to include a condition as to his virginity in the marriage contract, and this would seem to be one of those matters on which the Universal House of Justice will have to legislate in due course.

145.7 Although the Universal House of Justice has to apply and supplement the laws of the Aqdas, it has no right at all to change any law that Bahá'u'lláh has specifically revealed. As clearly stated by the Guardian, the provisions of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas "remain inviolate" during the entire Dispensation. ...

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

146

Memorandum on Establishing and Operating a Bahá'í Publishing Trust

13 May 1974

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

146.1 The goal of the Five Year Plan to establish six new Publishing Trusts is by now known to you; these new publishing agencies are to be established in Australia, the Fiji Islands, Japan, Korea, the Philippines and Malaysia.

146.2 We have just sent to these six National Spiritual Assemblies the attached Memorandum on Establishing and Operating a Bahá'í Publishing Trust, together with our Memorandum of 28 March 1971. We now enclose both these memoranda solely for your information. It is possible that some of the six National Spiritual Assemblies charged with this goal may apply to any one of you for information about the structure and operation of your own publishing agency and we feel sure you will answer any questions they may ask.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

Memorandum on Establishing and Operating a Bahá'í Publishing Trust

May 1974

146.3 1. The name “Bahá’í Publishing Trust” does not require the establishment of a Trust in the legal sense, and, in fact, more than one Bahá’í publishing agency is not called a Trust.

146.4 2. By whatever name it is called the objective is to establish a publishing agency, under the complete control and direction of the National Spiritual Assembly.

146.5 3. The difference between a Bahá’í Publishing Trust and any other Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly lies chiefly in the fact that the publishing agency does not operate on a budget from the National Spiritual Assembly but is established as a business with its own capital (whose sources are listed at 6 below), trading in the publishing and sale of Bahá’í literature and allied items, and the results of this trading remain within its own financial structure. It is a business, owned by the National Spiritual Assembly, to carry out its publishing requirements.

146.6 4. While it may first be set up as a Committee the aim should be to form some association, legally established, by which the National Spiritual Assembly may act as a publisher. This may be achieved either through the National Spiritual Assembly's own incorporation or by the establishment of a separate legal entity with the National Spiritual Assembly having full control. But in any case legal advice must be sought.

146.7 5. The Company or Trust must be a non-profit-making organization, that is to say all proceeds from its transactions must be used for such things as paying salaries and other operational expenses, royalties and interests on loans and augmenting its own capital. It is not operated for individual profit.

Capitalization

146.8 6. Since the agency is to be operated solely for Bahá’í purposes, capital funds may not be received from non-Bahá’ís, although of course the aim is to sell books to the largest possible public. Capital may be obtained from:

Grants from the National Spiritual Assembly

Gifts from individual Bahá’ís or from Spiritual Assemblies

Profit from trading

Loans from Bahá’ís or Bahá’í institutions. Such loans may be interest free or interest bearing but for every loan there must be a written contract setting out the terms of the loan, its duration, condition of repayment and all details.

Taking over any publishing assets (stock, outstanding accounts, etc.) which your National Spiritual Assembly or one of your Committees may at present have.

Production

146.9 7. Publishing is not the same as printing or manufacturing books. The publisher engages manufacturing firms to produce his books according to the publisher's design and specifications. The actual production and distribution of books need not be confined to the country in which the Publishing Trust operates. The printing and binding may be done anywhere it is deemed most feasible economically, and from the point of view of control, quality, economy

and financial arrangements.

Publishing Program

146.10 8. Bahá'í literature comprises in general the Sacred Text (works of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, 'Abdu'l-Bahá); the Guardian's writings; letters and publications of the Universal House of Justice; introductory and explanatory works; historical works; teaching pamphlets and other teaching literature. The purpose of establishing Bahá'í publishing agencies throughout the world is to make a wide range of such material available to everybody.

146.11 The specific program you must devise will therefore take into consideration the following factors:

a) What are the prevailing languages in your area of jurisdiction.

b) Will other National Spiritual Assemblies be interested in your publications.

c) What are your immediate needs for teaching and study of the Faith.

d) What literature useful to you already exists.

e) Reviewing.

Under

You will need to consider a program of translation and we refer you to our Memorandum of 28 March 1971.

If the answer is yes, you will need to consult any such National Spiritual Assembly with a view to establishing priorities and enlisting their help in translating.

Together with b) and d) should enable you to establish a publishing program by priority of need.

If you can, with reasonable ease, obtain needed literature from other Bahá'í Publishing Trusts you should obviously do so and use your own resources for publishing items not available elsewhere. Your own publishing agency should buy such material at wholesale prices and re-sell it to Local Spiritual Assemblies and individuals.

Everything published must be approved; see our Memorandum of 28 March 1971

Financial Program

146.12 9. An appeal may be made to all the believers under your jurisdiction, as well as to any National Spiritual Assemblies under 8 b) above, to support the new publishing agency. In addition to such an appeal a general invitation to the friends may be issued to take up loans, see 6 d) above.

146.13Proper accounts must be kept and a Profit and Loss Account and a Balance Sheet drawn up and audited every year.

146.14Pricing of publications. Two objectives have to be balanced against each other, namely, to make Bahá'í literature available at as low a price as possible and to build up a sound business. Retail prices will have to cover

a) production costs

b) operating expenses (see 5)

c) discounts allowed

d) a small profit to repay loans and build up capital.

146.15 Postage on books. Cost of postage or freight may either be charged directly to the customer or included in the selling price.

146.16If the National Spiritual Assembly wishes to sell a book at less than the commercial retail price, it should subsidize its Publishing Trust so that the Trust itself will incur no loss.

Management

146.17 10. The Publishing Trust should be managed by a Committee, appointed by your National Spiritual Assembly and directly responsible to you. Ideally it should have in its membership one believer capable of acting as general manager and conducting the business of the Trust on behalf of the Committee. At the outset it may not be possible to make this a full-time position or to offer a salary to the manager, but this point should be borne in mind as the business of the Trust increases and its volume of sales justifies such an expense. Perhaps it may be possible to find some competent believer who, for the present, would make the management of the Publishing Trust his or her Bahá'í service.

146.18The above are not hard and fast rules but guidelines for consideration. The important thing is to tackle at once the problem of supplying literature to support the all-important work of teaching and study of the Cause. The Sacred Text, the Guardian's writings, expository and historical works are all essential to the propagation and promotion of the Faith.

147

Laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas Not Binding in the West

9 June 1974

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iceland

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

147.1 Thank you for your letter of 4 March 1974 enclosing the inquiry from the Bahá'í Group of Ísafjörður. It has become apparent from a number of questions we have received that many believers are not clear which are those laws already binding upon the Bahá'ís in the West. We therefore feel it is timely to clarify the situation, and the simplest way is to state those laws listed in the Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas which are not at present binding upon the friends in the western world. For ease of reference we give the numbers of the sections listed.

147.2IV.A.(4)(c) The law regarding the exemption from obligatory prayer granted to women in their courses.

147.3IV.A.(10) The law concerning ablutions, with the exception of the ablutions required for the Medium Obligatory Prayer which are described in Section CLXXXII of Prayers and Meditations and are required for the recitation of that prayer.

147.4IV.A.(12) The law concerning actions to be taken in place of an Obligatory Prayer missed on account of insecure conditions.

147.5IV.B.(5)(a) The definition of travelers for the purpose of exemption from fasting. Instead of these definitions the believers in the West should observe the following guidance given by the beloved Guardian's secretary on his behalf: "travelers are

exempt
from fasting, but if they want to fast while they are traveling, they are free to do so.
You are exempt the whole period of your travel, not just the hours you are in a train
or car, etc. ..."
147.6IV.B.(5)(f) The law regarding the exemption from fasting granted to women in their courses.
147.7IV.C.(1)(i) The laws governing betrothal.
147.8IV.C.(1)(j) The law concerning the payment of a dowry by the groom to the bride on marriage.
147.9IV.C.(1)(l) and (m) The laws concerning the traveling of a husband away from his wife.
147.10IV.C.(1)(n) and (o) The laws relating to the virginity of the wife.
147.11IV.C.(2)(b) That part of the divorce law relating to fines payable to the House of Justice.
147.12IV.C.(3) The law of inheritance. This is normally covered by civil laws of intestacy at the
present time.
147.13IV.D.(1)(a) The law of pilgrimage.
147.14IV.D.(1)(b) The law of Huqúqu'lláh is not yet applied to the western friends.
147.15IV.D.(1)(d) The law of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is gradually being put into effect.
147.16IV.D.(1)(f) The Bahá'í Festivals are being celebrated by the western friends on their
anniversaries in the Gregorian calendar until such time as the Universal House of
Justice deems it desirable to pass supplementary legislation necessary for the full
implementation of the Badí' calendar.
147.17IV.D.(1)(j) The age of maturity applies only to Bahá'í religious duties as yet. On other
matters it is subject to the civil law of each country. The age of administrative
maturity in the Bahá'í community has, for the time being, been fixed at 21.
147.18IV.D.(1)(k) For the burial of the dead the only requirements now binding in the West are to
bury the body (not to cremate it), not to carry it more than a distance of one hour's
journey from the place of death, and to say the Prayer for the Dead if the deceased
is a believer over the age of 15.
147.19IV.D.(1)(p) The law of tithes.
147.20IV.D.(1)(q) The law concerning the repetition of the Greatest Name 95 times a day.
147.21IV.D.(1)(r) The law concerning the hunting of animals.

147.22IV.D.(1)(t), (u), (v) and (w) The laws relating to the finding of lost property, the disposition of
treasure trove, the disposal of objects held in trust and compensation for manslaughter are all designed for a future state of society. These matters are usually covered by the civil law of each country.
147.23IV.D.(1)(y) (xiv), (xv), (xvi) and (xvii) Arson, adultery, murder and theft are all forbidden to
Bahá'ís, but the punishments prescribed for them in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas are designed
for a future state of society. Such matters are usually covered by the civil laws of
each country.
147.24IV.D.(1)(y) (xxv), (xxx), (xxxi) and (xxxii) The laws prohibiting the use of the type of pools
which used to be found in Persian baths, the plunging of one's hand in food, the
shaving of one's head and the growth of men's hair below the lobe of the car.
147.25 All the exhortations, listed in section IVD.(3), are applicable universally at the present time insofar as it is possible for the friends to implement them; for example, the exhortation to teach one's children to chant the Holy Verses in the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár can be literally carried out only on a limited scale at the present time, but the friends should, nevertheless, teach their children the Holy Writings as far as possible.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice

148
Revision of the Functions
of Continental Pioneer Committees
22 JULY 1974
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
148.1 In view of the ever-increasing number of pioneers and traveling teachers now arising from various countries to serve the Cause of God in widely scattered lands throughout all continents the Universal House of Justice has considered ways of deriving maximum benefit from the services of these devoted believers, coordinating their efforts and anticipating the needs of the future.
148.2 The Continental Boards of Counselors will soon be approaching you about the need for pioneers and traveling teachers for the period ending Ridván 1976.
148.3 The functions of the Continental Pioneer Committees have been reviewed and developed in a way that will enable them to operate in closer collaboration with the Continental Boards of Counselors and the National Spiritual Assemblies of their areas. A copy of the statement outlining the functions of the Continental Pioneer Committees as now revised is attached for your information. As you will note, the members of these Committees will henceforth be appointed by the Universal House of Justice. Nothing in the functions now assigned to the Continental Pioneer Committees in any way

detracts from the primary responsibility of National Spiritual Assemblies to foster and promote pioneering and traveling teaching.

148.4 It is our hope and prayer that as the Five Year Plan unfolds evidences of closer ties of cooperation among the various institutions of the Faith will be increasingly witnessed in every land.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

149

The Lesser Peace and "the Calamity"

29 July 1974

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

149.1 We have received your letter of 19 June 1974 describing the preoccupation of some American believers with the date of the Lesser Peace, and with their feeling that "the calamity," as a prelude to that peace, is imminent.

149.2 It is true that 'Abdu'l-Bahá made statements linking the establishment of the unity of nations to the twentieth century. For example: "The fifth candle is the unity of nations—a unity which, in this century, will be securely established, causing all the peoples of the world to regard themselves as citizens of one common fatherland." And, in The Promised Day is Come, following a similar statement quoted from Some Answered Questions, Shoghi Effendi makes this comment: "This is the stage which the world is now approaching, the stage of world unity, which, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá assures us, will, in this century, be securely established."

149.3 There is also this statement from a letter written in 1946 to an individual believer on behalf of the beloved Guardian by his secretary: All we know is that the Lesser and the Most Great Peace will come—their exact dates we do not know. The same is true as regards the possibility of a future war; we cannot state dogmatically it will or will not take place—all we know is that mankind must suffer and be punished sufficiently to make it turn to God.

149.4 It is apparent that the disintegration of the old order is accelerating, but the friends should not permit this inevitable process to deter them from giving their undivided attention to the tasks lying immediately before them. Let them take heart from the reassuring words of Shoghi Effendi contained in the closing paragraphs of his momentous message of 5 June 1947, and concentrate on the challenging tasks of this hour.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

150

Passing of Laura Dreyfus-Barney,

Compiler of Some Answered Questions

22 August 1974

To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of France

150.1ASCENSION DISTINGUISHED MAIDSERVANT LAURA DREYFUS-BARNEY FURTHER DEPLETE SMALL BAND PROMOTERS FAITH HEROIC AGE. MEMBER FIRST HISTORIC GROUP PARIS

TAUGHT BY MAY MAXWELL SHE ACHIEVED IMMORTAL FAME THROUGH COMPILATION SOME ANSWERED QUESTIONS UNIQUE ENTIRE FIELD RELIGIOUS HISTORY. OFFERING ARDENT PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM URGE ALL COMMUNITIES FRANCE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS GRATITUDE OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT.

Universal House of Justice

151

Comments on the Bahá'í Attitude
Toward Material Suffering

19 November 1974

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Italy

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

151.1 In your letter of 11 September you say that the questions of how to help the Third World or the poor who are suffering under calamities are much discussed in your community and you wish to know whether to create a special fund for such needs, to ask for special contributions from time to time, or whether there are other ways in which you could help.

151.2 It is understandable that Bahá'ís who witness the miserable conditions under which so many human beings have to live, or who hear of a sudden disaster that has struck a certain area of the world, are moved to do something practical to ameliorate those conditions and to help their suffering fellow-mortals.

151.3 There are many ways in which help can be rendered. Every Bahá'í has the duty to acquire a trade or profession through which he will earn that wherewith he can support himself and his family; in the choice of such work he can seek those activities which are of benefit to his fellowmen and not merely those which promote his personal interests, still less those whose effects are actually harmful.

151.4 There are also the situations in which an individual Bahá'í or a Spiritual Assembly is confronted with an urgent need which neither justice nor compassion could allow to go unheeded and unhelped. How many are the stories told of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in such situations, when He would even take off a garment He was wearing and give it to a shivering man in rags.

151.5 But in our concern for such immediate obvious calls upon our succor we must not allow ourselves to forget the continuing, appalling burden of suffering under which millions of human beings are always groaning—a burden which they have borne for century upon century and which it is the mission of Bahá'u'lláh to lift at last. The principal cause of this suffering, which one can witness wherever one turns, is the corruption of human morals and the prevalence of prejudice, suspicion, hatred, untrustworthiness, selfishness and tyranny among men. It is not merely material well-being that people need. What they desperately need is to know how to live their lives—they need to know who they are, to what purpose they exist, and how they should act towards one another; and, once they know the answers to these questions they need to be helped to gradually apply these answers to everyday behavior. It is to the solution of this basic problem of mankind that the greater part of all our energy and resources should be directed. There are mighty agencies in this world, governments, foundations, institutions of many kinds with tremendous

financial resources which are working to improve the material lot of human beings. Anything we Bahá'ís could add to such resources in the way of special funds or contributions would be a negligible drop in the ocean. However, alone among men we have the divinely given remedy for the real ills of mankind; no one else is doing or can do this most important work, and if we divert our energy and our funds into fields in which others are already doing more than we can hope to do, we shall be delaying the diffusion of the Divine Message which is the most important task of all.

151.6 Because of such an attitude, and also because of our refusal to become involved in politics, Bahá'ís are often accused of holding aloof from the "real problems" of their fellowmen. But when we hear this accusation let us not forget that those who make it are usually idealistic materialists to whom material good is the only "real" good, whereas we know that the working of the material world is merely a reflection of spiritual conditions and until the spiritual conditions can be changed there can be no lasting change for the better in material affairs.

151.7 We should also remember that most people have no clear concept of the sort of world they wish to build, nor how to go about building it. Even those who are concerned to improve conditions are therefore reduced to combating every apparent evil that takes their attention. Willingness to fight against evils, whether in the form of conditions or embodied in evil men, has thus become for most people the touchstone by which they judge a person's moral worth. Bahá'ís, on the other hand, know the goal they are working towards and know what they must do, step by step, to attain it. Their whole energy is directed towards the building of the good, a good which has such a positive strength that in the face of it the multitude of evils—which are in essence negative—will fade away and be no more. To enter into the quixotic tournament of demolishing one by one the evils in the world is, to a Bahá'í, a vain waste of time and effort. His whole life is directed towards proclaiming the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, reviving the spiritual life of his fellowmen, uniting them in a divinely created World Order, and then, as the Order grows in strength and influence, he will see the power of that Message transforming the whole human society and progressively solving the problems and removing the injustices which have so long bedeviled the world.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

152

Release of a Compilation on Opposition

26 November 1974

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

152.1 Five months before he passed away, the beloved Guardian in his cable to the Bahá'í world, dated 4 June 1957, drew our attention to the fact that from both without and within the Faith evidences of "increasing hostility" and "persistent machinations" were apparent, and that they foreshadowed the "dire contest" predicted by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which was destined to "range [the] army [of] light [against the] forces [of] darkness, both secular

[and] religious."

152.2 The marvellous victories won in the name of Bahá'u'lláh, since those words were written; and the triumphs increasingly being achieved by His dedicated and ardent lovers in every land, will no doubt serve to rouse the internal and external enemies of the Faith to fresh attempts to attack the Faith and dampen the enthusiasm of its supporters, as evidenced by the book attacking Shoghi Effendi recently published in Germany by Hermann Zimmer, a Covenant-breaker, and the new book misrepresenting the Faith written by William Miller, a longtime enemy of the Faith who used to be a missionary in Persia.

152.3 We felt, therefore, that we could contribute to your devoted and incessant efforts to protect our precious Cause by placing in your hands a compilation from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and of Shoghi Effendi, clearly outlining the principle that the progressive unfoldment and onward march of the Faith of God are bound to raise up adversaries, indubitably foreshadowing the worldwide opposition which is to come, and unequivocally giving the assurance of ultimate victory. This compilation is far from complete and exhaustive, but provides a basis for the study of this all-important subject.

152.4 We leave it to your discretion, in consultation with a Hand or Hands of the Cause who may be available, as well as with the Counselors, to decide in what manner, and how much of this material should be shared with the friends. In some areas it may be best for National Spiritual Assemblies to publish these extracts in Bahá'í newsletters gradually, in others the circulation or even publication of the entire compilation, with other pertinent texts, if called for, may be desirable; in yet other areas it may be enough to draw the attention of the friends to this important subject, through courses and lectures based on these texts and given in conferences and summer schools.

152.5 We feel strongly that, whatever method is chosen to inform the friends, the time has come for them to clearly grasp the inevitability of the critical contests which lie ahead, give you their full, support in repelling with confidence and determination "the darts" which will be leveled against them by "their present enemies, as well as those whom Providence will, through His mysterious dispensations, raise up, from within or from without," and aid and enable the Faith of God to scale loftier heights, win more signal triumphs, and traverse more vital stages in its predestined course to complete victory and worldwide ascendancy.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

153

Formation of Five New National Spiritual Assemblies during Ridván 1975 and Readjustment of the Zones of African Continental Boards of Counselors

6 January 1975

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

153.1 We are glad to announce that preparations are being made for next Ridván by the friends in several countries in West Africa and one in the

Near East to form, in accordance with the provisions of the Five Year Plan, their new National Spiritual Assemblies. In Western Africa, the National Spiritual Assembly of Dahomey, Togo and Niger will divide into three separate national communities for each of the three countries which presently compose the region, with their seats in Cotonou, Lomé and Niamey respectively, while the National Spiritual Assemblies of West Africa and of Upper West Africa will each split into two units, the former into Liberia and Guinea, with its seat in Monrovia, and Sierra Leone, with its seat in Freetown, and the latter into the Gambia, with its seat in Banjul, and a new National Spiritual Assembly with the name of Upper West Africa comprising Sénégal, Mauritania, Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands, with its seat in Dakar. In the Near East the National Spiritual Assembly of Jordan will be formed, with its seat in ʻAmmán. These developments on the national level will result in a net increase next Ridván of five National Spiritual Assemblies, but in view of the inability of the friends in Indonesia to maintain national administrative activities, the total number of National Spiritual Assemblies will thus be raised throughout the world to 119.

153.2 Of the five new National Spiritual Assemblies, four will have their seats in Western Africa. Three more National Spiritual Assemblies are scheduled to be formed in this area in the course of the Plan. The mighty potentialities for growth and expansion in the western regions of Africa are such as to justify a corresponding development of the institution of the Continental Boards of Counselors in that vast and promising area. The decision has been taken, therefore, after consultation with the International Teaching Center, to break the present zone of Northwestern Africa into two separate zones of Northern and Western Africa, to each of which will be transferred parts of the Central and East African zone. The zone of Northern Africa will comprise Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Spanish Sahara. The zone of Western Africa will consist of Mauritania, Sénégal, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, the Cape Verde Islands, Guinea, Mali, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta Niger, Ghana, Togo, Dahomey, Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and São Tomé and Príncipe.

153.3 Because of the creation of a new Board for Northern Africa, the Counselors in this and the one for Western Africa must be regrouped, new appointments made to the Northern Board, and the number of Auxiliary Board members increased. We decided, therefore, that the Board for Northern Africa will consist of Mr. Muhammad Kebdani, already serving as a Counsellor, Mr. Muhammad Mustafá, and Mr. ʻImád Sábirán. The Board for Western Africa will consist of Mr. Husayn Ardikání (Trustee), Mr. Friday Ekpe, Mr. Zekrullah Kazemi, and Dr. Mihdí Samandarí (transferred from the Central and East African Board).

153.4 [Map of Africa showing the Continental Boards of Counselors' zones has been omitted.]

153.5 We are also increasing the number of Auxiliary Board members in Africa, adding 9 members to the Board for Protection, and 9 to that for Propagation, bringing the totals for that continent to 27 and 45 respectively, allocated according to the following schedule:

Auxiliary Board members
for Protection
Auxiliary Board members
for Propogation
Central and East Africa
13
19
Southern Africa
4
10
Northern Africa
2
8
Western Africa
5
11
18
36
153.6 We pray at the Holy Shrines that these decisions, which reflect the growth of our beloved Faith in Africa, will pave the way for speedier progress, wider expansion and greater consolidation, as the friends of that mighty continent forge ahead in their efforts to promote and protect the precious Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice
154
Acquisition of the House of 'Abdu'lláh Páshá in 'Akká
9 January 1975
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
154.1JOYOUSLY ANNOUNCE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION LENGTHY DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS RESULTING ACQUISITION BY PURCHASE HOLY HOUSE CENTER COVENANT 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ BIRTHPLACE BELOVED GUARDIAN SHOGHI EFFENDI. HISTORIC PROPERTY ADJACENT BARRACKS MOST GREAT PRISON COMPRISES LAND AREA APPROXIMATING SEVEN THOUSAND SQUARE METRES INCLUDES OTHER STRUCTURES WITHIN COMPLEX ASSURING PERMANENT PROTECTION HOUSE VISITED BY MANY PILGRIMS TURN CENTURY SCENE HISTORIC VISIT FIRST GROUP WESTERN PILGRIMS. PLANS BEING PREPARED RESTORATION HOLY HOUSE BEAUTIFICATION GROUNDS AS ADDITIONAL PLACE PILGRIMAGE WORLD CENTER WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES FUNDS PERMIT. OFFER HUMBLE THANKSGIVING BAHÁ'U'LLÁH THIS GREAT BLESSING.
Universal House of Justice
155
Call for Pioneers
13 January 1975
To the Bahá'ís of the World
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
155.1 The striking progress made during the first eight months of the Five Year Plan and the urgent needs of the work as disclosed in a survey made by the

International Teaching Center impel us to raise anew the call for pioneers made at Ridván, increasing the number from 557 to 933. The details of the allocations are now being sent to your National Spiritual Assemblies for immediate action.

155.2 The eager response of the friends to the initial call has already resulted in 279 pioneers settled or in process of becoming so. The remainder are urged to arise as quickly as possible before the confusion and chaos which are engulfing the old order disrupt transportation and communications and cause doors which are now open to be closed in our faces. It is our ardent hope that most, if not all, of the 933 posts will be filled by the midway point of the Five Year Plan, which coincides with the Anniversary of the Birth of the Báb, on 20 October 1976.

155.3 We renew our plea to individual believers, as well as to National and Local Spiritual Assemblies, to give generous support to the International Deputization Fund, which will not only be an essential factor in the speedy settlement of this urgently needed army of pioneers, but will also stimulate and assist the flow of traveling teachers, whose labors will provide strong reinforcement to the work of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in all parts of the world.

155.4 Our prayers for your guidance and confirmation are offered at the Sacred Threshold. May Bahá'u'lláh inspire those who arise and guide their feet in the path of His service.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

156

Acquisition of Land Adjacent to
the Guardian's Resting-Place in London

4 February 1975

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

156.1ANNOUNCE PURCHASE STRIP LAND GREAT NORTHERN LONDON CEMETERY FACING BELO GUARDIAN'S RESTING PLACE ENSURING PROTECTION SACRED PLOT. PRAYERS GRATITUDE OFFERED DIVINE THRESHOLD.

Universal House of Justice

157

The Significance of the House of 'Abdu'lláh Páshá

4 March 1975

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

157.1 Immediately after sending the cable announcing the joyful news of the acquisition of this property [the house of 'Abdu'lláh Páshá], the Universal House of Justice had the enclosed article prepared at the World Center, and it is sent for you to disseminate as you see fit.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

The House of 'Abdu'lláh Páshá

157.2 Some of the most poignant, dramatic and historically significant events of the Heroic Age of our Faith are associated with this house, which

derives its name from the Governor of ‘Akká who built it and used it as his official residence during his term of Office, from 1820 to 1832. It stands just inside the northwestern corner of the sea wall of ‘Akká in the close neighborhood of the citadel where Bahá’u’lláh was confined. The main building is L-shaped, facing south and cast on its outer prospects. The structure, though chiefly on two stories, is irregular and on the inside angle has balconies, uncovered stairways, a bathhouse and a well. The entire property comprises large courtyards and is bounded on the west, or seaward, side by a wall, which turns due east at its southern angle and continues towards the heart of ‘Akká, forming after a few yards, the wall of a narrow street; at the eastern terminus of this wall, and within the property, is an imposing house which was occupied by that Governor of ‘Akká whose incumbency coincided with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s residence in the main building, and whose northern windows permitted him to maintain a constant surveillance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s activities. Beyond this house is a small mosque. The eastern boundary of the property is a row of houses giving directly, on its western aspect, to the courtyard and offering many additional vantage points for observing the Master. A similar row of houses extends from the northeastern corner along the northern boundary until they terminate at the longitudinal wing of the main building which, at this point, projects northwards into several conjoined buildings, making a large irregular outcrop on the northern boundary. The western end of the northern boundary is a short stretch of wall completing the enclosure at the northwestern corner of the west wall. Large stables, coach houses and storerooms line the southern boundary.

157.3 In this house, fifty lunar years after the Báb's martyrdom, in January, 1899, the casket containing His sacred and precious remains was received by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who successfully concealed it until it was possible to inter it, with all honors, in its permanent resting-place in the bosom of Carmel. In this house 'Abdu’l-Bahá was confined during the period of His renewed incarceration. Shoghi Effendi, in God Passes By, testifies to the conditions of His life at that time:

157.3a Even His numerous friends and admirers refrained, during the most turbulent days of this period, from calling upon Him, for fear of being implicated and of incurring the suspicion of the authorities. On certain days and nights, when the outlook was at its darkest, the house in which He was living, and which had for many years been a focus of activity, was completely deserted. Spies, secretly and openly, kept watch around it, observing His every movement and restricting the freedom of His family.

157.3b Yet during these troublous times, and from this house, He directed the construction of the Báb's sepulchre on Mount Carmel, erected under its shadow His own house in Haifa and later the Pilgrim House, issued instructions for the restoration of the Báb's holy House in Shiraz and for the erection of the first Mashriqu’l-Adhkár of the world in the city of ‘Ishqábád. Again the Guardian is our reference for the Master's ceaseless activity at that time:

157.3c Eyewitnesses have testified that, during that agitated and perilous period of His life, they had known Him to pen, with His own hand, no less than ninety Tablets in a single day, and to pass many a night, from dusk to dawn,

alone in His bedchamber engaged in a correspondence which the pressure of His manifold responsibilities had prevented Him from attending to in the daytime.

157.4 It was in this house that His celebrated table talks were given and compiled, to be published later under the title Some Answered Questions. In this house and in the darkest hours of a period which the beloved Guardian describes as "the most dramatic period of His ministry," "in the heyday of His life and in the full tide of His power" He penned the first part of His Will and Testament, which delineates the features and lays the foundations of the Administrative Order to arise after His passing. In this house He revealed the highly significant Tablet addressed to the Báb's cousin and chief builder of the 'Ishqábád Temple, a Tablet whose import can be appreciated and grasped only as future events unfold before our eyes, and in which, as testified by Shoghi Effendi, 'Abdu'l-Bahá "in stirring terms proclaimed the immeasurable greatness of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, sounded the warnings foreshadowing the turmoil which its enemies, both far and near, would let loose upon the world, and prophesied, in moving language, the ascendancy which the torch-bearers of the Covenant would ultimately achieve over them."

157.5 During the twelve years of His residence in this house, 'Abdu'l-Bahá demonstrated the true nobility of His divine nature; overcame hatred with love; pursued without rest, against ever-mounting opposition, the direction of His Father's Cause; maintained in the face of fanaticism, jealousy and bitterness His unceasing care of the poor and sick; and overcame, with unruffled equanimity, the severest crisis of His life. The Guardian's words testify to these things:

157.5aAt His table, in those days, whenever there was a lull in the storm raging about Him, there would gather pilgrims, friends and inquirers from most of the aforementioned countries [Persia, the United States, Canada, France, England, Germany, Egypt, Iraq, Russia, India, Burma, Japan, and the Pacific Islands], representative of the Christian, the Muslim, the Jewish, the Zoroastrian, the Hindu and Buddhist Faiths. To the needy thronging His doors and filling the courtyard of His house every Friday morning, in spite of the perils that environed Him, He would distribute alms with His own hands, with a regularity and generosity that won Him the title of "Father of the Poor." Nothing in those tempestuous days could shake His confidence, nothing would be allowed to interfere with His ministrations to the destitute, the orphan, the sick, and the downtrodden, nothing could prevent Him from calling in person upon those who were either incapacitated, or ashamed to solicit His aid. ...

157.5bSo imperturbable was 'Abdu'l-Bahá's equanimity that, while rumors were being bruited about that He might be cast into the sea, or exiled to Fízán in Tripolitania, or hanged on the gallows, He, to the amazement of His friends and the amusement of His enemies, was to be seen planting trees and vines in the garden of His house, whose fruits when the storm had blown over, He would bid His faithful gardener, Ismá'íl Áqá, pluck and present to those same friends and enemies on the occasion of their visits to Him.

157.6 In this house was born the child ordained to hold the destiny of the Faith in his hands for thirty-six years and to become its "beloved

Guardian," the child named "Shoghi" by his Grandfather, who grew up under His loving and solicitous care and became the recipient of His Tablets.

157.7 When Bahá'u'lláh ascended, in 1892, the Mansion at Bahjí remained in the occupancy of the arch-breaker of the Covenant, the Master's half-brother Muhammad-'Alí, and members of that branch of Bahá'u'lláh's family. 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the members of His family, including His illustrious sister the Greatest Holy Leaf, remained in the House of 'Abbúd, which continued to be 'Abdu'l-Bahá's official residence. In the course of the fifth year after Bahá'u'lláh's passing, the marriage of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's two eldest daughters took place, and it quickly became apparent that the portion of the House of 'Abbúd available for occupation was woefully inadequate to the enlarged family. With characteristic vigor 'Abdu'l-Bahá took action and in the months preceding the birth of Shoghi Effendi arranged to rent the main building, and subsequently the subsidiary wings, of 'Abdu'lláh Páshá's house, and He established it as His official residence. Thus it came about that, in 1897, Shoghi Effendi was born in the same house (in an upper room of the wing facing south) that witnessed events of such vital importance to the Faith and the future of mankind.

157.8 The Guardian's childhood and upbringing in that house are referred to by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum in The Priceless Pearl:

157.8a It may sound disrespectful to say the Guardian was a mischievous child, but he himself told me he was the acknowledged ringleader of all the other children. Bubbling with high spirits, enthusiasm and daring, full of laughter and wit, the small boy led the way in many pranks; whenever something was afoot, behind it would be found Shoghi Effendi! This boundless energy was often a source of anxiety as he would rush madly up and down the long flight of high steps to the upper story of the house, to the consternation of the pilgrims below, waiting to meet the Master. His exuberance was irrepressible and was in the child the same force that was to make the man such an untiring and unflinching commander-in-chief of the forces of Bahá'u'lláh, leading them to victory after victory, indeed, to the spiritual conquest of the entire globe. We have a very reliable witness to this characteristic of the Guardian, 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself, Who wrote on a used envelope a short sentence to please His little grandson: "Shoghi Effendi is a wise man—but he runs about very much!"

157.8b In those days of Shoghi Effendi's childhood it was the custom to rise about dawn and spend the first hour of the day in the Master's room, where prayers were said and the family all had breakfast with Him. The children sat on the floor, their legs folded under them, their arms folded across their breasts, in great respect; when asked they would chant for 'Abdu'l-Bahá; there was no shouting or unseemly conduct. Breakfast consisted of tea, brewed on the bubbling Russian brass samovar and served in little crystal glasses, very hot and very sweet, pure wheat bread and goats' milk cheese. ...

157.9 It was to this house that that historic first group of pilgrims from the West came to see the Master in the winter of 1898-99, and in which many more from both East and West sought His presence. Some of them have left

memorable descriptions of their experiences with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and His household in that home. Ella Goodall Cooper, one of the very earliest American believers, records the following:

157.9aOne day … I had joined the ladies of the Family in the room of the Greatest Holy Leaf for early morning tea, the beloved Master was sitting in His favourite corner of the divan where, through the window on His right, He could took over the ramparts and see the blue Mediterranean beyond. He was busy writing Tablets, and the quiet peace of the room was broken only by the bubble of the samovar, where one of the young maidservants, sitting on the floor before it, was brewing the tea.

157.10 Thornton Chase, the first American believer, records in his memoir, In Galilee:

157.10aWe did not know we had reached our destination until we saw a Persian gentleman, and then another and another, step out at the entrance and smile at us. We alighted and they conducted us through the arched, red brick entrance to an open court, across it to a long flight of stone steps, broken and ancient, leading to the highest story and into a small walled court open to the sky, where was the upper chamber assigned to us, which adjoined the room of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. The buildings are all of stone, whitewashed and plastered, and it bears the aspect of a prison.

157.10bOur windows looked out over the garden and tent of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on the sea side of the house. That garden is bounded on one side by the house of the Governor, which overlooks it, and on another by the inner wall of fortification. A few feet beyond that is the outer wall upon the sea, and between these two are the guns and soldiers constantly on guard. A sentry house stands at one corner of the wall and garden, from which the sentry can see the grounds and the tent where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá meets transient visitors and the officials who often call on him. Thus all his acts outside of the house itself are visible to the Governor from his windows and to the men on guard. Perhaps that is one reason why the officials so often become his friends. No one, with humanity, justice, or mercy in his heart, could watch ‘Abdu’l-Bahá long without admiring and loving him for the beautiful qualities constantly displayed.

157.11 Mary Hanford Ford published an account of her pilgrimage to this house in Star of the West, vol. XXIV:

157.11aThe little room in which I stayed and in which the significant conversations with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá took place, was of the simplest description. The floor was covered with matting, the narrow iron bed and the iron wash stand with larger and smaller holes for bowl and pitcher were of that vermin proof description with which I had become familiar. Everything was scrupulously clean, and there was an abundant supply of sparkling water for bathing and drinking. A wide window looked over the huge town wall upon the blue Mediterranean and before this stretched a divan upon which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá sat when He came to see me.

157.12 The palpable victory which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had wrested from the persecution, intrigue, hatred, vilification even, directed against Him during His twelve years in the House of ‘Abdu’lláh Páshá, was signally apparent

when, upon His release from incarceration in 1908, He moved to His new residence in Haifa. At that time the future Guardian was a boy of eleven, but his appointment, although a carefully guarded secret, had already been made by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the part of His Will and Testament revealed in that house.

157.13 As we contemplate the extraordinary focusing of powerful forces and events upon this house, we eagerly anticipate the day when it will be restored and made ready for pilgrims, who may inhale from its atmosphere, its grounds and sacred walls, the fragrances of a glorious past.

158

A Plan for International Collaboration
in Traveling Teaching
25 March 1975

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá’í Friends,

158.1 As we approach the threshold of the second year of the Five Year Plan, it is evident that the need for traveling teachers as indicated in the message launching that Plan is acquiring greater urgency and importance.

158.2 During the past year steps have been taken to revise the functions, broaden the base and strengthen the work of the Continental Pioneer Committees and to bring them into much closer collaboration with the Continental Boards of Counselors. Already, with their assistance an army of pioneers has moved and is moving towards its objectives, and a general readiness has been evinced by the friends, particularly the youth, to serve as itinerant teachers.

158.3 The strenuous efforts being made to fill the pioneer goals by the midway point of the Plan must now be paralleled by well-considered and determined efforts to swell to a mighty river the stream of those friends who will travel to foreign lands to reinforce the efforts of those who are laboring so valiantly to expand and consolidate the widely scattered Bahá’í communities and to proclaim the Message of Bahá’u’lláh to every stratum of society.

158.4 At our request the International Teaching Center has evolved a plan, which we have warmly approved, comprising specific goals of international collaboration in the field of traveling teaching. This plan is now being sent to the Continental Boards of Counselors who will, in turn, present it to the National Spiritual Assemblies, whose task it will be to implement it. In consultation with the Counselors each National Spiritual Assembly is to work out specific proposals which it should then present to the other National Assemblies with whom it is to collaborate, so that, as soon as possible, actual projects can be worked out and set in motion, thus inaugurating a process which should rapidly gather momentum and be prosecuted with undiminished vigor in the years ahead.

158.5 The Continental Pioneer Committees should be kept closely informed of all projects so that they may know how best to reinforce the flow with those many volunteers who will undoubtedly arise outside the framework of the specific projects now to be conceived. It is our hope that, as far as possible, travel teaching projects will be self-supporting or can be assisted by the National Funds involved, but where necessary, the International

Deputization Fund is available to assist. Whenever assistance from the Deputization Fund is required, the request should be made to the Continental Pioneer Committee, giving details of the project. If the sum required is small the Committee may be able to help immediately; otherwise it will pass the request, together with its recommendation, to the Universal House of Justice for consideration.

158.6 We sincerely hope that in the forefront of the volunteers, the Bahá'í youth will arise for the sake of God and, through their driving force, their ability to endure inhospitable and arduous conditions, and their contentment with the bare necessities of life, they will offer an inspiring example to the peoples and communities they set out to serve, will exert an abiding influence on their personal lives, and will promote with distinction the vital interests of God's Cause at this crucial stage in the fortunes of the Plan.

158.7 We shall offer our ardent prayers at the Holy Shrines for the confirmation of the efforts of all those who will heroically respond to this call.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

159

Ridván Message 1975

4 April 1975

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

159.1OCCASION MOST GREAT FESTIVAL WE CONTEMPLATE WITH THANKFUL HEARTS ACHIEVEMENTS FIRST YEAR FIVE YEAR PLAN ELECTION THIS RIDVÁN FIVE NEW NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES FOUR IN AFRICA ONE IN ASIA. DESPITE WORSENING PLIGHT MORIBUND CIVILIZATION EVIDENCES GATHERING CLOUDS WIDESPREAD OPPOSITION DIVINE MESSAGE BELIEVERS THROUGHOUT WORLD FORGING AHEAD ACCOMPLISHMENT GOA THREE HUNDRED EIGHTY-SIX PIONEERS ALREADY SETTLED ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-TWO PREPARING PROCEED POSTS. NEW WORLDWIDE TRAVEL TEACHING PROGRAM DESIGNED BY INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTER NOW BEING LAUNCHED BY NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES IN CONSULTATION COUNSELORS. BELOVED HANDS CAUSE ADVANCING VANGUA ARMY LIGHT LENDING CONSTANT LOVING GUIDANCE ENCORAGEMENT PROTECTION FRIENDS LABORING DIVINE VINEYARD. WORLD CENTER FAITH RICHLY BLESSED THROUGH ACQUISITION HOLY HOUSE MASTER BIRTHPLACE SHOGHI EFFENDI WITHIN WALLS 'AKKÁ WILL EARLY WITNESS ON CONSECRATED SOIL SLOPES MOUNT CARMEL INITIATION EXCAVATION FOUNDATIONS PERMANENT SEAT UNIVERSAL HOUSE JUSTICE AND IN ITALY SIGNATURE CONTRACT MARBLE REQUIRED MAJESTIC EDIFICE. AT THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE HUMAN HISTORY THREE MAJOR OBJECTIVES PLAN AND ITS SPECIFIC GOALS PRESENT DISTINCT INSISTENT CHALLENGE TO EACH INDIVIDUAL BAHÁ'Í ADULT YOUTH CHILD TO EACH BAHÁ'Í FAMILY TO EACH LOCAL COMMUNITY AND ABOVE ALL TO EACH LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY WHOSE DEVELOPMENT IS VITAL SUCCESS FIVE YEAR PLAN AND PROGRESSIVE UNFOLDMENT DIVINELY ORDAINED BAHÁ'Í SOCIETY. MAY REMAINING THREE HUNDRED NINETY-FIVE PIONEERS SPEEDILY ARISE AND ARMY VOLUNTEERS RESPOND NEWLY LAUNCHED TRAVEL TEACHING PROGRAM. NATIONAL LOCAL ASSEMBLIES INDIVIDUA BELIEVERS URGED CONTRIBUTE UNSTINTINGLY TIME EFFORT OUTPOURING MATERIAL RESOURCES SUPPORT EVERY PHASE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN COMING YEAR. APPEAL

BELIEVERS EVERY LAND JOIN US PRAYERS SUPPLICATION BLESSED BEAUTY GUIDE SUSTAIN PROTECT HIS DEVOTED FOLLOWERS IN THEIR DEDICATED EFFORTS PURIFY THEIR SOULS RAISE HIS BANNER SERVE HIS CAUSE.

Universal House of Justice

160

Fiftieth Anniversary of the National Spiritual Assembly
of the United States

24 April 1975

To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

160.1PORTENTOUS OCCASION FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY FORMAL ESTABLISHMENT NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY BAHÁ'ÍS UNITED STATES RECALL WITH PRIDE ADMIRATION PREEMINENT STATION CONFERRED AMERICAN BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY CENTER COVENANT PREPONDERATING ROLE ALREADY ASSUMED WORLDWIDE PROMOTION FAITH GLORIOUS ACHIEVEMENTS UNMATCHED RANGE MAGNITUDE ENTIRE BAHÁ'Í WORLD PAST HALF CENTURY. CALL UPON THIS HIGHLY BLESSED DISTINGUISHED COMMUNITY CONTEMPLATE IT UNDOUBTED DUTIES PRIVILEGES PURGE ITS SOUL ALL WORLDLY ENTANGLEMENTS REDEDICA ITS ENERGIES RESOURCES IMMEDIATE TASKS ARISE SINGLE-MINDEDLY PERFORM HISTORIC MISSION RENDER SUCH SERVICES ATTAIN SUCH SACRIFICIAL HEIGHTS WORTHY BRILLIANT FOREBEARS HEROIC AGE FAITH.

Universal House of Justice

161

Safeguarding the Letters of Shoghi Effendi

14 May 1975

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í' friends,

161.1 In December 1967 the Universal House of Justice wrote to all National Spiritual Assemblies expressing the need of the World Center for letters written by the Guardian to them, or to their subsidiary institutions, as well as to the friends under their jurisdiction.

161.2 The response to this request was encouraging, but it is obvious that there are many letters which have not yet been received.

161.3 The Universal House of Justice requests you, therefore, to check again in your archives or files of correspondence with the Guardian for any further letters which have not yet been forwarded to the World Center and to appeal to the believers under your jurisdiction, calling upon those who were privileged to have received letters from the Guardian to send the text of such letters to the World Center.

161.4To assist your National Spiritual Assembly and the friends to carry out this urgent project the following points from the letter of December 1967 from the Universal House of Justice are here repeated for your consideration. Recipients of letters from the Guardian have the inherent right of deciding to keep the letters themselves, or to have them preserved for the future in their families. To assist the Universal House of Justice, however, in its efforts to study and compile the letters of the Guardian, the friends are urged to provide, for dispatch to the Holy Land, photostatic copies of their communications from the Guardian if they wish to keep the originals themselves. If they are not in a position to provide such copies, they should kindly allow

National Spiritual Assemblies to undertake this project on our behalf. Should any believer possess letters so personal and confidential that he does not wish to disclose their contents to any institution other than the Universal House of Justice, he is invited to send either the originals or copies of such letters, marked confidential, directly to the Universal House of Justice, by registered mail, with any instructions he wishes to be followed.

161.5 Will you please give this matter your early attention. The Universal House of Justice thanks you warmly for your assistance.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

162

Comments on the Progress of the Five Year Plan

25 May 1975

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

162.1 A fifth of the span allotted to the Five Year Plan has run its course and we have passed a major milestone in the destinies of that Plan. It is appropriate for every National Spiritual Assembly to pause in order to appraise its position, and that of the community which it represents and serves, and to determine its progress in relation to the goals with which it stands identified.

162.2 To help each National Spiritual Assembly in this appraisal we send you the following statement which, under various headings, outlines the impressions we have gathered and comments we are prompted to make on the prosecution of certain goals of the Plan. Although some of the items may not be directly applicable to you, you may find them of interest. Each National Spiritual Assembly should determine, in the light of the goals assigned to it, to what extent each of our observations is applicable to its work.

Teaching—Expansion and Consolidation

162.3 Teaching the Faith embraces many diverse activities, all of which are vital to success, and each of which reinforces the other. Time and again the beloved Guardian emphasized that expansion and consolidation are twin and inseparable aspects of teaching that must proceed simultaneously, yet one still hears believers discussing the virtues of one as against the other. The purpose of teaching is not complete when a person declares that he has accepted Bahá'u'lláh as the Manifestation of God for this age; the purpose of teaching is to attract human beings to the divine Message and so imbue them with its spirit that they will dedicate themselves to its service, and this world will become another world and its people another people. Viewed in this light a declaration of faith is merely a milestone along the way—albeit a very important one. Teaching may also be likened to kindling a fire, the fire of faith, in the hearts of men. If a fire burns only so long as the match is held to it, it cannot truly be said to have been kindled; to be kindled it must continue to burn of its own accord. Thereafter more fuel can be added and the flame can be fanned, but even if left alone for a period, a truly kindled fire will not be extinguished by the first breath of wind.

162.4 The aim, therefore, of all Bahá'í institutions and Bahá'í

teachers is to advance continually to new areas and strata of society, with such thoroughness that, as the spark of faith kindles the hearts of the hearers, the teaching of the believers continues until, and even after, they shoulder their responsibilities as Bahá'ís and participate in both the teaching and administrative work of the Faith.

162.5 There are now many areas in the world where thousands of people have accepted the Faith so quickly that it has been beyond the capacity of the existing Bahá'í communities to consolidate adequately these advances. The people in these areas must be progressively deepened in their understanding of the Faith, in accordance with well-laid plans, so that their communities may, as soon as possible, become sources of great strength to the work of the Faith and begin to manifest the pattern of Bahá'í life.

Reaching Remote Areas—an Immediate Challenge

162.6 At the same time there is a challenge of great urgency facing the worldwide Bahá'í community. When launching the Ten Year Crusade, Shoghi Effendi urged the believers to "carry the torch of the Faith to regions so remote, so backward, so inhospitable that neither the light of Christianity or Islam has, after the revolution of centuries, as yet penetrated." A number of such regions still exist in places like New Guinea, the heart of Africa and the Amazon Basin in South America. As the influence of civilization spreads, the age-old ways of life of the inhabitants of these regions will inevitably perish, and they will rapidly be infected with the materialistic ideas of a decadent civilization. It is our pressing duty to carry the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to such people while they are still purehearted and receptive, and through it to prepare them for the changed world which will come upon them.

Teaching Tribal Peoples and Minorities

162.7 In addition to the tribes in these remote regions of the world, there are tribes and minorities who still live in their traditional ways in the midst of other cultures. All too often such peoples are despised and ignored by the nations among whom they dwell, but we should seek them out, teach them the Cause of God, and enrich through their membership the Bahá'í communities of the lands in which they live. So important is this goal that each National Spiritual Assembly should study the requirements for teaching each of the different tribes and groups within its area, appoint a committee for this purpose—even a special committee for each tribe or minority where this is feasible and desirable—and launch a series of well-conceived, far-reaching campaigns to bring about the enrollment of these peoples within the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, and the establishment among them of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

Pioneering

162.8 Great challenges and opportunities for teaching often occur far from large well-established Bahá'í communities; this is especially true in respect of many of the tribal peoples. Pioneering and travel teaching are therefore of the greatest importance for the accomplishment of teaching plans. It is not always difficult to see what the ideal solution for any particular teaching problem may be; however, ideal solutions are seldom available, and the

Assemblies which achieve the most outstanding results are those which have developed the skill of using to their best advantage whatever means they have at their command and whatever assistance can be given to them. Pioneers, for example, all have different capacities, different skills, different problems and different responsibilities. A National Assembly may see that its most urgent need is for a financially independent married couple who can live in a remote village area to conduct regular classes for the believers there; but what it actually receives are two single middle-aged ladies who need to work to support themselves and can only get jobs in one of the large towns. Instead of despairing, a resourceful Assembly will immediately see whether the presence of either or both of these ladies in such a town would enable one or more native believers to pioneer to the village area. Even if this does not work out, it will nevertheless do all it can to assist the two pioneers to settle down and will make the utmost use of whatever services they can render, services which may well, in the long run, be of inestimable benefit to that national community.

162.9 There are several ways of pioneering, and all are entirely valid and are of great help to the teaching work. There is, first of all, the pioneer who goes to a particular country, devotes the remainder of his life to the service of the Faith in that land and finally lays his bones to rest in its soil. Secondly, there is the pioneer who goes to a post, serves valiantly there until the native Bahá'í community is strongly established, and then moves on to new fields of service. Thirdly, there are those, for example youth between the completion of their schooling and the starting of their chosen profession, who go pioneering for a specific limited period.

162.10 Ideally, of course, a pioneer should be, or become as soon as possible, financially independent of the Fund in his chosen post, not only to husband the financial resources of the Faith but because it is a Bahá'í principle that everyone should work and support himself and his family whenever possible, and there is no such profession as pioneer or teacher in the Bahá'í Faith as there are professional missionaries and clergymen in other religions. Nevertheless it must be recognized that in some posts where pioneers are desperately needed there is no possibility for them to get work. Either there is no work available in the area or else the pioneer is refused a work permit because he is a foreigner. In such cases it is essential for the Assemblies to provide financial assistance to support the pioneer for as long as is necessary.

162.11 There are a number of methods of financing pioneers in areas where work is unobtainable. Believers can be found who have independent means and are willing to pioneer to the areaand live on whatever income they have, however slender. There are those who, in accordance with Bahá'u'lláh's injunction, have been deputized by friends who are unable to go themselves. Believers may be found who are willing to go to such an area for a specific period supported by the meagre budget that the Fund can afford, with the clear understanding that at the end of that period they will return from the pioneer post and become self-supporting again; in such a way an area can be serviced with a succession of pioneers. Then there are those believers who are willing

to serve in a remote and inhospitable area, but whose age or situation makes it clear from the outset that they will not be able to become self-supporting again; when the need is great and cannot be met in any other way, an Assembly would be fully justified in supporting them, but it should realize from the outset the extent of the responsibility it is incurring for an indefinite period into the future.

162.12 Naturally these ways of financing pioneering are not mutually exclusive. A person, for example, can be partially self-supporting and assisted to only a limited degree; or a pioneer may go to an area with the intention of finding work but is unable to do so and the Assembly repeatedly extends the period of financial support until the time comes when he is no longer able to become self-supporting anywhere. In such a case the Assembly needs to watch the process very carefully so that, on the one hand, it does not incur a permanent responsibility it had not intended, and on the other, does not commit the injustice of terminating the financial support extended to a pioneer at a time when he has become unemployable, and is unable to obtain any other means of support.

Traveling Teaching

162.13 While pioneers provide a very valuable long-term reinforcement of a community and are often the only feasible means for opening new areas—and here we are speaking not only of pioneers from foreign lands but of homefront pioneers as well, the use of whom must be greatly developed in most countries—a second vital reinforcement of the work is provided by traveling teachers. As mentioned in the message sent to all believers at Ridván, a new international travel teaching program is now being launched. National Assemblies and their committees, therefore, need to develop a threefold integrated program for travel teaching. Firstly, there should be within each national community regular circuits of local traveling teachers, that is to say of believers who are members of that national community, whether native or pioneers, who are able and willing to devote time to this activity. Secondly, and integrated within these circuits, provision should be made for planned visits of traveling teachers from abroad. Thirdly, each National Assembly should establish an agency and a procedure for taking advantage of the unheralded arrival of visitors from abroad, or of sudden offers from believers on the homefront, who would be able to give valuable help in the fields of travel teaching or proclamation if properly organized. Such an agency would, of course, be responsible for evaluating the capacity of those who offer services because while an unexpected offer can often provide a very valuable teaching opportunity, it is also true to say that some Bahá'í communities have been exhausted and their work hindered by the arrival of a succession of traveling Bahá'ís who were not really suited, for lack of a language or for other reasons, to assist with teaching in the area concerned. Friends who travel spontaneously in this way can do valuable teaching themselves but should not expect the assistance of local administrative institutions if they have not arranged the trip in advance.

Correspondence Courses

162.14 Only a few National Spiritual Assemblies have been given the specific

goal of developing and conducting correspondence courses; however, those National Assemblies who have the goal of training selected believers to assist in consolidating local communities would find it worthwhile to consider how the use of correspondence courses could help in the fulfillment of this goal. For example, once the selection of trainees has been made, the first stage in their training could well be a correspondence deepening course which would ascertain the degree of interest and capacity of each trainee and also prepare him to attend a series of lectures or classes which would follow as a second stage. The entire training process could consist of several stages interspersed in this way. This combination of two methods has the advantage of helping the Assembly to ascertain at the outset which trainees have the capacity and desire to continue with the course, thus leading to a better selection and helping to ensure that the costs of holding classes and bringing trainees to them are incurred only in respect of those whose interest and capacity have been established.

162.15 Economy can be exercised by holding the deepening classes in smaller gatherings by grouping several neighboring local communities together and sending one or more teachers to the area. This might prove more economical than inviting the selected trainees to, say, the capital, and having to accommodate and feed them during the period of the course.

Teaching Conferences

162.16 Teaching conferences can have a great value for the advance of the Faith. Their aim is to strengthen the bonds of unity and fellowship among the friends, to increase their involvement in the teaching work and their interest in its progress, and to serve as magnets to attract divine confirmations. They are also rallying points for the believers, evidences of the vitality of their love for Bahá'u'lláh, and potent instruments for generating enthusiasm and spiritual drive for advancing the interests of the Faith.

162.17 Certain National Spiritual Assemblies, which are not among the majority who are already doing so, have been assigned the goal of holding at least one National Teaching Conference during each year. The purpose of this is to provide a national event of major importance in addition to the annual National Convention to stimulate the interest and reorientate the efforts of the friends, focusing their attention upon the current urgent needs of the Plan. These National Teaching Conferences should, therefore, be held some months away from Ridván, or they will lose a great part of the intended effect.

162.18 As the eight International Conferences will soon be upon us, it is important for National Assemblies to decide as soon as possible, in consultation with the Counselors, whether it would be feasible and helpful to hold a national conference soon after, or possibly immediately before, the International Conference nearest to their area. The sooner this study is made and decisions taken and announced, the greater will be the participation of the friends, locally and from abroad.

Newsletters

162.19 Although during the past year a marked improvement has been noticed in certain countries in the standard and regularity of the Bahá'í newsletters, the development of this organ of Bahá'í communication still needs great

attention in most national communities. A special committee should be appointed, on which members of the National Spiritual Assembly could well serve, with the task of making the national newsletter a powerful instrument of direct and regular contact with the friends, which will disseminate news among them, stimulate and maintain their interest in the growth of the Faith in the world and throughout the area of national jurisdiction, share with them the National Spiritual Assembly's plans, hopes and aspirations, convey to them its comments on Bahá'í developments of special significance, and cause the believers to anticipate the future with feelings of excitement and confidence. The doors of communication between the friends, the Local Spiritual Assemblies and the National Spiritual Assembly should always be open. The one means which will contribute most to the promotion of this open-door policy is the regular issue of an interesting and heartwarming newsletter. In certain countries, we are glad to see, there are in addition to the national newsletter, news bulletins issued on regional or district levels. The importance of these secondary organs of Bahá'í communication acquires added weight in areas where differences of language make the issue of bulletins in a local language of each area highly desirable, if not essential.

Literature

162.20 When each National Spiritual Assembly carefully compares the demands of the waiting public and the needs of the believers for Bahá'í literature with the current supply, it will realize how urgent is the need for it to multiply its efforts to ensure that a comprehensive range of our literature is made constantly available. The basic literature of the Faith must be translated into languages that are most suitable and in demand for the spread and development of the Faith in accordance with the goals of the Plan. In each national area the agencies for obtaining and disseminating Bahá'í literature should be greatly strengthened so that they will efficiently ensure an uninterrupted supply of the literature which is available from the various Publishing Trusts and organize its distribution throughout the area, through Local Assemblies and groups, by sale at conferences and summer schools, and directly to individuals. At the same time these agencies should ensure that the monies received from the sale of literature are kept separate from other funds of the Faith and are used for the replenishment of stocks of books and the widening of the range of literature available. National Assemblies must also give consideration to the need to cover the cost of certain literature out of the National Fund, so that it can be supplied free or sold at a price within the reach of those who urgently require it.

Radio and Television

162.21 A compilation has recently been made from the letters written on behalf of the Guardian and a copy is attached for your information. This brief compilation shows the importance that Shoghi Effendi attached to the use of radio as a means of teaching and proclaiming the Faith in countries where such activity is possible.

162.22 The Universal House of Justice has initiated a pilot project in Ecuador for the purchase and operation of a Bahá'í radio station, and at the present time this is the only one for which sufficient funds are available.

However, the actual owning of a radio station is not the only way of making use of this medium. National Spiritual Assemblies responsible for countries where Bahá'í radio programs would raise no objection from the civil authorities, should regard it as their bounden duty to explore, if they have not already done so, whatever options are open to them to utilize radio to sow the seeds of the Faith as widely as they can and to broadcast its divine teachings, as well as to assist in the consolidation of the local Bahá'í communities.

162.23 Where the use of television broadcasts is open to Bahá'í communities they should also take the utmost advantage of this opportunity.

Contact with the Authorities

162.24 The events of the past year have demonstrated clearly that the enemies of the Faith are intensifying their attacks on the precious Cause of God. The Five Year Plan calls for a planned and sustained effort, under the close supervision of each National Spiritual Assembly, to foster cordial relations with responsible government officials and prominent people. In every country where the doors of contact with those in authority are open to the friends, the National Spiritual Assembly should, as indicated in our letter of Naw-Rúz 131, appoint a special committee to be given the task of finding effective ways of informing the authorities about the Faith, of dispelling any misgivings and of removing any misapprehensions which may be deceitfully created by those who are striving to extinguish the fire of God's Faith. We cannot overemphasize the necessity of this activity and the need to use utmost tact and wisdom in pursuing it, for, not only will it facilitate the further proclamation and recognition of the Faith, but, as opposition to and misconceptions about the aims and purposes of the Bahá'ís increase, when a moment of crisis arrives the institutions of the Faith may know where to turn, whose advice and assistance to seek and how to minimize the effects of opposition.

162.25 Closely linked with the above undertaking, in countries where the Faith is not yet recognized, is the need to apply for such recognition if the laws of the country permit and if the Universal House of Justice has approved that an approach be made to the authorities on the subject. In other countries where some measure of recognition, such as the incorporation of Assemblies, has been obtained, National Spiritual Assemblies should be alert to the possibilities which are open to them to widen the scope and broaden the base of the recognition obtained for Bahá'í institutions, the Bahá'í marriage certificate and Bahá'í Holy Days. These measures will not only secure for the Faith a higher degree of legal protection, but will enhance its stature in the eyes of the authorities and the general public.

Wisdom in the Use of Bahá'í Funds

162.26 The Five Year Plan emphasizes the obligation of the friends, in view of the growing needs of the Faith to ensure that a generous outpouring of contributions is offered in support of Bahá'í Funds, and encourages Bahá'í communities at present dependent on outside help to aim at becoming self-supporting. While all National Spiritual Assemblies have the obligation to administer Bahá'í funds wisely and judiciously, those National Spiritual Assemblies which depend to a large extent on budgetary assistance from the World Center have an even greater responsibility, so to speak, to carefully

supervise expenditures. The more rigorous the exercise of economy on the part of National Spiritual Assemblies, the sooner will the body of the friends be encouraged to feel financial responsibility toward the progress of the Faith in their areas, to place greater reliance upon the wise administration of the National Spiritual Assembly, and to offer their resources, however modest they may be, for the furthering of its plans and activities.

162.27 National Spiritual Assemblies must uphold economy not only because the funds at their disposal are limited but, as experience has repeatedly shown, because lack of proper control and supervision in the expenditure of these funds is both an unfair temptation to the untrustworthy and a test to the body of the believers, causing them to become disenchanted with Bahá'í administration and weakening their resolve to fulfill their sacred obligation of contributing to the Fund.

162.28 In the attitudes seen at the National Office, in the appropriations made to committees and other agencies of the National Assembly, in any budgetary assistance given to pioneers and traveling teachers, in the holding of conferences and deepening courses, and in all aspects of the work of the Cause for which the National Assembly is responsible, supervision, careful planning and lack of extravagance should be observed and be seen to be upheld.

Local Spiritual Assemblies

162.29 It is becoming increasingly understood by the friends why the Five Year Plan places such great emphasis upon the firmness of the foundation and the efficiency of the operation of the Local Spiritual Assemblies. This is very heartening, for upon the degree to which the members of these Assemblies grasp the true significance of the divine institution on which they serve, arise selflessly to fulfill their prescribed and sacred duties, and persevere in their endeavors, depends to a large extent the healthy growth of the worldwide community of the Most Great Name, the force of its outward thrust, and the strength of its supporting roots.

162.30 We long to see every Local Spiritual Assembly either spontaneously adopt its own goals or warmly welcome those it has been or will be given by its National Spiritual Assembly, swell the number of the adherents who compose its local community and, guided by the general policy outlined by its National Spiritual Assembly, proclaim the Faith more effectively, energetically pursue its extension teaching and consolidation goals, arrange the observances of the Holy Days, regularly hold its Nineteen Day Feasts and its sessions for deepening, initiate and maintain community projects, and encourage the participation of every member of its community in giving to the Fund and undertaking teaching activities and administrative services, so as to make each locality a stronghold of the Faith and a torchbearer of the Covenant.

162.31 We are confident that the institution of the Boards of Counselors will tend its vital support and, through the Counselors' own contacts with the friends, through their Auxiliary Boards and their assistants, will nourish the roots of each local community, enrich and cultivate the soil of knowledge of the teachings and irrigate it with the living waters of love for Bahá'u'lláh. Thus will the saplings grow into mighty trees, and the trees bear their golden fruit.

Women

162.32 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has pointed out that “Among the miracles which distinguish this sacred dispensation is this, that women have evinced a greater boldness than men when enlisted in the ranks of the Faith.” Shoghi Effendi has further stated that this “boldness” must, in the course of time, “be more convincingly demonstrated, and win for the beloved Cause victories more stirring than any it has as yet achieved.” Although obviously the entire Bahá’í world is committed to encouraging and stimulating the vital role of women in the Bahá’í community as well as in society at large, the Five Year Plan calls specifically on eighty National Spiritual Assemblies to organize Bahá’í activities for women. In the course of the current year which has been designated “International Women's Year” as a worldwide activity of the United Nations, the Bahá’ís, particularly in these eighty national communities, should initiate and implement programs which will stimulate and promote the full and equal participation of women in all aspects of Bahá’í community life, so that through their accomplishments the friends will demonstrate the distinction of the Cause of God in this field of human endeavor.

Youth

162.33 It is our hope that in the international travel teaching program now being launched the youth will assume a major role by devoting time during their vacations, and particularly during the long vacation at the end of the academic year, to the promotion of the teaching work in all its aspects, not only within their own national communities but farther afield. Some youth may have financial resources of their own, others may be able and willing to work and save the funds necessary for such projects, still others may have the financial backing of their parents, relatives or friends. In other cases the Bahá’í funds may be able to supplement whatever resources the prospective traveling teacher may be able to supply.

162.34 The endurance of youth under arduous conditions, their vitality and vigor, and their ability to adapt themselves to local situations, to meet new challenges, and to impart their warmth and enthusiasm to those they visit, combined with the standard of conduct upheld by Bahá’í youth, make them potent instruments for the execution of the contemplated projects. Indeed, through these distinctive qualities they can become the spearhead of any enterprise and the driving force of any undertaking in which they participate, whether local or national. Our expectant eyes are fixed on Bahá’í youth!

Children

162.35 How often have well-organized Bahá’í children's classes given parents, even those who are not Bahá’ís, the incentive to learn more and study more deeply the Teachings of the Faith! How often have the children, through their songs and recitation of prayers during Feasts and at other gatherings of the friends, added lustre and inspiration to the program and created a true sense of belonging to the community in the hearts of those present! How many are the children who have grown into active and enkindled youth, and later into wholly dedicated adults, energetically supporting the work of the Cause and advancing its vital interests!

162.36 Certain National Spiritual Assemblies have been given the specific goal of organizing children's activities, and many of these Assemblies have been assigned assistance in the form of at least one helper who will have received some training in the education of Bahá'í children. The National Assemblies to receive such helpers, however, should not await their arrival before initiating activities. Through the services of a committee chosen from among those interested in this area of service, simple lessons could be improvised, suitable extracts from the Writings and Prayers chosen for the children to study and memorize, and local talent called upon to carry out this vital activity which will assuredly exert a far-reaching influence on the well-being and strength of each community.

Dawn Prayers

162.37 We have been watching with profound interest the manner in which the goal of encouraging the friends to meet for dawn prayers is being carried out. In some rural areas this has become already an established practice of the friends and indeed a source of blessing and benefit to them as they pursue their activities during the day, as well as increasing the consciousness of community solidarity. In other areas, the friends have found that, because of the distances involved, better results are obtained by meeting for prayer in smaller groups. In yet other areas, as a first step, plans have been made to meet for dawn prayers once a week.

162.38 May the Blessed Beauty sustain you bountifully as you prepare yourselves to discharge the commitments and surmount the challenges of the year which has just begun.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

Use of Radio and Television in Teaching

(Extracts from letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi)

162.39In regard to your wish of broadcasting the Message, Shoghi Effendi would advise you to consult with the Spiritual Assembly as to whether such an action meets their approval, and if so to ask their assistance and help for finding the best means through which to carry out your plan. The idea of a wireless station is rather ambitious and requires much financial expenditure. If, however, you find it feasible and within your financial capacity you should not hesitate to do so, inasmuch as this will enable you to spread the Cause in a much easier and more efficient manner.

(13 August 1933 to an individual believer)

162.40Your suggestion regarding the installation of a radio station in the Temple is truly splendid. But it remains to be seen whether the National Spiritual Assembly finds it financially feasible to undertake such a project, which is, beyond doubt, a very costly enterprise. Whatever the expenditure involved in this project, there is no reason why the believers should not start now considering seriously the possibility of such a plan, which, when carried out and perfected, can lend an unprecedented impetus to the expansion of the teaching work throughout America.

162.41It is for the National Spiritual Assembly, however, to take the final decision in this matter, and to determine whether the national fund of the

Cause is at present sufficiently strong to permit them to install a radio station in the Temple.

162.42The Guardian feels, nevertheless, confident that this plan will receive the careful consideration of the National Spiritual Assembly members, and hopes that, if feasible, they will take some definite action in this matter.

(31 January 1937 to an individual believer)

162.43He read with interest the various suggestions you made to the National Spiritual Assembly, and feels they are fundamentally sound, especially the wider use of the radio. Unfortunately at the present time anything that would make a fresh demand on the financial resources of the Cause in America—such as a Bahá'í-owned broadcasting station—is out of the question, as the friends are finding it difficult to meet the great needs of the teaching and Temple Funds. However the idea should, he feels, be kept in mind for future realization.

(14 October 1942 to an individual believer)

162.44In connection with the radio work ... he would suggest that the main consideration is to bring to the attention of the public the fact that the Faith exists, and its teachings. Every kind of broadcast, whether of passages from the Writings, or on topical subjects, or lectures, should be used. The people need to hear the word "Bahá'í" so that they can, if receptive, respond and seek the Cause out. The primary duty of the friends everywhere in the world is to let the people know such a Revelation is in existence; their next duty is to teach it.

(24 July 1943 to an individual believer)

162.45He feels it would be excellent if the Cause could be introduced more to the people through the medium of radio, as it reaches the masses, especially those who do not take an interest in lectures or attend any type of meeting.

(7 March 1945 to an individual believer)

162.46The matter of obtaining free time on the radio is one which the Radio Committee and the National Spiritual Assembly must decide upon: but the principle is that every effort should be made to present the teachings over the air as often as possible as long as the manner in which it is done is compatible with the dignity of our beloved Faith.

(15 August 1945 to an individual believer)

162.47He was sorry to learn through your cable that the project for a Bahá'í radio station can not be carried out at present; he considers that such a station would be a very great asset to the Cause, not only as a teaching medium and a wonderful form of publicity, but also as an enhancement of its prestige. He feels your Assembly should not drop the matter, but go on investigating ways to make such a project materialize as soon as possible.

(20 March 1946 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada)

162.48He hopes that a Bahá'í radio station will prove feasible during the coming years, as he considers it of great importance.

(4 May 1946 to the Radio Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada)

162.49 The Bahá'ís should not always be the last to take up new and

obviously excellent methods, but rather the first, as this agrees with the dynamic nature of the Faith which is not only progressive, but holds within itself the seeds of an entirely new culture and civilization.
(5 May 1946 to an individual believer)
162.50The Guardian approves in principle of a radio station, and sees no objection to its being in the Temple; but he considers the cost you quote too much of a burden at the present time for the Fund to bear, in view of the multiple expenses of the new Seven Year Plan. If there is any way it can be done for a price you feel the Fund could pay, and which would be more reasonable, he approves of your doing it. In any case the National Spiritual Assembly should strongly press for recognition as a Religious Body, and claim full rights to be represented on the air on an equal footing with other established Churches.
(20 July 1946 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada)
162.51He approves of your desire to teach the principles of the Faith through radio. But he urges you to do all you can to always, however small the reference you are able to make to it may be, clearly identify or associate what you are giving out with Bahá'u'lláh. The time is too short now for us Bahá'ís to be able to first educate humanity and then tell it that the Source is this new World Faith. For their own spiritual protection people must hear of the name Bahá'í—then, if they turn blindly away, they cannot excuse themselves by saying they never even knew it existed! For dark days seem still ahead of the world, and outside of this Divine Refuge the people will not, we firmly believe, find inner conviction, peace and security. So they have a right to at least hear of the Cause as such!
(24 April 1949 to an individual believer)
163
Representation of the Universal House of Justice by
Hands of the Cause of God at International Conferences
27 May 1975
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
International Teaching Conferences
1976-1977
163.1 We joyfully announce that the following Hands of the Cause of God have been named as our representatives to the International Conferences:
Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih KhánumParis, France 3-6 August 1976
Ugo GiacheryHelsinki, Finland 6-8 July 1976
'Alí-Akbar FurútanHong Kong 5-8 November 1976
Paul HaneyMérida, Mexico 4-6 February 1977
Enoch OlingaBahia, Brazil 28-30 January 1977
William SearsNairobi, Kenya 15-17 October 1976
Collis FeatherstoneAnchorage, Alaska 23-25 July 1976
Abu'l-Qásim FaiziAuckland, New Zealand 19-22 January 1977
With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice
164
Significance of the Seat of
the Universal House of Justice
5 June 1975
To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the World
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
164.1 As the Five Year Plan gathers momentum in all parts of the world, with the followers of the Blessed Perfection firmly embarked on the course that will lead to victory, the time has come for us to contemplate, in preparation for its imminent initiation, the project which will rank as the greatest single undertaking of that Plan, the construction of a befitting Seat for the Universal House of Justice in the heart of God's Holy Mountain.
164.2 Nearly thirty-six years ago, after overcoming a multitude of difficulties, the beloved Guardian succeeded in transferring to Mount Carmel the sacred remains of the Purest Branch and Navváb, interring them in the immediate neighborhood of the resting-place of the Greatest Holy Leaf, and alluded, in these words, to the "capital institutional significance" that these events constituted in the unfoldment of the World Center of the Faith:
164.2aFor it must be clearly understood, nor can it be sufficiently emphasized, that the conjunction of the resting-place of the Greatest Holy Leaf with those of her brother and mother incalculably reinforces the spiritual potencies of that consecrated Spot which, under the wings of the Báb's overshadowing Sepulchre, and in the vicinity of the future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár which will be reared on its flank, is destined to evolve into the focal center of those world-shaking, world-embracing, world-directing administrative institutions, ordained by Bahá'u'lláh and anticipated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and which are to function in consonance with the principles that govern the twin institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice. Then, and then only, will this momentous prophecy which illuminates the concluding passages of the Tablet of Carmel be fulfilled: "Erelong will God sail His Ark upon thee (Carmel), and will manifest the people of Bahá who have been mentioned in the Book of Names."
164.2b To attempt to visualize, even in its barest outline, the glory that must envelop these institutions, to essay even a tentative and partial description of their character or the manner of their operation, or to trace however inadequately the course of events leading to their rise and eventual establishment is far beyond my own capacity and power. Suffice it to say that at this troubled stage in world history the association of these three incomparably precious souls who, next to the three Central Figures of our Faith, tower in rank above the vast multitude of the heroes, Letters, martyrs, hands, teachers and administrators of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, in such a potentially powerful spiritual and administrative Center, is in itself an event which will release forces that are bound to hasten the emergence in a land which, geographically, spiritually and administratively, constitutes the heart of the entire planet, of some of the brightest gems of that World Order now shaping in the womb of this, travailing age.

164.3 The first of the majestic edifices constituting this mighty Center, was the building for the International Archives of the Faith which was completed in the summer of 1957 as one of the last major achievements of Shoghi Effendi's Guardianship and which set the style for the remaining structures which, as described by him, were to be raised in the course of time in the form of a far-flung arc on the slope of Mount Carmel. In the eighteen years since that achievement, the community of the Most Great Name has grown rapidly in size and influence: from twenty-six National Spiritual Assemblies to one hundred and nineteen, from some one thousand to seventeen thousand Local Spiritual Assemblies, and from four thousand five hundred localities to over seventy thousand, accompanied by a corresponding increase in the volume of the work carried on at the World Center of the Faith and in the complexity of its institutions. It is now both necessary and possible to initiate construction of a building that will not only serve the practical needs of a steadily consolidating administrative center but will, for centuries to come, stand as a visible expression of the majesty of the divinely ordained institutions of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

164.4 Faced, like the Archives Building, with stone from Italy, and surrounded by a stately colonnade of sixty Corinthian columns,the Seat for the Universal House of Justice will contain, in addition to the council chamber of the House of Justice, a library, a concourse for the reception of pilgrims and dignitaries, storage vaults with air purification for the preservation of original Tablets and other precious documents, accommodation for the secretariat and the many ancillary services that will be required. Conceived in a style of enduring beauty and majesty, and faced with stone that will weather the centuries, the building in its interior arrangements will be very simple and capable of adaptation in the generations ahead to whatever technological advances will be made by the rapid growth of human knowledge.

164.5 The erection of this building which, comprising five and a half stories, far surpasses in size and complexity any building at present in existence at the World Center presents a major challenge to the Bahá'í community, whose resources are already all too meagre in relation to the great tasks that lie before it. But the spirit of sacrifice has been the hallmark of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh of every race and clime and as they unite to raise this second of the great edifices of the Administrative Center of their Faith they will rejoice at having the inestimable privilege of taking part in a "vast and irresistible process" which Shoghi Effendi stated is "unexampled in the spiritual history of mankind," a process "which will synchronize with two no less significant developments—the establishment of the Lesser Peace and the evolution of Bahá'í national and local institutions—the one outside and the other within the Bahá'í world—will attain its final consummation, in the Golden Age of the Faith, through the raising of the standard of the Most Great Peace, and the emergence, in the plenitude of its power and glory, of the focal Center of the agencies constituting the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh."

The Universal House of Justice

Excavation of the Site of the Seat of the
Universal House of Justice
17 June 1975
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
165.1JOYFULLY ANNOUNCE COMMENCEMENT EXCAVATION SITE UNIVERSAL HOUSE JUSTICE BUILDING ARC MOUNT CARMEL CONTRACT ENTAILS REMOVAL FORTY THOUSAND CUBIC MET ROCK AND EARTH AT COST APPROXIMATELY TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS. INVITE AI BELIEVERS CONTRIBUTE UNSTINTINGLY BUILDING FUND ENSURE UNINTERRUPTED PROGRESS HISTORIC UNDERTAKING.
The Universal House of Justice
166
Laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas Concerning Men and
Women; Membership on the Universal House of Justice
24 July 1975
To an individual Bahá'í
Dear Bahá'í Friend,
166.1 Your letter of 16 March 1975 has been received and we have studied the various questions arising from your study of the Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. ...
166.2 Concerning your questions about the equality of men and women, this, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá has often explained, is a fundamental principle of Bahá'u'lláh; therefore the Laws of the Aqdas should be studied in the light of it. Equality between men and women does not, indeed physiologically it cannot, mean identity of functions. In some things women excel men, for others men are better fitted than women, while in very many things the difference of sex is of no effect at all. The differences of function are most apparent in family life. The capacity for motherhood has many far-reaching implications which are recognized in Bahá'í Law. For example, when it is not possible to educate all one's children, daughters receive preference over sons, as mothers are the first educators of the next generation. Again, for physiological reasons, women are granted certain exemptions from fasting that are not applicable to men.
166.3 You mention the provision in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas regarding inheritance, in which the eldest son receives preferential treatment. As you no doubt know, the duty of making a will is enjoined upon all Bahá'ís, and in such a will a believer is free to bequeath his or her property in whatever way he or she wishes (see note 25 on page 60 of the Synopsis and Codification). Every system of law, however, needs to make provision for the disposal of a person's property if he or she dies without having made a will, and it is in cases of intestacy that the specific provisions stated in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas are applied. These provisions give expression to the law of primogeniture, which, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá has stated, has invariably been upheld by the Law of God. In a Tablet to a follower of the Faith in Persia He wrote: "In all the Divine Dispensations the eldest son hath been given extraordinary distinctions. Even the station of prophethood hath been his birthright." With the distinctions given to the eldest son, however, go concomitant duties. For example, with respect to the law of inheritance 'Abdu'l-Bahá has

explained in one of His Tablets that the eldest son has the responsibility to take into consideration the needs of the other heirs. Similar considerations no doubt apply to the provisions that, in intestacy, limit the shares due to half-brothers and half-sisters of the deceased on his or her mother's side; they will, of course, be due to receive inheritance from their own father's estate.

166.4 Your statement that “Gifts to a wife are included in the man's property to be given away after his death” is incorrect. It is clear from the passage in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas that certain things that a husband buys for his wife are intended to be for the general household and certain are intended to be the wife's personal property. These latter, that is to say the wife's used clothing and gifts which have been made to her, are not included in the husband's property.

166.5 The husband's duty to send his wife home if differences arise between them while traveling is a part of the law of divorce, and relates to the husband's obligation to support his wife during the year of waiting. The Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas reads as follows (at section (g) on pages 42 and 43):

166.5aShould differences arise between husband and wife while traveling, he is required to send her home, or entrust her to a dependable person, who will escort her there, paying her journey and her full year's expenses.

166.6 You have also asked for an explanation of why, in view of the Bahá’í principle of equality of men and women, women are not allowed to serve on the Universal House of Justice. We share with you the following passages about this subject, taken from letters written on behalf of the beloved Guardian to a National Spiritual Assembly and to an individual believer.

166.6aAs regards the membership of the International House of Justice, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá states in a Tablet that it is confined to men, and that the wisdom of it will be revealed as manifest as the sun in the future. In any case the believers should know that, as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Himself has explicitly stated that sexes are equal except in some cases, the exclusion of women from the International House of Justice should not be surprising. From the fact that there is no equality of functions between the sexes one should not, however, infer that either sex is inherently superior or inferior to the other, or that they are unequal in their rights.—14 December 1940

166.6bRegarding your question, the Master said the wisdom of having no women on the International House of Justice would become manifest in the future. We have no other indication than this.—17 September 1952

166.7 We must always remember Bahá’u’lláh’s exhortation, which is quoted on page 22 of the Synopsis and Codification: “Weigh not the Book of God with such standards and sciences as are current amongst you, for the Book itself is the unerring balance established amongst men. In this most perfect balance whatsoever the peoples and kindreds of the earth possess must be weighed, while the measure of its weight should be tested according to its own standard, did ye but know it.”

166.8 It is hoped that the foregoing will be helpful to your own

understanding of the matters about which you have asked.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice
167
Release of a Compilation of Prayers and Tablets
for Children and Youth
25 September 1975
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
167.1 We are very happy to send you the enclosed selection of prayers revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l- Bahá for children, together with some Tablets of the Master intended for children and youth, translated into English.
167.2 You may use this translation as you wish, adding from it to the prayer books you have already published, using it as a basis of prayer books or other literature published specially for children, or sharing these precious words with the friends in any other manner you deem wise and useful. You are, of course, at liberty to translate these prayers and Tablets into other languages, and we hope that this will be done.
167.3 The raising of children in the Faith of God and the spiritualization of their lives from their earliest years is of prime importance in the life of the Bahá'í community, and the firm establishment of activities to promote these aims is one of the vital goals of the Five Year Plan.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice
168
Release of a Compilation on Bahá'í Meetings
and the Nineteen Day Feast
30 November 1975
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
168.1 The Research Department has recently prepared two compilations from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the letters of Shoghi Effendi on the subject of "Bahá'í Meetings" and "The Nineteen Day Feast," and copies are sent to you herewith.
168.2 The Universal House of Justice leaves it to your discretion to decide in which manner these texts may be shared with the friends under your jurisdiction.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
169
Naw-Rúz Message 1976
18 March 1976
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
169.1ANNOUNCE DELEGATES ASSEMBLED NATIONAL CONVENTIONS GLAD TIDINGS COMPLETI
EXCAVATION MOUNT CARMEL PREPARATORY RAISING MAJESTIC CENTER LEGISLATION GOD'S
FAITH THAT SACRED SPOT, SIGNATURE ITALY FIVE AND HALF MILLION DOLLAR CONTRACT

FOR SUPPLYING OVER TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED CUBIC METRES PENTELIKON MARBLE FROM GREECE AND FASHIONING THEREFROM THE COLUMNS FACINGS ORNAMENTATION BEFITTING MONUMENTAL BUILDING. DEEPLY MOVED ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE BELIEVERS ALL PARTS WORLD THIS CHALLENGING GLORIOUS TASK. DEVELOPMENTS WORLD CENTER PARALLELED FURTHER UNFOLDMENT ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE CONTINENTAL NATIONA LEVELS THROUGH RAISING NUMBER CONTINENTAL COUNSELORS TO SIXTY-ONE BY APPOINTMENT THELMA KHELGHATI WESTERN AFRICA, WILLIAM MASEHLA SOUTHERN AFRICA BURHÁNI'D-DÍN AFSHÍN SOUTH CENTRAL ASIA, HIDEYA SUZUKI NORTHEASTERN ASIA, OWEN BATTRICK AUSTRALASIA AND ADIB TAHERZADEH EUROPE, AUTHORIZATION BOARDS COUNSELORS APPOINT NINETY MORE MEMBERS AUXILIARY BOARDS, AND CALL FOR ELECTIO AT RIDVÁN 1977 OF SEVEN NEW NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES: TWO IN AFRICA, MALI WITH ITS SEAT IN BAMAKO AND UPPER VOLTA WITH ITS SEAT IN OUAGADOUGOU, TWO IN THE AMERICAS, THE FRENCH ANTILLES WITH ITS SEAT IN POINT-À-PITRE AND SURINAM AND FRENCH GUIANA WITH ITS SEAT IN PARAMARIBO, ONE IN EUROPE, GREECE WITH ITS SEAT IN ATHENS, AND TWO IN THE PACIFIC, THE NEW HEBRIDES WITH ITS SEAT IN PORT VILA AND THE MARSHALL ISLANDS WITH ITS SEAT IN MAJURO, THE LATTER BEING SUPPLEMENTARY ACHIEVEMENT OF PLAN. NUMBER NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES THUS RAISED ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-FOUR FOLLOWING DISSOLUTION ACCOUNT LOCAL RESTRICTIONS NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES EQUATORIAL GUINEA NEPAL. OF NINE HUNDRED FIFTY-THREE PIONEERS CALLED FOR SPECIFIC POSTS FOUR HUNDRED NINETY-TWO ALREADY SETTLED. ALSO FOUR HUNDRED SEVENTY-SEVEN OTHER PIONEERS PROCEEDED GOAL COUNTRIES. GREAT OUTFLOW INTERNATIONAL TRAVELING TEACHERS RECORDED. MOVED P TRIBUTE INDEFATIGABLE SERVICES HANDS CAUSE GOD PAST YEAR IN PROMOTING ABOVE SUCCESSES AND IN FIELDS TEACHING PROTECTION PRESERVATION PROCLAMATION AND LITERATURE FAITH AS WELL AS SIGNAL SERVICES INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTER CONSTITUTING GREAT ACCESSION STRENGTH WORLD CENTER RELIEF BURDENS RESTING UNIVERSAL HOUSE JUSTICE. MIDDLE YEAR FIVE YEAR PLAN NOW OPENING WILL WITNESS GATHERING FOLLOWERS BAHÁ'U'LLÁH EIGHT INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CONFERENCES DESIGNED GENERATE TREMENDOUS IMPETUS PROGRESS PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENT WHOSE GO NOW LAGGING SERIOUSLY BEHIND. MOST PRESSING NEED FAITH THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE ITS MISSION REDEEM MANKIND IS FOR EVERY BELIEVER ALL ASSEMBLIES NATIONAL LOCAL CONCENTRATE ATTAINMENT GOALS PLACED BEFORE BAHÁ'Í WORLD, PROMOTE PROCESS ENTRY BY TROOPS, ACHIEVE VAST INCREASE SIZE COMMUNITY, INCREASE NUMBER STEADFAST SELF-SACRIFICING BELIEVERS DEDICATED CONFORM EVERY ASPECT THEIR LIVES HIGH STANDARDS SET SACRED TEXTS. THE FIELD IS VAST THE TIME SHORT THE LABORERS LAMENTABLY FEW BUT ON THE EFFORTS WE FOLLOWERS OF THE BLESSED BEAUTY NOW EXE ON THE DEGREE TO WHICH WE SUCCESSFULLY AND SPEEDILY PROCLAIM AND TEACH HIS MESSAGE TO OUR FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS, DEPENDS IN GREAT MEASURE THE COURSE OF HUMAN HISTORY IN THE DECADES IMMEDIATELY AHEAD.

The Universal House of Justice

170

Appointments to Continental Boards of Counselors
and Auxiliary Boards

24 March 1976

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

170.1 As you will have seen in the Convention message, the Universal House

of Justice has appointed six new Counselors and has authorized the appointment of ninety more Auxiliary Board members.

170.2 On the instruction of the House of Justice we now enclose for your information a complete list of the members of the Continental Boards of Counselors following the above appointments, and a list of the Auxiliary Boards showing the increases.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

170.3 Membership of the Continental Boards of Counselors

March 1976

Africa

Northern Africa Muhammad Kebdani, Muhammad Mustafá, 'Imád Sábirán

Western Africa Husayn Ardikání, Friday Ekpe, Zekrullah Kazemi, Thelma Khelghati, Mihdí Samandarí

Central & East Africa Hushang Ahdieh, Oloro Epyeru, Kolonario Oule, Isobel Sabri, Peter Vuyiya.

Southern Africa Seewoosumbur-Jeehoba Appa, Shidan Fat'he-Aazam, William Masehla, Bahíyyih Winckler

Western Hemisphere

North America Lloyd Gardner, Sarah Pereira, Velma Sherrill, Edna True

Central America Carmen de Burafato, Rowland Estall, Artemus Lamb, Paul Lucas, Alfred Osborne

South America Leonora Armstrong, Athos Costas, Mas'úd Khamsí, Peter McLaren, Raúl Pavón, Donald Witzel

Asia

Western Asia Iraj Ayman, Masih Farhangí, Hádí Rahmání, Manúchihr Salmánpúr

South Central Asia Burháni'd-Dín Afshín, Shirin Boman, Salisa Kermani, Dipchand Khianra, Zena Sorabjee

Northeastern Asia Richard Benson, Elena Marsella, Rúhu'lláh Mumtází, Hideya Suzuki

Southeastern Asia Yan Kee Leong, Firaydún Míthágíyán, Khudárahm Paymán, Vicente Samaniego, Chellie Sundram

Australasia

Suhayl 'Alá'í, Owen Battrick, Howard Harwood, Violet Hoehnke, Thelma Perks

Europe

Erik Blumenthal, Anneliese Bopp, Dorothy Ferraby, Louis Hénuzet, Betty Reed, Adib Taherzadeh

170.4Auxiliary Boards—Ridván 1976

Former Number	Present Increase	New Total
Africa		
Protection:		
Northern	5	–
5		
Western	5	6
11		
Central and East	13	–
13		
Southern	4	3
7		
27		
36		
Propagation:		
Northern	5	–
5		
Western	11	3
14		
Central and East	19	–
19		
Southern	10	6
16		
45		
54		
Western Hemisphere		
Protection:		

North America
9
–
9
Central America
9
2
11
South America
9
7
16
27
36
Propagation:
North America
18
–
18
Central America
9
7
16
South America
27
11
38
54
72
Asia
Protection:
Western
9
–
9
South Central
3
3
6
Northeastern
3
–
3
Southeastern
3
6
9

18
27
Propagation:
Western
18
–
18
South Central
15
15
30
Northeastern
15
–
15
Southeastern
15
12
27
63
90
Australasia
Protection:
9
–
9
Propagation:
9
9
18
Europe
Protection:
9
–
9
Propagation:
27
9
27
TOTAL
288
90
378
Total Protection
90
27
117

Total Propagation
198
63
261
171
Message to the International Teaching Conference,
Helsinki, Finland—July 1976
July 1976
To the Followers of Bahá’u’lláh gathered at
the International Teaching Conference in Helsinki
Dearly loved Friends,
171.1 With eager hearts we hail the convocation of this first of the twin Arctic Conferences inaugurating the series of eight International Bahá’í Conferences to be held during the middle part of the Five Year Plan. The northern regions of the world were alluded to by Bahá’u’lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Mother Book of this Revelation. Their names were recorded in the Tablets of the Divine Plan by the pen of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who, in one of His other Tablets, supplicated God to “raise up sanctified, pure and spiritual souls in the countries of the West and the territories of the North, and make them signs of His guidance, ensigns of the Concourse on High angels of the Abhá Kingdom.” These lands received the constant attention of Shoghi Effendi, who repeatedly urged the friends to carry the Faith to their uttermost inhabited areas, and who joyfully announced every advance of the Bahá’ís that established a center closer to the North Pole.
171.2 Already touched by the morning light of God's Cause by the nineteen-twenties, the lands of the North were blessed by visits from the indomitable Martha Root, whose love warmed and encouraged the hearts of the handful of believers then laboring in a few scattered centers in Scandinavia and illumined the soul of Hólmfríður Árnadóttir, Iceland's first Bahá’í. Bursting into blossom under the impact of the rays of the second Seven Year Plan, these communities received a major impetus from the Ten Year Crusade, of which the European campaign was launched at the never-to-be-forgotten conference in Stockholm in 1953, and which established centers as far north as Thule in Greenland and Sassen in the islands of Spitzbergen. Yet another stage of growth was reached with the Nine Year Plan and the convocation of the North Atlantic Conference in Reykjavik, which marked the opening of a new phase in the collaboration between the northern communities on both sides of that ocean.
171.3 Only thirty-eight years have passed since Väinö Rissanen, the first Bahá’í in Finland, accepted with radiant heart the life-giving message brought to him by Josephine Kruka, the “Mother of Finland,” in July 1938, and now the city of Helsinki, the seat of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Finland, is the scene of an International Bahá’í Conference whose deliberations are focused on the diffusion of the light of God's Faith throughout the entire arctic and subarctic regions of the world.
171.4 The followers of the Blessed Perfection gathered in Helsinki must direct their attention to the urgent tasks of the second half of the Five Year

Plan: to the reopening of Spitzbergen; the winning of the 34 Local Spiritual Assemblies still to be formed in Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland; the acceleration of the translation and publication of Bahá'í literature; the forging of still closer links of collaboration with the Bahá'í communities of Alaska, Canada and in the continent of Europe; the enlistment under the banner of Bahá'u'lláh of increasing numbers of the Eskimo, Lapp and Gypsy peoples; and the pursuit of the vital and challenging objectives of the Plan beyond the frontiers of their homelands.

171.5 It is our fervent prayer at the Threshold of Bahá'u'lláh that this Conference will produce an upsurge of Bahá'í activity throughout the northern lands and in the islands of the North Sea and the Baltic that will outshine every achievement made in those promising regions, and be an inspiration to your fellow-believers in every country of the world.

The Universal House of Justice

172

Message to the International Teaching Conference,
Anchorage, Alaska—July 1976

July 1976

To the Friends assembled at the
International Teaching Conference in Anchorage

Dearly loved Friends,

172.1 Sixty years ago 'Abdu'l-Bahá summoned the valiant North American believers to open the remote and inhospitable regions which form the climatic frontiers of the Arctic and the sub-Arctic. The full implementation of His wish had to be postponed for some years, until, under the leadership of His beloved grandson, well-grounded administrative bases were established from which Bahá'í crusaders could set out in conquest of these prized and virgin lands.

172.2 As early as 1915, however, we see a first wave of itinerant teachers and short-time settlers directing their steps towards Alaska in an attempt to open it to the light of Bahá'u'lláh. This was followed by a second wave of determined pioneers and spiritual conquerors who, ever since the first Seven Year Plan, demonstrated their exemplary enthusiasm and caused "the breezes ... of the love of God" to "Perfume the nostrils of the inhabitants" of that "vast country." In Canada, in response to the Master's call, a succession of homefront pioneers settled and opened the length and breadth of their land, so rich in promise "whether from a material or a spiritual standpoint," and whose destiny is to "become the object of the glance of Providence." To the fringes of Greenland North American and European pioneers brought the light of God's Faith, and provided the means for the fire of His love to be kindled in that land, in anticipation of the day when it will become "a divine rose garden and a heavenly paradise." Iceland, specifically mentioned by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the Tablets of the Divine Plan, was opened and consolidated, and has, through the warm response of its inhabitants to the Call of God, undoubtedly become one of the shining beacons of the "lights of the Most Great Guidance" in the North.

172.3 As a result of these movements and organized activities, the call of

the Kingdom reached “the ears of the Eskimos,” and the divine spark was struck in their lands. Praise be to God, today there are many who justly belong to the rank of heroes from among that noble race, and whose hearts are burning with His love. Upon the zeal and endurance of these enkindled believers will depend the early fulfillment of the Master's glowing promises. The teaching work among the Indians of the northern lands of the Western Hemisphere has likewise borne rich fruit, as tribe upon tribe has been enlisted under the banner of Bahá’u’lláh. Whether in Alaska’s southeastern islands and rugged mountains, or in Canada’s huge Indian reserves from the west to the east, many Amerindian believers have arisen to serve the Cause, and through their joint efforts, their sacrificial endeavors and distinctive talents they bid fair to accelerate the dawn of the day when they will be so “illumined as to enlighten the whole world.”

172.4 Many are the goals which now challenge the peoples of the North under the Five Year Plan: encouraging and educating the children and stimulating and guiding the youth; a wider participation of women in Bahá’í services; a greater assumption by the indigenous inhabitants of these regions of responsibilities in the leadership and administration of the community; a bolder proclamation of the Faith by radio and television; and a more far-flung and intensified campaign of teaching, audaciously conceived by National Spiritual Assemblies and their agencies and vigorously executed by Local Spiritual Assemblies and individual believers, aiming at a vast increase in the number of adherents to the Faith from every segment of society, a multiplication of Bahá’í administrative institutions, and a richer and more diverse range of publications in all media. What will set the seal on the success of the Plan and pave the way for the long-awaited and divinely promised glories of the future, is a mightier effort by every supporter of the Most Great Name in those climes to increasingly deepen themselves in the teachings, to pour forth their substance in the path of His love, to resolve to conform their personal lives to the high standards set in His teachings, and to undertake more daring tasks however great the sacrifice, and more extensive travels however arduous the voyage. In this wise will they draw nearer to the Spirit of Bahá’u’lláh and become true and radiant signs of His Most Great Guidance. These are the tasks! This is the work!

172.5 We pray at the Sacred Threshold that the Bahá’ís of the North may in the not-too-distant future transform the Arctic into that spiritual rose garden and heavenly paradise longed and yearned for by 'Abdu’l-Bahá, and that its peoples may be bountifully blessed and lovingly guided in their selfless services to promote the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh.

The Universal House of Justice

173

Comments on the Subject of Politics

7 July 1976

To an individual Bahá’í

Dear Bahá’í Friend,

173.1 The Universal House of Justice received your letter of 15 May conveying your thoughts on the need for Bahá’ís to become involved as may

be necessary in political affairs and to participate in activities aimed at the eradication of injustice. The sincerity which prompted you to write such a letter and to candidly express your sentiments deeply touched the Universal House of Justice. We have been asked to convey its comments to you.

The Divine Physician's Remedy

173.2 You ask if silence on the part of Bahá'ís will not allow chaos and human humiliation to be a permanent feature on earth, and state that shunning of politics by the Bahá'ís can but weaken the freedom fighters of the world. When viewing the conditions of our society we see a world beset by ills and groaning under the burden of suffering. This suffering, Bahá'u'lláh has Himself testified, is because the "body" of the world, "though created whole and perfect, has been afflicted, through divers causes, with grave ills and maladies," and "its sickness waxed more severe, as it fell under the treatment of unskilled physicians who have spurred on the steed of their worldly desires and have erred grievously."

Bahá'u'lláh's statement in this passage concludes with the assertion that the "sovereign remedy" lies in turning and submitting to the "skilled," the "all-powerful," and "inspired Physician. This, verily, is the truth, and all else naught but error."

173.3 This Divine Physician has assured us in His Writings that God is All-Seeing and All-Knowing and has willed to establish in this Day and among men His everlasting Kingdom. "The whole earth," Bahá'u'lláh has stated, "is now in a state of pregnancy. The day is approaching when it will have yielded its noblest fruits, when from it will have sprung forth the loftiest trees, the most enchanting blossoms, the most heavenly blessings." In order to achieve this purpose God sent us the spirit and message of the New Day through two successive Manifestations, both of Whom the generality of mankind have rejected, and have, alas, preferred to continue in their own blindness and perversity. Commenting on such a world spectacle, Bahá'u'lláh wrote: "soon will the present-day order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead." "After a time," He further wrote, "all the governments on earth will change. Oppression will envelop the world. And following a universal convulsion, the sun of justice will rise from the horizon of the unseen realm."

173.4 When we turn to His other Writings to learn more of His warning that this "present-day order" is to be "rolled up," we read statements and predictions such as these: "The time for the destruction of the world and its people hath arrived." "The hour is approaching when the most great convulsion will have appeared." "The promised day is come, the day when tormenting trials will have surged above your heads, and beneath your feet, saying: 'Taste ye what your hands have wrought!'" "Soon shall the blasts of His chastisement beat upon you and the dust of hell enshroud you." "And when the appointed hour is come, there shall suddenly appear that which shall cause the limbs of mankind to quake." "The day is approaching when its [civilization's] flame will devour the cities, when the Tongue of Grandeur will proclaim: 'The Kingdom is God's, the Almighty, the All-Praised!'" "The day is approaching when the wrathful anger of the Almighty will have

taken hold of them. He, verily, is the Omnipotent, the All-Subduing, the Most Powerful. He shall cleanse the earth from the defilement of their corruption, and shall give it for an heritage unto such of His servants as are nigh unto Him."

The Hand of Providence at Work

173.5 From the above it becomes clear that the Hand of Providence is at work, and is engaged in fulfilling God's purpose for mankind in this Age. "God's purpose," Shoghi Effendi assures us, "is none other than to usher in, in ways He alone can bring about, and the full significance of which He alone can fathom, the Great, the Golden Age of a long-divided, a long-afflicted humanity. Its present state, indeed even its immediate future, is dark, distressingly dark. Its distant future, however, is radiant, gloriously radiant—so radiant that no eye can visualize it."

173.6 Let us consider the First World War, which Shoghi Effendi has described in his writings as "the first stage in a titanic convulsion long predicted by Bahá'u'lláh." Although it ended outwardly in a Treaty of Peace, 'Abdu'l-Bahá remarked: "Peace, Peace, the lips of potentates and peoples unceasingly proclaim, whereas the fire of unquenched hatreds still smoulders in their hearts." And then in 1920, He wrote: "The ills from which the world now suffers will multiply; the gloom which envelops it will deepen." And again: "another war, fiercer than the last, will assuredly break out." After this Second World War broke out in 1939, Shoghi Effendi called it a "tempest, unprecedented in its violence," and the "great and mighty wind of God invading the remotest and fairest regions of the earth." After the termination of this War and the creation of the United Nations, the Guardian wrote in 1948, anticipating "still more violent convulsions" and referred to the "wings of yet another conflict" destined to "darken the international horizon." And finally in his last Ridván Message of April 1957, he left for posterity the following analysis of world conditions in the light of the prophecies and predictions recorded in the writings of the Faith:

173.6a Indeed, as we gaze in retrospect beyond the immediate past, and survey, in however cursory a manner, the vicissitudes afflicting an increasingly tormented society, and recall the strains and stresses to which the fabric of a dying Order has been increasingly subjected, we cannot but marvel at the sharp contrast presented, on the one hand, by the accumulated evidences of the orderly unfoldment, and the uninterrupted multiplication of the agencies, of an Administrative Order designed to be the harbinger of a world civilization, and, on the other, by the ominous manifestations of acute political conflict, of social unrest, of racial animosity, of class antagonism, of immorality and of irreligion, proclaiming, in no uncertain terms, the corruption and obsolescence of the institutions of a bankrupt Order.

173.6b Against the background of these afflictive disturbances—the turmoil and tribulations of a travailing age—we may well ponder the portentous prophecies uttered well-nigh four score years ago, by the Author of our Faith, as well as the dire predictions made by Him Who is the unerring Interpreter of His teachings, all foreshadowing a universal commotion, of a scope and intensity unparalleled in the annals of mankind.

173.6cThe violent derangement of the world's equilibrium; the trembling that will seize the limbs of mankind; the radical transformation of human society; the rolling up of the present-day Order; the fundamental changes affecting the structure of government; the weakening of the pillars of religion; the rise of dictatorships; the spread of tyranny; the fall of monarchies; the decline of ecclesiastical institutions; the increase of anarchy and chaos; the extension and consolidation of the Movement of the Left; the fanning into flame of the smouldering fire of racial strife; the development of infernal engines of war; the burning of cities; the contamination of the atmosphere of the earth—these stand out as the signs and portents that must either herald or accompany the retributive calamity which, as decreed by Him Who is the judge and Redeemer of mankind, must, sooner or later, afflict a society which, for the most part, and for over a century, has turned a deaf ear to the Voice of God's Messenger in this day—a calamity which must purge the human race of the dross of its age-long corruptions, and weld its component parts into a firmly knit world-embracing Fellowship ...

173.7 Thus we see how the Divine Physician is both the “Judge” of mankind and its “Redeemer.”

Noninterference in political affairs

173.8 This same Physician, addressing His followers, “the beloved of the one true God,” wrote: “Forbear ye from concerning yourselves with the affairs of this world and all that pertaineth unto it, or from meddling with the activities of those who are its outward leaders. The one true God, exalted be His glory, hath bestowed the government of the earth upon the kings. To none is given the right to act in any manner that would run counter to the considered views of them who are in authority.”

173.9 In another Tablet He laid on His followers the obligation to “behave towards the government of the country in which they reside with loyalty, honesty and truthfulness.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá reaffirmed the same principles. When in America He explained: “The essence of the Bahá’í spirit is that, in order to establish a better social order and economic condition, there must be allegiance to the laws and principles of government.” And in a Tablet He referred to the “irrefutable command that the Blessed Perfection hath given” in His Tablets, namely, “that the believers must obey the kings with the utmost sincerity and fidelity, and He hath forbidden them [the believers] to interfere at all with political problems. He hath even prohibited the believers from discussing political affairs.”

173.10 And finally in His last Will and Testament He wrote: “We must obey and be the well-wishers of the government of the land ...”

The Role of Bahá’ís in Today's World

173.11 We have also been asked to share with you at this juncture the following two extracts from letters written by the Universal House of Justice, and it is hoped these will help you in appreciating the significant and vital role Bahá’ís can and must play in the world today:

173.11aWe are told by Shoghi Effendi that two great processes are at work in the world: the great Plan of God, tumultuous in its progress, working through

mankind as a whole, tearing down barriers to world unity and forging humankind into a unified body in the fires of suffering and experience. This process will produce in God's due time, the Lesser Peace, the political unification of the world. Mankind at that time can be likened to a body that is unified but without life. The second process, the task of breathing life into this unified body—of creating true unity and spirituality culminating in the Most Great Peace—is that of the Bahá'ís, who are laboring consciously, with detailed instructions and continuing divine guidance, to erect the fabric of the Kingdom of God on earth, into which they call their fellowmen, thus conferring upon them eternal life.

173.11bThe working out of God's Major Plan proceeds mysteriously in ways directed by Him alone, but the Minor Plan that He has given us to execute, as our part in His grand design for the redemption of mankind, is clearly delineated. It is to this work that we must devote all our energies, for there is no one else to do it. ...

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173.11c... Bahá'ís are often accused of holding aloof from the "real problems" of their fellowmen. But when we hear this accusation let us not forget that those who make it are usually idealistic materialists to whom material good is the only "real" good, whereas we know that the working of the material world is merely a reflection of spiritual conditions and until the spiritual conditions can be changed there can be no lasting change for the better in material affairs.

173.11dWe should also remember that most people have no clear concept of the sort of world they wish to build, nor how to go about building it. Even those who are concerned to improve conditions are therefore reduced to combating every apparent evil that takes their attention. Willingness to fight against evils, whether in the form of conditions or embodied in evil men, has thus become for most people the touchstone by which they judge a person's moral worth. Bahá'ís, on the other hand, know the goal they are working towards and know what they must do, step by step, to attain it. Their whole energy is directed towards the building of the good, a good which has such a positive strength that in the face of it the multitude of evils—which are in essence negative—will fade away and be no more. To enter into the quixotic tournament of demolishing one by one the evils in the world is, to a Bahá'í, a vain waste of time and effort. His whole life is directed towards proclaiming the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, reviving the spiritual life of his fellowmen, uniting them in a divinely-created World Order, and then, as the Order grows in strength and influence, he will see the power of that Message transforming the whole human society and progressively solving the problems and removing the injustices which have so long bedeviled the world.

173.12 You have asked whether it is possible to have a World Federation when not all countries have attained their independence. The answer is in the negative. Both 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi likened the emergence of the American Republic and the unification of the "diversified and loosely related elements" of its "divided" community into one national entity, to the unity of the world and the incorporation of its federated units into "one

coherent system." Just as the American Constitution does not allow one state to be more autonomous than another, so must the nations of the world enjoy equal status in any form of World Federation. Indeed one of the "candles" of unity anticipated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá is "unity in freedom."

173.13 Yet another question is whether it is morally right to remain silent when equality is being abused. The beloved Guardian has given us the following guidelines in letters written on his behalf. "Much as the friends must guard against in any way ever seeming to identify themselves or the Cause with any political party, they must also guard against the other extreme of never taking part with other progressive groups, in conferences or committees designed to promote some activity in entire accord with our teachings—such as, for instance, better race relations."

173.14 The Universal House of Justice hopes that you and your Bahá'í coworkers in that land will steep yourselves in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, endeavor to follow in your personal lives the noble standards set by Him, attract the multitudes to the radiance of His glorious Faith, and enable them to warm their hearts and ignite their souls with the flames of that undying Fire which "blazeth and rageth in the world of creation."

173.15 We have been asked by the Universal House of Justice to assure you of its prayers on your behalf in the Holy Shrines.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

174

Message to the International Teaching Conference,
Paris, France—August 1976

August 1976

To the Friends assembled at the International Teaching Conference in Paris

Dearly loved Friends,

174.1 The brilliance of Paris in the story of European civilization bids fair to be renewed with even greater splendor during the Day of the Lord of Hosts and the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth. The annals of Paris in this Day have already acquired eternal lustre from events of mightier import, of greater universal significance and more sacred character than any which its past history has witnessed. The visits of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Center of God's inviolable Covenant, alone outshine in historical importance anything in the long history of France, and are immortalized in the greatly loved collection of His discourses given in that capital city. Beyond this, we recall with awe and pride that it was at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's instruction that the illustrious May Maxwell succeeded in establishing in Paris the first Bahá'í center on the European Continent, a continent described by Shoghi Effendi as "the cradle of a civilization to some of whose beneficent features the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh has paid significant tribute; on whose soil both the Greek and Roman civilizations were born and flourished; which has contributed so richly to the unfoldment of American civilization; the fountainhead of American culture; the mother of Christendom, and the scene of the greatest exploits of the followers of Jesus Christ," and experiencing

“the first stirrings of that spiritual revolution” which must culminate in the permanent establishment throughout its diversified lands of the divinely ordained Order of Bahá’u’lláh. This first center was rapidly reinforced by the conversion of the first English believer and of the first Frenchman to accept the Faith—the distinguished Hippolyte Dreyfus, whose “preeminent role” it was to kindle “the torch which is destined to shed eternal illumination upon his native land and its people”—and by Laura Barney, whose “imperishable service” was to transmit to posterity Some Answered Questions. The steadfastness and devotion of the Paris Bahá’í Community during the dark and sombre days of the Second World War earned great praise from the beloved Guardian of the Faith, while the recent signs of widespread and effective teaching work throughout France lend wings to the hope that this veteran, sorely tested and steadfast community is about to gather the harvest of those potent seeds sown and nourished so lovingly by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

174.2 It is highly propitious that this city, thrice blessed by the presence of the Master, should be the scene of the first International Bahá’í Conference in France and one of the eight International Conferences to be held around the world during the Five Year Plan. You are gathered in this historic spot to deliberate on the fortunes of that Plan, to derive inspiration from the deeds performed there in the Heroic Age of our Faith and from your association together, to rededicate yourselves to the service of Bahá’u’lláh and to determine, each and every one, how best you can promote the victory of the Five Year Plan. We call to your attention ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s words:

174.2aThe call of Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá can be heard far and wide. It is my hope that this soul-stirring melody of the Abhá Kingdom may also be raised high in Paris, for Paris is tumultuous in all things. I pray the Almighty that the music and singing of the beloved of God will be so loud that the vibrations thereof may cause the limbs of Paris to quake. I await very joyful tidings from the friends in Paris. Unquestionably the divine melody will in the future be raised in that city, but I long that this may happen in these days of the Covenant, and that you will be the enchanting songsters and the sweet-singing nightingales of that land.

174.3 Our hopes are high and we pray at the Sacred Threshold that from this Conference will surge throughout Europe a wave of such sacrificial teaching as will impel large numbers of its diverse and highly talented peoples to embrace the Faith of God and dedicate themselves to the redemption of mankind under the glorious banner of the Prince of Peace.

The Universal House of Justice

175

Release of a Compilation on Bahá’í Education

31 August 1976

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá’í Friends,

175.1 Among the goals of the Five Year Plan given to certain National Spiritual Assemblies is that of the promotion of the Bahá’í education of children. But this subject is of profound interest to Bahá’ís in every

land, not only in those where, as the Plan indicates, specific goals must be attained.

175.2 At our request the Research Department at the World Center has prepared this compilation of Bahá'í teachings on the subject of Bahá'í education for the friends everywhere to study and to begin to apply as their circumstances permit. In the main part of the compilation all extracts are from Tablets or other authenticated writings. In addition there is a supplement of extracts from talks of 'Abdu'l-Bahá recorded in Star of the West and The Promulgation of Universal Peace. It is hoped that in future it will be possible to have such well-known addresses verified against authenticated transcripts of the talks in the original language, but until that time the friends may use them in their present form for their reference and study. You are free to share this compilation, in whole or in part, with the believers under your jurisdiction in whatever way you judge best.

175.3 A letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer on 7 June 1939 explained:

175.3a... the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá do not present a definite and detailed educational system, but simply offer certain basic principles and set forth a number of teaching ideals that should guide future Bahá'í educationalists in their efforts to formulate an adequate teaching curriculum which would be in full harmony with the spirit of the Bahá'í Teachings, and would thus meet the requirements and needs of the modern age.

175.3bThese basic principles are available in the sacred Writings of the Cause, and should be carefully studied, and gradually incorporated in various college and university programs. But the task of formulating a system of education which would be officially recognized by the Cause, and enforced as such throughout the Bahá'í world, is one which the present-day generation of believers cannot obviously undertake, and which has to be gradually accomplished by Bahá'í scholars and educationalists of the future.

173.4 In reading the compilation the friends should bear the above explanation in mind and not interpret as a universal instruction what may, in fact, be simply an example of the sort of course that could advantageously be followed. For example, the quotations from the Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the letters of Shoghi Effendi written in the early years of his Guardianship were addressed to the Bahá'ís in Persia when that community, although oppressed, was already large in numbers, and was living in a society where schooling was rudimentary and scarce. At the present time in most countries, compulsory education and state school systems are widespread and meet the general need for material education, so the resources of the Faith in that field have to be concentrated on the spiritual and moral education of our children and on providing primary and tutorial schools in mass-teaching areas where illiteracy is still the rule. Also, the various extracts must be read in the context of the whole.

173.5 The proper education of children is of vital importance to the progress of mankind, and the heart and essential foundation of all education is spiritual and moral training. When we teach our fellowmen the truths and way

of life of the Bahá'í Faith we have to struggle against barriers of indifference, materialism, superstition and a multitude of erroneous preconceptions; but in our newborn children we are presented with pure souls, untarnished by the world. As they grow they will face countless tests and difficulties. From their earliest moments we have the duty to train them, both spiritually and materially, in the way that God has shown, and thus, as they come to adulthood, they can become champions of His Cause and spiritual and moral giants among mankind, equipped to meet all tests, and will be, indeed, "stars of the heaven of understanding," "soft-flowing waters upon which must depend the very life of all men."

175.6 It is our prayer at the Sacred Threshold that the provision of the gems of divine guidance contained in this compilation will be a stimulus and a source of inspiration for Bahá'í parents, teachers and Spiritual Assemblies throughout the world, and a blessing for the rising generations.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

176

Message to the International Teaching Conference,
Nairobi, Kenya—September 1976

26 September 1976

To the Friends gathered at the International Conference in Nairobi

Beloved Friends,

176.1 The flames of enthusiasm which ignited the hearts of the followers and lovers of the Most Great Name in Helsinki, in Anchorage and in Paris are now being kindled in a city which occupies a central and envied position at the very crossroads of the vast African mainland and are destined to illumine its horizons. This Conference marking the imminent approach of the midway point of the Five Year Plan which coincides with the anniversary of the birth of the Blessed Báb, will no doubt go down in Bahá'í history as a further landmark in the irresistible march of events which have characterized the impact of the Faith of God upon that continent.

176.2 We recall that in addition to Quddús the only other companion of the Báb on His pilgrimage to Mecca was an Ethiopian, and that he and his wife were intimately associated with Him and His household in Shiraz. During the Ministry of Bahá'u'lláh a few of His stalwart disciples reached the northeastern shores of Africa, and under His direct guidance, announced the glad tidings of the New Day to the people of the Nile, thus opening to the Faith two countries of the African mainland. Soon afterwards, His blessed person approached those shores in the course of His exile to the Holy Land. Still later He voiced His significant utterance in which He compared the colored people to "the black pupil of the eye," through which "the light of the spirit shineth forth." Just over six years after His ascension, the first member of the black race to embrace His Cause in the West, who was destined to become a disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, a herald of the Kingdom, and the door through which numberless members of his race were to enter that Kingdom, came on pilgrimage to the Holy Land with the first group of Western friends who arrived in 'Akká to visit the Center of the Covenant. This was

followed by a steady extension of the teaching work among the black people of North America, and the opening to the Faith, by the end of the Heroic Age, of two more countries in Africa, under the watchful care of the Master, Whose three visits to Egypt have blessed the soil of that Continent. Prior to the conclusion of the first Bahá'í century the number of countries opened to the Faith had been raised to seven, and the teaching work among the black race in North America had entered a new phase of development through the continuous guidance flowing from the pen of Shoghi Effendi, who himself traversed the African continent twice from south to north, and who, in the course of his ministry, elevated two members of the black race to the rank of Hand of the Cause, appointed three more believers residing in Africa to that high office, and there raised up four National Spiritual Assemblies.

176.3 At the beginning of the Ten Year Crusade the number of countries opened to the Faith had reached twenty-four, including those opened under the aegis of the Two Year African Campaign coordinated by the British National Spiritual Assembly. The Ten Year Plan opened the rest of Africa to the light of God's Faith, and today we see with joy and pride in that vast continent and its neighboring islands the establishment of four Boards of Counselors, thirty-four National Spiritual Assemblies—firm pillars of God's Administrative Order—and over 2800 Local Spiritual Assemblies, nuclei of a growing Bahá'í society.

176.4 Africa, a privileged continent with a past rich in cherished associations, has reached its present stage of growth through countless feats of heroism and dedication. Before us unfolds the vision of the future. "Africa," the beloved Guardian assures us in one of the letters written on his behalf, "is truly awakening and finding herself, and she undoubtedly has a great message to give, and a great contribution to make to the advancement of world civilization. To the degree to which her peoples accept Bahá'u'lláh will they be blessed, strengthened and protected."

176.5 The realization of this glorious destiny requires that the immediate tasks be worthily discharged, and the pressing challenges and urgent requirements of the Five Year Plan be wholeheartedly and effectively met and satisfied. As the forces of darkness in that part of the world wax fiercer, and the problems facing its peoples and tribes become more critical, the believers in that continent must evince greater cohesion, scale loftier heights of heroism and self-sacrifice and demonstrate higher standards of concerted effort and harmonious development.

176.6 During the brief thirty months separating us from the end of the Plan, Africa must once again distinguish itself among its sister continents through a vast increase in the number of its believers, its Local Spiritual Assemblies and its localities opened to the Faith, and by accelerating the process of entry by troops throughout its length and breadth. The deepening of the faith, of the understanding and of the spiritual life of its individual believers must gather greater momentum; the foundations of its existing Local Spiritual Assemblies must be more speedily consolidated; the number of local Hazíratu'l-Quds and of local endowments called for in the Plan must be soon acquired; the Bahá'í activities of women and of youth must be

systematically stimulated; the Bahá'í education of the children of the believers must continuously be encouraged; the basis of the recognition that the institutions of the Faith have succeeded in obtaining from the authorities must steadily be broadened; mass communication facilities must be used far more frequently to teach and proclaim the Faith; and the publication and dissemination of the essential literature of the Faith must be given much greater importance. Above all it is imperative that in ever greater measure each individual believer should realize the vital need to subordinate his personal advantages to the overall welfare of the Cause, to awaken and reinforce his sense of responsibility before God to promote and protect its vital interests at all costs, and to renew his total consecration and dedication to His glorious Faith, so that, himself enkindled with the flames of its holy fire, he may, in concert with his fellow-believers, ignite the light of faith and certitude in the hearts of his family, his tribe, his countrymen and all the peoples of that mighty continent, in preparation for the day when Africa's major contribution to world civilization will become fully consummated.

176.7 We fervently pray at the Holy Shrines that these hopes and aspirations may soon come true, and that the "pure-hearted" and 'spiritually receptive" people of Africa may draw ever nearer to the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh, and may become shining examples of self-abnegation, of courage and of love to the supporters of the Most Great Name in every land.

The Universal House of Justice

177

Visit of His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II to the Resting-Place of Shoghi Effendi

5 October 1976

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

177.1WITH FEELINGS IMMENSE ELATION ANNOUNCE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITIES ALL CONTINENTS JOYFUL NEWS FIRST VISIT BY BAHÁ'Í REIGNING MONARCH TO RESTING PLACE BELOVED SHOGHI EFFENDI WELL NIGH NINETEEN YEARS FOLLOWING HIS PASSING. HIS HIGHNESS MALIETOA TANUMAFILI II OF WESTERN SAMOA COURSE HIS RECENT VISIT LONDON ATTAINED THIS INESTIMABLE BOUNTY. HIS HIGHNESS ACCOMPANIED BY SMALL DELEGATION FRIENDS HEADED BY HAND CAUSE GIACHERY INCLUDING HANDS CAUSE KHADE VARQÁ AND FIVE MEMBERS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY UNITED KINGDOM PROCEEDED CEMETERY PARTICIPATED DEEPLY MOVING HIGHLY DIGNIFIED VISITATION RESTING PLACE SIGN GOD ON EARTH WHOSE LIFELONG HEROIC LABORS ACHIEVED WORLDWIDE SPREAD GLORIOUS CAU BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. FOLLOWING PRAYERS DEVOTIONS AND EXPRESSIONS APPRECIATION GRATITUDE BY HIS HIGHNESS HE MET WITH RADIANT SPIRIT LARGE GATHERING BELIEVERS ASSEMBLED PRECINCTS GRAVE TO WELCOME HIM AND TO WHOM HE CONVEYED GREETINGS I FELLOW SAMOAN BAHÁ'ÍS AND HIS HOPE GROWTH FAITH FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH ALL OVER WORLD. IN HOLY LAND SYNCHRONIZING WITH THESE EVENTS HANDS CAUSE OTHE MEMBERS, INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTER JOINED MEMBERS HOUSE JUSTICE SPECIAL VISIT BAHJÍ WHERE FERVENT PRAYERS WERE OFFERED SACRED THRESHOLD MOST HOLY SHRINE IN THANKSGIVING HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT WHICH REPRESENTS PRELUDE TO FULFILLMENT LONG CHERISHED DESIRE 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ AND SHOGHI EFFENDI WITNESS PILGRIM KINGS PAY THEIR HUMBLE TRIBUTE AT HOLY SHRINES FOUNDERS OUR

FAITH IN SPIRITUAL HEART PLANET. FERVENTLY PRAYING THIS JOYOUS NEWS WILL STRENGTHEN RESOLVE SUPPORTERS MOST GREAT NAME EVERY LAND REDOUBLE THEIR EFFO TO FORGE AHEAD HOWEVER ARDUOUS THE TASKS HOWEVER SEEMINGLY INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLES UNTIL EVERY GOAL WORLDWIDE PLAN IS SPEEDILY AND FULLY CONSUMMATED.
The Universal House of Justice

178
Outstanding Achievements in Khurásán, Iran
15 October 1976
To the Friends gathered at the
International Teaching Conference in Nairobi, Kenya

178.1REJOICE SHARE WITH FRIENDS AT NAIROBI CONFERENCE JOYOUS TIDINGS RECEIVED FROM CRADLE FAITH FRIENDS PROVINCE KHURÁSÁN WHERE MIGHTY EVENTS TOOK PLACE EARLY YEARS HEROIC AGE HAVE WON UNIQUE DISTINCTION. EVERY LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY EVEN EVERY GROUP THAT PROVINCE HAS FORMULATED ITS LOCAL GOALS AND EVERY INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER HAS ADOPTED PERSONAL TEACHING GOALS. OBJECTIVE ENVISAGED FIVE YEAR PLAN BRILLIANTLY OUTSTRIPPED. FERVENTLY PRAYING SHRINES SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES GROUPS INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS EVERY LAND WILL BE INSPIRED FOLLOW THIS EXAMPLE.

Universal House of Justice

179
Achievement of the Majority of Pioneer Goals at
Midpoint of Five Year Plan
21 October 1976
To all National Spiritual Assemblies

179.1JOYFULLY ANNOUNCE REALIZATION HOPE EXPRESSED IN JANUARY 1975 THAT BY MIDWAY POINT FIVE YEAR PLAN MOST PIONEER POSTS BE SETTLED. OUT OF THESE 962 POSTS 612 ALREADY FILLED THROUGH SETTLEMENT 1374 PIONEERS. 350 POSTS STILL REMAIN UNFILLED BUT 227 VOLUNTEERS HAVE ARISEN AND ARE BEING PROCESSED FOR SETTLEMENT THESE GOALS. CALL WITH URGENT INSISTENCE ALL NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES WITH UNFILLED PIONEER GOALS EXPEDITE FULFILLMENT ASSIGNMENTS COUNTRIES STILL NEEDING URGENT SUPPORT. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES BOUNTIFUL BLESSINGS ALL WHO HAVE ARISEN PIONEER FIELDS VARIOUS LANDS AND WHO WILL ARISE DURING FAST FLEETING MONTHS BEFORE RIDVÁN 1977 WIN OUTSTANDING PIONEER GOALS FIVE YEAR PLAN.

Universal House of Justice

180
Additional Appointments to Continental Boards of Counselors
31 October 1976
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá’í Friends,

180.1 The Universal House of Justice announces with pleasure that it has appointed three new Counselors as follows:

Dr. Peter Khan—to the Continental Board of Counselors in Australasia
Dr. Hidáyatu’lláh Ahmadíyyih—to the Continental Board of Counselors in Central America
Mr. Angus Cowan—to the Continental Board of Counselors in North America.

With loving Bahá’í greetings,
Department of the secretariat

181
Message to the International Teaching Conference,
Hong Kong—November 1976
November 1976
To the Friends assembled at the
International Teaching Conference in Hong Kong
Dearly loved Friends,
181.1 With grateful and joyous hearts we extend our warmest greetings and express our highest hopes to the followers of Bahá'u'lláh gathered, at this critical point of the Five Year Plan, in this Conference on Asia's eastern shore. This great continent has nourished mighty civilizations; above its horizons the suns of major Revelations of God have risen; on its soil many of the heroes of this New Age have shed their blood and offered their lives in token of their love for Him Who is the Beloved of the World and the Desire of the Nations.
181.2 What an imperishable glory has been bestowed upon the people of Asia, the first to be illumined by the rays of God's Faith, the first recipients of His Call and the first promoters of His Cause. Their spiritual capacity is extolled and the great role they are destined to play in the strengthening of the foundation of the New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh unhesitatingly affirmed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Tablets of the Divine Plan.
181.3 This great continent contains within its boundaries the heart of the Faith and its Cradle, the lands wherein its Founders toiled and suffered, and not only the great majority of the human race but the great majority of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh. The potentiality of such a situation cannot be underestimated, nor must the great force latent within so large a proportion of the Army of Light be neglected. They must be mobilized to accelerate the expansion of the beloved Cause, to consolidate its victories, to enhance its prestige and to augment its influence. We appeal to every participant in this historic Conference to become conscious of these tremendous but hidden potentialities which, if properly tapped and directed, can hasten the process of the spiritualization of the nations of Asia, the influence of which will extend far beyond the confines of that continent—even to the entire planet.
181.4 We eagerly await news that from this Conference will surge throughout Asia a wave of vigorous activity devoted to the execution on the individual, local and national levels, of systematic plans designed to attract the great masses of that continent to the life-giving, all-embracing Message of Bahá'u'lláh. Such plans must provide opportunities for those thousands who in recent years have swelled the rank and file, as well as for those veterans who have, for so many years, striven in the path of service to the Cause. It is through active participation of more and more new believers in both teaching and administration that the consolidation of the Bahá'í community can best be achieved.
181.5 In a continent so richly endowed, so greatly blessed, new generations of Bahá'ís must continually be raised up, trained from childhood in the school of the love of God, and nurtured under the shadow of His Cause. Bahá'ís in every country must be constantly urged and, wherever necessary,

assisted to pass on to their children as their most cherished legacy, the precious Faith they themselves have embraced. Those new generations of Bahá'ís will have a vital role in consolidating the Cause of God on a firm foundation.

181.6 The establishment of Local Assemblies as the basic administrative unit of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh and as rallying points for the Bahá'ís of every community should, in accordance with the objectives of the Five Year Plan, be multiplied no matter at what cost of effort and endurance. The process of invigorating the Local Assemblies requires, during the Five Year Plan, the consultation of all the institutions of the Cause.

181.7 Publication of literature in many languages as part of a determined campaign to win thousands upon thousands of diverse peoples in all spheres of life must be vigorously pursued. Participation of all believers in supporting the Bahá'í Funds, the lifeblood of the Cause, must be given adequate attention, and the blessings which reward the act of voluntary giving for the promotion of the Faith, no matter how small the amount may be, must be lovingly and wisely explained.

181.8 May this Conference become a landmark in the process of attracting vast numbers of the great Chinese race scattered throughout the world. May it be a prelude to the unprecedented expansion of the Faith in all the countries of Asia. May it become a source of strength to the supporters of the Most Great Name so that despite the rising tide of trials and upheavals afflicting the world, and whatever forces of opposition may be mounted against the Cause of God itself, the believers will not waver or become diverted from their course, but be ever more confirmed in their determination to raise the edifice of the Faith of God as the last bastion of hope to a lost and wayward humanity.

The Universal House of Justice

182

Grappling with the Challenge of Consolidation

2 December 1976

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

182.1 Your letter of 12 October 1976 proposing the establishment of an International Human Development Center has caused us concern for a number of reasons. It is true that in our letter of 23 December 1975 we stated: "We feel that it is for your Assembly to decide what methods should be employed to bring about the desired result," but your present proposals are a great enlargement and development of the concepts outlined in your letter of 5 December 1975 and involve the establishment of an institution with international ramifications requiring financial assistance from beyond the confines of your own community.

182.2 We are acutely aware of the varied problems of community and character development that the American Bahá'í community faces. They are problems that in varying ways and to different degrees face every Bahá'í community in the world. In many countries they are further complicated by grinding poverty, widespread illiteracy, religious persecution or compulsory

political indoctrination.

182.3 As you quite correctly observe, Bahá'í Administration should make use of whatever expertise or appropriate instruments are available, whether Bahá'í' or non-Bahá'í, for the attainment of its objectives. But this is not the same as establishing a quasi-Bahá'í institution under Bahá'í auspices based on one particular theory. It is far too early in the development of the Faith and of the social sciences for the Administrative Order thus to promote one particular system or theory of education. A similar situation exists in the field of psychology. As you are well aware, many people come into the Faith needing psychiatric treatment, and it is often very difficult for them to find a psychiatrist who will not urge them to some course of behavior which is contrary to the teachings of the Faith. There are a number of Bahá'í psychologists and psychiatrists who are endeavoring to develop their skills in the light of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, and use can certainly be made of their services where available—but it would be premature to consider establishing a Bahá'í School of Psychology ....

The Gradual Unfoldment of Bahá'í Education

182.4 The grave problems faced by Bahá'í parents and children, when the children must attend schools that are strongly influenced by the degradation of present-day society, are fully appreciated. However, the only ways to completely overcome these dangers would seem to be either to effect a reform of the entire non-Bahá'í educational system or to provide a worldwide network of Bahá'í schools. Both ways are very long-term projects beyond the capacity of the Bahá'í community at this time. Already, of course, Bahá'í communities are establishing primary or tutorial schools in many parts of the world, but these are small and few in number and are located where there are such conditions as general illiteracy among the believers or where no other schools are available to them. Undoubtedly, in time, this process will gain momentum, and Bahá'í schools of ever higher quality and scope will be established in country after country, as has already occurred in India, but necessarily, this must now be a gradual process related, among other things, to the resources of the community, the number of Bahá'í children needing education, and the availability of other suitable schools. Perhaps in certain parts of the United States there are sufficiently large concentrations of Bahá'í children to make the running of a private Bahá'í school feasible—such a proposal has, indeed, been made by a number of individual believers in Alaska, principally teachers, but we stressed in that instance that, if implemented, it should be conducted as a private venture and that the people concerned should give very careful consideration to all the factors involved before initiating it; furthermore we pointed out to them their opportunities for improving the schools in which they themselves worked.

182.5 Failing a nationwide system of Bahá'í schools, the establishment of which is clearly out of the question at this stage of the growth of the Cause in the United States, Bahá'í parents will continue to be faced with the problems caused by the exposure of their children to irreligious and immoral attitudes, behavior, and even instruction, from their fellow pupils and their teachers. This is a great challenge to Bahá'í parents, to the

Bahá'í children themselves, and to the Spiritual Assemblies. It was to assist in meeting such challenges that we recently issued the compilation of Bahá'í prayers for children and that on Bahá'í education. Your Assembly is correct in its view that a major effort will have to be exerted to raise the number and quality of Bahá'í children's classes, and to assist Bahá'í parents to bring up their children as firm Bahá'ís able to withstand the moral and spiritual poisons and temptations of the society around them....

The Spiritual Nature of Personal Transformation

182.6 In addition to the specific problems of child education, you instance the difficulties of local communities which are faced with the task of reorienting and integrating into the Cause new believers who enter with all sorts of immoral and even criminal tendencies from their former life. This is indeed difficult, but this is the very stuff of the work of the Cause. The Bahá'í Faith not only provides teachings in accordance with which the behavior of human beings can be reformed, but also makes available a spiritual power which reinforces the devoted efforts of every believer, whether veteran or neophyte. Arising to serve the Cause has, itself, a transforming effect upon believers, as the beloved Guardian wrote with respect to service upon Spiritual Assemblies: "If we but turn our gaze to the high qualifications of the members of Bahá'í Assemblies, as enumerated in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets, we are filled with feelings of unworthiness and dismay, and would feel truly disheartened but for the comforting thought that if we arise to play nobly our part every deficiency in our lives will be more than compensated by the all-conquering spirit of His grace and power." Thus, what is most imperative for the promotion of the spiritual life of local Bahá'í communities is the stimulation of the believers to increase their devotion to Bahá'u'lláh, their absolute reliance upon Him and upon His love, and their determination to apply His teachings in every aspect of their lives. This stimulation can be conveyed from heart to heart and mind to mind by devoted Bahá'ís without the need of formal training....

The Auxiliary Board: A Potent Aid to Consultation

182.7 As we pointed out previously, you have already initiated excellent programs; we continually receive evidence of the enthusiasm with which they have been received by local communities in the United States. You should persevere with these programs, expanding and supplementing them as necessary with others that you may judge desirable for the work of the Cause in the conditions of each of the widely diverse areas of your vast national territory. One of the most potent aids to the consolidation of local communities and Assemblies and the deepening of the faith of the believers, is the services of the Auxiliary Board members and their assistants. Here is an institution of the Faith, reaching into every locality, composed of firm believers who know the area they have to serve and are familiar with its problems and potentialities—an institution expressly designed to encourage and reinforce the work of the Spiritual Assemblies, to enthuse the believers, to stimulate them to study the Teachings and apply them in their lives—a body of Bahá'ís whose efforts and services will complement and support the work

being done by your committees and by the Local Assemblies themselves in every sphere of Bahá'í endeavor....
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice

183
Call For a Vigorous Traveling Teaching Program
19 December 1976
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,

183.1 Now that we have passed the midway point of the Five Year Plan and through the grace of the Blessed Beauty the processes which it has set in motion in every continent are gaining momentum, we observe almost daily with awe and admiration how abundant are the blessings which surround the efforts of the devoted believers who are delivering His divine Message with dedication, enthusiasm and perseverance, and how infinitely vast and challenging are the possibilities for the future.

183.2 One of the activities which must be given greater attention, both nationally and internationally, is travel teaching to localities which are in need of consolidation and stimulation. While teaching projects of short duration, in terms of days and one or two weeks, are useful, the time has come for long-term teaching projects of three to six months and possibly more, as envisaged in the Five Year Plan, to be more vigorously prosecuted in every continent, so that more lasting results may accrue from these teaching trips and the rich harvest anticipated at the outset of the Plan may become a reality, imparting its inestimable benefits to the devoted laborers in His divine Vineyard.

183.3 It is hoped that those who will arise will be mostly self-supporting or supported by private deputization, and that the funds of the Faith, nationally for projects on the homefront, and internationally for projects in foreign fields, will be requested only when the individual concerned is regarded as well qualified and there is no other source of funds available to him.

183.4 We hope that National Assemblies whose assignments include international travel teaching projects will make a special appeal to the friends under their jurisdiction calling on them to meet this new challenge. If this urgent call, which is directed to all believers in every land, is answered with promptness and enthusiasm by those whose personal circumstances permit, great advances will be made towards fulfilling the hitherto sorely neglected teaching goals of the Plan. While the youth can through their creative resourcefulness and energetic labors effectively support the work ahead, believers from the older age groups can be a valuable asset in the achievement of the goals through their experience, knowledge and wisdom.

183.5 Our prayers are offered frequently at the Holy Shrines for the infinite blessings of the Abhá Beauty to reinforce every step you take in strengthening and broadening the foundations of the Faith in the areas entrusted to your care.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

184

Message to the International Teaching Conference,
Auckland, New Zealand—January 1977

January 1977

To the Friends assembled at the
International Teaching Conference in Auckland

Dearly loved Friends,

184.1 With hearts full of love and admiration for the followers of the Most Great Name in Australasia we send our warmest greetings to all assembled in this historic gathering in the heart of the Antipodes.

184.2 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."

184.3 Now, twenty-five years later, the achievements are truly astounding. Beginning with the establishment of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of New Zealand at Ridván 1957, the number of National Assemblies has increased elevenfold; the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Antipodes has been erected near Sydney; His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II of Western Samoa has become the first reigning monarch to embrace the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh; the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies now stands at over 360; and the number of localities where Bahá'ís reside in this vast oceanic area covering well-nigh one-eighth of the earth's surface is more than 1,800. These accomplishments doubtless have been a source of great joy to the immortal soul of Shoghi Effendi, whose esteem and affection for the followers of Bahá'u'lláh laboring for His Cause in the Antipodes was frequently expressed in glowing terms in his letters to the Assemblies and friends in Australasia.

184.4 Dear friends, we have now passed the midpoint of the Five Year Plan. You are met in the beautiful city of Auckland to take stock and to make plans for attaining the victories which will surely be yours.

184.5 The National Spiritual Assemblies of the New Hebrides and of the Marshall Islands are to be raised up next Ridván; plans for the soon-to-be-erected Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of Samoa are in process; but although the goal of establishing Bahá'í centers totalling 2,188 is within easy reach, the Local Assembly goals assigned to each national community, totalling 613, need prompt and decisive attention. The divine assistance spoken of by

the beloved Guardian in 1951 has ever been available, and is still "ready to be poured forth in astonishing abundance." It is within your power during the coming year to win all assigned teaching goals, leaving the final year of the Plan for consolidation and the winning of supplementary victories.

184.6 This will be achieved, not by resting on laurels, but by manifesting those qualities of faith, judgement, vision, loyalty, courage and self-sacrifice which earned the Guardian's praise so frequently in past decades. Let the valiant Australasian Bahá'í communities vie once more with their sister communities throughout the world for the palm of victory and maintain their position in the vanguard of the Army of Light.

184.7 Pioneers, traveling teachers and a fresh outpouring of funds are essential ingredients to the onward march of the Cause throughout Australia, New Zealand and the islands of the South Pacific. Let those who can offer their valued services to the teaching work arise without delay; let those who cannot travel or pioneer deputize those who can go in their stead.

184.8 We cherish the highest hopes for the success of your endeavors and it is our constant prayer that Bahá'u'lláh will shower His richest blessings and confirmations upon you.

The Universal House of Justice

185

Message to the International Teaching Conference,
Bahia, Brazil—January 1977

January 1977

To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh gathered
at the International Teaching Conference in Bahia, Brazil

Dearly loved Friends,

185.1 With joyous hearts we hail the convocation of this first of the twin Latin American Conferences closing the series of eight International Bahá'í Conferences held during the midway period of the Five Year Plan.

185.2 The ringing call of Bahá'u'lláh in His Most Holy Book to the Rulers of America and the Presidents of the Republics therein was followed after an interval of more than four decades by the revelation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets of the Divine Plan in which the beloved Master stressed the importance of the Republics of the South American Continent.

185.3 The first believer to respond to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's divine call was that star-servant of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, valiant, indomitable Martha Root, who in 1919 visited many important cities in South America. Two years later Leonora Holsapple Armstrong, mother of the Bahá'ís of Brazil, settled in Bahia. The teaching work in the continent progressed steadily to the point where, in 1937, the beloved Guardian launched his first Seven Year Plan paving the way for the raising in subsequent Plans of the institution of Bahá'u'lláh Administrative Order in every one of its republics and in its islands. It was in the course of that first Seven Year Plan that 'Abdu'l-Bahá's beloved handmaid, May Maxwell, in 1940 won a martyr's crown when she laid down her life in Argentina, thereby adding further lustre to the spiritual history of South America.

185.4 How truly fitting, then, that this auspicious Conference have its

venue in the city of Bahia, singled out for special mention by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His Tablets of the Divine Plan. And how timely it is at this crucial point in the Five Year Plan that the friends gathered in Bahia from many lands prayerfully consider, and arise to prosecute expeditiously all measures aimed at achieving glorious victory in all goals of the Plan.

185.5 Noteworthy progress has been achieved in many fields of service throughout the South American Bahá’í community, particularly in attracting to the Cause large numbers of its indigenous peoples. But myriads of pure-hearted souls have not yet heard the clarion call of Bahá’u’lláh and hungrily await the spiritual nourishment that only His followers can give them.

185.6 Steps must be taken to attract members of every stratum of society to the divine circle of the Faith through effective proclamation and teaching. Greater utilization of radio broadcasts is necessary, not only to reach all levels of society but also to deepen the believers themselves. The valuable and dynamic services of Bahá’í youth must be multiplied in the fields of pioneering and travel teaching. A far wider dissemination of Bahá’í literature must be accompanied by a continuous program of translation of the Sacred Text into the major indigenous languages of the continent.

185.7 The continental goals for South America of 8,670 centers and 2,293 Local Spiritual Assemblies must be won, and may even be surpassed, for every country must achieve the goals assigned to it. This calls for the dedicated effort of every National Spiritual Assembly, every Local Spiritual Assembly and indeed every believer. All the divinely ordained instruments of the Administrative Order of Bahá’u’lláh must now unite in executing a symphony of victory in all the unfinished goals of the Five Year Plan, winning thereby the good pleasure of the Blessed Beauty.

185.8 Beloved friends, go forward with complete assurance that a continent so rich in spiritual promise, so diverse in its peoples and races, so fertile for the planting of the seeds of Bahá’u’lláh’s Faith will yield a brilliant harvest for all who labor in that Divine Vineyard.

185.9 It is our fervent loving prayer at the Sacred Threshold that Bahá’u’lláh’s bountiful confirmations and richest blessings may be showered upon you.

The Universal House of Justice

186

Signature of Contract for Erection
of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice
10 January 1977

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

186.1JOYFULLY ANNOUNCE SIGNATURE AGREEMENT GENERAL CONTRACTOR FOR ERECTION S
UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE AT COST JUST OVER TWO MILLION DOLLARS. FIRST
SHIPMENT FINISHED MARBLE DELIVERED SITE. LOVING GREETINGS.

The Universal House of Justice

187

Message to the International Teaching Conference,
Mérida, Mexico—February 1977
February 1977

To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh gathered at the
International Teaching Conference in Mérida, Mexico
Dearly loved Friends,

187.1 With joyous hearts and eager anticipation we send warmest greetings to you the participants in the last of the eight great International Teaching Conferences marking the halfway point of the Five Year Plan.

187.2 The convening of this Conference in the Republic of Mexico, in the capital city of a state that was once an important part of a great Indian empire, provides a unique opportunity to initiate what may well become the widespread reawakening of a people whose ancestors more than 1,200 years ago developed one of the most brilliant pre-Columbian civilizations known to modern man. These present-day descendants, many of whom have already embraced the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh and who consider the Yucatan Peninsula and the seacoast lowlands and rugged spine of mountains joining North and South America to be their homeland, are among the very people mentioned by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Tablets of the Divine Plan as having a great destiny once they have accepted His Father's Cause. Here, too, and throughout Middle America, are those whose forefathers came from the Iberian Peninsula, Africa, and the Far East linking the Old with the New World.

187.3 Conscious of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's impassioned plea to promulgate the oneness of mankind to a spiritually impoverished humanity, a handful of itinerant Bahá'í' teachers set forth four decades ago, traversed the land bridge connecting the two continents of the Western Hemisphere and carried the healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the Spanish-American Republics. Their dedicated efforts were rewarded when, in 1938, the first Local Spiritual Assembly in Latin America was formed in Mexico City. This initial triumph at the inception of the first of the teaching plans formulated by Shoghi Effendi spearheaded other victories leading to the formation of two, then of four Regional Spiritual Assemblies and ultimately to the establishment of National Spiritual Assemblies in each of the republics of Latin America and in the islands of the Caribbean.

187.4 Praiseworthy indeed were these achievements but the Bahá'í communities of Central America and the West Indies must not be content to rest on these laurels. The beloved Guardian during the last months of his precious life continually urged the friends of Latin America to pursue what he described as "the paramount task," the teaching work. How much more does that injunction apply today! In less than thirty months, approximately 900 groups and isolated centers and over 400 Local Spiritual Assemblies must be added to those already existing in the mainland and island nations of Middle America!

187.5 To accomplish this challenging task, intensive effort to attract new believers, be they black, brown, red or white, from all strata of society must be exerted. Hand in hand with this endeavor, particularly in local communities, goes the development of the distinctive character of Bahá'í life. Prompt attention must also be given to the acquisition of local Hazíratu'l-Quds and endowments; and the translation and publication of Bahá'í literature, especially in indigenous languages, must be accelerated.

187.6 Dear friends, if at the close of the Five Year Plan we are to witness

the ensigns of victory lifted high, the wholehearted support of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh must be enlisted now and their energies systematically channeled into areas most in need. We cherish the hope that at this final Conference the friends will arise with enthusiasm and determination not only to win the remaining goals of the Plan but to carry out Shoghi Effendi's injunction to win the allegiance of members of the various tribes of American Indians to the Cause, thereby hastening the period prophesied by the Master when the Indian peoples of America would become a source of spiritual illumination to the world.

187.7 Our hearts, our hopes and our prayers will be with you during all the days of your deliberations. May Bahá'u'lláh inspire each and every one of you.

The Universal House of Justice

188

Release of a Compilation on the Individual and Teaching

3 March 1977

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

188.1 The cornerstone of the foundation of all Bahá'í activity is teaching the Cause. As 'Abdu'l-Bahá has categorically proclaimed in His Will and Testament, "the guidance of the nations and peoples of the world" is "the most important of all things," and "Of all the gifts of God the greatest is the gift of Teaching."

188.2 The friends likewise are in varying degrees aware of the repeated exhortations found in the Writings of our Faith that divine confirmations are dependent upon the active pursuit of the teaching work. In the words of the beloved Master, "confirmations from the unseen world are encompassing all those who deliver the divine Message." He further states, "should the work of teaching lapse, these confirmations would be entirely cut off, since it is impossible for the loved ones of God to receive assistance unless they teach."

188.3 While the friends are generally conscious of the vital importance of teaching, yet, because of their frailties, many for the most part lack confidence, and feel they do not know what course of action to follow, or how to bring their efforts to a conclusion. Since guidance on such fundamental issues comes from the Writings of the Faith, we asked the Research Department to prepare a compilation of texts on the subject. This is now ready and a copy is enclosed.

188.4 A study of the compilation will provide the friends with stimulating information on general guidelines to be followed by them when engaged in the teaching work. While many will be inspired, after reading the compilation, to cast aside their fears and misgivings and their sense of inadequacy, and will arise to speak forth announcing the glad-tidings of the Kingdom to their fellowmen, many more will still be in need of loving education and more detailed guidance on the part of the institutions of the Faith, and patient and wise prodding before they are aroused to action. And since the primary purpose for which Local Spiritual Assemblies are established is to promote the teaching

work, it is clear that every National Spiritual Assembly must give careful consideration to ways and means to encourage each Local Assembly under its jurisdiction to fulfill its principal obligation. For instance, Local Assemblies could be urged to organize special meetings when texts, such as those included in the compilation, would be studied. Furthermore, it is important that Local Assemblies share with the local friends stories of successes achieved by some of them, descriptions of effective presentations found useful by them, examples of various ways that a Bahá'í subject could be introduced to inquirers, or illustrations of methods which would enable the believer to relate the needs of society to our teachings. Such information and suggestions could be offered to the friends at Nineteen Day Feasts, through a local newsletter, or by any other means open to each Local Assembly. In all these contacts with the believers, each Local Spiritual Assembly should impress upon the friends the unique and irreplaceable role the individual plays in the prosecution of any Bahá'í undertaking. Quotations from the writings on this point, such as the following passage from one of the letters of Shoghi Effendi, should be repeatedly presented and explained to the friends:

188.4aHe [the individual believer] it is who constitutes the warp and woof on which the quality and pattern of the whole fabric must depend. He it is who acts as one of the countless links in the mighty chain that now girdles the globe. He it is who serves as one of the multitude of bricks which support the structure and insure the stability of the administrative edifice now being raised in every part of the world. Without his support, at once wholehearted, continuous and generous, every measure adopted, and every plan formulated, by the body which acts as the national representative of the community to which he belongs is foredoomed to failure. The World Center of the Faith itself is paralyzed if such a support on the part of the rank and file of the community is denied it. The Author of the Divine Plan Himself is impeded in His purpose if the proper instruments for the execution of His design are lacking. The sustaining strength of Bahá'u'lláh Himself, the Founder of the Faith, will be withheld from every and each individual who fails in the long run to arise and play his part.

188.5 When the friends realize that the hosts of the Kingdom are waiting to rush forth and assist them, that others from their own ranks have arisen and have been successful, that everyone can find some effective method of teaching according to his own particular capacities and talents, they will then no doubt arise with greater confidence to take the first step, and this, we know, will be aided and guided from on high, for the very act of striving to respond to God's call will bring in its wake countless divine blessings.

188.6 It is the hope and prayer of the Universal House of Justice that each National Spiritual Assembly will do its utmost to constantly encourage the friends to participate in what Shoghi Effendi calls "the most essential, the most urgent of all our obligations," and what must be "the dominating passion of our life," and follow the example of the Apostles of Christ who, as testified by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "forgot themselves and all earthly things, forsook all their cares and belongings, purged themselves of self and passion ... till at last they made the world another world, illumined the surface of

the earth and even to their last hour proved self-sacrificing in the pathway of that beloved One of God. ... Let them that are men of action follow in their footsteps!"

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

189

Consolidation of Local Spiritual Assemblies;
Formation at Any Time During Ridván

6 March 1977

To National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

189.1 The establishment and strong growth of Local Spiritual Assemblies is one of the most fundamental requirements for the spread of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, the development of Bahá'í community life and the emergence of a transformed society. This theme has been made one of the central goals of the Five Year Plan, and National Spiritual Assemblies, aided by their committees, have been making strenuous efforts to establish new Local Spiritual Assemblies and to consolidate those which have lapsed or are in need of strengthening.

189.2 Already a number of specific steps have been taken by the Universal House of Justice to assist National Spiritual Assemblies towards the attainment of these objectives. The most far-reaching of these steps is the authority given to members of the Auxiliary Boards to appoint assistants whose primary aim is to stimulate and assist the believers to bring into being and to consolidate Local Spiritual Assemblies in all localities where nine or more Bahá'ís reside, and to advise and assist these Assemblies in the performance of their God-given duties. The effects of the appointment of assistants by Auxiliary Board members are beginning to appear and will undoubtedly bear more and more fruit as the months pass.

189.3 Nevertheless, it is of concern to the Universal House of Justice that, in spite of the efforts of the National Spiritual Assemblies and the Auxiliary Boards and of all the believers who are laboring in the field, there are many areas in which there are communities of nine or more believers who are left, for year after year, without the blessing of the divine institution of a Local Spiritual Assembly. This is a phenomenon of the present stage of the spread of the Faith where there has been a rapid acceptance of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh by people who, because of factors such as illiteracy, unfamiliarity with the concepts of Bahá'í administration, or an attitude to the calendar and the passage of time that is different from that of city-dwellers, fail to reelect their Spiritual Assemblies on the First Day of Ridván. National Assemblies are striving to send pioneers and traveling teachers to deepen such believers in their understanding of the teachings and administrative principles of the Faith, but often the localities in which they dwell are remote from the other friends or difficult to reach, and there are, in any case, too few well-grounded believers who can be sent on such projects.

189.4 Not wishing such communities to be deprived of the bounty and experience of having Local Spiritual Assemblies, we have decided that, in such

cases, when the local friends fail to elect their Spiritual Assembly on the First Day of Ridván, they should do so on any subsequent day of the Ridván Festival. This is not a general permission to all Local Spiritual Assemblies; it is intended only for those which are affected by factors such as those mentioned above, and it is for your Assembly to decide the areas or Assemblies in your country to which it will apply. The aim is still to so consolidate all communities that they will elect their Assemblies regularly on the First Day of Ridván.

189.5 It is hoped that this decision will do much to help you consolidate the communities throughout your area of jurisdiction. It does not change the permission given at the beginning of the Five Year Plan for new Assemblies, being formed for the first time, to be formed at any time during the year.

189.6 We shall supplicate the Blessed Perfection to reinforce with the Hosts of Heaven every effort you make towards this vital objective.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

190

Ridván Message 1977

24 March 1977

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

190.1REJOICE OUTSTANDING EVENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS MARKING MID YEAR FIVE YEAR PLAN: PUBLICATION IN ENGLISH SELECTION WRITINGS BLESSED BÁB OPENING TO EYES WESTERN FOLLOWERS FAITH A PRICELESS TREASURY HIS IMMORTAL UTTERANCES, A BOUNTY WHICH CANNOT FAIL DRAW HEARTS EVER NEARER YOUTHFUL MARTYR-PROPHET, SUCCESSFU HOLDING EIGHT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES, BLAZONING NAME CAUSE GOD BEFORE A RECEPTIVE PUBLIC, KNITTING MORE CLOSELY TIES LINKING FRIENDS ALL LANDS, RESULTING UPSURGE INTENSE ACTIVITY TEACHING PIONEERING, CONFERRING AWARENESS URGENT CHALLENGE PRESENTED BY GOALS PLAN THIS CRITICAL PERIOD; PROFOUNDLY SIGNIFICANT VISIT TO RESTING-PLACE BELOVED GUARDIAN BY FIRST REIGNING MONARCH TO ACCEPT FAITH BAHÁ'U'LLÁH; DEPARTURE FORMER TENANTS HOUSE 'ABDU'LLÁH PÁSHÁ ENABLING FAITH OBTAIN POSSESSION RECENTLY PURCHASED HOLY PLACE INITIATE PROCESS RESTORATION PREPARATION EVENTUAL OPENING TO VISITS BY PILGRIMS; ARRIVAL HAIFA FIRST FOUR CONSIGNMENTS MARBLE AND INITIATION ACTUAL CONSTRUCTION SEAT UNIVERSAL HOUSE JUSTICE MOUNT CARMEL; APPOINTMENT THREE ADDITIONAL COUNSELORS NORTH CENTRAL AMERICA AUSTRALASIA; ATTAINMENT GOAL SETTLEMENT MIDWAY POINT PLAN MAJORITY PIONEERS CALLED FOR DURING FIRST PHASE ACCOMPANIED GREAT OUTFLOW INTERNATIONAL TRAVELING TEACHERS; DRAMATIC RESURG TEACHING WORK CRADLE FAITH BY INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS UNDER LOCAL PLANS; FINALLY, ELECTION THIS RIDVÁN SIX NEW PILLARS UNIVERSAL HOUSE JUSTICE, NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES OF UPPER VOLTA IN AFRICA, OF THE FRENCH ANTILLES IN THE CARIBBEAN, OF SURINAM AND FRENCH GUIANA IN SOUTH AMERICA, OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS AND OF THE NEW HEBRIDES IN PACIFIC OCEAN, AND OF GREECE IN EUROPE, RAISING TOTAL NUMBER NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES TO 123 TO TAKE PART IN FOURTH ELECTION UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE IN HOLY LAND DURING RIDVÁN1978.

190.2 NATIONAL CONVENTIONS IN 1978 WILL BE ON WEEKEND PRECEDING OR FOLLOWING 23 MAY FEAST DECLARATION BÁB. CALL FOR FORMATION AT THAT TIME SIX MORE NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES: BURUNDI AND MAURITANIA IN AFRICA, THE BAHAMAS IN

AMERICA, OMAN AND QATAR IN ASIA, AND THE MARIANA ISLANDS IN THE PACIFIC.

190.3 PRESENT RATE GROWTH COMMUNITY PROSPECT ACCELERATION PROCESS ENTRY BY TROOPS ITS SPREAD NEW AREAS IMPEL US STRENGTHEN STILL FURTHER THE AUXILIARY BOARDS WHOSE SERVICES SO VITAL SOUND DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY ANNOUNCE AUTHORIZATION INCREASE MEMBERSHIP BOARDS BY 297 RAISING TOTAL TO 675 OF WHICH 279 ARE AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBERS FOR PROTECTION AND 396 FOR PROPAGATION OF FAITH.

190.4 IN EARLY DAYS OF JUNE 1877 BAHÁ'U'LLÁH LEFT CITY 'AKKÁ AND TOOK UP RESIDENCE IN MAZRA'IH. TO MARK CENTENARY THIS TERMINATION CONFINEMENT ANCIENT BEAUTY WITHIN WALLS PRISON CITY WE CALL UPON HIS FOLLOWERS ALL LANDS DEVOTE NINETEEN DAY FEAST OF NÚR COMMEMORATION HISTORIC EVENT, REDEDICATING THEMSELVES URGENT TASKS BEFORE THEM, SO THAT PENT-UP ENERGIES HIS PRECIOUS FAITH MAY BE RELEASED TO REACH EVER GREATER NUMBER SEEKING SOULS IN EVER WIDER CIRCLE THEIR FELLOWMEN.

190.5 GREATEST CHALLENGE FACING FOLLOWERS BAHÁ'U'LLÁH LAST TWO YEARS PLAN IS IN FIELDS EXPANSION CONSOLIDATION. TREMENDOUS UPSURGE NEEDED IN SERVICES INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS ON WHOSE DEEDS ULTIMATELY ALL PROGRESS DEPENDS. MOMENTU GENERATED BY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES MUST BE ACCELERATED WITHOUT DELAY AN SPIRIT RELEASED MUST PERMEATE ALL COMMUNITIES. GREAT INCREASE MUST TAKE PLACE IN ENTHUSIASTIC TEACHING CARRIED OUT WITH CONFIDENCE, IMAGINATION AND PERSEVERANCE BY YOUNG AND OLD, RICH AND POOR, LEARNED AND ILLITERATE, WHETHER AT HOME OR TRAVELING. PARTICULARLY CALL UPON BAHÁ'Í WOMEN, WHOSE CAPACITIES IN MANY LANDS STILL LARGELY UNUSED, AND WHOSE POTENTIAL FOR SERVICE CAUSE SO GREAT, TO ARISE AND DEMONSTRATE IMPORTANCE PART THEY ARE TO PLAY IN ALL FIELDS SERVICE FAITH.

190.6 BOUNTIES IN ABUNDANCE WAITING DESCEND FROM SUPREME CONCOURSE. THAT THE FRIENDS OF GOD WILL NOW SURGE AHEAD WITH RESOLUTE RADIANT SPIRITS IN EVERY CONTINENT ISLANDS OF THE SEAS, TO BRING MESSAGE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH TO WAITING SOULS WIN THEIR ALLEGIANCE HIS CAUSE, ENSURING OVERWHELMING VICTORY PLAN TO WHICH THEY ARE NOW COMMITTED, IS OUR HIGH HOPE AND ARDENT PRAYER AT SACRED THRESHOLD.

The Universal House of Justice

190.7 Auxiliary Boards—Ridván 1977

Former Number	Present Increase	New Total
Africa		
Protection:		
Northern	5	5
Western	11	13

24
Central and East
13
23
36
Southern
7
9
16
36
81
Propagation:
Northern
5
–
5
Western
14
19
33
Central and East
19
17
36
Southern
16
9
25
54
99
Western Hemisphere
Protection:
North America
9
9
18
Central America
11
7
18
South America
16
2
18
36
54
Propagation:

North America
18
9
27
Central America
19
11
27
South America
38
25
63
72
117
Asia
Protection:
Western
9
9
18
South Central
6
30
36
Northeastern
3
15
18
Southeastern
9
18
27
27
99
Propagation:
Western
18
18
36
South Central
30
6
36
Northeastern
15
3
18

Southeastern
27
–
27
90
117
Australasia
Protection:
9
9
18
Propagation:
18
9
27
Europe
Protection:
9
18
27
Propagation:
27
9
36
TOTAL
378
297
675
Total Protection
117
162
279
Total Propagation
261
135
396
191
Call for Pioneers
26 May 1977
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá’í Friends,
191.1 We are gratified that so many pioneers have settled in the territories scheduled under the two pioneer calls of the Five Year Plan.
191.2 We have just completed a review of the current status of the Plan in consultation with the International Teaching Center, and it became obvious that a new pioneer call is needed. A new list of pioneer assignments is enclosed, from which you will see that 462 pioneers must arise to settle in specified

territories. These pioneers should proceed to their posts as soon as possible to lend their support to the vital local teaching work, in time to participate in winning the remaining goals and in consolidating the work prior to the conclusion of the Plan.

191.3 In view of the difficulties that nationals of certain countries are experiencing in settling in the goal countries assigned to their national community, some adjustments, and in certain cases deletions, have been made in the few unfilled goals. Therefore this pioneer call includes all outstanding goals. Any National Assembly finding that its prior unfilled assignments have not been carried forward should realize that alternative solutions have been found. However, if at the time National Assemblies receive this list some of their prospective pioneers are well advanced in their preparations to proceed to their posts, nothing should be done to prevent their going forward with their plans. We hope that the pioneers already in the field will remain at their posts and that the National Spiritual Assemblies will encourage them, and if necessary provide the means required to enable them to continue their worthy labors in their respective fields of service.

191.4 It is our fervent hope and prayer that this new outflow of pioneers will provide a stimulus to the teaching work throughout the world. We realize the heavy commitments that many National Spiritual Assemblies called upon to provide pioneer manpower have in respect to their homefront goals, but in view ofthe worldwide needs of the Plan, we trust that every effort will be made to respond to this call, and not only pave the way for a triumphal conclusion of the Plan in 1979, but reinforce the efforts now being exerted to lay firm foundations for the spread and development of the precious Faith of God in every land.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

192

Commemoration of the Centenary of the Termination of Bahá'u'lláh's Confinement in 'Akká

June 1977

192.1IN EARLY DAYS OF JUNE 1877 BAHÁ'U'LLÁH LEFT CITY 'AKKÁ AND TOOK UP RESIDENCE IN MAZRA'IH. TO MARK CENTENARY THIS TERMINATION CONFINEMENT ANCIENT BEAUTY WITHIN WALLS PRISON CITY WE CALL UPON HIS FOLLOWERS ALL LANDS DEVOTE NINETEEN DAY FEAST OF NÚR COMMEMORATION HISTORIC EVENT, REDEDICATING THEMSELVES URGENT TASKS BEFORE THEM, SO THAT PENT-UP ENERGIES HIS PRECIOUS FAITH MAY BE RELEASED TO REACH EVER GREATER NUMBER SEEKING SOULS IN EVER WIDER CIRCLE THEIR FELLOWMEN.

The Universal House of Justice, Ridván 1977

192.2 In the early afternoon of Saturday, 11 June 1977, the pilgrims and the friends serving at the World Center made their way to Mazra'ih to visit the Mansion which 'Abdu'l-Bahá had rented a century ago for the use of Bahá'u'lláh, His first residence after leaving the prison city of 'Akká. While there, each was privileged to visit and offer prayers in the very room occupied by the Blessed Beauty; later they repaired to the gardens at Bahjí.

192.3 Meanwhile the Hands of the Cause present in the Holy Land, the members of the Universal House of Justice and the Counselor members of the International Teaching Center were paying their respects to the memory of Bahá'u'lláh at the House of 'Abbúd in 'Akká and at the Garden of Ridván. The rooms Bahá'u'lláh had occupied were visited and prayers of thanksgiving for His release from confinement were offered in these Holy Places. They then journeyed north to Mazra'ih for prayers at that Holy Spot, and afterwards joined the other friends in the Haram-i-Aqdas at Bahjí for the formal program of the Commemoration of this great event in the history of the Heroic Age of the Cause.

192.4 Prayers were recited; 'Abdu'l-Bahá's account of the end of Bahá'u'lláh's confinement and Shoghi Effendi's narrative from God Passes By were read; and finally, just as the sun was casting its last light over the Mediterranean, the friends made their way in the utmost reverence to the Most Holy Shrine for the chanting of the Tablet of Visitation.

192.5The remembrance of God and His praise, and the glory of God and His splendor, rest upon Thee, O Thou Who art His Beauty! I bear witness that the eye of creation hath never gazed upon one wronged like Thee. Thou wast immersed all the days of Thy life beneath an ocean of tribulations. At one time Thou wast in chains and fetters; at another Thou wast threatened by the sword of Thine enemies. Yet, despite all this, Thou didst enjoin upon all men to observe what had been prescribed unto Thee by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

Bahá'u'lláh

193

Murder of an Iranian Homefront Pioneer

14 June 1977

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

193.1 The Universal House of Justice has asked us to send you the enclosed article for the Bahá'í News concerning a recent martyrdom in Persia. A photograph of Mr. Rúhu'lláh Taymúrí is also enclosed.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

193.2 The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iran has reported that a 37 year old man, Mr. Rúhu'lláh Taymúrí-Muqaddam, a steadfast pioneer for some twenty years in Fádilábád in the Province of Gurgán, has been martyred at the hands of misguided people of that village. Some members of a fanatical element of the area had been plotting against the Faith and had collected money to finance a large-scale attack on the Bahá'ís. In starting the campaign they went to the house of Taymúrí and attacked him and his sister. The blows of a knife and other weapons caused the death of Mr. Taymúrí and serious injury to his younger sister, Miss Parvín Taymúrí.

193.3 Fortunately the authorities in Iran have arrested the assassins and they now await trial. At present the area is calm and the Government has the situation under control.

193.4 The National Spiritual Assembly reports that it is confident that this persecution in the cradle of the Faith will attract divine confirmations and will bring new victories to the steadfast and devoted believers in the land of Bahá'u'lláh.

194

Collaboration between Auxiliary Board Members and National and Regional Teaching Committees

6 July 1977

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

194.1 It has become apparent that in some areas the progress of the teaching work requires closer collaboration between Auxiliary Board members and National or Regional Teaching Committees than heretofore. Following consultation with the International Teaching Center on the matter, we have concluded that the possibilities provided by the present policy are adequate and that where a lack of collaboration has been felt it has arisen from an insufficiently full and frequent exchange of information between the institutions.

194.2 While the members of the Auxiliary Boards and their assistants should never attempt to direct the work of committees or become involved in the administrative work associated with the committees' functions, it is absolutely vital that they be kept fully informed of the committees' activities and plans and their hopes for the work in the area. Only then can the members of the Auxiliary Boards be confident that the services to which they are exhorting the believers and the projects in which they are encouraging them are in harmony with the overall plans and objectives of the National Spiritual Assembly and its committees.

194.3 The existing policy and the reasons for it were conveyed to the Continental Boards of Counselors and all National Spiritual Assemblies in our letter of 1 October 1969, a copy of which is attached. It should be noted that under this policy it is permissible and highly desirable to have a direct and regular exchange of information between the committees and the Auxiliary Board members. Moreover, at the outset of the work of the year or at times during the year when new plans are being evolved, it is often helpful to arrange for consultations to be held between the Auxiliary Board members and the National or Regional Teaching Committees before such plans are finalized.

194.4 We are confident that a greater awareness of the importance of close collaboration between the two arms of the Administrative Order and of the ways available to achieve this will lead to a much-needed intensification of the teaching work in every land.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

195

Reconstruction of Society

21 August 1977

To an individual Bahá'í

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

195.1 The Universal House of Justice has studied your long letter of 19 May 1976. With many of your observations it thoroughly agrees; others, it believes are founded on erroneous information, on an inaccurate assessment of the current status of the Bahá'í community, or on misconceptions about the objectives towards which it is working. The House of Justice does not have the time which would be required to formulate a detailed reply to all the various points in your letter. It reaffirms, however, the decisions conveyed to your National Spiritual Assembly in its letter of 2 December 1976, and has instructed us to add the following comments.

195.2 Mankind's response to the Message of Bahá'u'lláh has been dangerously, one might say disastrously, slow. From the earliest days it has been brought to the notice of leaders and scholars, but few of these, very few, have rallied to its support. The most profound and most widespread response has been from the middle classes and indeed from the poor, the unlettered, the deprived and the suffering. But, as the Guardian's secretary wrote on his behalf on 20 June 1942,

195.2a That is perhaps what is most glorious about our present activities all over the world, that we, a band not large in numbers, not possessing financial backing or the prestige of great names, should, in the name of our beloved Faith, be forging ahead at such a pace, and demonstrating to future and present generations that it is the God-given qualities of our religion that are raising it up and not the transient support of worldly fame and power. All that will come later, when it has been made clear beyond the shadow of a doubt that what raised aloft the banner of Bahá'u'lláh was the love, sacrifice, and devotion of His humble followers and the change that His teachings wrought in their hearts and lives.

195.3 Already the situation is changing, and larger numbers of believers are occupying positions of eminence and distinction in the world, but, in comparison with the overwhelming majority of the Bahá'ís, they are still a small handful. The process of changing the hearts and lives is also a gradual one, but while we should strive to hasten it, we should not let the problems dismay us. On 5 July 1947 the Guardian's secretary wrote on his behalf to an individual believer:

195.3a The primary reason for anyone becoming a Bahá'í must of course be because he has come to believe the doctrines, the teachings and the Order of Bahá'u'lláh are the correct thing for this stage in the world's evolution. The Bahá'ís themselves as a body have one great advantage: they are sincerely convinced Bahá'u'lláh is right; they have a plan, and they are trying to follow it. But to pretend they are perfect, that the Bahá'ís of the future will not be a hundred times more mature, better balanced, more exemplary in their conduct, would be foolish.

195.4 The Universal House of Justice is aware of the magnitude of the problems that the Bahá'í communities face, but as the response to the Message of Bahá'u'lláh increases and as the Bahá'í community throughout the world shows its ability to overcome these problems, the attention of men and women of every stratum of society will increasingly be drawn to the Faith. The most urgent need now—so late is the hour—is for

the Bahá'ís to spread the Message, while they are still able to do so, to the largest possible number of their fellow human beings, simultaneously expanding and consolidating the Bahá'í community as quickly as they can with the resources at their disposal. As mankind passes through the darkest phase of its history, the Bahá'í community will have to face not only entry by troops, which it is now experiencing, but, before too long, mass conversion.

195.5 The first step in the reconstruction of human society is for individuals to accept Bahá'u'lláh as the Manifestation of God for this age and to begin to strive, as well as they can, to follow His Teachings in their individual and in their communal lives. Conversion is but the first step, yet it is the essential one. Without it no amount of expertise or scientifically based knowledge will have a lasting effect, because the fundamental motivating and sustaining power will be lacking.

195.6 As the Bahá'í community grows it will acquire experts in numerous fields—both by Bahá'ís becoming experts and by experts becoming Bahá'ís. As these experts bring their knowledge and skill to the service of the community and, even more, as they transform their various disciplines by bringing to bear upon them the light of the Divine Teachings, problem after problem now disrupting society will be answered. In such developments they should strive to make the utmost use of non-Bahá'í resources and should collaborate fully with non-Bahá'ís who are working in the same fields. Such collaboration will, in the long run, be of far more benefit than any attempt now to treat such scientific endeavors as specifically Bahá'í projects operating under Bahá'í institutions and financed by investment of Bahá'í funds.

195.7 Paralleling this process, Bahá'í institutional life will also be developing, and as it does so the Assemblies will draw increasingly upon scientific and expert knowledge—whether of Bahá'ís or of non-Bahá'ís—to assist in solving the problems of their communities.

195.8 In time great Bahá'í institutions of learning, great international and national projects for the betterment of human life will be inaugurated and flourish.

195.9 The Bahá'í work for the reconstruction of human society can thus be seen to comprise three streams: the most fundamental is the spreading of the Word of God, the winning of the allegiance of ever-greater numbers of men and women to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and the establishment of the Bahá'í Administrative Order; concurrent with this is the contribution to human advancement and to the progress of the Bahá'í community made by individual Bahá'ís in the pursuit of their daily work; and then there are the projects and institutions for human advancement launched and operated by Bahá'í Spiritual Assemblies as their resources grow and the range of their activities expands. It is for the Universal House of Justice to direct the energies of the believers in these various channels and to make known what activities are timely and have priority. It considers that the establishment of an International Human Development Center now as a Bahá'í-affiliated institution would be untimely and ill-advised.

195.10 The House of Justice assures you of its prayers for the confirmation of

your endeavors on behalf of the Faith and in your professional work.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
196
Ceremony for Laying the Foundation Stone of the
Mother Temple of the Indian Subcontinent
10 October 1977
To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India
196.1OVERJOYED REMOVAL OBSTACLES USE TEMPLE SITE. WELCOME PRESENCE AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚHÍYYIH KHÁNUM IN YOUR MIDST OCCASION WOMEN'S CONFERENCE ENABLING YOU HOLD BEFITTING CEREMONY MARKING INITIATION PROJECT CONSTRUCTION MOTHER TEMPLE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT. CALLING ON AMATU'L-BAHÁ REPRESENT HOUSE JUSTICE MOMENTOUS OCCASION LAY FOUNDATION STONE HISTORIC EDIFICE. FERVENTLY PRAYING NOBLE INSTITUTION SOON TO BE REARED YOUR SOIL WILL ATTRACT ADDED DIVINE BLESSINGS UPON COMMUNITY WHOSE TEACHING SUCCESS STANDS UNEQUALED ENTIRE BAHÁ'Í WORLD.
Universal House of Justice
197
Message to Women's Conference, New Delhi
13 October 1977
To the Bahá'í Women's Conference in New Delhi, India
197.1WITH UTMOST JOY HAIL BAHÁ'Í WOMEN'S CONFERENCE GRACED PRESENCE AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚHÍYYIH KHÁNUM AS ANOTHER MAJOR STEP IN ASIA LEADING TO FULL RECOGNITION NOBLE STATION FULFILLMENT THEIR GREAT POTENTIALITIES THEIR SIGNIFICANT ROLE PROMOTION CAUSE IMMENSE RESPONSIBILITIES THEY ARE CALLED UPON TO DISCHARGE IN COOPERATION WITH THEIR BRETHREN IN BUILDING NEW CIVILIZATION SHELTERING ALL MANKIND. ARDENTLY PRAYING SACRED THRESHOLD THIS GATHERING MAY BECOME LANDMARK PROGRESS FAITH ASIA STRENGTHEN WING HUMANITY SO TENDERLY ENCOURAGED BY BLESSED BEAUTY ENABLE COMMUNITIES CONTINENT SOAR HEIGHTS GLORIOUS VICTORIES.
Universal House of Justice
198
Appointment of Architects for Mother Temple
of the Indian Subcontinent and the Restoration of the
House of 'Abdu'lláh Páshá
14 October 1977
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
198.1HAVE MUCH JOY IN ANNOUNCING APPOINTMENT TWO DISTINGUISHED BAHÁ'Í ARCHITECTS FROM CRADLE FAITH: FARÍBURZ SAHBÁ AS ARCHITECT MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR INDIA, AND RIDVÁNU'LLÁH ASHRAF AS ARCHITECT FOR RESTORATION SACRED RESIDENCE BELOVED MASTER KNOWN AS HOUSE OF 'ABDU'LLÁH PÁSHÁ. SUPPLICATING DIVINE CONFIRMATIONS THESE TWO HISTORIC ENTERPRISES.
Universal House of Justice
199
Formation of New and Lapsed Assemblies
throughout the year
20 November 1977

To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
199.1 The Universal House of Justice has decided that during the last year of the Five Year Plan, i.e., from 21 April 1978 until 20 April 1979 inclusive, Local Spiritual Assemblies being established for the first time, as well as lapsed Assemblies which achieve adequate strength to regain their Assembly status, may be formed at any time during that year. This means that Local Assemblies formed at Ridván 1979 will not be counted towards the fulfillment of the goals of the Five Year Plan.
199.2 It is the hope of the Universal House of Justice that this information will enable you to plan your teaching activities intelligently and realistically over the period of time separating us from the end of the Plan, and to intensify your efforts in order to achieve maximum results.
199.3 The Universal House of Justice will offer prayers at the Holy Shrines that the process of forming firmly grounded Local Spiritual Assemblies, which is one of the vital goals of the Five Year Plan, will be pursued with outstanding success through the dedicated efforts of the friends in every land.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
200
Appointment of New Counselor in Southeastern Asia
25 November 1977
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
200.1 The Universal House of Justice announces with pleasure that it has appointed a new Counselor in the zone of Southeastern Asia, Mr. Inparaju Chinniah of Malaysia. Mr. Chinniah replaces Mr. Firaydún Mítháqíyán, who ceased to be a Counselor upon leaving the zone and pioneering to Korea, where he is continuing his devoted services to the Cause of God.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
201
Announcement of Initiation of Broadcasting by
First Bahá'í Radio Station
15 December 1977
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
201.1REJOICE ANNOUNCE INITIATION FULL TIME BROADCASTING FIRST RADIO STATION BAHÁ'Í WORLD 12 DECEMBER IN OTAVALO, ECUADOR. HAIL VISION LABORS ASSEMBLY COMMUNITY ECUADOR IN ACHIEVING THIS MILESTONE BAHÁ'Í PROCLAMATION TEACHING DEEPENING. OFFERING PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD BAHÁ'Í RADIO ECUADOR WILL FULFILL ITS PROMISE AS LANDMARK CAUSE AND SERVICE PROGRESS PEOPLES LATIN AMERICA.
Universal House of Justice
202
Message of Greetings to Hemispheric Bahá'í
Radio-Television Conference
15 December 1977

To the Hemispheric Radio-Television Conference
202.1EXTEND WARM GREETINGS ATTENDANTS HEMISPHERIC RADIO TELEVISION CONFERENCE GREAT OPPORTUNITIES AFFORDED THOSE BAHÁ'ÍS TRAINED USE POWERS RADIO TELEVISION REACH HEARTS MINDS NUMBERLESS PERSONS AWAITING COMING KINGDOM OF G ON EARTH. MAY VOICE CAUSE BE RAISED BEFORE MILLIONS PROCLAIMING MESSAGE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH THROUGHOUT HEMISPHERE. SHARING OF TALENTS RESOURCES ZEAL WILL ASSUREDLY BRING GREAT CONFIRMATIONS. ASSURE LOVING PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES SUCCESS YOUR IMPORTANT DELIBERATIONS.
Universal House of Justice
203
Comments on First International Bahá'í Women's
Conference in South America
3 January 1978
To the First International Bahá'í Women's Conference in South America
203.1DELIGHTED GREAT SUCCESS WIDESPREAD ATTENDANCE EXCELLENT PUBLICITY PROCLAMATION FIRST INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í WOMEN'S CONFERENCE SOUTH AMERICA WILL OFFER PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD DETERMINATION WIN GOALS PLAN WILL BE CONFIRMED.
Universal House of Justice
204
Release of a Compilation on Bahá'í Consultation
1 February 1978
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
204.1 Recently the Research Department made a compilation on Bahá'í Consultation, and we have been asked by the Universal House of Justice to send you herewith a copy. You may share the contents of this compilation with the friends in whatever manner you consider advisable.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
205
Inauguration of Radio Bahá'í Ecuador
Naw-Rúz 1978
To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ecuador
205.1WITH JOYOUS HEARTS WE HAIL THE OFFICIAL INAUGURATION IN ECUADOR OF THE FIRST RADIO STATION IN THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD, AUSPICIOUS MAJOR STEP FULFILLMENT GOAL OF THE FIVE YEAR PLAN OF INCREASING THE USE OF MASS COMMUNICATION IN PROCLAIMING AND TEACHING THE FAITH OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.
205.2 MAY THIS HAPPY EVENT BE THE FORERUNNER AND THE INSPIRATION FOR THE EARLY ESTABLISHMENT OF RADIO STATIONS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD AS A NOTABLE SERVICE NOT ONLY TO THE FOLLOWERS OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH BUT TO ALL PEOPLES.
205.3 WE WILL SUPPLICATE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IN THE HOLY SHRINES THAT HIS BLESSINGS AND CONFIRMATIONS WILL DESCEND UPON ALL WHO LABOR FOR THE SUCCESS OF THIS WORTHY UNDERTAKING.
The Universal House of Justice
206
Elucidation of Bahá'í Teachings on Ranks and Stations

27 March 1978
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
206.1 One of the believers wrote recently to the Universal House of Justice requesting an elucidation of a statement made by it in one of its letters about the relationship between the Boards of Counselors and National Spiritual Assemblies. The House of Justice instructed us to send the following reply, which is now being shared with all National Assemblies as it will undoubtedly be of interest to the believers in general.
206.2 The statement that the Boards of Counselors outrank the National Institutions of the Faith has a number of implications. A Board of Counselors has the particular responsibility of caring for the protection and propagation of the Faith throughout a continental zone which contains a number of national Bahá'í communities. In performing these tasks it neither directs nor instructs the Spiritual Assemblies or individual believers, but it has the necessary rank to enable it to ensure that it is kept properly informed and that the Spiritual Assemblies give due consideration to its advice and recommendations. However, the essence of the relationships between Bahá'í institutions is loving consultation and a common desire to serve the Cause of God rather than a matter of rank or station.
206.3 It is clear from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, as well as from those of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the interpretations of the Guardian, that the proper functioning of human society requires the preservation of ranks and classes within its membership. The friends should recognize this without envy or jealousy, and those who occupy ranks should never exploit their position or regard themselves as being superior to others. About this Bahá'u'lláh has written:
206.3aAnd amongst the realms of unity is the unity of rank and station. It redoundeth to the exaltation of the Cause, glorifying it among all peoples. Ever since the seeking of preference and distinction came into play, the world hath been laid waste. It hath become desolate. Those who have quaffed from the ocean of divine utterance and fixed their gaze upon the Realm of Glory should regard themselves as being on the same level as the others and in the same station. Were this matter to be definitely established and conclusively demonstrated through the power and might of God, the world would become as the Abhá Paradise.
206.3bIndeed, man is noble, inasmuch as each one is a repository of the sign of God. Nevertheless, to regard oneself as superior in knowledge, learning or virtue, or to exalt oneself or seek preference, is a grievous transgression. Great is the blessedness of those who are adorned with the ornament of this unity and have been graciously confirmed by God.
In similar vein, Shoghi Effendi gave this warning to those who are elected to serve on National Spiritual Assemblies:
206.3c
206.3cThey should never be led to suppose that they are the central ornaments of the body of the Cause, intrinsically superior to others in capacity or merit, and sole promoters of its teachings and principles. They should

approach their task with extreme humility, and endeavor by their open-mindedness, their high sense of justice and duty, their candor, their modesty, their entire devotion to the welfare and interests of the friends, the Cause, and humanity, to win not only the confidence and the genuine support and respect of those whom they should serve, but also their esteem and real affection. ...

206.4 Courtesy, reverence, dignity, respect for the rank and achievements of others are virtues which contribute to the harmony and well-being of every community, but pride and self-aggrandizement are among the most deadly of sins.

206.5 The House of Justice hopes that all the friends will remember that the ultimate aim in life of every soul should be to attain spiritual excellence—to win the good pleasure of God. The true spiritual station of any soul is known only to God. It is quite a different thing from the ranks and stations that men and women occupy in the various sectors of society. Whoever has his eyes fixed on the goal of attaining the good pleasure of God will accept with joy and radiant acquiescence whatever work or station is assigned to him in the Cause of God, and will rejoice to serve Him under all conditions.

206.6 There are many passages on this theme in the Holy Writings, and the Universal House of Justice hopes that these remarks will help the friends to turn to them and understand their purport.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

207

Message to the International Convention—Ridván 1978

Ridván 1978

To the International Bahá'í Convention

Dearly loved Friends,

207.1 The Universal House of Justice takes great pleasure in addressing the members of National Spiritual Assemblies gathered in the Holy Land, in the presence of Hands of the Cause of God and Counselors from all continents, at this fourth International Convention, pausing with you to review the course and needs of the Five Year Plan as we cross the threshold of its final year.

Review of the progress of the Five Year Plan

207.2 The opening of the Plan witnessed the eager response of the friends, careful study made by the national institutions of the Faith of its implications and requirements, the establishment of machinery and the setting up of projects to achieve its goals, and the often arduous struggle to fulfill the first of its three major objectives—the safeguarding and consolidation of all prizes won in earlier campaigns. This phase extended in many countries over a period of several months, and in others continued as far as the midway point of the Plan.

207.3 The middle year of the Plan saw the holding of the International Conferences and those many regional and national conferences which were held concurrently and diffused far and wide the inspiration flowing from these eight major assemblages of the believers. These gatherings motivated a great acceleration of the work and helped the believers throughout the world to

arrive at a new realization of the responsibility entrusted to the followers of the Most Great Name for the spiritual regeneration of their fellowmen.

207.4 We are now in the last stage of the Plan, and this Convention provides us with a welcome and auspicious hour in which to assess our progress and to direct our thoughts to the complete achievement of the goals.

207.5 Of the 130 National Spiritual Assemblies which will be operating during the last year of the Plan, 50 have either achieved or nearly achieved their teaching goals. Of the remaining 80 National Spiritual Assemblies, some 40 are confidently forging ahead and are assured of victory if the present tempo in their teaching work is maintained. Nine National Assemblies are restricted by conditions which make the fulfillment of their homefront goals dependent upon circumstances beyond their control. The remaining 30 national communities are, alas, seriously lagging behind, and only strenuous and sacrificial effort will enable them to win their goals.Review of the second objective: vast and widespread expansion

207.6 The second of the three major objectives of the Plan—a vast and widespread expansion of the Bahá'í community—has seen great but geographically uneven progress. There are now more than 19,000 Local Spiritual Assemblies and the number of localities where Bahá'ís reside is over 83,000. This expansion has been accompanied by an intensification of proclamation efforts and by increased use of mass media such as radio and television.

207.7 There have been notable advances in the process of gaining wider recognition for the Cause of God and in fostering cordial relations with civil authorities, a matter of vital importance in these days when there is a growth of opposition to the Faith from those who, misconstruing its true nature and aims, take alarm at its progress.

Review of the Third Objective:
Developing the Distinctive Character of Bahá'í Life

207.8 Some of the most significant achievements of the Plan have been towards its third major objective—the development of the distinctive character of Bahá'í life—and in the consolidation and strengthening of the structure of the Bahá'í community. The beloved Hands of the Cause of God, who have been in the forefront of so many aspects of the work of the Faith, have rendered far-reaching services in this field.

207.9 The Local Spiritual Assemblies, focal centers for the teaching of the Faith and the consolidation of the community, are growing in experience, maturity and wisdom, are proving to be potent instruments for nurturing the Bahá'í life and are, in increasing numbers, carrying out plans for the establishment of the Faith in areas outside their own range of jurisdiction, under the overall guidance of their National Spiritual Assemblies, and with the encouragement and help of the Auxiliary Boards and their assistants. The work of developing Local Spiritual Assemblies is a task without end in the foreseeable future. As the Bahá'í community, which is still very thinly spread around the world, moves continually and with increasing rapidity into new areas, new Assemblies will come into being and will need patient help and training in their sacred duties.

207.10 The devotion and self-sacrifice of the friends, which have drawn to them the confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh, have resulted in the very great advances made so far. Evidences of this striving are apparent in the growing number of national communities which, under the wise stewardship and challenging leadership of their National Spiritual Assemblies, are becoming financially self-supporting; in the fact that ever more individual believers are adopting for themselves specific goals and plans of service for the advancement of the Faith; in the settlement of more than 2,000 pioneers during the course of the Plan; in the upsurge of travel teaching individually and in teams; in a greater awareness of the power of prayer; and in many other ways. Three vital aspects of Bahá'í community life which have seen marked progress during the past four years are the development of the services of women and of youth, and the Bahá'í education of children. The youth have long been in the forefront of the teaching work, and now our hearts rejoice to see the women, in so many lands where previously their capacities were largely left unused, devoting their capable services to the life of the Bahá'í community. The education of Bahá'í children is also receiving much attention, which bodes well for the future generations of Bahá'ís.

The Continental Boards of Counselors

207.11 Experience has shown that active and loving collaboration between the Continental Boards of Counselors and National Spiritual Assemblies has been a particularly invigorating and strengthening factor in the progress of the Cause in all aspects of the work. Reflecting the growth of the community the number of Continental Counselors has been raised to 64 during the Plan, and the number of Auxiliary Boards to 675. Under the authorization given to them, the members of the Auxiliary Boards have till now appointed 3,358 assistants, who are already playing a significant role in the formation and consolidation of Local Spiritual Assemblies and the fostering of the Bahá'í way of life in local communities. Coordinating and directing the work of these Continental Boards from the Holy Land, the International Teaching Center is now well established in the conduct of its responsibilities, foreshadowing the mighty role that it is destined to play in the functioning of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

Seizing Opportunities to Steer the Course of History

207.12 The Faith is passing through a time of tremendous opportunity and development, as well as of increasing opposition and of growing complexity in the problems confronting it. These opportunities must be seized and these problems overcome, for so crucial are these times that the future course of human history is daily in the balance. During this year the Universal House of Justice will be consulting on the nature, duration and goals of the next stage in the implementation of the Divine Plan. The firm base of the achievement of the Five Year Plan goals, both those of quality and those of quantity, is therefore the burning necessity of the months now before us. Let us go forward in a spirit of optimism, with confidence, determination, courage and unity. The greater the love and unity among the friends, the more speedily will the work advance.

207.13 May the Almighty bless the endeavors of His servants and inspire their

hearts to arise in His Cause with that degree of radiant faith and self-sacrifice which will draw to their aid the conquering hosts of the Supreme Concourse.

The Universal House of Justice

208

Message to the National Conventions—Ridván 1978

Ridván 1978

To the Friends gathered at National Bahá'í Conventions

Beloved friends,

208.1 We joyfully hail the formation of seven more National Spiritual Assemblies, those of Burundi, Mauritania, the Bahamas, Oman, Qatar, the Mariana Islands and Cyprus; two in Africa, one in the Americas, two in Asia, one in the Pacific and one in Europe, raising to one hundred and thirty the number of pillars of the Universal House of Justice.

208.2 Your National Spiritual Assemblies will be sharing with you the message addressed to the International Bahá'í Convention and the news of the progress of the Five Year Plan that was released on that occasion. As you will see, many national communities have already completed, or virtually completed, their Five Year Plan goals. These communities must now ensure that the pace of expansion and consolidation which brought them victory is maintained so that they will advance strongly into the next plan. They can also, by pioneering and travel teaching, rally to the assistance of their sister communities which still have months of intensive work before them in order to win their goals. It is to these latter communities that we now address our call to redoubled, united and sacrificial effort. We are fervently supplicating at the Sacred Threshold that the followers of the Blessed Beauty will arise with enthusiasm, confidence and consecration to ensure that every goal is attained.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

209

Election of the Universal House of Justice—Ridván 1978

1 May 1978

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

209.1NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE 'ALÍ NAKHJAVÁNÍ HUSHMAND FATHEAZAM AMOZ GIBSON IAN SEMPLE DAVID RUHE CHARLES WOLCOTT DAVID HOFMAN HUGH CHANCE BORRAH KAVELIN.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

210

Appointment of Architect for House of Worship in Western Samoa

15 May 1978

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

210.1ANNOUNCE APPOINTMENT HUSAYN AMÁNAT ARCHITECT FOR MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR SAMOA.

Universal House of Justice

211
Love for God and Bahá'u'lláh
25 May 1978
To an individual Bahá'í
Dear Bahá'í Friend,
211.1 The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 21 March 1978 in which you express concern that you do not yet feel in your heart the degree of love for God and for Bahá'u'lláh that you wish to have and which you witness in others, and is touched by the depth of your longing and effort. We have been requested to convey the following.
211.2 One source of true joy and happiness which you would do well to concentrate upon is that you have been able to recognize and accept God's supreme Manifestation in the Day of His appearance. There is no greater bounty than this and the souls of all Bahá'ís should be filled with gratitude for this supreme gift.
211.3 The House of Justice encourages you to continue your reading of the Words of Bahá'u'lláh and the Master and adds that spiritual growth has been likened to organic growth. Everything living must change. Growth and change can be imperceptible or dramatic and rapid. It is stated in a letter dated 6 October 1954 written on behalf of the beloved Guardian to an individual believer:
211.3a
When a person becomes a Bahá'í, actually what takes place is that the seed of the spirit starts to grow in the human soul. This seed must be watered by the outpourings of the Holy Spirit. These gifts of the spirit are received through prayer, meditation, study of the Holy Utterances and service to the Cause of God.
211.4 We have been directed to assure you of the prayers of the House of Justice for your spiritual advancement and that you may be so strengthened in your faith that you will be enabled to devotedly serve the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Department of the Secretariat
212
Inclusion of Mother Temple of the West in
National Register of Historic Places
22 June 1978
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States
212.1DELIGHTED ACTION BY FEDERAL AUTHORITIES TO INCLUDE MOTHER TEMPLE OF THE WEST IN NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES. FRUITION YOUR EFFORTS ON 134TH ANNIVERSARY OF DECLARATION HIS MISSION BY BLESSED BÁB OBTAIN THIS SIGNIFICANT RECOGNITION DESERVES WARM COMMENDATIONS AND IS AN OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT.
Universal House of Justice
213
Inauguration of Radio Bahá'í Ecuador
28 August 1978
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ecuador

213.1DELIGHTED YOUR CABLE MAY FORMAL INAUGURATION STATION RADIO BAHÁ'Í BRING WIDESPREAD REALIZATION NOBLE AIMS PURPOSES FAITH SERVE PEOPLES LOCAL AREA BRING ADVANCEMENT ECUADOR. DELIGHTED PROGRESS TOWARD GOALS PLAN AIDED BY HA EVENTS OTAVALO PRAYING SUCCESSES CONFIRMATIONS BEYOND EXPECTATION.
Loving greetings,
Universal House of Justice

214
Directing the Course of Ones Life
11 October 1978
To an individual Bahá'í
Dear Bahá'í Friend,

214.1 The Universal House of Justice has received your moving appeal for guidance in your letter of 5 September 1978, and has instructed us to convey to you the following advice.

214.2 Each individual is unique and has a unique path to tread in his lifetime. In espousing the Bahá'í Faith you have defined the direction of that path, for your recognition of God's Manifestation for this Day and your devotion to His Message provide the spiritual and ethical basis for all aspects of your life of service to mankind, while the continuing guidance that He has provided for the community of His followers enables you to know the directions in which the most effort is required at the present time.

214.3 While, during the early years of the development of the Faith, Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi sometimes gave specific instructions to individual believers on how they should serve the Cause, the Universal House of Justice seldom does this. It is, indeed, the precious privilege of the individual human being to direct the course of his own life. Through exercising this privilege while striving always to conform his conduct to the divine Teachings and devote his talents in the best possible way to the service of the Cause and mankind, a soul deepens his understanding of God and His will.

214.4 This does not mean that you are left to make your decisions without guidance. This you will find from several sources. Firstly, in general, you will find it in the Writings. Secondly, and more specifically, in the teaching plans issued by the Universal House of Justice. Thirdly, in the plans and projects of your own National Spiritual Assembly. All these, it would seem from your letter, you have been striving to follow. Fourthly, with regard to your own personal goals and actions, is the guidance you can receive through consultation—with your wife, with friends of your choice whose opinions you value, with your Local Spiritual Assembly, with such committees of your National Assembly as are concerned with the fields of activity towards which your inclinations lie. Fifthly, there is prayer and meditation.

214.5 You mention that the answers to your prayers never seem to have come through clearly. Mrs. Ruth Moffett has published her recollection of five steps of prayer for guidance that she was told by the beloved Guardian. When asked about these notes, Shoghi Effendi replied, in letters written by his secretary on his behalf, that the notes should be regarded as "Personal suggestions," that he considered them to be "quite sound," but that the

friends need not adopt them “strictly and universally.” The House of Justice feels that they may be helpful to you and, indeed, you may already be familiar with them. They are as follows:

... use these five steps if we have a problem of any kind for which we desire a solution, or wish help.

Pray and meditate about it. Use the prayers of the Manifestations, as they have the greatest power. Learn to remain in the silence of contemplation for a few moments. During this deepest communion take the next step.

Arrive at a decision and hold to this. This decision is usually born in a flash at the close or during the contemplation. It may seem almost impossible of accomplishment, but if it seems to be an answer to prayer or a way of solving the problem, then immediately take the next step.

Have determination to carry the decision through. Many fail here. The decision, budding into determination, is blighted and instead becomes a wish or a vague longing. When determination is born, immediately take the next step.

Have faith and confidence, that the Power of the Holy Spirit will flow through you, the right way will appear, the door will open, the right message, the right principle or the right book will be given to you. Have confidence, and the right thing will come to meet your need. Then as you rise from prayer take immediately the fifth step.

Act as though it had all been answered. Then act with tireless, ceaseless energy. And, as you act, you yourself will become a magnet which will attract more power to your being, until you become an unobstructed channel for the Divine Power to flow through you.

214.6 Also the Guardian’s secretary wrote to an individual believer on his behalf: “The Master said guidance was when the doors opened after we tried. We can pray, ask to do God's will only, try hard, and then if we find our plan is not working out, assume it is not the right one, at least for the moment.”214-3

214.7 The Universal House of Justice deeply appreciates your candor and spirit of devotion, and assures you of its prayers in the Holy Shrines on your behalf.

With loving Bahá’í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

215

The Grave Peril Facing Bahá’ís and Holy Places in Iran

15 December 1978

To National Spiritual Assemblies

215.1FRIENDS IRAN AND MOST HOLY PLACES IN SHIRAZ AND TEHRAN IN GRAVE PERIL. BAHÁ’ÍS HAVE BEEN THREATENED OVER SEVERAL WEEKS MOST PARTS IRAN WITH IMMINENT DANGERS. THIS THREAT IS NOW MATERIALIZING IN FORMS OF LOOTING, BURNING BAHÁ’Í HOUSES AND FURTHER THREATS OF ASSASSINATION. IN NAYRÍZ 25 BAHÁ’Í HOMES BURNED, IN SHIRAZ 60 HOMES LOOTED. SIMILAR ATTACKS REPORTED IN OTHER PROVINCES. IN SARVISTÁN BAHÁ’ÍS TAKEN TO MOSQUES AND FORCIBLY REQUIRED TO RECANT THEIR FAITH. ... URGE FRIENDS JOIN US PRAYERS PROTECTION FRIENDS HOLY PLACES CRADLE FAITH.

Universal House of Justice

216
Announcement of Decision to Launch
a Seven Year Plan
26 December 1978
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
216.1ANNOUNCE WITH UTMOST JOY DECISION TO LAUNCH DURING FORTHCOMING RIDVÁN FESTIVITIES A SEVEN YEAR GLOBAL PLAN CONSTITUTING NEXT STAGE MASTER'S STEADILY UNFOLDING DIVINE PLAN. CONFIDENT MOMENTOUS DECISION TAKEN IN MIDST SEVERE CRISIS SHAKING CRADLE FAITH AND WHILE EFFORTS BAHÁ'Í WORLD COMMUNITY ARE STRENUOUSLY BENT UPON FULFILLMENT GOALS FIVE YEAR PLAN WILL RELEASE OUTPOURIN SPIRITUAL ENERGY ACCELERATE DESTINED PROGRESS BAHÁ'Í WORLD COMMUNITY NOW GRADUALLY APPEARING IN SHARPER RELIEF BEFORE EYES OF A BEWILDERED HUMANITY FLOUNDERING IN DEPTHS OF CONFLICT AND MORAL DEGRADATION.
216.2 DETAILS PLANS NATIONAL COMMUNITIES FOR INITIAL TWO YEAR PHASE NEW PLAN NOW BEING EVOLVED IN CONSULTATION WITH INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTER WIL SHORTLY BE ANNOUNCED TO EACH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. THIS INITIAL PHASE WILL CALL FOR GREATER PROCLAMATION, CONTINUED CONSOLIDATION AND WIDER EXPANSION. NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES ARE THEREFORE URGED ENSURE THAT TEACHING ACTIVITIES ARE PURSUED WITH CONTINUING VIGOR INTO OPENING YEARS NEW PLAN, THAT PIONEERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO REMAIN AT THEIR POSTS, THAT PROCESS DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY LIFE I UNINTERRUPTEDLY SUSTAINED, AND THAT MOMENTUM NOW IMPELLING BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY FORWARD IS MAINTAINED. 216.3 URGE ALL NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES SHARE THIS MESSAGE IMMEDIATELY WITH FRIENDS UNDER THEIR JURISDICTION INVITING THEM MAKE SPECIAL EFFORT ATTEND NATIONAL CONVENTIONS NEXT RIDVÁN CELEBRATE VICTORIOUS CONCLUSION FIVE YEAR PLAN SIMULTANEOUSLY INAUGURATE SEVEN YEAR PLAN.
216.4 OWING IMPORTANCE NEXT CONVENTION REQUEST NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES CONSIDER EXTENDING WHEREVER PRACTICABLE ITS DURATION BY ONE OR TWO DAYS. WE ARE CALLING ON COUNSELORS IN ADDITION TO THEIR OWN PARTICIPATION TO ENCOURAGE AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBERS TO ATTEND THESE PORTENTOUS CONVENTIONS.
216.5 AS THE TURMOIL OF AN AGITATED WORLD SURGES ABOUT THEM THE SUPPORTERS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S MAJESTICALLY RISING FAITH MUST, AS THE BELOVED GUARDIAN SO CLEARLY INDICATED, SCALE NOBLER HEIGHTS OF HEROISM, SERENELY CONFIDENT THAT THE HOUR OF THEIR MIGHTIEST EXERTIONS MUST COINCIDE WITH THE LOWEST EBB OF MANKIND'S FAST DECLINING FORTUNES.
216.6 FERVENTLY SUPPLICATING BAHÁ'U'LLÁH BOUNTIFULLY BLESS STRENUOUS EFFORTS HIS DEVOTED SERVANTS EVERY LAND WIN GOAL FIVE YEAR PLAN ENSURE FIRM FOUNDATION NEXT STAGE WORLDWIDE DEVELOPMENT GOD'S HOLY CAUSE.
The Universal House of Justice
217
Bahá'í Scholarship
3 January 1979
To the Participants in the Bahá'í Studies Seminar
held in Cambridge on 30 September and 1 October 1978
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
217.1 The Universal House of Justice has read with great interest the report of your seminar. It regards Bahá'í scholarship as of great potential importance for the development and consolidation of the Bahá'í

community as it emerges from obscurity. It noted that there are a number of problems with which you have been grappling, and while it feels that it should, in general, leave the working out of solutions to Bahá'í scholars themselves, the House of Justice has the impression that it would be helpful to provide you, at this relatively early stage of the development of Bahá'í scholarship, with a few thoughts on matters raised during your seminar. Reports of your seminar were therefore referred to the Research Department, and the Universal House of Justice commends to your study the enclosed memorandum which that Department has prepared.

217.2 The House of Justice also urges you not to feel constrained in any way in consulting it about problems, whether theoretical or practical, that you meet in your work. It has noted, for example, the difficulties presented by the current temporary requirement for the review of publications, and in this connection it asks us to inform you that it has already established the policy that doctoral theses do not have to be reviewed unless there is a proposal to publish them in larger quantities than is required by the examining body.

217.3 You are still in the early stages of a very challenging and promising development in the life of the Bahá'í community, and the Universal House of Justice is eager to foster and assist your work in whatever ways it can. We are to assure you of its prayers in the Sacred Shrines on behalf of you all and of the progress of Bahá'í scholarship.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

The Bahá'í Studies Seminar on Ethics and Methodology

Held in Cambridge on 30 September and 1 October 1978

Comments by the Research Department at the World Center

217.4 This seminar seems to have provided a very valuable forum for the discussion of a number of aspects of Bahá'í scholarship, and the airing of certain problems which have been worrying some of the friends in relationship to their work and to their fellow believers. We believe that many of the problems arise from an attempt by some Bahá'í scholars to make use of methodologies devised by non-Bahá'ís without thinking through the implications of such a course and without working out a methodology which would be in consonance with the spirit of the Faith. The seminar itself may well prove to be an initial step in such a working out. The following remarks are intended merely to draw attention to certain aspects which we believe can help to advance this process.

The Harmony of Science and Religion

217.5 It has become customary in the West to think of science and religion as occupying two distinct—and even opposed—areas of human thought and activity. This dichotomy can be characterized in the pairs of antitheses: faith and reason; value and fact. It is a dichotomy which is foreign to Bahá'í thought and should, we feel, be regarded with suspicion by Bahá'í scholars in every field. The principle of the harmony of science and religion means not only that religious teachings should be studied with the light of reason and evidence as well as of faith and inspiration, but also that everything in this creation, all aspects of human life and knowledge, should be

studied in the light of revelation as well as in that of purely rational investigation. In other words, a Bahá'í scholar, when studying a subject, should not lock out of his mind any aspect of truth that is known to him.

217.6 It has, for example, become commonplace to regard religion as the product of human striving after truth, as the outcome of certain climates of thought and conditions of society. This has been taken, by many non-Bahá'í thinkers, to the extreme of denying altogether the reality or even the possibility of a specific revelation of the Will of God to mankind through a human mouthpiece. A Bahá'í who has studied the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, who has accepted His claim to be the Manifestation of God for this Age, and who has seen His Teachings at work in his daily life, knows as the result of rational investigation, confirmed by actual experience, that true religion, far from being the product solely of human striving after truth, is the fruit of the creative Word of God which, with divine power, transforms human thought and action.

The Distinction between Divine Revelation and What People Know and Do about It

217.7 A Bahá'í, through this faith in, this "conscious knowledge" of, the reality of divine Revelation, can distinguish, for instance, between Christianity, which is the divine message given by Jesus of Nazareth, and the development of Christendom, which is the history of what men did with that message in subsequent centuries, a distinction which has become blurred if not entirely obscured in current Christian theology. A Bahá'í scholar conscious of this distinction will not make the mistake of regarding the sayings and beliefs of certain Bahá'ís at any one time as being the Bahá'í Faith. The Bahá'í Faith is the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh: His Own Words as interpreted by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian. It is a revelation of such staggering magnitude that no Bahá'í at this early stage in Bahá'í history can rightly claim to have more than a partial and imperfect understanding of it. Thus, Bahá'í historians would see the overcoming of early misconceptions held by the Bahá'í community, or by parts of the Bahá'í community, not as "developments of the Bahá'í Faith"—as a non-Bahá'í historian might well regard them—but as growth of that community's understanding of the Bahá'í Revelation.

A Unity of Faith and Reason

217.8 It has been suggested that the words of Bahá'u'lláh that a true seeker should "so cleanse his heart that no remnant of either love or hate may linger therein, lest that love blindly incline him to error, or that hate repel him away from the truth," support the viewpoint of methodological agnosticism. But we believe that on deeper reflection it will be recognized that love and hate are emotional attachments or repulsions that can irrationally influence the seeker; they are not aspects of the truth itself. Moreover, the whole passage concerns taking "the step of search in the path leading to the knowledge of the Ancient of Days" and is summarized by Bahá'u'lláh in the words: "Our purpose in revealing these convincing and weighty utterances is to impress upon the seeker that he should regard all else beside God as transient, and count all things save Him, Who is the Object

of all adoration, as utter nothingness." It is in this context that He says, near the beginning of the passage, that the seeker must, "before all else, cleanse and purify his heart ... from the obscuring dust of all acquired knowledge, and the allusions of the embodiments of satanic fancy." It is similar, we think, to Bahá'u'lláh's injunction to look upon the Manifestation with His Own eyes. In scientific investigation when searching after the facts of any matter a Bahá'í must, of course, be entirely open-minded, but in his interpretation of the facts and his evaluation of evidence we do not see by what logic he can ignore the truth of the Bahá'í Revelation which he has already accepted; to do so would, we feel, be both hypocritical and unscholarly.

217.9 Undoubtedly the fact that Bahá'í scholars of the history and teachings of the Faith believe in the Faith that they are studying will be a grave flaw in the eyes of many non-Bahá'í academics, whose own dogmatic materialism passes without comment because it is fashionable; but this difficulty is one that Bahá'í scholars share with their fellow believers in many fields of human endeavor.

217.10 If Bahá'í scholars will try to avoid this snare of allowing a divorce between their faith and their reason, we are sure that they will also avoid many of the occasions for tension arising between themselves and their fellow believers.

The Spiritual Qualities of Bahá'í scholars

217.11 The sundering of science and religion is but one example of the tendency of the human mind (which is necessarily limited in its capacity) to concentrate on one virtue, one aspect of truth, one goal, to the exclusion of others. This leads, in extreme cases, to fanaticism and the utter distortion of truth, and in all cases to some degree of imbalance and inaccuracy. A scholar who is imbued with an understanding of the broad teachings of the Faith will always remember that being a scholar does not exempt him from the primal duties and purposes for which all human beings are created. All men, not scholars alone, are exhorted to seek out and uphold the truth, no matter how uncomfortable it may be. But they are also exhorted to be wise in their utterance, to be tolerant of the views of others, to be courteous in their behavior and speech, not to sow the seeds of doubt in faithful hearts, to look at the good rather than at the bad, to avoid conflict and contention, to be reverent, to be faithful to the Covenant of God, to promote His Faith and safeguard its honor, and to educate their fellowmen, giving milk to babes and meat to those who are stronger.

217.12 Scholarship has a high station in the Bahá'í teachings, and Bahá'í scholars have a great responsibility. We believe that they would do well to concentrate upon the ascertainment of truth—of a fuller understanding of the subject of their scholarship, whatever its field—not upon exposing and attacking the errors of others, whether they be of non-Bahá'í or of their fellow believers. Inevitably the demonstration of truth exposes the falsity of error, but the emphasis and motive are important. We refer to these words of Bahá'u'lláh:

Consort with all men, O people of Bahá, in a spirit of friendliness and

fellowship. If ye be aware of a certain truth, if ye possess a jewel, of which others are deprived, share it with them in a language of utmost kindliness and goodwill. If it be accepted, if it fulfill its purpose, your object is attained. If any one should refuse it, leave him unto himself, and beseech God to guide him. Beware lest ye deal unkindly with him. A kindly tongue is the lodestone of the hearts of men. It is the bread of the spirit, it clotheth the words with meaning, it is the fountain of the light of wisdom and understanding. ...
(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh CXXXII)
and again:
Should any one among you be incapable of grasping a certain truth, or be striving to comprehend it, show forth, when conversing with him, a spirit of extreme kindliness and goodwill. Help him to see and recognize the truth, without esteeming yourself to be, in the least, superior to him, or to be possessed of greater endowments.
(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh V)
217.13 In our view there are two particular dangers to which Bahá'í scholars are exposed, and which they share with those believers who rise to eminent positions in the administration of the Cause. One danger is faced by only a few: those whose work requires them to read the writings of Covenant-breakers. They have to remember that they are by no means immune to the spiritual poison that such works distill, and that they must approach this aspect of their work with great caution, alert to the danger that it presents. The second danger, which may well be as insidious, is that of spiritual pride and arrogance. Bahá'í scholars, especially those who are scholars in the teachings and history of the Faith itself, would be well advised to remember that scholars have often been most wrong when they have been most certain that they were right. The virtues of moderation, humility and humor in regard to one's own work and ideas are a potent protection against this danger.
217.14 We feel that by following such avenues of approach as those described in this memorandum Bahá'í scholars will find that many of the "fears, doubts and anxieties" which were aired at the seminar will be dispelled.
218
Persecution of the Bahá'ís of Iran
12 January 1979
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
218.1 From reports in the news media you have no doubt learned of the disturbances in Iran. The followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh have in the land of its birth once again been subjected to severe persecution and active repression.
218.2 The National Spiritual Assembly compiled during the month of October 1978 a list of 93 cases dealing with personal injuries inflicted upon individual believers and of damages to houses, shops, crops and livestock, as well as to local Hazíratu'l-Quds. During the month of December organized mobs attacked Bahá'ís and their properties in Shiraz and its environs. As a result of these attacks over 300 homes were either burned or

destroyed, and some 200 looted. In these events 15 believers were beaten or wounded, and two were killed. Fortunately the intention of the attackers to destroy the Holy House of the Báb was not carried out, but the spirit of aggressive animosity towards the Bahá'ís spread to several centers throughout the province of Fárs, including the town of Marvdasht, where 31 Bahá'í homes were looted and the imposing structure of the local Hazíratu'l-Quds reared by that community was razed to the ground.

218.3 Following these events, the wave of persecution spread to the north of the country. In several towns and villages of Ádhirbáyján, and particularly in Míyán-Duáb, the onslaught was severe. In the latter town the first target was the local Hazíratu'l-Quds, which was totally destroyed, and this was followed by the burning or looting of 80 homes and the brutal murder of two believers, a father and his son, whose bodies were then dragged through the streets, cut in pieces, and consigned to the flames.

218.4 The organized and violent assaults on Bahá'í lives and properties have emboldened and incited hooligans all over the country, and the oppressed Bahá'ís are constantly under threat of mass aggression and assault.

218.5 These acts of hostility against the Bahá'ís have so far cost four lives, millions of dollars in loss of property, and the displacement of some 700 individuals who have become homeless. The spirit of the Bahá'ís, however, is very high, and acts of heroism and magnanimity have been reported, which historians will record for posterity.

218.6 The National Spiritual Assembly of Iran has instituted a special fund for the relief of the needy and suffering from among the believers in that country. The House of Justice has already contributed a sum of $135,000.00 to this fund, and it calls upon all friends in every land to offer of their substance, at this hour of need, to help their tormented brethren in the Cradle of the Faith. All contributions should preferably be sent to the Universal House of Justice, which will ensure that the contributions are transmitted safely to the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran.

218.7 The House of Justice further calls on the friends the world over to join it in fervent prayers for the protection of the Faith and the Holy Places and for the relief and deliverance of the beloved and steadfast friends in Iran. It particularly invites the friends to pray daily during the period of the Fast, supplicating Bahá'u'lláh that the distressing plight of the Persian Community may be mitigated and that their sorrows and deprivations may be transmuted into comfort and joy through His grace and bounty.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

219

Extension of Permission to Form Local Spiritual Assemblies under Certain Conditions during Ridván

19 February 1979

To National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

219.1 We have been asked by the Universal House of Justice to draw your attention to its letter sent to you and other selected National Spiritual

Assemblies of the world on 6 March 1977. In that letter, a copy of which is enclosed for your ease of reference, permission was given to hold the election of Local Spiritual Assemblies during the twelve days of Ridván if certain conditions existed in some localities. This is to inform you that, until further notice, it is permissible to follow this procedure every Ridván where it is called for.

219.2 Furthermore, in view of the conditions of the Faith at this stage in its development, the House of Justice has decided that the provision set forth under the Five Year Plan permitting the establishment of Local Spiritual Assemblies which are being formed for the first time, whenever there are nine or more adult believers residing in a locality, will continue to apply after the completion of the Five Year Plan.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

220

Refutation of False Accusations against Iranian Bahá'ís

26 February 1979

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

220.1 Recent events in Iran have focused the attention of the world's news media on that country, and the Bahá'ís and the Bahá'í Faith have been mentioned frequently. Our enemies have spread many misleading statements and calumnies through the media.

220.2 Already in the United States the prompt reaction of Local Spiritual Assemblies and the National Spiritual Assembly to an attack on the Faith made during a national television program has resulted in the greatest publicity for the Cause for many years.

220.3 The friends are urged through their National and Local Assemblies, and individually, and without in any way criticizing or confronting editors and program directors, to offer articles, letters to editors, statements to radio and television producers and to take occasional advertisements. All these should be linked to any mention of the Faith, particularly though not necessarily a misleading one, and should be solely concerned with repudiating falsehoods and giving the truth about the Faith, not indulging in argument or complaint.

220.4 The Universal House of Justice is aware of a pattern in the false statements being circulated about the Faith and sends the following information to enable the friends everywhere to take action whenever the opportunity arises.

220.5 The allegations against us are mainly that in Iran the Bahá'ís have been political supporters of the previous regime, that one of the Prime Ministers and some Ministers have been Bahá'ís, and that even the head of SAVAK (the Iranian Secret Police) and other of its high-ranking officers have been members of the Bahá'í Faith. The Bahá'ís are also accused of being against Islam and of supporting causes which are hostile to Muslim nations.

220.6 It is obvious that these allegations are entirely unfounded. The

established nonpolitical nature of the Faith, as well as the principle that whoever among the friends participates in partisan politics or becomes a member of a political party is expelled from the Bahá'í community, support this. These false accusations by the enemies of the Cause are being deliberately spread for two main reasons: one, to discredit their political opponents who have been or are in power by associating them with the Faith; and two, to incite further hatred of the fanatical sections of the population against the Bahá'ís.

220.7 During the previous regime, when a one-party system, Rastakhiz, was in force in Iran and the people were induced and often compelled to become members of it, the Bahá'ís of Iran were perhaps the only community who, on the grounds of their religious beliefs, firmly refused to join this party. They declared that although, as an act of faith, they are loyal to the government of the country in which they reside, they cannot accept membership in any political party. Threats of the consequences of such refusal did not deter the Bahá'ís from standing firm in their conviction.

220.8 Regarding the false allegation that Mr. Abbas Hoveida, the ex-Prime Minister of Iran, was a Bahá'í, the facts are that his grandfather was a Bahá'í at the time of Bahá'u'lláh and his father was also a member of the Faith for some time. However, because the latter accepted a political assignment in the foreign ministry of Iran, he was expelled from the Bahá'í community. Mr. Hoveida himself never became a Bahá'í, and asserted that he was a Muslim. In fact, during his term of office, he created many difficulties for the Bahá'í community in order to counter the accusations of his alleged affiliation with the Faith. It was during his regime that many Bahá'ís were dismissed from their administrative posts in the government because of their Faith, and an anti-Bahá'í bias was fostered in respect of employment.

220.9 There was another Minister, Mansour Rouhani, whose father was a Bahá'í and mother a Muslim, but he was not, nor had ever been a Bahá'í. Further, some years ago, a Bahá'í accepted a cabinet post just for a brief time, and he was promptly expelled from the Bahá'í community. 220.10 It should be categorically denied and refuted that General Nasiri, the late head of SAVAK, as well as his assistants, were ever Bahá'ís, and it can be stated that their organization was responsible for the dismissal of many of the friends from government offices in Iran.

220.11 It is true that Bahá'ís must show loyalty to their respective governments, and it is also true that a number of the friends in Iran, while demonstrating this principle, as well as rectitude of conduct and trustworthiness, became known for these qualities and obtained high-ranking, nonpolitical, financial, and administrative positions in the government. However, loyalty and obedience to the government has never meant that the Bahá'ís agreed with or promoted political principles and policies.

220.12 Another principle of the Faith may be cited, namely, that Bahá'ís are forbidden to deny their Faith, even if their very lives are at stake. It is an historical fact that thousands of martyrs, given the choice to deny their faith so that their lives would be spared, refused to do so and proclaimed their faith openly, suffering the consequences. Therefore the public should

know that whoever denies that he is a Bahá'í cannot be a member of the Bahá'í community.

220.13 In Iran the officially recognized religious minorities are the adherents of the Jewish, Christian, and Zoroastrian Faiths, although the Bahá'ís outnumber them all. The enemies of the Cause in Iran consider the Bahá'ís as heretical, a "sect," "cult," or similar group. This is because the Muslims, unlike Bahá'ís who believe in progressive and continuous divine revelation, believe that no prophet will appear after Muhammad. Therefore, whenever Bahá'ís are referred to as a sect or group, the friends should try to remove this misunderstanding and proclaim the independent nature of the Faith to the non-Bahá'í public.

220.14 The Bahá'ís are also accused of being against Islam, whereas it is easy to explain to the public that we believe that all religions of the past, including Islam, are divine in origin and are revered and respected by the followers of Bahá'u'lláh. Indeed, the Author of this Revelation Himself states this fact time and time again in His Writings.

220.15 One of the excuses given by Muslims for hostility to the Faith is the location of our world administrative center in Israel; in the conflict between some Islamic nations and Israel, the Bahá'ís have been accused of being Zionists. It should be made clear that Bahá'ís, who believe in the oneness of humanity and who do not show enmity to any nation, people or creed, cannot take sides in any political controversy. As promoters of genuine love and proclaimers of the unity of mankind, taking sides in such disputes would be diametrically opposed to their religious beliefs. It can be explained, whenever necessary, that Bahá'u'lláh was sent, in 1868, as a Prisoner to the Holy Land by the Ottoman Emperor. For the remainder of His life He was a Prisoner and Exile, and He subsequently passed away near 'Akká in 1892. The holiest Shrines of the Bahá'í Faith, around which its world administrative center has been established, are situated in the Holy Land because of events which occurred more than half a century before the establishment of Israel and other countries in this part of the world as independent nations. Holy Shrines of the Muslims, Christians and Jews are also located in the Holy Land. Therefore, it is simple enmity to attack the Bahá'í Faith on the basis of the geographical location of its World Center.

220.16 The Universal House of Justice has requested us to bring these facts to your attention so that you may use them whenever necessary in refuting falsehoods and in answering questions and writing articles and letters to the press.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

1979-1986

The Seven Year Plan

221

Launching of the Seven Year Plan—Naw-Rúz 1979

Naw-Rúz 1979

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

221.1 The decline of religious and moral restraints has unleashed a fury of chaos and confusion that already bears the signs of universal anarchy. Engulfed in this maelstrom, the Bahá'í world community, pursuing with indefeasible unity and spiritual force its redemptive mission, inevitably suffers the disruption of economic, social and civil life which afflicts its fellowmen throughout the planet. It must also bear particular tribulations. The violent disturbances in Persia, coinciding with the gathering in of the bountiful harvest of the Five Year Plan, have brought new and cruel hardships to our long-suffering brethren in the Cradle of our Faith and confronted the Bahá'í world community with critical challenges to its life and work. As the Bahá'í world stood poised on the brink of victory, eagerly anticipating the next stage in the unfoldment of the Master's Divine Plan, Bahá'u'lláh's heroic compatriots, the custodians of the Holy Places of our Faith in the land of its birth, were yet again called upon to endure the passions of brutal mobs, the looting and burning of their homes, the destruction of their means of livelihood, and physical violence and threats of death to force them to recant their faith. They, like their immortal forebears, the Dawn-Breakers, are standing steadfast in face of this new persecution and the ever-present threat of organized extermination.

221.2 Remembering that during the Five Year Plan the Persian friends far surpassed any other national community in their outpouring of pioneers and funds, we, in all those parts of the world where we are still free to promote the Cause of God, have the responsibility to make good their temporary inability to serve. Therefore, with uplifted hearts and radiant faith, we must arise with redoubled energy to pursue our mighty task, confident that the Lord of Hosts will continue to reward our efforts with the same bountiful grace He vouchsafed to us in the Five Year Plan.

Teaching Victories in the Five Year Plan

221.3 The teaching victories in that Plan have been truly prodigious; the points of light, those localities where the Promised One is recognized, have increased from sixty-nine thousand five hundred to over ninety-six thousandz; the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies has grown from seventeen thousand to over twenty-five thousand; eighteen new National Spiritual Assemblies have been formed. The final report will disclose in all their manifold aspects the magnitude of the victories won.

221.4 In the world at large the Bahá'í community is now firmly established. The Institution of the Hands of the Cause of God, the Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Commonwealth, is bearing a precious fruit in the development of the International Teaching Center as a mighty institution of the World Center of the Faith; an institution blessed by the membership of all the Hands of the Cause; an institution whose beneficent influence is diffused to all parts of the Bahá'í community through the Continental Boards of Counselors, the members of the Auxiliary Boards and their assistants.

221.5 Advised, stimulated and supported by this vital arm of the Administrative Order, 125 National Spiritual Assemblies are rapidly acquiring experience and growing in wisdom as they administer the complex affairs of

their respective communities as organic parts of one worldwide fellowship. More and more Local Spiritual Assemblies are becoming strong focal centers of local Bahá'í communities and firm pillars of the National Spiritual Assembly in each land. Even in those countries where the Bahá'í Administration cannot operate or has had to be disbanded, countries to which have now been added Afghanistan, the Congo Republic, Niger, Uganda and Vietnam, the believers, while obedient to their governments, nevertheless staunchly keep alive the flame of faith.

Spiritual Development of the Bahá'í community

221.6 Beyond the expansion of the community, vital as it is, the Five Year Plan witnessed great progress in the spiritual development of the friends, the growing maturity and wisdom of Local and National Assemblies, and in the degree to which Bahá'í communities embody the distinguishing characteristics of Bahá'í life and attract, by their unity, their steadfastness, their radiance and good reputation, the interest and eventual wholehearted support of their fellow citizens. This is the magnet which will attract the masses to the Cause of God, and the leaven that will transform human society.

Obstacles and Opportunities

221.7 The conditions of the world present the followers of Bahá'u'lláh with both obstacles and opportunities. In an increasing number of countries we are witnessing the fulfillment of the warnings that the writings of our Faith contain. "Peoples, nations, adherents of divers faiths," the beloved Guardian wrote, "will jointly and successively arise to shatter its unity, to sap its force, and to degrade its holy name. They will assail not only the spirit which it inculcates, but the administration which is the channel, the instrument, the embodiment of that spirit. For as the authority with which Bahá'u'lláh has invested the future Bahá'í Commonwealth becomes more and more apparent, the fiercer shall be the challenge which from every quarter will be thrown at the verities it enshrines." In different countries, in varying degrees, the followers of Bahá'u'lláh at this very hour are undergoing such attacks, and are facing imprisonment and even martyrdom rather than deny the Truth for whose sake the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh drained the cup of sacrifice.

221.8 In other lands, such as those in Western Europe, the faithful believers have to struggle to convey the message in the face of widespread indifference, materialistic self-satisfaction, cynicism and moral degradation. These friends, however, still have freedom to teach the Faith in their homelands, and in spite of the discouraging meagreness of outward results they continue to proclaim the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to their fellow-citizens, to raise high the reputation of the Cause in the public eye, to acquaint leaders of thought and those in authority with its true tenets, and to spare no effort to seek out those receptive souls in every town and village who will respond to the divine summons and devote their lives to its service.

221.9 In many lands, however, there is an eager receptivity for the teachings of the Faith. The challenge for the Bahá'ís is to provide these thousands of seeking souls, as swiftly as possible, with the spiritual food that they crave, to enlist them under the banner of Bahá'u'lláh, to

nurture them in the way of life He has revealed, and to guide them to elect Local Spiritual Assemblies which, as they begin to function strongly, will unite the friends in firmly consolidated Bahá'í communities and become beacons of guidance and havens of refuge to mankind.

221.10 Faced by such a combination of danger and opportunity, the Bahá'ís, confident in the ultimate triumph of God's purpose for mankind, raise their eyes to the goals of a new Seven Year Plan.

World Center Goals

221.11 In the Holy Land the strengthening of the World Center and the augmentation of its worldwide influence must continue:

221.11a•The Seat of the Universal House of Justice will be completed and designs will be adopted for the remaining three buildings of the World Administrative Center of the Faith.

221.11b•The Institution of the InternationalTeaching Center will be developed and its functions expanded. This will require an increase in its membership and the assumption by it and by the Continental Boards of Counselors of wider functions in the stimulation on an international scale of the propagation and consolidation of the Faith, and in the promotion of the spiritual, intellectual and community aspects of Bahá'í life.

221.11c•The House of 'Abdu'lláh Pásha will be opened to pilgrimage.

221.11d•Work will be continued on the collation and classification of the Sacred Texts and a series of compilations gleaned and translated from the wiritngs of the Faith will be sent out to the Bahá'í world to help in deepening the friends in their understanding of the fundamentals of the Faith, enriching their spiritual lives, and reinforcing their efforts to teach the Cause.

221.11e•The ties binding the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations will be further developed.

221.11f•Continued efforts will be made to protect the Faith from opposition and to emancipate it from the fetters of persecution.

International Goals

221.12 Each National Spiritual Assembly has been given goals for these first two years of the Plan, designed to continue the process of expansion, to consolidate the victories won, and to attain, where circumstances permit, any goals that may have had to remain unaccomplished at the end of the Five Year Plan. During these first two years we shall be examining, with the Continental Boards of Counselors and National Spiritual Assemblies, the conditions and possibilities in each country, and shall be considering in detail the capacities and needs of each of the rapidly differentiating national Bahá'í communities before formulating the further goals towards which each community is to work following the opening phase of the Plan.

221.13Throughout the world the Seven Year Plan must witness the attainment of the following objectives:

221.13a•The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of Samoa is to be completed and progress will be made in the construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in India.

221.13b•Nineteen new National Spiritual Assemblies are to be brought into being: eight in Africa, those of Angola, Bophuthatswana, the Cape Verde

Islands, Gabon, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia and Transkei; eight in the Americas, those of Bermuda, Dominica, French Guiana, Grenada, the Leeward Islands, Martinique, St. Lucia and St. Vincent; and three in the Pacific, those of the Cook Islands, Tuvalu and the West Caroline Islands. Those National Spiritual Assemblies which have had to be dissolved will, circumstances permitting, be reestablished.

221.13c•The Message of Bahál'u'lláh must be taken to territories and islands which are as yet unopened to His Faith.

221.13d•The teaching work, both that organized by institutions of the Faith and that which is the result of individual initiative, must be actively carried forward so that there will be growing numbers of believers, leading more countries to the stage of entry by troops and ultimately to mass conversion.

221.13e•This teaching work must include prompt, thorough and continuing consolidation so that all victories will be safeguarded, the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies will be increased and the foundations of the Cause reinforced.

221.13f•The interchange of pioneers and traveling teachers, which contributes so importantly to the unity of the Bahá'í world and to a true understanding of the oneness of mankind, must continue, especially between neighboring lands. At the same time, each national Bahá'í community must aspire to a rapid achievement of self-sufficiency in carrying out its vital activities, thus acquiring the capacity to continue to function and grow even if outside help is cut off.

221.13g•Especially in finance is the attainment of independence by national Bahá'í communities urgent. Already the persecutions in Iran have deprived believers in that country the bounty of contributing to the insternational funds of the Faith of which they have been a major source. Economic disruption in other countries threatens further diminution of financial resources. We therefore appeal to the friends everywhere to exercise the utmost economy in the use of funds and to make those sacrifices in their personal lives which will enable them to contribute their share, according to their means, to the local, national, continental and international funds of the Faith.

221.13h•For the prompt achievement of all the goals and the healthy growth of Bahá'í community life National Spritual Assemblies must pay particular attention to the efficient functioning, in the true spirit of the Faith, of their national committees and other auxiliary institutions, and, in consultation with the Continental Boards of Counselors, must conceive and implement programs that will guide and reinforce the efforts of the friends in the path of service.

221.13i•National Spiritual Assemblies must promote wise and dignified approaches to people prominent in all areas of human endeavor, acquainting them with the nature of the Bahá'í community and the basic tenets of the Faith, and winning their esteem and friendship.

221.13j•At the heart of all activities, the spiritual, intellectual and community life of the believers must be developed and fostered, requiring: the prosecution with increased vigor of the development of Local Spiritual Assemblies so that they may exercise their beneficial influence and guidance on

the life of Bahá'í communities; the nurturing of a deeper understanding of Bahá'í family life; the Bahá'í education of children, including the holding of regular Bahá'í classes and, where necessary, the establishment of tutorial schools for the provision of elementary education; the encouragement of Bahá'í youth in study and service; and the encouragement of Bahá'í women to exercise to the full their privileges and responsibilities in the work of the community—may they befittingly bear witness to the memory of the Greatest Holy Leaf, the immortal heroine of the Bahá'í Dispensation, as we approach the fiftieth anniversary of her passing.

A Time of Testing: a Time for Clinging to the Covenant

221.14 As lawlessness spreads in the world, as governments rise and fall, as rival groups and feuding peoples struggle, each for its own advantage, the plight of the oppressed and the deprived wrings the heart of every true Bahá'í, tempting him to cry out in protest or to arise in wrath at the perpetrators of injustice. For this is a time of testing which calls to mind Bahá'u'lláh's words, "O concourse of the heedless! I swear by God! The promised day is come, the day when tormenting trials will have surged above your heads, and beneath your feet, saying: "Taste ye what your hands have wrought!"

221.15 Now is the time when every follower of Bahá'u'lláh must cling fast to the Covenant of God, resist every temptation to become embroiled in the conflicts of the world, and remember that he is the holder of a precious trust, the Message of God which, alone, can banish injustice from the world and cure the ills afflicting the body and spirit of man. We are the bearers of the Word of God in this day and, however dark the immediate horizons, we must go forward rejoicing in the knowledge that the work we are privileged to perform is God's work and will bring to birth a world whose splendor will outshine our brightest visions and surpass our highest hopes.

The Universal House of Justice

222

Elucidation of Seven Year Plan Goals

Naw-Rúz 1979

To National Spiritual Assemblies

Beloved friends,

222.1 In the message of the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World and in its letters to individual communities setting the goals of the first phase of the Seven Year Plan are a number of references which it wishes to amplify for your guidance. Not all will apply to every national Bahá'í community, but you will all undoubtedly find interest in reading even those which do not immediately apply to your specific situation. The points we have been asked to set forth are as follows.

Local Spiritual Assemblies

222.2 In August 1970 the House of Justice sent to all National Spiritual Assemblies a compilation of the words of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi on the Local Spiritual Assembly. To supplement this fundamental and most important guidance we now enclose a compilation of

extracts from the letters of the Universal House of Justice written between 1966 and 1975, covering the importance of Local Spiritual Assemblies, their development, the supporting role of the Auxiliary Board members and their assistants, and suggested goals for Local Assemblies.

222.3 In selecting goal towns for the formation of Local Spiritual Assemblies a National Assembly should ensure that there will be a wide distribution of Local Assemblies throughout the country.

222.4 National Assemblies should consider calling upon every Local Assembly to meet at least once every Bahá'í month, and to appoint a local teaching committee wherever it is desirable to do so and has not already been done.

Pioneers and Traveling Teachers

222.5 The need for the services of pioneers and traveling teachers remains very great. In the goals for the initial two-year phase of the Plan few specific assignments for the sending of pioneers and traveling teachers have been made. In recent years a steady stream has begun to flow, and the Universal House of Justice calls upon the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in the stronger national communities to arise to join this stream. Enclosed are two lists showing those countries which are particularly in need of pioneers and traveling teachers at the present time. You should publish these as soon as possible. They are also being supplied to the Continental Pioneer Committees, and those friends who arise will be able to decide upon their area of service in consultation with their National Assembly and the appropriate committees. The international funds of the Faith are now very limited, and this adds to the need for pioneers and traveling teachers to be self-supporting.

Youth Teaching

222.6 Experience has shown that youth can render valuable service in many activities of the community, and particularly in taking the message to the members of their own generation. Those in schools and universities have many opportunities to teach their fellow students and faculty members, and many can be particularly effective by attending a school or university in a pioneer goal. During vacations youth can often render outstanding services as traveling teachers. Traveling in teams has been very useful.

Border Teaching

222.7 It is very important that there be collaborative teaching between national Bahá'í communities in border areas, both by travel teaching across the border and in the organization of joint teaching campaigns on both sides of it. Each National Spiritual Assembly should study this possibility and, if it finds such projects profitable, should seek the collaboration of its sister National Assemblies and request the advice and assistance of the Continental Board of Counselors.

Teaching Conferences

222.8 These conferences, whether national or regional, in addition to providing good opportunities for fanning the enthusiasm of the friends and fostering their unity, have been effectively used by many National Assemblies as working conferences where reports are given of the status of the goals of the Plan and of the urgent needs and priorities; and, where necessary, calls are raised for pioneers, traveling teachers and funds.

Summer and Winter Schools

222.9 The Guardian once described the institution of the Summer School in a letter written on his behalf, as "a vital and inseparable part of any teaching campaign." In April 1972 the House of Justice issued a compilation on the importance of Bahá'í Summer Schools, and it commends this to every National Spiritual Assembly for study. In only a few countries has it been possible or timely to acquire properties to house Summer and Winter Schools; in most they are still held in rented premises, and the House of Justice stresses the importance of holding them at as low a cost as possible in a place that is easily accessible to the friends, so that large numbers of believers and inquirers can attend. It is hoped that this activity will become at least an annual feature of the Bahá'í community life in every land.

The Bahá'í Education of Children

222.10 It is important to hold regular Bahá'í children's classes to give the children a thorough grounding in knowledge of the teachings and history of the Faith, to imbue them with its spirit, to establish loving ties between them and to provide them with that firm foundation in the Faith which will enable them to grow up as staunch and enlightened servants of Bahá'u'lláh. Non-Bahá'í parents will often welcome the opportunity of having their children take part in such classes, and this, in addition to the benefit it confers upon the children, may well be a means of attracting their parents to the Faith.

Tutorial Schools

222.11 This is a term, originally adopted in the Bahá'í community of India, to describe the simple type of school, organized and conducted under the auspices of the Bahá'í administrative institutions, wherein one teacher is employed to conduct classes in reading and writing and elementary subjects for the Bahá'í and non- Bahá'í children in a village. In addition to the academic subjects he also conducts Bahá'í classes for the children and, in his spare time, makes a valuable contribution to the teaching and consolidation work in his own and neighboring Bahá'í communities. The school may be held in the open air, in one of the houses of the Bahá'ís, in the local Hazíratu'l-Quds, or in a simple building constructed for the purpose, as conditions allow.

222.12 The teacher's salary as well as the other costs of the school are provided out of fees paid by the parents, supplemented, if necessary and possible, by allocations from the local or national funds.

222.13 In the Tablet of the World Bahá'u'lláh states that "Everyone, whether man or woman, should hand over to a trusted person a portion of what he or she earneth through trade, agriculture or other occupation, for the training and education of children, to be spent for this purpose with the knowledge of the Trustees of the House of Justice." In many countries this duty is fulfilled through the taxes that the government levies for the support of the state educational system, but there are other lands where no such facilities are provided and the Local Spiritual Assemblies may well begin to fulfill this aspect of their duties by encouraging the local friends to contribute to a special education fund which can be used for the support of tutorial schools or

to assist the children of indigent believers to obtain schooling.

Publications

222.14 Every National Spiritual Assembly should have a well conceived plan for the provision and dissemination of a balanced supply of Bahá'í literature for the believers and for the teaching work. In translation and publication, priority should be given to the Sacred Texts and the writings of Shoghi Effendi, for without access to the life-giving waters of the Holy Word, how are the believers to deepen in their understanding of the Teachings and convey them accurately to others?

Recordings

222.15 In addition to the publication of Texts and teaching materials for the friends, it would be helpful in areas where the degree of literacy is not high, to find ways to teach the friends Bahá'í songs, poems, stories and brief quotations from the Writings as well as prayers. This can be done through the use of cassette tapes or radio broadcasts.

222.16 The goal given to certain national communities to make recordings of the Holy Texts is not intended to imply the large-scale production of cassette tapes but rather the development of locally based programs for the recording on cassette tapes of passages in the indigenous languages. Such tapes can then be carried by traveling teachers to outlying areas, used in the teaching work, or left behind if there are tape-recorders locally available.

Communications

222.17 Keeping the friends informed of the news of the Faith is so important that every National Assembly is urged to devote attention to the prompt and regular dissemination of its national newsletter, supplemented, where necessary and feasible, by regional and local news organs. Some National Assemblies have also found that cassette recordings can be useful for communicating with friends in outlying areas, and radio programs can, of course, fulfill a similar purpose.Correspondence courses

222.18 Such courses have proved their usefulness both for teaching the Faith and deepening the knowledge of the believers, and their production has been given as a goal to some national communities. If any National Assembly assigned this goal is not certain how to proceed, it may consult with the Continental Board of Counselors or write to the Universal House of Justice which will put it in touch with those National Assemblies most likely to be able to help.

Properties

222.19 Many properties have already been acquired in the course of previous plans. It is important that these properties be properly maintained in good repair. National Spiritual Assemblies should set aside sums annually in their budgets for the maintenance of national properties so that when a repair becomes necessary the funds will be available without creating a sudden crisis for the national fund. As far as possible, local Hazíratu'l-Quds and other local properties should be kept up by the local friends themselves.

222.20 It is also important to make full use of the properties of the Faith for the purposes for which they were acquired. Well maintained and regularly used properties will not only be a means of fostering Bahá'í community life, but

will add to the prestige and dignity of the Faith in the eyes of the non-Bahá'í public.

222.21 A number of properties called for in the Five Year Plan, such as district and local Hazíratu'l-Quds and local endowments, have not yet been acquired, usually as a result of local circumstances beyond the control of the friends. These goals should continue to be diligently pursued so that they will be attained as soon as conditions permit. If there are insuperable difficulties which make such a property unobtainable in the foreseeable future, a full report should be sent to the Universal House of Justice.

222.22 For goals requiring the acquisition of additional local Hazíratu'l-Quds during the initial phase of the Seven Year Plan, no budget has been provided for assistance from the International Fund.

222.23 The Universal House of Justice is eagerly anticipating an upsurge of activity in the years ahead, and assures you all of its fervent prayers in the Holy Shrines for the rapid progress of all aspects of the new Plan.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

223

Member of the Universal House of Justice to Address Significant Meetings in North America and Europe

8 May 1979

To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

223.1IN THE WAKE OF JOYOUS WORLDWIDE CELEBRATIONS VICTORIES FIVE YEAR PLAN OUR HEARTS TURN TO OUR BELEAGUERED BRETHREN CRADLE FAITH, TO DEEPENING CRISIS INTERNATIONAL FUND AND ITS SPECIAL IMPACT ON CHALLENGES FACING BAHÁ'Í WORLD IN OPENING TWO-YEAR PHASE SEVEN YEAR PLAN. OUR PRAYERFUL CONSIDERATION MEASURES DESIGNED MITIGATE GRAVE PROBLEM RESULTED IN DECISION ARRANGE A SERIES OF SIGNIFICANT WELL ATTENDED MEETINGS WITH FRIENDS IN SEVERAL KEY CITIES NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE TO BE PLANNED BY RESPECTIVE NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES AND ADDRESSED BY MEMBER UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE. THIS MISSION ASSIGNED TO MR. KAVELIN. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE AND WE DEEM MONTHS OF JULY AND AUGUST MOST AUSPICIOUS CARRY OUT PROGRAM, PREFERABLY COVERING UNITED STATES AND CANADA IN JULY AND EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IN AUGUST. AMONG CITIES IN UNITED STATES, WE SUGGEST NEW YORK METROPOLITAN AREA, HOUSTON, WILMETTE, SAN DIEGO, LOS ANGELES, SAN FRANCISCO. WE WOULD LEAVE TO YOUR CONVENIENCE THE TIME AND LOCATION OF MEETINGS. YOU MAY ALSO CONSIDER HAVING OUR REPRESENTATIVE JOIN YOUR JUNE MEETING FOR CONSULTATION AND PROCEED FROM THERE TO INITIATE PROGRAM IN STAGES, THENCE TO CANADA. THERE IS FLEXIBILITY IN ARRANGEMENTS TO MEET CONDITIONS IN BOTH COUNTRIES. WE DEEM IT HIGHLY FITTING AND WORTHY THAT THIS PROGRAM BE LAUNCHED IN THE MUCH-LOVED COMMUNITY CALLED BY THE BELOVED MASTER APOSTLES O BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND NAMED BY SHOGHI EFFENDI PRINCIPAL BUILDERS AND DEFENDERS OF A MIGHTY ORDER. IN VIEW OF THE URGENCY IN MAKING APPROPRIATE ARRANGEMENTS ON BOTH CONTINENTS, WE WOULD APPRECIATE AN EARLY RESPONSE FROM YOU.

Universal House of Justice

224

Living a Chaste and Holy Life

8 May 1979

To an individual Bahá'í

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

224.1 The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 12 September 1978 and is impressed with the eager desire you show to train your behavior in accordance with the standards of the Faith. It has asked us to send you the following comments in answer to your questions.

224.2 On page 25 of The Advent of Divine Justice the beloved Guardian is describing the requirements not only of chastity, but of "a chaste and holy life"—both the adjectives are important. One of the signs of a decadent society, a sign which is very evident in the world today, is an almost frenetic devotion to pleasure and diversion, an insatiable thirst for amusement, a fanatical devotion to games and sport, a reluctance to treat any matter seriously, and a scornful, derisory attitude towards virtue and solid worth. Abandonment of "a frivolous conduct" does not imply that a Bahá'í must be sour-faced or perpetually solemn. Humor, happiness, joy are characteristics of a true Bahá'í life. Frivolity palls and eventually leads to boredom and emptiness, but true happiness and joy and humor that are parts of a balanced life that includes serious thought, compassion and humble servitude to God are characteristics that enrich life and add to its radiance.

224.3 Shoghi Effendi's choice of words was always significant, and each one is important in understanding his guidance. In this particular passage, he does not forbid "trivial" pleasures, but he does warn against "excessive attachment" to them and indicates that they can often be "misdirected." One is reminded of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's caution that we should not let a pastime become a waste of time.

224.4 Concerning the positive aspects of chastity, the Universal House of Justice states that the Bahá'í Faith recognizes the value of the sex impulse and holds that the institution of marriage has been established as the channel of its rightful expression. Bahá'ís do not believe that the sex impulse should be suppressed but that it should be regulated and controlled.

224.5 Chastity in no way implies withdrawal from human relationships. It liberates people from the tyranny of the ubiquity of sex. A person who is in control of his sexual impulses is enabled to have profound and enduring friendships with many people, both men and women, without ever sullying that unique and priceless bond that should unite man and wife.

224.6 A believer cannot fulfill his true mission in life as a follower of the Blessed Perfection merely by living according to a set of rigid regulations, as you will recognize. It is neither possible nor desirable for the House of Justice to lay down a set of rules covering every situation. Rather is it the task of the individual believer to determine, according to his own prayerful understanding of the Writings, precisely what his course of conduct should be in relation to situations which he encounters in his daily life. He must continually study the sacred Writings and the instructions of the beloved Guardian, striving always to attain a new and better understanding of their import to him, and orient his life towards service to Bahá'u'lláh, praying fervently for divine guidance, wisdom and strength to do what is pleasing to God.

224.7 The House of Justice hopes that these comments will be of help to you, and assures you of its prayers in the Holy Shrines that you will be guided and confirmed in your efforts to put into practice the divine teachings.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
225
Seizure of the House of the Báb
10 May 1979
To National Spiritual Assemblies
225.1NEWS JUST RECEIVED BLESSED HOUSE SHIRAZ AND FOUR ADJACENT HOUSES SEIZED BY ARMED MEN LAST WEEK OCCUPIED BY THEM FEW DAYS, BAHÁ'Í CUSTODIANS THEN SENT AWAY AND DOORS LOCKED AND SEALED....
Universal House of Justice
226
Call for Prayers for the Bahá'ís of Iran
23 May 1979
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
226.1 Since you were last informed of the recent events in the Cradle of the Faith, news has been received of further persecutions directed against the beloved and steadfast friends.
226.2 Historic sites of the Faith, Hazíratu'l-Quds of local communities, and other Bahá'í properties in several provinces of Iran have been seized and occupied by forces of the new revolutionary government. Among the more sacred of these properties are the Most Holy House of the Báb in Shiraz, ordained by Bahá'u'lláh to be a place of pilgrimage for His followers and regarded by them as the most hallowed Spot in that land, the Síyáh-Chál and two ancestral Houses of Bahá'u'lláh in Tehran and Tákur. Ominous signs of the intensification of active repression of the Faith are becoming evident, and the defenseless and vulnerable Persian Bahá'í community faces mounting perils to its Holy Places, institutions, properties and even the lives of its members.
226.3 We call on all believers in every land to offer special prayers for the protection of the Faith and the believers in Iran on the forthcoming anniversary of the Martyrdom of the Báb, on 9 July 1979, supplicating that through God's loving grace this fresh wave of persecution may not seriously harm the interests of His Cause, and that He may remove the obstacles from the path of the friends, and provide the means for the protection of the Holy Places and institutions of His Faith.
226.4 As soon as the Secretariat of your Assembly receives this letter, immediate steps should be taken to inform all the friends under your jurisdiction of the contents of the letter so that as many believers as possible in every land may participate in this day of prayer on behalf of their beleaguered brethren in Iran.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice
227

The Increasing Dangers Facing Iranian Bahá'ís
15 June 1979
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
227.1Further to the letter of the House of Justice to you of 23 May, the situation in Persia continues to be a cause for deep concern and the friends and Holy Places in the country are in serious danger. We have been directed by the House of Justice to inform you of the following developments in the Cradle of our Faith.
227.21. An order has been issued by the authorities requiring the Umaná Company to cease functioning under its Bahá'í manager and to operate henceforth under a new non-Bahá'í management. This company holds on behalf of the Bahá'í community all the properties of the Faith, including the Holy Places. This step is ominous in its implications as it forebodes total confiscation of all our properties, including Bahá'í cemeteries. A similar step has been taken in respect to the Bahá'í hospital in Tehran, known as the Míthágíyyih Hospital.
227.3 2. As a result of the recent disturbances, local revolutionary committees in Iran have instigated, in rural areas, the looting of the homes of several hundred Bahá'í families and the deprivation of their means of livelihood. Although a partial restitution of these properties has taken place, adequate compensation for the losses sustained by the Bahá'ís has yet to be made.
227.4 3. Efforts are made to silence the religious conscience of the Bahá'ís, as they are threatened with dismissal from their jobs and loss of their retirement allowances if they refuse to recant their Faith.
227.5 4. Shirkat-i-Nawnahálán, a commercial company of sixty years' standing, in which over 15,000 Bahá'ís have shares and investments, is occupied, its assets frozen, and its staff prevented from work, and denied their salaries. This action contradicts public proclamations of the new regime as well as accepted international standards.
227.6 5. The proposed drafts of the new constitution as published in the press recognize three religious minorities, but omit mention of the Bahá'ís, in spite of the fact that they are the largest religious minority in the country.
227.7 6. The true aims and principles of the Faith are being maliciously misrepresented by a group of fanatical Shí'ah fundamentalists, established over twenty years ago, and one of whose chief aims has been and is to harass the Bahá'í community in Iran. This group is presently spreading false allegations against the Bahá'ís, unjustly accusing them of being enemies of Islam, agents of Zionism and political tools of the previous regime. Such allegations have aroused the passions of uninformed mobs, and created misunderstandings with the authorities. As the Bahá'ís are not a recognized entity in Iran, they have no opportunity to deny or disprove these false accusations. ...
227.8 One of the Persian friends has also written to the House of Justice a eulogy of the spirit of his fellow-believers at this moment of deep agitation and turmoil in the Cradle of our Faith. A copy of extracts from his letter is enclosed.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
Extracts from a Report of One of
the Friends from Persia

227.9 The enemies of the Faith, filled with hatred and cruelty, have once again attacked the wronged and homeless believers and the Bahá'í properties. They are truly the return of their bloodthirsty predecessors. The friends have encountered such persecution and have manifested such courage and steadfastness that in every detail they have become the return of the martyrs and the heroes of the Cause of God. The events of history have become alive once again and are reoccurring. No day passes without the shedding of tears of blood and the anguish of hearts. The news of sad events, like a weighty hammer continually descends upon the Bahá'ís. No pen is able to describe the degree of afflictions and difficulties inflicted upon these wronged believers.

227.10 About 2,000 men, women, children and youth have sought refuge in the mountains and deserts and live in tents. They have spent many cold and rainy days in the caves of the mountains. Many are injured with broken arms and legs. The small children have lost their ability to talk, having been frightened so much because of the incidents, and the milk of the nursing mothers has dried up. These believers, without having any means of livelihood, pass their days with utmost difficulty and are banished from place to place.

227.11 When the believers, hungry and grief-stricken, had gathered together in the wilderness, the enemies sent them chilaw-kabáb (kabáb with rice) to win their hearts. But those beloved ones did not accept the food and returned it. It is easy to say or write these words, but the bearing of these afflictions is only possible through the power of God. Those few who have denied their faith have escaped to Isfahán, crying and lamenting that they were threatened with the raping of the women of their households. They sit and cry for hours saying they did not know what else to do.

227.12 This is only a glimpse into one incident. Every day, from every corner, there is another cry of grief. The Hazíratu'l-Quds of Ábádih, where the heads of the early martyrs of the Faith have been buried, has been leveled to the dust. Many other Hazíratu'l-Quds have been destroyed. The number of Bahá'ís in prisons for one reason or another has increased to 20. Many have been discharged from their jobs. Many have lost their retirement allowances. The Ministry of Education has officially sent a circular that those Bahá'ís who do not deny their faith should be immediately discharged.

227.13 Facing these difficulties, in the midst of the darkness of this oppression and tyranny, are the illumined faces of the National Spiritual Assembly members: the sources of hope. Truly they are angels of God; no, more exalted. Every minute of their lives deserves the reward of a martyr, and each one of them, the reward of a thousand martyrs. They are the personification of steadfastness, courage, and sacrifice, with nothing but the service of the Cause in their hearts and souls. Whenever I looked upon the faces of these illuminated and beloved ones in the meetings of the Assembly, my tears would uncontrollably pour from my eyes.

227.14 There are many such examples amongst the Auxiliary Board members,

members of the Assemblies and the youth. Truly, the new creations of God are beyond our imaginations. Unless one witnesses such events in person, the extent of the sacrifice and steadfastness that these friends have manifested cannot be comprehended.

227.1 Whenever I witnessed what befell these believers, the words of God would find meaning in front of my eyes. I had looked up the meaning of these words in the dictionaries, but I did not know that in addition to their obvious meaning they describe, or better even, create new realities. Now that the tempest of trials and afflictions has encircled the community of the beloved ones, the believers who have remained behind and who steadfastly and firmly are bearing the burden of this storm, only can sing the eternal epic of the second century of the Faith. Truly, all of them are the children and descendants of those who watered the tree of the Faith with their pure blood. This tree is still bearing fruit, is still growing! What a glory! What a glory!

227.16 There is so much to say and tell, but the mental anguish is so severe, the conditions are so dark and confused, and the outpouring of the difficulties so abundant that my tongue is not able to utter a word and my mind is bewildered. I can only cry. May my soul be sacrificed for the faithful followers of Bahá'u'lláh who have created the greatest epic in the history of the second century of this new Day. One of the guards who had gone to the house of one of the friends had told her that he could not believe the forbearance and patience of the Bahá'ís and had asked how we could ever do it!

227.17 These are events to remember. Whenever the bloodthirsty enemies or others have returned a part of the looted belongings of the Bahá'ís, they have refused to accept them, crying that they will not take back what they have given in the path of God. One of the friends ... lost absolutely everything, and refusing the help of the Assembly on the grounds that there were many more needy than he, started to work as a laborer to make a living for his family. He could not bring himself to accept any help whatever from non-Bahá'ís, or to tell of his situation to friends. A friend related that when he saw him, he was so touched that his knees could no more bear the weight of his body.

227.18 And yet another story. A believer who had incurred a loss of Rls.170,000,000, wrote on the questionnaire form of the Assembly that he did not need any help! When everything is gone with the wind, only faith remains.

227.19 At present thousands of friends in Iran have lost everything, or have lost their jobs and are meeting their expenses by the sale of their belongings. And then there are those who are fleeing from one place to another and in grave danger. This is only the beginning of the journey of love, and its end is not known.

227.20 For five months the National Spiritual Assembly has been meeting at least three or four times a week, for about six to eight continuous hours each time, and devotes 90 per cent of its time to discussion of urgent matters relating to the situation.

227.21 The staff of the Nawnahálán Company have not received their salaries for three months now and about 40 families are affected by this situation. Many other families who had given whatever they had to the Nawnahálán Company

and were dependent on the interest received to pay for their expenses, are left without any income. All petitions and complaints have remained unanswered. Whatever was lost is lost and nothing has been recovered.

227.22 God willing, I will write a book instead of a letter and present it to you so that perhaps a drop of this ocean of difficulties may be recorded. The request of this servant and every one of the believers is to express our servitude and beseech the House of Justice for its prayers in the Holy Shrines. From whomever I asked whether they had any special request to be conveyed to you, I was told to beg for your prayers that God may give them the power and worthiness to accept and bear the difficulties.

228

Advice on Use of Pioneers and Traveling Teachers

28 June 1979

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

228.1 One of the objectives of the Seven Year Plan is the continued settlement of pioneers in needed areas and the movement of traveling teachers. We have been asked by the Universal House of Justice to share with you its advice on these vital tasks.

228.2 The House of Justice feels that, while ultimate decisions regarding the selection of pioneers and traveling teachers and the manner in which their services are to be utilized remain, of course, in the hands of National Spiritual Assemblies, a closer degree of communication with Boards of Counselors in these matters should be maintained. For example, the number of pioneers and traveling teachers to foreign lands which a National Spiritual Assembly can supply during the current year and every subsequent year of the Plan; the degree of dependence of a national community on outside workers and, if needed, how many and from which countries; and when necessary the evaluation of the services of certain pioneers, are among issues that every National Spiritual Assembly can usefully discuss with the Counselors in its zone. The House of Justice is sure that such consultations would most certainly be conducive to excellent results.

228.3 On a different level, a National Spiritual Assembly may need assistance from Continental Pioneer Committees in the movement of pioneers to their posts or in the coordination of visits by traveling teachers. In order to obtain the best results from the collaboration of these Committees, it is important that information and views be exchanged with them speedily and efficiently. The House of Justice feels that it is highly desirable for each National Spiritual Assembly to make arrangements for Continental Pioneer Committees to deal directly with agencies of National Spiritual Assemblies responsible for pioneers and traveling teachers. When a decision is taken in this regard, the name and address of the correspondent or correspondents should be immediately conveyed to the Continental Pioneer Committees concerned.

228.4 The Universal House of Justice assures you of its loving prayers as you exert yourselves to fulfill the goals and tasks ahead.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

229
The Setting of Counselors' Terms of Service
29 June 1979
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
229.1MOMENT PROPITIOUS ANNOUNCE DURATION TERMS SERVICE MEMBERS CONTINENTAL BOARDS COUNSELORS AS ANTICIPATED IN ANNOUNCEMENT ESTABLISHMENT THAT INSTITUT AND IN CONSTITUTION UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE. DECISION NOW TAKEN THAT TERMS WILL BE OF FIVE YEARS STARTING DAY COVENANT 26 NOVEMBER 1980. SUPPLICATING ANCIENT BEAUTY DIVINE BLESSINGS DEVELOPMENT THIS ESSENTIAL INSTITUTION BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER.
Universal House of Justice
230
New Member of International Teaching Center
4 July 1979
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
230.1JOYFULLY ANNOUNCE APPOINTMENT COUNSELOR ANNELIESE BOPP TO MEMBERSHIP INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTER.
Universal House of Justice
231
Conversion of Iranian National Bahá'í Headquarters
into an Islamic University
17 July 1979
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
231.1SITUATION FRIENDS IRAN STEADILY DETERIORATING. REUTERS HAS SENT WORLD PRESS NEWS RELEASE TWELVE JULY QUOTING OFFICIAL PARIS NEWS AGENCY THAT NATIONA BAHÁ'Í HEADQUARTERS BEING CONVERTED INTO ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY....
Universal House of Justice
232
Call for Pioneers
28 July 1979
To National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
232.1 In order to expedite the dispatch of pioneers called for under the first phase of the Seven Year Plan to the territories named by the Universal House of Justice as having high priority, the House of Justice has decided to make specific assignments to selected National Spiritual Assemblies. A list of these assignments is attached.
232.2 It is the hope of the House of Justice that the arrival of these pioneers will be of valuable assistance to you in the promotion of the teaching work in the areas under your jurisdiction. However, as you are aware, the process of preparing and sending pioneers is often time-consuming, and you should not wait for the arrival of these pioneers before making your teaching plans. The success of the efforts of your Assembly is not dependent solely upon the presence and assistance of pioneers, but must in the long term be firmly rooted in the devoted efforts of the local believers themselves.
232.3 You may wish to contact directly the National Assemblies scheduled to provide pioneers for your territory in order to expedite achievement of these

important goals.
232.4 You are assured of the loving prayers of the Universal House of Justice at the Holy Threshold for the success of all your efforts in the service of the Cause, and also for all those who arise to fulfill the goals.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
233
Release of Bahá'í Prisoners in Baghdad
20 August 1979
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
233.1 The following message has just been telexed by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'í International Community office in New York:
HIGHLY GRATIFIED NEWS JUST RECEIVED ALL BAHÁ'Í PRISONERS BAGHDAD RELEASED AS PART GENERAL AMNESTY. WE OFFER THANKSGIVING BAHÁ'U'LLÁH HIS BOUNTIFUL GRACE ENABLING HIS STEADFAST FRIENDS DEMONSTRATE THEIR UNWAVERING LOYALTY HIS PRECIOUS FAITH.
233.2 The Universal House of Justice is sure that this news will delight the hearts of the friends.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
234
Effects of Bahá'í Actions on the Situation in Iran
20 August 1979
To National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
234.1 Since writing to you on 15 June on behalf of the Universal House of Justice about events and persecutions in Iran, several developments have transpired, and we have been asked to share the information set forth below with you.
234.2 The cumulative effect of the cables sent by Local Spiritual Assemblies throughout the world, as well as the issuance and quiet circulation of open letters directed to the public in Iran by the National Spiritual Assembly of that country, refuting the false allegations made against the Bahá'í Community, seem to have produced, among others, the following results.
234.3 1. The Iranian press has stopped its daily vituperation against the Bahá'ís.
234.4 2. The official government explanation for the seizure of properties belonging to the Bahá'í Community, including the Holy Places, is that these have been seized in order to protect them.
234.53. Individual government officials, contacted by representatives of the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran, have expressed personal sympathy with the Bahá'ís; however, they seem incapable of effectively helping the friends in their present plight....
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat

235
Demolition of the House of the Báb
9 September 1979
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
235.1PERSECUTION OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS, THE LARGEST RELIGIOUS MINORITY IN IRAN, HAS TAKEN A NEW TURN. EARLY YESTERDAY MORNING A CROWD OF OVER 100 PEOPLE, INCLUDING THE HEAD OF THE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT FOR RELIGIOUS ENDOWMENTS IN SHIRAZ, AND ACCOMPANIED BY 25 REVOLUTIONARY GUARDSMEN AND 10 OTHER ARMED MEN ATTACKED THE MOST HOLY HOUSE OF THE BÁB WHICH WAS ORDAINED BY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, THE FOUNDER OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH, TO BE A PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE FOR HIS FOLLOWERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AND IS REGARDED BY THEM AS THE MOST HALLOWED SPOT IN IRAN. THIS CROWD, WHICH HAD THE KEY TO THE HOUSE, SMASHED AND DISMANTLED DOORS AND WINDOWS, DESTROYED ORNAMENTAL PLASTERWO BREACHED THE WALLS AND HACKED TO PIECES A TREE IN THE COURTYARD. THIS MORNING THE WORK OF DEMOLITION IS BEING CONTINUED BY A GROUP OF WORKMEN AND IT IS CLEAR THAT THE PURPOSE IS TO RAZE TO THE GROUND THE HOUSE OF THE BÁB AND TWO ADJACENT HOUSES WHICH ALSO BELONG TO THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY.
235.2 A WAVE OF ANGUISHED INDIGNATION IS SWEEPING THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. WHEN ALL BAHÁ'Í HOLY PLACES IN IRAN WERE SEIZED BY THE AUTHORITIES IN RECENT MONTHS, THE PROTESTATIONS OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS WERE MET WITH BLAND ASSURANCES, CONFIRMED IN WRITING, THAT THE TAKEOVER WAS FOR THE PROTECTION OF THESE SACRED PROPERTIES.
235.3 BAHÁ'ÍS IN EAST AND WEST ARE REGISTERING VEHEMENT PROTESTS WITH THE IRANIAN AUTHORITIES.
Universal House of Justice
236
Results of Significant Meetings Addressed by Member of the Universal House of Justice
16 September 1979
To the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís of Alaska, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom, United States
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
236.1 We have been directed by the Universal House of Justice to convey its loving appreciation for the devoted and wholehearted cooperation each of you, as a host National Assembly, extended to its official representative, Mr. Borrah Kavelin, in the series of meetings arranged in North America and in Europe extending over a ten-week period that ended on 31 August.
236.2 In all, 42 meetings were held in 33 cities. It is estimated that a total of more than twelve thousand friends were in attendance at the series of meetings, and that all national Bahá'í communities in Europe were represented in that number. It is hoped that the intended distribution by all host National Assemblies to Local Spiritual Assemblies of copies of the taped message of the Universal House of Justice's representative will reach the widest possible number of friends in all countries within the scope of the assigned mission.
236.3 Already, the magnificent response by National and Local Spiritual

Assemblies, and by untold numbers of friends, received by the World Center in the form of commitments and generous and sacrificial contributions, is a noble testament to the wholehearted acceptance of the challenge facing the Bahá'í world in the opening two-year phase of the Seven Year Plan, and to the redemption of the ransom imposed upon the beloved friends in the Cradle of the Faith, even as the clouds of persecution and oppression continue to darken the horizon in that troubled land, as evidenced by the tragic news of the severe damage recently inflicted on the Blessed House of the Báb in Shiraz.

236.4 The Universal House of Justice is serenely confident that each of you, in collaboration with the institution of the Continental Board of Counselors, will maintain, and indeed enhance, the high level of activity called for in successfully overcoming the crisis we face. Ardent and loving prayers at the Divine Threshold will be offered for the blessings and confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh to surround you in your devoted labors.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

237

Assassination of the Hand of the Cause of God

Enoch Olinga

17 September 1979

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

237.1WITH GRIEF-STRICKEN HEARTS ANNOUNCE TRAGIC NEWS BRUTAL MURDER DEARLY LOV GREATLY ADMIRED HAND CAUSE GOD ENOCH OLINGA BY UNKNOWN GUNMEN COURTYARD H KAMPALA HOME. HIS WIFE ELIZABETH AND THREE OF HIS CHILDREN BADÍ, LENNIE AND TÁHIRIH HAVE ALSO FALLEN INNOCENT VICTIMS THIS CRUEL ACT. MOTIVE ATTACK NOT YET ASCERTAINED. HIS RADIANT SPIRIT, HIS UNWAVERING FAITH, HIS ALL-EMBRACING LOVE, HIS LEONINE AUDACITY IN THE TEACHING FIELD, HIS TITLES KNIGHT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, FATHER VICTORIES CONFERRED BELOVED GUARDIAN, ALL COMBINE DISTINGUISH HIM AS PREEMINENT MEMBER HIS RACE IN ANNALS FAITH AFRICAN CONTINENT URGE FRIENDS EVERYWHERE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS BEFITTING TRIBUTE HIS IMPERISHABLE MEMORY. FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS NOBLE SOUL AND SOULS FOUR MEMBERS HIS PRECIOUS FAMILY.

Universal House of Justice

238

Omission of Bahá'ís as Recognized Religious Minority from Iranian Constitution

20 September 1979

To National Spiritual Assemblies

238.1FRAMERS NEW CONSTITUTION IRAN APPROVED CLAUSE RECOGNIZING MINORITY RELIGIONS SPECIFYING JEWS CHRISTIANS ZOROASTRIANS BUT OMITTING MENTION BAHÁ'ÍS....

Universal House of Justice

239

Refutation of Accusations against Iranian Bahá'ís

17 October 1979

To National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

239.1 The Universal House of Justice has asked us to send you the attached material....
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
239.2IRANIAN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES OUTSIDE IRAN HAVE APPARENTLY ADOPTED A UNIFOR STAND IN THEIR REPLIES TO APPEALS BEING MADE ON BEHALF OF THE IRANIAN BAHÁ'ÍS. THEY SAY THAT BAHÁ'ÍS IN IRAN, UNLIKE BAHÁ'ÍS ELSEWHERE, HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN POLITICS, CONSPIRED WITH AND WERE FAVORED AND SUPPORTED BY THE PREVIOUS REGIME, AND WERE PROMINENT MEMBERS OF SAVAK. IN SUPPORT OF THESE STATEMENTS THESE OFFICIALS NAME AS BAHÁ'ÍS: FORMER PRIME MINISTER ABBAS AMIR HOVEIDA, A FORMER MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE MANSOUR ROUHANI, A SAVAK SENIOR OFFICER PARVIZ SABETI, AND THE PHYSICIAN TO THE SHAH DR. AYADI.
239.3 THE FACTS ARE THAT HOVEIDA'S GRANDFATHER WAS A BAHÁ'Í, HIS FATHER WAS EXPELLED FROM THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY BECAUSE HE BECAME INVOLVED IN POLITICAL ACTIVITY, AND HOVEIDA HIMSELF WAS NEVER A BAHÁ'Í. ROUHANI'S FATHER WAS A BAHÁ'Í, HIS MOTHER A DEVOUT MUSLIM, BUT ROUHANI WAS NEVER A BAHÁ'Í SABETI'S PARENTS WERE BAHÁ'ÍS, AND THEY REGISTERED HIM IN THE COMMUNITY AS A BAHÁ'Í CHILD. HOWEVER, WHEN HE CAME OF AGE HE DID NOT HIMSELF REGISTER AS A BAHÁ'Í AND NEVER BECAME A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY UNLIKE CHILDREN OF OTHER RELIGIONS, BAHÁ'Í CHILDREN DO NOT AUTOMATICALLY INHERIT THE FAITH OF THEIR PARENTS. WHEN THEY COME OF AGE THEY MUST OF THEIR OWN VOLITION EXPRESS THEIR BELIEF IN BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND HIS TEACHINGS. DR. AYADI, HOWEVER, IS A BAHÁ'Í HE HELD TWO POSITIONS: ONE AS DIRECTOR OF THE ARMY MEDICAL SERVICE; THE OTHER AS PRIVATE PHYSICIAN OF THE COURT. NEITHER OF THESE TWO POSITIONS WAS REGARDED BY THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY AS POLITICAL IN NATURE.
239.4 ALTHOUGH SOME BAHÁ'ÍS WITH UNIQUE QUALIFICATIONS WERE PLACED IN POSITIONS OF TRUST BECAUSE OF THEIR ABILITY AND INTEGRITY, IT IS NOT TRUE TO SAY THAT BAHÁ'ÍS WERE FAVORED BY THE PREVIOUS REGIME. ON THE CONTRARY, THEY WERE DENIED CIVIL RIGHTS, SUCH AS PERMISSION TO REGISTER THEIR BAHÁ'Í MARRIAGES, PRIVILEGE TO HOLD BAHÁ'Í RELIGIOUS ENDOWMENTS IN NAME OF BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY, AND FREEDOM TO PUBLISH BAHÁ'Í LITERATURE OR ESTABLISH BAHÁ'Í SCHOOLS (INDEED DURING THE REIGN OF MUHAMMAD REZA SHAH'S FATHER, OVER THIRTY BAHÁ'Í SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY WERE PERMANENTLY CLOSED). MANY OF RANK AND FILE OF BAHÁ'ÍS WERE DENIED JOBS AND SOMETIMES EVEN THEIR RIGHTS TO PENSIONS BECAUSE OF THEIR REFUSAL TO DENY THEIR FAITH.
239.5 AS TO THE ALLEGED ROLE OF BAHÁ'ÍS IN SAVAK, THIS IS LIKEWISE UNTRUE. FOR EXAMPLE, IN JANUARY 1979, THROUGH THE MACHINATIONS OF SAVAK, AN ORDER WAS GIVEN TO SYSTEMATICALLY LOOT AND BURN OR OTHERWISE DESTROY HUNDRE OF HOMES OF BAHÁ'ÍS. THIS IS A FACT ATTESTED TO BY MUSLIM CLERICS BELONGING TO THE PRESENT REGIME WHO, DURING THAT PERIOD OF TERROR AND VIOLENCE AGAINST THE BAHÁ'ÍS, WERE AMONG THE FIRST TO TRY TO DISSUADE THE MOBS FROM PARTICIPATING IN THE SAVAK PLAN, SINCE THE CLERGY KNEW THAT THE AIM OF THIS PLAN WAS TO GIVE EXCUSE TO SAVAK TO DISCREDIT AND SUPPRESS THEM.
239.6 SUMMARIZING THE FOREGOING—IT IS FEARED THAT THE PRESENT REGIME, AS INDICATED BY THE SIMILARITY OF THE STATEMENTS BEING GIVEN OUT BY IRANIAN DIPLOMATIC AGENCIES, IS ATTEMPTING TO JUSTIFY ACTIONS BEING TAKEN AGAINST THE

BAHÁ'ÍS BY ASSERTING THAT THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH IS NOT A RELIGION BUT A POLITICAL PARTY, AND THAT THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY SUPPORTED THE PREVIOUS REGIME AND THEREBY BECAME POWERFUL AND WEALTHY. THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER CAN FOUND IN THE BAHÁ'Í PRINCIPLE AND PRACTICE OF COMPLETE ABSTENTION FROM PARTICIPATION IN PARTISAN POLITICS WHICH WAS DEMONSTRATED IN IRAN IN 1975 WHEN BAHÁ'ÍS EVEN IN THE FACE OF THREATS REFUSED TO BECOME MEMBERS OF THE RASTAKHIZ PARTY PROMOTED BY THE PREVIOUS REGIME. IN ONE CASE WHEN A BAHÁ'Í ACCEPTED A CABINET POST UNDER DURESS HE WAS DEPRIVED OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY. AS TO THE ALLEGATION THAT THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY REAPED FINANCIAL REWARD BECAUSE OF ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT WITH THE PREVIOUS REGIM THE FACT IS THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF IRANIAN BAHÁ'ÍS ARE OF THE POORER CLASSES LIVING IN VILLAGES. FEW ARE WEALTHY, AND AMONG THEM A NUMBER WERE BUSINESSMEN WHO PROVIDED FACILITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT OF THOUSANDS OF WORKERS. THE FEW WHO RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY ARE BEING ACCUSED OF CORRUPTION AND OTHER OFFENCES SHOULD NOT BE REGARDED AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE. IT IS AN INJUSTICE TO HOLD ANY RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ILL-DOINGS OF ANY ONE OF ITS MEMBERS WHO FAILS TO REFLECT THE PRINCIPLES PROMULGATED BY THAT RELIGION.

239.7 AS THE NEW CONSTITUTION MAKES NO REFERENCE TO THE BAHÁ'ÍS, WAYS AND MEANS SHOULD BE SOUGHT TO EXTEND TO THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY PROTECTION OF ITS INTERESTS, AND TO ENSURE FOR ITS INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS BASIC CIVIL RIGHTS THUS AVOIDING FRICTION AND FRUSTRATION IN SUCH OFT-RECURRING PERSONAL PROBLEMS RELATED TO REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGES AND BIRTHS, EMPLOYMENT, TRAVELING DOCUMENTS, ETC.

239.8 UNLESS THESE DISABILITIES CURRENTLY AFFLICTING IRAN'S LARGEST RELIGIOUS MINORITY ARE REMEDIED, FANATICAL ELEMENTS WILL BE GIVEN FREE REIN TO REPEATEDLY RESORT TO MOB VIOLENCE AGAINST THE BAHÁ'ÍS, EMBARRASSING THE GOVERNMENT AND PREVENTING HOPED-FOR PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY IN THAT COUNTRY. ..

239.9 ONE OF THE OFT-REPEATED ACCUSATIONS AGAINST BAHÁ'ÍS IS THAT THEY ARE ENEMIES OF ISLAM. THIS CHARGE ASSUMES NOW NEW PROPORTIONS AS MANY RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES IN NEW CONSTITUTION APPLY ONLY IF INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES CONCERNED ARE NOT REGARDED AS ANTI-ISLAMIC. HENCE OFFICIAL BRANDING BAHÁ'Í FAITH AS ANTI-ISLAMIC MAY BE CONVENIENT DEVICE TO DENY BAHÁ'ÍS ESSENTIAL HUMAN RIGHTS. FURTHERMORE, SOMETIMES DISTINCTION IS MADE BETWEEN BAHÁ'Í FAITH AND OTHER RELIGIONS BY STATING THAT OUR FAITH APPEARED AFTER ISLAM AND THEREFORE IS NOT CONSIDERED BY MUSLIMS AS A RELIGION ENTITLED TO RIGHTS OF OTHER RELIGIONS. SUCH THEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES SHOULD NOT BE CAUSE DENIAL CIVIL RIGHTS. SAME SITUATION APPLIES TO MUSLIMS WHO RESIDE IN CHRISTIAN COUNTRIES, AND ENJOY FULL RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL RIGHTS.

239.10 REGARDING PROPERTIES HELD BY UMANÁ COMPANY. THESE PROPERTIES CONSIST PRIMARILY OF BAHÁ'Í HOLY AND HISTORICAL SITES HELD IN TRUST BY IRANIAN BAHÁ'ÍS ON BEHALF THEIR CO-RELIGIONISTS THROUGHOUT WORLD AS WELL AS PROPERTIES OF PURELY RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE SUCH AS TEMPLE LAND, COMMUNITY CENTERS AND CEMETERIES AND MANY OF THESE HAVE BEEN IN BAHÁ'Í POSSESSION FOR OVER A CENTURY.

239.11 REGARDING NAWNAHÁLÁN: THIS COMPANY WAS FOUNDED PRIOR TO RULE PAHLAVI DYNASTY. OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF FIFTEEN THOUSAND BAHÁ'ÍS WHO HAVE SHARES

AND INVESTMENTS IN COMPANY ARE NOT OF WEALTHY CLASS, AND DEPEND FOR THEIR LIVELIHOOD ON INCOME THEY WERE DERIVING FROM THEIR ASSETS IN THE COMPANY. ...

240

Release of a Compilation on Inspiring the Heart

24 October 1979

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

240.1 The provision and dissemination of a balanced supply of Bahá'í literature is one of the aims set forth in the Seven Year Plan. The Universal House of Justice has been considering this aspect of the Plan, and has asked us to convey its comments to you.

240.2 The House of Justice hopes that every National Spiritual Assembly will provide the believers under its jurisdiction with publications of the Words of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It is explicit in the Holy Text that the followers of the Most Great Name should recite the verses daily. How is this possible for the thousands of Bahá'ís who do not have access to these Holy Words in a language which they can understand? Furthermore, the way is open for the consolidation and maturing of the Bahá'í community when the hearts of its members can be exposed to the Divine Teachings in their pure form.

240.3 With these principles in mind, the House of Justice asked a committee at the World Center to prepare a compilation from previously published texts covering a broad range of subjects dealt with by the Central Figures of the Faith, including material which can be easily comprehended, inspire the heart, strengthen the spirit of faith, and enrich the spiritual understanding of the reader.

240.4 Such a compilation has now been prepared, and it is being sent to you by airmail under separate cover. It is not meant to supersede any material you may have already compiled. It is a sample of what can be done in this vital area of Bahá'í activity. You should, therefore, feel free to use or translate as much or as little of this material as you wish, to add selections from the Writings which you feel are particularly applicable to the friends in your area, and to publish and distribute your own compilations as quickly and inexpensively as possible.

240.5 It is the hope of the Universal House of Justice that the workers in the Divine Vineyard in every land will always and increasingly have recourse to the Writings revealed by the Central Figures of our Faith, will appreciate the potency of the Holy Word, and will allow its ennobling and spiritualizing influence to stimulate and direct their personal lives and guide them in devoted services to the Cause of God.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

241

Demolition of the House of the Báb
and Adjacent Bahá'í Properties

19 November 1979

To National Spiritual Assemblies

241.1WITH SORROWFUL HEARTS SHARE NEWS FRESH ATTACK BÁB'S HOUSE HAS RESULTED DEMOLITION REMNANTS BLESSED HOUSE AND DESTRUCTION TWO OTHER ADJACENT BAHÁ'Í PROPERTIES. WALLS SEPARATING COURTYARDS THESE HOUSES AND ALL WALLS BORDERING STREET ALSO DISMANTLED. DEMOLITION ADDITIONAL BAHÁ'Í HOUSES IMMEDIATE VICINITY GRAVELY THREATENED....
Universal House of Justice
242
Excavation of Temple Site in Western Samoa
6 December 1979
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
242.1JOYFULLY ANNOUNCE COMMENCEMENT EXCAVATION TEMPLE SITE SAMOA PRESENCE H HIGHNESS MALIETOA TANUMAFILI II SPECIAL CEREMONY, DECEMBER FIRST. THIS HISTORIC EVENT COINCIDES COMPLETION EXCAVATION AND LETTING TENDERS FOR CONSTRUCTION MOTHER TEMPLE INDIA. CONFIDENT THESE VICTORIES WILL RAISE SPIRITS BRING JOY HEARTS FRIENDS DISTRESSED RECENT EVENTS CRADLE FAITH. OFFERING ARDENT PRAYERS THANKSGIVING HOLY THRESHOLD.
Universal House of Justice
243
Passing of the Hand of the Cause of God
Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir
30 December 1979
To all Hands of the Cause of God and National Spiritual Assemblies
243.1PROFOUNDLY LAMENT UNTIMELY PASSING IN QUITO ECUADOR BELOVED HAND CAUSE RAHMATU'LLÁH MUHÁJIR FOLLOWING HEART ATTACK COURSE HIS LATEST SOUTH AMERICAN TOUR UNSTINTED UNRESTRAINED OUTPOURING OF PHYSICAL SPIRITUAL ENERGIE BY ONE WHO OFFERED HIS ALL PATH SERVICE HAS NOW CEASED. POSTERITY WILL RECORD HIS DEVOTED SERVICES YOUTHFUL YEARS CRADLE FAITH HIS SUBSEQUENT UNIQUE EXPLOIT PIONEERING FIELD SOUTHEAST ASIA WHERE HE WON ACCOLADE KNIGHTHOOD BAHÁ'U'LLÁH HIS CEASELESS EFFORTS OVER TWO DECADES SINCE HIS APPOINTMENT HAND CAUSE STIMULATING IN MANY LANDS EAST WEST PROCESS ENTRY BY TROOPS. FRIENDS ALL CONTINENTS WHO MOURN THIS TRAGIC LOSS NOW SUDDENLY DEPRIVED COLLABORATION ONE WHO ENDEARED HIMSELF TO THEM THROUGH HIS GENTLENESS HIS LUMINOUS PERSONALITY HIS EXEMPLARY UNFLAGGING ZEAL HIS CREATIVE ENTHUSIASTIC APPROACH TO FULFILLMENT ASSIGNED GOALS. URGE FRIENDS EVERYWHERE HOLD MEMORIA GATHERINGS BEFITTING HIS HIGH STATION UNIQUE ACHIEVEMENTS. MAY HIS RADIANT SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM REAP RICH HARVEST HIS DEDICATED SELF-SACRIFICING SERVICES CAUSE GOD....
Universal House of Justice
244
Release of a Compilation on Divorce
18 January 1980
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
244.1 The Universal House of Justice has noted with increasing concern that the undisciplined attitude of present-day society towards divorce is reflected in some parts of the Bahá'í World Community. Our Teachings on this subject are clear and in direct contrast to the loose and casual attitude of the

“permissive society,” and it is vital that the Bahá’í Community practice these Teachings.

244.2 In order to help the believers appreciate the need to preserve the sacred marital bond, the Research Department has, at the instruction of the House of Justice, prepared a compilation of texts on the reprehensibility of divorce in the light of our Teachings. This compilation is now ready and is being shared with all National Spiritual Assemblies, who are left free to use the texts in any manner they deem advisable.

With loving Bahá’í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

245

Passing of Inparaju Chinniah, Continental Counsellor

7 February 1980

To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Malaysia

245.1DEEPLY GRIEVED UNTIMELY PASSING DEVOTED COWORKER INPARAJU CHINNIAH. HIS OUTSTANDING UNTIRING SERVICES INSTITUTIONS FAITH BOTH MALAYSIA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA SHED LUSTRE ANNALS CAUSE GOD ENTIRE REGION. PRAYING HOLY THRESHOLD PROGRESS SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM MAY BELOVED FRIENDS MALAYSIA INCREASE FERVOR SERVITUDE BAHÁ’U’LLÁH FOLLOW EXAMPLE DEPARTED FRIEND COMPENSATE HIS LOSS THEIR MIDST ASSURE FAMILY FRIENDS SYMPATHY ADVISE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL MEETINGS.

Universal House of Justice

246

Message to Iranian Bahá’ís throughout the World

10 February 1980

To the dear Iranian believers

resident in other countries throughout the world

246.1 In these tumultuous days when the lovers of the Best Beloved are remote from their homeland, associated with their fellow-believers in other lands, and participating in the services of the loyal supporters throughout the world, we felt it necessary to convey our thoughts to those distinguished friends, with absolute sincerity and affection, and invite them to that which we believe can guarantee their tranquillity and happiness, as well as their eternal salvation and redemption, so that with firm steps and sure hearts they may, God willing, withstand the onslaughts which have and will afflict all the countries of the globe. Thus they may fix their gaze on the dawn of the fulfillment of the soul-vitalizing promises of God and remain certain that behind these dark clouds the Sun of the Will of God is shining resplendent from its height of glory and might. Before long these dark clouds of contention, negligence, fanaticism, and rebellion shall disperse, the day of victory shall dawn above the horizon, and a new age shall illumine the world. It should not be surmised that the events which have taken place in all corners of the globe, including the sacred land of Iran, have occurred as isolated incidents without any aim and purpose. According to the words of our beloved Guardian, “The invisible hand is at work and the convulsions taking place on earth are a prelude to the proclamation of the Cause of God.” This is but one of the

mysterious forces of this supreme Revelation which is causing the limbs of mankind to quake and those who are drunk with pride and negligence to be thunderstruck and shaken. To the truth of this testifies the sacred verse: "The world's equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order," and the repeated warnings of the Pen of the Most High, such as:

246.1aThe world is encircled with calamities. Even if at times some good may be evident, it is inevitable that a great calamity followeth—and yet no one on earth hath perceived its origin.

246.1bThe world is in travail, and its agitation waxeth day by day. Its face is turned towards waywardness and unbelief. Such shall be its plight, that to disclose it now would not be meet and seemly. Its perversity will long continue. And when the appointed hour is come, there shall suddenly appear that which shall cause the limbs of mankind to quake. Then and only then will the Divine Standard be unfurled, and the Nightingale of Paradise warble its melody.

The Calamities Ahead

246.2 Similarly, the Pen of the Center of the Covenant has repeatedly prophesied the intolerable calamities which must beset this wayward humanity ere it heeds the life-giving Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

246.3Chaos and confusion are daily increasing in the world. They will attain such intensity as to render the frame of mankind unable to bear them. Then will men be awakened and become aware that religion is the impregnable stronghold and the manifest light of the world, and its laws, exhortations and teachings, the source of life on earth.

246.4 Every discerning eye clearly sees that the early stages of this chaos have daily manifestations affecting the structure of human society; its destructive forces are uprooting time-honored institutions which were a haven and refuge for the inhabitants of the earth in bygone days and centuries, and around which revolved all human affairs. The same destructive forces are also deranging the political, economic, scientific, literary, and moral equilibrium of the world and are destroying the fairest fruits of the present civilization. Political machinations of those in authority have placed the seal of obsolescence upon the root principles of the world's order. Greed and passion, deceit, hypocrisy, tyranny, and pride are dominating features afflicting human relations. Discoveries and inventions, which are the fruit of scientific and technological advancements, have become the means and tools of mass extermination and destruction and are in the hands of the ungodly. Even music, art, and literature, which are to represent and inspire the noblest sentiments and highest aspirations and should be a source of comfort and tranquillity for troubled souls, have strayed from the straight path and are now the mirrors of the soiled hearts of this confused, unprincipled, and disordered age. Perversions such as these shall result in the ordeals which have been prophesied by the Blessed Beauty in the following words: "... the earth will be tormented by a fresh calamity every day and unprecedented commotions will break out." "The day is approaching when its [civilization's] flame will devour the cities."

The Vision

246.5 In such an afflicted time, when mankind is bewildered and the wisest of men are perplexed as to the remedy, the people of Bahá, who have confidence in His unfailing grace and divine guidance, are assured that each of these tormenting trials has a cause, a purpose, and a definite result, and all are essential instruments for the establishment of the immutable Will of God on earth. In other words, on the one hand humanity is struck by the scourge of His chastisement which will inevitably bring together the scattered and vanquished tribes of the earth; and on the other, the weak few whom He has nurtured under the protection of His loving guidance are, in this Formative Age and period of transition, continuing to build amidst these tumultuous waves an impregnable stronghold which will be the sole remaining refuge for those lost multitudes. Therefore, the dear friends of God who have such a broad and clear vision before them are not perturbed by such events, nor are they panic-stricken by such thundering sounds, nor will they face such convulsions with fear and trepidation, nor will they be deterred, even for a moment, from fulfilling their sacred responsibilities.

The Responsibility of Providing an Example

246.6 One of their sacred responsibilities is to exemplify in their lives those attributes which are acceptable at His Sacred Threshold. Others must inhale from them the holy fragrances of the homeland of Bahá'u'lláh, the land which is the birthplace of self-sacrificing martyrs and devoted lovers of the Omnipotent Lord. They must not forget that Bahá'ís throughout the world expect much from the Iranian believers. They should hearken to the life-giving clarion call which their Peerless Beloved has given to the friends in Iran:

246.6aThe wish of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, that which attracts His good pleasure, and, indeed, His binding command, is that Bahá'ís, in all matters, even in small daily transactions and dealings with others, should act in accordance with the divine Teachings. He has commanded us not to be content with lowliness, humility and meekness, but rather to become manifestations of selflessness and utter nothingness. Of old, all have been exhorted to loyalty and fidelity, compassion and love; in this supreme Dispensation, the people of Bahá are called upon to sacrifice their very lives. Notice the extent to which the friends have been required in the Sacred Epistles and Tablets, as well as in our Beloved's Testament, to be righteous, well-wishing, forbearing, sanctified, pure, detached from all else save God, severed from the trappings of this world and adorned with the mantle of a goodly character and godly attributes.

246.6bFirst and foremost, one should use every possible means to purge one's heart and motives, otherwise, engaging in any form of enterprise would be futile. It is also essential to abstain from hypocrisy and blind imitation, inasmuch as their foul odor is soon detected by every man of understanding and wisdom. Moreover, the friends must observe the specific times for the remembrance of God, meditation, devotion and prayer, as it is highly unlikely, nay impossible, for any enterprise to prosper and develop when deprived of divine bestowals and confirmation. One can hardly imagine what a great

influence genuine love, truthfulness and purity of motives exert on the souls of men. But these traits cannot be acquired by any believer unless he makes a daily effort to gain them. Let not the stranger, the envious and the enemy have cause to attribute the sublimity of the Faith in the past and in its early days to the appearance of outstanding and sanctified souls and the perseverance of martyrs whose absence today implies the necessary decline, weakening, scattering and annihilation of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

246.6cWe beseech God to aid and assist them daily to center their attentions on these divine admonitions and to tread the path of faithfulness so as to secure abiding happiness.

The Responsibility of Serving God

246.7 Another of the sacred responsibilities of the believers is their spiritual commitment to serve God's Sacred Threshold at all times and under all conditions so that they may dedicate the few, fleeting days of their lives—particularly in this age of transition—to the Cause of God, unmindful of the vicissitudes of fortune, trusting in Providence, and relieved of worries and anxieties. Witness what joyful tidings the Pen of the Most High has given to such blessed souls:

246.7aWhatsoever occurreth in the world of being is light for His loved ones and fire for the people of sedition and strife. Even if all the losses of the world were to be sustained by one of the friends of God, he would still profit thereby, whereas true loss would be borne by such as are wayward, ignorant and contemptuous. Although the author of the following saying had intended it otherwise, yet We find it pertinent to the operation of God's immutable Will: "Even or odd, thou shalt win the wager." The friends of God shall win and profit under all conditions, and shall attain true wealth. In fire they remain cold, and from water they emerge dry. Their affairs are at variance with the affairs of men. Gain is their lot, whatever the deal. To this testifieth every wise one with a discerning eye, and every fair-minded one with a hearing ear.

The Responsibility of Moderation

246.8 Yet another sacred duty is that of clinging to the cord of moderation in all things, lest they who are to be the essence of detachment and moderation be deluded by the trappings of this nether world or set their hearts on its adornments and waste their lives. If they are wealthy, they should make these bestowals a means of drawing nigh unto God's Threshold, rather than being so attached to them that they forget the admonitions of the Pen of the Most High. The Voice of Truth has said, "Having attained the stage of fulfillment and reached his maturity, man standeth in need of wealth, and such wealth as he acquireth through crafts or professions is commendable and praiseworthy in the estimation of men of wisdom." If wealth and prosperity become the means of service at God's Threshold, it is highly meritorious; otherwise it would be better to avoid them. Turn to the Book of the Covenant, the Hidden Words, and other Tablets, lest the cord of your salvation become a rope of woe which will lead to your own destruction. How numerous are those negligent souls, particularly from among your own compatriots, who have been deprived of the blessings of faith and true understanding. Witness how, no sooner had they

attained their newly amassed wealth and status, than they became so bewitched by them as to forget the virtues and true perfections of man's station. They clung to their empty and fruitless lifestyle. They had naught else but their homes, their commercial success, and their ornamental trappings of which to be proud. Behold their ultimate fate. Many a triumphal arch was reduced to a ruin, many an imperial palace was converted into a barn. Many a day of deceit turned into a night of despair. Vast treasures changed hands and, at the end of their lives, they were left only with tears of loss and regret. "... all that perisheth and changeth is not, and hath never been, worthy of attention, except to a recognized measure." Therefore the people of Bahá must not fall prey to the corruption of the ruthless, but rather cling to contentment and moderation. They must make their homes havens for the believers, folds for their gatherings and centers for the promulgation of His Cause and the diffusion of His love, so that people of all strata, whether high or low, may feel at home and be able to consort in an atmosphere of love and fellowship.

The Responsibility of Resettling

246.9 Another sacred responsibility of those dear Iranian friends now living abroad is to consult with the Assemblies and Bahá'í Institutions so that their settlement in needy areas may help the establishment and consolidation of the Faith. They must serve on the pioneer front wherever they reside. They must not allow themselves to be drawn to and congregate in areas where their relatives or friends reside, unaware of the pioneering needs of the Faith. Praised be God that, through the blessings of the Greatest Name, the believers have been imbued with a love and unity which transcends the ties of kinship and friendship and overcomes the barriers of language and culture. Therefore there is no need for the Iranian friends to congregate in one place. Often such a congregation creates problems. For example, should the number of Iranians exceed the number of native believers in a community, they would inadvertently bring about such difficulties as might hamper the progress of the Cause of God, and the world-conquering religion of the Abhá Beauty might appear to others as a religion which is limited and peculiar to Iranians. This could but lead to a waste of time and the disenchantment of both Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís. Under such circumstances the dear Iranian friends would neither enjoy their stay in that place nor would they be able to serve the Faith in a befitting manner. It is our ardent hope that, wherever possible, the Iranian friends may settle in those towns or villages which are pioneering goals, so that through their stay the foundation of the Cause may be strengthened. They must encourage each other to pioneer and disperse in accordance with the teaching plans wherever they reside, and sacrifice the happiness and joy which they may otherwise obtain from companionship with each other for the sake of the vital interests of the Cause.

The Responsibility of Avoiding Political Involvement

246.10 Another of the sacred duties incumbent upon the believers is that of avoiding participation in political discussions and intrigues which have become popular nowadays. What have the people of Bahá to do with political contention and controversy? With absolute certainty they must prove to the world that Bahá'ís by virtue of their beliefs, are loyal citizens of

whatever country they reside in and are far removed from the machinations of conspirators and the perpetrators of destruction and chaos. Their ideal is the happiness of all the peoples of the world and sincere and wholehearted service to them. In administrative positions they are obedient to their governments and carry out their duties with the utmost honesty and trustworthiness. They regard no faction as superior to another and prefer no individual above another. They oppose no one, for the Divine Pen has prohibited sedition and corruption and enjoined peace and harmony upon us. For more than a century Bahá'ís have proven by their deeds that they regard servitude and service to their fellowman as being more worthy than the privileges of power which can be gained from politics. In administering their own affairs, they rely on God rather than on the influence of those in power and authority. Particularly in these days when the enemies of the Faith have afflicted the Cause in the sacred land of Iran with the darts of calumny and slander on every side, the clear Iranian friends should be vigilant, both in their contact with other Iranians abroad and with people in general, and behave in such a way as to leave no doubt as to the independence and nonalignment of the Bahá'ís and their good will to all people, whether in Iran or elsewhere. They must not give a new excuse to cause trouble to those mischief-makers who have always sought to further their own unworthy ends by making the Bahá'í community a target for their malicious accusations.

The Strengths of the Iranian Bahá'ís

246.11 O beloved of God, and compatriots of the Abhá Beauty! Your relationship to the Blessed Perfection merits befitting gratitude. Having appreciated the true value of so inestimable a bounty, your forefathers regarded the offering of their lives in the path of their kind Beloved as easy to make. They were put in chains, became captives of the sword, lost their homes and belongings, yet no sound was heard from their lacerated throats but the cry of "Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá" and "Yá 'Alíyyu'l-A'lá."

The vibration of the sound of that same soul-burning cry gradually noised abroad the call of this world-illuminating Great Announcement and the ringing notes of that call resounded in all regions of the world, and, now too, the beloved friends in Iran, who are the devoted dwellers in the courtyard of the Beloved, stand firm in the same Covenant and Testament. Behold the courage, firmness, detachment, unity, cooperation, zeal and enthusiasm with which these loyal lovers of the Beloved daily face their tests and prove and demonstrate to the world, with radiant and shining faces, their purity, their heritage, their quality, and their virtue. With the utmost meekness, truthfulness, wisdom, and courage they meet the challenges presented to them, the challenge of defying the enemies, dispelling misunderstandings which are a result of the proliferation of calumnies and false accusations. They have met their fate with acquiescence, have bowed their heads in the valley of submission and resignation, and have borne every tribulation with radiance, for they know with absolute certainty that the fulfillment of divine prophecies will coincide with dire events and the bearing of innumerable afflictions. The beloved Guardian says: "If in the days to come, adversities of various kinds should encircle that land and national upheavals should further aggravate the present

calamities, and intensify the repeated afflictions," the dear friends in that country should not feel "sorrowful and grieved" and must not be deflected "from their straight path and chosen highway." He then continues to address the dear friends in these words:

246.11aThe liberation of this meek and innocent band of His followers from the fetters of its bondage and the talons of the people of tyranny and enmity must needs be preceded by the clamor and agitation of the masses. The realization of glory, of tranquillity, and of true security for the people of Bahá will necessitate opposition, aggression and commotion on the part of the people of malevolence and iniquity. Therefore, should the buffeting waves of the sea of tribulation intensify and the storms of trials and tribulations assail that meek congregation from all six sides, know of a certainty and without a moment's hesitation that the time for their deliverance has drawn nigh, that the age-old promise of their assured glory will soon be fulfilled, and that at long last the means are provided for the persecuted people of Bahá in that land to attain salvation and supreme triumph. A firm step and an unshakeable resolve are essential so that the remaining stages may come to pass and the cherished ideals of the people of Bahá may be realized on the loftiest Summits, and be made manifest in astounding brilliance. "Such is God's method, and no change shalt thou find in His method."

246.11b That is why those royal falcons who soar in the firmament of God's love have arisen with such joy, tranquillity, and dignity that their serenity has become a magnet for the attraction of the confirmations of the Concourse on High and has brought such a resounding success to them as has astonished and startled the people of Bahá throughout the world. Others have been inspired by the example of those treasured brethren to renew their pledge to their All-Glorious Beloved and to serve His Sacred Threshold with high endeavor. Thus they endeavor, as far as possible, to make good the temporary disability of the believers in Iran. Inspired by the courage, constancy, sincerity, and devotion of those enamored friends in the path of their Beloved, they are increasing their services and renewing and strengthening their resolve so that they may arise in the arena of the love of God as it beseems; true lovers. That is why in these days the followers of the Greatest Name in different parts of the world have undertaken to win new victories in remembrance and on behalf of their dear friends in Iran. They have made new plans and their efforts have been confirmed with resounding success, which they attribute to the influences of the high endeavors and the constancy of the friends in the Cradle of the Faith. What then will you do, dear friends who come from that sacred land of Iran? You are the birds of that rose garden. You should sing such a song that the hearts of others will rejoice with gladness. You are the candles of that Divine Sanctuary. You should shed such a light that it will illumine the eyes of the intimates of God's mysteries. Our eager hearts in these days are expectant to see the rays of loyalty and integrity from amidst these dark and threatening clouds, so that your blessed names, like those of your self-sacrificing compatriots, may be recorded in gold upon the Tablet of Honor. This is dependent upon your own high endeavor.

The Universal House of Justice

247
Passing of the Hand of the Cause of God
Hasan M. Balyuzi
12 February 1980
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
247.1HOLD SPECIAL MEMORIAL GATHERING IN MOTHER TEMPLE. WITH BROKEN HEARTS ANNOUNCE PASSING DEARLY LOVED HAND CAUSE HASAN BALYUZI. ENTIRE BAHÁ'Í WORLD ROBBED ONE OF ITS MOST POWERFUL DEFENDERS MOST RESOURCEFUL HISTORIANS. HIS ILLUSTRIOUS LINEAGE HIS DEVOTED LABORS DIVINE VINEYARD HIS OUTSTANDING LITERARY WORKS COMBINE IN IMMORTALIZING HIS HONORED NAME IN ANNALS BELOVED FAITH. CALL ON FRIENDS EVERYWHERE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS. PRAYING SHRINES HIS EXEMPLARY ACHIEVEMENTS HIS STEADFASTNESS PATIENCE HUMILITY HIS OUTSTANDINC SCHOLARLY PURSUITS WILL INSPIRE MANY DEVOTED WORKERS AMONG RISING GENERATION FOLLOW HIS GLORIOUS FOOTSTEPS.
Universal House of Justice
248
Naw-Rúz Message 1980
Naw-Rúz 1980
To the Bahá'ís of the World
Dearly loved Friends,
248.1 The successful launching of the Seven Year Plan and the advances made in the first year of its opening phase mitigate, in some degree, the disasters and calamities which, in the past year, have assailed the struggling Faith of God. The newest wave of persecution unleashed against us in the Cradle of our Faith has been compounded by Divine decree afflicting the entire Bahá'í world community. In the full tide of their brilliant services to the Faith of God, and within the short span of twenty weeks three Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Order, the Hands of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga, Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir and Hasan Balyuzi were summoned to the Abhá Kingdom, leaving the rest of us bereft and shocked by the enormity of our loss and the tragic brutality of the circumstances attending the murder of beloved Enoch Olinga and members of his family.
The Dialectic of Disaster and Triumph
248.2 In Iran, the confusion which has seized the whole country opened the way for the fierce and inveterate enemies of the Faith, unrestrained by any effective authority, to indulge their fanatical hatred. The Holy House of the Báb has been demolished and proposals have been made to erase its very site. The Síyáh-Chál and Bahá'u'lláh's Home in Tehran have been seized, together with all other Holy Places and properties. One member of the National Spiritual Assembly and two of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tehran have been kidnapped and the whereabouts of two of them is still unknown, while the third is still in prison. Also, a Counselor and some friends who are associated with the National Office or are members of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tehran have been imprisoned. Bahá'ís have been heavily pressed to recant their faith and in one case a believer, who refused to do so, followed the glorious path of the martyrs and was executed. Beyond all this a campaign of vilification and false charges has been conducted against the friends in an

effort to make them the scapegoat of unrestrained mobs.

248.3 And yet, as ever in the Cause of God, the beneficent operation of the dialectic of disaster and triumph is clearly apparent. The unwavering faith of the dearly loved, severely tested, ever-steadfast Persian Bahá'í community, guided by the heroic stand and example of its National Spiritual Assembly, supported and inspired by the Counselors and their Auxiliary Board members, has effected a spiritual revitalization of the beloved friends. They have united as one man to present a front of refulgent spirituality and assurance and appear, as one observer reports, like a dazzling community of eager, uplifted, radiant new believers.

248.4 Nor is the influence of their response to the sufferings engulfing them confined to their homeland. From farthest east to farthest west, from pole to pole, wherever the Standard of Bahá'u'lláh has been implanted, the friends have felt the impulse of sacrifice and risen to assume that enormous share of the work of the Faith in the fields of teaching, pioneering and financial contribution which the Persian friends, for the time being, are no longer able to shoulder.

248.5 The wonderful love aroused in Bahá'í hearts everywhere by the sudden, untimely passing of the beloved Hands of the Cause has moved the believers to dedicate themselves anew with increased ardor and self-sacrifice to the promotion of the work to which all the Hands of the Cause of God have dedicated their lives.

248.6 The worldwide response of the friends to these tragedies is the more heartening in view of the clear warnings voiced by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the beloved Guardian of the fierce and widespread opposition which the increasing growth of the Cause of God will arouse. There is no doubt of this. Shoghi Effendi called attention to "the extent and character of the forces that are destined to contest with God's holy Faith," and supported his argument with "these prophetic and ominous words" from 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "HOW GREAT, HOW VERY GREAT IS THE CAUSE! HOW VERY FIERCE THE ONSLAUGHT OF ALL THE PEOPLES AND KINDREDS OF THE EARTH! ERELONG SHALL THE CLAMOR OF THE MULTITUDE THROUGHOUT AFRICA, THROUGHOUT AMERICA, THE CRY OF THE EUROPEAN AND OF THE TUR THE GROANING OF INDIA AND CHINA, BE HEARD FROM FAR AND NEAR. ONE AND ALL THEY SHALL ARISE WITH ALL THEIR POWER TO RESIST HIS CAUSE. THEN SHALL THE KNIGHTS OF THE LORD, ASSISTED BY HIS GRACE FROM ON HIGH, STRENGTHENED BY FAITH, AIDED BY THE POWER OF UNDERSTANDING, AND REINFORCED BY THE LEGIONS OF THE COVENANT ARISE AND MAKE MANIFEST THE TRUTH OF THE VERSE: 'BEHOLD THE CONFUSION THAT HATH BEFALLEN THE TRIBES OF THE DEFEATED!"'

248.7 The beloved Guardian expatiated at length upon this theme and its inevitable outcome: "Stupendous as is the struggle which His words foreshadow, they also testify to the complete victory which the upholders of the Greatest Name are destined eventually to achieve."

248.8 Now, therefore, it is our sacred duty to make the utmost use of our freedom, wherever it exists, to promote the Cause of God while we may. The surest way to do this and to win the good-pleasure of Bahá'u'lláh is to pursue, with dedication and unrelenting vigor, the goals of whatever Plan is in force, for Bahá'u'lláh has stated: "To assist Me is to teach My

Cause."

Accomplishments during the First Year of the Seven Year Plan

248.9 A good start has been made with the Seven Year Plan. At the World Center of the Faith the uninterrupted progress in raising the Seat of the House of Justice, repairing and refurbishing the House of 'Abdu'lláh Páshá, further extension of the gardens surrounding the Haram-i-Aqdas at Bahjí, and the initiation of a general reorganization of the work of the World Center to accommodate its ever-growing needs and make use of the most up-to-date technological developments, have taken place.

248.10 In the international sphere the enthusiasm with which the friends everywhere greeted the launching of the Seven Year Plan and girded themselves to achieve the goals of the first two-year phase, their generous and sacrificial outpouring of funds, the confident and sustained efforts exerted to carry forward the two sacred enterprises initiated in the Indian subcontinent and at the heart of the vast Pacific Ocean, the constant activity of the Bahá'í International Community in fostering its relations with the United Nations, the great increase in the number of children's Bahá'í classes and the innumerable victories won in the teaching field, recorded by the establishment of the worldwide community of the Most Great Name in over 106,000 localities, all testify to the unassailable, and indeed ever-increasing vigor of the Cause of God.

248.11 The number of pioneers and traveling teachers who have entered the field during the first year of the Seven Year Plan, and the increase in the number of national communities which have sent them out are highly encouraging. This stream of pioneers and traveling teachers must be increased and more widely diffused, and we fervently hope that, at the very least, all those pioneers filling the assigned goals of the first phase of the Seven Year Plan will be at their posts by Ridván 1981.

248.12 In the field of proclamation unprecedented publicity has been accorded the Cause of God, chiefly as a result of the persecutions in Iran. In addition significant gains have been made in the Bahá'í radio operation in South America, where short wave transmission has greatly extended the range of Radio Bahá'í in Otavalo, Ecuador, and where a new station is being established in Puno, in Peru, on the shores of Lake Titicaca. Both these achievements offer immeasurable new opportunities for the teaching, proclamation and consolidation of the Cause in that area.

248.13 In 88 languages of the world the supply of Bahá'í literature has been enriched, while three new languages have been added to bring to 660 the number of those in which Bahá'í material is available.

Formation of Six National Assemblies at Ridván 1981

248.14 The National Spiritual Assembly of Transkei with its seat in Umtata will be formed at Ridván 1980. At Ridván 1981 six new National Spiritual Assemblies will be formed; two in Africa, Namibia with its seat in Windhoek, and Bophuthatswana with its seat in Mmabatho; three in the Americas, the Leeward Islands with its seat in St. John's, Antigua, the Windward Islands with its seat in Kingstown, St. Vincent, and Bermuda with its seat in Hamilton; one in Australasia, Tuvalu with its seat in Funafuti. With great joy we announce

the reformation of the National Spiritual Assembly of Uganda, to take place at Ridván 1981.

248.15 In the course of the coming year, the Universal House of Justice, in consultation with the International Teaching Center, will review the accomplishments of the initial phase and will then announce to all National Spiritual Assemblies the goals towards which they should strive in the next stage of the Seven Year Plan.

Approaching people of prominence

248.16 During this final year of the initial phase National Spiritual Assemblies are urged to continue their wise and dignified approaches to people prominent in all areas of human endeavor in order to acquaint them with the nature and spirit of the Faith and to win their esteem and friendship. At the same time vigorous campaigns must be continually mounted to proclaim more and more directly and to as large audiences as possible the existence and basic principles of the Faith of God. Now is the time, as all human endeavors to repair the old order only result in deeper and deeper confusion, to proclaim constantly and openly the claims of the Faith and the redemptive power of Bahá'u'lláh.

An Acceleration of Momentum

248.17 The marvellous momentum generated at the beginning of the Plan and now propelling the Bahá'í world community forward to the achievement of the immediate objectives of the initial phase must be maintained and indeed accelerated, so that firm foundations in the spiritual life of the community may be laid and its forces gathered for the winning of the specific tasks with which it will be challenged in the major part of the Plan.

248.18 Our hearts go out in love and admiration to the friends in Iran and in gratitude to the believers throughout the world for their spontaneous defense of their persecuted brethren and their shouldering of the load which must, at all costs, be borne.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

249

Release of a Compilation on the Importance of Prayer, Meditation, and the Devotional Attitude

31 March 1980

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

249.1 The Research Department has just prepared a compilation of The Importance of Prayer, Meditation, and the Devotional Attitude, and we have been asked to send you a copy.

249.2 The Universal House of Justice leaves it to your discretion to determine the manner in which you share the contents of the compilation with the friends under your jurisdiction.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

250

Contract for Construction of the Indian Temple

1 May 1980
To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India.
250.1GRATEFUL SENTIMENTS EXPRESSED PARTICIPANTS CONVENTION HELD AUSPICIOUS OCCASIONS SIGNING CONTRACT CONSTRUCTION BEAUTIFUL TEMPLE HEART SUBCONTINENT INAUGURATION CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS DESIGNED PROMOTE LIFE-GIVING MESSAGE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH GREATER NUMBER RECEPTIVE SOULS ALL STRATA SOCIETY LENGTH BREADTH WIDTH INDIA. ARDENTLY PRAYING DIVINE THRESHOLD SUPPLICATING BLESSINGS ASSISTANCE OUTSTANDING SERVICES BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY INDIA ALREADY DISTINGUISHED BY MAGNIFICENT ACHIEVEMENTS WHICH HAVE BRIGHTENED HOPES ATTRAC ADMIRATION ENTIRE BAHÁ'Í WORLD.
Universal House of Justice
251
Comments on the Kitáb-i-Aqdas
7 May 1980
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Germany
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
251.1 The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 14 April 1980 enclosing the copy of that part of page 15 of the issue of the Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung for 14 March 1980, on which the letter from Francesco Ficicchia was published.
251.2 The House of Justice feels that the best course is to ignore this disgraceful attack on the Faith, rather than to make any rebuttal. Your Assembly should, however, be prepared to answer any inquiries that you may receive as a result of this article, whether from Bahá'ís or non-Bahá'ís. To assist you in this, we enclose extracts from a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, which touch on matters raised by Mr. Ficicchia. You are also, no doubt, aware that a Russian translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas by A. G. Tumansky was published in 1899. A translation of the complete text into English, made by two former Presbyterian missionaries in Iran, was published by The Royal Asiatic Society in 1961; it is accompanied by highly prejudiced and misleading footnotes and introduction, and the inadequacy of the translation itself is immediately apparent to anyone who compares passages with those that Shoghi Effendi translated. The existence of these two published translations, however, demonstrates the falsity of Ficicchia's statement that no complete translation exists. A far clearer understanding of the contents of the Most Holy Book, however, than given by either translation, is presented in the Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas which gives not only the laws of the Aqdas themselves, but also includes the elucidations given by Bahá'u'lláh Himself in the "Questions and Answers," and contains many explanatory annotations provided by the House of Justice.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
27 May 1980
Extracts from a Reply written on behalf
of the Universal House of Justice to questions about
the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

251.3 The institution of the Covenant has a direct bearing on the implementation of the laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. This Book is the repository of the basic laws for the Dispensation to be implemented gradually in accordance with the guidance given by God through those infallible Institutions which lie at the heart of the Covenant. Indeed, one of those Institutions, the Universal House of Justice, has been given by Bahá'u'lláh the task not only of applying the laws but of supplementing them and of making laws on all matters not explicitly covered in the Sacred Text. An English translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was made by Dr. Earl E. Elder and Dr. William McE. Miller, two men who were Presbyterian missionaries in Persia and have long been strongly antagonistic to the Faith. A great many of the statements that they make about its history are based on the assertions of Covenant-breakers or opponents of the Faith—rather like a history of Christianity based primarily on statements by enemies of Jesus Christ. Dr. Miller, for example, places great reliance on a document called the "Nuqtatu'l-Káf," which is, in fact, spurious, as is fully demonstrated by the Hand of the Cause Hasan Balyuzi in his book Edward Granville Browne and the Bahá'í Faith.

251.4 The reasons for the delay in the translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas are given in the introduction to the Synopsis and Codification. The Kitáb-i-Aqdas itself is the kernel of a vast structure of Bahá'í law that will have to come into being in the years and centuries ahead as the unity of mankind is established and develops. Thus to properly understand the contents of that Book one should also read many other Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh relating to them, as well as the interpretations of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian, and realize that great areas of detail have been left by Bahá'u'lláh for the Universal House of Justice to fill in and to vary in accordance with the needs of a developing society. For example:

251.4a 1. The law of divorce in the Aqdas seems to apply only to a husband divorcing his wife, and not vice versa. 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian have made it quite clear that the principle enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas applies equally to men and women, and the law has always been implemented in this way. Such elucidations are one of the specific functions intended by Bahá'u'lláh for the authoritative Interpreter.

251.4b 2. The Kitáb-i-Aqdas appears to allow bigamy. This is explained in Note 17 on page 59 of the Synopsis and Codification: "The text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas upholds monogamy, but as it appears also to permit bigamy, the Guardian was asked for a clarification, and in reply his secretary wrote on his behalf. 'Regarding Bahá'í marriage: in the light of the Master's Tablet interpreting the provision in the Aqdas on the subject of the plurality of wives, it becomes evident that monogamy alone is permissible, since, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá states, bigamy is conditioned upon justice and as justice is impossible, it follows that bigamy is not permissible, and monogamy alone should be practised.'"

251.4c 3. This is an authoritative interpretation, and as an interpretation states what is intended by the original text, it is correct to say that the Kitáb-i-Aqdas prohibits plurality of wives. This method of

establishing monogamy as the law of the Faith is one example of the process referred to in the introduction to the Synopsis and Codification whereby there is a progressive disclosure of the full meaning of the laws of the Faith as the Dispensation unfolds.

251.4d 4. The punishments prescribed for theft, murder and arson are given only in barest outline. It is explained in Note 42 on page 64 of the Synopsis and Codification that these punishments are intended for a future condition of society and will have to be supplemented and applied by the Universal House of Justice. The punishment for theft, for example, says that for the third offence a mark must be placed on the thief's forehead (nothing is said about branding), so that people will be warned of his proclivities. All details of how the mark is to be applied, how long it must be worn, on what conditions it may be removed, as well as the seriousness of various degrees of theft have been left by Bahá'u'lláh for the Universal House of Justice to decide when the law has to be applied. Similarly, merely the fundamental principles of the punishments for murder and arson are given in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Willful murder is to be punished either by capital punishment or life imprisonment. Such matters as degrees of offence and whether any extenuating circumstances are to be taken into account, and which of the two prescribed punishments is to be the norm are left to the Universal House of Justice to decide in light of prevailing conditions when the law is in operation. Arson, as you yourself can see from the newspapers, is becoming an increasingly frequent offence—scarcely a day passes without some building being burned or blown up, often causing agonizing death to innocent people. Bahá'u'lláh prescribes that a person who burns a house intentionally is to be burned or imprisoned for life, but again, the application of these punishments, the method of carrying them out and the fixing of degrees of offence are left to the Universal House of Justice. Obviously there is a tremendous difference in the degree of the offence of a person who burns down an empty warehouse from that of one who sets fire to a school full of children.

251.4e From the above examples it should be clear why a translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas made without proper comprehensive footnotes referring to other Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh which elucidate His laws as well as to interpretations made by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian, can give a very misleading impression—quite apart from the problem of achieving a beauty of style in the English which can approach that of the original, an aspect in which the Elder-Miller translation falls woefully short.

251.5 Although there is no explicit reference to the Guardianship in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Synopsis and Codification lists "Anticipation of the Institution of the Guardianship." On page 214 of God Passes By, when summarizing the contents of the Aqdas, Shoghi Effendi states that in it Bahá'u'lláh "anticipates by implication the institution of Guardianship," and again, on page 147 of The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh the Guardian refers to "the verses of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas the implications of which clearly anticipate the institution of the Guardianship." One such implication is in the matter of Huqúqu'lláh (The Right of God), which is ordained in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas without provision being made for who is to

receive it; in His Will and Testament ‘Abdu’l-Bahá fills this gap by stating “It is to be offered through the Guardian of the Cause of God ...” Other implications of this institution can be seen in the terms in which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is appointed as the Successor of Bahá’u’lláh and the Interpreter of His Teachings. The faithful are enjoined to turn their faces towards the one whom “God hath purposed” and who “hath branched from this Ancient Root” and are bidden to refer whatsoever they do not understand in the Bahá’í Writings to him who “hath branched from this mighty Stock.” Yet another can be seen in the provision of the Aqdas concerning the disposition of international endowments—a passage which not only refers this matter to the Aghsán (male descendants of Bahá’u’lláh) but also provides for what should happen should the line of Aghsán end before the coming into being of the Universal House of Justice. Thus the “Anticipation of the Institution of the Guardianship” is correctly included in the Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

252

Our Attitude and Actions
toward the Impending Catastrophe

13 May 1980

To an individual Bahá’í

Dear Bahá’í Friend,

252.1 Your letter of 13 January to the Universal House of Justice has been received and we are instructed to convey its response.

252.2 As a concert pianist you are uniquely endowed for service to God and mankind, for the Master states that “the musician's art is among those arts worthy of the highest praise, and it moveth the hearts of all who grieve.” Further, the pursuit of excellence in your art both fulfils Bahá’í admonitions and is worship manifested in your profession.

252.3 Your concern about the future in these troubled times is understandable. There is every reason to expect that the world will experience travail and testing as never before, but we do not know what form these upheavals will take, when exactly they will come, how severe they will be, nor how long they will last. In a letter dated 30, September 1950 written on behalf of the beloved Guardian to an individual believer, it is stated:

252.3a

He does not feel that fear—for ourselves or for others—solves any problems, or enables us to better meet it if it ever does arise. We do not know what the future holds exactly, or how soon we may all pass through another ordeal worse than the last one.

252.4 The important aspect for the Bahá’ís is that their attitude and actions in response to the pending catastrophe be correct. We all know that the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh is the world's only salvation, and that our duty is to actively teach receptive souls, and to do our utmost to help in the consolidation of the institutions of the Faith. Only in this way can we contribute our share of servitude at His Threshold, and we should then leave the rest to Him. ...

252.5 The House of Justice will offer prayers at the Holy Shrines that you

may have abundant opportunities to uplift the souls of men through your music and through your teaching of the Cause of the Blessed Beauty.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
253
Ominous Increase in Pressures on Iranian Bahá'ís
30 June 1980
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
253.1… PRESSURES ON BELEAGUERED FRIENDS OMINOUSLY INCREASING. IN ISSUE LE MONDE NO. 11009 TUESDAY 24 JUNE IN ARTICLE ABOUT IRAN BEGINNING FRONT PAGE ENDING SIXTH PAGE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS MADE "... LE VENERABLE AYATOLLAH (SADOUGHI) A INVITE FOULE DES FIDELES A 'CHASSER LES BAHAIS QUE VOUS CONNAISSEZ DE TOUTES LES ADMINISTRATIONS ET DE LES LIVRER AU PARQUET REVOLUTIONNAIRE.' LA PEUR S'EST EMPAREE DE LA COMMUNAUTE BAHAI (ENVIRON CINQUANTE MILLE PERSONNES) ET POUR CAUSE, LES PROPOS DE L'AYATOLLAH SADOUGHI ONT ETE REPRODUITS DANS LE QUOTIDIEN INGUILAB ISLAMI (ORGANE DU PRESIDENT BANI-SADR) LEUR DONNANT AINSI UNE DANGEREUSE PUBLICITE. UNE VAGUE D'ARRESTATIONS DE BAHAIS A COMMENCE À DEFERLER DANS DEUX VILLES: À YAZD ET À CHIRAZ.
253.2 "DIMANCHE 22 JUIN, ETELAAT PUBLIE UN COMMUNIQUE DE L'ASSOCLATION ISLAMIQUE DES FONCTIONNAIRES DE L'ETAT EXIGEANT ENTRE AUTRES LE RENVOI DE TOUS LES EMPLOYES DES CONFESSIONS BAHAIS EN LEUR INTERDISANT DESORMAIS D'EXERCER TOUTES ACTIVITES REMUNEREES."
253.3 SUCH PRONOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNIQUES CAN BUT PROVOKE EASILY EXCITABLE PASSIONS LEAD TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES FATE INDIVIDUAL BAHA'IS INFLICT UPON MEMBERS OPPRESSED COMMUNITY UNTOLD SUFFERINGS PARTICULARLY ON OCCASION HOLY CURRENT MONTH SHA'BAN AND MONTH RAMADAN ENDING MID-AUGUST. ...
Universal House of Justice
254
Execution of Two Members of the Tabríz Spiritual Assembly
16 July 1980
To the Bahá'ís of the World
254.1WITH HEARTS LADEN WITH SORROW YET FILLED WITH PRIDE AND ADMIRATION ANNOUNCE MARTYRDOM IN CRADLE FAITH OF YADU'LLÁH ÁSTÁNÍ AND FARÁMARZ SAMANDARÍ RESPECTIVELY CHAIRMAN MEMBER LOCAL ASSEMBLY TABRÍZ. THESE TWO HEROIC SOULS, TOGETHER WITH BAHÁR VUJDÁNÍ OF MAHÁBÁD, GHULÁM-HUSAYN A'ZAMÍ OF SANGSAR AND MÍR-ASADU'LLÁH MUKHTÁRÍ OF BÍRJAND, WHO DURING PAST SEVERAL MONTHS ALSO SUFFERED CRUEL MARTYRDOM, HAVE JOINED RANKS THEIR NOBLE FOREBEARS HEROIC AGE. BAHÁ'Í WORLD WITNESSING WITH AWE AND WONDER VALIANT BELIEVERS CRADLE FAITH, WORTHY HEIRS OF DAWN-BREAKERS, ONCE AGAIN BEARING SUCCESSIVE WAVES OF REPRESSION AND HARASSMENT, ARRESTS AND KILLINGS, AND CONFISCATION OF PERSONAL PROPERTIES.
254.2MAY FOLLOWERS MOST GREAT NAME, INSPIRED BY PRODIGIOUS ACTS HEROISM THEIR LONG-SUFFERING BRETHREN IRAN, ARISE, WITH RENEWED CONSECRATION AND VIGOR, WIN FRESH VICTORIES, REWARD SACRIFICES, COMPENSATE DISABILITIES, CHEER LONGING HEARTS STAUNCH STEADFAST BELIEVERS HOMELAND BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.
Universal House of Justice

255
Vigorous Steps Taken in Defense of the Bahá'ís of Iran
24 July 1980
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
255.1VIGOROUS STEPS BEING TAKEN ENERGETICALLY BY FRIENDS ALL CONTINENTS FOLLOWING NEWS MARTYRDOM TWO FRIENDS TABRÍZ HIGHLY GRATIFYING. ALREADY INFLUENTIAL PAPERS HAVE PUBLISHED EXCEPTIONALLY FAVORABLE ARTICLES IN SUPPORT PERSECUTED FRIENDS. JUST RECEIVED NEWS CANADIAN PARLIAMENT VOTED UNANIMOUSLY DEPLORING PERSECUTION IRANIAN BAHÁ'ÍS CALLING ON CANADIAN GOVERNMENT REFER UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION. CANADIAN GOVERNMENT HAS FORWARDED RESOLUTION DIRECTLY TO SECRETARY-GENERAL UNITED NATIONS. IN IRAN WAVE PERSECUTION CONTINUES UNABATED. NOT SATISFIED WITH CONFISCATION COMMUNITY PROPERTIES INCLUDING HOLY PLACES STEPS NOW TAKEN FREEZE FINANCIAL ASSETS SCORES BAHÁ'ÍS BANNING THEM FROM ALL BUSINESS DEALINGS. IN YAZD AND SHIRAZ MORE MEMBERS LOCAL ASSEMBLIES ARRESTED IMPRISONED. IN MANSHÁD ONE OF OUTLYIN VILLAGES YAZD FIVE BAHÁ'ÍS THREE MEN TWO WOMEN CRUELLY MOBBED RESULTING THEIR HOSPITALIZATION YAZD. BAHÁ'ÍS RESIDENT VILLAGE IN CONSTANT DANGER....
Universal House of Justice
256
Passing of the Hand of the Cause of God
Adelbert Mühlschlegel
29 July 1980
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
256.1WITH SORROWFUL HEARTS ANNOUNCE PASSING BELOVED HAND CAUSE ADELBERT MÜHLSCHLEGEL. GRIEVOUS LOSS SUSTAINED ENTIRE BAHÁ'Í WORLD PARTICULARLY FELT EUROPE MAIN ARENA HIS DISTINGUISHED SERVICES CAUSE GOD. SERVING FOR MANY YEARS NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY GERMANY HE BECAME AFTER ELEVATION RANK HAN CAUSE ONE OF CHAMPION BUILDERS EMERGING EUROPEAN BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY CONSTANTLY TRAVELING ENCOURAGING RAISING SPIRITS FRIENDS RESIDING WHEREVER SERVICES MOST NEEDED FINALLY PIONEERING GREECE AND SURRENDERING HIS SOUL PIONEER POST. HIS CONSTANT WILLINGNESS SERVE HIS ABILITY ENDEAR HIMSELF BELIEVERS AND OTHERS ALIKE BY HIS LOVING GENTLENESS SERENE HUMILITY RADIANT CHEERFULNESS HIS NEVER-CEASING PURSUIT KNOWLEDGE AND TOTAL DEDICATION BLESSED BEAUTY PROVIDE WONDERFUL EXAMPLE BAHÁ'Í LIFE, ADVISE FRIENDS COMMEMORATE HIS PASSING AND REQUEST BEFITTING MEMORIAL SERVICES ALL MOTHER TEMPLES. ...
Universal House of Justice
257
Commencement of Construction of Indian Temple
30 July 1980
To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India
257.1REJOICE NEWS COMMENCEMENT CONSTRUCTION MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR HEART INDIAN SUBCONTINENT. THIS ACHIEVEMENT IS IN SHARP CONTRAST SAD HAPPENINGS CRADLE FAITH AND WILL BE SOURCE DELIGHT BELIEVERS ALL LANDS. SUPPLICATING SACRED THRESHOLD THAT TEMPLE OF LIGHT WILL SOON BECOME INSTRUMENT RADIATE DIVINE GUIDANCE ILLUMINE HEARTS OF THE MULTITUDES. MAY BAHÁ'ÍS OF INDIA ARISE TO MEET RESPONSIBILITIES RENDER UTMOST ASSISTANCE RAISING THIS BEAUTIFUL EDIFICE

IN THE NAME OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH.
Universal House of Justice
258
Translation of the Long Healing Prayer
and the Fire Tablet
13 August 1980
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá’í Friends,
258.1 The Universal House of Justice recently commissioned the translation into English of two of the important works of Bahá’u’lláh, namely, the Long Healing Prayer and His Tablet entitled “Qad-Ihtaraqa’l-Mukhlisún,” known to many in the West as the “Fire Tablet”.
258.2 These translations have now been checked and approved, and a copy of each is enclosed. The Universal House of Justice leaves it entirely to your discretion to determine how these two works may be shared with the friends under your jurisdiction. There is no objection to their inclusion in prayer books published by National Spiritual Assemblies.
With loving Bahá’í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
259
Arrest of National Spiritual Assembly of Iran and
Two Auxiliary Board Members
24 August 1980
To selected National Spiritual Assemblies
269.1WITH HEARTS BURNING INDIGNATION DISTRESS ANNOUNCE ALL MEMBERS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IRAN TOGETHER WITH TWO AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBERS FORCIBLY AND PEREMPTORILY TAKEN FROM MEETING IN PRIVATE HOME ON EVENING 21 AUGUST TO UNKNO DESTINATION. VIEWING RISING TIDE PERSECUTIONS STEADFAST HEROIC LEADERS HARASSED COMMUNITY HAD ALREADY ANTICIPATED POSSIBILITY SUCH AN UNWARRANTED ACTION AND HAD MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR NINE ALTERNATIVE MEMBERS ASSUME RESPONSIBILITIES NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN CASE THEY WERE UNABLE FUNCTION. NINE MEMBERS APPOINTED BODY NOW AT HELM DETERMINED DISCHARGE SACRED DUTIES FOLLO FOOTSTEPS THEIR COURAGEOUS PREDECESSORS, REMINISCENT SPIRIT EVINCED UNDAUNTED HEROES FAITH DURING MEMORABLE EPISODE BÁRFURÚSH. NEW NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TOGETHER WITH WIVES CLOSE RELATIVES ARRESTED FRIENDS HAVE APPEALED AUTHORITIES FOR RELEASE LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS. THROUGH THEIR CONSTANCY AND VALOR PERSIAN FRIENDS HAVE ONCE AGAIN SET AN EXAMPLE OF SERVITUDE AT SACRED THRESHOLD WORTHY EMULATION ALL FRIENDS EVERY LAND PARTICULARLY THOSE PRIVILEGED SERVE ACTIVELY ON BAHÁ’Í INSTITUTIONS. CALL ON FRIENDS EVERYWHERE JOIN US IN FERVENT PRAYERS THAT SELF-SACRIFICING PERSIAN BRETHREN MAY AT LAST YIELD GOLDEN FRUIT THEIR RELEASE FROM YOKE TRIBULATION OPPRESSION SO NOBLY BORNE IN PATH HIS LOVE MORE THAN ONE CENTURY....
Universal House of Justice
260
Another False Accusation against the Iranian Bahá’ís
25 August 1980

To selected National Spiritual Assemblies
260.1SUBSEQUENT ARREST ENTIRE MEMBERSHIP NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IRAN AND TWO AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBERS OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT JUST RELEASED THROUGH MASS ME IRAN ACCUSES LEADERS BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN RECENTLY ATTEMPTED COUP. THIS FALSE ACCUSATION ANOTHER EVIDENCE DELIBERATE SCHEME AUTHORITIES ELIMINATE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY AND ITS INSTITUTIONS IN LAND ITS ORIGIN. ...
260.2ASSURE YOU PRAYERS SUCCESS EFFORTS ALLEVIATE SUFFERINGS OPPRESSED BRETHREN IRAN.
Universal House of Justice
261
Martyrdom of Seven Bahá'ís in Yazd
9 September 1980
To National Spiritual Assemblies
261.1ANNOUNCE WITH DEEP SORROW HEARTRENDING NEWS MARTYRDOM ON MORNING MONI EIGHT SEPTEMBER IN YAZD SEVEN DEVOTED STEADFAST BELIEVERS TWO OF WHOM WERE AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBERS AND FIVE PROMINENT BAHÁ'ÍS YAZD INCLUDING ONE SEVENTY-EIGHT YEAR OLD BELIEVER. LOCAL REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS WHO PERPETRATED THIS DASTARDLY ACT CHARGED INNOCENT FRIENDS ON LOCAL RADIO WITH FALSE IMPUTATIONS SUCH AS SPYING AND SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES. THIS EPISODE WILL GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS ANOTHER EVIDENCE PATIENCE LONG-SUFFERING INNOCENT PERSIAN BRETHREN IN FACE OF UNABATED HATRED VIRULENT MALICE INVETERATE ENEMIES FAITH. ...
261.2NAMES MARTYRS AS FOLLOWS:
'AZÍZU'LLÁH DHABÍHÍYÁN
FIRAYDÚN FARÍDÁNÍ
NÚRU'LLÁH AKHTAR-KHÁVARÍ
JALÁL MUSTAQÍM
MAHMÚD HASANZÁDIH
'ALÍ MUTAHHARÍ
'ABDU'L-VAHHÁB KÁZIMÍ-MANSHÁDÍ. ...
Universal House of Justice
262
Defense of the Bahá'ís of Iran in Le Monde
11 September 1980
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
262.1 The Universal House of Justice has asked us to convey to you the following. ...
262.2 An official statement published in Iran in the columns of newspapers of nationwide circulation charges that those executed [the seven martyrs of Yazd] were guilty of spying and subversion and denounces the Local Spiritual Assembly of Yazd as an instrument of espionage. These accusations are nothing but downright falsehood. ...
262.3 Recently the world press has carried several excellent articles written by fair-minded and well-known non-Bahá'í writers in support of our beloved Faith. Le Monde of Paris in its 29 August issue published a remarkable article earnestly defending the Bahá'í community in Iran. The Universal

House of Justice has asked us to send you a copy of the article in French, with a translation of its text into English, for your information and use in any manner you deem advisable.

262.4 The situation of the friends in Iran is perilous. The total number of believers imprisoned in the country has exceeded sixty. The friends have no refuge save their trust in Bahá'u'lláh. We must steadfastly continue to cling to the Hem of His Garment, fervently pray for the alleviation of the sufferings of our oppressed brethren, resolutely arise to win victories in His name, and be confident that the promised deliverance of the Faith of God from the shackles of blind orthodoxy will, in the fullness of time, be fully realized with the aid of His invisible hosts and as decreed by His invincible Will.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

The Bahá'ís: An Accursed Community

262.5 The Iranian press is still silent concerning the arrest, on 21 August last, of the nine members of the supreme governing body of the Bahá'í community, "the National Spiritual Assembly" (Le Monde of 28 August). No one knows who proceeded to arrest them, except that it was a group of armed men "claiming authority," who took refuge in pregnant silence. Nothing is known, either, of the place of their confinement. Neither President Bani-Sadr, nor the Attorney-General, Ayatollah Ghodoussi, could, or would, reply to the anguished appeals of the families and co-religionists of the nine persons.

262.6 Accused of "Plotting against the security of the State," they are in danger of execution. In accordance with the procedure of the "Islamic revolutionary tribunals," the arraignment and the trial will take place in camera without the presence of an advocate; the verdict could be pronounced and executed before even the Attorney General is informed. Thousands of "counterrevolutionaries" are no doubt in the same situation.

262.7 But the situation of the Bahá'ís is, in general, far more grave inasmuch as the repression falls not only on individuals who could have been guilty of subversive activities, but on an entire group of people who lack the benefit of any legal protection. In the eyes of the Constitution, indeed, the Bahá'ís ... do not exist. Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, although far less numerous than the followers of this humanist religion, are mentioned in the fundamental law and benefit from all the rights accorded to other citizens of Muslim faith, including that of being represented in Parliament. Thus some three hundred thousand Bahá'ís have been reduced to the condition of pariahs.

262.8 The anarchy produced by the revolution—which was in principle directed against imperial autocracy and foreign domination—has favored the unleashing of the fanaticism, not of the population, but of ultraconservative religious organizations like the brotherhood of the Tablighat-i- Islamí (an Islamic propaganda group), who already under the monarchy were conducting persecutions with the active collaboration of SAVAK. Since the installation of the Republic a score of Bahá'í Holy Places have been destroyed or confiscated by the local authorities; centers of worship in eighty towns and

villages have been destroyed or burned down; some forty cemeteries have been profaned and in most cases confiscated; museums, shops, or places of business belonging to Bahá'ís have been attacked or looted in more than three hundred and eighty urban or rural settlements, according to a report compiled two months ago by the National Spiritual Assembly of the community.

262.9 The high authorities of the Republic would find it difficult to exonerate themselves from all responsibility for these collective crimes. Not one of them, as far as is known, has explicitly condemned them. Worse, the Revolutionary Council, on which, moreover, some "liberals" are represented, decreed last winter (see the daily Etelaat of 20 December) that the army must expel from its ranks all persons who do not belong to one of the four "official" religions of the State (Muslim, Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian). Following this, in addition to the officers and soldiers, civil servants, employees of nationalized industries, university professors and teachers have been dismissed from one day to the next without any indemnity or pension. Again by order of the government, Bahá'í places of worship in several cities, notably in Tehran and Mashhad, have been converted into "free Islqmic Universities."

262.10 The Bahá'ís are denounced as "heretics," as "renegades" from Islam, because the Founders of their religion, in the last century, were for the most part, Persian Muslims, because their Prophet, the Báb (1819–1850) had the misfortune to be born after Muhammad, who is considered to be the last Messenger of God. However, the millions of Bahá'ís scattered today in some eighty-eight thousand localities across the five continents are neither of Persian origin nor are they Muslim converts. Beyond this, the Bahá'í Faith recognizes and respects Islam.

262.11 However, the persecutors have "refined" their accusations by "politicizing" them. The Bahá'ís, according to them, are "agents of Israel" because the World Center of the community is situated in Haifa. But the seat was established in that city in 1868, almost a century before the foundation of the Jewish State.

262.12 The Bahá'ís, it is said again, were "supporters of the regime and of SAVAK!" Yet they refused—in face of demands of the Sháh—to join the single Rastakhiz party, in spite of the pogroms organized against them by SAVAK, notably in 1955 and in 1963. In the last months of the monarchy the agents of the secret police had caused some three hundred houses belonging to Bahá'ís to be burnt. In accordance with their teachings, the Bahá'ís are required to be obedient to the established authority, whatever it may be, and refuse—under pain of being expelled from the community—to involve themselves in any activity or to accept any office of a political nature. This shows how absurd appears the accusation of "Plotting against the security of the State" formulated against the nine elected members of the supreme body of the community in Iran.

262.13 They knew that they were in danger. They could, like so many others, have chosen exile. As one of them said to us recently, they had nevertheless decided "to remain at the side of our fellow believers in distress." Their fidelity can cost them their lives. But who, in Iran or abroad, will have the

courage or the wish to intervene in favor of a community accursed among all others?

—Eric Rouleau

263

Worldwide Response to Iranian Persecutions

23 September 1980

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

263.1MEMBERS VENERABLE COMMUNITY OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S FOLLOWERS IN HIS NATIVE LAND ARE FACING IN UTMOST NOBILITY HEROISM AND IN TRADITION THEIR ILLUSTRIOUS FOREBEARS ORDEALS SEVERITY OF WHICH IS REMINISCENT OF FEROCITY PERSECUTIONS HEROIC AGE OUR FAITH. INNOCENT BLOOD THEY ARE SHEDDING ALTAR SACRIFICE, INTENSE SUFFERINGS THEY ARE SERENELY BEARING IN LOVE HIS PATH ARE RELEASING SPIRITUAL ENERGIES WHICH ARE ACCELERATING MOMENTUM PROGRESS FAITH OPENING UP NEW HORIZONS AS IT IRRESISTIBLY FORGES AHEAD TOWARDS ITS ULTIMATE DESTINY.

263.2UNITED NATIONS SUBCOMMISSION ON PREVENTION DISCRIMINATION PROTECTION MINORITIES MEETING IN GENEVA FOLLOWING PRESENTATION MADE BY REPRESENTATIVE BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY DISCUSSED APPROVED ON 10 SEPTEMBER RESOLUTION EXPRESSING PROFOUND CONCERN OVER SAFETY BAHÁ'ÍS IRAN AND REQUESTING UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL CONVEY THIS CONCERN TO AUTHORITIE IRAN AND CALL ON THEM PROTECT FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY.

263.3EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MEETING IN STRASBOURG AND COMPRISING OVER 400 MEMBERS UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED ON 19 SEPTEMBER HISTORIC RESOLUTION WHICH DENOUNCES SYSTEMATIC CAMPAIGN PERSECUTION IRANIAN BAHÁ'ÍS AND VIOLATION THEIR ELEMENTARY HUMAN RIGHTS, CALLS UPON GOVERNMENT IRAN GRANT BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY LEGAL RECOGNITION AND PROTECTION, AND UPON FOREIGN MINISTERS EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES MAKE URGENT PRESENTATIONS TO IRANIAN AUTHORITIES CEASE PERSECUTIO BAHÁ'ÍS ALLOWING THEM PRACTICE THEIR RELIGION FREELY AND ENJOY FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND REQUESTS MEMBER STATES IMPOSE EMBARGO ON ALL SALES OF SUBSIDIZED SURPLUS AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS TO IRAN UNTIL FULL HUMAN RIGHTS ARE RESTORED TO IRANIAN CITIZENS. THIS REMARKABLE DOCUMENT ENDS WITH STATEMENT THAT EVIDENCE SUGGESTS ARRESTS EXECUTIONS OF BAHÁ'ÍS ARE CONTINUING AND INCREASING ACCORDING TO PREARRANGED PLAN AND ONLY SPEEDY RESPONSE BY EUROPEA PARLIAMENT CAN STOP THESE DEVELOPMENTS.

263.4REPORTS RECEIVED FROM ALL CONTINENTS ELOQUENTLY BEAR TESTIMONY TO SENSE O UNITY FELT BY FRIENDS EVERYWHERE IN FACE DEPRIVATIONS THEIR PERSIAN BRETHREN, GENEROUS OFFERINGS OF TIME, EFFORT, AND RESOURCES IN MEMORY MARTYRS AND ON BEHALF OF IMPRISONED FRIENDS, AMONG WHOM ARE A COUNSELLOR, AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBERS, ENTIRE MEMBERSHIP NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY AS WELL AS MEMBERS SEVERAL LOCAL ASSEMBLIES. THESE AFFLICTIONS HAVE ENABLED FRIENDS IN MOST COUNTRIES WORLD OVER PROCLAIM FAITH TO HIGHEST OFFICIALS THEIR COUNTRY AND NOISE ABROAD ITS TEACHINGS THROUGH MASS MEDIA. COUNTLESS PLEDGES OF LOYALTY AND OF RENEWED DEDICATION HAVE BEEN MADE TO SHOW IN THE DAYS AHEAD GREATER SOLIDARITY AUDACITY ACHIEVE MORE STIRRING VICTORIES FOR GOD'S HOLY FAITH. ALREADY DURING PAST SEVERAL WEEKS IN ONE COUNTRY LATIN AMERICA NUMBER BELIEVE HAS MORE THAN DOUBLED RESULT EFFORTS INSPIRED BLOOD INNOCENT MARTYRS. LET MEN

OF VALOR IN OTHER COUNTRIES FOLLOW IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS.
263.5CALL ON FRIENDS EVERYWHERE JOIN US IN PRAYERS THANKSGIVING FOR THESE VICTORIES WORTHY RESPONSES OF BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY TO BITTER PERSECUTIONS BEING METED OUT ITS FOLLOWERS IN NATIVE LAND BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. URGE ALL FRIENDS CONTINUE THEIR SUPPLICATIONS TO HIM THAT UNYIELDING INTRANSIGENT ATTITUDE OF IRANIAN AUTHORITIES TOWARD BAHÁ'ÍS MAY BE TRANSMUTED INTO CONFIDENCE IN AND GOODWILL TOWARDS PEACE-LOVING, LAW-ABIDING MEMBERS PRESENTLY PROSCRIBED COMMUNITY.
Universal House of Justice
264
Property Acquisitions in the Holy Land
24 September 1980
To the Bahá'ís of the World
264.1WITH HEARTS BRIMMING WITH GRATITUDE FOR BOUNTIFUL CONFIRMATIONS BLESSED BEAUTY ANNOUNCE FOLLOWING RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS HOLY LAND:
264.2IN BAHJÍ JUST ACQUIRED STRIP OF LAND 13,150 SQUARE METRES IN AREA BORDERING DRIVEWAY FROM WESTERN GATE BAHÁ'Í PROPERTY AREA ACQUIRED ADJACENT TO AND SOUTH OF PRESENT BOUNDARY OLIVE GROVE ENABLES SOUTHWEST QUADRANT GAR SURROUNDING MOST HOLY SHRINE BE COMPLETED. THIS ACQUISITION WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY EXCHANGE AGAINST PROPERTY ON MAIN ROAD TO NAZARETH DONATED WORLD CENTER DESCENDANTS LATE HUSAYN BÁQIR KÁSHÁNÍ.
264.3ALSO PURCHASED NEARLY 50,000 SQUARE METRES AGRICULTURAL LAND ADJACENT TO AND NORTH OF MAZRA'IH PROPERTY AS PROTECTION TO MANSION IN RAPIDLY DEVELOPING AREA.
264.4SHIPMENT OVER 1,000 PIECES COMPRISING 120 CUBIC METRES KATRINA CEDAR WOOD FROM TURKEY JUST CLEARED FROM HAIFA PORT FOR USE RESTORATION HOUSE ABDU'LLÁH PÁSHÁ IN 'AKKÁ.
Universal House of Justice
265
Passing of Leonora Stirling Armstrong,
Spiritual Mother of South America
20 October 1980
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Brazil
265.1HEARTS SADDENED PASSING DISTINGUISHED COUNSELOR LEONORA STIRLING ARMSTRONG, HERALD OF THE KINGDOM, BELOVED HANDMAIDEN 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, SPIRITUAL MOTHER SOUTH AMERICA. HER SIXTY YEARS VALIANT DEVOTED SERVICES CAUSE BRAZIL SHEDS LUSTRE ANNALS FAITH THAT PROMISING LAND. REQUESTING MEMORIAL SERVICES MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁRS WILMETTE PANAMA URGE ALL COMMUNITIES BRAZIL LIKEWISE HOLD SERVICES. OFFERING ARDENT SUPPLICATIONS MOST HOLY SHRINE PROGRESS HER RADIANT SPIRIT ABHÁ KINGDOM.
Universal House of Justice
266
Attendance of the Members
of a Spiritual Assembly at its Meetings
26 October 1980
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,

266.1 ... The attached compilation on the importance of participation in meetings of a National Spiritual Assembly by its entire membership has been prepared to assist members of these divinely ordained bodies to understand the nature and importance of the responsibilities they must assume when they are elected by their fellow believers. The House of Justice requests that every member of your Assembly be provided with a copy of this compilation, and that it be the subject of prayerful consultation at an early meeting of your Assembly.

266.2 Many of the passages included in the compilation apply equally to Local Spiritual Assemblies.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

267

Further Development of the
Continental Boards of Counselors

3 November 1980

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

267.1 One of the greatest sources of consolation for the Universal House of Justice amid the tribulations of the past twelve years, has been the establishment and growth of the Continental Boards of Counselors, and the assistance that this institution has been rendering, in ever-increasing measure, to the sound development of the worldwide Bahá'í community. We cannot pay too high a tribute to the indefatigable labors of the devoted souls who have been called upon to shoulder this onerous responsibility, and who have followed with such fidelity the path of self-sacrificing service that has been blazed for them by the beloved Hands of the Cause of God.

267.2 In June 1979 we were moved to announce that the duration of the terms of office of Continental Counselors would be five years, to start on the Day of the Covenant of this year. As this date approaches, we have decided that the time is ripe for a further step in the development of the institution itself that will, at one and the same time, accord greater discretion and freedom of action to the Continental Boards of Counselors in the carrying out of their duties, and widen the scope of each Board to embrace an entire continent. In accordance with this decision, the zones of the Continental Boards of Counselors will, from the Day of the Covenant of the year 137 (26 November 1980), be as follows:

Africa, comprising the areas of the four present zones of that continent.

The Americas, comprising the present zones of North, Central and South America.

Asia, comprising the present zones of Western, South Central and Southeastern Asia, together with the present zone of Northeastern Asia without the Hawaiian Islands and Micronesia.

Australasia, comprising the present zone of Australasia plus the Hawaiian Islands and Micronesia.

Europe.

267.3 Those who are now appointed as Counselors to serve on these Continental Boards for the next five years are:

267.3aAfrica: Dr. Hushang Ahdieh (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Mr. Husayn Ardíkání, Friday Ekpe, Mr. Oloro Epyeru, Mr. Shidan Fat'he-Aazam, Mr. Zekrullah Kazemi, Mr. Muhammad Kebdani, Mrs. Thelma Khelghati, Mr. William Masehla, Mr. Muhammad Mustafá, Mr. Kolonario Oule, Mrs. Isobel Sabri, Dr. Mihdí Samandarí, Mr. Peter Vuyiya, Mrs. Bahíyyih Winckler.

267.3bThe Americas: Dr. Hidáyatu'lláh Ahmadíyyih, Dr. Farzam Arbáb, Mrs. Carmen de Burafato, Mr. Athos Costas, Mr. Angus Cowan, Mr. Lloyd Gardner (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Mr. Mas'úd Khamsí, Mrs. Lauretta King, Mr. Artemus Lamb, Mr. Peter McLaren, Mr. Raúl Pavón, Dr. Sarah Pereira, Mrs. Ruth Pringle, Mr. Fred Schechter, Mrs. Velma Sherrill, Mr. Donald Witzel.

267.3cAsia: Mr. Burháni'd-Dín Afshín, Mrs. Shirin Boman, Dr. Masíh Farhangí, Dr. John Fozdar, Mr. Zabíhu'lláh Gulmuhammadí, Mr. Aydin Güney, Mr. Dipchand Khianra, Mr. Rúhu'lláh Mumtází, Mr. S. Nagaratnam, Mr. Khudárahm Paymán (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Mr. Manúchihr Salmánpúr, Mr. Vicente Samaniego, Mrs. Zena Sorabjee, Dr. Chellie Sundram, Mr. Hideya Suzuki, Mr. Yan Kee Leong.

267.3dAustralasia: Mr. Suhayl 'Alá'í, Mr. Ben Ayala, Mr. Owen Battrick (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Mr. Richard Benson, Mrs. Tinai Hancock, Dr. Peter Khan, Mr. Lisiate Maka.

267.3eEurope: Mr. Erik Blumenthal, Mrs. Dorothy Ferraby, Dr. Agnes Ghaznaví, Mr. Hartmut Grossmann, Mr. Louis Hénuzet (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Mrs. Ursula Mühlschlegel, Dr. Leo Niederreiter, Mrs. Betty Reed, Mr. Adib Taherzadeh.

267.4 A number of friends who have rendered highly valued services as Counselors are not being reappointed for the coming term, and we wish to express here our profound gratitude for the devoted labors they have rendered and are rendering in the path of the Cause. These dearly loved believers are:

267.4aMr. Seewoosumbur-Jeehoba Appa, Dr. Iraj Ayman, Mr. Rowland Estall, Mr. Howard Harwood, Miss Violet Hoehnke, Mrs. Salisa Kermani, Mr. Paul Lucas, Miss Elena Marsella, Mr. Alfred Osborne, Miss Thelma Perks, Mr. Hádí Rahmání, Mr. 'Imád Sábirán, Miss Edna True.

267.5 Henceforth the Board of Counselors in each continent will have wider discretion to decide such matters as whether to divide its area into zones, and what the boundaries of such zones should be, the number and location of the Board's offices, and the manner in which the members of the Auxiliary Boards will report to and operate under the Counselors. The principles and policies governing the operation of the Continental Boards of Counselors, however, and their relationships with the National and Local Spiritual Assemblies and the individual believers will remain unchanged. As the Bahá'í world experiences the manifold interactions of these two vital and complementary arms of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh, the unique benefits of this divinely ordained System become ever more apparent. The harmonious interaction and the proper discharge of the duties of these institutions representing the rulers and the learned among the people of Bahá is the essential basis at this time for the protection of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and the fulfillment of its God-given mandate.

267.6 Events of the most profound significance are taking place in the world. The river of human history is flowing at a bewildering speed. Age-old institutions are collapsing. Traditional ways are being forgotten, and newly born ideologies which were fondly expected to take their place, are withering and decaying before the eyes of their disillusioned adherents. Amidst this decay and disruption, assailed from every side by the turmoil of the age, the Order of Bahá'u'lláh, unshakeably founded on the Word of God, protected by the shield of the Covenant and assisted by the hosts of the Concourse on High, is rising in every part of the world.

267.7 Every institution of this divinely created Order is one more refuge for a distraught populace; every soul illumined by the light of the sacred Message is one more link in the oneness of mankind, one more servant ministering to the needs of an ailing world. Even should the Bahá'í communities, in the years immediately ahead, be cut off from the World Center or from one another—as some already have been—the Bahá'ís will neither halt nor hesitate; they will continue to pursue their objectives, guided by their Spiritual Assemblies and led by the Counselors, the members of the Auxiliary Boards and their assistants. It is our prayer at the Sacred Threshold that the new and challenging development now taking place in the evolution of the institution of the Counselors will release great energies for the advancement of the Cause of God in every land.

The Universal House of Justice

268

Martyrdom of Ridá Fírúzí in Tabríz; Uncertainty of Whereabouts of National Assembly Members

14 November 1980

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

268.1SORROWFUL NEWS JUST RECEIVED ANOTHER BELIEVER RIDÁ FÍRÚZÍ MARTYRED TABRÍZ 9 NOVEMBER, NEWS ITEM ISSUED PARS NEWS AGENCY AND REUTERS AND PUBLISHED IN TEHRAN PAPERS CHARGES HIM WITH BEING PROMINENT BAHÁ'Í AND INFIDEL AND INCLUDES USUAL LIST TOTALLY UNFOUNDED ACCUSATIONS. WHEREABOUTS NINE MEMBERS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND FEW OTHERS STILL UNCERTAIN. STRONG FEARS HARASSED COMMUNITY ONCE AGAIN FACING AFTER BRIEF LULL FRESH WAVE OPPRESSION LEADING TO SHAM TRIALS MERCILESS ATROCITIES....

Universal House of Justice

269

Passing of the Hand of the Cause of God Abu'l-Qasim Faizi

20 November 1980

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

269.1HEARTS FILLED WITH SORROW PASSING INDEFATIGABLE SELF-SACRIFICING DEARLY LOVED HAND CAUSE GOD ABU'L-QASIM FAIZI. ENTIRE BAHÁ'Í WORLD MOURNS HIS LOSS. HIS EARLY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS IN CRADLE FAITH THROUGH EDUCATION CHILDREN YOUTH STIMULATION FRIENDS PROMOTION TEACHING WORK PROMPTED BELOVED GUARDIAN DESCRIBE HIM AS LUMINOUS DISTINGUISHED ACTIVE YOUTH. HIS SUBSEQUENT PIONEERING WORK IN LANDS BORDERING IRAN WON HIM APPELLATION SPIRITUAL CONQUERO THOSE LANDS. FOLLOWING HIS APPOINTMENT HAND CAUSE HE PLAYED INVALUABLE PART

WORK HANDS HOLY LAND TRAVELED WIDELY PENNED HIS LITERARY WORKS CONTINUED HIS EXTENSIVE INSPIRING ORRESPONDENCE WITH HIGH AND LOW YOUNG AND OLD UNTIL AFTER LONG ILLNESS HIS SOUL WAS RELEASED AND WINGED ITS FLIGHT ABHÁ KINGDOM. CALL ON FRIENDS EVERYWHERE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS HIS HONOR, INCLUDING SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE MEETINGS HIS NAME IN HOUSES WORSHIP ALL CONTINENTS. MAY HIS SHINING EXAMPLE CONSECRATION CONTINUE INSPIRE HIS ADMIRERS EVERY LAND. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES HIS NOBLE RADIANT SOUL MAY BE IMMERSED IN OCEAN DIVINE MERCY CONTINUE ITS UNINTERRUPTED PROGRESS IN INFINITE WORLDS BEYOND.
Universal House of Justice

270

Immolation of Bahá'í Couple in Núk village
8 December 1980
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,

270.1 On 1 December 1980 the Universal House of Justice cabled certain National Spiritual Assemblies as follows:

WITH FEELINGS HORROR INDIGNATION INFORM YOU MARTYRDOM MUHAMMAD-HUSAYN MA'SÚMÍ AND HIS WIFE BRUTALLY PUT TO DEATH 23 NOVEMBER NÚK VILLAGE NEAR BÍRJAND IN KHURÁSÁN. FIFTEEN MASKED MEN ATTACKED COUPLE THEIR HOME MIDDLE NIGHT FIRST POURED KEROSENE ON HUSBAND AND SET HIM ON FIRE THEN FORCED HIM RUN FEW METRES FINALLY HEAPED WOOD UPON HIM BURNING HIM TO DEATH. HIS WIFE SUBJECT SIMILAR TREATMENT DIED TWO DAYS LATER HOSPITAL. SO FAR THIS ATROCITY NOT REPORTED IN NEWS MEDIA. ...

270.2... The Universal House of Justice calls on the friends in every land to continue to remember the oppressed friends of Iran in their prayers, supplicating Bahá'u'lláh to grant His divine aid and assist that persecuted community to face the trials that God has ordained for them, in accordance with His inscrutable wisdom.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat

271

Message to Counselors' Convocations on Five Continents
22 December 1980
To gatherings of Counselors in all countries

271.1HAIL CONVOCATION IN ALL CONTINENTS FIVE GATHERINGS CONTINENTAL BOARDS COUNSELORS ON MORROW THEIR APPOINTMENT FOR NEW TERM. GRATEFUL DIVINE BLESSING ENABLING THESE GATHERINGS BE GRACED BY PRESENCE HANDS CAUSE GOD WHO IN ACCORDANCE 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S WILL TESTAMENT WERE APPOINTED BY BELOVED GUARDIAN AND DESCRIBED BY HIM AS CHIEF STEWARDS BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S EMBRYONIC WORLD COMMONWEALTH.

271.2INVESTED WITH DUAL FUNCTION DISTINGUISHING MEMBERS THAT AUGUST INSTITUTION AND FOLLOWING IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS EACH NEWLY APPOINTED BOARD COUNSELORS IS CALLED UPON AMIDST TURMOIL PRESENT HOUR ASSUME WITH RENEWED VIGOR AND DETERMINATION UNDER GUIDANCE INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTER ITS VITAL DUTIES GUARD OVER SECURITY ENSURE PROPAGATION GOD'S FAITH IN CONSULTATION NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES WITHIN CONFINES ITS CONTINENT IN STRICT CONFORMITY PRINCIPLES

OUTLINED BY GUARDIAN IN HIS CABLE TO BAHÁ'Í WORLD DATED 4 JUNE 1957. AS HE CLEARLY ENVISAGED THEN AND AS IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY APPARENT NOW SECURITY CAUSE PRESERVATION SPIRITUAL HEALTH COMMUNITY VITALITY FAITH INDIVIDUALS PROPE FUNCTIONING BAHÁ'Í INSTITUTIONS FRUITION WORLDWIDE ENTERPRISES FULFILLMENT ULTIMATE DESTINY FAITH ALL DEPENDENT UPON BEFITTING DISCHARGE WEIGHTY RESPONSIBILITIES MEMBERS TWIN ARMS ADMINISTRATION.
271.3IF AT ANY TIME FOR ANY REASON COMMUNICATION WITH WORLD CENTER IS CUT OFF IN FUTURE, COUNSELORS EACH CONTINENT SHOULD COLLECTIVELY INDIVIDUALLY ASSIST NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES ENSURE CONTINUATION NORMAL ADMINISTRATION FAITH BY THESE ASSEMBLIES WITHOUT INTERRUPTION UNTIL COMMUNICATIONS CAN BE RESTORED. FURTHERMORE IF IT SHOULD PROVE UNFEASIBLE AT END OF ANY FIVE YEAR TERM OF OFFICE FOR HOUSE JUSTICE TO REVIEW AND RENEW MEMBERSHIP CONTINENTAL BOARDS COUNSELORS, THESE BOARDS SHOULD CONTINUE IN OFFICE EVEN IF ONE OR MORE THEIR MEMBERS IS UNABLE FUNCTION, FAITHFULLY DISCHARGING THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES, UNTIL PROPITIOUS CONDITIONS PREVAIL FOR HOUSE JUSTICE CONSIDER APPOINTMENT SUCCESSORS. FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES GOD'S PRECIOUS FAITH MAY BE PROTECTED FROM ONSLAUGHT ITS ENEMIES WITHIN ITS ANTAGONISTS BOTH RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR WITHOUT, THAT MEMBERS RECONSTITUTED INSTITUTION COUNSELORS MAY BE RECIPIENTS FRESH MEASURE HEAVENLY CONFIRMATIONS AND THAT FIRST MEETINGS NOW CONVENED MAY LAY FIRM FOUNDATIONS FOR EFFICIENT OPERATION THIS ESSENTIAL ORGAN STEADILY UNFOLDING ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER FAITH BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. REQUEST COUNSELORS SHARE COPY THIS MESSAGE WITH ALL NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES THEIR CONTINENT.
Universal House of Justice

272

Relationship between Husband and Wife

28 December 1980

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of New Zealand

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

272.1 The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 16 October 1980 enclosing a letter from the Spiritual Assembly of ... posing questions which have arisen as a result of reading the book When We Grow Up by Bahíyyih Nakhjavání, and it has instructed us to convey the following.

272.2 The House of Justice suggests that all statements in the Holy Writings concerning specific areas of the relationship between men and women should be considered in the light of the general principle of equality between the sexes that has been authoritatively and repeatedly enunciated in the Sacred Texts. In one of His Tablets 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts: "In this divine age the bounties of God have encompassed the world of women. Equality of men and women, except in some negligible instances, has been fully and categorically announced. Distinctions have been utterly removed." That men and women differ from one another in certain characteristics and functions is an inescapable fact of nature; the important thing is that 'Abdu'l-Bahá regards such inequalities as remain between the sexes as being "negligible."

272.3 The relationship between husband and wife must be viewed in the context of the Bahá'í ideal of family life. Bahá'u'lláh came to

bring unity to the world, and a fundamental unity is that of the family. Therefore, one must believe that the Faith is intended to strengthen the family, not weaken it, and one of the keys to the strengthening of unity is loving consultation. The atmosphere within a Bahá'í family as within the community as a whole should express "the keynote of the Cause of God" which, the beloved Guardian has stated, "is not dictatorial authority, but humble fellowship, not arbitrary power, but the spirit of frank and loving consultation."

272.4 A family, however, is a very special kind of "community." The Research Department has not come across any statements which specifically name the father as responsible for the "security, progress and unity of the family" as is stated in Bahíyyih Nakhjavání's book, but it can be inferred from a number of the responsibilities placed upon him, that the father can be regarded as the "head" of the family. The members of a family all have duties and responsibilities towards one another and to the family as a whole, and these duties and responsibilities vary from member to member because of their natural relationships. The parents have the inescapable duty to educate their children—but not vice versa; the children have the duty to obey their parents—the parents do not obey the children; the mother—not the father—bears the children, nurses them in babyhood, and is thus their first educator; hence daughters have a prior right to education over sons and, as the Guardian's secretary has written on his behalf, "The task of bringing up a Bahá'í child, as emphasized time and again in Bahá'í Writings, is the chief responsibility of the mother, whose unique privilege is indeed to create in her home such conditions as would be most conducive to both his material and spiritual welfare and advancement. The training which a child first receives through his mother constitutes the strongest foundation for his future development ..." A corollary of this responsibility of the mother is her right to be supported by her husband—a husband has no explicit right to be supported by his wife. This principle of the husband's responsibility to provide for and protect the family can be seen applied also in the law of intestacy which provides that the family's dwelling place passes, on the father's death, not to his widow, but to his eldest son; the son at the same time has the responsibility to care for his mother.

272.5 It is in this context of mutual and complementary duties, and responsibilities that one should read the Tablet in which 'Abdu'l-Bahá gives the following exhortation:

272.5a"O Handmaids of the All-Sufficing God!

272.5bExert yourselves, that haply ye may be enabled to acquire such virtues as shall honor and distinguish you amongst all women. Of a surety, there is no greater pride and glory for a woman than to be a handmaid in God's Court of Grandeur; and the qualities that shall merit her this station are an alert and wakeful heart; a firm conviction of the unity of God, the Peerless; a heartfelt love for all His maidservants; spotless purity and chastity; obedience to and consideration for her husband; attention to the education and nurturing of her children; composure, calmness, dignity and self-possession; diligence in praising God, and worshipping Him both night and day; constancy and firmness in

His holy Covenant; and the utmost ardor, enthusiasm, and attachment to His Cause. ...

272.5cThis exhortation to the utmost degree of spirituality and self-abnegation should not be read as a legal definition giving the husband absolute authority over his wife, for, in a letter written to an individual believer on 22 July 1943, the beloved Guardian's secretary wrote on his behalf:

272.5dThe Guardian, in his remarks ... about parents' and children's, wives' and husbands' relations in America, meant that there is a tendency in that country for children to be too independent of the wishes of their parents and lacking in the respect due to them. Also wives, in some cases, have a tendency to exert an unjust degree of domination over their husbands, which, of course, is not right, any more than that the husband should unjustly dominate his wife.

272.5e In any group, however loving the consultation, there are nevertheless points on which, from time to time, agreement cannot be reached. In a Spiritual Assembly this dilemma is resolved by a majority vote. There can, however, be no majority where only two parties are involved, as in the case of a husband and wife. There are, therefore, times when a wife should defer to her husband, and times when a husband should defer to his wife, but neither should ever unjustly dominate the other. In short, the relationship between husband and wife should be as held forth in the prayer revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá which is often read at Bahá'í weddings: "Verily, they are married in obedience to Thy command. Cause them to become the signs of harmony and unity until the end of time."

272.6 These are all relationships within the family, but there is a much wider sphere of relationships between men and women than in the home, and this too we should consider in the context of Bahá'í society, not in that of past or present social norms. For example, although the mother is the first educator of the child, and the most important formative influence in his development, the father also has the responsibility of educating his children, and this responsibility is so weighty that Bahá'u'lláh has stated that a father who fails to exercise it forfeits his rights of fatherhood. Similarly, although the primary responsibility for supporting the family financially is placed upon the husband, this does not by any means imply that the place of woman is confined to the home. On the contrary, 'Abdu'l-Bahá has stated:

272.6aIn the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh, women are advancing side by side with men. There is no area or instance where they will lag behind: they have equal rights with men, and will enter, in the future, into all branches of the administration of society. Such will be their elevation that, in every area of endeavor, they will occupy the highest levels in the human world. ...

and again:

272.6bSo it will come to pass that when women participate fully and equally in the affairs of the world, when they enter confidently and capably the great arena of laws and politics, war will cease; ...

(The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 135)

272.6c In the Tablet of the World, Bahá'u'lláh Himself has envisaged that women as well as men would be breadwinners in stating:

272.6dEveryone, whether man or woman, should hand over to a trusted person a

portion of what he or she earneth through trade, agriculture or other occupation, for the training and education of children, to be spent for this purpose with the knowledge of the Trustees of the House of Justice. (Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 90)

272.6e A very important element in the attainment of, such equality is Bahá'u'lláh's provision that boys and girls must follow essentially the same curriculum in schools.

272.7 It is hoped that the above explanations and comments will help the Local Spiritual Assembly of to resolve the questions set forth in its letter.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

273

Assassination of Dr. Manúchihr Hakím,
Chairman of Iranian National Spiritual Assembly

13 January 1981

To National Spiritual Assemblies

273.1PROFOUNDLY SHOCKED TRAGIC NEWS JUST RECEIVED OF ASSASSINATION IN HIS CLINIC OF PROFESSOR MANÚCHIHR HAKÍM DISTINGUISHED PHYSICIAN EMINENT PROFESSOR UNIVERSITY TEHRAN AND FOR SUCCESSIVE DECADES INTERMITTENTLY MEMBER CHAIRMAN NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY IRAN. SPIRIT COURAGE DEDICATION WITH WHICH THIS MOST RECENT MARTYR DISCHARGED SACRED RESPONSIBILITIES ON SUPREME NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í INSTITUTION CRADLE FAITH WORTHY EMULATION BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATORS AND FRIENDS EVERY LAND. DEEPLY DISTURBED THIS LATEST OMINOUS SIGN GATHERING CLOUDS FRESH CALAMITIES HARD-PRESSED FRIENDS IRAN....

Universal House of Justice

274

Events Related to the Execution of
Dr. Manúchihr Hakím

30 January 1981

To National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

274.1 We have been asked by the Universal House of Justice to share with you the following comments about events related to the martyrdom of Professor Manúchihr Hakím, and the general situation as it affects the safety of our brethren in Iran.

274.2The National Spiritual Assembly of Iran believes that ominous signs foreshadow an intensification of the persecution of the Bahá'ís, particularly since the release of the American hostages, and it fears that they will again become the target of their traditional adversaries who are presently in power.

274.3In reply to complaints from the Bahá'ís concerning the recent assassination of Professor Hakím, the authorities have insisted that the murderer is unknown to them, and they categorically deny any involvement in the case. It is very significant to note, however, that a few days after the assassination, the government officially produced documentation authorizing the confiscation of Professor Hakím's house, and officials went to that house, took an inventory of its furnishings, and sealed it on Wednesday, 14 January.

A lawyer who was protecting the interests of the Hakím family objected to this action, saying that the house belonged to and was in the name of Mrs. Germaine Hakím. On the next day about twenty Revolutionary guards entered the house and removed everything, including the car in the garage, leaving the premises entirely bare!

274.4 Many non-Bahá'ís in Iran have expressed sympathy to the Bahá'ís for the cruel death of Professor Hakím, who was renowned for his gentleness and his services to the community.

274.5 Mrs. Hakím has sent a number of cables of protest to Iran, but these have not thus far produced any favorable results. She is in Paris and has been advised to remain there since it is highly unsafe for her to return to Iran.

274.6 The National Spiritual Assembly is apprehensive about an official bill which is presently being drafted in the office of the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajá'í. This bill, if passed, will prevent the employment of Bahá'ís by any government or quasi-government institution. A circular letter has already been issued to all branches of the government, instructing them to dismiss all Bahá'ís. When the Bahá'ís do not fill out the blank marked "religion" on employment forms, they are asked again to complete the form so that there will be reason for their dismissal, namely being Bahá'ís. It should be recalled that the dismissal of Bahá'ís took place previously on a large scale in the field of education, and at that time the Minister of Education was the present Prime Minister, Mr. Rajá'í. A considerable number of dismissals also occurred in the Army, despite protests made by a cadre of officers in the Ministry of Defense.

274.7 The National Assembly also reports that a number of local mullahs are continuously instigating the populace against the Bahá'ís in their respective areas. ...

274.8 The Universal House of Justice will continue to keep you apprised from time to time of the latest developments concerning our beleaguered brethren in the Cradle of the Faith.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

275

Second Phase of the Seven Year Plan

March 1981

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

275.1 The successes of the initial phase of the Seven Year Plan are heartening evidence of the Divine care with which the growth of the Cause of God is so lovingly invigorated and sheltered. This still infant Cause, harassed and buffeted over these two years by relentless enemies, experiencing in swift succession a number of sharply contrasting crises and victories, surrounded by the increasing turmoil of a disintegrating world, has raised its banner, reinforced its foundations, and extended the range of its administrative institutions.

275.2 The resurgence of bitter and barbaric persecution of the Faith in the land of its birth, the passing to the Abhá Kingdom of five Hands of the Cause

of God, the darkening of the horizons of the world as the sombre shadows of universal convulsions and chaos extinguish the lights of justice and order, are among the factors which have chiefly affected the conditions and fortunes of the worldwide army of God.

The Bahá'ís in Iran

275.3 The Bahá'í community in the Cradle of the Faith, having witnessed the destruction of its holiest Shrine, the sequestration of its Holy Places, confiscation of its endowments and even personal properties, the martyrdom of many of its adherents, the imprisonment and holding without trial or news of the members of its National Spiritual Assembly and other leading figures of its community, the deprivation of the means of livelihood, vilification and slander of its cherished tenets, has stood staunch as the Dawn-Breakers of old and emerged spiritually united and steadfast, the pride and inspiration of the entire Bahá'í world. In all continents of the globe, their example and hapless plight has led the friends to proclaim the Name of Bahá'u'lláh as never before, personally, locally, and through all the media of mass communication. The Bahá'í world community, acting through its representatives at the United Nations and through its National Spiritual Assemblies, has brought to the attention of governments and world leaders in many spheres the tenets and character of the Faith of God. The world's parliaments, its federal councils, its humanitarian agencies have considered the Bahá'í Cause and in many instances have extended their support and expressed their sympathy.

275.4 In the midst of this time- and energy-consuming activity on behalf of our beloved Persian brethren, the community of the Most Great Name, far from lessening its pursuit of the objectives of the initial phase of the Seven Year Plan, has promoted them with increasing vigor. Added to the burning desire of the friends everywhere to show their love for their brethren in Persia by teaching the Cause with redoubled fervor, has been the further inspiration to teach derived from the loss of the beloved Hands of the Cause, an inspiration which has been fostered by the travels of those dear Hands still able to extend this loving service to the believers.

Developments within the Faith during the First Phase

275.5 The broadening, during this opening phase of the Seven Year Plan, of the foundations of the Boards of Counselors and the consolidation of the thirteen zonal Boards to five continental ones have greatly reinforced this vital institution of the Faith. It has been further developed by the setting of a specified term of office for Continental Counselors, as was envisaged in the original appointments.

275.6 Progress on the Seat of the Universal House of Justice and on the Temples of India and Samoa has continued. Six new National Spiritual Assemblies will be formed during this Ridván: two in Africa, that of South West Africa/Namibia with its seat in Windhoek and that of Bophuthatswana with its seat in Mmabatho; three in the Americas, Bermuda with its seat in Hamilton, the Leeward Islands with its seat in St. John's, Antigua, and the Windward Islands with its seat in Kingstown, St. Vincent; one in the Pacific, namely that of Tuvalu with its seat in Funafuti; and the National Spiritual Assembly

of Uganda will be reconstituted. To those to be formed during the remainder of the Seven Year Plan, the following have been added: two in Africa, Equatorial Guinea with its seat in Malabo, Somalia with its seat in Mogadishu, and one in Asia, that of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands with its seat in Port Blair.

275.7 Increases in the total number of Local Spiritual Assemblies and localities have been registered during the opening phase, and Bahá'í communities in all parts of the world have demonstrated greater unity and maturity in their collective activities.

The Second Phase of the Plan—1981–84

275.8 The second phase of the Seven Year Plan, now opening, will last for three years and will be followed by the final phase of two years, ending at Ridván 1986. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the passing of our beloved Guardian will occur during the second year of the second phase of the Plan and that same year will also witness the fiftieth anniversary of the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf. The House of Justice plans to issue a compilation of letters to her and of statements about her by Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and the beloved Guardian, and of her own letters.

Worldwide Goals for the Second Phase

275.9 All National Spiritual Assemblies have been sent the goals assigned to their communities for the second phase, for the prosecution of which the Bahá'í world community now stands poised and ready. Among the major developments envisioned during this phase are:

275.9a Occupation by the Universal House of Justice of its permanent Seat on the slopes of Mount Carmel above the Arc;

275.9b Completion of the Temple in Samoa and continued progress on the work of the Temple in India;

275.9c Further development of the functions of the International Teaching Center and the Boards of Counselors, with special reference to the promotion of the spiritual, intellectual, and social life of the Bahá'í community;

275.9d The holding, during the first nine months of 1982, of five international conferences, in Lagos, Nigeria; Montreal, Canada; Quito, Ecuador; Dublin, Ireland; and Manila, the Philippines, this last one taking place at the midpoint of an axis, referred to by the beloved Guardian, whose poles are Japan and Australia;

275.9e Preparation of architect's plans for the first dependency of the European Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, namely, a Home for the Aged, and an increase in the number of national and local Hazíratu'l-Quds; the latter, which will be particularly in rural areas, are to be acquired or built through the efforts of the local friends;

275.9f Acquisition of six new Temple sites, five in Africa and one in

Australasia; and of five new
national endowments, four in Africa and one in the Americas;
275.9gFormation of two Publishing Trusts, one in the Ivory Coast and one in Nigeria;
275.9h A great increase in the production of Bahá'í literature in an increasing number of languages,
the ultimate aim being to enable every believer to have some portion of the Sacred Text
available in his native tongue;
275.9iCompletion of three more radio stations in South America;
275.9jGreat attention to the development and consolidation of Local Spiritual Assemblies
throughout the world;
275.9kDevelopment of Bahá'í community life with special attention to the Bahá'í education of
children and the spiritual enrichment of communities;
275.9lThe settlement of 279 pioneers in 80 countries during the first year of the second phase.

The Need for Increased Contributions to Bahá'í Funds

275.10 Liberal and increased contributions to the various Funds of the Faith will be essential if the above-mentioned tasks are to be successfully pursued. Furthermore, the now observable emergence from obscurity of our beloved Faith will impose the necessity of new undertakings involving large calls on the Funds. The growing awareness of the friends throughout the world in the past few years that the Funds of the Faith are indeed the lifeblood of its activities is a heartening augury for the future. We are confident that this awareness will increase, that more National Spiritual Assemblies will make great strides towards financial independence, that national budgets will be met, and the Bahá'í International Fund will receive an ever-increasing outpouring of contributions enabling that Fund to keep pace with the ever-increasing international needs of the Faith.

A Spiritual Service

275.11 Beloved friends, the world moves deeper into the heart of darkness as its old order is rolled up. Pursing our objectives with confidence, optimism, and an unshakeable resolve, we must never forget that our service is a spiritual one. Mankind is dying for lack of true religion and this is what we have to offer to humanity. It is the love of God, manifest in the appearance of Bahá'u'lláh, which will feed the hungry souls of the world and eventually lead the peoples out of the present morass into the orderly, uplifting, and soul-inspiring task of establishing God's Kingdom on earth.

The Universal House of Justice

276

Return of the Hand of the Cause of God
William Sears to Africa
4 March 1981
To all National Spiritual Assemblies

276.1AFRICA REJOICES RETURN HAND CAUSE WILLIAM SEARS FULFILLMENT PLEDGE MADE

RECEIPT TRAGIC NEWS ASSASSINATION HAND CAUSE ENOCH OLINGA. CONTINENT WHICH EARNED SUCH HIGH PRAISE BELOVED GUARDIAN AGAIN GRACED PRESENCE HAND. NOBLE ACTION ENRICHES RECORD HIS HISTORIC SERVICES. OFFERING ARDENT PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD GREAT NEW VICTORIES AFRICA.
Universal House of Justice
277
Execution of Two Bahá'ís in Shiraz
17 March 1981
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
277.1SORROWFUL NEWS JUST RECEIVED TWO BELIEVERS FROM ÁBÁDIH IMPRISONED SHIRAZ WERE EXECUTED MONDAY NIGHT 16 MARCH BY GOVERNMENT FIRING SQUAD SHIRAZ CHARG LIST INCLUDES USUAL FALSE IMPUTATIONS LEVELED AGAINST DEFENSELESS BELIEVERS. NAMES THESE TWO VALIANT FRIENDS MIDHÍ ANVARÍ AND HIDÁYATU'LLÁH DIHQÁNÍ ADDED LIST OTHER SELFLESS MARTYRS WHO WITH THEIR BLOOD HAVE TESTIFIED TRUTH GOD'S GLORIOUS REVELATION. OMINOUS SIGNS VISIBLE FURTHER AGGRAVATION PERILOUS SITUATION FACING BELEAGUERED PERSIAN COMMUNITY....
Universal House of Justice
278
Attendance of Bahá'ís from Rural Areas
at International Conferences
30 March 1981
To the National Spiritual Assemblies in
Africa, Asia, Australasia, South and Central America
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
278.1 The Universal House of Justice wishes to stress the importance of encouraging as many believers as possible living in rural areas to attend the International Conferences, and to this end it is requesting the National Spiritual Assemblies of Nigeria, the Philippines and Ecuador to investigate the possibilities of providing inexpensive accommodation so that more will be able to attend.
278.2 Cost of travel is another important item, and it is the hope of the Universal House of Justice that National Spiritual Assemblies can find ways to assist a number of indigenous believers to travel to the Conferences, as attendance could be considered as a part of the deepening program. National Assemblies should also start now to encourage believers to make plans to attend the Conference nearest them and to save money for their fares. The Universal House of Justice requests you to give this matter your urgent attention, and report to it the steps you are taking to implement the contents of this letter.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
279
Deployment of Pioneers and Traveling Teachers
16 April 1981
To all Continental Pioneer Committees
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
279.1 As we enter the second phase of the Seven Year Plan, the Universal House of Justice has given consideration to the vital role that Continental

Pioneer Committees can and should increasingly play in helping to fulfill the pioneer goals that have been set, and in coordinating international traveling teaching projects. We have been asked to send you the following comments.

279.2 There is no doubt that closer collaboration of the Continental Pioneer Committees with the Continental Boards of Counselors and with the National Spiritual Assemblies, both those supplying pioneers and travel teachers and those receiving them, will increase the number of pioneers effectively and expeditiously settled at their posts, and will improve the results of the labors of international traveling teachers. This collaboration should always be uppermost in the minds of each Continental Pioneer Committee, particularly its secretary, so that efforts are increasingly made to widen the scope of the relationships and to strengthen the ties which bind the Continental Pioneer Committees to the institutions which they are called upon to serve.

Pioneers

279.3 In the message of the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the world, intended to be read at the National Conventions, a call is raised for a total of 279 pioneers to settle in 80 countries. A list of these countries is attached, showing the number to be settled in each. The number of pioneers on this list is additional to those called for at the outset of the Plan. No assignment of specific quotas has been made to National Spiritual Assemblies, although it is generally expected that the National Spiritual Assemblies originally made responsible for sending pioneers to these countries will respond favorably to this new call and spontaneously feel the spiritual responsibility to fill the supplementary pioneer needs. It will be the duty of Pioneer Committees to keep a close tally of pioneers settling in the countries named by the House of Justice, and to ensure, to the extent possible, that no goals remain unfilled.

Traveling Teachers

279.4 Experience has shown that traveling teachers from abroad can be of tremendous assistance to the teaching work in the fields of proclamation, expansion, and consolidation. It is important that the best use possible be made of these friends who are sacrificing their time and resources to serve the Faith in foreign fields.

279.5 Care must also be taken that traveling teachers do not prove to be a burden on the receiving community, and a cause of problems. The two most frequently occurring problems caused by traveling teachers can, the House of Justice feels, be greatly reduced by prior advice and information provided by your Committees.

279.6 The first is the arrival in a country, in rapid succession, of foreign traveling teachers who do not speak the language. Sometimes the net result is that the time of all the best local teachers (who may well be better teachers than the visitor) is occupied by translating for the traveler, and the community, instead of being helped and stimulated by visitors, is exhausted and becomes reluctant to accept future help. This can be avoided by proper advance planning and by explaining to both the Spiritual Assemblies and to the traveling teachers themselves, that the Assemblies should not feel obliged to

provide assistance for a visitor who arrives without prior agreement, and that a teacher who arrives unannounced may well have to concentrate on doing his teaching work unaided and without burdening the local friends.

279.7 The second problem occurs most frequently in countries such as those in Africa, where there is entry by troops. In such countries it is comparatively easy to bring large numbers of new believers into the Faith, and this is such a thrilling experience that visiting teachers often tend to prefer to do this rather than help with the consolidation work. Yet it is in consolidation that traveling teachers from abroad can often be most useful to the community. The House of Justice believes that this problem can be eased by your Committees' impressing upon traveling teachers that they must adhere strictly to the guidance given to them by the teaching committees and Spiritual Assemblies on the spot, and subordinate their own wishes to the need to render their services in the fields where they are most urgently required. It should be pointed out that, especially if they are assigned to expansion work, they must remember that consolidation is an essential and inseparable element of teaching, and if they go to a remote area and enroll believers whom no one is going to be able to visit again in the near future, they may well be doing a disservice to those people and to the Faith. To give people this glorious Message and then leave them in the lurch, produces disappointment and disillusionment, so that, when it does become possible to carry out properly planned teaching in that area, the teachers may well find the people resistant to the Message. The first teacher who was careless of consolidation, instead of planting and nourishing the seeds of faith has, in fact, "inoculated" the people against the Divine Message and made subsequent teaching very much harder.

279.8 While the caveats given above should be carefully considered by the Continental Pioneer Committees, nothing should be done to dampen the zeal of the friends to arise in order to carry out the injunction of Bahá'u'lláh to move from place to place. Their desire to offer themselves as travel teachers should be encouraged by the Continental Pioneer Committees to the extent that this ties within their power, and when the friends have volunteered, they should be lovingly guided so that the maximum results are obtained from their visits.

International Conferences 1982

279.9 The Universal House of Justice has called International Conferences during the first nine months in 1982 in the following locations: Montreal, Canada; Quito, Ecuador; Dublin, Ireland; Lagos, Nigeria; and Manila, Philippines. As soon as specific dates have been set, you will be notified. It is anticipated that many friends attending these Conferences will be able to undertake travel teaching assignments in connection with their travel to and from Conferences.

279.10 The House of Justice has asked us to alert you to the opportunities, and to request you to devise ways and means of encouraging such offers and of taking advantage of them, preferably by advance planning and routing of volunteers in consultation with the National Spiritual Assemblies of the countries they will visit. You should plan to have a representative of your

Committee at the Conference nearest you to assist in the processing of pioneer offers and also in the routing of late traveling teacher offers. If it is not possible for a member of your Committee to attend, you may delegate another believer to represent you who, in such case, must be thoroughly briefed by you.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat

280
Comments on Apects of the Seven Year Plan
17 April 1981
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,

80.1 The message of the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the world, dated March 1981, must have reached you by now, and, likewise, the specific message addressed to the Bahá'ís under your jurisdiction, outlining the goals of the second phase of the Seven Year Plan. The Universal House of Justice feels it is important that we share with you now, on its behalf, the following comments on certain aspects of the Plan. Each National Spiritual Assembly should be able to determine what portion of these comments is applicable to its work in the light of the goals it has been assigned.

The Local Spiritual Assembly

280.2 As you note from statements of guidelines and goals, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on the activities of local communities. It is obvious that through the consolidation of the foundations of the Administrative Order on the local level, the national institutions of the Faith will receive support and strength in the conduct of their activities. In turn, the National Spiritual Assembly and its agencies should not only oversee the activities of the local communities, but it has the duty and privilege to coordinate the efforts and to stimulate and give direction to the spirit of enterprise and initiative of the individual friends. When a proper and balanced relationship is maintained between these two levels of Bahá'í activity, and a healthy interaction takes place between them, a foundation is laid for the community to become "spiritually welded into a unit at once dynamic and coherent."

280.3 The broad outlines of duties and functions of Local Spiritual Assemblies are set forth clearly in the instructions of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi, and these instructions have already been sent to National Assemblies in the form of compilations. Similar statements have also been made by the Universal House of Justice, and these, too, have been shared with the friends. If any National Assembly does not have these compilations at hand, it should write to the World Center at once so that copies may be sent.

Consolidation

280.4 Consolidation is as vital a part of the teaching work as expansion. It is that aspect of teaching which assists the believers to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Teachings, and fans the flame of their devotion to Bahá'u'lláh and His Cause, so that they will, of their own volition, continue the process of their spiritual development, promote the teaching work, and strengthen the functioning of their administrative

institutions. 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 expansion itself.

280.5 If a National Spiritual Assembly finds that its National Teaching Committee cannot devote sufficient attention to the work of consolidation, it should not hesitate to appoint, in addition, special committees whose tasks would be the conduct of the various activities which are essential for consolidation. Activities falling within this category include the organization of circuits of traveling teachers skilled in consolidation work; the holding of summer and winter schools, weekend institutes and conferences; the initiation and operation of tutorial schools; the dissemination of Bahá'í literature and the encouragement of its study by the friends; and the organization of special courses and institutes for Local Spiritual Assembly members.

280.6 In the courses for Local Assembly members special attention should be paid to the significance of the Assembly and the importance of attending its meetings; the functions and duties of the Assembly's officers, especially those of the secretary, upon the proper discharge of whose responsibilities the efficient functioning of the Assembly largely depends; the importance of making the Word of God easily accessible to the friends and of holding regular deepening classes where the Teachings can be studied and discussed; the vital necessity of prayer, and the value of holding gatherings for dawn prayers where and when feasible; the proper holding of Nineteen Day Feasts and the observance of Bahá'í Holy Days and anniversaries; the need to pay particular attention to the education of children; and the value of organizing social gatherings, such as picnics, encouraging the friends to associate together and with their non-Bahá'í friends in love and fragrance.

280.7 Consolidation activities promote the individual spiritual development of the friends, help to unite and strengthen Bahá'í community life, establish new social patterns for the friends, and stimulate the teaching work.

Bahá'í Literature

280.8 The question of making the Sacred Texts available to the friends is so important that the House of Justice commissioned a special committee a year or so ago to prepare three compilations from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. These compilations have already been sent to all National Spiritual Assemblies for publication in vernacular languages.

280.9 Recently, the House of Justice instructed that a compilation in the form of a small booklet be prepared for use by the friends, especially in areas where literature is not easily available in print. A copy of this compilation, which consists of basic prayers and passages from the Writings, will soon be sent to you. It would be highly desirable for every believer to have easy access to at least a compilation of this type in a language he can understand, and it is sincerely hoped that by the reading of the Sacred Texts and the exposure of the believer's soul to their influence, his spiritual growth will be stimulated. He will thereby not only increase his own spiritual joy and understanding, but also contribute to the consolidation of the entire

community.

The Bahá'í Family

280.10 Another aspect of Bahá'í life emphasized in the provisions of the Seven Year Plan is the development of the Bahá'í family life. If the believer is the only one of his family who has embraced the Faith, it is his duty to endeavor to lead as many other family members as possible to the light of divine guidance. As soon as a Bahá'í family unit emerges, the members should feel responsible for making the collective life of the family a spiritual reality, animated by divine love and inspired by the ennobling principles of the Faith. To achieve this purpose, the reading of the Sacred Writings and prayers should ideally become a daily family activity. As far as the teaching work is concerned, just as individuals are called upon to adopt teaching goals, the family itself could adopt its own goals. In this way the friends could make of their families strong healthy units, bright candles for the diffusion of the light of the Kingdom, and powerful centers to attract the heavenly confirmations.

Recognition of the Faith

280.11 In the goals assigned to National Spiritual Assemblies, no specific reference has been made to goals for the recognition of the Bahá'í marriage certificate and of Bahá'í Holy Days, for the incorporation of Local Spiritual Assemblies, or for the obtaining of exemptions from state and municipal taxes on Bahá'í properties. Conditions in every country differ, and it is the duty of every National Spiritual Assembly to consider carefullythe means whereby it can continually increase the degree of recognition officially accorded to Bahá'í institutions. It is important that any accomplishments in this vital area be reported to the World Center when National Spiritual Assemblies submit their semi-annual statistical reports.

280.12 The process of obtaining added recognition for the Faith can be stimulated if National Assemblies give adequate attention in their work to the ever-present need to continually foster cordial relations with government officials. Many of these officials have but a scanty and sometimes faulty knowledge of the Faith, and there is no doubt that when they become familiar with our aims and tenets and are assured of their beneficent effect on their society, they will be well-disposed to accord the Faith and its institutions at least such rights and privileges as are given to other religious organizations in the country.

Mass Media

280.13 The importance of mass media to Bahá'í proclamation has risen sharply in past years, and acutely so since the crisis in Iran. Mass media, and particularly radio, have proven to be potent instruments for the deepening of the friends and the promotion of the teaching work in mass teaching areas. Thus in the second phase of the Plan, 92 National Spiritual Assemblies have been given goals calling for increased use of the mass media. Countries not included in the list are those where the use of mass media for Bahá'í purposes is not permitted, or where the friends are already so actively engaged in such projects that they did not need the inclusion of such a goal in their

assignments.
280.14 It is important for National Spiritual Assemblies generally to be aware that the use of mass media is becoming international in scope and that there is a need for National Spiritual Assemblies to share materials, methods, and experiences, and even personnel, in order to achieve best results.
280.15 In order to facilitate this exchange of information about the promotion of the Bahá'í work through radio and television, as well as about the availability of audio-visual materials, the Universal House of Justice, as it has been announced already, has established the International Bahá'í Audio-Visual Center (IBAVC) now in Toronto, Canada. This Center can be called upon by National Spiritual Assemblies for program materials and for advice on personnel training.
280.16 Every National Spiritual Assembly engaged in the teaching work in rural areas, where means of communication are scarce, is strongly advised to consider the possibility of applying for radio time on the local radio station, provided the cost is not too high. It may be possible to obtain such time in certain areas free of charge, especially when such a privilege is given to other groups or religions, or when the radio station is anxious to fill its time with worthwhile and helpful programs.
280.17 The House of Justice feels that in countries where the doors of publicity are open to the friends, every effort should be made to make the most of the attention being drawn to the Faith by the present situation, and exploit fully the potential for enlisting large numbers under the banner of the Cause.
Newsletters
280.18 The dissemination of Bahá'í news, local, national, and international, should be pursued with added vigor. Bahá'í newsletters should be issued regularly to the friends, however great the sacrifice, for news of Bahá'í activities in other communities has always been a source of encouragement and has given the friends a sense of belonging to a vital, growing, and united worldwide Bahá'í family.
280.19 In some areas, it may be found that more than one newsletter is necessary in order to reach all the friends with news about the work of the Faith. According to reports received at the World Center, a number of National Assemblies, in addition to issuing a national news bulletin, have made provisions for their Teaching Committees to issue regional or district newsletters in languages understood by the friends. Indeed, many a Local Spiritual Assembly has its own newsletter to ensure that information about developments of the Cause can reach every believer.
Marriages, Births, Burials
280.20 Local Spiritual Assemblies, which are embryonic Local Houses of Justice, should develop as rallying centers of the community. They must concern themselves not only with teaching the Faith, with the development of the Bahá'í way of life and with the proper organization of the Bahá'í activities of their communities, but also with those crucial events which profoundly affect the life of all human beings: birth, marriage, and death. When a Bahá'í couple has a child it is a matter of joy to the whole local community as well as to the couple, and each Local Spiritual Assembly should be

encouraged to keep a register of such births, issuing a birth certificate to the parents. Such a practice will foster the consolidation of the community and of the Assembly itself. Even if only one of the parents is a Bahá'í, the Assembly could register the birth of the child, and upon application of the Bahá'í parent, issue the certificate.

280.21 The carrying out of the Bahá'í marriage laws, as given to the friends throughout the world, is a vital obligation of every believer who wishes to marry, and it is an important duty of every Local Spiritual Assembly to ensure that these laws are known to, and obeyed by, the believers within their jurisdiction, whether or not the Bahá'í marriage ceremony is recognized by civil law. Each Assembly, therefore, must conscientiously carry out its responsibilities in connection with the holding of Bahá'í marriage ceremonies, the recording of Bahá'í marriages in a register kept for this purpose, and the issuing of Bahá'í marriage certificates.

280.22 The burial of the dead is an occasion of great solemnity and importance, and while the conduct of the funeral service and the arrangements for the interment may be left to the relatives of the deceased, the Local Spiritual Assembly has the responsibility for educating the believers in the essential requirements of the Bahá'í law of burial as at present applied, and in courteously and tactfully drawing these requirements to the attention of the relatives if there is any indication that they may fail to observe them. These requirements are: that the body not be cremated; that it not be transported more than an hour's journey from the place of death to the place of burial; that the Prayer for the Dead be recited if the deceased is a Bahá'í of fifteen years of age or more; and that the funeral be carried out in a simple and dignified manner that would be a credit to the community.

280.23 In some parts of the world, if Local Spiritual Assemblies fail to carry out these sacred duties, some believers might gradually drift away from the Faith and even pay dues to churches or other religious organizations to ensure that, when they require to register the birth of a child, to solemnize a marriage or to have a funeral service, there will be a religious institution ready to perform the necessary services. Conversely, when Local Assemblies have arisen to carry out these responsibilities, the believers have acquired a sense of security and solidarity, and have become confident that in such matters they can rely upon the agencies of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

Education of Children

280.24 The House of Justice has noted with deep gratification the increased number of Local Spiritual Assemblies which are organizing Bahá'í classes for children. In order to make these classes effective, it is important to have a graduated system of lesson plans suited to different age groups. Usually, such material is prepared by each National Spiritual Assembly in the manner suited to its conditions. However, to assist National Assemblies in benefiting from the fruits of the labors of Bahá'ís in other countries, we have been asked to inform you that the National Spiritual Assemblies of Colombia, India, Malaysia, and the United States have reported the availability of literature prepared by them for this purpose. You should feel free to

correspond with these National Spiritual Assemblies.

280.25 Regarding tutorial schools, some National Assemblies engaged in this activity have reported excellent results, which have helped both in the expansion work and in the consolidation of the Faith. A report on this type of activity has recently been received at the World Center, and a digest of the report is attached for the study of those National Assemblies who have been assigned this goal.

Pioneers

280.26 Certain National Spiritual Assemblies have been assigned the goal of raising self-supporting homefront pioneers. This activity has great potential for the spread and consolidation of the Faith, and it is the hope of the House of Justice that this type of service will be encouraged in all national communities, including those which have not been given this goal.

280.27 In addition to homefront pioneers, there is a need for 279 pioneers to settle in 80 countries and islands of the world. A list of these pioneer needs is attached, and it is hoped that the required number of dedicated souls will arise to fill the posts that are in need of pioneer support. It is suggested that National Assemblies keep in close touch with the Continental Pioneer Committees, who will be in a position to keep National Assemblies informed of progress towards these goals.

Continental Pioneer Committees

280.28 Continental Pioneer Committees working in close collaboration with National Spiritual Assemblies are assuming greater importance as the work of the Faith unfolds on every continent. The House of Justice is writing to all Continental Pioneer Committees, outlining their added responsibilities in relation both to the newly formed Continental Boards of Counselors and the National Spiritual Assemblies. It is the hope of the House of Justice that the services of these important Continental Committees will in the future be made available to the friends with ever-greater effectiveness.

280.29 The Universal House of Justice has asked us to assure you of its prayers for the blessings of Bahá'u'lláh to confirm your efforts as you face the next three years with optimism and confidence, and respond to the challenging opportunities ahead with determination and vigor.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

Bahá'í Tutorial Schools: An Example

(Summarized from a report received concerning the functioning of such schools in a particular country)

Special Conditions

280.30 The Bahá'í tutorial schools in this country are called "Bahá'í Educational Centers" to prevent confusion with the schools supported by the State and managed by the Department of National Education. They were established in part in response to the goal assigned during the last Plan, to deepen at least one person in each Bahá'í locality to assist in consolidating the community and the Local Spiritual Assemblies. This need was felt particularly because in many of the villages, Bahá'í activities take place only during visits from pioneers or other visitors from the large cities.

Definition

280.31 “The Bahá’í Educational Center is a place where Bahá’í and non-Bahá’í children and adults receive, under the direction of their Local Spiritual Assemblies, first a spiritual education, then a basic literacy education, and finally a technical education such as training in crafts. This is also a center [for] numerous other social activities for youth and women. The purpose is to obtain quasi-universal participation of the whole village.”

Relationship to Government

280.32 The Centers “are allowed to function on the provincial level by the [Government] Department of Social Affairs, which was seeking every possible means to provide literacy education for the masses. The authorities of that Department are so happy with the development of these Educational Centers which cost them nothing that they gave permission to award certificates of participation in these courses, signed, on the one hand, bythemselves and, on the other hand, by the Local Spiritual Assembly concerned, which acts as the principal. For their part, the chiefs of villages also stated that when a Local Spiritual Assembly wants an Educational Center, they will themselves erect huts in which classes may be held and encourage all the children to attend day classes and adults evening classes.” The chiefs also witness the signing of the contract between the volunteer teachers (see below) and the Local Spiritual Assembly.

Teachers

280.33 The teachers are Bahá’í volunteers, “often youth almost illiterate themselves who, after some time of unemployment in large cities, return disheartened to their native village but they become important when they are engaged in Educational Centers.” These teachers sign an official contract with the Local Assembly before the chief of the civil community, who represents the tribe, stating that they are volunteers and will not demand any salary later on. “The teacher is recompensed by the Local Spiritual Assembly, which either provides labor to raise crops for him, provides him with food through pupils' contributions, or gives him financial assistance according to each particular case.”

280.34 In addition, local villagers may offer to teach practical subjects in which they are knowledgeable (e.g., weaving of baskets or mats, canoe building, fishing, pottery, “cure by medicinal plants”, etc.). (See below, “Program”)

Books and Materials

280.35 A committee assists the Local Assemblies in the preparation of programs and teaching materials. Books and materials are now in preparation, and are being adapted to the “low instructional level of the teachers. This material will permit them to deepen themselves so that they may maintain a higher level than their pupils.” Basic books for the teacher's use and such materials as chalk are bought by the Local Spiritual Assembly; materials for each pupil are bought by the parents at a wholesale price offered by the committee.

Registration and Fees

280.36 Fees are set by each Local Spiritual Assembly. At the time of registration, which may take place at 3-month, 6-month or yearly intervals

according to the decision of the Local Assembly, a registration card is issued to each pupil.

Program

280.37 The program includes three parts: a “spiritual part which includes the teachings and laws, history of the Faith, and Bahá’í administration, all adapted to the level of each class;” a program which “includes basic literacy and general knowledge. This level will develop into post-literacy and permanent education in order to attain more advanced levels of evening classes, high school and even university.” The third part “is the apprenticeship in crafts or other trades useful in the development of the village. Any villager can offer to teach crafts or trades in which he is knowledgeable: for instance, weaving of baskets and mats ... fishing, cure by medicinal plants, pottery, embroidery, etc. ...”

280.38 The schedule of courses is determined by the Local Spiritual Assembly, which takes into account harvest and fishing seasons, Nineteen Day Feasts and Bahá’í Holy Days, national holidays, and the like.

280.39 The duration of the program is not yet determined, but the first literacy phase is expected to last approximately two years, to be followed by “post-literacy and permanent education, and even to university.”

Results to Date

280.40Effects already seen in various Local Assembly areas include the following:

The Assemblies are obliged to meet, and are thus strengthened.

Educational activities for children are established.

Youth activities, “such as playgrounds, choirs, lectures, homefront pioneers, team teaching and others,” are organized.

Women's activities, “such as embroidery, sewing, hygiene, study of the importance of children's education, etc.,” are organized.

“A more universal participation of the whole village in the spiritual activities, such as prayers, Nineteen Day Feast, contribution to the fund, teaching, etc.”

“Increase and expansion” in the number of believers.

“Great prestige in the eyes of the government for the Bahá’í education.”

Proposals for Future Developments

280.41 1. Recording of prayers, Holy Writings, and songs on tapes, to be used as deepening material;

Recording on a local basis by the believers, with duplication of tapes for use by other Educational Centers;

Radio broadcasts addressed directly to Bahá’í Educational Centers, either through the establishment of a radio station or through rental of time on existing stations;

Creation of an audiovisual center able to adapt material to the needs of the development of the Educational Centers;

A regional bulletin dealing with the needs of the “Post-literacy” students;

Publication of a book on the Messengers of God in the major languages of the country, intended for the Educational Center but which could then also be sold

to “lay schools” for countrywide distribution;
Construction of durable buildings for the Educational Centers;
A mobile institute for the training of teachers.
281
Execution of Three Bahá’ís in Shiraz
4 May 1981
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
281.1WITH SADDENED HEARTS ANNOUNCE MARTYRDOM THREE MORE HEROES CRADLE FAITH SURRENDERED LIVES AS THEIR LAST OFFERING SACRED THRESHOLD. YADU’LLÁH VAHDAT, IHSÁNU’LLÁH MIHDÍZÁDIH, SATTÁR KHUSHKHÚ, ALL THREE MEMBERS BAHÁ’Í INSTITUTIONS, WERE EXECUTED IN SHIRAZ BY FIRING SQUAD ON NIGHT 29 APRIL BY ORDER ISLAMIC REVOLUTIONARY COURT SHIRAZ AND WITH APPROVAL HIGH COUR JUSTICE TEHRAN. VERDICT SHIRAZ COURT PUBLISHED ALL MAJOR NEWSPAPERS IRAN SPECIFICALLY MENTIONS USUAL FALSE CHARGES GIVING DISTORTED IMAGE ACTIVITIES BAHÁ’ÍS MISREPRESENTING THEM AS ZIONISTS IMPERIALIST AGENTS PROMOTERS GODLESSNESS ENEMIES ISLAM. ...
281.2 UNDAUNTED BY THIS FRESH OUTBREAK ANIMOSITY AGAINST THEM STAUNCH FRIENDS CRADLE FAITH PREPARING THEMSELVES WITH JOY UNFOLDMENT THEIR GLORIOUS DESTINY, CONFIDENT PRECIOUS LIVES THEY ARE OFFERING ALTAR SACRIFICE WILL GALVANIZE BELIEVERS EVERY LAND INSPIRE THEM REDOUBLE THEIR DEVOTED EXERTIONS I SERVITUDE BELOVED FAITH.
281.3 SUMMON FRIENDS EVERY COUNTRY HOLD SPECIAL PRAYERS DURING NIGHT AND DAY OF ASCENSION BAHÁ’U’LLÁH 29 MAY BESEECHING DIVINE PROTECTION BELEAGUERED FRIENDS IRAN.
Universal House of Justice
282
Imminent Obliteration of the Site of the
House of the Báb
26 May 1981
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
282.1PROFOUNDLY DISTRESSED OMINOUS NEWS IMMINENT OBLITERATION SITE BLESSED HOUSE BÁB BY AUTHORITIES SHIRAZ IN IMPLEMENTATION PLANS DRAWN UP SEVERAL MONTHS AND BUILD ROAD AND PUBLIC SQUARE. OCCUPANTS ADJACENT HOUSES MOST OF WHICH HAD BEEN ACQUIRED BY BAHÁ’Í COMMUNITY AS PROTECTION HOLY HOUSE NOW ORDERED VACATE HOUSES PRELIMINARY COMMENCEMENT PROJECT THIS WEEK. RECALL WH BÁB'S HOUSE WAS CONFISCATED GOVERNMENT ALLEGED STEP TAKEN AS PROTECTION HOLY PLACE, WHEN HOUSE DESTROYED GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED ACT TO UNRULY M BUT THIS DEVELOPMENT NOW TOTALLY BELIES SUCH ALLEGATIONS SHOWS OFFICIAL DELIBERATE SYSTEMATIC DESIGN ERADICATION BAHÁ’Í HOLY PLACES AFTER THEIR CONFISCATION, IN ADDITION TO HARASSMENT PRESSURE ON INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS RECANT THEIR FAITH ON PAIN LOSING JOBS PENSIONS DEPRIVATION CIVIL RIGHTS IMPRISONMENT EXECUTION ASSASSINATION....
The Universal House of Justice
283
Establishment of European Branch Office of
Bahá’í International Community
26 May 1981

To the European National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
283.1 Further to the letter sent to you on behalf of the Universal House of Justice on 28 December 1980 seeking your views on the proposal to establish in Europe a branch office of the Bahá'í International Community, we are now instructed to tell you that the House of Justice has decided to establish the office now, with its address in Geneva. Mr. Giovanni Ballerio has been appointed full-time representative of the Bahá'í International Community in Europe, and will be moving, with his family, to Geneva or its vicinity. When the address is known and the office is operating an announcement will be made to the Bahá'í world.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat

284
Bahá'í International Fund—Recent Victories and Immediate Challenges
8 June 1981
To the Bahá'ís of the World
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
284.1 At the outset of the Seven Year Plan, faced with tremendous tasks to be accomplished by the Bahá'í world, and confronted by the seemingly crippling financial losses that resulted from the savage onslaught of inveterate enemies upon the valiant believers in the Cradle of the Faith, the Universal House of Justice turned with fervent hope to the believers in the rest of the world, calling upon them to arise and champion the cause of their persecuted brethren in the international arena and, through self-sacrifice and the exercise of wisestewardship of the funds of the Faith, to enable its work to go forward unhindered by the sudden inability of the believers in Iran to continue their major role in providing the lifeblood of the Cause. In both fields, these past two years have witnessed astonishing victories.
284.2 The manner in which the case of the persecuted Faith of Bahá'u'lláh has been blazoned in the media, conveying its message to millions of souls who had scarcely if at all heard of it before; and the degree to which world authorities have risen to plead its case and call for its vindication, have both been witnessed with eager and uplifted hearts by Bahá'ís in all lands. Now the Universal House of Justice has instructed us to inform you that in supporting the Bahá'í International Fund the self-sacrificing followers of the Blessed Beauty have won similar victories.
284.3 The manifold acts of devotion and service that have been so distinctive a mark of progress in the opening phase of the Seven Year Plan have not only laid a firm foundation for the development of the institutions of the Faith worldwide, but have also been manifested in an outpouring of financial substance that has made possible the setting of goals for the second phase of the Plan that will enhance the prestige of our beloved Faith and hasten the day of its complete emergence from obscurity. The financial needs of the first phase of the Plan have been fully met. The teaching work has continued with unabated zeal. The Seat of the Universal House of Justice is now nearing

completion and the funds required for that tremendous task are in hand. The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Indian subcontinent is rising and the work on that for Samoa will shortly begin.

284.4 Now the Universal House of Justice turns with loving confidence to those beloved ones of God who have responded with such zeal to fulfill the commitments that it has been guided to undertake, and has asked us to lay before you the needs of the year which has just begun.

284.5 Although the task of raising the Seat of the Universal House of Justice on God's Holy Mountain is now well-nigh behind us, the work on the two Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs has acquired additional urgency. The unstable condition of the world and rapidly rising prices make it essential to complete these two enterprises at the earliest possible date. Thus, major expenditures which it had been hoped could be spread over a number of years must be met within the next twelve months. The public attention drawn to the Faith by the Iranian situation and the many valuable friendships and contacts that have been made with those in authority demand, if the ground now gained is not to be rapidly lost, expansion and intensification of the activities of the representatives of the Bahá'í International Community with the United Nations and its specialized agencies, as well as with other international bodies such as the Parliament of Europe. The Universal House of Justice has therefore taken the decision to establish an office of the Bahá'í International Community at Geneva, with a full-time representative. It has also become necessary to allocate large sums to the provision of a wider range of Bahá'í literature in many languages and to develop the Bahá'í use of radio.

284.6 The Universal House of Justice has estimated that to meet all these urgent goals as well as carrying on the current work of the Faith during the year 1981/82, an increase of 50% over the amount of contributions for the year just past will be required. It therefore asks every believer and every community to consider prayerfully the degree to which they can take part in this mighty effort, and to strain every sinew to ensure that the tasks placed by an omniscient and all-wise Ordainer on the shoulders of His privileged lovers will be worthily and speedily performed.

284.7 The House of Justice assures you all of its loving, fervent prayers in the Holy Shrines for your guidance and assistance.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

285

Execution of Seven Members
of the Spiritual Assembly of Hamadan

15 June 1981

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

285.1WITH STRICKEN HEARTS SHARE NEWS SEVEN MEMBERS LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY HAMADAN MARTYRED AFTER BEING TORTURED. EXECUTIONS CARRIED OUT DAWN 14 JUNE WITH APPROVAL SUPREME JUDICIAL COUNCIL ON USUAL TRUMPED-UP CHARGES. THIS FRESH BLOW ANOTHER STEP IN PERSECUTION SCHEME TRADITIONAL ADVERSARIES UPROOT FAITH I LAND ITS BIRTH. ...

285.2NAMES OF SEVEN MARTYRS ARE AS FOLLOWS: HUSAYN MUTLAQ, MUHAMMAD-BÁQIR

(SUHAYL) HABÍBÍ, MUHAMMAD (SUHRÁB) HABÍBÍ, DR. NÁSIR VAFÁ'Í,
DR. FÍRÚZ NA'ÍMÍ, HUSAYN KHÁNDIL, AND TARÁZU'LLÁH KHUZAYN....
Universal House of Justice
286
Execution of Three Bahá'ís in Tehran
23 June 1981
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
286.1TRAGIC NEWS JUST RECEIVED THREE MORE PROMINENT PERSIAN BAHÁ'ÍS, BUZURG
'ALAVÍYÁN, HÁSHIM FARNÚSH AND FARHANG MAVADDAT EXECUTED TEHRAN YESTERDAY.
CHARGES COMPLETELY MISREPRESENT BAHÁ'Í SERVICES AS POLITICALLY MOTIVATED
ACTIVITIES. ... OFFERING PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES BLESSED BEAUTY MAY CONFIRM ALL
EFFORTS ALLEVIATE SUFFERINGS OPPRESSED INNOCENT COMMUNITY.
Universal House of Justice
287
Execution of Four Bahá'ís in Iran
24 June 1981
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
287.1WITH HEARTS BURNING WITH ANGUISH SHARE NEWS SOULS ANOTHER FOUR
DISTINGUISHED BELIEVERS NOW GATHERED ABHÁ KINGDOM ON BEING MARTYRED YESTERDA
BY FIRING SQUAD: DR. MASÍH FARHANGÍ MEMBER BOARD COUNSELORS ASIA,
BADÍ'U'LLÁH FARÍD, YADU'LLÁH PÚSTCHÍ, VARQÁ TIBYÁNÍYÁN....
Universal House of Justice
288
Announcement of Representatives to the
International Conferences
20 July 1981
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
288.1 It is with great pleasure we announce that the following Hands of the
Cause of God have been named as our representatives to the International
Conferences:
Amatu'l-Bahá Montreal, Canada2–5 September 1982
Rúhíyyih Khánum
Ugo GiacheryManila, Philippines7–9 May 1982
Paul HaneyQuito, Ecuador6–8 August 1982
William SearsLagos, Nigeria19–22 August 1982
Collis FeatherstoneDublin, Ireland25–27 June 1982
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice
289
Tests of Bahá'í Community Life—
A Balanced Perspective
22 July 1981
To an individual Bahá'í
Dear Bahá'í Friend,
289.1 The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 6 March
1981 and has instructed us to send you the following comments on the issues you

have raised.

289.2 The House of Justice feels that your questions are very perceptive and that, in many instances, you have, yourself, provided the answers. As "Abdu'l-Bahá so often points out, the Manifestation of God is a Divine Educator. He attracts the hearts of men, pours out His spirit upon those who respond to Him, instructs them in the right way of life, uses them to carry forward the development of human society, and disciplines them by His law. We Bahá'ís, we who have answered His call, bear the responsibility of carrying forward His work among mankind, and in spite of our innumerable failings His plan is irresistibly progressing. The great tragedy of mankind at this time is the failure of the vast majority of human beings to heed the Divine Call, and this is in large part occasioned by the failure of most of those who have believed to live up to the high standard that Bahá'u'lláh has set. This is the condition in which we must work in our service to mankind, turning a sin-covering eye to the faults of others, and striving in our own inmost selves to purify our lives in accordance with the divine Teachings.

Differentiating the Roles of Spiritual Assemblies and Individuals

289.3 The Day of God is a Day of joy, but also a Day of Judgement. Every Man is guided both by the Love of God and by the Fear of God. In their relationships with one another individual believers should be loving and forgiving, overlooking one another's faults for the sake of God, but the Spiritual Assemblies are the upholders of the law of God. They are embryonic Houses of Justice. The education of a child requires both love and discipline; so also does the education of believers and the education of a community. One of the failings of Bahá'ís, however, is to confuse these two roles, individuals behaving like little Spiritual Assemblies, and Spiritual Assemblies forgetting that they must exercise justice.

Deepening—Developing a Spiritual Attitude

289.4 Great love and patience are needed towards new believers, especially those who have come from very backgrounds, but ultimately they too have to learn the responsibilities they have taken upon themselves by accepting Bahá'u'lláh and must uphold the principles that Bahá'u'lláh has revealed. If they do not do so, how can the condition of mankind be improved? Some people accept the Faith, not as a response to the divine Summons to God's service, but as a way to find love and happiness and companionship and understanding for themselves. At the beginning this is only natural, for people are sorely in need of such spiritual strengths, but if such people do not soon progress to the point where they are more concerned about what they can do for God and His Cause than what it can do for them, they will surely become disillusioned and drift away. Arousing in the hearts of the friends the enthusiasm and spirit of selfless service that will carry them over this transition is one of the most fundamental aspects of deepening and consolidation. Deepening is far more a matter of developing a spiritual attitude, devotion and selflessness than it is of acquiring information, although this, of course, is also important.

289.5 In a letter to an individual Bahá'í, dated 5 April 1956, the beloved Guardian's secretary wrote on his behalf:

289.5aHe was very sorry to hear that you have had so many tests in your Bahá'í life. There is no doubt that many of them are due to our own nature. In other words, if we are very sensitive, or if we are in some way brought up in a different environment from the Bahá'ís amongst whom we live, we naturally see things differently and may feel them more acutely; and the other side of it is that the imperfections of our fellow-Bahá'ís can be a great trial to us.
289.5bWe must always remember that in the cesspool of materialism, which is what modern civilization has to a certain extent become, Bahá'ís—that is some of them—are still to a certain extent affected by the society from which they have sprung. In other words, they have recognized the Manifestation of God, but they have not been believers long enough, or perhaps tried hard enough, to become "a new creation."
289.5cAll we can do in such cases is to do our duty; and the Guardian feels very strongly that your duty is towards Bahá'u'lláh and the Faith you love so dearly; and certainly is not to take the weaker course and sever yourself from the Bahá'í Community.
289.5dHe feels that, if you close your eyes to the failings of others, and fix your love and prayers upon Bahá'u'lláh, you will have the strength to weather this storm, and will be much better for it in the end, spiritually. Although you suffer, you will gain a maturity that will enable you to be of greater help to both your fellow-Bahá'ís and your children.

Spiritual Assembly Intervention—Loving and Patient

289.6 The ideal of human life is described again and again and in multitudes of ways in the Writings. These aspects of the Teachings are discussed in Teaching Institutes and Summer Schools and elaborated in many books. Then, in general, it is left to the individual believer, as a responsibility between himself and God, to follow these Teachings. It is not the business either of the believers or of the Spiritual Assemblies to pry into the lives of individual friends to ascertain the degree to which they are living up to the standards of the Cause. Only if misbehavior becomes blatant and flagrant does it become a matter for action, and then it is a matter for action by the Assembly and not by individuals. Even then the Assembly must be loving and patient, and exhort the believer to follow the Path of the Cause, but, if he persists in openly and flagrantly flouting Bahá'í law, the Assembly has no alternative to ultimately depriving him of his voting rights.

The Relationship between Supporting an Assembly and its Maturation

289.7 Applying these principles requires mature understanding and judgement, and great love for one's fellowmen. It is a weighty responsibility which rests upon the shoulders of the members of Spiritual Assemblies. Undoubtedly errors are made and will continue to be made, but the more the friends are united and wholeheartedly support their Assemblies, the sooner will these mature in their decisions and actions, outgrow their mistakes, and become strong magnets for the Faith.

289.8 Briefly, then, one can say that the Bahá'ís, while in the process of improving their own lives, are engaged in attracting their fellowmen to the Love of God, educating them through the Teachings of God, introducing them to

the vivifying discipline of the Law of God, and enlisting them as fellow-warriors in the Army of God. The difficulties that you describe are the result of the problem of properly balancing these many aspects of following the Bahá'í Cause and of training new believers from the point of acceptance of the Message to being champions of the Faith.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

290

Execution of Two Bahá'ís in Káshmar

27 July 1981

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

290.1GRIEVED ANNOUNCE TWO MORE ACTIVE DEDICATED SUPPORTERS FAITH BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IRAN KAMÁLI'D-DÍN BAKHTÁVAR AND NI'MATU'LLÁH KÁTIBPÚR-SHAHÍDÍ MARTYRED BY FIRING SQUAD IN KÁSHMAR, KHURÁSÁN PROVINCE CHARGED WITH TOTALLY FALSE ACCUSATIONS INVOLVEMENT POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. IRANIAN BAHÁ'ÍS SPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS FACED WITH FRESH WAVE ARRESTS AND CONFISCATION PERSONAL PROPERTIES. AROUND ISFAHÁN ALSO KHURÁSÁN KÁSHÁN IN NUMBER TOWNS VILLAGES SEVERAL HUNDRED BAHÁ'ÍS FORCED FLEE THEIR HOMES TAKING REFUGE IN NEARBY LARGER TOWNS. SUCH RUTHLESS ATTACKS REMAIN UNCHECKED ATTEMPTS TERRORIZE BAHÁ'ÍS INTENSIFIED. MORE INNOCENT LIVES AT STAKE....

Universal House of Justice

291

Message to First National Bahá'í Women's Conference, United Kingdom

27 July 1981

To the First Women's Conference, United Kingdom

291.1KINDLY CONVEY PARTICIPANTS FIRST NATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE LOVING CONGRATULATIONS SUCCESS ASSURANCE PRAYERS BOUNTIFUL CONFIRMATIONS ALL EFFORT BAHÁ'Í WOMEN MAKE NOBLE CONTRIBUTION PROMOTION SPIRITUAL LIFE COMMUNITY.

The Universal House of Justice

292

Execution of Auxiliary Board Member and Seven Assembly Members in Tabríz; Abduction of Two Teenage Girls

30 July 1981

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

292.1WITH HEAVY-LADEN HEARTS ANNOUNCE NEWS JUST RECEIVED NINE HEROIC FRIENDS EXECUTED TABRÍZ BY FIRING SQUAD ONE OF WHOM AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBER AND SEVEN MEMBERS LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY:

MASRÚR DAKHÍLÍ

HUSAYN ASADU'LLÁHZÁDIH

ALLÁH-VIRDÍ MÍTHÁQÍ

MANÚCHIHR KHÁDÍ'Í

'ABDU'L-'ALÍ ASADYÁRÍ

ISMÁ'ÍL ZIHTÁB

PARVÍZ FÍRÚZÍ

MIHDÍ BÁHIRÍ

HABÍBU'LLÁH TAHQÍQÍ
292.2TWO TEENAGE GIRL STUDENTS ... ABDUCTED FROM SCHOOL BY TEACHERS IN RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION. PARENTS UNABLE DETERMINE FATE DISAPPEARED CHILDREN. TEACHERS CLAIM GIRLS CONVERTED ISLAM REFUSE MEET BAHÁ'Í PARENTS. LOCAL AUTHORITIES UNCOOPERATIVE.
292.3GRIEVED AT RUTHLESSNESS RAPIDITY WITH WHICH PRECIOUS LIVES DISTINGUISHED VIRTUOUS MEMBERS COMMUNITY BEING SNUFFED OUT, THEIR HONOR VIOLATED, THEIR HOM POSSESSIONS PLUNDERED. WE PRAY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH BEHALF ENTIRE BAHÁ'Í WORLD ATTAIN GREATER CAPACITY SERENELY BEAR WEIGHT ORDEALS, WITNESS EARLY DELIVERANCE HIS PERSECUTED LOVERS CRADLE FAITH FROM SHACKLES REPRESSION BIGOTRY, AS PROMISED HIS SACRED WRITINGS.
Universal House of Justice
293
A New Phase of Persecution in Iran
11 August 1981
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
293.1PERSECUTION BAHÁ'ÍS IRAN GAINING MOMENTUM ENTERING NEW PHASE: IN YAZD A FEW DAYS AGO GOVERNMENT FROZE ALL ASSETS 117 BELIEVERS. ON 8 AUGUST ANNOUNCEMENT ON LOCAL RADIO SUMMONED HEADS 150 PROMINENT BAHÁ'Í FAMILIES TO REPORT WITHIN ONE WEEK TO REVOLUTIONARY AUTHORITIES. IN ABSENTIA DECREES TO BE ISSUED RESPECT ANY NAMED BELIEVER WHO FAILS PRESENT HIMSELF BY 15 AUGUST. AMONG NAMES ARE FEW WHO PASSED AWAY, CONFIRMING DETERMINATION AUTHORITIES PERSECUTE BAHÁ'ÍS PURELY FOR THEIR BELIEF, NOT BECAUSE OF ANY ALLEGED CRIME. ONE OF THOSE NAMED WAS ARRESTED AS HE WAS PROCEEDING FOR NECESSARY TEMPORARY JOURNEY OUTSIDE YAZD. ACTIONS TAKEN FORESHADOW PLAN AUTHORITIES FORCE BAHÁ'ÍS RECANT THEIR FAITH PURELY FOR THEIR FAITH ON PAIN CONFISCATION ALL THEIR PROPERTIES, OTHER DIRE CONSEQUENCES. ...
293.2FURTHER REPORT JUST RECEIVED INDICATES IN MANSHÁD VILLAGE NEAR YAZD GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL FROM YAZD ACCOMPANIED REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS HAS PEREMPT SEIZED FURNITURE CROPS LIVESTOCK LOCAL BELIEVERS.
293.3FOLLOWING DETAILS ADDITIONAL PERSECUTION OTHER PROVINCES NOW IN HAND:
IN MASJID SULAYMÁN AUTHORITIES HAVE INSTRUCTED BANKS SUBMIT LIST ALL CHECKING AND DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS BAHÁ'ÍS.
IN NAYSHÁBÚR WHERE TWO BELIEVERS WERE RECENTLY MARTYRED MOB HAD DESTROYED WALL BAHÁ'Í CEMETERY. AUTHORITIES NOW CLAIM TWO MILLION RIALS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY TO RESTORE WALL.
IN HIMMATÁBÁD NEAR ABÁDIH WIVES OF BELIEVERS WHO HAD FLED FROM THEIR HOMES HAVE BEEN GIVEN NOTICE CALL THEIR HUSBANDS. WIVES THREATENED GRAVE REPERCUSSIONS IF HUSBANDS FAIL PRESENT THEMSELVES....
Universal House of Justice
294
Release of a Compilation on the Assistance of God
24 August 1981
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
294.1 The Universal House of Justice commissioned the Research Department to compile texts which convey the assurance that the assistance of God will

surround and confirm the efforts of the friends when they arise to deliver His divine message and teach His Cause. This compilation is now ready, and a copy is attached. The Universal House of Justice leaves it to your discretion to determine how best the contents of this compilation or other texts on this subject should be shared with the friends.

294.2 It is the conviction of the House of Justice that the powers of heaven and earth will, as repeatedly asserted in the attached extracts, mysteriously and unfailingly assist all those who will arise with love, dedication, and trust in their hearts to teach the Cause, to promote the Word of God, to deliver its healing message to receptive souls, and to serve its vital interests.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat

295
Release of a Compilation of Prayers and Passages
from the Bahá'í Writings
16 September 1981
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,

295.1 You will recall that in its letters outlining goals of successive Teaching Plans for the expansion and consolidation of the Faith, the Universal House of Justice has repeatedly stressed the importance of the friends' having access to the Sacred Text. In our letter of 17 April 1981, written on behalf of the House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, it was mentioned that steps were being taken to prepare a compilation which would consist of prayers and passages from the Holy Writings of our Faith.

295.2 This material is now ready and is being sent to you in the form of a booklet. The contents are suitable for use by individual believers, as well as for occasions when the friends gather for meetings. Your National Assembly may have already published a compilation of this order and size for the use of the friends. If not, and if your Assembly is among those specifically assigned the goal to make basic Bahá'í literature available, and if you decide that the material included in the enclosed booklet is suitable for your purposes, the Universal House of Justice is prepared to send you, upon request, a proof copy of the English text in flat sheets ready for offset printing, as this will facilitate the printing of the booklet in English, if such is your need.

295.3 The material in the booklet, it is hoped, will soon be ready also in French and in Spanish, as the House of Justice is asking the respective Publishing Trusts in Belgium and Argentina to undertake its translation and publication. However, if the language or languages in which you should publish your Bahá'í literature is other than the three mentioned above, you should consider the material, such as the passages included in the enclosed compilation, for translation and dissemination among the friends, thus enabling them, as envisaged in the Plan, to enrich their spiritual lives through exposure to the Sacred Word.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat

296
Execution of Six Bahá'ís in Tehran and Dáryún
18 September 1981
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
296.1RUTHLESS PERSECUTION DEFENSELESS COMMUNITY BAHÁ'ÍS IRAN FURTHER INTENSIFIED THROUGH RECENT EXECUTION BY FIRING SQUADS OF SIX STAUNCH MARTYRS, ONE IN TEHRAN HABÍBU'LLÁH 'AZÍZÍ, FIVE IN DÁRYÚN NEAR ISFAHÁN,
BAHMAN 'ÁTIFÍ, 'IZZAT 'ÁTIFÍ, 'ATÁ'U'LLÁH RAWHÁNÍ,
AHMAD RIDVÁNÍ, AND GUSHTÁSB THÁBIT-RÁSIKH. LAST FIVE WERE IMPRISONED FOLLOWING LARGE-SCALE SIMULTANEOUS ATTACKS ON BAHÁ'ÍS IN THEIR HOMES AND ARREST OF SEVERAL OF THEM IN VILLAGES NEAR ISFAHÁN. FAMILIES MARTYRS WERE NOT INFORMED OF EXECUTIONS WHILE RELATIVES THOSE EXECUTED IN DÁRYÚN ALSO NOT PERMITTED CONDUCT BAHÁ'Í FUNERALS THEIR LOVED ONES, AND LAST THREE NAMED WERE BURIED UNCEREMONIOUSLY IN MUSLIM CEMETERY. NO ANNOUNCEMENT BY AUTHORI WAS MADE ABOUT EXECUTION LAST FIVE....
Universal House of Justice
297
The Worsening Situation in Yazd
28 September 1981
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
297.1SITUATION PERSECUTION FRIENDS YAZD ENTERING NEW PERILOUS PHASE: FURTHER INFORMATION CONVEYED TO YOU OUR CABLE 11 AUGUST ABOUT RADIO SUMMONS ISSUED PROMINENT YAZD BAHÁ'ÍS THESE FRIENDS ARE AGAIN BEING CALLED PRESENT THEMSELVES BEFORE REVOLUTIONARY COURTS. 14 OF THEM HAVE SO FAR REPORTED. WHILE FATE THESE IN BALANCE TEN OTHER BELIEVERS YAZD WHO HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY DETAINED HAVE JUST BEEN TRANSFERRED TO PRISONS DIRECTLY ASSOCIATED REVOLUTIONARY COURTS. FOUR OF THESE ARE WOMEN. ONE OF THEM IS 75 YEARS OLD, THE OTHER THREE IN THEIR LATE FIFTIES. TRANSFER NEW PRISON OMINOUS SIGN THAT LOCAL REVOLUTIONARY COURT INTENDS ISSUE ITS FINAL VERDICT. FRIENDS IN CAPITAL HAVE REPEATEDLY IN PAST APPEALED WITHOUT SUCCESS FOR VINDICATION RIGHTS BAHÁ'ÍS TO CENTRAL AUTHORITIES TEHRAN. IN RECENT WEEKS HIGH-RANKING AUTHORITIES EVEN REFUSE GIVE AUDIENCE TO BAHÁ'ÍS AS SOON AS THEY LEARN SUBJECT MATTER. OFFICIALS IN LOWER RANKS SO FAR CONTACTED HAVE IN RECENT MONTHS WARNED BELIEVERS OF GRAVE PERSECUTIONS IN STORE FOR BAHÁ'ÍS. ONE GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE HAS UNOFFICIALLY INFORMED BAHÁ'ÍS THAT DEVELOPMENTS IN YAZD MAY WELL FORM PATTERN FOR TREATMENT BAHÁ'ÍS ELSEWHERE IN COUNTRY, THAT AUTHORITIES ARE FULLY AWARE ALL MEASURES TAKEN BY BAHÁ'ÍS IN INTERNATIONAL CIRCLES, AND CONSIDER THESE AS ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIONS, THAT GOVERNMENT IRAN HAS NO REGARD FOR INTERNATIONAL OPINION, THAT BAHÁ'ÍS ARE ENEMIES ISLAM, AND BAHÁ'Í TEACHINGS SUCH AS EQUALITY SEXES AND REMOVAL VEIL CONSTITUTE VIOLATION ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES, AND THAT GOVERNMENT CAPABLE ORGANIZE MOBS TO PUBLICLY DEMAND EXPULSION, EXECUTION, EXTERMINATION BAHÁ'ÍS. THESE THREATS SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN LIGHTLY....
Universal House of Justice
298
Further Deterioration of the Situation in Iran
16 October 1981

To all National Spiritual Assemblies
298.1SITUATION FRIENDS IRAN STEADILY DETERIORATING. ALTHOUGH REVOLUTIONARY COURT YAZD ORDERED RELEASE FOUR OF THOSE DETAINED PRESSURES IN DIFFERENT FORMS ARE MOUNTING IN YAZD AND IN OTHER PARTS COUNTRY. BAHÁ'Í WORKERS BEING INCREASINGLY EXPELLED FROM FACTORIES, BAHÁ'Í SHOPKEEPERS IN ONE PROVINCE ORDERED CLOSE DOWN FOLLOWING WITHDRAWAL BUSINESS LICENSES, SCHO AUTHORITIES SCRUTINIZING RELIGION STUDENTS PRIOR TO REGISTRATION RESULTING IN REFUSAL REGISTER BAHÁ'Í STUDENTS IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS. DECREE ANNOUNCED BY MINISTRY OF EDUCATION PUBLISHED IN KAYHÁN DAILY NUMBER 11397 DATED 9 MIHR 1360 (30 SEPTEMBER 1981) LISTS CRIMES WHICH BAR PROFESSORS AND STUDENTS FROM BEING EMPLOYED OR REGISTERED AT UNIVERSITIES. AMONG CRIMES LISTED IS WHAT TEXT OF DECREE DESCRIBES AS MEMBERSHIP IN SECT WHICH IS RECOGNIZED BY MUSLIMS AS MISLED AND HERETICAL SECT. THIS IS OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO MEMBERSHIP IN BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY. BAHÁ'Í CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXEMPLIFYING HIGH SPIRIT HEROISM STEADFASTNESS PREFERRING DEPRIVATION FROM SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION TO RECANTATION FAITH....
Universal House of Justice
299
Voice of America Report on Campaign
of Arrests against Iranian Bahá'ís
22 October 1981
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
299.1A REPORT FROM TEHRAN SAYS IRAN'S CENTRAL REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE IS PLANNING A NEW CAMPAIGN TO ROUND UP MEMBERS OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH. THE BAHÁ'ÍS REPORTEDLY WILL BE ARRESTED ON GROUNDS THAT THEIR MARRIAGES ARE ILLEGAL AND THEIR CHILDREN ILLEGITIMATE SINCE IRAN DOES NOT RECOGNIZE THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH. THE COMMITTEE SAYS SOME 96 BAHÁ'ÍS HAVE BEEN EXECUTED SO FAR AND ANOTHER 200 ARE UNDER ARREST. SOME 10,000 BAHÁ'Í FAMILIES ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE FLED IRAN SINCE THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THEM BEGAN. THE COMMITTEE HAS ANOTHER 20,000 BAHÁ'Í NAMES ON ITS ARREST LIST COMPILED FROM CAPTURED BAHÁ'Í OFFICE LISTS AND DOCUMENTS FROM THE SHAH'S OLD SECRET POLICE, SAVAK. MANY BAHÁ'ÍS HAVE CHANGED THEIR NAMES OR GONE INTO HIDING TO ESCAPE CAPTURE.
Universal House of Justice
300
Further Acts of Persecution in Iran
23 October 1981
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
300.1FOLLOWING NEWS FURTHER ACTS PERSECUTION INFLICTED BRETHREN IRAN JUST RECEIVED:
— IN URÚMÍYYIH, ÁDHIRBÁYJÁN TWENTY-SIX BAHÁ'ÍS SUMMARILY ARRESTED, FIVE OF WHOM ARE WOMEN.
— IN BÍRJAND, KHURÁSÁN HOUSES ALL LOCAL BELIEVERS RANSACKED FORCING FRIENDS DESERT THEIR HOMES AND FLEE FOR SAFETY.
— IN TEHRAN HOME PROMINENT BELIEVER OCCUPIED ALL HER FURNITURE CONFISCATED. LISTING OF ITEMS ALLEGEDLY FOUND IN HOUSE FALSELY INCLUDES ARMAMENTS DRUGS.
— FRIENDS IRAN LIVING IN ATMOSPHERE CONSTANT FEAR THEIR PROPERTIES AND

LIVES....
Universal House of Justice
301
Grave Developments in Iran
5 November 1981
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
301.1FOLLOWING GRAVE DEVELOPMENTS REPORTED FROM IRAN:
REFERENCE OUR CABLE 26 MAY 1981 WORK ON BUILDING ROAD DESIGNED RUN THROUGH SITE
BÁB'S HOLY HOUSE SHIRAZ BEING ACTIVELY RESUMED. RECENT REPORT INDICATES WORK
STEADILY PROGRESSING APPROACHING SACRED PRECINCTS.
OFFICE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BROKEN INTO PAPERS FILES REMOVED.
SIX MEMBERS LOCAL ASSEMBLY TEHRAN SUMMARILY ARRESTED WHILE IN SESSION. COUPLE
IN WHOSE HOME MEETING WAS HELD HAVE ALSO BEEN DETAINED.
GOVERNMENT IRAN HAS RECENTLY INSTRUCTED ITS CONSULAR REPRESENTATIVES EVERYWHE
COMPILE LIST BAHÁ'ÍS RESIDING AREAS THEIR RESPONSIBILITY AND HENCEFORTH
REFRAIN FROM EXTENDING PASSPORTS IRANIAN BAHÁ'ÍS....
Universal House of Justice
302
Call for Pioneers
13 November 1981
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
302.1 The Universal House of Justice has asked us to convey to you the following with respect to the settlement of pioneers since the opening of the second phase of the Seven Year Plan.
302.2 Out of a total of 285 pioneers (originally 279 plus 6 added later) assigned for the first year of the second phase, 137 posts have been filled. While many additional pioneers have settled around the world, a net balance of 148 pioneers is still needed to fill the posts originally envisioned.
302.3 In consultation with the International Teaching Center the goals of the Plan in terms of pioneer needs have been reviewed, and a number of new goals have been established and added to the net outstanding goals. The consolidated list of the pioneer needs has now been prepared and is attached. As you see it calls for 216 pioneers to arise, God willing, by the end of this first year of the second phase of the Plan. The list also shows the National Spiritual Assemblies responsible for providing the manpower in each case and, if necessary, arranging finance for the projects.
302.4 The Universal House of Justice is praying at the Holy Shrines that the friends everywhere may respond to this call, and that the Continental Pioneer Committees throughout the world will offer their services in a manner to facilitate the early fulfillment of these goals.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
303
Release of a Compilation on Excellence in all Things
23 November 1981
To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

303.1 Attached is a compilation prepared by the Research Department which is aimed at presenting texts and extracts which encourage the friends to attain distinction and excellence in all their undertakings. The compilation is entitled Excellence in all Things. The Universal House of Justice hopes that the contents of this compilation will guide the friends everywhere in the conduct of their individual lives so that they may follow Bahá'u'lláh's exhortation to distinguish themselves from others through deeds, and that their "light can be shed upon the whole earth." "Happy is the man," He assures us, "that heedeth My counsel ..."

303.2 The Universal House of Justice leaves it to your discretion to determine how to share the contents of this compilation with the friends and communities for whom you are responsible.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

304

Inauguration of Radio Bahá'í Peru

29 November 1981

To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Peru

304.1WARMEST CONGRATULATIONS AUSPICIOUS INAUGURATION RADIO BAHÁ'Í DEL LAGO TITICACA DAY COVENANT AND SIMULTANEOUS OPENING MUHÁJIR TEACHING INSTITUTE FIRST MUSIC FESTIVAL PRAYING HOLY THRESHOLD INCREASING CONFIRMATIONS YOUR ASSEMBLY COOPERATING ASSEMBLIES ECUADOR BOLIVIA RADIO COMMISSION ALL STAFF LOVING GREETINGS THIS IMPORTANT STEP GROWTH FAITH ALTIPLANO. KINDLY ASSURE MICHAEL STOKES OUR PRAYERS HIS BEHALF.

Universal House of Justice

305

Demolition of the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Tákur;
Seizure of Cemetery in Tehran

10 December 1981

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

305.1 DISTRESSED REPORT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IRAN EVIDENCE FURTHER PERSECUTIONS ATROCITIES AGAINST DEFENSELESS BELIEVERS CRADLE FAITH: HOUSE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IN TÁKUR, PREVIOUSLY CONFISCATED, HAS NOW BEEN TOTALLY DEMOLISHED AND THIS BAHÁ'Í HOLY PLACE INCLUDING LAND AND GARDENS OFFERED FOR SALE TO PUBLIC BY AUTHORITIES.

BAHÁ'Í CEMETERY TEHRAN SEIZED ON SATURDAY 5 DECEMBER BY ORDER REVOLUTIONARY COURT, 5 CARETAKERS AND 8 TEMPORARY WORKERS ARRESTED, AND CEMETERY CLOSED. BAHÁ'ÍS FEARFUL DESECRATION GRAVES. TENS OF THOUSANDS BAHÁ'ÍS TEHRAN NOW WITHOUT BURIAL GROUNDS. THIS RECENT DEVELOPMENT INDECENT ACT STILL ANOTHE EXAMPLE EVIL DESIGNS ELIMINATE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY THAT COUNTRY.

OTHER PERSECUTIONS SUCH AS SUMMARY ARRESTS, HARASSMENT, CONFISCATION PROPERTIES, CONTINUE....

Universal House of Justice

306

Arrest of Eight Members of
the Iranian National Spiritual Assembly

14 December 1981
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
306.1HAVE JUST RECEIVED DISTRESSING REPORT EIGHT MEMBERS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IRAN WHILE IN SESSION ARRESTED TOGETHER WITH TWO OTHER BELIEVERS IN HOME WHERE MEETING WAS HELD. TWO WOMEN AMONG TEN DETAINEES. AUTHORITY RESPONSIBLE FOR ARRESTS AND LOCATION PRISON STILL UNIDENTIFIED....
Universal House of Justice
307
Execution of Eight Members of
the Iranian National Spiritual Assembly
29 December 1981
To National Spiritual Assemblies
307.1WITH HEAVY HEARTS INFORM FRIENDS THROUGHOUT WORLD EIGHT MEMBERS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IRAN ARRESTED 13 DECEMBER WERE EXECUTED 27 DECEMBER. THEY ARE:
MR. KÁMRÁN SAMÍMÍ
MRS. ZHÍNÚS MAHMÚDÍ
MR. MAHMÚD MAJDHÚB
MR. JALÁL ‘AZÍZÍ
MR. MIHDÍ AMÍN AMÍN
MR. SÍRÚS RAWSHANÍ
MR. ‘IZZATU’LLÁH FURÚHÍ
MR. QUDRATU’LLÁH RAWHÁNÍ
307.2FAMILIES NOT NOTIFIED OF ARRESTS, TRIAL, EXECUTIONS. BODIES BURIED UNCEREMONIOUSLY IN BARREN FIELD RESERVED BY GOVERNMENT FOR INFIDELS. INFORMATION DISCOVERED FORTUITOUSLY. GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES TOTALLY SILENT, UNCOOPERATIVE.
307.3THIS HEINOUS ACT CAUSES US FEAR THAT MEMBERS PREVIOUS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND TWO AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBERS WHO DISAPPEARED AUGUST 1980, AS WELL AS TWO OTHERS WHOSE WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN OVER TWO YEARS, HAVE SUFFERED SAME FATE. NAMES THESE HEROIC DEDICATED SERVANTS BLESSED BEAUTY ARE:
AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBERS
DR. YÚSIF ‘ABBÁSÍYÁN
DR. HISHMATU’LLÁH RAWHÁNÍ
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS
DR. ‘ALÍMURÁD DÁVÚDÍ
MR. ‘ABDU’L-HUSAYN TASLÍMÍ
MR. HÚSHANG MAHMÚDÍ
MR. IBRÁHÍM RAHMÁNÍ
DR. HUSAYN NAJÍ
MR. MANÚCHIHR QÁ’IM MAQÁMÍ
MR. ‘ATÁ'U’LLÁH MUQARRABÍ
MR. YÚSIF QADÍMÍ
MRS. BAHÍYYIH NÁDIRÍ
DR. KÁMBÍZ SADIQZÁDIH
MEMBER LOCAL ASSEMBLY TEHRAN
MR. RÚHÍ RAWSHANÍ
PROMINENT TEACHER

MR. MUHAMMAD MUVAHHID
307.4EXEMPLARY CHARACTER THESE SELFLESS GLORIOUS SOULS SOURCE INSPIRATION TO BAHÁ'ÍS OF WORLD. WHILE NOT ABLE WIN CROWN MARTYRDOM LIKE PERSIAN BRETHREN, VALIANT DETACHED FRIENDS EVERY LAND UNDOUBTEDLY ARE ENDEAVORING EVINCE SAME SPIRIT FOLLOW SAME PATH CONSECRATION DEDICATION GOD'S HOLY FAITH. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT SANCTIFIED BLOOD OF THESE DESCENDANTS DAWN-BREAKERS WII SERVE STRENGTHEN BODY CAUSE GOD THROUGHOUT GLOBE, PRODUCE UNPRECEDENTED VICTORIES TO COMPENSATE LOSSES SUSTAINED CRADLE FAITH....
Universal House of Justice
308
Proselytizing, Development, and the Covenant
3 January 1982
To an individual Bahá'í
Dear Bahá'í Friend,
308.1 The Universal House of Justice has received your letter and has asked us to assure you that you should feel no diffidence in raising the sort of questions that you have expressed. It seems clear from your letter that you have been greatly attracted to the Message of Bahá'u'lláh and have accepted His Faith before, as you say, becoming "fully committed," and are, therefore, now having to face and resolve problems that many believers overcome before they declare their faith. The House of Justice urges you not to let it worry you. All through life Bahá'ís are faced with tests of many kinds, and problems and doubts, but it is through facing and overcoming them that we grow spiritually.
308.2 On the particular issues that you raise, the House of Justice has instructed us to send you the following comments.
Teaching vs. Proselytizing
308.3 It is true that Bahá'u'lláh lays on every Bahá'í the duty to teach His Faith. At the same time, however, we are forbidden to proselytize, so it is important for all believers to understand the difference between teaching and proselytizing. It is a significant difference and, in some countries where teaching a religion is permitted, but proselytizing is forbidden, the distinction is made in the law of the land. Proselytizing implies bringing undue pressure to bear upon someone to change his Faith. It is also usually understood to imply the making of threats or the offering of material benefits as an inducement to conversion. In some countries mission schools or hospitals, for all the good they do, are regarded with suspicion and even aversion by the local authorities because they are considered to be material inducements to conversion and hence instruments of proselytization.
308.4 Bahá'u'lláh, in The Hidden Words, says, "O Son of Dust! The wise are they that speak not unless they obtain a hearing, even as the cup-bearer, who proffereth not his cup till he findeth a seeker, and the lover who crieth not out from the depths of his heart until he gazeth upon the beauty of his beloved. ...", and on page 55 of The Advent of Divine Justice, a letter which is primarily directed towards exhorting the friends to fulfill their responsibilities in teaching the Faith, Shoghi Effendi writes: "Care, however, should, at all times, be exercised, lest in their eagerness to further

the international interests of the Faith they frustrate their purpose, and turn away, through any act that might be misconstrued as an attempt to proselytize and bring undue pressure upon them, those whom they wish to win over to their Cause." Some Bahá'ís sometimes overstep the proper bounds, but this does not alter the clear principle.

308.5 The responsibility of the Bahá'ís to teach the Faith is very great. The contraction of the world and the onward rush of events require us to seize every chance open to us to touch the hearts and minds of our fellowmen. The Message of Bahá'u'lláh is God's guidance for mankind to overcome the difficulties of this age of transition and move forward into the next stage of its evolution, and human beings have the right to hear it. Those who accept it incur the duty of passing it on to their fellowman. The slowness of the response of the world has caused and is causing great suffering; hence the historical pressure upon Bahá'ís to exert every effort to teach the Faith for the sake of their fellowmen. They should teach with enthusiasm, conviction, wisdom and courtesy, but without pressing their hearer, bearing in mind the words of Bahá'u'lláh: "Beware lest ye contend with any one, nay, strive to make him aware of the truth with kindly manner and most convincing exhortation. If your hearer respond, he will have responded to his own behove, and if not, turn ye away from him, and set your faces towards God's sacred Court, the seat of resplendent holiness." (Gleanings CXXVIII)

Considerations in the Application of Bahá'í Social Teachings

308.6 The application and development of the social aspects of the Teachings is dependent on the stage of growth of the Bahá'í community in each area, and on worldwide priorities. We are living in an age of transition, and as 'Abdu'l-Bahá explained, we must, in order to succeed in our aims, sacrifice the important for the most important. The House of Justice, for example, had to turn down the request of certain believers to establish Bahá'í schools in a Western country which already had a functioning state educational system; those Bahá'í funds which are available for educational projects must be spent on the establishment and running of schools in areas where there are large Bahá'í communities of poor people, with no adequate system of education available to them. In its answer, the House of Justice pointed out that if these friends, on their own initiative, wished to establish their own school, run on Bahá'í lines, and financially self-supporting, they were entirely free to do so. This highlights an aspect of the matter which is often overlooked. The social services of Bahá'í are not restricted to what they do as a community. Every Bahá'í has a duty to work and earn his living, and in choosing a career a Bahá'í should consider not only its earning capacity but also the benefit of the work to his fellowmen. All over the world Bahá'ís are rendering outstanding services in this way.

308.7 When a Bahá'í community is very small, there is little that it can do to implement the social teachings of the Faith (beyond their impact on the behavior of individual believers), because such a community with the resources in funds and manpower at its disposal is but a drop in the ocean in comparison with the many large agencies, governmental and private, which are engaged in social improvement. When the Bahá'í community grows

sufficiently large, however, its activities can and must proliferate and diversify. This development is already taking place in many parts of the world. In India, for example, the New Era School in Panchgani, which has been developing remarkably for a number of years, is closely associated with a rural development project in the villages close by that is having dramatically favorable results in the life of the villagers. In the province of Madhya Pradesh, where there are hundreds of thousands of Bahá'ís, the Rabbani School in Gwalior is educating children from the villages of the area in the Teachings of the Faith, in academic subjects and in agriculture, so that when they return to their home villages, these pupils not only promote the Faith but will influence their growth and development in every way. In Ecuador, as you no doubt know, the size of the Bahá'í community, scattered over inaccessible terrain in the high Andes, made it both necessary and possible some years ago to establish a Bahá'í radio station. "Radio Bahá'í," as it is known, broadcasts not only about the Faith, but has programs concerning health, agriculture, literacy and so on. It has now become so well established and highly regarded that it has been able to apply for and receive a Canadian Government grant through C.I.D.A. to finance the development of certain social service activities. Thus it can be seen that once the Bahá'í community attains a certain stature it is able to work in fruitful collaboration with non-Bahá'í agencies in its social activities.

308.8 A further aspect of this kind of work is the collaboration between the Bahá'í International Community and the United Nations. Having consultative status with both ECOSOC and UNICEF, and long association with the Department of Public Information, the Bahá'í International Community is able to take part in conferences and consultations on many aspects of human development, both from the point of view of the Bahá'í Teachings and with the background of its extensive experience in meeting the problems of developing countries, such as illiteracy, the status of women, tribalism, racial prejudice, and so on.

308.9 As you can see, all these developments relate directly to the teaching work inasmuch as the Bahá'í communities must reach a certain size before they can begin to implement many of them. How, for example, can a Bahá'í community demonstrate effectively the abolition of prejudices which divide the inhabitants of a country until it has a cross-section of those inhabitants within its ranks? A seed is the vital origin of a tree and of a tremendous importance for that reason, but it cannot produce fruit until it has grown into a tree and flowered and fruited. So a Bahá'í community of nine believers is a vital step, since it can bring into being for that locality the divine institution of the Local Spiritual Assembly, but it is still only a seed, and needs to grow in size and in the diversity of its members before it can produce really convincing fruit for its fellow citizens.

308.10 One could say, however, that the Bahá'í communities could assist in social development from a very early stage in their development by supporting the activities of other groups who are, at this point, more numerous and powerful. To some extent this is true, provided that such involvement does not divert the efforts of the friends from the more fundamentally important

teaching work or involve them in the disputes of non-Bahá'í rival groups.

Humanity's Most Urgent Need

308.11 The teaching work is of primary importance for this reason: the most urgent need of human beings is to recognize the Manifestation of God and thereby to learn how to collaborate constructively. All over the world tremendous efforts are being made to improve the lot of mankind—or of parts of mankind, but most of these efforts are frustrated by the conflicts of aims, by corruption of the morals of those involved, by mistrust, or by fear. There is no lack of material resources in the world if they are properly used. The problem is the education of human beings in the ultimate and most important purpose of life and in how to weld the differences of opinion and outlook into a united constructive effort. Bahá'ís believe that God has revealed the purpose of life, has shown us how to attain it, has provided the ways in which we can work together and, beyond that, has given mankind the assurance both of continuing divine guidance and of divine assistance. As people learn and follow these teachings their efforts will produce durable results. In the absence of these teachings, a lifetime of effort only too often ends in disillusionment and the collapse of all that has been built.

308.12 It is not easy for people to learn the Bahá'í way, to overcome their inherited prejudices or to resist their personal temptations. This way takes time, is subject to checks and backsliding, but one can see, looking at the past 138 years, that there is an overall advance that is astonishing in the light of the obstacles to be overcome, and is accelerating with every passing decade.

Obstacle to Progress: Getting Sucked into Prevailing Attitudes

308.13 One of the great obstacles to progress is the tendency of Bahá'ís to be sucked into the general attitudes and disputes that surround them, to be influenced, for example, as you yourself pointed out, by the prevailing attitude to marriage so that the divorce rate becomes a problem within the Bahá'í community itself which should be an example to the rest of society in such matters. Involvement in politics and controversial questions is another aspect of the same phenomenon. In one of His Tablets Bahá'u'lláh warns the Bahá'ís: "Dispute not with any one concerning the things of this world and its affairs, for God hath abandoned them to such as have set their affection upon them. Out of the whole world He hath chosen for Himself the hearts of men—hearts which the hosts of revelation and of utterance can subdue." (Gleanings CXXVIII) As you realize, this cannot mean that Bahá'ís must not be controversial since, in many societies, being a Bahá'í is itself a controversial matter. The central importance of this principle of avoidance of politics and controversial matters is that Bahá'ís should not allow themselves to be drawn into the disputes of the many conflicting elements of the society around them. The aim of the Bahá'ís is to reconcile, to heal divisions, to bring about tolerance and mutual respect among men, and this aim is undermined if we allow ourselves to be swept along by the ephemeral passions of others. This does not mean that Bahá'ís cannot collaborate with any non-Bahá'í movement; it does mean that good judgement is required to distinguish those activities and

associations which are beneficial and constructive from those which are divisive.

The Uniqueness of the Bahá'í Covenant

308.14 The House of Justice hopes that these explanations will help you to understand some of the aspects of the Faith that have been troubling you. The crux of the matter, as you realize, is the acceptance of spiritual authority and what this implies. You express the fear that the authority conferred upon 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice could lead to a progressive reduction in the "available scope for personal interpretation," and that "the actual writings of the Manifestation will have less and less import," and you instance what has happened in previous Dispensations. The House of Justice suggests that, in thinking about this, you contemplate the way the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh has actually worked, and you will be able to see how very different its processes are from those of, say, the development of the law in Rabbinical Judaism or the functioning of the Papacy in Christianity. The practice in the past in these two religions, and also to a great extent in Islam, has been to assume that the Revelation given by the Founder was the final, perfect revelation of God's Will to mankind, and all subsequent elucidation and legislation has been interpretative in the sense that it aimed at applying this basic Revelation to the new problems and situations that have arisen. The Bahá'í premises are quite different. Although the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh is accepted as the Word of God and His Law as the Law of God, it is understood from the outset that Revelation is progressive, and that the Law, although the Will of God for this Age, will undoubtedly be changed by the next Manifestation of God. Secondly, only the written text of the Revelation is regarded as authoritative. There is no Oral Law as in Judaism, no Tradition of the Church as in Christianity, no Hadíth as in Islam. Thirdly, a clear distinction is drawn between interpretation and legislation. Authoritative interpretation is the exclusive prerogative of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian, while infallible legislation is the function of the Universal House of Justice.

308.15 If you study the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and of the Guardian, you will see how tremendously they differ from the interpretations of the Rabbis and the Church. They are not a progressive fossilization of the Revelation, they are for the most part expositions which throw a clear light upon passages which may have been considered obscure, they point up the intimate interrelationship between various teachings, they expound the implications of scriptural allusions, and they educate the Bahá'ís in the tremendous significances of the Words of Bahá'u'lláh. Rather than in any way supplanting the Words of the Manifestation, they lead us back to them time and again.

Authoritative vs. Individual Interpretation

308.16 There is also an important distinction made in the Faith between authoritative interpretation, as described above, and the interpretation which every believer is fully entitled to voice. Believers are free, indeed are encouraged, to study the Writings for themselves and to express their understanding of them. Such personal interpretations can be most illuminating,

but all Bahá'ís, including the one expressing the view, however learned he may be, should realize that it is only a personal view and can never be upheld as a standard for others to accept, nor should disputes ever be permitted to arise over differences in such opinions.

Interpretation and Legislation

308.17 The legislation enacted by the Universal House of Justice is different from interpretation. Authoritative interpretation, as uttered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian, is a divinely guided statement of what the Word of God means. The divinely inspired legislation of the Universal House of Justice does not attempt to say what the revealed Word means—it states what must be done in cases where the revealed Text or its authoritative interpretation is not explicit. It is, therefore, on quite a different level from the Sacred Text, and the Universal House of Justice is empowered to abrogate or amend its own legislation whenever it judges the conditions make this desirable. Moreover, the attitude to legislation is different in the Bahá'í Faith. The human tendency in past Dispensations has been to want every question answered and to arrive at a binding decision affecting every small detail of belief or practice. The tendency in the Bahá'í Dispensation, from the time of Bahá'u'lláh Himself, has been to clarify the governing principles, to make binding pronouncements on details which are considered essential, but to leave a wide area to the conscience of the individual. The same tendency appears also in administrative matters. The Guardian used to state that the working of National Spiritual Assemblies should be uniform in essentials but that diversity in secondary matters was not only permissible but desirable. For this reason a number of points are not expressed in the National Bahá'í Constitution (the Declaration of Trust and By-Laws of National Assemblies); these are left to each National Spiritual Assembly to decide for itself.

The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh

308.18 The Covenant is the "axis of the oneness of the world of humanity" because it preserves the unity and integrity of the Faith itself and protects it from being disrupted by individuals who are convinced that only their understanding of the Teachings is the right one—a fate that has overcome all past Revelations. The Covenant is, moreover, embedded in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh Himself. Thus, as you clearly see, to accept Bahá'u'lláh is to accept His Covenant; to reject His Covenant is to reject Him.

308.19 The House of Justice asks us to assure you of its loving prayers at the Sacred Threshold for your guidance in your efforts to arrive at a greater understanding of this wonderful Revelation.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

309

Iranian Supreme Court's Denial of Execution of Iranian National Spiritual Assembly Members

5 January 1982

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

309.1PRESIDENT SUPREME COURT AYATOLLAH ARDEBILI IS REPORTED BY NEWS SERVICES TO HAVE DENIED EXECUTION EIGHT MEMBERS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IRAN. ... WE CONVINCED EXECUTIONS WERE PLANNED TO BE KEPT SECRET BUT WERE DISCOVERED FORTUITOUSLY. BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY REQUESTING SECRETARY GENERAL UNITED NATIONS INVESTIGATE....
Universal House of Justice
310
Appeal by Bahá'í International Community to Iranian leaders
7 January 1982
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
310.1BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CABLING FOLLOWING TEXT TO AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI, PRIME MINISTER MIR HUSAYN MUSAVI, AND PRESIDENT SUPREME COURT AYATOLLAH MUSAVI ARDEBILI:
310.2"NEWS RECENT SECRET EXECUTION EIGHT MEMBERS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BAHÁ'ÍS IRAN, AND SEVEN OTHERS, SIX OF WHOM WERE MEMBERS LOCAL ASSEMBLY TEHRAN, HAS SHOCKED BAHÁ'ÍS ENTIRE WORLD. TOTAL NUMBER BAHÁ'ÍS WHOSE MARTYRDOMS OFFICIALLY ACKNOWLEDGED HAS NOW REACHED NINETY-SEVEN. FOURTEEN OTHERS, KNOWN TO HAVE DISAPPEARED, FEARED TO HAVE SUFFERED SAME FATE. HUNDRED IMPRISONED THROUGHOUT COUNTRY ON CHARGES WITHOUT SUBSTANTIATING EVIDENCE. W CATEGORICALLY DENY TRUTH THESE ACCUSATIONS.
310.3AS BAHÁ'ÍS IRAN ARE RIGIDLY DENIED OPPORTUNITY PUBLICLY PRESENT THEIR CASE, DEFEND THEIR RIGHTS, PROVE THEIR INNOCENCE, AND ALL DOORS APPEAL THEIR CASE CLOSED BEFORE THEM, WE THEREFORE APPEAL TO YOU ON THEIR BEHALF IN NAME OF BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITIES IN 164 INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD:
TO ISSUE IMMEDIATE INSTRUCTIONS STOP SUMMARY ARRESTS EXECUTIONS,
TO REQUIRE THOSE RESPONSIBLE PRODUCE PUBLISH DOCUMENTS WHICH HAVE FORMED BAS CONVICTION BAHÁ'ÍS AS SO-CALLED SPIES,
TO EXTEND TO BAHÁ'ÍS AS LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS, AND AS A COMMUNITY, INALIENABLE RIGHT TO PUBLICLY DEFEND THEMSELVES DISPROVE MALICIOUS ACCUSATIONS FALSE CHARGES.
310.4WE LAY BEFORE YOU FATE THESE LOYAL CITIZENS ABOUT WHOSE INNOCENCE, TRUE LOVE FOR IRAN AND REVERENCE FOR SPIRIT ISLAM YOU SHOULD HAVE NO DOUBT. WE PRAY THE ALMIGHTY MAY GUIDE YOU THIS ELEVENTH HOUR TO DISCHARGE SACRED INESCAPABLE RESPONSIBILITIES BEFORE GOD AND MAN.
BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY"
Universal House of Justice
311
Secret Execution of Six Members of Tehran Assembly and Hostess
7 January 1982
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
311.1INFORMATION JUST RECEIVED SIX MEMBERS LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY TEHRAN TOGETHER WITH WOMAN BELIEVER IN WHOSE HOME ARRESTS WERE MADE ON SECOND NOVE WERE SECRETLY EXECUTED ON FOURTH JANUARY. INFORMATION OBTAINED FORTUITOUSLY RELATIVES FRIENDS MARTYRS. NAMES THESE VALIANT SOULS ARE:
MR. KÚRUSH TALÁ'Í
MR. KHUSRAW MUHANDISÍ
MR. ISKANDAR 'AZÍZÍ

MR. FATHU'LLÁH FIRDAWSÍ
MR. 'ATÁ'U'LLÁH YÁVARÍ
MRS. SHÍVÁ MAHMÚDÍ ASADU'LLÁHZÁDIH
HOSTESS: MRS. SHÍDRUKH AMÍR-KÍYÁ BAQÁ ...
Universal House of Justice
312
Using A Cry from the Heart to Explain the
Tragic Events in Iran
21 January 1982
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
312.1 The Hand of the Cause William Sears, deeply moved by the savage onslaught on the dearly loved and heroic Bahá'í community in Iran, has written a dramatic account of the current persecution.
312.2 Mr. Sears's story acquires deep poignancy from the account of his travels in Iran when he came to know and love the Persian Bahá'ís, both individually and collectively, among whom are a number of the martyrs. In a white heat of indignation, he came to the World Center to write the first draft of his book, using the detailed information available here to present—as he is so well able—the successive tragedies which, even in these days of universal terrorism, are beginning to shock the world.
312.3 The House of Justice believes that Mr. Sears's book will not only be warmly welcomed by the friends, but can also be a potent instrument for interesting large numbers of people in the tragic events now taking place in Persia, winning their sympathy for the harassed Bahá'ís and leading them to inquire further about a Faith which can inspire such fortitude in ordinary people. He does not miss the opportunities offered, in refuting the trumped-up charges made against the Bahá'ís, for presenting basic Bahá'í teachings and conveying a persuasive sense of why Bahá'u'lláh is worth dying for. Furthermore, widespread knowledge among the public of the persecutions in Iran can be an added deterrent to their continuation, reinforcing the many efforts being made by governments and other agencies as a result of the constant appeals of the Bahá'í International Community and National Spiritual Assemblies.
312.4 The House of Justice requests you to give the greatest possible support to distribution of this book, calling it to the attention of the friends and urging them to use it as a topical introduction for their contacts, to try to persuade their local newspapers and radio stations to review it and their local bookshops to display it. We have asked that it be published at as low a price as possible so that it can be used by all the friends. It is now at press and you will shortly hear from the publisher.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
313
Plans for Commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of
the Ascension of Bahíyyih Khánum
24 January 1982

To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
313.1 The fiftieth anniversary of the ascension of Bahíyyih Khánum, eldest daughter of Bahá'u'lláh and designated by Him the Greatest Holy Leaf, will occur on 15 July of this year. We summon the entire Bahá'í world to a befitting commemoration of the life of the greatest woman in the Bahá'í Dispensation.
313.2 National Spiritual Assemblies are requested to arrange national commemorative services, and to ensure that all local communities hold befitting meetings. These services should be held on the date of the anniversary or on the weekend immediately following it, and in those countries where Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs are in existence, they should be held in the Temple.
313.3 In order to provide for your arrangement of the services, we have requested our Research Department to compile a bibliography of references to the Greatest Holy Leaf in Bahá'í literature in English, and this is enclosed for your use. In addition the book announced in our message of March 1981 is now at press, and will be available by the time of the commemoration.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice
Some References to the Greatest Holy Leaf
Found in published works
313.4Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Tablets Revealed in Honor of the Greatest Holy Leaf (New York:
National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, 1933).
313.5Shoghi Effendi:
The Advent of Divine Justice (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1990), p. 37.
Bahá'í Administration (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), pp. 25, 57, 70, 93, 187–196.
The Dawn-Breakers (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), dedication.
God Passes By (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), pp. 108, 347, 350, 392. Guidance for Today and Tomorrow (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1973), pp. 58–71.
Messages to America: Selected Letters and Cablegrams Addressed to the Bahá'ís of North America 1932–1946 (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1947), pp. 1, 31, 37.
Messages to the Bahá'í World (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971), p. 74.
The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1991), pp. 67–68, 81–82, 93–94, 98.
313.6Others:
Balyuzi, H. M., 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Center of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh (London: George Ronald, 1971), pp. 12, 54–55, 74, 332, 401, 416, 454–455, 463–464, 482.
Balyuzi, H. M., Edward Granville Browne and the Bahá'í Faith (London: George Ronald, 1970), pp. 119–220.

Blomfield, Lady Sarah, The Chosen Highway (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1967), pp. 37–69, 73.
Gail, Marzieh, Khánum: the Greatest Holy Leaf as Remembered by Marzieh Gail (London: George Ronald, 1982).
Maxwell, May, An Early Pilgrimage (London: George Ronald, 1969), pp. 18–19.
Muhájir, Iran Furútan, comp., The Mystery of God (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1979), pp. 278–304.
Rabbaní, Rúhíyyih, The Priceless Pearl (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1969), pp. 6–7, 10–11, 13–15, 21–22, 39, 44, 46–51, 57–58, 63, 90, 102–03, 112, 115, 129–30, 139–40, 144–48, 151–52, 168, 199, 218, 236, 259, 261–62, 266–67, 273, 279–80, 430, 438.
Universal House of Justice, Bahá'í Holy Places at the World Centre (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1968), pp. 62–70.
313.7The Bahá'í World, an International Record
vol. 2, 1926–1928, pp. 83, 132.
vol. 3, 1928–1930, p. 64.
vol. 5, 1932–1934, pp. 22–23, 114–15, 169–88.
vol. 8, 1938–1940, pp. 5, 8, 206, 255–56, 262, 266.
vol. 9, 1940–1944, p. 329.
vol. 10, 1944–1946, p. 536.
vol. 11, 1946–1950, pp. 474, 492.
vol. 16, 1973–1976, pp. 54, 66, 73.
313.8Bahá'í News, published by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States
no. 18, June 1927, p. 5.
no. 36, December 1929, p. 1.
no. 52, May 1931, pp. 1–2.
no. 62, May 1932, p. 2.
no. 65, August 1932, pp. 1–2.
no. 66, September 1932, p. 1.
no. 72, March 1933, p. 3.
no. 121, December 1938, p. 3.
no. 124, April 1939, p. 1.
no. 128, August 1939, p. 4.
no. 133, February 1940, p. 1.
no. 135, April 1940, insert
313.9Star of the West (Chicago: Bahá'í News Service)
vol. 10, no. 17, pp. 312–14.
vol. 12, no. 10, pp. 163–67; no. 11, pp. 186–88; no. 13, pp. 211–14; no. 15, 245; no. 19, pp. 302–03.
vo1. 13, no. 4, pp. 68–69, 82–83, 88; no. 8, pp. 207–10, 219–20; no. 11, p. 314.
vol. 17, no. 8, pp. 256–60.
vol. 18, no. 9, pp. 278–82.
vol. 20, no. 1, p. 18; no. 4, p. 104.
vol. 23, no. 5, p. 134; no. 7, pp. 202–04; no. 12, pp. 374–77.
vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 18–20; no. 3, pp. 90–93.

vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 118–22
(Many of these references are accounts of early pilgrimages, and give only a brief mention of the Greatest Holy Leaf)
314
Golden Opportunity Offered by Reign of Relentless Terror; Actions Taken to Defend the Bahá'ís of Iran
26 January 1982
The Bahá'ís of the World
Dearly loved Friends,
314.1 With indignation and anguish the Bahá'ís of the world, over the past three years, have received continuously tragic news of the sufferings and martyrdoms of their brethren in Iran, where a reign of relentless terror is now encompassing that long-abused and downtrodden community. The inhuman cruelties heaped on the followers of the Most Great Name—worthy descendants of their forebears, the Dawn-Breakers—in that land where the heroes and martyrs of the Faith have shed such lustre on their generations, are increasing daily. We have seen how the House of the Báb in Shiraz and Bahá'u'lláh's ancestral home in Tákur have been demolished, all Bahá'í endowments, including our Holy Places, have been seized, and the main financial assets of the community sequestered. We have seen with what callousness Bahá'í children have been refused admission to schools, Bahá'í employees dismissed from government positions, and the essential human rights of the sorely tried Bahá'ís violated, their means of livelihood undermined or destroyed, their homes plundered, their properties confiscated, their very lives snuffed out.
An Acceleration of Persecution
314.2 Contemplating the history of the persecution of the Bahá'ís of Iran, we note an alarming acceleration in the degree of blatancy with which the traditional enemies of the Faith pursue their single purpose of extirpating the Faith in the land of its birth. In the past, with the exception of a few specific instances, the persecution of the members of the Bahá'í community by those traditionally inimical to the Faith, was random and sporadic, resulting from the incitement of easily aroused mobs to attack the lives and properties of the Bahá'ís.
314.3 Now the enemies of God's precious Cause who, as they themselves attest, have in the past twenty-five years organized themselves to counteract the influence of the Faith, to vilify and misrepresent its purpose and teachings, to inflame religious passions leading to the harassment and intimidation of the believers, to sow seeds of doubt among the friends and sympathizers, have infiltrated the ranks of officialdom, where, from this more advantageous position, they continue to instigate the persecution of the Bahá'ís. The incidence of violation of the rights of the Bahá'ís is thus becoming more frequent as is well evidenced by reports published in the press of Iran in recent months. Examples abound. For instance, formerly when Bahá'ís were arrested they were given an opportunity to defend themselves in some form of judicial proceedings held for the sake of appearances. On one occasion part of the proceedings which resulted in the execution of seven believers in Yazd, as late as September 1980, was televised. But recently the

court proceedings, if any, have been held in camera, and reports have even been received of the torture of Bahá'ís before their execution.No longer are the relatives of imprisoned Bahá'ís permitted to visit them, as they were until recently; no longer are the condemned permitted to solace their families with letters of farewell or the making of wills before theirexecution; and, more tragically, disturbed by the large number of Bahá'ís and sympathetic people of other religions who attended the funeral services of the slain Bahá'ís, the authorities have now seized the Bahá'í cemetery in Tehran and do not permit burial there. Indeed, the families of those most recently martyred were not even notified of the secret execution of their loved ones, whose bodies, unceremoniously deposited in graves for "infidels," were only fortuitously discovered.

314.4 Although the oppressors maintain that they are killing the Bahá'ís because they are guilty of serving as political agents and spies, it has been ascertained that in almost every instance of execution, the accused Bahá'í was offered recantation as a means of release.

Oppression—The Cause of Stability and Firmness

314.5 The inveterate enemies of the Faith imagine that their persecutions will disrupt the foundations of the Faith and tarnish its glory. Alas! Alas for their ignorance and folly! These acts of oppression, far from weakening the resolve of the friends, have always served to inflame their zeal and galvanize their beings. In the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "... they thought that violence and interference would cause extinction and silence and lead to suppression and oblivion, whereas interference in matters of conscience causes stability and firmness and attracts the attention of men's sight and souls, which fact has received experimental proof many times and often."

314.6 Every drop of blood shed by the valiant martyrs, every sigh heaved by the silent victims of oppression, every supplication for divine assistance offered by the faithful, has released, and will continue mysteriously to release, forces over which no antagonist of the Faith has any control, and which, as marshaled by an All-Watchful Providence, have served to noise abroad the name and fame of the Faith to the masses of humanity in all continents, millions of whom had previously been totally ignorant of the existence of the Faith or had but a superficial, and oft-times erroneous, understanding of its teachings and history.

Worldwide Publicity

314.7 The current persecution has resulted in bringing the name and character of our beloved Faith to the attention of the world as never before in its history. As a direct result of the protests sent by the worldwide community of the Most Great Name to the rulers in Iran, of the representations made to the media when those protests were ignored, of direct approach by Bahá'í institutions at national and international levels to governments, communities of nations, international agencies and the United Nations itself, the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh has not only been given sympathetic attention in the world's councils, but also its merits and violated rights have been discussed and resolutions of protest sent to the Iranian authorities by sovereign governments, singly and in unison. The world's leading newspapers,

followed by the local press, have presented sympathetic accounts of the Faith to millions of readers, while television and radio stations are increasingly making the persecutions in Iran the subject of their programs. Commercial publishing houses are beginning to commission books about the Faith.

314.8 But in spite of this great wave of publicity now bringing the name of the Faith to the attention of large masses of mankind, and in spite of the many representations made to the authorities in Iran, the persecution of the Bahá'ís there continues. The world stands helpless before the imperviousness of that country to outside opinion or criticism. In face of this tragic impasse we can only redouble our efforts to teach the Cause, taking advantage of the increasing interest in the character and principles of our beloved Faith created by the sufferings of the Persian community.

A Blessing in Disguise

314.9 Indeed, this new wave of persecution sweeping the Cradle of the Faith may well be seen as a blessing in disguise, a "providence" whose "calamity" is, as always, borne heroically by the beloved Persian community. It may be regarded as the latest move in God's Major Plan, another trumpet blast to awaken the heedless from their slumber and a golden opportunity offered to the Bahá'ís to demonstrate once again their unity and fellowship before the eyes of a declining and sceptical world, to proclaim with full force the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to high and low alike, to establish the reverence of our Faith for Islam and its Prophet, to assert the principles of noninterference in political activities and obedience to government which stand at the very core of our Faith, and to provide comfort and solace to the breasts of the serene sufferers and steadfast heroes in the forefront of a persecuted community. Our motto in these days of world-encircling gloom should be the Words of God addressed to the Blessed Beauty Himself: "When the swords flash, go forward! When the shafts fly, press onward!"

314.10 Future historians will have to assess the impact of this crisis on the onward march of a triumphant Faith. A detailed list of the steps that have already been taken by the Bahá'ís of the world during the past three years is attached for the study of the friends.

314.11 Our fervent prayers are offered most ardently at the Holy Shrines for the blessings of Bahá'u'lláh to surround His lovers and loved ones in every land, and to assist and confirm them as they face with certitude and confidence the challenges of the future.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

Summary of Actions Taken by the Bahá'í International Community, National and Local Bahá'í Institutions, Governments, Non-Bahá'í Organizations and Prominent People in Connection with the Persecution of the Bahá'ís of Iran

The Bahá'í International Community

314.12 - Issued official statements to the press; kept the Secretary-General and appropriate offices of the United Nations

apprised of developments as they occurred;
cabled the Ayatollah Khomeini, the President and Prime Minister of Iran, and the President of the Iranian Supreme Court, urging their intervention and refuting accusations made against the Faith;
prepared materials and made statements in connection with the adoption of resolutions by the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, the European Parliament, and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;
made statements at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on the Question of Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances;
contacted the Iranian representative to the United Nations in New York in order to repudiate falsehoods made about the Faith and provide him with the true facts;
and prepared the "White Paper" and "Update" and arranged for their translation in three languages, the "Chronological Summary of Individual Acts of Persecution in Iran," and other documents for submission to high-ranking officials, government and United Nations offices, and worldwide distribution to National Spiritual Assemblies.

Bahá'í Institutions

314.13 - National Assemblies throughout the world cabled the Ayatollah Khomeini on four occasions, the Prime Minister and Head of the Iranian Supreme Court three times each, and the Secretary of the Revolutionary Council of Iran once.

118 National Spiritual Assemblies cabled the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as did thousands of Local Assemblies, Bahá'í groups and isolated centers. It was estimated that some 10–15,000 cables reached him, protesting the execution of seven Bahá'ís in Hamadan.

Over 10,000 Local Spiritual Assemblies cabled the Ayatollah Khomeini, urging his intervention regarding the expropriation of Bahá'í properties in Iran.

Most National Assemblies contacted by letter or delegation, or sent cables to their respective Iranian Embassy or Consulate, on five occasions and kept their government officials continually informed of developments.

Selected National Assemblies cabled the Ayatollah Khomeini, the President and the Prime Minister of Iran, and the Secretary of the Revolutionary Council on several occasions. They also cabled or contacted their respective Iranian Embassy or Consulate at least eleven times; approached humanitarian, business or professional organizations; and were in constant touch with government offices and the media.

A large number of National Assemblies pursued a well organized campaign of approaching the mass media, providing them with accurate information about the Faith and refuting false accusations made by enemies of the Cause. As a result, an unprecedented volume of publicity occurred in leading newspapers and periodicals throughout the world, as well as in newspapers having modest circulations. Well-known journalists wrote articles, some of which were distributed through international news agencies. Interviews were held with families of the martyrs, individual Bahá'ís wrote letters to editors of

newspapers, and many radio and television programs were aired, including "Iran's Secret Pogrom" on W5 TV in Canada, and "Day One" and "John Craven's Newsround" on BBCl TV.

Many National Assemblies contacted immigration authorities and appropriate government offices in efforts to assist the displaced Iranian Bahá'ís in extending their visas and obtaining work permits and travel documents. They established special committees to work specifically to assist the Iranian friends, and they set up Persian Relief Funds on a national scale to aid deserving cases. The National Assemblies of Australia and Canada worked out with their respective immigration offices procedures whereby the process of immigration by Iranian Bahá'ís would be facilitated.

314.14 - Bahá'í communities the world over have assisted Iranian students abroad, who have been faced with the termination of their education because they are unable to receive funds from their families in Iran whose assets in Nawnahálán Company were frozen, or did not receive funds because the Iranian government prevented the transfer of money from Iran to Bahá'í students abroad. In some areas, Iranian embassies have refused to extend the visas of Bahá'í students. Certain universities and colleges have allowed the Bahá'í students to continue their studies, and in some instances their tuition fees have even been waived.

Resolutions adopted on behalf of the Bahá'ís in Iran

314.15 - Canadian Parliament (2)
House of Representatives, Australia
Senate, Australia
German Federal Parliament
A meeting held in a committee room of the House of Commons, United Kingdom
United Nations General Assembly, Third Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Religious Intolerance
United Nations Sub-commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Commission on Human Rights (2)
European Parliament (2)
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (2)
House of Representatives of the State of Alaska, USA.
House of Representatives, State of Illinois, USA.
International Association for Religious Freedom

Statements and Letters from Governments, World Leaders and Others

314.16 To name just a few
Prime Minister's Office of the United Kingdom
President Mitterrand of France
Offices of the King and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium
President and Minister of Cultural Affairs of Luxembourg
All three parliamentary parties in Luxembourg
Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher of Germany
Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of India
148 Out of 150 Members of Parliament in the Netherlands
Swiss Parliamentarians
Western Samoan Government

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Australia
Governor of the Hawaiian Islands, USA.
Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Some Non-Bahá'í Individuals and Organizations that Issued Statements, Letters, Cables, or Press Releases
314.17 - Human Rights Commission of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Switzerland
Amnesty International
Trinidad and Tobago Bureau on Human Rights
Former Chief Justice, India
Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism
Pacific Conference of Churches
13 Heads of Colleges in Oxford, U.K.
The Master, Balliol College, Oxford, England
Iran Committee for Democratic Action and Human Rights (based in the United States)
Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (based in France)
A large number of Senators and Congressmen of the United States
315
Call for a Day of Prayer for the Bahá'ís of Iran;
Inviting Sympathetic Organizations and Individuals
29 January 1982
To National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
315.1 At this time when our thoughts are so often directed toward our beleaguered brethren in the Cradle of the Faith, where no relenting of the persecutions is in sight, the Universal House of Justice is moved to call on National Spiritual Assemblies to schedule a day of prayer in order to extol the memory of the glorious martyrs, and to invoke the power of God to emancipate the Iranian believers from the fetters of oppression and hardship. Each National Assembly should select a suitable day and request all Bahá'í communities under its jurisdiction to hold appropriate gatherings on that specific day.
315.2 There is no doubt that the persecutions in Iran have attracted the interest of the public in a number of countries to the Cause of God and many have even expressed deep and genuine sympathy for the plight of the Persian friends. In such countries, if the National Assembly considers it desirable, it will be entirely permissible to invite to the prayer meetings, in the spirit and manner befitting the occasion, members of sympathetic organizations or selected individual non-Bahá'ís. These meetings could confirm and deepen the love and respect that many already cherish in their hearts for the Cause of God.
315.3 The following suggestions may be helpful to you:
315.3a If invitations are to be extended to non-Bahá'í friends, consideration should be given to those in authority both on national and local levels, leaders of thought, prominent people of all walks of life, and those sympathetic to the Faith. A general invitation to the public could also be

issued in some localities, if appropriate and advisable.
315.3b Where Bahá'í centers are unavailable or inadequate for such meetings, public or community halls could be hired. If all efforts fail to obtain such secular facilities, it would also be permissible, as a last resort, tohold the gatherings in public halls owned by, or places of worship of, other religious communities, if such places are spontaneously offered or easily available, and provided it is absolutely clear that the meetings are to be conducted by, and under the auspices of, the Bahá'ís.
315.4 In each country where a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is located the national meeting should be held by the National Assembly concerned in the Mother Temple.
315.5 It is important that the gatherings be carefully planned well in advance and the meetings be held with utmost dignity.
315.6 In countries where it would not be propitious to invite non-Bahá'ís to the proposed prayer meetings, such gatherings should as usual be confined to Bahá'ís.
315.7 The House of Justice is confident that the power of prayer emanating from these meetings will attract divine blessings, will cause the souls of those who have joined the hosts on high to rejoice, and will assist the endeavors of the believers everywhere in expediting the triumph of the Cause of God.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat

316
Release of a Compilation on Family Life
18 February 1982
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
316.1 Many of the National Spiritual Assemblies have been given a specific goal, during the second phase of the Seven Year Plan, to organize programs for the development of family life and to nurture in the friends a deeper understanding of the nature of an institution which is at the very base of Bahá'í society. In order to help the friends everywhere to strengthen and enrich their family ties, and enable the family unit to reflect the glory of the Words of God, the Universal House of Justice asked its Research Department to prepare a compilation of suitable texts on this subject.
316.2 The compilation is now ready and a copy is attached.
316.3 The Universal House of Justice leaves it to your discretion to determine how best the contents of this compilation may be shared with the friends under your jurisdiction.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat

317
Mounting Cruelties and the Heightened
Steadfastness of the Iranian Bahá'ís
9 March 1982
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
317.1ACCOUNTS HEROISM BELIEVERS CRADLE FAITH FILL OUR HEARTS WITH FEELINGS OF

AWE, GRATITUDE, ADMIRATION. MOUNTING CRUELTIES OPPRESSORS MATCHED BY HEIGHTENED ENDURANCE STEADFASTNESS STAUNCH SUPPORTERS GREATEST NAME.
317.2SINCE LAST REPORT ON 11 JANUARY 1982 CROWN MARTYRDOM HAS ADORNED TWO MORE LOVING SOULS, HUSAYN VAHDAT-I-HAQQ OF TEHRAN AND IBRÁHÍM KHAYRKHÁH OF BÁBULSAR. THE FORMER, A HIGHLY QUALIFIED ELECTRONICS ENGINEER, WAS EXECUTED ON 28 FEBRUARY, EVE OBSERVANCE DECLARATION BÁB ACCORDING LUNAR CALENDAR, AND MR KHAYRKHÁH, ACTIVE BELIEVER CASPIAN AREA, TWO DAYS EARLIER. BOTH EXECUTED BURIED UNCEREMONIOUSLY WITHOUT RELATIVES FRIENDS BEING INFORMED.
317.3CONFISCATION OF HOMES INNOCENT BAHÁ'ÍS WITHOUT PROVOCATION IS CONTINUING. LOOTING AND AUCTIONING OF FURNISHINGS OF BAHÁ'Í HOME IN ARDIKÁN NEAR YAZD WAS PRELUDE TO SERIES SIMILAR RAIDS ON HOMES OTHER BAHÁ'ÍS THAT TOWN. IN SHIRAZ 17 MORE HOMES EITHER CONFISCATED OR IN PROCESS CONFISCATION. 35 ADDITIONAL BANK ACCOUNTS OF BAHÁ'ÍS IN SHIRAZ NOW FROZEN. SCORES OF BAHÁ'ÍS HAVE LOST THEIR JOBS OR BEEN DEPRIVED THEIR BUSINESS AND TRADE LICENSES. ON ONE OCCASION A HIGH-RANKING AUTHORITY DECREED, IN REPLY TO QUESTION FROM INSURANCE COMPANY, THAT A BAHÁ'Í WIDOW HAD NO RIGHT COLLECT HALF HER HUSBAND'S PENSION DUE HER NOR RETAIN CUSTODY HER CHILDREN. HISTORIC BAHÁ'Í SITES PROGRESSIVELY BEING DEMOLISHED INCLUDING HOUSE BÁBÍYYIH IN MASHHAD.
317.4IN FACE SUCH OPPRESSIVE MEASURES, THOUSANDS BAHÁ'ÍS IRAN UNMINDFUL OF POSSIBLE DIRE CONSEQUENCES, HAVE COURAGEOUSLY APPEALED BY LETTER OR CABLE TO VARIOUS HIGH OFFICIALS AT NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS COMPLAINING ABOUT BARBARIC ACTS GROSS INJUSTICE, HAVE REVEALED THEIR NAMES AND ADDRESSES, AND HAVE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT FEAR GOD WILL ULTIMATELY AWAKEN BLOODTHIRSTY AND HATE-FILLED INDIVIDUALS TO DISGRACEFUL ABUSE THEIR POWERS AND INDUCE THEM CEASE BEHAVIOR ABHORRENT ALL CIVILIZED PEOPLE.
317.5BAHÁ'ÍS IRAN ARE GRATEFUL THEIR BRETHREN THROUGHOUT WORLD BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT ONLY SUCCESSFULLY RAISED THEIR VOICES IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FORUMS BUT ALSO HAVE PLEDGED REDOUBLE THEIR EFFORTS SERVE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IN NAME COWORKERS CRADLE FAITH, IN ORDER TO COUNTERACT EVIL MACHINATIONS ENEMIES CAUSE DESIGNED ERADICATE FAITH IN LAND ITS BIRTH.
Universal House of Justice

318

Relocation of Manila Conference
11 March 1982
To National Spiritual Assemblies
318.1ON RECOMMENDATION NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY PHILIPPINES FOLLOWING ITS CONSULTATIONS AUTHORITIES VIEW PRESENT DISTURBED CONDITIONS HAVE DECIDED TRANSFER MANILA CONFERENCE ELSEWHERE. NEW DATE VENUE WILL BE ANNOUNCED SHORT TO BAHÁ'Í WORLD.
Universal House of Justice

319

Transfer of International Conference
to Canberra, Australia
29 March 1982
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,

319.1 As you learned from an earlier communication, it has been necessary to transfer the International Conference planned for Manila, Philippines to another location. The Universal House of Justice requested the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia to act as host since it is located at the southern pole of the spiritual axis referred to by the beloved Guardian as extending from "the Antipodes to the northern islands of the Pacific Ocean." It is pleased to announce that the National Assembly has made arrangements to hold the Conference in Canberra from the 2nd through the 5th of September 1982. The Hand of the Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery will attend as representative of the House of Justice.

319.2 Kindly circulate this information to the friends as quickly as possible. It is hoped that all those who had been planning to attend the Manila Conference will find it possible to support the one now scheduled for Canberra.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

320

Representation of the Universal House of Justice
at Lagos Conference by Hand of the
Cause of God John Robarts

29 March 1982

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

320.1 The Universal House of Justice has asked us to inform you that it has become clear that in the present circumstances the representation of the World Center at the Lagos Conference by anyone currently residing in South Africa may give rise to unfavorable publicity for the Faith.

320.2 It has been decided, therefore, by the Universal House of Justice to invite the Hand of the Cause of God John Robarts to represent it at the Lagos Conference.

320.3 Four special conferences are being called for the benefit of the friends in Southern Africa, as these friends, because of the prevailing situation, are for the most part unable to attend the Lagos Conference. At these Conferences the Hand of the Cause William Sears will represent the Universal House of Justice.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

321

Ridván Message 1982

Ridván 1982

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

321.1 Triumphs of inestimable portent for the unfoldment of the Cause of God, many of them resulting directly from the steadfast heroism of the beloved Persians in face of the savage persecutions meted out to them, have characterized the year just ending. The effect of these developments is to offer such golden opportunities for teaching and further proclamation as can

only lead, if vigorously and enthusiastically seized, to large-scale conversion and an increasing prestige.

Notable Achievements

321.2 Heartwarming progress in the construction of the Indian and Western Samoan Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs, the opening of the second Bahá'í radio station of Latin America in Peru, the establishment of the European office of the Bahá'í International Community in Geneva, steady advances in the second phase of the Seven Year Plan, encouraging expansion of the systematized Bahá'í education of children, sacrifice and generous outpouring of funds from a growing number of friends, all testify to the abundant confirmations with which Bahá'u'lláh rewards the dedicated efforts of His loved ones throughout the world. The worldwide attention accorded the Faith in the media, which has opened wide the doors of mass proclamation of the divine Message, and the sympathetic discussion of it in the highest councils of mankind with the resulting actions taken by sovereign governments and international authorities, are unprecedented in Bahá'í history.

A Year Rich in Bahá'í Occasions

321.3 All this, dear friends, augurs well for the coming year which is rich in Bahá'í occasions. The fiftieth anniversary of the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf will be commemorated at the five International Conferences and by the publication of a book, compiled at the World Center, comprising texts about her and some hundred of her own letters; the move to the permanent Seat of the Universal House of Justice will take place; in November the twenty-fifth anniversary of the passing of our beloved Guardian will coincide with the midway point of the Seven Year Plan and the year will terminate with the fifth International Convention when members of National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the world will come to Haifa to elect the Universal House of Justice.

Tribute to the Hands of the Cause of God
and the Continental Boards of Counselors

321.4 The distinguished and invaluable activities of the beloved Hands of the Cause are a source of pride and joy to the entire Bahá'í world. The assumption of wider responsibilities by each Continental Board of Counselors is proving an unqualified success and we express our warm thanks and admiration to the International Teaching Center and all the Counselors for the great contribution they are making, in increasing measure, to the stability and development of the embryonic World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

Youth

321.5 As to Bahá'í youth, legatees of the heroic early believers and now standing on their shoulders, we call upon them to redouble their efforts, in this day of widespread interest in the Cause of God, to enthuse their contemporaries with the divine Message and thus prepare themselves for the day when they will be veteran believers able to assume whatever tasks may be laid upon them. We offer them this passage from the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh:

321.5a Blessed is he who in the prime of his youth and the heyday of his life will arise to serve the Cause of the Lord of the beginning and of the end, and adorn his heart with His love. The manifestation of such a grace is greater

than the creation of the heavens and of the earth. Blessed are the steadfast and well is it with those who are firm.

Our Response: A Mighty Upsurge in Effective Teaching

321.6 The rising sun of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation is having its visible effect upon the world and upon the Bahá'í community itself. Opportunities, long dreamed of for teaching, attended by showering confirmations, now challenge in ever-increasing numbers, every individual believer, every Local and National Spiritual Assembly. The potent seeds sown by 'Abdu'l-Bahá are beginning to germinate within the divinely ordained Order expounded and firmly laid by the beloved Guardian. Humanity is beaten almost to its knees, bewildered and shepherdless, hungry for the bread of life. This is our day of service; we have that heavenly food to offer. The peoples are disillusioned with deficient political theories, social systems and orders; they crave, knowingly or unknowingly, the love of God and reunion with Him. Our response to this growing challenge must be a mighty upsurge of effective teaching, imparting the divine fire which Bahá'u'lláh has kindled in our hearts until a conflagration arising from millions of souls on fire with His love shall at last testify that the Day for which the Chief Luminaries of our Faith so ardently prayed has at last dawned.

The Universal House of Justice

322

Further Developments of the Situation in Iran

3 May 1982

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

322.1 We have been instructed by the Universal House of Justice to announce the sorrowful news that since our last report of 11 March 1982, two more steadfast and devoted supporters of the Greatest Name in Iran, Mr. Ihsánu'lláh Khayyámí of Urúmíyyih and Mr. 'Azízu'lláh Gulshaní of Mashhad, have joined the ranks of the martyrs of His Cause. After a few months of imprisonment and intense but unsuccessful pressure to recant his Faith, Mr. Khayyámí, a staunch believer of humble means, was executed on 12 April 1982. Mr. Gulshaní, a prominent Bahá'í of Khurásán province who was imprisoned for many months, was executed on 29 April. The following developments are also shared with you.

322.2 • The friends in the village of Saysán, in one of the outlying districts of Tabríz, are under extreme pressure by a mullah of the neighboring town of Bustánábád, and have been given a month to decide whether they will convert to Islam or face grave consequences. The members of the Bahá'í community in this village, which consists of several generations of Bahá'ís, have remained steadfast and approached the religious authorities in Qum who have recommended to the Imám-Jum'ih of Tabríz that he intervene and try to relieve the Bahá'ís from such harassment.

322.3 • All the Bahá'ís of Hisárin in Khurásán have been forced to leave their homes and had to flee to Mashhad.

322.4 • Although a few believers have been released from prison during the recent period of amnesty, many have been arrested and imprisoned,

including nine active Bahá'ís in Qazvín and its surrounding areas, seven in Shiraz, five in Tehran, and seven in Zanján.

322.5 The Universal House of Justice urges the friends throughout the world to continue their prayers for the Bahá'ís in Iran and to intensify their services in the path of the Blessed Beauty to compensate for the plight of our oppressed brethren in the Cradle of the Faith....

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

323

Six Martyrdoms, More Arrests Resulting from Fresh Outburst of Persecutions

10 May 1982

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

323.1AFTER BRIEF LULL AND RELEASE FEW BAHÁ'Í PRISONERS, FRESH OUTBURST PERSECUTIONS AGAINST MEMBERS DEFENSELESS COMMUNITY IN CRADLE FAITH CLEARLY EVIDENT.

323.2HEARTS GRIEVED ANNOUNCE THAT SINCE EARLY APRIL SIX STAUNCH BELIEVERS HAVE OFFERED THEIR LIVES ALTAR SACRIFICE. ALL MERCILESSLY EXECUTED SOLELY DUE THEIR ADHERENCE BELOVED FAITH, BUT OUTWARDLY ON BASIS TRUMPED-UP ACCUSATIONS.

323.3THEIR NAMES ARE:

MR. 'ASKAR MUHAMMADÍ OF RAHÍMKHÁN VILLAGE IN BÚKÁN, KURDISTÁN, WHO WAS ASSASSINATED AT HIS HOME IN EARLY APRIL BY REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS AFTER INTRODUCING HIMSELF AS BAHÁ'Í WHILE THEY WERE SEARCHING HOUSES THAT AREA FOR WEAPONS.

MR. IHSÁNU'LLÁH KHAYYÁMÍ OF URÚMÍYYIH, WHO WAS EXECUTED BY FIRING SQUAD ON 12 APRIL AFTER INTENSE BUT UNSUCCESSFUL PRESSURE TO RECANT HIS FAITH.

MR. 'AZÍZU'LLÁH GULSHANÍ OF MASHHAD, KHURÁSÁN, WHO WAS HANGED ON 29 APRIL. COURT VERDICT CLEARLY BASED HIS AFFILIATION FAITH AND BAHÁ'Í ACTIVITIES. NEWSPAPER KAYHÁN REPORTS VERDICT COURT REFERS TO HIM AS A HERETIC, WHICH IS PUNISHABLE BY DEATH. THIS IMPORTANT DOCUMENT PROVES BAHÁ'ÍS ARE BEING KILLED BECAUSE OF THEIR RELIGION.

MR. BADÍ'U'LLÁH HAQQ-PAYKAR OF KARAJ NEAR TEHRAN, AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE LOCAL ASSEMBLY, WHO WAS EXECUTED BY FIRING SQUAD ON 8 MAY.

AND 6. MR. MAHMÚD FARÚHAR AND HIS WIFE ISHRÁQÍYYIH, HIGHLY QUALIFIED AND EDUCATED ACTIVE BELIEVERS, AND MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL ASSEMBLY, WHO WERE ALSO EXECUTED IN KARAJ ON 8 MAY.

323.4FURTHER, MANY PROMINENT BAHÁ'ÍS, INCLUDING 23 MEMBERS LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES IN VARIOUS PARTS COUNTRY ARRESTED IN RECENT WEEKS....

Universal House of Justice

324

Execution of Two Members of the Spiritual Assembly of Urúmíyyih

11 May 1982

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

324.1FURTHER RECENT MESSAGE ON RECRUDESCENCE PERSECUTIONS IRAN, NEWS JUST RECEIVED TWO OTHER BELIEVERS MARTYRED BY FIRING SQUAD IN IRAN. THEY ARE: MR. ÁGÁHU'LLÁH TÍZFAHM AND MISS JALÁLÍYYIH MUSHTÁ'IL-USKÚ'Í. BOTH

MEMBERS LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY URÚMÍYYIH....
Universal House of Justice
325
Appointment of New Counselor in Asia
13 May 1982
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
325.1 The Universal House of Justice announces with pleasure the appointment of Dr. Sábir Áfáqí to the Continental Board of Counselors in Asia to replace Dr. Masíh Farhangí, who was martyred last year.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
326
Passing of Amoz Gibson, member of the
Universal House of Justice
15 May 1982
To National Spiritual Assemblies
326.1WITH SORROWFUL HEARTS LAMENT LOSS OUR DEARLY LOVED BROTHER AMOZ GIBSON V PASSED AWAY AFTER PROLONGED HEROIC STRUGGLE FATAL ILLNESS. EXEMPLARY SELF-SACRIFICING PROMOTER FAITH ACHIEVED BRILLIANT UNBLEMISHED RECORD CONSTAN SERVICE FOUNDED ON ROCK-LIKE STAUNCHNESS AND DEEP INSATIABLE LOVE FOR TEACHING WORK PARTICULARLY AMONG INDIAN AND BLACK MINORITIES WESTERN HEMISPHERE AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AFRICA. HIS NOTABLE WORK ADMINISTRATIVE FIELDS NORTH AMERICA CROWNED FINAL NINETEEN YEARS INCALCULABLE CONTRIBUTION DEVELOPMENT WORLD CE WORLD-EMBRACING FAITH. PRAYING SHRINES BOUNTIFUL REWARD HIS NOBLE SOUL THROUGHOUT PROGRESS ABHÁ KINGDOM. EXPRESS LOVING SYMPATHY VALIANT BELOVED WIDOW PARTNER HIS SERVICES AND BEREAVED CHILDREN ADVISE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORI GATHERINGS EVERYWHERE BAHÁ'Í WORLD AND COMMEMORATIVE SERVICES ALL MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁRS.
Universal House of Justice
327
Call for Ballots to Elect One Member of the
Universal House of Justice
18 May 1982
To National Spiritual Assemblies
327.1CALL UPON MEMBERS YOUR ASSEMBLY CAST THEIR BALLOTS FOR ELECTION ONE MEMBE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE REPLACE AMOZ GIBSON. EXHORT ALL ELECTORS PONDER SACRED RESPONSIBILITY NOW RESTING THEIR SHOULDERS UPHOLD SCRUPULOUSLY PRAYERFULLY SANCTIFIED SPIRIT BAHÁ'Í ELECTIONS. EACH MEMBER SHOULD RECORD VOTE FOR ONE MALE ADULT BELIEVER ON PIECE PLAIN PAPER ENCLOSE IT IN A SEALED UNMARKED ENVELOPE AND SEAL THAT IN ANOTHER ENVELOPE ON WHICH ELECTOR SHOULD WRITE OWN NAME AND NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY NAME AND IMMEDIATELY SEND TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OFFICE. AS SOON AS ALL NINE BALLOTS RECEIVED NATIONAL OFFICE SHOULD AIRMAIL THEM IN ONE PACKAGE WITH LIST BALLOTS ENCLOSED TO UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE NOTIFYING WORLD CENTER OF DISPATCH AT ONCE BY CABLE. IF NOT ALL NINE RECEIVED AT NATIONAL OFFICE BY TWENTY-SECOND JUNE BALLOTS RECEIVED MUST BE SENT THAT DAY. LATE ARRIVALS SHOULD BE FORWARDED AS SOON AS RECEIVED

CABLING WORLD CENTER IN EACH CASE NUMBER BALLOTS DISPATCHED. RESULT WILL BE ANNOUNCED FIFTEENTH JULY. SUPPLICATING BAHÁ'U'LLÁH GUIDE PROTECT YOU IN EXERCISE THIS DIVINELY CONFERRED RESPONSIBILITY.
Universal House of Justice
328
Execution of Two Members of the
Kháníábád Spiritual Assembly
26 May 1982
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
328.1WITH UTMOST SADNESS ANNOUNCE EXECUTION ON 16 MAY TWO MORE VALIANT SOULS CRADLE FAITH SA'DU'LLÁH BÁBÁZÁDIH AND NASRU'LLÁH AMÍNÍ, MEMBERS SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY KHÁNÍÁBÁD VILLAGE NEAR TEHRAN. DEATH SENTENCE HANDED DOWN OVER TWO MONTHS AGO, HOWEVER EXECUTION POSTPONED WHILE INTENSE PRESSUR BROUGHT TO BEAR UPON TWO CONDEMNED BAHÁ'ÍS RECANT FAITH OBTAIN FREEDOM. THESE TWO STEADFAST FRIENDS WHO PREFERRED MARTYRDOM TO DENIAL FAITH WERE BUR UNCEREMONIOUSLY WITHOUT FAMILY FRIENDS BEING INFORMED. AFTER SEVEN DAYS RELATIVES FORTUITOUSLY DISCOVERED EXECUTION THEIR LOVED ONES.
328.2ALTHOUGH FEW BAHÁ'Í PRISONERS RELEASED, ARRESTS CONTINUE THROUGHOUT COUNTRY....
Universal House of Justice
329
Message to the International Conference in
Dublin, Ireland—2 June 1982
2 June 1982
To the Friends gathered at the International Conference in Dublin
Dearly loved Friends,
329.1 "The world is in travail, and its agitation waxeth day by day. ... Such shall be its plight, that to disclose it now would not be meet and seemly." The shattering blows dealt to the old, divisive system of the planet and the constantly accelerating decline in civilized life since that dire warning was uttered by Bahá'u'lláh a hundred years ago, have brought mankind to its present appalling condition. Consideration of how the Bahá'ís of Europe, confronted by this situation, can meet their responsibilities, spiritually and actively, is the main purpose of this Conference.
329.2 The holding of this Conference in Dublin calls to mind the historic and heroic services of Ireland in spreading the divine religion throughout pagan Europe. Europe's response was to develop, through many vicissitudes, the most widespread and effective civilization known. That civilization, together with all other systems in the world, is now being rolled up, and Europe's plight in proportion to her former preeminence, is desperate indeed. By the same token her opportunity is correspondingly great. The challenges to her resilience, to her deep-seated spiritual vitality, nourished over the centuries by the Teachings of Christ—now, alas, neglected and even contemned—can and must call forth a more magnificent response than was ever made by the divided and contending peoples of olden times. Yours is the task to arouse that response. The power of Bahá'u'lláh is with you and this Day, as attested

by the Báb, is “immensely exalted ... above the days of the Apostles of old.”

329.3 In this great Day Europe is blessed as never before in its history, for the Manifestation of God, the Lord of Hosts, spent five years of His exiles within its borders, sending forth from His “remote prison” the first of those challenging, world-shaking addresses to the kings and rulers, six of whom were European potentates. There is no authenticated record of a Manifestation of God ever before setting foot in Europe.

329.4 You are engaged on a Seven Year Plan and have made devoted and sacrificial efforts to attain its objectives. But its ultimate purpose, as that of all other plans, namely the attracting of the masses of mankind to the all-embracing shelter of the Cause of God, still evades us. Particularly in Europe. We have not, as yet, found the secret of setting aglow the hearts of great numbers of Europeans with the divine fire. This must now be your constant preoccupation, the subject of your deliberations at this Conference, the purpose of your lives, to which you will attain “only if you arise to trample beneath your feet every earthly desire.” We call upon every Bahá’í in Europe to ponder this vital matter in his inmost soul, to consider what each may do to attract greater power to his efforts, to radiate more brilliantly and irresistibly the joyous, regenerating power of the Cause, so that the Bahá’í community in every country of Europe may stand out as a beacon light repelling the dark shadows of godlessness and moral degradation now threatening to obliterate the last remnants of a dying order. We call upon the Continental Board of Counselors to consult following this Conference with every National Spiritual Assembly in Europe, and together, launch such a campaign of spiritualization of the Bahá’í community, allied with intensified personal teaching, as has never been witnessed in your continent. The goals of the Seven Year Plan can all be accomplished as the result of such a program and the European Bahá’í community may achieve through it the spiritual force and character to demonstrate to a stricken and declining civilization the peace and joy and order of the long-awaited, Christ-promised Kingdom of God on earth.

329.5 May the loving spirit and saintly life of the Greatest Holy Leaf, the fiftieth anniversary of whose ascension is commemorated in this Conference, imbue your thoughts and aspirations and resolves with that dedicated, self-sacrificing, utter devotion to Bahá’u’lláh and His Cause which she so greatly exemplified.

With loving Bahá’í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

330

Comments on the Station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the Language Used by the Central Figures

3 June 1982

To individual believers

Dear Bahá’í Friends,

330.1 The Universal House of Justice has asked us to acknowledge your letter of 28 April and to make the following comments concerning your three

questions.
330.21. It was the express wish of Bahá'u'lláh that after Him the friends should "turn" to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Bahá'u'lláh also said in His Book of Laws that anything that was not clear in His Writings should be "referred" to His Most Mighty Branch springing from the Ancient Root. (See The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pages 134–35.) In one of the Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá published in Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (page 214) He quotes the passages mentioned above and interprets them to mean that "whatever He ['Abdu'l-Bahá] saith is the very truth." 'Abdu'l-Bahá further says, referring to those who do not accept Him as the Interpreter of the Word of God, "Whoso deviates from my interpretation is a victim of his own fancy" (The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, page 138). Moreover, in the Star of the West, Volume 12, page 227, 'Abdu'l-Bahá interprets the verses from the "Tablet of the Branch" to mean "whatsoever His ['Abdu'l-Bahá's] pen records, that is correct."
330.3 2.There is nothing in the Writings that would lead us to the conclusion that what Shoghi Effendi says about himself concerning statements on subjects not directly related to the Faith also applies to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Instead we have assertions which indicate that 'Abdu'l-Bahá's position in the Faith is one for which we find "no parallel" in past Dispensations. For example, Bahá'u'lláh, in addition to His reference to the Center of His Covenant as the "Mystery of God," states that 'Abdu'l-Bahá should be regarded as God's "exalted Handiwork" and "a Word which God hath adorned with the ornament of His Own Self, and made it sovereign over the earth and all that there is therein." And from Shoghi Effendi we have the incontrovertible statement that the Guardian of the Faith while "overshadowed" by the "protection" of Bahá'u'lláh and of the Báb, "remains essentially human," whereas in respect of 'Abdu'l-Bahá Shoghi Effendi categorically states that "in the person of 'Abdu'l-Bahá the incompatible characteristics of a human nature and superhuman knowledge and perfection have been blended and are completely harmonized."
330.4 3. With reference to your question about the "ether," the various definitions of this word as given in the Oxford English Dictionary all refer to a physical reality, for instance, "an element," "a substance," "a medium," all of which imply a physical and objective reality and, as you say, this was the concept posited by nineteenth century scientists to explain the propagation of light waves. It would have been understood in this sense by the audiences whom 'Abdu'l-Bahá was addressing. However, in Chapter XVI of Some Answered Questions, 'Abdu'l-Bahá devotes a whole chapter to explaining the difference between things which are "perceptible to the senses" which He calls "objective or sensible," and realities of the "intellect" which have "no outward form and no place," and are "not perceptible to the senses." He gives examples of both "kinds" of "human knowledge." The first kind is obvious and does not need elaboration. To illustrate the second kind the examples He gives are: love, grief, happiness, the power of the intellect, the human spirit and "ethereal

matter." (In the original Persian the word "ethereal" is the same as "etheric".) He states clearly that "Even ethereal matter, the forces of which are said in physics to be heat, light, electricity and magnetism, is an intellectual reality, and is not sensible." In other words, the "ether" is a concept arrived at intellectually to explain certain phenomena. In due course, when scientists failed to confirm the physical existence of the "ether" by delicate experiments, they constructed other intellectual concepts to explain the same phenomena.

330.5 In considering the whole field of divinely conferred "infallibility" one must be careful to avoid the literal understanding and petty-mindedness that has so often characterized discussions of this matter in the Christian world. The Manifestation of God (and, to a lesser degree, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi) has to convey tremendous concepts covering the whole field of human life and activity to people whose present knowledge and degree of understanding are far below His. He must use the limited medium of human language against the limited and often erroneous background of His audience's traditional knowledge and current understanding to raise them to a wholly new level of awareness and behavior. It is a human tendency, against which the Manifestation warns us, to measure His statements against the inaccurate standard of the acquired knowledge of mankind. We tend to take them and place them within one or other of the existing categories of human philosophy or science while, in reality, they transcend these and will, if properly understood, open new and vast horizons to our understanding.

330.6 Some sayings of the Manifestation are clear and obvious. Among these are laws of behavior. Others are elucidations which lead men from their present level of understanding to a new one. Others are pregnant allusions, the significance of which only becomes apparent as the knowledge and understanding of the reader grow. And all are integral parts of one great Revelation intended to raise mankind to a new level of its evolution.

330.7 It may well be that we shall find some statement is couched in terms familiar to the audience to which it was first addressed, but is strange now to us. For example, in answer to a question about Bahá'u'lláh's reference to the "fourth heaven" in the Kitáb-i-Iqán, the Guardian's secretary wrote on his behalf:

330.7aAs to the ascent of Christ to the fourth heaven, as revealed in the glorious "Book of Íqán," he [the Guardian] stated that the "fourth heaven" is a term used and a belief held by the early astronomers. The followers of the Shí'ih sect likewise held this belief. As the Kitáb-i-Íqán was revealed for the guidance of that sect, this term was used in conformity with the concepts of its followers.

(Translated from the Arabic)

330.7bIn studying such statements, however, we must have the humility to appreciate the limitations of our own knowledge and outlook, and strive always to understand the purpose of Bahá'u'lláh in making them, trying to look upon Him with His own eyes, as it were.

330.8 It is hoped that the above explanations will prove useful to you in your study of the subjects in which you have expressed interest.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
331
Martyrdom of Four Bahá'ís in Qazvín
and Surrounding Areas
12 July 1982
To National Spiritual Assemblies
331.1WITH GREAT SORROW INDIGNATION ANNOUNCE FURTHER MARTYRDOMS FOUR MORE VALIANT DEVOTED SERVANTS BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, ALL PROMINENT BAHÁ'ÍS IN QAZVÍN AND SURROUNDING AREAS.331-1
MUHAMMAD MANSÚRÍ
JADÍDU'LLÁH ASHRAF
MUHAMMAD 'ABBÁSÍ
MANÚCHIHR FARZÁNIH-MU'AYYAD
331.2PRESSURES AGAINST BAHÁ'ÍS IRAN MOUNTING, THEIR SCOPE WIDENING, ENGULFING BAHÁ'ÍS ALL WALKS OF LIFE....
Universal House of Justice
332
Election of Glenford Mitchell to the
Universal House of Justice
15 July 1982
To National Spiritual Assemblies
332.1 WARMLY WELCOME NEWLY ELECTED MEMBER HOUSE JUSTICE GLENFORD MITCHELL.
Universal House of Justice
333
Guidelines Concerning the Registration of
Children and Youth
19 July 1982
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
333.1 The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 3 June 1982 mentioning some of the misunderstandings which still exist concerning the registration of Bahá'í children and youth, and it has instructed us to send you the following clarifications.
333.2 The beloved Guardian's secretary wrote on his behalf to your National Spiritual Assembly on 17 June 1954:
333.2aAlthough the children of Bahá'í parents are considered to be Bahá'ís, there is no objection at the present time, for purposes of keeping a correct census, and also ascertaining whether the young people are, sincerely, believers, and willing to do their share in service to the Faith, to asking them to make a declaration of their intention, at the age of fifteen or so. Originally the Guardian understands this was adopted in America to enable young Bahá'í men to make certain arrangements in connection with their application for noncombatant status, upon their attaining the age of military service. There is really nothing about it in the Teachings or in the Administration. Your Assembly is free to do as it pleases in this matter.
333.2b He has also written that in deciding who is to be regarded as a

believer, Assemblies must refrain as far as possible from drawing rigidly the line of demarcation.

333.3 At the present time, with so many more young people entering the Faith, and with such a great increase in mobility from country to country, the House of Justice feels that it is necessary to establish certain guidelines which will apply to all National Spiritual Assemblies in this delicate issue, while matters of procedure are left to each National Assembly to decide according to the conditions in its own area of jurisdiction. In the current phase of the Seven Year Plan, for example, the House of Justice has called on Assemblies to keep registers of the birth of Bahá'í children, and great stress is being laid on the Bahá'í education of children and on the activities of Bahá'í youth.

333.4 In letters replying to questions on the registration of children and youth the Universal House of Justice has attempted to avoid laying down rulings that are universally applicable. However, for the assistance of National Spiritual Assemblies it is now providing the following summary of guidelines and elucidations that have been given. We are to emphasize that no hard and fast lines should be drawn, and procedural matters must never be allowed to eclipse the spiritual reality of belief, which is an intensely personal relationship between the soul and its Creator.

Bahá'í Children

333.5 Unlike the children of some other religions, Bahá'í children do not automatically inherit the Faith of their parents. However, the parents are responsible for the upbringing and spiritual welfare of their children, and Spiritual Assemblies have the duty to assist parents, if necessary, in fulfilling these obligations, so that the children will be reared in the light of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and from their earliest years will learn to love God and His Manifestations and to walk in the way of God's Law. It is natural, therefore, to regard the children of Bahá'ís as Bahá'ís unless there is a reason to conclude the contrary. It is quite wrong to think of Bahá'í children as existing in some sort of spiritual limbo until the age of fifteen at which point they can "become" Bahá'ís. In the light of this one can conclude the following:

333.6 Children born to a Bahá'í couple are regarded as Bahá'ís from the beginning of their lives, and their births should be registered by the Spiritual Assembly.

333.7 The birth of a child to a couple, one of whom is a Bahá'í, should also be registered unless the non-Bahá'í parent objects.

333.8 A Spiritual Assembly may accept the declaration of faith of a child of non-Bahá'í parents, and register him as a Bahá'í child, provided the parents give their consent.

333.9 In the cases of children whose parents become Bahá'ís, much depends upon the ages and reactions of the children concerned. They will require great love and understanding, and each case must be judged on its own merits. This applies to an added degree, of course, if only one of the parents has accepted the Faith, in which case the attitude of the other parent is an important factor; the aim of the Bahá'ís should be to foster family unity.

The important thing is that the children, whether registered as Bahá'ís or not, should be made to feel welcome at Bahá'í children's classes and other community gatherings.

333.10 It is within a Spiritual Assembly's discretion to request Bahá'í children to undertake work of which they are capable in service to the Faith, such as service on suitable committees.

Bahá'í Youth

333.11 Fifteen is the age at which a child attains spiritual maturity, and thus it is at the age of fifteen that a Bahá'í child assumes the responsibility for obeying such laws as those of fasting and prayer, and for affirming of his own volition his faith in Bahá'u'lláh.

333.12 At the present time the Universal House of Justice prefers to leave it to each National Spiritual Assembly to decide what method is to be followed in ascertaining the attitude of Bahá'í children when they reach fifteen, provided that it is clear that a Bahá'í child is not becoming a Bahá'í at that age, but is simply affirming his faith on his own behalf. One Spiritual Assembly, for example, sends a very kind letter to each Bahá'í child in its community on the occasion of his fifteenth birthday (unless, of course, it has reason to doubt that the child in question is a Bahá'í), explaining the meaning of attaining the age of maturity, and extending the good wishes of the Assembly for his future services to the Cause. This does not require an active response from every child but does provide each with an opportunity to make his position clear if desired. In whatever procedure it adopts a National Spiritual Assembly must wisely steer a course between seeming to doubt the faith of a child who has been brought up as a devout Bahá'í on the one hand, and seeming to compel a child to be a member of the Bahá'í community against his will, on the other.

333.13 If the Assembly ascertains from a youth that he does not, in fact, accept the Faith, even if he has been brought up in a Bahá'í family, it should not register him as a Bahá'í youth, and such a youth, since he is now mature and responsible for his own actions, would be in the same situation as any other non-Bahá'í youth who is in close contact with the Bahá'í community. He should be treated with warmth and friendship.

333.14 It may happen that a Bahá'í child, on reaching the age of fifteen is not entirely sure in his own mind. This can well happen if one of the parents is not a Bahá'í or if the parents have accepted the Faith not long before. In such a case the Assembly should not assume automatically that he is not a Bahá'í. If the youth wishes to attend Feasts and is content to continue to be regarded as a Bahá'í as he was when a child, this should be permitted, but in the process of deepening his understanding of the Faith his parents and the Assembly should explain to him that it is his responsibility to soon make his position clear.

333.15 Declarations of faith from non-Bahá'í youth between the ages of 15 and 21, whose parents are not Bahá'ís, may be accepted without the consent of their parents unless this is contrary to the civil law. However, the importance of respect for one's parents must not be forgotten, and such youth may need to be counseled to give heed to their parents' wishes as far as the

degree of their activity on behalf of the Faith is concerned, and even, if the parents are very antagonistic, to be completely inactive for a time.

Administrative Maturity

333.16 It is stated in the Constitution of a National Spiritual Assembly that upon attaining the age of 21 years a Bahá'í is eligible to vote and to hold elective office. Some National Spiritual Assemblies in the past, and indeed a few at the present time, have required a specific action on the part of a Bahá'í youth to claim his voting rights on attaining the age of 21. The House of Justice does not wish to make a general ruling on this point, since in some circumstances this may be a necessary protection to the Faith. It does, however, discourage National Assemblies from making such a requirement unless they deem it essential.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

334

Commemoration at the World Center of the
Fiftieth Anniversary of the Passing
of the Greatest Holy Leaf and Inauguration of
the Seat of the Universal House of Justice

26 July 1982

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

334.1 We have been asked by the Universal House of Justice to share with you news of the observances at the World Center which marked the Fiftieth Anniversary of the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf.

334.2 Before gathering around her monument for prayers, at the hour coincident with that of her passing, the friends at the World Center visited the Holy Shrines at midnight for recitation of the Tablets of Visitation. This observance was followed by an all-day seminar, on Saturday, 17 July, held in the main Hall on the ground floor of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice.

334.3 It was a source of deep satisfaction to the Universal House of Justice that the first gathering of the friends in this beautiful setting should have been such a meeting, dedicated to the memory of the Greatest Holy Leaf, whose resting-place is embosomed in the heart of that consecrated spot enfolded by the "far-flung arc" on which now already stand two of those structures constituting the World Administrative Center of the Faith.

334.4 This highly befitting inauguration of the use of the building, held in the presence of the three Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land, is a prelude to the fast-approaching day when the Universal House of Justice and its several Departments will occupy this majestic structure.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

335

Execution of 'Abbás-'Alí Sádiqípúr in Shiraz

2 August 1982

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

335.1SADDENED REPORT YET ANOTHER STALWART SUPPORTER GREATEST NAME ÍRAN ‘ABBÁS-‘ALÍ SÁDIQÍPÚR EXECUTED 15 JULY SHIRAZ. CHARGES PUBLISHED LEADING NEWSPAPER IRAN WERE BASED HIS CONNECTION FAITH, INCLUDING BEING ACTIVE BAHÁ’Í. SUCH CHARGES SIMILAR THOSE RESULTING EXECUTION OTHER PROMINENT BAHÁ’ÍS CONFIRM EVIL INTENTIONS AGAINST FRIENDS CRADLE FAITH....
Universal House of Justice
336
Elucidation of the Principle of Confidentiality
2 August 1982
To a National Spiritual Assembly
Dear Bahá’í Friends,
336.1 The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 17 June 1982 and has instructed us to send you the following reply.
336.2 The House of Justice is very sorry to learn that the problems which you instance have become a threat to the unity of your Assembly, and it hopes and prays that this difficulty will quickly be overcome. It feels that there are a number of distinct but related principles which are involved in the situations you describe, and that the issues will become clearer if they are considered separately.
336.3 Every institution in the Faith has certain matters which it considers should be kept confidential, and any member who is privy to such confidential information is obliged to preserve the confidentiality within the institution where he learned it. Such matters, however, are but a small portion of the business of any Bahá’í institution. Most subjects dealt with are of common interest and can be discussed openly with anyone. Where no confidentiality is involved the institutions must strive to avoid the stifling atmosphere of secrecy; on the other hand, every believer must know that he can confide a personal problem to an institution of the Faith, with the assurance that knowledge of the matter will remain confidential.
336.4 Members of Assemblies, whether they are assistants or not, are obviously in a position to receive confidential information as individuals from several sources. It is an important principle of the Faith that one must not promise what one is not going to fulfil. Therefore, if a Bahá’í accepts confidential information either by virtue of his profession (e.g., as a doctor, a lawyer, etc.), or by permitting another person to confide in him, he is in duty bound to preserve that confidentiality.
336.5 In the relationship between assistants and the National Spiritual Assembly no problems should arise, because the functions are entirely separate. An assistant is appointed by an Auxiliary Board member to help him in a specified area of the territory and he functions as an assistant only in relation to that area. Assistants, like Auxiliary Board members, function individually, not as a consultative body. Assistants who are members of a National Assembly or a national committee do not function as assistants in relation to that body, and they have the same duty to observe the confidentiality of its consultations, and of matters considered by the Assembly to be confidential, as does any other member. An assistant can, of course, be a member of a Local Spiritual Assembly, but his task here as an

assistant is to help the Spiritual Assembly to function harmoniously and efficiently in the discharge of its duties and this will hardly succeed if he gives the Assembly the feeling that he is reporting privately everything it does to the Auxiliary Board member. He should, on the contrary, do all he can to foster an atmosphere of warm and loving collaboration between the Local Assembly and the Board member.

336.6 In answer to your fourth question the House of Justice instructs us to say that an element of judgement is required in deciding what are and what are not "administrative" matters. Immoral actions of believers, for example, generally become subjects for administrative action only when they are blatant or flagrant, and reflect on the good name of the Faith. If a believer turns to an assistant or Auxiliary Board member for advice on a personal matter it is for the assistant or Auxiliary Board member to decide whether he should advise the believer to turn to his Spiritual Assembly, whether he should himself give advice and, in either case, whether he should report the matter to the Counselors, or to the Local Assembly, which, of course, would depend upon the degree of confidentiality he had undertaken to observe. Likewise, it is for the Counselor to decide whether it is a matter of which the National Assembly should be informed. All this is, of course, within the general context that, apart from matters which ought to remain confidential, the more freely information is shared between the institutions of the Faith the better.

336.7 National Assembly members themselves must exercise such discretion, and it should be clear to the believers that they are not justified in assuming that because a matter is known to individual members of the Assembly it is therefore before the Assembly itself. If a believer wishes to bring a matter to the Assembly's attention he should do so explicitly and officially. If a member of the Assembly knows of a personal problem, and if he has not undertaken to keep it confidential, he may bring it to the Assembly's attention if he feels it would be in the interests of the Faith for him to do so, but he is not obliged to.

336.8 The House of Justice does not wish to elaborate these comments beyond the above, and believes that your Assembly will be able to answer the questions that you pose in the light of
these principles. The House of Justice will pray in the Holy Shrines for speedy strengthening of the unity of your Assembly and for the growth of closer collaboration between your body and the Board of Counselors.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

337

Message to the International Conference in
Quito, Ecuador—6–8 August 1982

6 August 1982

To the followers of Bahá'u'lláh gathered at
the International Conference in Quito, Ecuador

Beloved friends,

337.1 We hail with joyous hearts and eager anticipation the soldiers of Bahá'u'lláh's army of light gathered together in Quito, the capital

city of the Republic of Ecuador, to do honor and homage to the blessed memory of Bahíyyih Khánum, the Greatest Holy Leaf, the most outstanding heroine of the Bahá'í Dispensation, the fiftieth anniversary of whose ascension was so recently commemorated throughout the world.

337.2 Conscious of the beloved Master's plea to promulgate the oneness of mankind to a spiritually impoverished humanity, inspired by the memory of the Hand of the Cause Dr. Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir whose mortal remains are interred in the soil of Quito, and deriving spiritual stimulus from the Mother Temple for Latin America, the friends are reminded of the galvanizing words of our beloved Guardian addressed to "the eager, the warm-hearted, the spiritually minded and staunch members of these Latin American Bahá'í communities": "Let them ponder the honor which the Author of the Revelation Himself has chosen to confer upon their countries, the obligations which that honor automatically brings in its wake, the opportunities it offers, the power it releases for the removal of all obstacles, however formidable, which may be encountered in their path, and the promise of guidance it implies ..."

337.3 Praiseworthy indeed are the achievements thus far made by the communities of South and Central America and the islands of the Caribbean in the first half of the Seven Year Plan. Full advantage should be taken of the current high tide of proclamation engendered by the crisis in Iran to attract to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh earnest and seeking souls from every stratum of society, thereby enriching the spiritual and material diversity of our communities. Great effort should be made to utilize more fully the valuable possibilities of radio and television as a means of reaching the vast multitudes whose hearts and minds offer fertile soil for the planting of the seeds of the Faith. All elements of the Bahá'í community, particularly the women and youth, should arise as one soul to shoulder the responsibilities laid upon them. All outstanding goals of the Seven Year Plan should be pursued with enthusiasm and assurance of their accomplishment.

337.4 All National Spiritual Assemblies during the remaining fast-fleeting years of this radiant century, in collaboration with the Institutions of the Faith standing ready and eager to assist them, must greatly reinforce the foundations of maturing National and Local Spiritual Assemblies to enable them to cope successfully with the multifarious and challenging problems that will confront them.

337.5 At a moment in Bahá'í history when the persecuted, beleaguered friends in the Cradle of the Faith heroically continue to face the trials ordained for them in the Major Plan of God, meeting martyrdom, as need be, with joyous acceptance, it behoves the friends throughout the Bahá'í world to endeavor by their own greatly increased acts of self-abnegation to make fruitful the spiritual energies released by the sacrifices of their stricken brethren.

337.6 May you all immerse yourselves in the spirit of the saintly life of the Greatest Holy Leaf, whose self-sacrificing devotion to her beloved Father's Cause is a worthy example for every believer to emulate.

The Universal House of Justice

338
Message to the International Conference in
Lagos, Nigeria—19–22 August 1982
19 August 1982
To the Friends gathered at the Bahá'í International Conference at Lagos
Dearly loved Friends,
338.1 With hearts overflowing with love for the people of Africa, so richly endowed with the gifts of the spirit, so abundantly and repeatedly blessed since the dawn of this Revelation, and so gloriously promising in the unfoldment of their hidden potentialities, we welcome the friends gathered at this Conference held in one of the most important capitals of their emergent continent.
338.2 As we review the annals of our Faith we see that since the days of the Blessed Beauty and up to the early 1950s, the activities of the friends in Africa had produced the formation of one National Spiritual Assembly with its seat in Cairo, Egypt, the opening of 12 countries to the light of the Faith, and some 50 localities established throughout its vast lands. It was at such a time that the beloved Guardian ushered in the first African Teaching Plan, to be followed during the remaining years of his ministry and in subsequent years after his passing, by a series of challenging and bravely executed plans designed to implant the banner of the Faith throughout the length and breadth of that continent and its neighboring islands. Today, after the lapse of a little over three decades, we stand in awe as we view with admiration one of the most valiant contingents of the Army of Light, guided by its own Board of Counselors, led and administered by 37 National Spiritual Assemblies and 4990 Local Spiritual Assemblies, privileged to serve an eager and radiant community of believers drawn from 1152 African tribes residing in 29,000 localities.
338.3 How wonderful that it has been possible to convene this Conference on African soil with such a large number of African friends in attendance, in loving memory of the most distinguished heroine of the Bahá'í Dispensation, the eldest daughter of the King of Glory, who lived a long life of sacrificial service to the Cause of her Beloved Father. Her meekness, her unassuming nature, the purity of her soul, the sensitivity of her heart, the calmness of her demeanor, her patience and long-suffering in trials, and above all, her unshakeable faith, her tenderness and love, and the spirit of self-renunciation which she evinced throughout her blessed life, are outstanding characteristics that we can well emulate, particularly in Africa, where these heavenly qualities play such an important part in attracting the souls and winning the hearts to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.
338.4 We rejoice in the knowledge that some communities have already initiated in her name teaching and consolidation campaigns of far-reaching magnitude; that many Bahá'í women, inspired by her example, are accepting an ever-greater share of responsibility in running the affairs of the community; and that numerous newsletters are reflecting eulogies of the station she occupied, the sufferings she endured, and the heroism she demonstrated in her love for the glorious Cause of her Lord.
338.5 The fortunes of the Seven Year Plan in Africa are in the balance. As

we draw near to the midway point in the unfoldment of the processes it has set in motion, we call upon its valiant promoters on the African mainland and its surrounding islands, to take stock of their position, to reappraise their progress, and to concentrate their resources on whatever portions of the goals are as yet unachieved. Chief among its objectives are a widespread recruitment of many more supporters of the Most Great Name, the deepening of the individual believers, for the fulfillment of all goals ultimately depends upon them, and a notable increase in the number of newly formed as well as firmly rooted Local Spiritual Assemblies, to serve as bases for the manifold activities of the community, including the Bahá'í education of children, a greater participation of women and youth in Bahá'í activities, and the formulation of ways and means to enrich the spiritual lives of the "noble" and "purehearted" believers of a "FAST-AWAKENING CONTINENT."

338.6 May the participants in this Conference carry to the mass of their devoted fellow believers, whose personal circumstances have made it impossible for them to attend, the spirit of joy and optimism which we hope will be generated at this gathering and the flames of enthusiasm which we pray will be enkindled in their hearts.

338.7 May the memory of the Greatest Holy Leaf, who through her life of heroic self-sacrifice has left to us "a legacy that time can never dim," inspire the friends in every country of the continent to rededicate themselves to the Cause of God, not to allow any opportunity for mentioning the Faith to slip by unutilized, and not to permit one day of their lives to pass without a noble effort to draw nearer to the good pleasure of the Blessed Beauty.

338.8 Our fervent prayers surround you as you proceed with your deliberations.

The Universal House of Justice

339

Execution of ʻAlí Naʻímíyán in Urúmíyyih

30 August 1982

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

339.1WITH SORROWFUL HEARTS ANNOUNCE EXECUTION ON 11 AUGUST IN URÚMÍYYIH ACTIVE BAHÁ'Í ʻALÍ NAʻÍMÍYÁN AFTER BEING IMPRISONED ONE YEAR.

339.2 PRESSURES INTENSIFYING AGAINST BELIEVERS IRAN....

Universal House of Justice

340

Message to the International Conference in Montreal, Canada—3–5 September 1982

2 September 1982

To the Friends gathered at the Bahá'í International Conference in Montreal

Dearly loved Friends,

340.1 Seventy years ago ʻAbdu'l-Bahá visited Montreal, hallowing it forever. The visit of the beloved Master to America, the laying by Him of the cornerstone of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the West and the revelation by Him five years later of the Tablets of the Divine Plan, which invest its chief executors and their allies with spiritual primacy, constitute successive stages

in the gradual disclosure of a mission whose seeds can be found in the Báb's address to the people of the West, urging them to aid God's Holy Cause. This mission was given specific direction through Bahá'u'lláh's summons to the rulers of America, calling on them to heal the injuries of the oppressed and, with the "rod of the commandments" of their Lord, to bring their corrective influence to bear upon the injustices perpetrated by the tyrannical and the ungodly. 'Abdu'l-Bahá revealed in clearer details than those given by either the Báb or Bahá'u'lláh the nature and scope of that glorious mission. In His eternal Tablets unveiling America's spiritual destiny the Master wrote, "The continent of America is, in the eyes of the one true God, the land wherein the splendors of His light shall be revealed, where the mysteries of His Faith shall be unveiled, where the righteous will abide and the free assemble. Therefore, every section thereof is blessed ..." and, referring to Canada, He asserted that its future "is very great, and the events connected with it infinitely glorious." Even more specifically, He expressed the "hope that in the future Montreal may become so stirred, that the melody of the Kingdom may travel to all parts of the world from that Dominion and the breaths of the Holy Spirit may spread from that center to the East and the West of America."

340.2 After the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and under the guidance of the Guardian the Bahá'ís of the world witnessed with awe and admiration the North American community arising as one man to champion the Administrative Order taking shape on their own soil, to embark upon the first collective teaching plan in the annals of the Faith, to lead the entire Bahá'í world in intercontinental teaching campaigns, to demonstrate with devotion their exemplary firmness in the Covenant, to extend their support and protection and relief to the oppressed followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the East and particularly in His native land, and to send forth valiant pioneers and traveling teachers to every continent of the globe. These marvellous and noble exertions, calling for the expenditure of resources almost beyond their means, paved the way for the achievement of glorious victories which synchronized with a series of world convulsions, signs of universal commotion and travail, and with repeated crises within the Faith. And in this day, while the blood of the martyrs of Persia is once again watering the roots of the Cause of God and when the international outlook is impenetrably and ominously dark, the Bahá'ís of North America are in the van of the embattled legions of the Cause.

340.3 Less than a score of years remain until the end of this century which the Master called "the century of light," and He clearly foresaw that ere its termination an advanced stage would have been reached in the striving towards the political, racial, and religious unity of the peoples of the world, unfolding new horizons in scientific accomplishments, universal undertakings and world solidarity. The calls of the Master and the Guardian plainly summon the Bahá'ís of the Americas to prodigies of proclamation, of teaching and of service. The American melting pot of peoples needs the unifying power of the new Faith of God to achieve its fusion. The representative character of the Bahá'í community should therefore be reinforced through the attraction, conversion and support of an ever-growing number of new believers from the

diverse elements constituting the population of that vast mainland and particularly from among Indians and Eskimos about whose future the Master wrote in such glowing terms. In the glorious freedom which enables you to proclaim, to teach and confirm, to educate and deepen yourselves and others in the verities of the Faith, you have precious opportunities of service denied to many of your fellow believers elsewhere. If your blessed communities are to lead the world spiritually, as the Master envisaged, then the Faith must strike deeper roots in your hearts, the spirit of its teachings must be exemplified in ever greater measure in your lives, and God's Holy Cause must be taught and proclaimed with ever greater intensity. In His immortal Tablets addressed to the Bahá'ís of North America 'Abdu'l-Bahá assures each one of you that "whosoever arises in this day to diffuse the divine fragrances, the cohorts of the Kingdom of God shall confirm him ..."

340.4 You are met in this Conference to review the progress of the Seven Year Plan, to be confirmed, galvanized and sent into action. It is not enough for the North American believers to stand at the forefront of the Bahá'í world; the scope of their exertions must be steadily widened. In the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "The range of your future achievements still remains undisclosed. I fervently hope that in the near future the whole earth may be stirred and shaken by the results of your achievements." "Exert yourselves; your mission is unspeakably glorious. Should success crown your enterprise, America will assuredly evolve into a center from which waves of spiritual power will emanate ..." The valiant countries of North America should in the second half of the Seven Year Plan ensure that an ever-swelling number of pioneers and traveling teachers will arise and travel to and settle in countries which need their support, however inhospitable the local conditions may be, ceaselessly endeavoring to contribute to the expansion of the teaching work and the strengthening of the foundations of the communities they are called upon to assist. They should, moreover, continue their defense of the downtrodden, open their doors to their Bahá'í brethren who are seeking refuge in their lands, provide technological expertise to communities which need it, and supply an uninterrupted flow of resources to support the ever-increasing international projects of the Faith.

340.5 In their respective homefronts the Bahá'ís of North America should intensify the drive to attract the masses to God's Holy Cause, to provide the means for their integration into the work of the Faith, and should become standard-bearers of an embryonic Bahá'í society which is destined to gradually emerge under the influence of the integrating and civilizing forces emanating from the Source of God's Revelation. Such noble objectives cannot be fully achieved unless and until local communities become those collective centers of unity ordained in our Writings, and every individual earnestly strives to support the structure and ensure the stability of the Administrative Edifice of the Faith.

340.6 How fitting that this Conference, and the one held for Bahá'í children on a scale unprecedented in North America, should commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the passing of Bahíyyih Khánum, the Greatest Holy Leaf, whose love for the North American believers and whose admiration for

their heroism were so deep and so sustained and whose natural fondness for children was so characteristic of Bahá'u'lláh. May each of you emulate her unswerving devotion and loyalty to the Covenant of God and her perseverance in the path of His love. We shall mark the first day of your Conference, together with the one being held concurrently in Canberra, with prayers at the Holy Shrines that all may "be assisted in ... service and, like unto brilliant stars, shine in these regions with the light of ... guidance."

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

341

Message to the International Conference in Canberra, Australia—2–5 September 1982

2 September 1982

To the Friends Gathered in the
Asian-Australasian Bahá'í Conference in Canberra

Dearly loved Friends,

341.1 These are momentous times. The institutions of the old world order are crumbling and in disarray. Materialism, greed, corruption and conflict are infecting the social order with a grave malaise from which it is helpless to extricate itself. With every passing day it becomes more and more evident that no time must be lost in applying the remedy prescribed by Bahá'u'lláh, and it is to this task that Bahá'ís everywhere must bend their energies and commit their resources.

341.2 New conditions now present themselves, making it easier to accomplish our purpose. Galvanized by the fires of fierce opposition and nurtured by the blood of the martyrs, the forces of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh are, at long last, emerging from obscurity. Never before in history has the Faith been the subject of such universal attention and comment. Eminent statesmen, parliamentarians, journalists, writers, educators, commentators, clergymen and other leaders of thought have raised their voices and set their pens to expressions of horror and revulsion at the persecutions of our brethren in Iran on the one hand, and to paeans of praise and admiration of the noble principles which motivate the followers of the Most Great Name on the other.

341.3 The five international conferences of the Seven Year Plan were called to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf, to discuss anew the present condition of the Faith in a turbulent world society, to examine the great opportunities for its future growth and development, and to focus attention on the unfulfilled goals of the Plan. We are certain that the contemplation of the gathered friends on the sterling qualities which distinguished the heroic life of the Greatest Holy Leaf will help them to persevere in their noble endeavors.

341.4 This particular Conference is unique in many ways. The geographical area of concern spans over half the globe, including within its purview all the vast continent of Asia as well as the water hemisphere which comprises all of Australasia. Within the continent of Asia is the "cradle of the principal religions of mankind ... above whose horizons, in modern times, the suns of two independent Revelations ... have successively arisen ... on whose Western

extremity the Qiblih of the Bahá'í world has been definitely established ..." The first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Bahá'í world was erected on this continent under the direction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and now another is arising on the Indian subcontinent in the midst of the world's largest Bahá'í community. In Australasia the Mother Temple of the Antipodes, dedicated to the Glory of God just two decades ago, looks out across the vast Pacific Ocean in whose "midmost heart" still another Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is being built on the mountain slope above Apia in the country of the first reigning monarch to embrace the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

341.5 The population of Asia and Australasia is well over half the world population. The area includes Asiatic USSR and mainland China, accounting for more than one thousand million souls who are, for the most part, untouched by the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. Obviously present conditions in these areas call for the exercise of the utmost wisdom and circumspection. Yet this vast segment of humanity cannot be ignored.

341.6 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:

341.6aA 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.

341.7 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.

341.8 We are approaching the midway point of the Seven Year Plan. As we review our accomplishments with respect to the goals of that Plan, it is essential that we fortify ourselves for the tasks ahead, and that we rededicate ourselves to that Cause for which our beloved martyrs rendered their last full measure of devotion. We can do no less!

341.9 We shall be with you in spirit during your important deliberations. Our prayers ascend at the Holy Threshold for the success of your Conference and the International Conference being held concurrently in Montreal. We shall ardently supplicate that the blessings and confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh will descend upon you and surround you wherever you go in service to His Faith.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Universal House of Justice

342
Comments on the First Danish Bahá'í
Women's Conference
20 September 1982
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Denmark
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
342.1 The Universal House of Justice was very pleased to receive your report of the first Danish Women's Seminar, submitted with your letter of 31 August 1982, and also a photograph of those attending.
342.2 Judging by the reactions of the participants, this seems to have been a very valuable experience for which there was a definite need. From the earliest days of the Faith women have played a prominent role, and especially in the West where in the beginning their influence predominated. It is the hope of the House of Justice that the Bahá'í women of Denmark will exert a growing influence on the community, increasing its spirituality, forging stronger ties of unity, consolidating its administrative institutions and increasing the rate of its expansion throughout Danish society.
342.3 The House of Justice assures your Assembly of its prayers at the Sacred Threshold for the confirmation of your noble endeavors and for the blessings of Bahá'u'lláh to reinforce the efforts of every member of the Danish Bahá'í community.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
343
Guidelines for Behavior of Children at Feast
14 October 1982
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
343.1 The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 14 September 1982 concerning the role of Local Spiritual Assemblies in guiding parents and children in standards of behavior for children at community gatherings, such as Nineteen Day Feasts and Bahá'í Holy Day observances.
343.2 Further to the letter we wrote on its behalf on 28 June 1977, the House of Justice has instructed us to say that children should be trained to understand the spiritual significance of the gatherings of the followers of the Blessed Beauty, and to appreciate the honor and bounty of being able to take part in them, whatever their outward form may be. It is realized that some Bahá'í observances are lengthy and it is difficult for very small children to remain quiet for so long. In such cases one or other of the parents may have to miss part of the meeting in order to care for the child. The Spiritual Assembly can also perhaps help the parents by providing for a children's observance, suited to their capacities, in a separate room during part of the community's observance. Attendance at the whole of the adult celebration thus becomes a sign of growing maturity and a distinction to be earned by good behavior.
343.3 In any case, the House of Justice points out that parents are responsible for their children and should make them behave when they attend

Bahá'í meetings. If children persist in creating a disturbance they should be taken out of the meeting. This is not merely necessary to ensure the properly dignified conduct of Bahá'í meetings but is an aspect of the training of children in courtesy, consideration for others, reverence, and obedience to their parents.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

344

Intensification of Oppression of Iranian Bahá'ís

18 November 1982

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

344.1 CRUEL SYSTEMATIC OPPRESSION LONG-SUFFERING IRANIAN FRIENDS HAS REACHED NEW LEVEL INTENSITY. DWINDLING SOURCES THEIR LIVELIHOOD FURTHER SEVERELY CURTAILED. DISMISSAL FROM JOBS, CANCELLATION TRADE LICENSES, CONFISCATION PRIVATE PROPERTIES UNABATED. HOMELESS THOUSANDS THROWN ON MERC RELATIVES FRIENDS. DOORS SCHOOLS CLOSED TO INCREASING NUMBER CHILDREN. FRESH BLOOD WANTONLY SPILLED AFTER LULL EXECUTIONS.

344.2 WITH HEAVY HEARTS ANNOUNCE HABÍBU'LLÁH AWJÍ, ENTHUSIASTIC ACTIVE BELIEVER, HANGED SHIRAZ 16 NOVEMBER. RECENT EVIDENCE CONFIRMS MARTYRDO SOME TIME AGO OF TWO STEADFAST UPHOLDERS CAUSE: YADU'LLÁH SIPIHR-ARFA' EXECUTED BY FIRING SQUAD TEHRAN, MANÚCHIHR VAFÁ'Í MURDERED IN HIS HOME TEHRAN BY UNKNOWN ASSAILANT WHO ATTACHED NOTE TO BODY GIVING AS REASON FOR DASTARDLY DEED INNOCENT VICTIM'S BAHÁ'Í BELIEF....

Universal House of Justice

345

Execution of Dr. Díyá'u'lláh Ahrárí in Shiraz

23 November 1982

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

345.1HEARTS SORELY GRIEVED EXECUTION DOCTOR DÍYÁ'U'LLÁH AHRÁRÍ BY FIRING SQUAD SHIRAZ 21 NOVEMBER. TRAGEDY OCCURRING SO QUICKLY UPON HEELS RECENTLY ANNOUNCED HANGING HABÍBU'LLÁH AWJÍ AROUSES DEEP CONCERN FATE THREE OTHER FAITHFUL SOULS TOGETHER WITH WHOM THESE TWO WERE CONDEMNED TO D BY RELIGIOUS COURT SHIRAZ LAST SEPTEMBER. JUDGE AT TRIAL OFFERED ALL FIVE 30 MINUTES TO RECANT AND BE FREE OR FACE DEATH SENTENCE. THEY INSTANTLY REAFFIRMED THEIR FAITH. FRESH MARTYRDOMS HIGHLIGHT INTENSITY PERSECUTIONS SHIRAZ WHERE WITHIN MONTHS 40 FRIENDS WERE ROUNDED UP AND IMPRISONED ADDING TO STILL OTHERS PREVIOUSLY ARRESTED....

Universal House of Justice

346

Passing of the Hand of the Cause of God Paul Haney

5 December 1982

To National Spiritual Assemblies

346.1WITH STRICKEN HEARTS ANNOUNCE SUDDEN IRREPARABLE LOSS THROUGH AUTOMOBIL ACCIDENT 3 DECEMBER HIGHLY DISTINGUISHED GREATLY PRIZED HAND CAUSE GOD STAUNC DEFENDER COVENANT PAUL HANEY.

346.2 THIS DISTINGUISHED SERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH WAS BLESSED CHILDHOOD THROUGH ATTAINMENT PRESENCE 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ. HIS NATURAL GENTLENESS, GENUINE

HUMILITY, UNAFFECTED UNBOUNDED LOVE, HIS UPRIGHTNESS, INTEGRITY HIS SINGLE-MINDED DEVOTION CAUSE SINCE YOUTHFUL YEARS, HIS UNFAILING RELIABILITY, METICULOUS ATTENTION DETAIL, CHARACTERIZED HIS HISTORIC SERVICES BOTH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS. SPANNING MORE THAN HALF CENTURY HIS TIRELESS LABORS INCLUDED LONGTIME MEMBERSHIP AMERICAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. SINCE 1954 HE CONSECRATED HIS ENERGIES AS MEMBER UNIQUE COMPANY CHIEF STEWARDS FAITH AND LATER AS MEMBER BODY HANDS CAUSE RESIDING HOLY LAND AT ONE OF MOST CRITICAL PERIODS BAHÁ'Í HISTORY. LAST DECADE HIS EARTHLY LIFE WAS FULLY DEDICATED DEVELOPMENT NEWLY FORMED INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTER. GENERATIONS YET UNB WILL GLORY IN HIS IMPERISHABLE ACHIEVEMENTS AND BE INSPIRED BY HIS UNIQUE FORTITUDE.

346.3 ARDENTLY SUPPLICATING HOLY THRESHOLD PROGRESS HIS NOBLE SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM. ADVISE HOLD THROUGHOUT BAHÁ'Í WORLD INCLUDING ALL MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁRS MEMORIAL GATHERINGS BEFITTING HIS HIGH RANK AND HIS MERITORIOUS SERVICES.

Universal House of Justice

347

Imprisonment of More Than Eighty Bahá'ís in Shiraz

6 December 1982

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

347.1DISTRESSED FURTHER ARRESTS SHIRAZ INCREASING NUMBER IMPRISONED FRIENDS TO MORE THAN 80 LAST WEEK....

Universal House of Justice

348

Establishment of First Bahá'í Radio Station
in North America

13 December 1982

To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of United States

348.1HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS ACHIEVEMENT LONG AWAITED STEP ESTABLISHMENT FIRST BAHÁ'Í RADIO STATION NORTH AMERICA ENABLING YOU PIONEER MODEL PROGRAM CONSOLIDATION UPLIFTMENT BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY SOUTH CAROLINA. PRAYING YOUR WISE MOBILIZATION BOUNTEOUS RESOURCES FOR MEDIA DEVELOPMENT IN UNITED STATES BEHALF BELOVED FAITH PROVIDING FURTHER IMPETUS TEACHING SOUTHERN STATES. LOVING GREETINGS,

Universal House of Justice

349

Torture of Bahá'ís Imprisoned in Shiraz

28 December 1982

To National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

349.1 The Universal House of Justice has received distressing news that the friends who are imprisoned in Shiraz are being tortured. It is not known how many Bahá'ís are being subjected to this cruelty or what form of punishment is involved. Reliable reports indicate, however, that the reason for the torture is to force them to recant their faith and induce them to give the names of active members of the Bahá'í community....

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat
350
Call for Another Day of Prayer
29 December 1982
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
350.1 As you know, the persecution of our friends in Iran continues unabated, and our oppressed brethren are bearing this ordeal with resignation and valor. The Universal House of Justice feels that the time has come to once again call for a day of prayer, and it asks that you inform the members of your community to offer special prayers on the Feast of Jamál (Beauty) on Thursday, 28 April 1983.
350.2 The House of Justice is confident that the friends will also want to pray for the believers in Iran during the Fast, particularly at dawn, and it would be useful for National Spiritual Assemblies to remind the friends of the privilege of joining universally in prayers during this period about which Bahá'u'lláh has written, "Thou hast endowed every hour of these days with a special virtue, inscrutable to all except Thee, ..."
350.3 In addition, your Assembly should set aside time during your National Convention for such prayers, as will be done at the International Convention.
350.4 It is hoped that these manifold supplications, reverberating from every corner of the globe, will attract in ever greater measure the blessings of the Almighty upon His lovers in the Cradle of His Faith, and will reinvigorate our determination to accelerate the tempo of our activities, in order to compensate for and indeed more than offset the setbacks being suffered by our beleaguered co-workers in Iran.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
351
Execution of Hidáyat Síyávushí in Shiraz
3 January 1983
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
351.1GREATLY DISMAYED LAMENTABLE NEWS EXECUTION HIDÁYAT SÍYÁVUSHÍ HANGED SHIRAZ 1 JANUARY, THIRD OF FIVE BAHÁ'ÍS SENTENCED TO DEATH 23 SEPTEMBER 1982....
Universal House of Justice
352
Prayer of 'Abdu'l-Bahá for Martyred Friends and Relatives
11 January 1983
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
352.1 We have been directed by the Universal House of Justice to send you the enclosed copy of a prayer revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in which mention is made of persecutions, the martyred friends and their relatives. This is for general use, and it is felt that it would be specially suitable for inclusion in the program of prayers being arranged by National Spiritual Assemblies all over the world for the Feast of Jamál (Beauty) on Thursday, 28 April 1983, as

was requested in our letter of 29 December 1982.
352.2 A copy of the text in the original Arabic is also enclosed so that it may be shared with those friends who may be able to use it.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
353
Release of a Compilation on the
Importance of Deepening
13 January 1983
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
353.1 At the request of the Universal House of Justice, and with the aim of fulfilling the goal assigned to all National Assemblies to pursue a program of spiritual enrichment designed to inspire and enlighten the friends regarding the Bahá'í way of life, the Research Department has prepared a compilation from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi on the importance of deepening our knowledge and understanding of the Faith.
353.2 It is hoped that the loving exhortations and guidelines given in these passages will kindle in the hearts of the believers a spark of longing to delve more deeply into the rich mine of the Writings of the Faith. Such efforts will undoubtedly be abundantly rewarded as the friends attain increased spirituality and understanding, aim at acquiring greater perfection, draw nearer to attracting the good pleasure of their Lord, and seek to become more effective promoters of the Cause of God.
353.3 A copy of this compilation is attached and the Universal House of Justice leaves it to your discretion to determine how best its contents may be shared with the friends under your jurisdiction.
With loving Bahá'í greetings
Department of the Secretariat
354
Occupation of the Seat of the
Universal House of Justice
2 February 1983
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
TO THE FOLLOWERS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IN EVERY LAND
354.1WE BOW OUR HEADS IN INFINITE GRATITUDE TO THE BLESSED BEAUTY FOR HIS ALL-EMBRACING CONFIRMATIONS ENABLING HOUSE JUSTICE OCCUPY ITS NEWLY CONSTRUCT PERMANENT SEAT. THIS AUSPICIOUS EVENT SIGNALIZES ANOTHER PHASE IN PROCESS FULFILLMENT SAILING GOD'S ARK ON MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD AS ANTICIPATED IN TABLET CARMEL, WONDROUS CHARTER WORLD SPIRITUAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CENTERS FAITH BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.
354.2 THIS HIGH POINT HISTORY STRUGGLING FAITH NOW EMERGING FROM OBSCURITY, THIS CRUCIAL HOUR SUFFUSED WITH UNTOLD POTENCIES GENERATED BY SOUL-STIRRING SACRIFICES BELOVED BRETHREN IRAN, MARKED BY VISIT MEMBERS HOUSE JUSTICE TWIN HOLY SHRINES AND FIRST GATHERING COUNCIL CHAMBER TOGETHER WITH HANDS CAUSE AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚHÍYYIH KHÁNUM 'ALÍ-AKBAR FURÚTAN AND COUNSELOR MEMBERS INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTER TO OFFER PRAYERS HUMBLE THANKSGIVING.

LET ALL REJOICE. LET PRAISES ANCIENT BEAUTY RESOUND. MAY UNRELENTING EFFORTS FRIENDS EVERYWHERE HASTEN ADVENT THAT DAY WHEN WONDROUS POTENTIALITIES ENSHRINED IN TABLET CARMEL WILL BE FULLY REVEALED AND WHEN FROM GOD'S HOLY MOUNTAIN, AS ENVISAGED BELOVED GUARDIAN, WILL STREAM FORTH RIVERS OF LAWS AND ORDINANCES WITH ALL-CONQUERING POWER AND MAJESTY.
Universal House of Justice
355
Execution of Two Bahá'ís in Shiraz
14 March 1983
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
355.1DISTRESSED ANNOUNCE EXECUTION BY HANGING ON 12 MARCH TWO INNOCENT FRIENDS SHIRAZ YADU'LLÁH MAHMÚDNIZHÁD AND RAHMATU'LLÁH VAFÁ'Í. THIS HEINOUS CRIME PERPETRATED ON MORROW PASSAGE RESOLUTION UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION EXPRESSING CONCERN VIOLATION FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS AND REQUESTING SECRETARYGENERAL CONTINUE EFFORTS SAFEGUARD RIGHTS BAHÁ'ÍS IRAN.
...
355.2SUPPLICATING DIVINE THRESHOLD DELIVERANCE BRETHREN IRAN BRAVELY FACING INTENSE CRUELTIES.
Universal House of Justice
356
Execution of Mrs. Túbá Za'irpúr in Shiraz
15 March 1983
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
356.1FURTHER OUR TELEX 14 MARCH JUST LEARNED DISTRESSING NEWS MRS. TÚBÁ ZÁ'IRPÚR WAS EXECUTED BY HANGING TOGETHER TWO FRIENDS MENTIONED OUR PREVIOUS MESSAGE. BODIES OF THREE WERE BURIED IN BAHÁ'Í CEMETERY BY PRISON GUARDS WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE, PRESENCE RELATIVES. EXECUTIONS WERE NOT ANNOUNCED EVEN TO FAMILIES....
Universal House of Justice
357
Message to Youth Conferences
in Costa Rica and Honduras
17 March 1983
The Bahá'í Youth Conferences in Costa Rica and Honduras
357.1WARMLY WELCOME OCCASION SIMULTANEOUS CONFERENCES COSTA RICA AND HONDU TO GREET VIBRANT BAHÁ'Í YOUTH CENTRAL AMERICA. YOUR ENTHUSIASTIC EXERTIONS IN SERVICE CAUSE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AS SHOWN BY SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE YOUR NUMBERS BRING GLADNESS TO OUR HEARTS AND INSPIRE EXHILARATING THOUGHT THAT BRIGHT PROSPECTS SUCCESS LIE IMMEDIATELY BEFORE YOU.
357.2YOU MEET AT HIGHLY CRITICAL MOMENT HISTORY WHEN TURMOIL ASSOCIATED WITH THIS ERA OF TRANSITION INTENSIFIES. WITHIN CAUSE ITSELF CAN BE SEEN ON ONE HAND UNPRECEDENTED CAMPAIGN PERSECUTION LONG-SUFFERING IRANIAN BRETHREN AND OTHER HAND RESOUNDING TRIUMPHS SEVEN YEAR PLAN INDUCED BY THEIR SACRIFICES AND SYMBOLIZED BY OCCUPANCY PERMANENT SEAT UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE. MANKIND RAPIDLY APPROACHES RECKONING WITH BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S INJUNCTION THAT IT BE UNITED. FROM FAR AND NEAR ANGUISHED MULTITUDES CRY FOR PEACE BUT BEING LARGELY IGNORANT HIS LIFE-REDEEMING MESSAGE THEY FEEL NO HOPE. SITUATION THUS PRESENTS

BAHÁ’Í YOUTH WITH GREAT OPPORTUNITIES INESCAPABLE CHALLENGE TO RESCUE THEIR PEERS FROM SLOUGH DESPONDENCY POINTING THEM TOWARDS HOPE-RESTORING BAN MOST GREAT NAME. HOW FITTING THEN THAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER AT THESE CONFERENCES BEST MEANS EQUIP YOURSELVES SPIRITUALLY TO FULFILL TEACHING MISSION PARTICULARLY SUITED TO YOUR CAPACITIES FOR SERVICE, YOUR ABOUNDING ZEAL AND ENERGY.

357.3ARDENTLY SUPPLICATING AT HOLY THRESHOLD ON YOUR BEHALF THAT IN ADDITION TO PRAYING, ABSORBING HOLY PRINCIPLES AND TEACHING FAITH, YOU WILL BE SO IMBUED BY BELOVED MASTER'S EXAMPLE SERVICE TO HUMANITY AS TO BE ABLE THROUGH YOUR INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE DEEDS TO DEMONSTRATE CIVILIZING POWER OUR SACRED CAUSE AND CONVEY VISION ITS SPIRITUAL AND SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTIVE BENEFITS TO YOUR COMPATRIOTS OF ALL AGES.

Universal House of Justice

358

Ridván Message 1983

Ridván 140 [1983 A.D.]

To the Bahá’ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

358.1 The observable acceleration, during the past decade, of the two processes described by our beloved Guardian, the disintegration of the old order and the progress and consolidation of the new World Order of Bahá’u’lláh, may well come to be regarded by future historians as one of the most remarkable features of this period. The recent increase in this very acceleration is even more remarkable. Both within and without the Cause of God, powerful forces are operating to bring to a climax the twin tendencies of this portentous century. Among the many evidences which reveal this process may be cited, on the one hand, the continual increase of lawlessness, terrorism, economic confusion, immorality and the growing danger from the proliferation of weapons of destruction, and on the other, the worldwide, divinely propelled expansion, consolidation and rapid emergence into the limelight of world affairs of the Cause itself, a process crowned by the wonderful efflorescence of Mount Carmel, the mountain of God, whose Divine springtime is now so magnificently burgeoning.

The Dialectic of Triumph and Disaster

358.2 During the past five years, the historical dialectic of triumph and disaster has operated simultaneously within the Cause of God. The Army of Light has sustained the loss of six Hands of the Cause and waves of bitter persecution which have again engulfed the long-suffering community in Iran, and have resulted in the razing of the House of the Báb, the demolition of Bahá’u’lláh’s ancestral home in Tákur, and the martyrdom of scores of valiant souls. Yet these disasters have called forth fresh energies in the hearts of the friends, have fed the deep roots of the Cause and given rise to a great harvest of signal victories. Chief among these are the successful conclusion of the Five Year Plan; the launching of the Seven Year Plan, now in the final year of its second phase and unprecedented proclamation of the Faith to Heads of States, parliaments and parliamentarians, government ministers and officials, leaders of thought and people prominent in the professions,

resulting in a change of attitude on the part of the mass media, which now increasingly approach us for information about the Cause.

358.3 To these movements must be added the worldwide observances commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf, the completion of the restoration of the upper floor of the House of ‘Abdu’lláh Páshá, and its opening, at this very time, to its first visitors; the occupation by the Universal House of Justice of its permanent Seat, in further fulfillment of the great prophecy in the Tablet of Carmel; steady progress on the construction of the first Mashriqu’l-Adhkár of the Pacific Islands in Samoa and the Mother Temple of the Indian Subcontinent in New Delhi.

358.4 Among the outstanding features of the teaching and consolidation work are the continuing effective results of the participation of more than sixteen thousand believers from all parts of the world in the five International Conferences; intensive teaching campaigns carried out with the active support of all levels of the community and drawing upon the enthusiasm and capacity of Bahá’í youth; the establishment of a second radio station in South America; the re-formation of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Uganda and Nepal, and the establishment of nine new National Spiritual Assemblies, two of which will be elected during the month of May this year, bringing the total of these secondary Houses of Justice to 135.

358.5 Above and beyond all these is the unity in action achieved by the Bahá’í world community in its efforts to enlist public support for the dearly loved, greatly admired, cruelly beleaguered Iranian believers, a unity further manifested in an outpouring of funds to replace their former liberal contributions, and an upsurge of personal dedication rarely seen on so universal a scale and holding the highest promise for the future.

Social and Economic Development

385.6 The growing maturity of a worldwide religious community which all these processes indicate is further evidenced in the reaching out, by a number of national communities, to the social and economic life of their countries, exemplified by the founding of tutorial schools, the inception of radio stations, the pursuit of rural development programs and the operation of medical and agricultural schemes. To these early beginnings must be added the undoubted skills acquired, as a result of the Iranian crisis, in dealing with international organizations, national governments and the mass media—the very elements of society with which it must increasingly collaborate toward the realization of peace on earth.

A Wider Horizon Beckons

385.7 A wider horizon is opening before us, illumined by a growing and universal manifestation of the inherent potentialities of the Cause for ordering human affairs. In this light can be discerned not only our immediate tasks but, more dimly, new pursuits and undertakings upon which we must shortly become engaged. At present we must complete the objectives of the Seven Year Plan, paying great attention to those inner spiritual developments which will be manifested in greater unity among the friends and in National and Local Spiritual Assemblies functioning “harmoniously, vigorously and efficiently”

as the Guardian desired.

385.8 We have no doubt that the Bahá'í world community will accomplish all these tasks and go forward to new achievements. The powers released by Bahá'u'lláh match the needs of the times. We may therefore be utterly confident that the new throb of energy now vibrating throughout the Cause will empower it to meet the oncoming challenges of assisting, as maturity and resources allow, the development of the social and economic life of peoples, of collaborating with the forces leading towards the establishment of order in the world, of influencing the exploitation and constructive uses of modern technology, and in all these ways enhancing the prestige and progress of the Faith and uplifting the conditions of the generality of mankind.

A Time for Rejoicing

385.9 It is a time for rejoicing. The Sun of Bahá'u'lláh is mounting the heavens, bringing into ever clearer light the contrast between the gloom, the despair, the frustrations and bewilderment of the world, and the radiance, confidence, joy and certitude of His lovers. Lift up your hearts. The Day of God is here.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

359

Election of the Universal House of Justice

Ridván 1983

1 May 1983

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

359.1NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE 'ALÍ NAKHJAVÁNÍ HUSHMAND FATHEAZAM IAN SEMPLE DAVID RUHE GLENFORD MITCHELL DAVID HOFMAN BO KAVELIN CHARLES WOLCOTT HUGH CHANCE.

Universal House of Justice

360

Execution of Two Bahá'ís in Isfahán

12 May 1983

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

360.1WITH SADDENED HEARTS ANNOUNCE EXECUTION ON 1 MAY TWO MORE ACTIVE SUPPORTERS GREATEST NAME CRADLE FAITH, MR. SUHAYL SAFÁ'Í AND MR. JALÁL HAKÍMÁN, IMPRISONED SINCE OCTOBER 1982 IN ISFAHÁN. THEIR FAMILIES, FRIENDS LEARNED AFTER MORE THAN A WEEK OF THEIR EXECUTION IN TEHRAN....

Universal House of Justice

361

Further Evolution of the International Teaching Center

19 May 1983

To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the World

Dearly loved Friends,

361.1 For ten years the International Teaching Center has rendered invaluable services at the World Center of the Faith, and it is with great joy that we now announce a number of major steps in the evolution of this vital institution of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

361.2 Since the tragic death of Mr. Paul Haney there have been only two

Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land. We have therefore decided to call upon Dr. ‘Alí Muhammad Varqá and Mr. Collis Featherstone to participate in the discharge of the special duties of the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land when the occasion requires, as for example, in dealing with matters of Covenant-breaking. They will be able to perform these functions either by correspondence or by periodic sojourns at the World Center.

Appointment of New Counselor Members

361.3 We have decided to raise the number of resident members of the International Teaching Center to nine. For reasons of health Mrs. Florence Mayberry is leaving the World Center, bringing to an end her highly valued services on this institution. Four new Counselor members have therefore been appointed: Dr. Magdalene Carney, Mr. Mas’úd Khamsí, Dr. Peter Khan and Mrs. Isobel Sabri, whom we now call upon to transfer their residences to the Holy Land, where they will join the Hands of the Cause Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum and ‘Alí-Akbar Furútan and Counselors Anneliese Bopp, Hooper Dunbar and ‘Azíz Yazdí.

Institution of a Five-Year Term

361.4 We have further decided, as foreshadowed in previous announcements, to institute a five-year term for the Counselor members of the International Teaching Center. Each term will start on 23 May immediately following the International Bahá’í Convention, and the current term will end on 23 May 1988. Should circumstances prevent the Universal House of Justice from making new appointments at the end of any five-year term, the Counselors will remain in office until such time as new appointments can be made.

An Increase of Responsibility

361.5 With the rapid growth of the Faith, its emergence from obscurity, and the diversification of the activities that the believers in many lands must undertake in such fields as education, rural development, radio and public relations—matters which must increasingly occupy the attention of the Universal House of Justice—we have decided that the time is ripe to devolve increased responsibility upon the International Teaching Center in the fields of protection and propagation of the Faith. The duties of the International Teaching Center, including those announced previously and those now being assigned to it, are as follows:

To assume full responsibility for coordinating, stimulating and directing the Continental Boards of Counselors, acting also as liaison between them and the Universal House of Justice.

To be fully informed of the situation of the Cause in all parts of the world and, from this knowledge, to make reports and recommendations to the Universal House of Justice and give advice to the Continental Boards of Counselors.

To watch over the security and ensure the protection of the Faith of God.

To be alert to possibilities for the extension of the teaching work and the development of economic and social life both within and without the Bahá’í community, and to draw the attention of the Universal House of Justice and the Continental Boards of Counselors to such possibilities, making recommendations for action.

To determine and anticipate needs for literature, pioneers and traveling

teachers and to work out teaching plans, both regional and global, for the approval of the Universal House of Justice.
To direct the work of the Continental Pioneer Committees.
To administer the expenditure of the International Deputization Fund.
To administer an annual budget that will be provided from the Bahá'í International Fund, allocating therefrom to the Continental Boards of Counselors monies for special teaching projects and literature subvention, and, when necessary, contributions to the Continental Funds.

361.6 The transfer of functions and responsibilities in implementation of the above decisions will be made gradually as the new members are able to settle in the Holy Land. National Spiritual Assemblies and Continental Pioneer Committees will be notified, as necessary, of any changes in procedure that will be required; in the meantime they should continue to operate as before.

New Offices

361.7 In the near future the International Teaching Center will be moving into its new offices near the House of the Master, in the building which served for several decades as the Western Pilgrim House, later as the Seat of the International Bahá'í Council and, for the past twenty years as that of the Universal House of Justice. Now, most befittingly, it will serve as the office of the International Teaching Center until the permanent building for that mighty institution can be raised on Mount Carmel in close proximity to the Universal House of Justice.

361.8 It is our ardent prayer that the decisions now taken will be blessed by Bahá'u'lláh and will enable the World Center of the Faith to coordinate and direct with ever greater effectiveness the self-sacrificing and assiduous labors of the friends of God in every part of the world during the challenging years which lie before us.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

362

Statement by the President of the United States
about the Bahá'ís of Iran

24 May 1983

To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

362.1OUTSTANDING STATEMENT PRESIDENT REAGAN BEHALF BAHÁ'ÍS IRAN FILLS HEARTS BELIEVERS WORLD OVER WITH JOY AND GRATITUDE. THIS ACHIEVEMENT INDICATIVE SPIRITUAL POWER RELEASED BY PURE BLOOD MARTYRS AND SUSTAINED EFFORT AMERICAN BAHÁ'ÍS THROUGH THEIR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES, FURTHER STEP IMPLEMENTATION ROLE AMERICAN NATION DESTINED PLAY PROTECTION OPPRESSED PEOPLE CONFIDENT BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY UNITED STATES WILL SEIZE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY PROCLAIM FAITH WIDELY AND WISELY ENTIRE NATION UNDER GUIDANCE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. EXTEND HEARTFELT CONGRATULATIONS ASSURE LOVING PRAYERS FURTHER VICTORIES.

Universal House of Justice

363

Execution of Six Bahá'ís in Shiraz

18 June 1983

To all National Spiritual Assemblies
363.1WITH GREAT SORROW IMPART NEWS EXECUTION BY HANGING LATE HOURS 16 JUNE IN SHIRAZ ANOTHER SIX VALIANT SERVANTS CAUSE:
DR. BAHRÁM AFNÁN, PROMINENT PHYSICIAN, 48 YEARS OLD
MR. BAHRÁM YALDÁ'Í, STUDENT, 23 YEARS OLD
MR. JAMSHÍD SÍYAVUSHÍ, MERCHANT, 39 YEARS OLD
MR. 'INÁYATU'LLÁH ISHRÁQÍ, RETIRED OFFICER OIL COMPANY, 60 YEARS OLD
MR. KÚRUSH HOQBÍN, ELECTRICAL TECHNICIAN, 27 YEARS OLD
MR. 'ABDU'L-HUSAYN ÁZÁDÍ, EMPLOYEE HEALTH MINISTRY, 60 YEARS OLD
363.2GRAVELY CONCERNED LIVES OTHER PRISONERS THREATENED BE SUBJECTED SIMILAR FATE IF REFUSE RECANT FAITH AND EMBRACE ISLAM. THIS RUTHLESS TREATMENT BY FANATICS NOW TAKING REINS JUSTICE THEIR HANDS IN DEFIANCE WORLD PUBLIC OPINION, DEMANDS SPECIAL CONSIDERATION BY GOVERNMENTS AND PEOPLE OF PROMINENCE TO EXE UTMOST EFFORTS PREVENT CONTINUATION SUCH ACTS WHICH VIOLATE PRINCIPLES JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS....
Universal House of Justice
364
Execution by Hanging of Ten Bahá'í Women in Shiraz
19 June 1983
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
364.1FOLLOWING OUTRAGEOUS EXECUTION SIX BAHÁ'ÍS IN SHIRAZ ON 16 JUNE, FURTHER HIDEOUS CRIME HAS BEEN PERPETRATED BY AUTHORITIES THAT CITY BY HANGING TEN INNOCENT WOMEN NIGHT OF 18 JUNE. THEY ARE:
MRS. NUSRAT YALDÁ'Í, 54 YEARS OLD, MOTHER OF BAHRÁM, HANGED 16 JUNE
MRS. 'IZZAT JÁNAMÍ ISHRÁQÍ 50 YEARS OLD, WIFE OF 'INÁYATU'LLÁH, HANGED 16 JUNE
MISS RU'YÁ ISHRÁQÍ, IN EARLY 20S, DAUGHTER OF ABOVE
MRS. TÁHIRIH SÍYÁVUSHÍ, 32 YEARS OLD, WIFE OF JAMSHÍD, HANGED 16 JUNE
MISS MUNÁ MAHMÚDNIZHÁD, 18 YEARS OLD, DAUGHTER OF YADU'LLÁH, EXECUTED 12 MARCH
MISS ZARRÍN MUQÍMÍ-ABYÁNÍH, UNDER 25 YEARS OLD
MISS SHAHÍN (SHÍRÍN) DÁLVAND, EARLY 20S
MISS AKHTAR THÁBIT 19 YEARS OLD
MISS SÍMÍN SÁBIRÍ, IN EARLY 20S
MISS MAHSHÍD NÍRÚMAND, 18 YEARS OLD
364.2THE EXECUTION OF THESE GUILTLESS WOMEN IN THE NAME OF RELIGION MUST SHOCK CONSCIENCE HUMANITY. THEY WERE ARRESTED FOR ACTIVITIES IN BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY INCLUDING EDUCATION OF YOUTH.
364.3FOLLOWING LONG INTERROGATION IN PRISON THEY WERE WARNED THEY WOULD BE SUBJECTED TO FOUR SESSIONS PRESSURING THEM RECANT THEIR FAITH ACCEPT ISLAM AND IF BY FOURTH TIME THEY HAD NOT SIGNED PREPARED STATEMENT RECANTING FAITH THEY WOULD BE KILLED. ALL PREFERRED DIE RATHER THAN DENY THEIR FAITH.
364.4FEW HOURS PRIOR EXECUTION WOMEN MET WITH FAMILIES, NONE OF WHOM KNEW IMPENDING EXECUTION. NEWS THIS DASTARDLY CRIME NOT PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED OR FORMALLY GIVEN TO FAMILIES. AUTHORITIES REFUSED ALLOW FAMILIES RECEIVE BODIES FOR BURIAL OR EVEN TO SEE THEM.
364.5IT SHOULD BE RECALLED THAT BETWEEN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER 1982 OVER 80

BAHÁ’ÍS WERE ARRESTED IN SHIRAZ. AUTHORITIES LATER REVEALED THAT 22 PERSONS AMONG THE 80 WERE CONDEMNED TO DEATH IF WOULD NOT RECANT. NAMES OF THESE 22 HOWEVER WERE NEVER REVEALED, INTENSIFYING PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS AMONG BAHÁ’Í PRISONERS.
364.6IN DEFIANCE APPEALS WORLD LEADERS AND WORLD PUBLIC OPINION, 21 OF THESE BAHÁ’ÍS HAVE THUS FAR BEEN EXECUTED, CASTING SHADOW ON FATE REMAINING BELIEVERS LANGUISHING IN PRISON....
Universal House of Justice
365
Message to Youth—
Summons to Vindicate Martyred Youth
23 June 1983
To Bahá’í Youth Throughout the World:
365.1RECENT MARTYRDOMS COURAGEOUS STEADFAST YOUTH IN SHIRAZ, SCENE INAUGURATI MISSION MARTYR-PROPHET, REMINISCENT ACTS VALOR YOUTHFUL IMMORTALS HEROIC AGE. CONFIDENT BAHÁ’Í YOUTH THIS GENERATION WILL NOT ALLOW THIS FRESH BLOOD SHED ON VERY SOIL WHERE FIRST WAVE PERSECUTION FAITH TOOK PLACE REMAIN UNVINDICATED OR THIS SUBLIME SACRIFICE UNAVAILING. AT THIS HOUR OF AFFLICTION AND GRIEF, AND AS WE APPROACH ANNIVERSARY MARTYRDOM BLESSED BÁB CALL ON BAHÁ’Í YOUTH TO REDEDICATE THEMSELVES TO URGENT NEEDS CAUSE BAHÁ’U’LLÁH. LET THEM RECALL BLESSINGS HE PROMISED THOSE WHO IN PRIME OF YOUTH WILL ARISE TO ADORN THEIR HEARTS WITH HIS LOVE AND REMAIN STEADFAST AND FIRM. LET THEM CALL TO MIND EXPECTATIONS MASTER FOR EACH TO BE A FEARLESS LION, A MUSK-LADEN BREEZE WAFTING OVER MEADS VIRTUE. LET THEM MEDITATE OVER UNIQUE QUALITIES YOUTH SO GRAPHICALLY MENTIONED IN WRITINGS GUARDIAN WHO PRAISED THEIR ENTERPRISING AND ADVENTUROUS SPIRIT, THEIR VIGOR, THEIR ALERTNESS, OPTIMISM AND EAGERNESS, AND THEIR DIVINELY APPOINTED, HOLY AND ENTHRALLING TASKS. WE FERVENTLY PRAY AT SACRED THRESHOLD THAT ARMY OF SPIRITUALLY AWAKENED AND DETERMINED YOUTH MA IMMEDIATELY ARISE RESPONSE NEEDS PRESENT HOUR DEVOTE IN EVER GREATER MEASURE THEIR VALUED ENERGIES TO PROMOTE, BOTH ON HOMEFRONTS AND IN FOREIGN FIELDS, CAUSE THEIR ALL-WATCHFUL AND EXPECTANT LORD. MAY THEY MANIFEST SAME SPIRIT SO RECENTLY EVINCED THEIR MARTYR BRETHREN CRADLE FAITH, SCALE SUCH HEIGHTS OF ENDEAVOR AS TO BECOME PRIDE THEIR PEERS CONSOLATION HEARTS PERSIAN BELIEVERS, AND DEMONSTRATE THAT THE FLAME HIS OMNIPOTENT HAND HAS KINDLED BURNS EVER BRIGHT AND THAT ITS LIFE-IMPARTING WARMTH AND RADIANCE SHALL SOON ENVELOP PERMEATE WHOLE EARTH.
Universal House of Justice
366
Appointment of Continental Counselors
27 June 1983
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá’í Friends,
366.1 The Universal House of Justice announces with pleasure the appointment of the following Continental Counselors:
In Africa:Mr. Gila Michael Bahta
Mr. Kassimi Fofana
In the Americas: Mr. Shapoor Monadjem

In Australasia:Mrs. Joy Stevenson
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
367
Execution of Suhayl Húshmand in Shiraz
30 June 1983
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
367.1SWIFT ON HEELS EXECUTION YOUNG BAHÁ'ÍS SHIRAZ ANNOUNCE DISTRESSING NEWS YET ANOTHER YOUNG SERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH THAT CITY, 24 YEAR OLD SUHAYL HÚSHMAND, HANGED 28 JUNE, BRINGING TO 142 TOTAL NUMBER BAHÁ'ÍS KILLED SINCE BEGINNING ISLAMIC REVOLUTION, NOT INCLUDING 14 WHO DISAPPEARED. FATE OTHER PRISONERS SHIRAZ IN BALANCE.
Universal House of Justice
368
Attacks against Bahá'í Villagers in Mázindarán;
Kidnapping of Two Bahá'ís in Tehran
4 July 1983
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
368.1ATROCITIES MOUNTING AGAINST BRETHREN CRADLE FAITH, NOW DIRECTED TOWARDS DEFENSELESS VILLAGERS NEAR SARI IN MÁZINDARÁN. IN VILLAGE OF ÍVÁL OVER 130 BAHÁ'ÍS INCLUDING WOMEN AND CHILDREN WERE HELD CAPTIVE FOR THREE DAYS IN WALLED-IN OPEN FIELD WITHOUT FOOD AND WATER. WHEN PRESSURES TO RECANT FAITH ACCEPT ISLAM FAILED THEY WERE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES. HOWEVER SAME NIGHT, 1 JULY THEY WERE ATTACKED BY VILLAGERS AND FORCED HIDE IN NEARBY FOREST.
368.2FURTHER DISTRESSING NEWS TWO PROMINENT BAHÁ'ÍS TEHRAN, JAHÁNGÍR HIDÁYATÍ AND AHMAD BASHÍRÍ, KIDNAPPED. APPEALS TO AUTHORITIES SO FAR UNHEEDED, ANY KNOWLEDGE THEIR ABDUCTION OR WHEREABOUTS DENIED....
Universal House of Justice
369
Message to the European Youth Conference
in Innsbruck
4 July 1983
To the European Youth Conference in Innsbruck
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
369.1 With high hopes we greet the representatives of the Bahá'í youth of Europe gathered in conference in Innsbruck. This generation of Bahá'í youth enjoys a unique distinction. You will live your lives in a period when the forces of history are moving to a climax, when mankind will see the establishment of the Lesser Peace, and during which the Cause of God will play an increasingly prominent role in the reconstruction of human society. It is you who will be called upon in the years to come to stand at the helm of the Cause in face of conditions and developments which can, as yet, scarcely be imagined.
369.2 European Bahá'í youth in particular face tremendous and challenging tasks in the immediate future. Can one doubt that the manner in which the governments of the European nations have rallied to the defense of the persecuted Bahá'ís in Iran will draw down blessings from on high upon

this continent? And who among the people of Europe are more likely to be kindled by the challenge and hope of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh than the youth? Now is an opportunity to awaken the interest, set afire the hearts and enlist the active support of young people of every nation, class and creed in that continent. The key to success in this endeavor is, firstly, to deepen your understanding of the Teachings of the Cause so that you will be able to apply them to the problems of individuals and society, and explain them to your peers in ways that they will understand and welcome; secondly, to strive to model your behavior in every way after the high standards of honesty, trustworthiness, courage, loyalty, forbearance, purity and spirituality set forth in the Teachings; and, above all, to live in continual awareness of the presence and all-conquering power of Bahá'u'lláh, which will enable you to overcome every temptation and surmount every obstacle.

369.3 A vibrant band of Bahá'í youth on the European continent, committed to the promotion of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and the upholding of His laws and principles, determined to work in harmony and unity with their fellow believers of all ages and classes, can revolutionize the progress of the Cause. With a rapid increase in the size of the Bahá'í communities in Europe, the believers of that continent, the cradle of Western civilization, will be the better able to serve as a fountainhead of pioneers, traveling teachers and financial assistance to the Bahá'í communities of the Third World.

369.4 When deciding what course of training to follow, youth can consider acquiring those skills and professions that will be of benefit in education, rural development, agriculture, economics, technology, health, radio and in many other areas of endeavor that are so urgently needed in the developing countries of the world. You can also devote time in the midst of your studies, or other activities, to travel teaching or service projects in the Third World.

369.5 A particular challenge to the Bahá'í youth of Europe is the vast eastern half of the continent that is as yet scarcely touched by the light of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. It is not easy to settle in those lands, but with ingenuity, determination and reliance upon the confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh it is certainly possible both to settle and to persevere in service in goals which demand a spirit of self-sacrifice, detachment and purity of heart worthy of those who would emulate the shining example set by the martyrs in Iran, so many of whom are youth, who have given their lives rather than breathe one word that would be a betrayal of the trust of God placed upon them.

369.6 With love and utmost longing we call upon you to immerse yourselves in the divine Teachings, champion the Cause of God and His law, and arise for the quickening of mankind.

The Universal House of Justice

370

Continuing Harassments and Arrests in Iran

26 July 1983

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

370.1PRESSURES MOUNTING AGAINST BAHÁ'ÍS IRAN, PARTICULARLY IN TEHRAN WHERE

MEMBERS OF BAHÁ'Í INSTITUTIONS ARE BEING HUNTED, THEIR HOMES RAIDED. IF NOT FOUND, THEIR FAMILIES ARE BEING HARASSED.
370.2TWENTY-TWO BELIEVERS INCLUDING 11 WOMEN WERE ARRESTED BETWEEN 11 AND 20 JULY....
Universal House of Justice
371
Formation of Nine New National Spiritual Assemblies at Ridván
31 July 1983
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
371.1OVERJOYED ANNOUNCE FORMATION AT RIDVÁN 1984 FOLLOWING NINE NEW NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES:
THREE IN AFRICA:CAPE VERDE ISLANDS, EQUATORIAL GUINEA AND GABON
THREE IN AMERICAS: FRENCH GUIANA, GRENADA AND MARTINIQUE
TWO IN ASIA: ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS, AND YEMEN (SAN'A)
ONE IN EUROPE:CANARY ISLANDS
371.1LAST TWO NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES NAMED ABOVE ARE SUPPLEMENTARY ACHIEVEMENTS SEVEN YEAR PLAN. PRAYING SHRINES BOUNTIFUL BLESSINGS MAY SURROUND SUPPORT FRIENDS EVERYWHERE IN THEIR ENDEAVORS PROMOTE GOD'S HOLY FAITH.
Universal House of Justice
372
Intensification of Waves of Arrests in Iran
2 August 1983
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
372.1 PERSECUTIONS IRANIAN FRIENDS REMAIN UNABATED. WAVES ARRESTS PROMINENT BAHÁ'ÍS RECENTLY INTENSIFIED....
Universal House of Justice
373
Arrest of More Bahá'ís in Iran
16 August 1983
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
373.1 ARRESTS IRANIAN BRETHREN CONTINUING.... 24 INCLUDING 10 WOMEN IMPRISONED BETWEEN 3 AND 5 AUGUST.
Universal House of Justice
374
Passing of Sylvia Ioas,
Member of the International Bahá'í Council
25 August 1983
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
374.1 SADDENED PASSING DEVOTED MAIDSERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH SYLVIA IOAS. HER LONG YEARS SERVICE DIVINE THRESHOLD CONSTANT SUPPORT CLOSE COLLABORATION HER DISTINGUISHED HUSBAND CROWNED BY HER APPOINTMENT BY BELOVED GUARDIAN AS MEMBER INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL AND HER SUBSEQUENT ELECTION SAME HISTORIC INSTITUTION AND AS ITS VICE-PRESIDENT. HER GRACIOUS MANNER, CHEERFUL DISPOSITION, HOSPITABLE SPIRIT REMAIN AS INDELIBLE IMPRESSIONS HER FRUITFUL

LIFE. FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES HER RADIANT SOUL MAY BE RICHLY REWARDED ABHÁ KINGDOM. URGE NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL SERVICES.
Universal House of Justice
375
Requisites for Spiritual Growth
1 September 1983
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Norway
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
375.1 On several occasions there has been correspondence between your Assembly and the Universal House of Justice on meditation and kindred subjects. The House of Justice is aware that such matters have been a cause of differences of opinion among the Norwegian Bahá'ís. It has now come to the attention of the House of Justice that there was a session of group meditation of a particular kind at your summer school under the aegis of the National Teaching Committee. We have, therefore, been instructed to send you the following comments which, it is hoped, will help to resolve this long-standing problem.
Spiritualization of the Bahá'í Community
375.2 In its message to the Dublin Conference the Universal House of Justice called upon the Continental Board of Counselors and the National Spiritual Assemblies of Europe to launch together "such a campaign of spiritualization of the Bahá'í community, allied with intensified personal teaching, as has never been witnessed in your continent." It realizes that the session at your Summer School referred to above may well have been intended as an aspect of this campaign, and it feels that it would be helpful to explain more fully what it intended by "spiritualization of the Bahá'í community."
375.3 Europe has suffered so appallingly in past centuries from persecutions and conflicts inspired by religious differences and fanaticism that there has been a revulsion against religion. Many Europeans have become sceptical, scornful of religious practices, and reluctant either to discuss religious subjects or to give credence to the power of faith. This turning away from religion has been powerfully reinforced by the growth of materialism, and has produced a combination of physical well-being and spiritual aridity that is having catastrophic results, socially and psychologically, on the population.
375.4 This intellectual and emotional atmosphere creates problems for the Bahá'í community in two ways. Its effect upon a large proportion of the non-Bahá'í population makes it difficult for Bahá'ís to convey the Message to others. Its effect upon the Bahá'ís is more subtle, but no less harmful; if not consciously combated it can lead the believers to neglect those spiritual exercises which are the very fountainhead of their spiritual strength and the nourishment of their souls.
Essential Requisites for Spiritual Growth
375.5 Bahá'u'lláh has stated quite clearly in His Writings the essential requisites for our spiritual growth, and these are stressed again and again by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His talks and Tablets. One can summarize them briefly in this way:

The recital each day of one of the Obligatory Prayers with pure-hearted devotion.
The regular reading of the Sacred Scriptures, specifically at least each morning and evening, with reverence, attention and thought.
Prayerful meditation on the Teachings, so that we may understand them more deeply, fulfill them more faithfully, and convey them more accurately to others.
Striving every day to bring our behavior more into accordance with the high standards that are set forth in the Teachings.
Teaching the Cause of God.
Selfless service in the work of the Cause and in the carrying on of our trade or profession.

375.6 These points, expressed in other words, have already been conveyed to the friends in Europe by the Counselors, but the House of Justice wishes to stress them, because they represent the path towards the attainment of true spirituality that has been laid down by the Manifestation of God for this age.

Prayer and Meditation—Personal Exercises

375.7 It is striking how private and personal the most fundamental spiritual exercises of prayer and meditation are in the Faith. Bahá'ís do, of course, have meetings for devotions, as in the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár or at Nineteen Day Feasts, but the daily obligatory prayers are ordained to be said in the privacy of one's chamber, and meditation on the Teachings is, likewise, a private individual activity, not a form of group therapy. In His talks 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes prayer as "conversation with God," and concerning meditation He says that "while you meditate you are speaking with your own spirit. In that state of mind you put certain questions to your spirit and the spirit answers: the light breaks forth and the reality is revealed."

375.8 There are, of course, other things that one can do to increase one's spirituality. For example, Bahá'u'lláh has specified no procedures to be followed in meditation, and individual believers are free to do as they wish in this area, provided that they remain in harmony with the Teachings, but such activities are purely personal and should under no circumstances be confused with those actions which Bahá'u'lláh Himself considered to be of fundamental importance for our spiritual growth. Some believers may find that it is beneficial to them to follow a particular method of meditation, and they may certainly do so, but such methods should not be taught at Bahá'í Summer Schools or be carried out during a session of the School because, while they may appeal to some people, they may repel others. They have nothing to do with the Faith and should be kept quite separate so that inquirers will not be confused.

375.9 It would seem that there are in Norway many believers who draw particular benefit from meditation. The House of Justice suggests that for their private meditations they may wish to use the repetition of the Greatest Name, Alláh-u-Abhá, ninety-five times a day which, although not yet applied in the West, is among the Laws, Ordinances and Exhortations of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. (See p. 46 of the Synopsis and Codification of the

Kitáb-i-Aqdas.)
375.10 The House of Justice is confident that if the believers throughout Europe will conscientiously strive to increase their spirituality in the six ways outlined above, and become aware in their inmost beings that in all their services they are but vehicles for the confirming power of God, they will attract the hearts of their fellow citizens and penetrate the miasma of materialism that veils the sight of so many of their countrymen. Effort, activity, unity and constant reliance on the power of Bahá'u'lláh will assuredly overcome all obstacles.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
376
Preparations for International Youth Year
7 September 1983
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
376.1 As you are probably aware, 1985 has been designated by the United Nations as International Youth Year, and the Bahá'í International Community is taking preliminary steps to set up a program for the involvement of the worldwide Bahá'í community in this event, in close cooperation with the United Nations and its agencies, such as UNICEF. The purpose of this letter is to request your National Assembly to determine how the Bahá'í youth in your country can, to the extent practicable, participate in general youth activities which are being proposed by the United Nations for International Youth Year, as well as in specific Bahá'í projects of service to the local community or to the country as a whole.
376.2 Your National Spiritual Assembly should be alert as to whether your government is making any plans to observe International Youth Year, and if so, you should consider the steps you could take in setting up or participating in projects associated with this event. Such activities should be planned, of course, in consultation with the Bahá'í International Community, which is coordinating and monitoring such efforts. Participation of this kind by the Bahá'í youth would not only add to the prestige of the Faith and demonstrate its humanitarian character, but would also act as a rallying point for the youth, strengthening them in their role in the Faith and training them to organize themselves for future services to this blessed Cause.
376.3 The Universal House of Justice will be anxious to learn of your plans to participate in this important event.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
377
Banning of Bahá'í Administration in Iran
13 September 1983
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
377.1 SORELY TRIED COMMUNITY GREATEST NAME IRAN HAS IN RECENT DAYS SUSTAINED YET ANOTHER CRUEL BLOW OPENING NEW CHAPTER ITS TURBULENT HISTORY. O 29 AUGUST IN UNPRECEDENTED MOVE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT THROUGH STATEMEN

ISSUED ATTORNEY-GENERAL ANNOUNCED BAN BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATION, RECITING USUAL FALSE ACCUSATIONS STATING EXISTENCE ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALLY CONSIDERED TO BE AGAINST LAWS CONSTITUTION COUNTRY. HOWEVER STATEMENT SAID BAHÁ'ÍS MAY PRACTICE BELIEFS AS PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS PROVIDED THEY DO NOT TEACH OR INVITE OTHERS TO JOIN FAITH, THEY DO NOT FORM ASSEMBLIES OR HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH ADMINISTRATION. SERVING IN BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATION NOW SPECIFIED AS CRIMINAL ACT. THIS LATEST ONSLAUGHT DEFENSELESS COMMUNITY CLEARLY DEMONSTRATES IMPLACABILITY FANATICAL ELEMENTS IN THEIR DRIVE SUPPRESS LIGHT GOD'S INFANT FAITH IN LAND ITS FIRST GLEAMING.

377.2 IN CONFORMITY PRINCIPLE LOYALTY OBEDIENCE GOVERNMENT NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY IRAN IMMEDIATELY TOOK ACTION DISSOLVE BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATION THROUGHOUT COUNTRY THUS UPHOLDING INTEGRITY COMMUNITY DESPIT HEAVY YOKE CRUELTIES BORNE BY ITS MEMBERS FOR SEVERAL GENERATIONS. CONFIDENT THAT STEADFAST TRIED AND DEVOTED FRIENDS THAT LONG-AGITATED LAND WILL FACE NEV SITUATION WITH RADIANT FORTITUDE. AT SAME TIME BAHÁ'ÍS ELSEWHERE ENJOYING FREEDOM PRACTICE FAITH ACUTELY CHALLENGED TO VINDICATE BY THEIR RECONSECRATIO TO IMMEDIATE SACRED TASKS UNABATED SUFFERING THEIR GRIEVOUSLY WRONGED IRANIAN BRETHREN. INDEED ALL NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES URGED TAKE STEPS STRENGTHEN FOUNDATION BAHÁ'Í INSTITUTIONS THEIR COUNTRIES AS TRIBUTE SACRIFICES COURAGEOUSLY ACCEPTED MEMBERS COMMUNITY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S NATIVE LAND.

Universal House of Justice

378

Open Letter to Iranian Authorities from the National
Spiritual Assembly of Iran
19 October 1983

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

378.1 You have already been informed of the disbanding of the National Spiritual Assembly and other Bahá'í institutions in Iran as a result of the new policy of the Iranian Government. The National Spiritual Assembly, before disbanding itself, decided to issue an open letter to the authorities and the public of their country explaining the action of their Government and pointing out the unjust attitudes and accusations of the Government against the Bahá'í administration in that land. Over two thousand of these letters were dispatched to important officials and other prominent people in Iran.

378.2 A copy of this letter has been received by the Universal House of Justice, and we have been instructed to enclose a translation for your information and possible use. Publication of the letter is permissible in whatever manner your National Spiritual Assembly deems fit.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

An Open Letter from the
National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iran
about the Banning of the Bahá'í Administration
(12 Sháhrívar 1362)
[3 September 1983]

378.3 Recently the esteemed Public Prosecutor of the Islamic Revolution of

the country, in an interview that was published in the newspapers, declared that the continued functioning of the Bahá'í religious and spiritual administration is banned and that membership in it is considered to be a crime. This declaration has been made after certain unjustified accusations have been leveled against the Bahá'í community of Iran and after a number of its members—ostensibly for imaginary and fabricated crimes but in reality merely for the sake of their beliefs—have been either executed, or arrested and imprisoned. The majority of those who have been imprisoned have not yet been brought to trial.

378.4 The Bahá'í community finds the conduct of the authorities and the judges bewildering and lamentable—as indeed would any fair-minded observer who is unblinded by malice. The authorities are the refuge of the people; the judges in pursuit of their work of examining and ascertaining the truth and facts in legal cases devote years of their lives to studying the law and, when uncertain of a legal point spend hours poring over copious tomes in order to cross a "t" and dot an "i." Yet these very people consider themselves to be justified in brazenly bringing false accusations against a band of innocent people, without fear of the Day of Judgement, without even believing the calumnies they utter against their victims, and having exerted not the slightest effort to investigate to any degree the validity of the charges they are making. "Methinks they are not believers in the Day of Judgement." (Háfiz)

378.5 The honorable Prosecutor has again introduced the baseless and fictitious story that Bahá'ís engage in espionage, but without producing so much as one document in support of the accusation, without presenting proof in any form, and without any explanation as to what is the mission in this country of this extraordinary number of "spies": what sort of information do they obtain and from what sources? Whither do they relay it, and for what purpose? What kind of "spy" is an eighty-five-year-old man from Yazd who has never set foot outside his village? Why do these alleged spies not hide themselves, conceal their religious beliefs and exert every effort to penetrate, by every stratagem, the Government's information centers and offices? Why has no Bahá'í "spy" been arrested anywhere else in the world? How could students, housewives, innocent young girls, and old men and women, like those blameless Bahá'ís who have recently been delivered to the gallows in Iran, or who have become targets for the darts of prejudice and enmity, be "spies"? How could the Bahá'í farmers of the villages of Afús, Chígán, Qal'ih Malik (near Isfahán), and those of the village of Núk in Bírjand, be "spies"? What Secret Intelligence documents have been found in their possession? What espionage equipment has come to hand? What "spying" activities were engaged in by the primary schoolchildren who have been expelled from their schools?

378.6 And how strange! The Public Prosecutor perhaps does not know, or does not care to know, that spying is an element of politics, while noninterference in politics is an established principle of the Bahá'í Faith. On the contrary, Bahá'ís love their country and never permit themselves to be traitors. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the successor of the Founder of the Bahá'í

Cause, says: "Any abasement is bearable except betraying one's own country, and any sin is forgivable other than dishonoring the government and inflicting harm upon the nation."

378.7 All the other accusations made against the Bahá'ís by the honorable Public Prosecutor of the Revolution are similarly groundless. He brands the Bahá'í community with accusations of subversion and corruption. For example, on the basis of a manifestly forged interview, the falsity of which has been dealt with in a detailed statement, he accuses the Bahá'í community of hoarding, an act which its members would consider highly reprehensible. The Prosecutor alleges that the Bahá'í administration sanctioned the insensible act of hoarding, yet he subtly overlooks the fact that with the proceeds that might be realized from the sale of unusable automobile spare parts whose total value is some 70 million túmáns—the value of the stock of any medium-size store for spare parts—it would be impossible to overthrow a powerful government whose daily expenditures amount to hundreds of millions of túmáns. If the Public Prosecutor chooses to label the Bahá'í administration as a network of espionage, let him at least consider it intelligent enough not to plan the overthrow of such a strong regime by hoarding a few spare parts! Yes, such allegations of corruption and subversion are similar to those hurled against us at the time of the Episcopalian case in Isfahán when this oppressed community was accused of collaboration with foreign agents as a result of which seven innocent Bahá'ís of Yazd were executed. Following this the falsity of the charges was made known and the Public Prosecutor announced the episode to be the outcome of a forgery.

378.8 Bahá'ís are accused of collecting contributions and transferring sums of money to foreign countries. How strange! If Muslims, in accordance with their sacred and respected spiritual beliefs, send millions of túmáns to Karbilá, Najaf and Jerusalem, or to other Muslim Holy Places outside Iran to be spent on the maintenance and upkeep of the Islamic Sacred Shrines, it is considered very praiseworthy; but if a Bahá'í—even during the time in which the transfer of foreign currency was allowed—sends a negligible amount for his international community to be used for the repair and maintenance of the Holy Places of his Faith, it is considered that he has committed an unforgivable sin and it is counted as proof that he has done so in order to strengthen other countries.

378.9 Accusations of this nature are many but all are easy to investigate. If just and impartial people and God-fearing judges will only do so, the falsity of these spurious accusations will be revealed in case after case. The Bahá'í community emphatically requests that such accusations be investigated openly in the presence of juries composed of judges and international observers so that, once and for all, the accusations may be discredited and their repetition prevented.

378.10 The basic principles and beliefs of the Bahá'ís have been repeatedly proclaimed and set forth in writing during the past five years. Apparently these communications, either by deliberate design or by mischance, have not received any attention, otherwise accusations such as those described above

would not have been repeated by one of the highest and most responsible authorities. This in itself is a proof that the numerous communications referred to were not accorded the attention of the leaders; therefore, we mention them again.

378.11 The Bahá'í Faith confesses the unity of God and the justice of the divine Essence. It recognizes that Almighty God is an exalted, unknowable and concealed entity, sanctified from ascent and descent, from egress and regress, and from assuming a physical body. The Bahá'í Faith, which professes the existence of the invisible God, the One, the Single, the Eternal, the Peerless, bows before the loftiness of His Threshold, believes in all divine Manifestations, considers all the Prophets from Adam to the Seal of the Prophets as true divine Messengers Who are the Manifestations of Truth in the world of creation, accepts Their Books as having come from God, believes in the continuation of the divine outpourings, emphatically believes in reward and punishment and, uniquely among existing revealed religions outside Islam, accepts the Prophet Muhammad as a true Prophet and the Qur'án as the Word of God.

378.12 The Bahá'í Faith embodies independent principles and laws. It has its own Holy Book. It prescribes pilgrimage and worship. A Bahá'í performs obligatory prayers and observes a fast. He gives, according to his beliefs, tithes and contributions. He is required to be of upright conduct, to manifest a praiseworthy character, to love all mankind, to be of service to the world of humanity and to sacrifice his own interests for the good and well-being of his fellow kind. He is forbidden to commit unbecoming deeds. 'Abdu'l-Bahá says: "A Bahá'í is known by the attributes manifested by him, not by his name; he is recognized by his character, not by his person."

378.13 Shoghi Rabbaní, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, says: "... a person who is not adorned with the ornaments of virtue, sanctity, and morality, is not a true Bahá'í, even though he may call himself one and be known as such."

378.14 He also says: "... the friends have been required to be righteous, well-wishing, forbearing, sanctified, pure, detached from all else save God, severed from the trappings of this world and adorned with the mantle of a goodly character and godly attributes."

378.15 The teachings and laws of the Bahá'í religion testify to this truth. Fortunately, the books and writings which have been plundered in abundance from the homes of Bahá'ís and are available to the authorities, bear witness to the truth of these assertions. Bahá'ís, in keeping with their spiritual beliefs, stay clear of politics; they do not support or reject any party, group or nation; they do not champion or attack any ideology or any specific political philosophy; they shrink from and abhor political agitations. The Guardian of the Bahá'í Cause says, "The people of Bahá, under the jurisdiction of whatsoever state or government they may be residing, should conduct themselves with honesty and sincerity, trustworthiness and rectitude. ... They are neither thirsty for prominence, nor acquisitive of power; they are neither adepts at dissimulation and hypocrisy, nor are they seekers after

wealth and influence; they neither crave for the pomp and circumstance of high office, nor do they lust after the glory of titles and ranks. They are averse to affectation and ostentation, and shrink from the use of coercive force; they have closed their eyes to all but God, and set their hearts on the firm and incontrovertible promises of their Lord ... Oblivious to themselves, they have occupied their energies in working towards the good of society ... While vigilantly refusing to accept political posts, they should wholeheartedly welcome the chance to assume administrative positions; for the primary purpose of the people of Bahá is to advance the interests and promote the welfare of the nation ... Such is the method of the Bahá'ís; such is the conduct of all spiritually illuminated souls; and aught else is manifest error."

378.16 Also, Bahá'ís, in accordance with their exalted teachings, are duty bound to be obedient to their government. Elucidating this subject, Shoghi Rabbaní says: "The people of Bahá are required to obey their respective governments, and to demonstrate their truthfulness and good will towards the authorities. ... Bahá'ís, in every land and without any exception, should ... be obedient and bow to the clear instructions andthe declared decrees issued by the authorities. They must faithfully carry out such directives."

378.17 Bahá'í administration has no aim except the good of all nations and it does not take any steps that are against the public good. Contrary to the conception the word "administration" may create in the mind because of the similarity in name, it does not resemble the current organizations of political parties; it does not interfere in political affairs; and it is the safeguard against the involvement of Bahá'ís in subversive political activities. Its high ideals are "to improve the characters of men; to extend the scope of knowledge; to abolish ignorance and prejudice; to strengthen the foundations of true religion in all hearts; to encourage self-reliance and discourage false imitation; ... to uphold truthfulness, audacity, frankness, and courage; to promote craftsmanship and agriculture; ... to educate, on a compulsory basis, children of both sexes; to insist on integrity in business transactions; to lay stress on the observance of honesty and piety; ... to acquire mastery and skill in the modern sciences and arts; to promote the interests of the public; ... to obey outwardly and inwardly and with true loyalty the regulations enacted by state and government; ... to honor, to extol and to follow the example of those who have distinguished themselves in science and learning." And again, "... to help the needy from every creed or sect, and to collaborate with the people of the country in all welfare services."

378.18 In brief, whatever the clergy in other religions undertake individually and by virtue of their appointment to their positions, the Bahá'í administration performs collectively and through an elective process.

378.19 The statements made by the esteemed Public Prosecutor of the Revolution do not seem to have legal basis, because in order to circumscribe individuals and deprive them of the rights which have not been denied them by the Constitution, it is necessary to enact special legislation, provided that legislation is not contradictory to the Constitution. It was hoped that the recent years would have witnessed, on the one hand, the administration of divine justice—a principle promoted by the true religion of Islam and

prescribed by all monotheistic religions—and, on the other, and coupled with an impartial investigation of the truths of the Bahá'í Faith, the abolition or at least mitigation of discriminations, restrictions and pressures suffered by Bahá'ís over the past 135 years. Alas, on the contrary, because of long-standing misunderstandings and prejudices, the difficulties increased immensely and the portals of calamity were thrown wide open in the faces of the long-suffering and sorely oppressed Bahá'ís of Iran who were, to an even greater degree, deprived of their birthrights through the systematic machinations of Government officials who are supposed to be the refuge of the public, and of some impostors in the garb of divines, who engaged in official or unofficial spreading of mischievous and harmful accusations and calumnies, and issued, in the name of religious and judicial authorities, unlawful decrees and verdicts.

378.20 Many are the pure and innocent lives that have been snuffed out; many the distinguished heads that have adorned the hangman's noose; and many the precious breasts that became the targets of firing squads. Vast amounts of money and great quantities of personal property have been plundered or confiscated. Many technical experts and learned people have been tortured and condemned to long-term imprisonment and are still languishing in dark dungeons, deprived of the opportunity of placing their expertise at the service of theGovernment and the nation. Numerous are the self-sacrificing employees of the Government who spent their lives in faithful service but who were dismissed from work and afflicted with poverty and need because of hatred and prejudice. Even the owners of private firms and institutions were prevented from engaging Bahá'ís. Many privately owned Bahá'í establishments have been confiscated. Many tradesmen have been denied the right to continue working by cancellation of their business licences. Bahá'í youth have been denied access to education in many schools and in all universities and institutions of higher education. Bahá'í university students abroad are deprived of receiving money for their education, and others who wish to pursue their studies outside Iran have been denied exit permits. Bahá'ís, including the very sick whose only hope for cure was to receive medical treatment in specialized medical centers in foreign lands, have been prevented from leaving the country. Bahá'í cemeteries have been confiscated and bodies rudely disinterred. Numerous have been the days when a body has remained unburied while the bereaved family pleaded to have a permit issued and a burial place assigned so that the body might be decently buried. As of today, thousands of Bahá'ís have been divested of their homes and forced to live as exiles. Many have been driven from their villages and dwelling places and are living as wanderers and stranded refugees in other parts of Iran with no other haven and refuge but the Court of the All-Merciful God and the loving-kindness of their friends and relatives.

378.21 It is a pity that the mass media, newspapers and magazines, either do not want or are not allowed to publish any news about the Bahá'í community of Iran or to elaborate upon what is happening. If they were free to do so and were unbiased in reporting the daily news, volumes would have been compiled describing the inhumane cruelty to and oppression of the innocent. For

example, if they were allowed to do so, they would have written that in Shiraz, seven courageous men and ten valiant women—seven of whom were girls in the prime of their lives—audaciously rejected the suggestion of the religious judge that they recant their Faith or, at least, dissemble their belief, and preferred death to the concealment of their Faith. The women, after hours of waiting with dried lips, shrouded themselves in their chádurs, kissed the noose of their gallows, and with intense love offered up their souls for the One Who proffereth life. The observers of this cruel scene might well ask forgiveness for the murderers at Karbilá, since they, despite their countless atrocities, did not put women to the sword nor harass the sick and infirm. Alas, tongues are prevented from making utterance and pens are broken and the hidden cause of these brutalities is not made manifest to teach the world a lesson. The Public Prosecutor alleges that they were spies. Gracious God! Where in history can one point to a spy who readily surrendered his life in order to prove the truth of his belief?

378.22 Unfortunately it is beyond the scope of this letter to recount the atrocities inflicted upon the guiltless Bahá'ís of Iran or to answer, one by one, the accusations leveled against them. But let us ask all just and fair-minded people only one question: If, according to the much publicized statements of the Public Prosecutor, Bahá'ís are not arrested and executed because of their belief, and are not even imprisoned on that account, how is it that, when a group of them are arrested and each is charged with the same "crime" of "spying," if one of them recants his belief, he is immediately freed, a photograph of him and a description of his defection are victoriously featured in the newspapers, and respect and glory are heaped upon him? What kind of spying, subversion, illegal accumulation of goods, aggression or conspiracy or other "crime" can it be that is capable of being blotted out upon the recantation of one's beliefs? Is this not a clear proof of the absurdity of the accusations?

378.23 In spite of all this, the Bahá'í community of Iran, whose principles have been described earlier in this statement, announces the suspension of the Bahá'í organizations throughout Iran in order to establish its good intentions and in conformity with its basic tenets concerning complete obedience to the instructions of the Government. Henceforth, until the time when, God willing, the misunderstandings are eliminated and the realities are at last made manifest to the authorities, the National Assembly and all Local Spiritual Assemblies and their Committees are disbanded, and no one may any longer be designated a member of the Bahá'í Administration.

378.24The Bahá'í community of Iran hopes that this step will be considered a sign of its complete obedience to the Government in power. It further hopes that the authorities—including the esteemed Public Prosecutor of the Islamic Revolution who says that there is no opposition to and no enmity towards individual Bahá'ís, who has acknowledged the existence of a large Bahá'í community and has, in his interview, guaranteed its members the right to live and be free in their acts of worship—will reciprocate by proving their good intentions and the truth of their assurances by issuing orders that pledge, henceforth:

To bring to an end the persecutions, arrests, torture and imprisonment of Bahá'ís for imaginary crimes and on baseless pretexts, because God knows—and so do the authorities—that the only "crime" of which these innocent ones are guilty is that of their beliefs, and not the unsubstantiated accusations brought against them;
To guarantee the safety of their lives, their personal property and belongings, and their honor;
To accord them freedom to choose their residence and occupation and the right of association based on the provisions of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic;
To restore all the rights which have been taken away from them in accordance with the groundless assertions of the Public Prosecutor of the country;
To restore to Bahá'í employees the rights denied them by returning them to their jobs and by paying them their due wages;
To release from prison all innocent prisoners;
To lift the restrictions imposed on the properties of those Bahá'ís who, in their own country, have been deprived of their belongings;
To permit Bahá'í students who wish to continue their studies abroad to benefit from the same facilities that are provided to others;
To permit those Bahá'í youth who have been prevented from continuing their studies in the country to resume their education;
To permit those Bahá'í students stranded abroad who have been deprived of foreign exchange facilities to receive their allowances as other Iranian students do;
To restore Bahá'í cemeteries and to permit Bahá'ís to bury their dead in accordance with Bahá'í burial ceremonies;
To guarantee the freedom of Bahá'ís to perform their religious rites; to conduct funerals and burials including the recitation of the Prayer for the Dead; to solemnize Bahá'í marriages and divorces, and to carry out all acts of worship and laws and ordinances affecting personal status; because although Bahá'ís are entirely obedient and subordinate to the Government in the administration of the affairs which are in the jurisdiction of Bahá'í organizations, in matters of conscience and belief, and in accordance with their spiritual principles, they prefer martyrdom to recantation or the abandoning of the divine ordinances prescribed by their Faith;
To desist henceforth from arresting and imprisoning anyone because of his previous membership in Bahá'í organizations.

378.25 Finally, although the order issued by the Public Prosecutor of the Islamic Revolution was unjust and unfair, we have accepted it. We beseech God to remove the dross of prejudice from the hearts of the authorities so that, aided and enlightened by His confirmations, they will be inspired to recognize the true nature of the affairs of the Bahá'í community and come to the unalterable conviction that the infliction of atrocities and cruelties upon a pious band of wronged ones, and the shedding of their pure blood, will stain the good name and injure the prestige of any nation or government, for what will, in truth, endure are the records of good deeds, and of acts of justice and fairness, and the names of the doers of good. These will history preserve

in its bosom for posterity.
Respectfully,
(signed) The National Spiritual
Assembly of The Bahá'ís Of Iran
379
Social and Economic Development—
New Field of Bahá'í Service
20 October 1983
To the Bahá'ís of the World
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
379.1 The soul-stirring events in Bahá'u'lláh's native land and the concomitant advance into the theatre of world affairs of the agencies of His Administrative Order have combined to bring into focus new possibilities in the evolution of the Bahá'í world community. Our Ridván message this year captured these implications in its reference to the opening before us of a wider horizon in whose light can dimly be discerned new pursuits and undertakings upon which we must soon embark. These portend our greater involvement in the development of
the social and economic life of peoples.
Dynamic Coherence between
the Spiritual and Practical Requirements of Life
379.2 From the beginning of His stupendous mission, Bahá'u'lláh urged upon the attention of nations the necessity of ordering human affairs in such a way as to bring into being a world unified in all the essential aspects of its life. In unnumbered verses and tablets He repeatedly and variously declared the "progress of the world" and the "development of nations" as being among the ordinances of God for this day. The oneness of mankind, which is at once the operating principle and ultimate goal of His Revelation, implies the achievement of a dynamic coherence between the spiritual and practical requirements of life on earth. The indispensability of this coherence is unmistakably illustrated in His ordination of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, the spiritual center of every Bahá'í community round which must flourish dependencies dedicated to the social, humanitarian, educational and scientific advancement of mankind. Thus, we can readily appreciate that although it has hitherto been impracticable for Bahá'í institutions generally to emphasize development activities, the concept of social and economic development is enshrined in the sacred Teachings of our Faith. The beloved Master, through His illuminating words and deeds, set the example for the application of this concept to the reconstruction of society. Witness, for instance, what social and economic progress the Iranian believers attained under His loving guidance and, subsequently, with the unfailing encouragement of the Guardian of the Cause.
Self-Sufficiency, Self-Reliance, and the Preservation of Human Honor
379.3 Now, after all the years of constant teaching activity, the Community of the Greatest Name has grown to the stage at which the processes of this development must be incorporated into its regular pursuits; particularly is action compelled by the expansion of the Faith in Third World countries where

the vast majority of its adherents reside. The steps to be taken must necessarily begin in the Bahá'í Community itself, with the friends endeavoring, through their application of spiritual principles, their rectitude of conduct and the practice of the art of consultation, to uplift themselves and thus become self-sufficient and self-reliant. Moreover, these exertions will conduce to the preservation of human honor so desired by Bahá'u'lláh. In the process and as a consequence, the friends will undoubtedly extend the benefits of their efforts to society as a whole, until all mankind achieves the progress intended by the Lord of the Age.

An Office of Social and Economic Development at the World Center

379.4 It is indeed propitious that systematic attention be given to this vital sphere of Bahá'í endeavor. We are happy, therefore, to announce the establishment at the World Center of the Office of Social and Economic Development, which is to assist the Universal House of Justice to promote and coordinate the activities of the friends throughout the world in this new field.

379.5 The International Teaching Center and, through it, the Continental Boards of Counselors are poised for the special responsibilities which devolve upon them to be alert to possibilities for extending the development of social and economic life both within and outside the Bahá'í Community, and to advise and encourage the Assemblies and friends in their strivings.

Working from the Grass Roots

379.6 We call now upon National Spiritual Assemblies to consider the implications of this emerging trend for their respective communities, and to take well-conceived measures to involve the thought and actions of Local Spiritual Assemblies and individuals in the devising and implementing of plans within the constraints of existing circumstances and available resources. Progress in the development field will largely depend on natural stirrings at the grass roots, and it should receive its driving force from those sources rather than from an imposition of plans and programs from the top. The major task of National Assemblies, therefore, is to increase the local communities' awareness of needs and possibilities, and to guide and coordinate the efforts resulting from such awareness. Already in many areas the friends are witnessing the confirmations of their initiatives in such pursuits as the founding of tutorial and other schools, the promotion of literacy, the launching of rural development programs, the inception of educational radio stations, and the operation of agricultural and medical projects. As they enlarge the scope of their endeavors other modes of development will undoubtedly emerge.

379.7 This challenge evokes the resourcefulness, flexibility and cohesiveness of the many communities composing the Bahá'í world. Different communities will, of course, perceive different approaches and different solutions to similar needs. Some can offer assistance abroad, while, at the outset, others must of necessity receive assistance; but all, irrespective of circumstances or resources, are endowed with the capacity to respond in some measure; all can share; all can participate in the joint enterprise of applying more systematically the principles of the Faith to upraising the quality of

human life. The key to success is unity in spirit and in action.

Development Activities—A Reinforcement of the Teaching Work

379.8 We go forward confident that the wholehearted involvement of the friends in these activities will ensure a deeper consolidation of the community at all levels. Our engagement in the technical aspects of development should, however, not be allowed to supplant the essentials of teaching, which remains the primary duty of every follower of Bahá'u'lláh. Rather should our increased activities in the development field be viewed as a reinforcement of the teaching work, as a greater manifestation of faith in action. For, if expansion of the teaching work does not continue, there can be no hope of success for this enlarged dimension of the consolidation process.

Call to Action

379.9 Ultimately, the call to action is addressed to the individual friends, whether they be adult or youth, veteran or newly enrolled. Let them step forth to take their places in the arena of service where their talents and skills, their specialized training, their material resources, their offers of time and energy and, above all, their dedication to Bahá'í principles, can be put to work in improving the lot of man.

379.10 May all derive enduring inspiration from the following statement written in 1933 by the hand of our beloved Guardian:

379.10a The problems which confront the believers at the present time, whether social, spiritual, economic or administrative will be gradually solved as the number and the resources of the friends multiply and their capacity for service and for the application of Bahá'í principles develops. They should be patient, confident and active in utilizing every possible opportunity that presents itself within the limits now necessarily imposed upon them. May the Almighty aid them to fulfill their highest hopes ...

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

380

Passing of Continental Counselor Raúl Pavón

23 October 1983

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

380.1 DEEPLY DEPLORE LOSS ZEALOUS SERVANT CAUSE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH RAÚL PAVÓN DISTINGUISHED PROMOTER FAITH AND INDEFATIGABLE WORKER IN TEACHING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES LATIN AMERICA. HIS OUTSTANDING SERVICES AS MEMBER BOARD COUNSELORS AMERICAS AND UNIQUE ENDEAVORS ESTABLISHMENT FIRST BAHÁ'Í RADIO STATION WARMLY REMEMBERED. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL WORLDS GOD AND SOLACE LOVING COMFORT HIS BEREAVED FAMILY. FEEL CONFIDANT HIS DEARLY CHERISHED PARENTS REJOICE ABHÁ KINGDOM RANGE HIS DEDICATED SERVICES. URGE ALL COMMUNITIES AMERICAS HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS BEFITTING HIS HIGHLY VALUED CONTRIBUTIONS BELOVED FAITH.

Universal House of Justice

381

Continued Pressure against the Bahá'ís of Iran

7 November 1983

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

381.1 Recent events in Iran following the banning of the Bahá'í administration indicate, unfortunately, the continuation of intense pressures against the defenseless Bahá'í community in that country. Many of these pressures are being exerted by the authorities in the hope that the Bahá'ís will recant their faith and trade their love of Bahá'u'lláh for the comfort and security which the authorities offer to them in exchange.

381.2 With great sadness the Universal House of Justice announces that many friends in prison are being tortured when they refuse to submit to the will of the authorities to deny their love for Bahá'u'lláh. In addition, while it is true that no Bahá'ís have been executed since the statement calling for the disbanding of the administration of the Faith was made by the Attorney-General on 29 August, it has been reported that on 19 September a Bahá'í farmer in the town of Khuy, Mr. Akbar Haqíqí, died as a result of a beating by a mob instigated by the clergy. Moreover, at least 140 Bahá'ís have been arrested in all parts of the country following the Attorney-General's statement, 50 of whom were detained on 30 October in the Caspian Sea area. Although a number of the friends have been released, the total number of Bahá'ís still imprisoned in Iran, according to our records, stands at over 450.

381.3 Three believers who were advanced in age have died in prison and thus have joined the ranks of those who have laid down their lives in service to the Cause. They are:

Mr. Husayn Nayyirí-Isfahání, 64 years old—imprisoned in Isfahán and died just as he was going into court for his trial on 29 November 1982.

Mr. Ahmad 'Alí Thábit-Sarvistání, 67 years old—died in prison in Shiraz on 30 June 1983.

Mr. Muhammad Ishráqí, 81 years old, an Auxiliary Board member—died in prison in Tehran on 31 August 1983.

381.4 Word has also recently been received that in the city of Dizfúl, a Bahá'í woman, Mrs. Írán Rahímpúr (Khurmá'í), was executed on 12 May 1982 after giving birth to her child. The baby was taken away by the Muslims and his fate is unknown.

381.5 One of the most obvious examples of persecution and proof of the evil intention of the Iranian authorities to uproot the Faith in that land is the destruction and desecration of Bahá'í cemeteries. Recently there was an official advertisement in the newspapers in Iran indicating that the tombstones in the Bahá'í cemetery in Tehran were being put up for sale. Since all markers on the graves are apparently being eliminated, it is possible that no trace of the Bahá'í cemetery will remain in future....

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

382

Appointment of Continental Counselors

6 December 1983

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

382.1 The Universal House of Justice announces with pleasure the appointment of the following Continental Counselors:
In Africa: Mr. Mabuku Wingi
In the Americas:Mrs. Isabel P. de Calderón
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat

383
Response of Individuals to Persecution of Iranian Bahá'ís
7 December 1983
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States
Dear Bahá'í Friends,

383.1 In recent months the Universal House of Justice has received comments from individual American believers expressing their distress over the continuing persecution of their beloved co-workers in Iran, and proposing such ways of registering their protest as public demonstrations and the wearing of armbands and ribbons. Consideration of these comments has prompted the instruction of the House of Justice that we write you thus.

The Need for a Proper Perspective

383.2 It is indeed difficult, given the heartbreaking disabilities imposed upon the Iranian Bahá'í Community and the seeming impotence of the American Community directly to effect a positive change, for the friends to be at case. But that the situation in Iran, grave as it is, should lead to feelings of depression and alienation on the part of the American believers, as has been reported, or that it should be allowed to hamper their success in teaching on the homefront, suggests the need for a proper perspective. You will sense in the comments and appeals of the beloved Guardian addressed to the American Community during 1955–56 a striking resemblance between the reactions and attitudes of the friends towards the crisis then and now. A rereading of his letter of 20 August 1955 describing the situation then and the opportunities it created for the proclamation of the Faith, and his cables of 5 January, 2 February and 22 June 1956 (Citadel of Faith, pages 133–42) urging action is most instructive. The American Community has displayed in the past a tendency towards periodic immobility, a condition the Guardian commented upon from time to time and that was the main concern of his last letter to the America dated 21 September 1957 (Citadel of Faith, pages 151–58). While the House of Justice does not now have the impression that the American believers as a whole are depressed, it feels it might be helpful to all concerned to make the following comments on the basis of that assumption, as conveyed in the correspondence received.

383.3 The American Bahá'í Community has for many years been in the forefront of defending the weak and oppressed. Its distinction in this respect won the repeated praise of the beloved Guardian, as, for example, The Advent of Divine Justice, his celebrated letter of 25 December 1938, affirms. Against an enumeration of afflictions that at that time threatened to force the majority of the existing Bahá'í communities into the shadows of retreat, he described the Bahá'í Community in North America as the "one chief

remaining citadel, the mighty arm which still raises aloft the standard of an unconquerable Faith." The many instances during the subsequent years in which that Community came to the aid of other defenseless communities are a testimony to the effectiveness of the American responses in times of need and trouble. But the situation in the world and in the Bahá'í community has changed. Consequently, the accustomed reactions to American interventions have also changed. While this change does not nullify the preeminent role destined for America in the eventual efflorescence of Bahá'u'lláh's system in the world, it does require the American believers to obtain a deeper understanding of their situation in relation to the changed circumstances.

A Combination of Pragmatism and Spirituality

383.4 The friends' response to the Iranian situation should neither be solely pragmatic nor solely spiritual, but a combination of both; moreover, it must not only meet the test of the immediate crisis, it must also match the challenge of the historic moment. In both these respects a fair appraisal of the results thus far should steel their resolve, not induce depression. Even though when viewed from the truculent reactions of the powers in Iran, the petitions and protests of the American Community in particular, the Bahá'í communities in general, appear to have been ineffective in stemming the persecutions of our brethren, there is strong reason to believe that had the Bahá'ís around the world not taken these actions, the plight of the Iranian friends would be far more tragic. And while there is a vast array of direct action that could be, or could have been, contemplated, not every proposed action is fitting or timely. Actions perceived to be appropriate within the framework of American society can be counterproductive when viewed in the broader framework of a world community. The Bahá'í world, in its complex diversity, has been guided to act according to the assessment by the House of Justice of the immediate circumstances and the resource at hand, and in consideration of the opinions and judgements of the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran, which until its recent disbanding, functioned with heroic verve in defending the rights of those under its charge. Since the Bahá'í Community must operate as a cohesive entity, it is not conducive to its success for any single unit of that world-embracing organism to go off at a tangent in its reactions to the situation, as well-intentioned as that unit might be.

A Review of Significant Achievements

383.5 The House of Justice suggests that the American friends look at the great contrast between the relatively low profile the Faith kept before the crisis and the obvious prominence it has achieved since then; that they consider the remarkable impression that the national Bahá'í communities throughout the world have made upon their national governments and international organizations; that they contemplate the extraordinary breakthroughs for the Faith in the media of the world compared to the media's reticence toward the Cause a few years ago; and, finally, that they think of the implications of all these new advantages for the teaching work and determine dispassionately whether, in fact, the opportunities for the progress of the Faith are greater or lesser than before.

Opposition—creating opportunities for progress

383.6 There is no gainsaying the insight set forth in the Teachings that opposition to the Faith creates opportunities for its progress. By their radiant submission to this insight, the Iranian Bahá'ís have surely demonstrated their conviction as to its potency. Motivated by their understanding of it, a number of Bahá'í communities in different parts of the world have engaged in activities that are producing concrete results in the expansion and consolidation of the Faith. For the American believers to give true expression to the anguish they feel over the persecution of their brethren, they too must capture the value of this insight and act upon it. The vision, the admonitions, the encouragement which The Advent of Divine Justice conveyed so many years ago, and which the Guardian elaborated in so many of his subsequent messages, are as appropriate, perhaps even more so, to the current situation as when they were first given. The responses he attempted long ago to evoke are no less desirable and necessary now; a deeper spiritual awareness, a deeper spiritual maturity are called for if the American community must pursue successfully its destined course. It should not be forgotten that the beloved Master promised, as the Guardian recalled in his early letters to America, to send intellectual, rather than physical, tests to the friends there in order to purify and better prepare them for their divinely appointed destiny. Nor should the prerequisites of success the Guardian outlined for the American Bahá'í Community be overlooked. It is in the framework of these prerequisites that the success or failure of the American Community must ultimately be measured, not from the standpoint of any frustration in effecting a desired change in the Iranian situation, which, despite its admitted distress for the community, has done more to proclaim the Cause abroad than any other experience in this century.

Toward a Response Worthy of the Valorous Victims

383.7 In a society whose people are as Protestant and demonstrative as the Americans, such public displays and symbolic gestures as street demonstrations and the wearing of armbands and ribbons may have a certain appeal to public attention and may even prove to be effective in the proper context and under the proper circumstances. But the evocative power of such activities is difficult to sustain over a long period. Particularly is this so in your country where the public demonstrations of a myriad groups constantly compete for attention. The House of Justice feels that while these ephemeral activities might relieve the immediate anxieties of some of the friends, they would have no measurable effect on the course of events in Iran. Our human resources are so limited, they must be devoted to the most effective means of responding to the situation. Of infinitely more value are actions that reflect the spiritual profundity underlying these persecutions and that match the dignity, radiance and optimism for the Faith of the valorous victims, who, as their published testimonies show, are quite clear about the reasons for their suffering and dying. Moreover, in the long view, it would not serve the best interests of the Faith for its members, at the very time of their emergence from obscurity, to impress themselves upon the consciousness of the public as a community identified with such symbols as armbands and ribbons.

383.8 An important point to bear in mind is that our activities in defense

of the Iranian believers must be supported by those toward the accomplishment of our stated goals. Preoccupation with the Iranian crisis, at the expense of neglecting the Seven Year Plan, would divert the Bahá'í world community from achieving the very success necessary to the strengthening of the Faith and the confounding of its enemies. Such a neglect would be unworthy of the sufferings of the Iranian friends. Indeed, the ideal being constantly pursued is to defend them vigorously, while, at the same time, exploiting the opportunities created by their sacrifices to promote the Cause of God. The unprecedented publicity, the unremitting appeals to governments and international bodies, the increased contacts with leaders of thought and, above all, the redoubling of teaching activities and the deeper consolidation of the Bahá'í Community, as called for by the House of Justice, are ultimately the best means of defending and securing the relief of the beleaguered Iranian Community; besides, by these means will the world community of Bahá'ís be better prepared to meet the inevitable opposition yet to come elsewhere.

383.9 It is the fervent prayer of the House of Justice that the American friends will be sustained by the same unconquerable spirit that fortifies the resolute faith of their brothers and sisters in Iran, that they will be refreshed from the same fountain of hope inspired by Bahá'u'lláh's incontrovertible assurance to the loved ones of God in that land, whom He exhorts "to patience, to acquiescence, and to tranquillity," and addresses in these consoling words:

Whatever hath befallen you, hath been for the sake of God. This is the truth, and in this there is no doubt. You should, therefore, leave all your affairs in His Hands, place your trust in Him, and rely upon Him. He will assuredly not forsake you. In this, likewise, there is no doubt. No father will surrender his sons to devouring beasts; no shepherd will leave his flock to ravening wolves. He will most certainly do his utmost to protect his own. If, however, for a few days, in compliance with God's all-encompassing wisdom, outward affairs should run their course contrary to one's cherished desire, this is of no consequence and should not matter. Our intent is that all the friends should fix their gaze on the Supreme Horizon, and cling to that which hath been revealed in the Tablets. ...

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

384

Service in Voluntary Nonsectarian Organizations

13 December 1983

To the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís of
Alaska, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Hawaiian Islands, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

384.1 The Universal House of Justice has been consulting upon aspects of youth service in pioneering throughout the Bahá'í world, and has requested that we convey its views on service in other lands undertaken by Bahá'í

youth with voluntary nonsectarian organizations.

384.2 In the past, the policy adopted by some National Assemblies was to discourage young Bahá'ís from enrolling to serve in activities sponsored by non-Bahá'í voluntary organizations, as the Assemblies were under the impression that these young people would not be able to engage in direct teaching, nor participate, for the most part, in Bahá'í activities while serving abroad in such programs. Perhaps in some instances the Bahá'ís involved were not sure how to function as members of the Bahá'í community in order to give each aspect of their lives its proper due.

384.3 In the light of experience, however, it is now clear that we should have no misgivings in encouraging young Bahá'ís to enroll in such voluntary service organization programs as the United Nations Volunteers, United States Peace Corps, Canadian University Services Overseas (CUSO) and similar Canadian agencies, the British Volunteer Program (BVP) of the United Kingdom, and other voluntary service organizations. Other countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, and the Scandinavian lands are understood to have similar service organizations which are compatible with Bahá'í development goals as now tentatively envisaged.

384.4 Some of the advantages of such service to the Faith are worth mentioning. Volunteers will receive thorough orientation and sometimes will be taught basic skills which will enable them to help the Bahá'í community in projects undertaken in developing countries. Wherever they serve, these volunteers should be able to participate in Bahá'í activities and contribute to the consolidation of the Bahá'í community. The freedom to teach is to a large extent dependent upon the local interpretation of the group leader, but even if volunteers do not engage in direct teaching, being known as Bahá'ís and showing the Bahá'í spirit and attitude towards work and service should attract favourable attention and may, in many instances, be instrumental in attracting individuals to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. And finally, the period of overseas service often produces a taste for such service, and volunteers may well offer to directly promote the pioneer work either in the same country or in another developing country.

384.5 It is well known that a considerable number of Bahá'ís have already gone abroad to serve with these agencies and that others have espoused the Faith while serving in foreign lands with voluntary service organizations.

...

384.6 National Spiritual Assemblies which hold orientation courses for pioneers may benefit from including the subject of rural development in their program, and, as in the past, from inviting people who have served in voluntary service organizations to participate in the planning of orientation programs and in having them share their experiences as volunteer workers in developing countries.

384.7 The House of Justice expresses the hope that the information contained in this letter will dispel the misunderstandings that have in the past surrounded the question of participation of Bahá'í youth in projects sponsored by non-Bahá'í voluntary organizations.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat
385
Acute Needs of the International Funds
2 January 1984
To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh in every Land
Dearly loved Friends,
385.1 The gathering of the representatives of the Bahá'í world at the International Convention last Ridván was held in an atmosphere charged with awareness of the sacrifices being made by our fellow believers in Iran and with eager anticipation of the new prospects opening before the Cause as a result of changing conditions in the world, the widespread publicity that the Faith has received in all continents, and the growing maturity of its administrative institutions.
385.2 During the succeeding eight months we have been developing the agencies and formulating the plans to enable the Faith to seize the unprecedented opportunities now before it, but we are confronted with a shortage of funds which, if not remedied, could frustrate these plans. For the last two years there has been a decline in the amount of contributions to the international funds of the Faith, and we note that many national funds also are facing the danger of deficits.
Four Areas Requiring Immediate Action
385.3 Beyond carrying on the general work of the Cause there are four areas where immediate action is required.
385.4 The first is the completion of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs in India and Samoa. Any delay in this work can but make it more expensive and also seriously injure the reputation of the Faith in these two vital areas.
385.5 The second is the development of the World Center, the focal point of the entire Administrative Order of the Faith where, in the words of Shoghi Effendi, "the dust of its Founders reposes, where the processes disclosing its purposes, energizing its life and shaping its destiny all originate."
385.6 The third is in the prosecution of programs of social and economic development. Bahá'í communities in many lands have attained a size and complexity that both require and make possible the implementation of a range of activities for their social and economic development which will not only be of immense value for the consolidation of these communities and the development of their Bahá'í life, but will also benefit the wider communities within which they are embedded and will demonstrate the beneficial effects of the Bahá'í Message to the critical gaze of the world. Funds for the initiation and carrying out of these projects will be dispensed very gradually and with great care in order not to undermine the natural growth and sense of responsibility of these communities, but the field is so vast, the opportunities so far-reaching, that the need will stretch the resources of the Cause to the uttermost.
385.7 The fourth area is in the development and coordination of worldwide efforts to present to a far more extensive audience than ever before the divine remedy for the problems besetting society and its individual members, to establish the universality of the Faith and the implications of its teachings

in the eyes of statesmen, and to ensure that the leaders of thought become thoroughly aware of the Bahá'í Revelation and the profundity of its message.

385.8 The work on the Temples is already well advanced and must not be stopped; the development of the agencies of the World Center, located in one of the principal trouble-spots of the world, cannot be indefinitely held back; the time for the expansion of social and economic development as an aspect of the work of the Cause has arrived and it cannot be neglected without grave consequences to the life of Bahá'í communities; the unprecedented opportunity for proclamation of the Faith has been given to us as a direct result of the persecutions inflicted on the believers in the Cradle of the Faith. If we are to be worthy of the sacrifices of these valiant friends, and if we are not to betray the trust that Bahá'u'lláh has placed upon us for the redemption of mankind in this hour of its acute need, we must not fail to seize the opportunities now before us.

385.9 This fourfold challenge faces us at the very time when the world is in the midst of an economic crisis and is overshadowed with threats of war and other disasters. These conditions, far from daunting the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, can only drive home to us the urgency for our response.

Call for Renewed Consecration

385.10 We therefore call upon every true-hearted Bahá'í to consecrate his life anew to the service of God and the betterment of the lot of mankind, so that manpower will not be lacking in the fields of pioneering, teaching and administrative service. Most urgently, may every believer give sacrificially of his substance, each in accordance with his means, to the funds of the Cause, local, national, continental and international, so that the material resources—the lifeblood of all activities—will be adequate to the tremendous work that we have to perform in the months and years immediately ahead. It requires a concentration of effort, a unity of purpose and a degree of self-sacrifice to match the heroic exertions of the victors of past plans in the progress of the Cause.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Universal House of Justice

386

Message to Youth—International Youth Year

3 January 1984

To the Bahá'í Youth of the World

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

386.1 The designation of 1985 by the United Nations as International Youth Year opens new vistas for the activities in which the young members of our community are engaged. The hope of the United Nations in thus focusing on youth is to encourage their conscious participation in the affairs of the world through their involvement in international development and such other undertakings and relationships as may aid the realization of their aspirations for a world without war.

386.2 These expectations reinforce the immediate, vast opportunities begging our attention. To visualize, however imperfectly, the challenges that

engage us now, we have only to reflect, in the light of our sacred Writings, upon the confluence of favorable circumstances brought about by the accelerated unfolding of the Divine Plan over nearly five decades, by the untold potencies of the spiritual drama being played out in Iran, and by the creative energy stimulated by awareness of the approaching end of the twentieth century. Undoubtedly, it is within your power to contribute significantly to shaping the societies of the coming century; youth can move the world.

386.3 How apt, indeed how exciting, that so portentous an occasion should be presented to you, the young, eager followers of the Blessed Beauty, to enlarge the scope of your endeavors in precisely that arena of action in which you strive so conscientiously to distinguish yourselves! For in the theme proposed by the United Nations—"Participation, Development, Peace"—can be perceived an affirmation that the goals pursued by you, as Bahá'ís, are at heart the very objects of the frenetic searchings of your despairing contemporaries.

386.4 You are already engaged in the thrust of the Seven Year Plan, which provides the framework for any further course of action you may now be moved by this new opportunity to adopt. International Youth Year will fall within the Plan's next phase; thus the activities you will undertake, and for which you will wish to prepare even now, cannot but enhance your contributions to the vitality of that Plan, while at the same time aiding the proceedings for the Youth Year. Let there be no delay, then, in the vigor of your response.

Providing a Living Example of Virtue

386.5 A highlight of this period of the Seven Year Plan has been the phenomenal proclamation accorded the Faith in the wake of the unabating persecutions in Iran; a new interest in its Teachings has been aroused on a wide scale. Simultaneously, more and more people from all strata of society frantically seek their true identity, which is to say, although they would not so plainly admit it, the spiritual meaning of their lives; prominent among these seekers are the young. Not only does this knowledge, open fruitful avenues for Bahá'í initiative, it also indicates to young Bahá'ís a particular responsibility so to teach the Cause and live the life as to give vivid expression to those virtues that would fulfill the spiritual yearning of their peers.

386.6 For the sake of preserving such virtues much innocent blood has been shed in the past, and much, even today, is being sacrificed in Iran by young and old alike. Consider, for example, the instances in Shiraz last summer of the six young women, their ages ranging from 18 to 25 years, whose lives were snuffed out by the hangman's noose. All faced attempted inducements to recant their faith; all refused to deny their Beloved. Look also at the accounts of the astounding fortitude shown over and over again by children and youth who were subjected to the interrogations and abuses of teachers and mullahs and were expelled from school for upholding their beliefs. It, moreover, bears noting that under the restrictions so cruelly imposed on their community, the youth, rendered signal services, placing their energies at the disposal of Bahá'í institutions throughout the country. No splendor of speech could give more fitting testimony to their spiritual commitment and fidelity than

these pure acts of selflessness and devotion. In virtually no other place on earth is so great a price for faith required of the Bahá'ís. Nor could there be found more willing, more radiant bearers of the cup of sacrifice than the valiant Bahá'í youth of Iran. Might it, then, not be reasonably expected that you, the youth and young adults living at such an extraordinary time, witnessing such stirring examples of the valor of your Iranian fellows, and exercising such freedom of movement, would sally forth, "unrestrained as the wind," into the field of Bahá'í action?

Reinvigorating Individual Efforts

386.7 May you all persevere in your individual efforts to teach the Faith, but with added zest, to study the Writings, but with greater earnestness. May you pursue your education and training for future service to mankind, offering as much of your free time as possible to activities on behalf of the Cause. May those of you already bent on your life's work and who may have already founded families, strive toward becoming the living embodiments of Bahá'í ideals, both in the spiritual nurturing of your families and in your active involvement in the efforts on the home front or abroad in the pioneering field. May all respond to the current demands upon the Faith by displaying a fresh measure of dedication to the tasks at hand.

386.8 Further to these aspirations is the need for a mighty mobilization of teaching activities reflecting regularity in the patterns of service rendered by young Bahá'ís. The native urge of youth to move from place to place, combined with their abounding zeal, indicates that you can become more deliberately and numerously involved in these activities as traveling teachers. One pattern of this mobilization could be short-term projects, carried out at home or in other lands, dedicated to both teaching the Faith and improving the living conditions of people. Another could be that, while still young and unburdened by family responsibilities, you give attention to the idea of volunteering a set period, say, one or two years, to some Bahá'í service, on the home front or abroad, in the teaching or development field. It would accrue to the strength and stability of the community if such patterns could be followed by succeeding generations of youth. Regardless of the modes of service, however, youth must be understood to be fully engaged, at all times, in all climes and under all conditions. In your varied pursuits you may rest assured of the loving support and guidance of the Bahá'í institutions operating at every level.

386.9 Our ardent prayers, our unshakeable confidence in your ability to succeed, our imperishable love surround you in all you endeavor to do in the path of service to the Blessed Perfection.

Universal House of Justice

387

Death of Three More Iranian Bahá'ís and
Arrest of 250 More

17 January 1984

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

387.1 PRESSURES AGAINST BELEAGUERED BRETHREN CRADLE FAITH UNCEASING. THREE MORE STALWART SUPPORTERS GREATEST NAME JOINED RANKS MARTYRS, AS FOLLOWS:

MR. ‘ABDU’L-MAJÍD MUTAHHAR IMPRISONED ISFAHÁN 4 SEPTEMBER 1983 DIED SHORTLY AFTER CONFINEMENT.
MR. RAHMATU’LLÁH HAKÍMÁN MYSTERIOUSLY PASSED AWAY IN PRISON IN KIRMÁN EARLY JANUARY 1984 FEW DAYS AFTER BEING IMPRISONED.
ON 19 NOVEMBER IN VILLAGE OF MUHAMMADÍYYIH NEAR ISFAHÁN, MR. BAHMAN DIHQÁNÍ, WELL KNOWN AND RESPECTED BAHÁ’Í, DIED AS RESULT OF MOB ATTACK. SINCE BURIAL NOT ALLOWED HIS VILLAGE, BAHÁ’ÍS CARRIED BODY TO NAJAFÁBÁD AND BURIED HIM THERE.
FULL DETAILS CIRCUMSTANCES ALL THREE DEATHS UNKNOWN.
387.2 SINCE LAST REPORT 7 NOVEMBER OVER 250 BAHÁ’ÍS INCLUDING INFANTS AND CHILDREN HAVE BEEN ARRESTED IN ALL PARTS COUNTRY. NEARLY 70 OF THESE WERE DETAINED BETWEEN 31 DECEMBER 1983 AND 3 JANUARY 1984.
387.3 OTHER DESPICABLE ACTS AGAINST BAHÁ’ÍS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING: REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS PERMITTED ENTER BAHÁ’Í HOMES WITHOUT WARRANTS, CONFISCATE VALUABLE PERSONAL POSSESSIONS. COMPLAINTS TO AUTHORITIES UNAVAILING.
SOME IMPRISONED BAHÁ’ÍS WHO WERE EXPELLED FROM THEIR JOBS HAVE BEEN PROMISED RELEASE IF THEY REPAY ALL SALARIES PAID TO THEM FROM BEGINNING THEIR EMPLOYMENT, SOMETIMES UP TO 30 YEARS. ...
Universal House of Justice

388
Passing of Ethel Revell, Member of the
International Bahá’í Council
9 February 1984
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
388.1 DEEPLY GRIEVED ANNOUNCE PASSING ETHEL REVELL SAINTLY STEADFAST SELF-SACRIFICING PROMOTER CAUSE GOD. BLESSED BY ASSOCIATION ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ COURSE HIS VISIT AMERICA AND RECEIPT TABLETS FROM HIM. HER TIRELESS LABORS STERLING QUALITIES EARNED ADMIRATION SHOGHI EFFENDI WHO APPOINTED HER INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ’Í COUNCIL AS ITS WESTERN ASSISTANT SECRETARY. THIS CROWN HER SERVICES CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP ELECTED COUNCIL SUBSEQUENT SERVICES MANY CAPACITIES WORLD CENTER INCLUDING SECRETARY HANDS HOLY LAND. URGE NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS HER HONOR IN ALL MASHRIQU’L-ADHKÁRS OTHER CENTERS. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER RADIANT SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM.
Universal House of Justice

389
Message to National
Bahá’í Women's Conference, Kenya
26 March 1984
To the National Bahá’í Women's Conference, Nairobi, Kenya
389.10 OCCASION NATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE WE GREET PARTICIPANTS EXPRESSING HOPE DELIBERATIONS WILL GIVE DIRECTION AND STIMULATION TO EFFORTS BAHÁ’Í WOMEN THROUGHOUT COUNTRY TO EXEMPLIFY BAHÁ’Í WAY OF LIFE, TO STEP FORWARD AS SUSTAINING AND DRIVING FORCE COMMUNITY AND TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP THEIR PEERS. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES BOUNTIFUL BLESSING, FULFILLMENT HIGHEST ASPIRATIONS.

Universal House of Justice
390
Persecution of Bahá’ís in Morocco
29 March 1984
To National Spiritual Assemblies
390.1 FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENTS HAVE OCCURRED RE MOROCCAN SITUATION:
COURT OF APPEAL CASABLANCA POSTPONED HEARING UNTIL 12 APRIL.
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, A NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION B
IN PARIS WHICH HAD SENT ITS REPRESENTATIVE TO MOROCCO FOR FIRST HAND COVERAGE
DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING BAHÁ’Í CASES, HAS JUST ISSUED PRESS RELEASE IN PARIS
OPENLY REPORTING SENTENCES, DECLARING THESE INCOMPATIBLE WITH STANDARD
TOLERANCE PRACTISED IN MOROCCO AS WELL AS INCORPORATED ITS CONSTITUTION, AND
WARNING THAT IF JUSTICE IS NOT DONE, FEDERATION IS PREPARED CALL ON OTHER
INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES TAKE ACTION BEHALF BAHÁ’ÍS.
IF YOU ARE APPROACHED BY MEDIA YOU SHOULD STATE THAT ACTION TAKEN BY FEDERATIO
ARISES FROM FINDINGS ITS OWN REPRESENTATIVE; HOWEVER BAHÁ’ÍS THEMSELVES
HAVE SO FAR REFRAINED FROM PUBLICITY AS THEY HOPE HEARINGS COURTS OF APPEAL
WILL REDRESS WRONGS AND UPHOLD JUSTICE.
Universal House of Justice
391
Inaugural Broadcast of Radio Bahá’í Bolivia
2 April 1984
To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Bolivia
391.1 HAPPY NEWS INITIAL BROADCAST RADIO BAHÁ’Í CARACOLLO MARKED BY
FAVORABLE LOCAL RECOGNITION SIGNIFICANCE EVENT ENTIRE REGION. ASSURE PRAYERS
AMPLE REWARDS YOUR LONG EFFORTS. ARDUOUS DAYS DEVELOPMENT FULL POTENTIALS
POWERFUL INSTRUMENT TEACHING DEEPENING UPLIFTMENT PEOPLES ALTIPLANO NOW BEFO
YOU. MAY GUIDANCE BLESSED BEAUTY BE YOURS WIN LAURELS IN SERVICE BELOVED
FAITH.
Universal House of Justice
392
Insidious Turn of Persecution of Iranian Bahá’ís
10 April 1984
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
392.1 PERSECUTION FRIENDS CRADLE FAITH PERSISTS, TAKING EVEN MORE INSIDIOUS
TURN. IN MARCH AT LEAST THREE PRISONERS DIED UNDER MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES,
TWO IN TEHRAN AND ONE IN BÁFT, KIRMÁN, BODY OF MUHSIN RADAVÍ, 55 YEARS
OLD, SHOWED EVIDENCE OF HANGING. OTHER TWO, GHULÁM-HUSAYN
HASANZÁDIH-SHÁKIRÍ, 80, AND NUSRATU’LLÁH DÍYÁ’Í, 61, WERE
BURIED WITHOUT FRIENDS RELATIVES BEING INFORMED.
392.2 ARRESTS CONTINUE WITH LEAST AMOUNT PUBLICITY. SINCE LAST REPORT 17
JANUARY ALTHOUGH SOME BAHÁ’Í PRISONERS RELEASED, 111 HAVE BEEN ARRESTED,
MOST OF WHOM WERE MEMBERS OF SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES BEFORE THEIR DISSOLUTION LAS
YEAR. NUMBER BAHÁ’ÍS KNOWN TO BE IN PRISONS IN IRAN TOTALS 704.
392.3 ACCURATE INFORMATION IN HAND DESCRIBES TORTURES PERPETRATED AGAINST
SOME VERY PROMINENT BAHÁ’ÍS. FOR EXAMPLE ONE BAHÁ’Í SEVERELY TORTURED

UNDER EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES FORCED CONFESS TO FALSE CHARGES. OTHERS SIMILARLY TORTURED RESISTED PRESSURES EXERTED ON THEM TO MAKE FALSE PUBLIC CONFESSIONS FOR BENEFIT RADIO TELEVISION....
Universal House of Justice
393
Execution of Three by Firing Squad
13 April 1984
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
393.1 FURTHER OUR MESSAGE 10/11 APRIL JUST RECEIVED DISTRESSING NEWS EXECUTION BY FIRING SQUAD IN EVIN PRISON TEHRAN FOLLOWING BELIEVERS:
393.2 MR. KÁMRÁN LUTFÍ, 32 YEAR OLD UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR, IMPRISONED 5 MAY 1983
393.3 MR. RAHÍM RAHÍMÍYÁN, 52 YEAR OLD BUSINESSMAN, IMPRISONED 5 MAY 1983
393.4 MR. YADU'LLÁH SÁBIRÍYÁN, 60 YEAR OLD PRINTING PRESS MANAGER, IMPRISONED 9 FEBRUARY 1982
393.5 SINCE EXECUTIONS NOT ANNOUNCED AND BODIES UNCEREMONIOUSLY BURIED WITHOUT FAMILIES RELATIVES BEING INFORMED, EXACT DATE EXECUTIONS UNKNOWN. FEARFUL OTHER BAHÁ'Í PRISONERS RECEIVED SAME FATE.
393.6 NOW ESTABLISHED FACT THAT GHULÁM-HUSAYN HASANZÁDIH-SHÁKIRÍ WAS ALSO EXECUTED BY FIRING SQUAD INSTEAD OF DYING MYSTERIOUSLY IN PRISON AS REPORTED....
Universal House of Justice
394
Ridván Message 1984
Ridván 1984
To the Bahá'ís of the World
Dearly loved Friends,
394.1 The emergence from obscurity, which has been so marked a feature of the Cause of God during the first five years of the Seven Year Plan, has been attended by changes, both external and internal, affecting the Bahá'í world community. Externally, there are signs of a crystallization of a public image of the Cause—largely uninformed, however friendly—while internally growing maturity and confidence are indicated by increased administrative ability, a desire for Bahá'í communities to render service to the larger body of mankind and a deepening understanding of the relevance of the divine Message to modern problems. Both these aspects of change must be taken into consideration as we enter the third and final phase of the Seven Year Plan.
The Bahá'ís of Iran
394.2 The year just closing has been overshadowed by the continued persecution of the friends in Iran. They have been forced to disband their administrative structure, they have been harassed, dispossessed, dismissed from employment, made homeless and their children are refused education. Some six hundred men, women and children are now in prison, some denied any contact with their friends and relatives, some subjected to torture and all under pressure to recant their faith. Their heroic and exemplary steadfastness has been the mainspring in bringing the Cause out of obscurity, and it is the consolation of

their hearts that their suffering results in unprecedented advances in teaching and proclaiming the divine Message to a world so desperately in need of its healing power. For this they embrace the final service of martyrdom. Our obligation is crystal clear. We cannot fail them now. Sacrificial action in teaching and promoting the Cause of God must follow every new instance of publicity arising from their persecution. Let this be our message to them of love and spiritual union.

Developments in the International Sphere

394.3 In the international sphere, the beloved Hands of the Cause, ever growing in our love and admiration, have, whenever their health has permitted, continued to uplift and encourage the friends and to promote the unity and onward march of the army of life. The International Teaching Center, operating from its world seat, has provided loving and wise leadership and direction to the Boards of Counselors. Its sphere of service has been immensely extended by the assignment of new responsibilities and by raising the number of its Counselor members to seven. The dedicated services of the Counselors in all the continents, ably supported by the Auxiliary Board members, have been invaluable in fostering the spiritual health and integrity of the worldwide community. To develop further this vital organ of the Administrative Order, it has been decided to establish a term of five years' service for those appointed to the Auxiliary Boards, commencing 26 November 1986. The work of the Bahá'í International Community in relationship with the United Nations has brought increasing appreciation of our social attitudes and principles, and in some instances—notably the sessions on human rights—the Bahá'í participation has been spectacular, again resulting from the heroism of the Persian friends. The Geneva office has been consolidated and additional staff engaged to deal with its expanding activities. In spite of severe problems the construction of the Indian and Samoan Houses of Worship has progressed satisfactorily, and the latter will be dedicated and opened to public worship between 30 August and 3 September 1984, when the Universal House of Justice will be represented by the Hand of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum. Immediately following the International Convention last Ridván, two new National Spiritual Assemblies were formed—in St. Lucia and Dominica. Two new radio stations will make their inaugural broadcasts this year, namely Radio Bahá'í of Bolivia, at Caracollo, and WLGI, the Bahá'í radio station at the Louis Gregory Institute, in the United States. Bahá'í membership in eleven countries, all in the Third World and nine of them island communities, have reached or surpassed one per cent of the total population.

394.4 During the final months of the second phase of the Seven Year Plan a generous response has been made by believers and institutions alike to an appeal which set out the increasing needs of the International Fund. We are confident that sustained and regular contributions during the final phase of the Plan will enable its aims and objectives to be fully accomplished.

Entrance of the Cause onto the World Scene

394.5 The entrance of the Cause onto the world scene is apparent from a number of public statements in which we have been characterized as "model citizens," "gentle," "law-abiding," "not guilty of any political

offence or crime"—all excellent but utterly inadequate insofar as the reality of the Faith and its aims and purposes are concerned. Nevertheless people are willing to hear about the Faith, and the opportunity must be seized. Persistently greater and greater efforts must be made to acquaint the leaders of the world, in all departments of life, with the true nature of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation as the sole hope for the pacification and unification of the world. Simultaneous with such a program must be unabated, vigorous pursuit of the teaching work, so that we may be seen to be a growing community, while universal observance by the friends of the Bahá'í laws of personal living will assert the fullness of, and arouse a desire to share in, the Bahá'í way of life. By all these means the public image of the Faith will become, gradually but constantly, nearer to its true character.

Social and Economic Development

394.6 The upsurge of zeal throughout the Bahá'í world for exploration of the new dimension of social and economic development is both heartwarming and uplifting to all our hopes. This energy within the community, carefully and wisely directed, will undoubtedly bring about a new era of consolidation and expansion, which in turn will attract further widespread attention, so that both aspects of change in the Bahá'í world community will be interactive and mutually propelling.

Consolidation of the Community

394.7 A prime element in the careful and wise direction needed is the achievement of victory in the Seven Year Plan, paying great attention to the development and strengthening of Local Assemblies. Great efforts must be made to encourage them to discharge their primary duties of meeting regularly, holding the Nineteen Day Feasts and observing Holy Days, organizing children's classes, encouraging the practice of family prayers, undertaking extension teaching projects, administering the Bahá'í Fund and constantly encouraging and leading their communities in all Bahá'í activities. The equality of men and women is not, at the present time, universally applied. In those areas where traditional inequality still hampers its progress we must take the lead in practising this Bahá'í principle. Bahá'í women and girls must be encouraged to take part in the social, spiritual and administrative activities of their communities. Bahá'í youth, now rendering exemplary and devoted service in the forefront of the army of life, must be encouraged, even while equipping themselves for future service, to devise and execute their own teaching plans among their contemporaries.

New National Spiritual Assemblies

394.8 Now, as we enter the final, two-year phase of the Seven Year Plan, we rejoice in the addition of nine new National Spiritual Assemblies; three in Africa, three in the Americas, two in Asia, one in Europe, bringing the total number to 143. Five more are to be established in Ridván 1985. They are Ciskei, Mali and Mozambique in Africa and the Cook Islands and the West Caroline Islands in Australasia. Thus the Plan will end with a minimum of 148 National Spiritual Assemblies. By that time plans must be approved for the completion of the Arc around the Monument Gardens on Mount Carmel, including the siting and designs of the three remaining buildings to be constructed

around that Arc.

An Increasing Relationship to the Non-Bahá'í World

394.9 There can be no doubt that the progress of the Cause from this time onward will be characterized by an ever increasing relationship to the agencies, activities, institutions and leading individuals of the non-Bahá'í world. We shall acquire greater stature at the United Nations, become better known in the deliberations of governments, a familiar figure to the media, a subject of interest to academics, and inevitably the envy of failing establishments. Our preparation for and response to this situation must be a continual deepening of our faith, an unwavering adherence to its principles of abstention from partisan politics and freedom from prejudices, and above all an increasing understanding of its fundamental verities and relevance to the modern world.

Goals for the Final Phase of the Plan

394.10 Accompanying this Ridván message are a call for 298 pioneers to settle in 79 national communities, and specific messages addressed to each of the present 143 national communities. They are the fruit of intensive study and consultation by the Universal House of Justice and the International Teaching Center, and set out the goals to be won and the objectives to be pursued by each national community so that Ridván 1986 may witness the completion in glorious victory of this highly significant Plan. It will have run its course through a period of unprecedented world confusion, bearing witness to the vitality, the irresistible advance and socially creative power of the Cause of God, standing out in sharp contrast to the accelerating decline in the fortunes of the generality of mankind.

394.11 Beloved friends, the bounties and protection with which the Blessed Beauty is nurturing and sheltering the infant organism of His new world order through this violent period of transition and trial, give ample assurance of victories to come if we but follow the path of His guidance. He rewards our humble efforts with effusions of grace which bring not only advancement to the Cause but assurance and happiness to our hearts, so that we may indeed look upon our neighbors with bright and shining faces, confident that from our services now will eventuate that blissful future which our descendants will inherit, glorifying Bahá'u'lláh, the Prince of Peace, the Redeemer of Mankind.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

395

Use of Torture to Extract False Confessions from Iranian Bahá'ís

10 May 1984

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

395.1

On Thursday, 10 May 1984, the Universal House of Justice instructed the Bahá'í International Community in New York to issue the following press release and to keep the appropriate United Nations agencies informed of the

continuing persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran.

395.2 THE PERSECUTION OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF IRAN HAS TAKEN AN EXTREMELY SEVERE AND CRITICAL TURN.

395.3 OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS ABDUCTIONS, EXECUTIONS, THE IMPRISONMENT OF HUNDREDS, DISMISSAL FROM JOBS, EXPULSION OF BAHÁ'Í CHILDREN FROM SCHOOLS, DESTRUCTION OF HOMES HAVE BEEN THE COMMON LOT OF THIS OPPRESSED COMMUNITY. NOW, HOWEVER, THE AUTHORITIES IN IRAN SEEM TO HAVE DECIDED TO SUBJECT PROMINENT BAHÁ'ÍS TO BARBARIC METHODS OF TORTURE TO EXTRACT FROM THEM CONFESSIONS TO THE FALSE CHARGES LEVELED AGAINST THEM.

395.4 TORTURE HAS BEEN USED ON BAHÁ'Í PRISONERS BEFORE, BUT HITHERTO THE PURPOSE HAS BEEN TO FORCE THEM TO RECANT THEIR FAITH OR REVEAL INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR FELLOW BELIEVERS. ALL BUT A FEW OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS REMAINED FIRM AND PREFERRED IMPRISONMENT AND DEATH TO RECANTATION OF THEIR FAITH. RECENTLY AN ADDED OBJECTIVE SEEMS TO INSPIRE THE GOVERNMENT'S TORTURE-MONGERS.

395.5 ALTHOUGH IN ALL THESE YEARS, SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE REVOLUTION, THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN IN POSSESSION, THROUGH CONFISCATION, OF ALL THE RECORDS AND FILES OF THE ENTIRE BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM IN IRAN, IT HAS FAILED TO PRODUCE A SINGLE SHRED OF EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT ITS REITERATED ACCUSATION THAT THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY IN IRAN IS A NETWORK OF FOREIGN SPIES AND AGENTS. IT WOULD SEEM THAT NOW IT HAS DETERMINED TO MANUFACTURE BY MEANS OF FALSE CONFESSIONS EXTRACTED UNDER TORTURE, EVIDENCE TO ENABLE IT TO PUBLICLY JUSTIFY ITS INHUMAN PERSECUTION OF THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY OF IRAN. WE KNOW OF THREE BAHÁ'ÍS WHOSE WILLS HAVE BEEN BROKEN UNDER THIS BARBARIC TORTURE AND WHO HAVE SUBMITTED TO THE DEMANDS OF THE AUTHORITIES, MAKING STATEMENTS ADMITTING TO A SERIES OF CRIMES. DOUBTLESS THE AUTHORITIES HOPE TO PUBLISH SIMILAR "CONFESSIONS" IN THE DAYS TO COME, MADE BY OTHER HAPLESS VICTIMS OF THIS FLAGITIOUS TREATMENT

395.6 WE KNOW THE NAMES OF MANY BAHÁ'ÍS WHO ARE NOW BEING TORTURED, AND ALTHOUGH, FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, THESE CANNOT BE PUBLICIZED, THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO SOME INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND GOVERNMENTS.

395.7 In addition to the above press release, supplementary information was telexed to the Bahá'í International Community and selected National Spiritual Assemblies:

395.7a FOLLOWING IS SOME DESCRIPTION TORTURES TO ENABLE YOU ANSWER QUESTIONS GIVE FURTHER BACKGROUND AS NECESSARY. THIS INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM RELIABLE SOURCES INCLUDING EYEWITNESSES.

395.7b REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS, USUALLY LATE AT NIGHT, WILL SUDDENLY CONVERGE UPON HOME BAHÁ'Í FAMILY. AFTER ENGAGING IN VARIETY VERBALLY AND PHYSICALLY ABUSIVE ACTIONS INVOLVING THREATS AND RANSACKING HOUSEHOLD IN GUISE OF CONDUCTING SEARCH, THEY SEIZE ALL BAHÁ'Í BOOKS AND PAPERS AND FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS AND TAKE AS PRISONER WHOMEVER THEY ARE INTERESTED IN APPREHENDING

395.7c INTERROGATIONS OFTEN TAKE PLACE WHILE VICTIM SITS FACING WALL OR IS BLINDFOLDED SO THAT HE OR SHE MAY NOT IDENTIFY INTERROGATORS. USUALLY SUCH VICTIMS ARE CURSED, REVILED, BEATEN AND SUBJECTED TO EXTREME PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURES DURING COURSE THESE INTERROGATIONS.

395.7d THERE ARE INSTANCES OF PRISONERS BEING PLACED IN TOTAL SOLITARY CONFINEMENT IN ISOLATED CELL 1.70 METRES BY 2 METRES AND HELD THERE FOR WEEKS

OR EVEN MONTHS WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO SPEAK TO ANYONE WHATEVER, NOT EVEN PRISO
GUARD.
395.7e IN OTHER INSTANCES BAHÁ'Í PRISONER, MAN OR WOMAN, WILL BE TIED
FIRMLY TO SPECIALLY DESIGNED TABLE AND WHIPPED MERCILESSLY ON ALL PARTS BODY,
BUT PARTICULARLY ON SOLES FEET. PERIODICALLY PRISONER WILL BE CHECKED AS TO
WHETHER HIS WILL HAS BEEN BROKEN AND HE IS WILLING EMBRACE PURPOSES PRISON
AUTHORITIES. AS LONG AS HE RESISTS, THIS PHYSICAL ASSAULT IS REPEATED MORNING
AND EVENING, RESULTING IN SWELLING PRISONER'S LEGS ON WHICH HE IS COMPELLED TO
WALK. PRISONER EXPERIENCES GREAT THIRST IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES AND IS FORCED IN
THIS CONDITION TO WALK UNAIDED TO SLAKE THIRST WITH GLASS WATER ALLURINGLY
DISPLAYED SOME DISTANCE FROM HIM. INTERNAL BODILY INJURY ALSO RESULTS FROM
SEVERE BEATINGS—INVARIABLY PRISONER PASSES BLOOD IN URINE. TO KEEP PRISONER
ALIVE SOMETIMES DOCTOR WILL BE SUMMONED TO APPLY SUPERFICIAL TREATMENT.
395.7f IN CASES WHEN BOTH WIFE AND HUSBAND ARE PRISONERS, ONE WILL BE SHOWN
DAMAGED BODY OF THE OTHER DURING COURSE OF INTERROGATION. CRIES AND MOANS OF
TORTURED PRISONERS REVERBERATE THROUGH PRISON AND ARE HEARD BY INMATES WHOSE
TURN WILL SOON COME.
Universal House of Justice
395.8 Kindly share this information with the believers in your community,
and use it as a basis for answering inquiries which you may receive from news
media or government officials.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
396
Summary of the Situation in Iran
21 May 1984
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
396.1 FURTHER TO OUR MESSAGE OF 10 MAY REGARDING TORTURE BEING INFLICTED
BAHÁ'ÍS IRAN WE SEND FOLLOWING SUMMARY OVERALL SITUATION THAT COUNTRY FROM
MOST RECENT INFORMATION PROVIDED BY RELIABLE SOURCES.
1. SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION MORE THAN 300 RESIDENCES
OF BAHÁ'ÍS HAVE BEEN PLUNDERED OR SET ON FIRE.
396.32. SOME 170 BAHÁ'ÍS, MOST OF THEM PROMINENT MEMBERS OF THE BAHÁ'Í
COMMUNITY, HAVE BEEN KILLED BY A VARIETY OF METHODS, BUT
PRINCIPALLY THROUGH EXECUTION BY FIRING SQUADS AND BY HANGING.
396.4 3. IN URBAN AREAS PROPERTIES BELONGING TO SEVERAL HUNDRED
FAMILIES
HAVE BEEN SEIZED, WHILE IN RURAL AREAS MANY ORCHARDS HAVE BEEN
DESTROYED AND FARMS AND ARABLE LANDS CONFISCATED. PETITIONS TO
THE AUTHORITIES FOR REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES HAVE BEEN IGNORED.
4. THE MINISTRY OF WORKS AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS FORMALLY INSTRUCTED
INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL INSTITUTIONS NOT TO PAY THEIR BAHÁ'Í STAFF.
5. MORE THAN 10,000 BAHÁ'ÍS EMPLOYED IN GOVERNMENT OFFICES OR IN THE
PRIVATE SECTOR HAVE BEEN SUMMARILY DISCHARGED, THEIR RIGHTS TO
PENSIONS AND OTHER EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS REVOKED. DEMANDS WERE MADE
OF A NUMBER OF THEM TO REFUND THE SALARIES THEY HAD RECEIVED FOR THE
DURATION OF THEIR EMPLOYMENT.

6. BAHÁ'Í STUDENTS HAVE BEEN DISMISSED FROM ALL UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING.
7. IN MOST CITIES AND PROVINCES, BAHÁ'Í CHILDREN HAVE BEEN DENIED ENTRY TO SCHOOLS AND THEREFORE HAVE NO ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION.
8. SOME 700 BAHÁ'ÍS, INCLUDING MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN, ARE BEING HELD IN VARIOUS PRISONS THROUGHOUT IRAN.
396.109. FOR MORE THAN NINE MONTHS VISITS TO 40 BAHÁ'Í PRISONERS HAVE BEEN STRICTLY PROHIBITED BY THE AUTHORITIES. THEIR FATE IS THEREFORE UNKNOWN.
396.11 10. IN EVIN AND GAWHAR-DASHT PRISONS A NUMBER OF BAHÁ'Í PRISONERS ARE
UNDERGOING RELENTLESS TORTURE IN AN EFFORT ON THE PART OF THE AUTHORITIES TO FORCE THEM TO ADMIT TO FALSE CHARGES OF ENGAGING IN ESPIONAGE AND ACTING AGAINST THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN. FOR A PERIOD OF MONTHS THEY HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO FLOGGINGS OF ALL PARTS OF THE BODY, PARTICULARLY THE LEGS AND FEET. SOMETIMES UP TO 400 STROKES BY WIRE CABLES HAVE BEEN ADMINISTERED TO ONE PRISONER, THEN HE OR SHE HAS BEEN MADE TO WALK. FINDING THIS IMPOSSIBLE, THE UNFORTUNATE PRISONER HAS BEEN FORCED TO CRAWL ON HANDS AND KNEES BACK TO A DARK CELL. IN MASHHAD AND YAZD BAHÁ'Í PRISONERS ARE REGULARLY WHIPPED ON THE HEAD AND FACE WITH THICK PLASTIC TUBES, SIMILAR PROCEDURES ARE USED TO A LESSER DEGREE IN OTHER PRISONS. A NUMBER OF THESE VICTIMS OF TORTURE HAVE LOST THEIR SIGHT AND HEARING, OTHERS THEIR MENTAL COMPETENCE. THE BODIES OF FOUR PRISONERS SUBJECTED TO SUCH TREATMENT WERE SEEN BEFORE BEING, BURIED IN UNKNOWN GRAVES. IT IS THEREFORE FEARED THAT OTHER PRISONERS WHOSE BODIES HAVE BEEN SIMILARLY BURIED WITHOUT THEIR FAMILIES BEING NOTIFIED SUFFERED THE SAME FATE.
396.12 11. BAHÁ'ÍS ARE UNSAFE IN THEIR OWN HOMES, WHICH ARE ENTERED AT WILL, DAY OR
NIGHT, BY REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS, WHO HARASS THE INHABITANTS BY INSULTING, THREATENING AND BEATING THEM. WHEN THE REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS INVADE A HOME WITH THE INTENTION OF ARRESTING A PARTICULAR BAHÁ'Í, IF THAT PERSON HAPPENS TO BE ABSENT, THEIR PRACTICE IS TO SEIZE AS HOSTAGES OTHER MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD, EVEN CHILDREN, AND TO RANSACK THE PLACE, CONFISCATING WHATEVER THEY PLEASE.
396.13 12. WHENEVER THE HEAD OR SOME OTHER IMPORTANT MEMBER OF THE FAMILY HAS
BEEN KILLED, AND OFTEN WHEN SUCH A PERSON HAS BEEN IMPRISONED, THOSE REMAINING BEHIND HAVE BEEN FORCED FROM THEIR HOMES AND NOT PERMITTED TO TAKE ANY BELONGINGS, EVEN IN THE DEAD OF WINTER. THE VICTIMS OF SUCH TREATMENT HAVE NO RECOURSE TO JUSTICE SINCE THEIR PETITIONS TO THE AUTHORITIES ARE IGNORED. BAHÁ'Í FAMILIES IN ISFAHÁN, MASHHAD, TEHRAN, URÚMÍYYIH AND YAZD IN PARTICULAR ARE AFFECTED BY THESE CONDITIONS. ...
396.14 FOLLOWING INFORMATION JUST RECEIVED: EXECUTION FOUR MORE COURAGEOUS BRETHREN IRAN
TABRÍZ, 5 MAY —MR. JALÁL PAYRAVÍ, IMPRISONED 22 OCTOBER 1981
MR. MAQSÚD 'ALÍZÁDIH, IMPRISONED 27 JANUARY 1982

TEHRAN, 15 MAY —MR. ‘ALÍ-MUHAMMAD ZAMÁNÍ, 45 YEARS OLD
MR. JAHÁNGÍR HIDÁYATÍ, 61 YEAR OLD CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER,
MEMBER NOW DISSOLVED NATIONAL ASSEMBLY KIDNAPPED
JUNE 1983
396.15 BOTH TORTURED DURING IMPRISONMENT
396.16 IN ADDITION, MR. ASADU’LLÁH KÁMIL-MUQADDAM DIED IN PRISON 2 MAY, CIRCUMSTANCES UNKNOWN.
396.17 FRIENDS IRAN FEEL SITUATION DANGEROUS GREAT NUMBER OTHER BAHÁ’Í PRISONERS....
Universal House of Justice

397

The Development of the Soul and the
Reconstruction of Society

12 June 1984

To an individual Bahá’í

Dear Bahá’í Friend,

397.1 Your letter of 18 October 1983 was received by the Universal House of Justice and it was very glad to note that many of the problems seemed to have been resolved. It regrets the delay in replying to you, but, as you will understand, the pressure of work has been very heavy and, as the additional clarification that you requested did not seem to be a matter of urgency, a reply has been postponed until now. On the points you raised we have now been instructed to convey the following comments.

The Purpose of Religion—The Development of the Soul

397.2 As you quite correctly appreciate, the fundamental purpose of all religion is the spiritual development of the souls of human beings. This is expressed in the Short Obligatory Prayer, and also there is the following very clear statement written on behalf of the beloved Guardian to an individual believer on 8 December 1935:

397.2a How to attain spirituality is, indeed, a question to which every young man and woman must sooner or later try to find a satisfactory answer. It is precisely because no such satisfactory reply has been given or found, that modern youth finds itself bewildered, and is being consequently carried away by the materialistic forces that are so powerfully undermining the foundation of man's moral and spiritual life.

397.2b Indeed, the chief reason for the evils now rampant in society is a lack of spirituality. The materialistic civilization of our age has so much absorbed the energy and interest of mankind, that people in general no longer feel the necessity of raising themselves above the forces and conditions of their daily material existence. There is not sufficient demand for things that we should call spiritual to differentiate them from the needs and requirements of our physical existence. The universal crisis affecting mankind is, therefore, essentially spiritual in its causes. The spirit of the age, taken on the whole, is irreligious. Man's outlook upon life is too crude and materialistic to enable him to elevate himself into the higher realms of the spirit.

397.2c It is this condition, so sadly morbid, into which society has fallen,

that religion seeks to improve and transform. For the core of religious faith is that mystic feeling that unites man with God. This state of spiritual communion can be brought about and maintained by means of meditation and prayer. And this is the reason why Bahá'u'lláh has so much stressed the importance of worship. It is not sufficient for a believer to merely accept and observe the teachings. He should, in addition, cultivate the sense of spirituality which he can acquire chiefly by the means of prayer. The Bahá'í Faith, like all other Divine religions, is thus fundamentally mystic in character. Its chief goal is the development of the individual and society, through the acquisition of spiritual virtues and powers. It is the soul of man that has first to be fed. And this spiritual nourishment prayer can best provide. Laws and institutions, as viewed by Bahá'u'lláh, can become really effective only when our inner spiritual life has been perfected and transformed. Otherwise religion will degenerate into a mere organization, and become a dead thing.

397.2d The believers, particularly the young ones, should therefore realize fully the necessity of praying. For prayer is absolutely indispensable to their inner spiritual development, and this, [as] already stated, is the very foundation and purpose of the religion of God.

(Published in U.S. Bahá'í News, No. 102, August 1936, p. 3)

The Central Purpose of Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation

397.3 In addition to this fundamental purpose underlying all Revelation, there is a particular central purpose for each Dispensation. The one for this Dispensation is the establishment of the oneness of the world of humanity, and it is a Bahá'í teaching that the spiritual development of the soul requires not merely prayer and meditation, but also active service to one's fellowmen in accordance with the laws and principles of the Revelation of God. The reconstruction of human society and the spiritual advancement of individual souls go hand in hand.

Attaining Unity in Spirit and Action

397.4 People are in many different conditions, come from many different backgrounds, and face many different problems in attaining unity in spirit and practice. Our guiding light is the Message of Bahá'u'lláh. The Administrative Order is the strong framework within which we work and the channel for the outflowing of the spirit into the world.

397.5 All Bahá'ís are fallible human beings, each one has his own insights, enthusiasms and degree of wisdom and understanding. Differences of viewpoint could cause the community to fragment into a thousand pieces, if it were not cemented together by the strong bond of the Covenant, and if the friends were not willing to subordinate their own ideas to the considered decisions that issue from the divinely ordained process of consultation and, at the same time, exercise the utmost forbearance towards their fellow believers, their individual characteristics and their shortcomings. One of the most potent statements of the Guardian, which illuminates many issues, is:

397.5a Let us also bear in mind that the keynote of the Cause of God is not dictatorial authority, but humble fellowship, not arbitrary power, but the spirit of frank and loving consultation. Nothing short of the spirit of a true

Bahá'í can hope to reconcile the principles of mercy and justice, of freedom and submission, of the sanctity of the right of the individual and of self-surrender, of vigilance, discretion and prudence on the one hand and fellowship, candor, and courage on the other.

397.6 Since we are all imperfect and have to learn the perfect standard which Bahá'u'lláh has unveiled, there are often things in the Teachings themselves which individual believers find difficult, and which they have to strive to learn and understand. All the believers are growing and this is a gradual process. Each one, as you say, must develop wisdom, and with this must realize the fundamental importance of the unity of the community and the bond of love and affection among the believers, for the sake of which he will sacrifice many things....

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

398

Message to Bahá'í Women's Conference in Cotonou, Benin

28 June 1984

To the Bahá'í Women's Conference in Cotonou, Benin

398.1 AS FINAL YEAR UNITED NATIONS DECADE WOMEN APPROACHES BEFITTING YOU GATHER THIS HISTORIC CONFERENCE REVIEW ACHIEVEMENTS PLAN ENLARGE SCOPE ACTIVITIES FULFILL NOBLE ROLE WOMANKIND ENVISAGED BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES DIVINE CONFIRMATIONS NOBLE ASPIRATIONS FRUITFUL DELIBERATIONS.

Universal House of Justice

399

Execution of Nusratu'lláh Vahdat in Mashhad

3 July 1984

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

399.1 FURTHER DISTRESSING NEWS RECEIVED FROM IRAN OF EXECUTION BY HANGING OF NUSRATU'LLÁH VAHDAT IN MASHHAD 17 JUNE. AN ADDITIONAL 51 BELIEVERS NOW HELD IN PRISONS IRAN, MAKING TOTAL OF 751, SOME OF WHOM ARE SUBJECTED TO CRUEL TORTURE. A NUMBER OF FRIENDS ARE NOW IN PARTICULAR DANGER....

Universal House of Justice

400

Execution of Ihsánu'lláh Kathírí in Tehran

5 July 1984

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

400.1 FURTHER OUR TELEX DATED 3 JULY WE HAVE JUST RECEIVED DISTRESSING NEWS OF EXECUTION IN TEHRAN ON 27 JUNE OF IHSÁNU'LLÁH KATHÍRÍ, 40 YEARS OLD, AFTER 11 MONTHS IMPRISONMENT HIS BODY UNCEREMONIOUSLY BURIED BY AUTHORITIES WITHOUT INFORMING FAMILY....

Universal House of Justice

401

Results of Bahá'í Women's Conference in Cotonou, Benin

20 July 1984

To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Benin

401.1 HEARTS UPLIFTED NEWS FIRST INTERREGIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE. OFFERING PRAYERS THANKSGIVING FOR BOUNTIFUL CONFIRMATIONS. CONFIDENT SPIRIT GENERATED WILL BENEFIT BAHÁ'Í WOMEN BENIN, INDEED ENTIRE REGION. PRAYING ADDED BLESSINGS BRILLIANT VICTORIES.

Universal House of Justice

402

Relationship between Husband and Wife—
Further Comments

25 July 1984

To an individual Bahá'í

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

402.1 The Universal House of Justice received your letter which raised questions concerning the status of men and women especially within the family setting. We are requested by the House of Justice to convey to you the following points.

402.2 The Universal House of Justice invites you once again to carefully read the letter written on its behalf and addressed to the National Spiritual Assembly of New Zealand, dated 28 December 1980. This letter is published in the compilation Bahá'í Marriage and Family Life, pp. 57–61.

402.3 Authoritative interpretation of the Writings was the exclusive domain of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi. When the House of Justice stated that the "father can be regarded as the 'head' of the family," it was giving expression to its own inference as you indicate. This inference, as the letter to New Zealand points out, is based on the clear and primary responsibility of the husband to provide for the financial support of the wife and family, and on the provisions of the law of intestacy, which assigns special functions and rights to the eldest son.

402.4 The description of the husband as "head" of the family does not confer superiority upon the husband nor does it give him special rights to undermine the rights of the other members of his family. 'Abdu'l-Bahá says:

402.4a The integrity of the family bond must be constantly considered, and the rights of the individual members must not be transgressed. The rights of the son, the father, the mother—none of them must be transgressed, none of them must be arbitrary. ...

402.5 The relationship between family members represents a complex of mutual and complementary duties and responsibilities that are implemented within the framework of the Bahá'í ideal of family life and are conducive to its unity. The concept of a Bahá'í family is based on the principle that the man is charged with the responsibility of supporting the entire family financially, and the woman is the chief and primary educator of the children. This does not mean that these functions are inflexibly fixed and cannot be changed and adjusted to suit particular family situations. Furthermore, while primary responsibility is assigned, it is anticipated that fathers would play a significant role in the education of the children and women would be breadwinners. (See pages 59–60 of Bahá'í Marriage and Family Life)

402.6 The principle of the equality between women and men, like the other

teachings of the Faith, can be effectively and universally established among the friends when it is pursued in conjunction with all the other aspects of Bahá'í life. Change is an evolutionary process requiring patience with one's self and others, loving education and the passage of time as the believers deepen their knowledge of the principles of the Faith, gradually discard long-held traditional attitudes and progressively conform their lives to the unifying teachings of the Cause.

402.7 There are a number of Tablets on marriage. You are referred, for example, to Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pp. 117–22, and Bahá'í Prayers (United States, 1982 Edition), pp. 104–08.

402.8 In relation to the particular "Marriage Tablet" to which you refer, we provide, for your information, an extract from a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly on 4 April 1976, which deals with the use of this "Tablet":

402.8a The so-called "Marriage Tablet" ... is not a Tablet at all but is an unauthenticated record by Ahmad Sohráb of a talk by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The friends may use it, but it should be made clear that this is not Scripture ...

402.9 The Promulgation of Universal Peace (1982 Edition) provides much useful source material on the subject of the equality of men and women. For talks of 'Abdu'l-Bahá citing historical examples, see particularly:

Talk to the Federation of Women's Clubs, pp. 74–77

Talk to a woman's suffrage meeting, pp. 133–37

Talk at Franklin Square House, pp. 280–84

402.10 We trust that the foregoing information will resolve your concerns and help to reinforce your sense of certitude.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

403

Dedication of the Mother Temple of the Pacific Islands,
Apia, Western Samoa
August 1984

To the friends gathered in Apia, Western Samoa on the occasion of the Dedication of the Mother Temple of the Pacific Islands

Dearly loved Friends,

403.1 In these historic days we are witnessing a major triumph in the development of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Not only is the raising up of this House of Worship a further significant fulfillment of the Blessed Beauty's promise, it also presages a brilliant future in the Pacific for His Faith, whose quickening light is casting its rays on the peoples of this vast ocean. In his message to the Bahá'í world in April 1957 the beloved Guardian, referring to the Pacific, wrote, "... Bahá'í exploits bid fair to outshine the feats achieved in any other ocean, and indeed in every continent of the globe ..."

403.2 In reviewing the religious history of the Pacific during the Bahá'í Dispensation we recall that it was only a short time prior to the Declaration of the Báb that the Teachings of Christ spread throughout these islands; that the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh were first proclaimed there

when the Hand of the Cause Agnes Alexander arrived in the Hawaiian Islands in December 1901; that at the beginning of the World Crusade in 1953 only a handful of islands had had any contact with the Faith; and that at Ridván 1959 when the first regional National Spiritual Assembly of the South Pacific was established in Suva there were in its area but twelve Local Spiritual Assemblies in nine island groups. Witness now what has happened in the quarter century since 1959.

403.2a - The first reigning monarch in the world to embrace the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is the Head of
State of Western Samoa whose official residence is near the
Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

403.3a- There are now a total of thirteen National Spiritual Assemblies in the homelands of the
Polynesians, the Melanesians and the Micronesians.

The Caroline Islands
Fiji
The Hawaiian Islands
Kiribati
The Mariana Islands
The Marshall Islands
New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands
Papua New Guinea
Samoa
The Solomon Islands
Tonga
Tuvalu
Vanuatu

403.2c- Two additional National Spiritual Assemblies are to be formed at Ridván 1985: those of
The Cook Islands and the Western Caroline Islands.

403.2d - Nearly five hundred Local Spiritual Assemblies are established.

403.2e - Bahá'ís reside in nearly 2,000 localities.

403.2f - There are more than 31,000 believers in the Pacific.

403.2g - Bahá'ís constitute more than one percent of the total population in eight national
communities in the Pacific.

403.2h - The seventh Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the world stands in all its glory on the mountainside at
Tiapapata. This spot has now become the spiritual heart of the Bahá'í communities
in the Pacific basin.

403.3 The new Temple of light is the outward expression of the illumination of hearts and minds by the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, that process initiated in these islands at the turn of the century and now reaching a mighty crescendo. The effulgent light of His Teachings has aroused stirrings in the friends, impelling them to apply these heavenly principles in their personal lives and in the daily activities of their communities. Just as the spiritual

illumination of the Bahá'ís is symbolized in the Temple, so the development of local community life in all its aspects, whether administrative or social, which flow from the fountainhead of faith in God's Revelation, will reach a fuller expression in the form of various dependencies around this edifice—dependencies which the Guardian described as "institutions of social service as shall afford relief to the suffering, sustenance to the poor, shelter to the wayfarer, solace to the bereaved, and education to the ignorant."

403.4 The dedication of this noble edifice will undoubtedly mark the beginning of a new phase in the growth of the Faith in this hemisphere. The portents of success are many and varied. The friendliness and spiritual perceptiveness of the people of the Pacific, the freedom enjoyed by the friends in traveling and sharing their faith with others, the absence hitherto of organized and concerted opposition to the Faith, the relatively low level of infection by the forces of materialism so rapidly invading every part of the world, and the genuine simplicity of the mode of life of the peoples of these islands—all combine to make of the Pacific a region rich with promise for the further dramatic spread of the Faith and for the efflorescence of its community life.

403.5 Let the joyous spirit generated at this conference, reinforced by your common endeavors and crowned by your participation in the dedicatory ceremony, be the generating impulse for a mighty surge of teaching activity which will yield a vast increase in the number of followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the far-flung islands of the Pacific. As the Seven Year Plan hastens towards its conclusion, you have a priceless opportunity to take advantage of the favorable conditions in your region to win victories in the Plan which will astonish the world and will fulfill the great promises enshrined in our Writings. Our prayers ascend at the Holy Threshold for the success of your selfless endeavors in the path of His Cause.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

404

Introduction of the Law of Huqúqu'lláh to the West

6 August 1984

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

404.1We are requested by the Universal House of Justice to thank you for your letter of 10 July 1984 recounting the electrifying events which took place at the closing session of your last National Convention. The House of Justice was deeply moved to learn of the enthusiastic response that the delegates and others present made to the inspiring talk given by the Hand of the Cause of God Zikrullah Khadem, and by their desire, expressed on the scroll which you have forwarded to the World Center, for the Law of Huqúqu'lláh to be applied to all believers in the United States.

404.2 In response to this petition the Universal House of Justice has decided that, although it is not yet timely to apply this mighty law in the

West, it will send to the believers in the United States and other Western countries a translation into English of a compilation of texts so that they will be able to familiarize themselves with this subject. This translation is now being prepared and when it is complete an appropriate announcement will be made which will constitute the first step in the process of applying this law of God to the Western Bahá'í communities.

404.3 Kindly share this letter with the friends in your area of jurisdiction.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

405

Understanding the Laws of the Faith

12 August 1984

To: An individual Bahá'í

From: The Universal House of Justice

405.1 ... We are very glad to see that the Assembly is taking steps to educate the friends in the laws of the Faith and to emphasize the importance of obedience to them....

1. It would seem to be important to make clear to the friends that the "laws" of the Faith must be regarded in various lights. There are laws, ordinances, exhortations and principles, all of which are sometimes loosely referred to as "laws." All are very important for the life of the community and the spiritual life of the individual, but they are applied differently. Some affect the society and the social relationships, and the Spiritual Assemblies are responsible for their enforcement. If a believer breaks such a law, he is subject to the imposition of sanctions. Others, although of very great importance, are not sanctionable, because their observance is a matter of conscience between the individual and God; among these fall the laws of prayer and fasting and the law of Huqúqu'lláh.

Then there are those high ethical standards to which Bahá'u'lláh calls His followers, such as trustworthiness, abstention from backbiting, and so on; generally speaking, obedience to these is a matter for individual conscience, and the Assemblies should not pry into people's lives to see whether or not they are following them; nevertheless, if a believer's conduct falls so far below the standard set by Bahá'u'lláh that it becomes a flagrant disgrace and brings the name of the Faith into disrepute, the Assembly would

have to
intervene, to encourage the believer to correct his ways, to warn him of the consequences
of continued misconduct, and possibly, if he does not respond, to deprive him of his
administrative rights.

405.3 In other words, the friends should realize the importance of following all the teachings and not assume that merely because an offence is not punishable it is therefore less grave. Assemblies, on the other hand, should distinguish clearly between those laws which it is their duty to enforce, those which should be left strictly to the conscience of the individual, and those in which it may have to intervene if the misbehavior is blatant and injurious to the good name of the Faith....

The Universal House of Justice

406

Execution of Manúchihr Rúhí

22 August 1984

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

406.1 MANÚCHIHR RÚHÍ, WELL-RESPECTED 52 YEAR OLD PHARMACIST, EXECUTED BY FIRING SQUAD ON 16 AUGUST, IN BUJNÚRD, KHURÁSÁN PROVINCE, IRAN, AFTER SPENDING ELEVEN MONTHS IN PRISON. ALL HIS PROPERTIES CONFISCATED. LIVES TWENTY-FIVE OTHER BAHÁ'ÍS IMPRISONED IN DIFFERENT PARTS COUNTRY AT STAKE AS DEATH SENTENCES ALREADY PRONOUNCED AGAINST THEM....

Universal House of Justice

407

Roles of Parents within the Bahá'í Family

23 August 1984

To a Bahá'í couple

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

407.1 The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 29 July 1984 and has instructed us to send you the following reply.

407.2 The seeker to whom you refer seems to have misconstrued the Bahá'í teachings about the responsibility of the parents for the education of their children. The father certainly has a very important role to play. In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas itself, Bahá'u'lláh revealed:

407.2a Unto every father hath been enjoined the instruction of his son and daughter in the art of reading and writing and in all that hath been laid down in the Holy Tablet. ... He that bringeth up his son or the son of another, it is as though he hath brought up a son of Mine; upon him rest My Glory, My loving-kindness, My Mercy, that have compassed the world.

407.3 The great importance attached to the mother's role derives from the fact that she is the first educator of the child. Her attitude, her prayers, even what she eats and her physical condition have a great influence on the child when it is still in the womb. When the child is born, it is she who has been endowed by God with the milk which is the first food designed for it, and it is intended that, if possible, she should be with the baby to train and nurture it in its earliest days and months. This does not mean that the father

does not also love, pray for, and care for his baby, but as he has the primary responsibility of providing for the family, his time to be with his child is usually limited, while the mother is usually closely associated with the baby during this intensely formative time when it is growing and developing faster than it ever will again during the whole of its life. As the child grows older and more independent, the relative nature of its relationship with its mother and father modifies and the father can play a greater role.

407.4 It may be helpful to stress to your seeker that the Bahá'í principle of the equality of men and women is clearly stated in the teachings, and the fact that there is diversity of function between them in certain areas does not negate this principle.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

408

Message to Youth Conference, London, Ontario

23 August 1984

To the Bahá'í Youth Conference in London, Ontario

408.1 WE HAIL WITH JOY AND HOPE THE ENNOBLING PURPOSES OF YOUR CONFERENCE IN LONDON, ONTARIO. YOU ARE GATHERED AT A MOMENT WHICH RESOUNDS WITH THE SIGNIFICANCES AND CHALLENGES POSED BY THE WORLD-SHAKING EVENTS ENVELOPING THE COMMUNITY OF THE GREATEST NAME IN BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S NATIVE LAND. THE OUTPOURING GRACE PROVIDENTIALLY VOUCHSAFED THE ONWARD MARCH OF OUR HOLY CA AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THESE EVENTS IS CLEARLY EVIDENT.

408.2 OUR HEARTS LEAP AT THE INNUMERABLE IMMEDIATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FURTHER UNFOLDMENT OF THE ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH TO WHICH UNDOUBTEDLY, YOU CAN AND WILL APPLY YOUR ABUNDANT TALENTS, YOUR ZEST FOR ACTION AND, ABOVE ALL, THE ENTHUSIASM OF YOUR DEVOTION. SURELY, YOU WILL SEE THAT THE HEROIC DEEDS OF SACRIFICE ON THE PART OF YOUR IRANIAN BRETHREN ARE MATCHED WITH CORRESPONDING EFFORTS ON YOUR PART IN THE VAST FIELDS OF TEACHING AND SERVICE LYING OPEN BEFORE YOU.

408.3 THE EXHORTATIONS ESPECIALLY ADDRESSED TO YOUTH BY OUR BELOVED MASTER AND THE GALVANIZING INFLUENCE OF THE GUARDIAN'S GUIDANCE WILL ECHO EVEN MORE LOUDLY IN YOUR HEARTS NOW. INDEED, WE WILL PRAY ARDENTLY AT THE HOLY SHRINES THAT YOU MAY REALIZE IN YOUR LIVES THE IDEALS THEY SO PERSISTENTLY UPHELD, THAT YOU MAY THUS "ACQUIRE BOTH INNER AND OUTER PERFECTIONS" AS YOU INCREASE YOUR STUDY OF THE HEAVENLY WRITINGS, STRIVE TOWARDS EXCELLENCE IN THE SCIENCES AND ARTS AND BECOME KNOWN FOR YOUR INDEPENDENCE OF SPIRIT, YOUR KNOWLEDGE AN YOUR SELF-CONTROL. MAY YOU, AS 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ WISHED, BE "FIRST AMONG THE PURE, THE FREE AND THE WISE."

Universal House of Justice

409

Safeguarding the Letters of Shoghi Effendi

26 August 1984

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

409.1 In December 1967 the Universal House of Justice wrote to all National Spiritual Assemblies requesting them to send to the World Center originals or

photocopies of letters from the beloved Guardian, or written on his behalf, and addressed to Bahá'í institutions or individual believers. The response to this request and to one issued in May 1975 was encouraging, but it is now clear that the originals and photocopies held at the World Center represent only a portion of the letters the Guardian is known to have written.

409.2 The House of Justice is eager to pursue, as swiftly as possible, the task of tracing such vitally important documents, and has therefore given the Archives Office the urgent duty of collecting information which will enable it to work towards the completion of the collection held at the World Center.

409.3 In order to avoid giving institutions and believers a great deal of unnecessary labor, the Archives Office will be directing letters with specific guidelines to certain National Assemblies and individuals who are known to have received large numbers of letters from the Guardian, sending a list of the letters of which originals or satisfactory photocopies are already held at the World Center. The recipient will then be able to check whether he has any which have not been supplied to the World Center.

409.4 National Assemblies which have in their national archives only a small number of letters written by the Guardian, or on his behalf, could assist greatly by sending to the Archives Office at the World Center immediately a list of such letters, specifying in each case the name of the addressee and the date.

409.5 Although the majority of National Spiritual Assemblies have come into being since the passing of Shoghi Effendi, they may well have within their jurisdiction Local Spiritual Assemblies and individual believers who corresponded with the Guardian, or the children and grandchildren of such believers, who may have the letters in their possession. Therefore, all National Spiritual Assemblies are asked to publish a statement in their newsletters, requesting all Local Spiritual Assemblies and individuals who have in their possession original letters from the Guardian, or written on his behalf, to notify the World Center of that fact either directly or through their National Assembly. They should be asked to state the number of letters that they have and, if these are only a few, to list the date and the exact name of the addressee of each one.

409.6 In this announcement the National Assembly should stress the point made in earlier appeals: that any such letter is the property of the person to whom the beloved Guardian wrote, and that that person is perfectly entitled to keep the original or to pass it down in his family. He does not have to give it up to any Bahá'í Archives. In such a case, however, the Archives needs to have a good photocopy, and arrangements will be made for this to be done. Alternatively, if the individual wishes to give the original document into the safekeeping of the Archives, but would like to have a photocopy, this can be sent to him. It should also be mentioned that whenever the contents of a letter are seen to be confidential that confidentiality is respected.

409.7 Since many believers may have already sent such letters to their National Archives, National Assemblies are requested to send to the World Center a list of the names of those persons and other institutions, such as committees, for whom they hold originals or photocopies. This list will be

checked here and the Archives Office will write in due course to inquire further as appears necessary.

409.8 In closing, the House of Justice asks us to stress that it is not asking for any of the Guardian's letters to be sent now. It merely wishes to collect information so that the Archives Office can systematically work to trace those letters which are lacking from the World Center collection.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

410

Call for Pioneers

2 October 1984

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

410.1 The Universal House of Justice has asked us to convey the following with respect to settlement of pioneers since the opening of the third phase of the Seven Year Plan.

410.2 Of a total number of 298 pioneers called for in the last phase of the Plan, 23 posts have so far been filled. Although many additional pioneers have also settled around the world, 275 pioneers are still needed to fill the posts originally assigned.

410.3 Furthermore, since the announcement last Ridván of these pioneering goals, the Universal House of Justice has received reports of the need for additional pioneers to reinforce the Bahá'í work in many countries.

410.4 In consultation with the International Teaching Center, outstanding goals have been reviewed, pioneer needs have been considered, and a supplementary pioneer call has been prepared and is attached. These additional assignments, which call for 88 pioneers to be sent by 18 National Spiritual Assemblies to 29 national communities, raise the total number of pioneer goals for this last phase of the Plan to 386. Those pioneers now preparing to leave for their posts should, of course, proceed with their plans.

410.5 As you are aware, less than two years remain in the current Plan. The countries assigned to supply pioneers are urged to send the quota of pioneers to the territories named as quickly as circumstances permit. It is the hope of the Universal House of Justice that these goals may be filled for the most part by the end of the first year of the last phase, thereby helping to usher in the triumphant conclusion of the Seven Year Plan.

410.6 We have also been asked to emphasize that the pioneer goals, as announced at Ridván and in this supplementary call, represent the minimum needs of some younger national communities. Settlement of pioneers above and beyond the goals assigned would be highly meritorious.

410.7 The Continental Pioneer Committees stand ready to do all in their power to collaborate with you in the fulfillment of these important goals, and you should feel free to call upon them for any assistance you may find necessary.

410.8 You may be assured that the Universal House of Justice will supplicate the Almighty that you may succeed in discharging your sacred

responsibilities.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
411
Martyrdom of Iranian
National Spiritual Assembly Member Shápúr Markazí;
Death of Amínu'lláh Qurbánpúr in prison
11 October 1984
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
411.1 WITH HEAVY HEARTS ANNOUNCE MARTYRDOM SHÁPÚR MARKAZÍ OUTSTANDING SERVANT FAITH IN IRAN MEMBER PREVIOUS NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY AND AUXILIAR BOARD MEMBER. HE SUFFERED CRUEL TORTURE PAST FEW MONTHS. PURPOSE THESE TORTURES WAS FORCE HIM TO ADMIT FALSE CHARGES IMPLICATING BAHÁ'Í INSTITUTIONS AS NETWORK ESPIONAGE AND HIMSELF AS SPY. HIS GROWING RESISTANCE INCREASED INTENSITY TORTURES WHICH MAY HAVE CAUSED HIS DEATH 23 SEPTEMBER. HE WAS BURIED 25 SEPTEMBER WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE RELATIVES FRIENDS.
411.2 REGRET ANNOUNCE ALSO PASSING AWAY IN PRISON OF AMÍNU'LLÁH QURBÁNPÚR 60 YEAR OLD MASON ON 25 AUGUST1984. CAUSE DEATH UNKNOWN. HOWEVER BLOOD-STAINED CLOTHES RETURNED TO FAMILY TOGETHER WITH HIS RECENTLY WASHED SHOES MAKE CIRCUMSTANCES HIS DEATH SUSPICIOUS. HIS BODY WAS ALSO BURIED BY AUTHORITIES WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE RELATIVES....
Universal House of Justice
412
The Universal House of Justice's Power of Elucidation
25 October 1984
To an individual Bahá'í
Dear Bahá'í Friend,
412.1 The Universal House of Justice has received your letter dated 4 September 1984 in which you seek further clarification about the qualitative difference between the Guardian's prerogative of interpretation and the power of elucidation of the Universal House of Justice, and raise questions about other aspects of the Teachings. We are directed to convey the following comments.
412.2 As you are aware, the Universal House of Justice has written three major messages which explain, among other things, the duties and functions shared by the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice, and those functions that are unique to each specific Institution. These messages are published in Wellspring of Guidance, pp. 44–56, and pp. 81–91, and in Messages of the Universal House of Justice: 1968–1973, pp. 37–44. In relation to their specific functions, Shoghi Effendi explained that "it is made indubitably clear and evident that the Guardian of the Faith has been made the Interpreter of the Word and that the Universal House of Justice has been invested with the function of legislating in matters not expressly revealed in the teachings."
412.3 The use of the term "elucidation" by the Universal House of Justice and the process by which it is implemented are based on passages in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and statements in the writings of the Guardian. For example, in the Will and Testament, 'Abdu'l-Bahá states:

412.3a It is incumbent upon these members (of the Universal House of Justice) to ... deliberate upon all problems which have caused difference, questions that are obscure and matters that are not expressly recorded in the Book ... and bear upon daily transactions, ... (p. 20)
412.3b Further, in response to a question raised by the American National Spiritual Assembly about the Universal Court of Arbitration, the Guardian in a letter dated 9 April 1923, defined such explanation as being in the domain of the Universal House of Justice and anticipated its function of elucidation:
412.3c ... regarding the nature and scope of the Universal Court of Arbitration, this and other similar matters will have to be explained and elucidated by the Universal House of Justice, to which, according to the Master's explicit Instructions, all important fundamental questions must be referred.... (Bahá'í Administration, p. 47)
412.4 In a letter dated 9 March 1965, the Universal House of Justice stresses the "profound difference" that exists between the "interpretations of the Guardian and the elucidations of the House of Justice in exercise of its function to 'deliberate upon all problems which have caused difference, questions that are obscure, and matters that are not expressly recorded in the Book.'" (Wellspring of Guidance, p. 52) Among these is the outlining of such steps as are necessary to establish the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh on this earth. The elucidations of the Universal House of Justice stem from its legislative function, while the interpretations of the Guardian represent the true intent inherent in the Sacred Texts. The major distinction between the two functions is that legislation with its resultant outcome of elucidation is susceptible of amendment by the House of Justice itself, whereas the Guardian's interpretation is a statement of truth which cannot be varied.
412.5 Shoghi Effendi has given categorical assurances that neither the Guardian nor the Universal House of Justice "can, nor will ever, infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain of the other." Therefore, the friends can be sure that the Universal House of Justice will not engage in interpreting the Holy Writings....
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
413
Execution of Member of Disbanded
Iranian National Spiritual Assembly and of Bahá'ís
from Karaj and Mashhad
8 November 1984
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
413.1 WITH SORROWFUL HEARTS WE ANNOUNCE EXECUTION OF THREE MORE BAHÁ'ÍS IN IRAN, MR. AHMAD BASHÍRÍ, MEMBER NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DISBANDED 29 AUGUST 1983, MR. YÚNIS NAWRÚZÍ-ÍRÁNZÁD, MEMBER LOCAL ASSEMBLY KARAJ.
413.2 THESE TWO EXECUTED BY HANGING AND THE THIRD, MR. FÍRÚZ PURDIL, AN ENGINEER FROM MASHHAD DETAILS OF WHOSE EXECUTION NOT YET KNOWN. IT IS CERTAIN THAT MR. BASHÍRÍ IN HIS FIFTEEN MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT SUFFERED CRUEL INHUMAN TORTURES DESIGNED TO OBTAIN FALSE DECLARATION FROM HIM IMPLICATING DISBANDED

BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATION IN IRAN AS ESPIONAGE NETWORK. HIS ENDURANCE, STEADFASTNESS, LIKE THAT OF HIS HEROIC FELLOW BELIEVERS, THWARTED INFAMOUS DESIGNS. MR. BASHÍRÍ AND MR. NAWRÚZÍ-ÍRÁNZÁD ALONG WITH MR. SHÁPÚR MARKAZÍ PREVIOUSLY REPORTED WERE INCLUDED IN LIST BAHÁ'ÍS ALREADY CONDEMNED TO DEATH. THIS CAUSES GRAVE CONCERN FATE REMAINING VALIANT SOULS LANGUISHING IN PRISON....

Universal House of Justice

414

Passing of the Hand of the Cause of God
Shu'á'u'lláh 'Alá'í

18 November 1984

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

414.1 GRIEVED ANNOUNCE PASSING HAND CAUSE SHU'Á'U'LLÁH 'ALÁ'Í 16 NOVEMBER THUS ENDING MORE THAN 70 YEARS UNINTERRUPTED DEDICATED SERVICES THRESHOLD BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. HE WAS TOWER STRENGTH CRADLE FAITH WHERE HE SERVED EMINENTLY, DEVOTEDLY IN ITS EMERGING ADMINISTRATIVE INSTITUTIONS SINCE THEIR INCEPTION. HIS MEMBERSHIP MANY DECADES NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, FREQUENTLY AS CHAIRMAN, BEARS WITNESS TRUST BAHÁ'ÍS IRAN PLACED HIS NOBLE PERSON. HIS EXEMPLARY COURAGE REPRESENTING INTERESTS FAITH HIGH PLACES, HIS INTEGRITY PERFORMING OFFICIAL DUTIES ENHANCED PRESTIGE BELOVED FAITH HE SO DILIGENTLY SINCERELY CHAMPIONED ENTIRE LIFE. HIS MANIFOLD ACHIEVEMENTS CROWNE HONOR APPOINTMENT HAND CAUSE 29 FEBRUARY 1952. THIS ENABLED HIM EXTEND SERVICES FAITH INTERNATIONAL ARENA. SUPPLICATING SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS RADIANT SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM. ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS BAHÁ'Í WORLD INCLUDING ALL MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁRS.

Universal House of Justice

415

Invitation to Participate
in the Formulation of the Next Plan

25 November 1984

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

415.1 At the Fifth International Convention held at Ridván 1983, the delegates consulted on the challenging needs and opportunities of the Faith during the remaining years of this century. Since then, some National Spiritual Assemblies have continued this consultation within the framework of their respective communities. As the Seven Year Plan draws to a close, the Universal House of Justice, with the aid of the International Teaching Center, is beginning to consider the next stage in the development of the Bahá'í world community, and the results of your consultation on the subject carried over from the Convention will be valuable to the formulation of the objectives of the next Plan. The House of Justice therefore invites your participation in the process of formulating a new Plan, and we are asked to request each of your Assemblies to send it your comments on the following points in view of the prevailing situation in the area under your jurisdiction.

415.2 1. Current status and specific needs of the Bahá'í community. What distinctive strengths

and weaknesses do you see in your community? Are there any unusual features of the
condition of the Faith in your community which must be taken into account in the
formulation of the next Plan?
2. Condition of the nation. Do the social, political and economic trends indicate any
unusual opportunities or difficulties for the development of the Bahá'í community in the
immediate years ahead?
415.4 The House of Justice would appreciate concise but adequate comments, which it would like to receive at your earliest convenience, but no later than 31 March 1985. Kindly send a copy of your comments to the Continental Board of Counselors.
415.5 The House of Justice anticipates with gratitude your cooperation in this matter.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat

416
Execution of Six Bahá'ís in Tehran
17 December 1984
To National Spiritual Assemblies
416.1 REGRETFULLY ANNOUNCE SAD NEWS EXECUTION OF SIX BAHÁ'Í FRIENDS IN TEHRAN: DR. RÚHÚ'LLÁH TA'LÍM FROM KIRMÁNSHÁH, MR. FÍRÚZ ATHARÍ, MR. 'INÁYATU'LLÁH HAQÍQÍ, MR. JAMSHÍD PÚR-USTÁDKÁR, MR. JAMÁL KÁSHÁMÍ, MR. GHULÁM HUSAYN FARHAND. THE LAST FIVE PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED TO YOU AS AMONG THOSE CONDEMNED TO DEATH. FATE OF REMAINING 19 IN BALANCE. ALL EXECUTIONS TOOK PLACE ON ONE DAY, 9 DECEMBER. DETAILS ARE UNKNOWN AS NEITHER RELATIVES FRIENDS WERE INFORMED. FACT OF EXECUTIONS DISCOVERED 8 DAYS LATER....
Universal House of Justice

417
Execution of Dr. Farhád Asdaqí after Four Months
of Torture; Death of Two Bahá'ís in Tabríz after
More than Two Years' Imprisonment
18 December 1984
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
417.1 FURTHER OUR TELEX 17 DECEMBER WE SORROWFULLY ANNOUNCE NEWS EXECUTION BY HANGING OF DR. FARHÁD ASDAQÍ ON 19 NOVEMBER AFTER FOUR MONTHS IMPRISONMENT AND TORTURE. MR. DÍYÁ'U'LLÁH MANÍ'I-USKÚ'Í AND MR. 'ALÍ-RIDÁ NÍYÁKÁN DIED IN TABRÍZ PRISON 13TH AND 11TH NOVEMBER RESPECTIVELY AFTER TWO AND A HALF YEARS IMPRISONMENT. CAUSE DEATHS NOT ESTABLISHED.
Universal House of Justice

418
Adoption of Another Oppressive Measure
by the Iranian Government

3 January 1985
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
418.1 DISTRESSED INFORM YOU THAT RECENTLY IRANIAN GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED ANOTHER OPPRESSIVE MEASURE AGAINST BAHÁ'Í PRISONERS. IN ORDER TO BE RELEASED PRISONER MUST SIGN FOLLOWING UNDERTAKING: "I THE UNDERSIGNED [DETAILS OF PERSONAL STATUS INCLUDING RELIGION] UNDERTAKE NOT TO HAVE IN MY POSSESSION ANY BOOK, PAMPHLET, DOCUMENT, SYMBOL OR PICTURE OF THIS MISGUIDED, ZIONIST, ESPIONAGE GROUP OF BAHÁ'ÍS. IF ANY OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED ARTICLES BELONGING TO THIS HATED UNDERGROUND MOVEMENT IS FOUND ON MY PERSON O IN MY HOME, THIS WILL BE TANTAMOUNT TO MY BEING OF THOSE 'WHO WAR AGAINST GOD' AND THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL WOULD BE FREE TO DECIDE AGAINST ME IN THE MANNER HE DEEMS FIT." THE TERMINOLOGY "WHO WAR AGAINST GOD" IS A TERM USED BY PRESENT REGIME TO SIGNIFY A CRIME DESERVING SENTENCE OF DEATH. BAHÁ'Í PRISONERS HAVE REFUSED SIGN SUCH AN INFAMOUS DOCUMENT FALSELY IMPUGNING THEIR FAITH. MOREOVER SIGNING SUCH A DOCUMENT WOULD LEAVE BAHÁ'ÍS OPEN TO HAVING SUCH ITEMS PLANTED ON THEIR PERSON OR IN THEIR HOMES. WAVE OF RECENT ARRESTS OF BAHÁ'ÍS SUGGESTS THAT AUTHORITIES PLAN EXERT PRESSURE ALL BAHÁ'ÍS TO SIGN SUCH AN IMPOSSIBLE UNDERTAKING. OBVIOUSLY FAITHFUL FRIENDS WILL REFUSE SUCCUMB SUCH CONTEMPTIBLE PLAN....
Universal House of Justice
419
Renewed Call for Support of International Funds
3 January 1985
To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh in every Land
Dearly loved Friends,
419.1 Twelve months have passed since we addressed to the devoted followers of the Blessed Beauty throughout the world a message in which we outlined the major challenges which face the Cause of God and the thrilling opportunities which are presenting themselves for us to use in His Service.
419.2 There was an immediate and heartwarming response in offers of service, in plans of action put promptly into effect, and in contributions to the Fund.
419.3 The activities of the friends are still increasing, and evidences of rich harvests are appearing. In India alone, over 150,000 new believers have joined the Bahá'í community; in Samoa the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár has been dedicated amidst unprecedented recognition of the Cause; in Canada, at the conference held in London, Ontario, an upsurge of activity among the Bahá'í youth has started a movement which has caught the imagination of the friends far and wide.
In relation to the Fund, however, the rate of contributions during the second six months of the year has slowed seriously, and we feel it is timely to draw to your attention that our letter of
2 January 1984 was not an appeal for a one-time Herculean effort, but was intended to inform the whole world community of the present great challenges and opportunities which are not only immediate but require also a long-range, sustained increase in the efforts and self-sacrifices of the friends, both in service and in contributing from their financial resources to the advancement of the Faith.

419.4 The challenges which we enumerated then are by no means met, nor the opportunities wholly seized. The Indian Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, a building of great size and beauty, is still unfinished; plans for the further development of the World Center, for the design and erection of the three remaining buildings on the Arc must be laid in full confidence that the funds for their completion will be made available; projects for social and economic development, for the establishment of Bahá'í schools and radio stations, for agricultural advancement, and a wide range of other urgently needed activities are multiplying; worldwide attention to the Faith has increased during the past year with even greater rapidity than before, demanding new measures to coordinate public information services and contacts with governments and leaders of thought; and last, but near to the hearts of all, is the need of funds to assist in the relief of those hard-pressed believers who have been forced to leave Iran, often penniless and in great distress, seeking to build a new life in other parts of the world.

419.5 Last April we were deeply touched by receiving a petition from the delegates gathered at the National Convention of the Bahá'ís of the United States, requesting that the Law of Huqúqu'lláh be made binding on all the believers in that country. Although it is not yet the time to take this far-reaching step, we were moved to decide that, as a preliminary measure, the texts relating to the Law of Huqúqu'lláh will be translated into English for general information against the time when this law will be applied more widely.

419.6 However, important as is the Law of Huqúqu'lláh, the devoted followers of Bahá'u'lláh have, even without it, every opportunity to contribute regularly and sacrificially to the work of the Cause. It is to a greater realization of the privilege and responsibility of supporting the multiple activities of our beloved Faith that we call you all at this critical time in world history, and remind you that to support the Bahá'í funds is an integral part of the Bahá'í way of life. The need is not only now, but throughout the years to come, until our exertions, reinforced by confirmations from on high, will have overcome the great perils now facing mankind and have made this world another world—a world whose splendor and grace will surpass our highest hopes and greatest dreams.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

420

International Year of Peace

23 January 1985

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

420.1 1986 has been named the International Year of Peace by the United Nations. Considering the dangers surrounding mankind and the remedial prospects of the Lesser Peace to which Bahá'u'lláh has summoned the nations, we embrace this God-sent opportunity to proclaim ever more widely and convincingly the vitalizing principles upon which, as our Teachings emphatically assert, a lasting peace must be founded. The nature and variety of

the proclamation activities which the Bahá'í community will undertake, during 1986 and beyond, will be outlined in detail later. We wish now to indicate some of the ideas we are contemplating, so that you may sense what to expect and how to prepare for your own participation.

In addition to projects to be initiated at the World Center, these ideas include:

420.2a- Calling upon local and national Bahá'í communities to sponsor a wide range of activities which will engage the attention of people from all walks of life to various topics relevant to peace, such as: the role of women, the elimination of racism, the eradication of prejudice, the promotion of education, the extension of social and economic development, the adoption of a world auxiliary language, the establishment of world government;

420.2b- Mounting a publicity campaign which will make use of such themes as "world peace through world religion," "world peace through world education," "world peace through world language," "world peace through world law"—a campaign which could lead to discussion of these subjects in small or large gatherings, at local or national levels, and perhaps in collaboration with organizations promoting such ideas;

421.2c- Urging the publishing within and without the Bahá'í community of a wide assortment of literature, posters and other graphic materials on peace;

420.2d- Requesting Bahá'í magazines—children, youth, adult—whether intended for internal or external circulation, to carry special features on peace;

420.2e - Inviting Bahá'í radio stations to devote particular attention to this theme;

420.2f - Asking the Associations for Bahá'í Studies to conduct programs on peace;

420.2g - Encouraging Bahá'í artists and musicians to contribute, and consider inviting their non-Bahá'í colleagues to contribute, to the effectiveness of such activities by giving expression through the various arts to important themes relating to world peace.

420.3 In effect, we envision a proclamation campaign which will not only involve large public events and the use of the mass media, but will also engage people at the grassroots and at all other levels of society in a broad range of profoundly effective activities through which they will interact with the Bahá'í community in a sustained, worldwide effort to attend to the fundamental issues of peace, aided by the unique insights provided by the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

420.4 As you contemplate what possibilities these and similar ideas suggest for your own plans, we advise you to take preparatory steps to hold within your jurisdiction, during 1986, local and national peace conferences to which public officials and other prominent persons should be invited. In those places where national conferences may not be possible, local conferences should certainly be held.

420.5 In some regions, neighboring National Assemblies may find it convenient to pool their resources and hold regional conferences instead of national ones. These need not be very large, but should be effective enough to make a good impression on the public as well as on the national Bahá'í communities involved. It is left to the initiative of the National Assemblies, in consultation with Continental Counselors, to hold such conferences.

420.6 Simultaneously as you make initial arrangements for the conferences, you will also want to find out what plans are being made by the governments and organizations in your respective countries, so that you will know beforehand how to coordinate your own programs with the programs of others in ways most conducive to the proclamation of the Faith and the mutual benefit of all concerned.

420.7 We would welcome any thoughts and suggestions you may have on the activities to be undertaken by you during the International Year of Peace.

420.8 Your planning efforts for 1986 must not, of course, interrupt the work of the Seven Year Plan. Indeed, the activities associated with the economic and social development of the Bahá'í community, the observance during 1985 of International Youth Year, and the anticipated activities for the peace campaign to begin a year hence are mutually reinforcing and go far to enhance the teaching opportunities necessary to the successful completion of the Plan. We have every confidence that your continuing exertions to meet the new challenges resulting from the emergence of the Faith from obscurity will be richly rewarded by the Blessed Beauty; and we shall renew our supplications at the Holy Threshold that your brightest expectations may be surpassed by resounding triumph.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

421

Execution of Rúhu'lláh Hasúrí in Yazd; Confirmation of Death in Prison of Rustam Varjávandí

29 January 1985

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

421.1 JUST RECEIVED NEWS EXECUTION YAZD, RÚHU'LLÁH HASÚRÍ, 35 YEARS OLD. HE WAS SHOT IN PRISON. NEWS DEATH IN PRISON TEHRAN RUSTAM VARJÁVANDÍ 15 SEPTEMBER CONFIRMED. THIS BRINGS TO 178 NUMBER THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES FOR FAITH. SINCE 3 SEPTEMBER 16 BAHÁ'ÍS HAVE BEEN KILLED OR HAVE DIED IN PRISON, 101 IMPRISONED AND 79 RELEASED, SOME OF WHOM HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN REPORTED IMPRISONED. TOTAL NUMBER NOW IN PRISON, AS FAR AS CAN BE ASCERTAINED, IS 707. GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES WHO WERE DISMISSED OR THEIR PENSIONS STOPPED BECAUSE OF THEIR FAITH ARE NOW BEING SUMMONED BY ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND COMPELLED PAY BACK ALL THE SALARIES RECEIVED FOR

MANY YEARS, EVEN DECADES, FAILING WHICH THEY WILL BE IMPRISONED. CAUSE MANY RECENT IMPRISONMENTS IS INABILITY TO PAY BACK SALARIES BAHÁ'ÍS HAD RECEIVED WHILE LAWFULLY EMPLOYED BY GOVERNMENT....
Universal House of Justice
422
Elucidation of the Lesser Peace and the Supreme Tribunal
31 January 1985
To an individual Bahá'í
Dear Bahá'í Friend,
422.1 The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 13 December 1984 inquiring about the Lesser Peace and the Supreme Tribunal referred to in the writings of the Faith. We are asked to convey the following comments.
422.2 Bahá'u'lláh's principal mission in appearing at this time in human history is the realization of the oneness of mankind and the establishment of peace among the nations; therefore, all the forces which are focused on accomplishing these ends are influenced by His Revelation. We know, however, that peace will come in stages. First, there will come the Lesser Peace, when the unity of nations will be achieved, then gradually the Most Great Peace—the spiritual as well as social and political unity of mankind, when the Bahá'í World Commonwealth, operating in strict accordance with the laws and ordinances of the Most Holy Book of the Bahá'í Revelation, will have been established through the efforts of the Bahá'ís.
422.3 As to the Lesser Peace, Shoghi Effendi has explained that this will initially be a political unity arrived at by decision of the governments of various nations; it will not be established by direct action of the Bahá'í community. This does not mean, however, that the Bahá'ís are standing aside and waiting for the Lesser Peace to come before they do something about the peace of mankind. Indeed, by promoting the principles of the Faith, which are indispensable to the maintenance of peace, and by fashioning the instruments of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, which we are told by the beloved Guardian is the pattern for future society, the Bahá'ís are constantly engaged in laying the groundwork for a permanent peace, the Most Great Peace being their ultimate goal.
422.4 The Lesser Peace itself will pass through stages; at the initial stage the governments will act entirely on their own without the conscious involvement of the Faith; later on, in God's good time, the Faith will have adirect influence on it in ways indicated by Shoghi Effendi in his "The Goal of a New World Order." In connection with the steps that will lead to this latter stage, the Universal House of Justice will certainly determine what has to be done, in accordance with the guidance in the Writings, such as the passage you quoted from Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, page 89. In the meantime, the Bahá'ís will undoubtedly continue to do all in their power to promote the establishment of peace.
422.5 The Universal House of Justice is greatly pleased with the initiative you have taken with others to start an organization through which youth can contribute their considerable energies and creative abilities towards fostering

world peace. It fully appreciates the wisdom of your approach in not affiliating your organization directly with the Faith and finds your leaflet describing the aims of Youth for World Peace most impressive. Since 1986 has been designated the International Year of Peace by the United Nations, your efforts are timely and will blend with the activities to be undertaken by the Bahá'í community during that year and beyond.

422.6 In your worthy endeavors to pursue your goal to create a peace movement of youth around the world which would draw non-Bahá'í youth within the influence of Bahá'í concepts, you should seek the advice of your National Spiritual Assembly, which is in a position to give you necessary advice.

422.7 Regarding your question about the Supreme Tribunal, enclosed are a few extracts from statements by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi on this subject; also included is a statement on the Lesser Peace.

422.8 We are asked by the House of Justice to assure you of its ardent prayers in the Holy Shrines that your noble efforts may contribute significantly to the upraising of the banner of peace in the world.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

From the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

422.9 So long as these prejudices survive, there will be continuous and fearsome wars.

422.10 To remedy this condition there must be universal peace. To bring this about, a Supreme Tribunal must be established, representative of all governments and peoples; questions both national and international must be referred thereto, and all must carry out the decrees of this Tribunal. Should any government or people disobey, let the whole world arise against that government or people.

(Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, [Rev. ed.] [Haifa: Bahá'í World Center, 1982], p. 249)

422.11 For example, the question of universal peace, about which Bahá'u'lláh says that the Supreme Tribunal must be established: although the League of Nations has been brought into existence, yet it is incapable of establishing universal peace. But the Supreme Tribunal which Bahá'u'lláh has described will fulfill this sacred task with the utmost might and power. And His plan is this: that the national assemblies of each country and nation—that is to say parliaments—should elect two or three persons who are the choicest of that nation, and are well informed concerning international laws and the relations between governments and aware of the essential needs of the world of humanity in this day. The number of these representatives should be in proportion to the number of inhabitants of that country. The election of these souls who are chosen by the national assembly, that is, the parliament, must be confirmed by the upper house, the congress and the cabinet and also by the president or monarch so these persons may be the elected ones of all the nation and the government. The Supreme Tribunal will be composed of these

people and all mankind will thus have a share therein, for every one of these delegates is fully representative of his nation. When the Supreme Tribunal gives a ruling on any international question, either unanimously or by majority rule, there will no longer be any pretext for the plaintiff or ground of objection for the defendant. In case any of the governments or nations, in the execution of the irrefutable decision of the Supreme Tribunal, be negligent or dilatory, the rest of the nations will rise up against it, because all the governments and nations of the world are the supporters of this Supreme Tribunal. Consider what a firm foundation this is! But by a limited and restricted League the purpose will not be realized as it ought and should. This is the truth about the situation, which has been stated....
(Tablet to the Executive Committee of the Central Organization for a Durable Peace, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, pp. 306–7)

422.12 A Supreme Tribunal shall be established by the peoples and Governments of every nation, composed of members elected from each country and Government. The members of this Great Council shall assemble in unity. All disputes of an international character shall be submitted to this Court, its work being to arrange by arbitration everything which otherwise would be a cause of war. The mission of this Tribunal would be to prevent war.
(Paris Talks: Addresses Given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Paris in 1911–1912, 11th ed. [London: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1979], p. 155)

From letters written on behalf of the Guardian to individual believers

The Supreme Tribunal

422.13 The Universal Court of Arbitration and the International Tribunal are the same. When the Bahá’í State will be established they will be merged in the Universal House of Justice.
(17 June 1933)

422.14 As regards the International Executive referred to by the Guardian in his “Goal of a New World Order”, it should be noted that this statement refers by no means to the Bahá’í Commonwealth of the future, but simply to that world government which will herald the advent and lead to the final establishment of the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh. The formation of this International Executive, which corresponds to the executive head or board in present-day national governments, is but a step leading to the Bahá’í world government of the future, and hence should not be identified with either the institution of the Guardianship or that of the International House of Justice.
(17 March 1934)
(refers to pp. 40–41 of The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh)

422.15 1 and 2 The Supreme Tribunal is an aspect of a World Super-state; the exact nature of its relationship to that State we cannot at present foresee.
(19 November 1945)

422.16 The above statement was in reply to the following questions:
Is the Supreme Tribunal the world court or world tribunal referred to in “The Unfoldment of World Civilization”, p. 43, and “Goal of a New World Order”, p. 20? [See The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh, pp. 203 and 41.]
Is it part of the world Super-State just as our Supreme Court is part of the

federal government at Washington?
Will the Supreme Tribunal (a world court) exist apart from the world government?
The Lesser Peace
422.17With reference to the question you have asked concerning the time and means through which the Lesser and Most Great Peace, referred to by Bahá'u'lláh, will be established, following the coming World War: Your view that the Lesser Peace will come about through the political efforts of the states and nations of the world, and independently of any direct Bahá'í plan or effort, and the Most Great Peace be established through the instrumentality of the believers, and by the direct operation of the laws and principles revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and the functioning of the Universal House of Justice as the supreme organ of the Bahá'í super-state—your view on this subject is quite correct and in full accord with the pronouncements of the Guardian as embodied in "The Unfoldment of World Civilization."
(14 March 1939)
423
Passing of Lloyd Gardner, Continental Counselor
7 March 1985
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
423.1 DEEPLY GRIEVED UNTIMELY PASSING ESTEEMED LLOYD GARDNER STALWART DEFENDER INTERESTS FAITH AMERICAS. HIS DISTINGUISHED LONGTIME SERVICE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CANADA AND MEMBERSHIP BOARD COUNSELORS AMERICAS SINCE INCEPTION MARKED BY INDEFATIGABLE LABORS ALL ASPECTS TEACHING WORK AND COMMUNITY LIFE, NOTABLY YOUTH ACTIVITIES. HIS STERLING CHARACTER, HIGH INTEGRITY, WARM-HEARTED NATURE, TOTAL DEDICATION FAITH WORTHY EMULATION. FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS LUMINOUS SPIRIT ABHÁ KINGDOM AND SOLACE HIS SORROWING FAMILY. ADVISING ALL COMMUNITIES AMERICAS OFFER PRAYERS IN HIS NAME. REQUESTING NATIONAL ASSEMBLY UNITED STATES HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERING TEMPLE WILMETTE.
Universal House of Justice
424
Execution of Rúhu'lláh Bahrámsháhí in Yazd and
Nusratu'lláh Subhání in Tehran
14 March 1985
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
424.1 RECENTLY SAD NEWS OF FURTHER EXECUTIONS OF TWO BAHÁ'ÍS IN IRAN RECEIVED. MR. RÚHU'LLÁH BAHRÁMSHÁHÍ, AGE 50, EXECUTED YAZD 25 FEBRUARY, MR. NUSRATU'LLÁH SUBHÁNÍ IN TEHRAN 5 MARCH....
Universal House of Justice
425
Human Suffering and the Reconstruction of Society
14 March 1985
To an individual Bahá'í
Dear Bahá'í Friend,
425.1 Your letter of 16 January 1985 in which you share the anguish of your heart and express deep concern for the fate of the suffering masses of mankind

has been received by the Universal House of Justice. We are instructed to convey this reply to you.

425.2 The world is clearly beset by ills and is groaning under the burden of appalling suffering. The trials of the innocent are indeed heartrending and constitute a mystery that the mind of man cannot fathom. Even the Prophets of God Themselves have borne Their share of grievous afflictions in every age. Yet in spite of the evidence of all this suffering, God's Manifestations, Whose lives and wisdom show Them to have been far above human beings in understanding, unitedly bear testimony to the justice, love and mercy of God.

425.3 To understand the condition of the world it is necessary to step back, so to speak, to gain a clearer view of the panorama of God's great redemptive Major Plan, which is shaping the destiny of mankind according to the operation of the divine Will. It should not be surmised that the calamitous events transpiring in all corners of the globe are random and lack purpose, though individually they may be difficult to comprehend. According to the words of our beloved Guardian: "The invisible hand is at work and the convulsions taking place on earth are a prelude to the proclamation of the Cause of God." We can confidently anticipate therefore, the arrival of the "new life-giving spring" once the destructive icy blasts of winter's tempests have run their course.

425.4 As Bahá'ís, we know that the "sovereign remedy" for each and every one of these ills lies in turning and submitting to the "skilled," the "all-powerful" and "inspired Physician." Bahá'u'lláh has assured us in His Writings that God has not forsaken us. He is the All-Seeing and All-Knowing, the "prayer-hearing, prayer-answering God" to those who turn to Him in supplication, and He intervenes actively in human history by sending His Manifestations, Sources of knowledge and spiritual truth to "liberate the children of men from the darkness of ignorance" and to "ensure the peace and tranquillity of mankind." In this Age, God has determined to establish His everlasting Kingdom among men, and so, to this end, He sent us the spirit and message of the New Day through two successive Manifestations, Who alas, were rejected by the generality of people.

425.5 When we contemplate the fate of mankind, it is important to reflect on the very complex arena in which man plays out the drama of his existence. There are a number of elements involved. For example, man, is a spiritual being located within the material creation; hence he is subjected to opposing forces, and has to live in accordance with values which refer to two worlds, the material world with all its imperfections and the spiritual world with its perfections. Tension derives from the fact that "In man there are two natures; his spiritual or higher nature and his material or lower nature. In one he approaches God, in the other he lives for the world alone." Man's actions then have both a material and spiritual consequence. While the material effect of his actions is usually clearly perceptible, their spiritual effect can only be determined by reference to spiritual principles revealed by the Manifestation of God. Suffering and trials, sent by God to test and perfect His creatures, are another integral part of life. They contain the potential for man's progress or retrogression, depending on the individual's

response. As ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explains:

425.5a The souls who bear the tests of God become the manifestations of great bounties; for the divine trials cause some souls to become entirely lifeless, while they cause the holy souls to ascend to the highest degree of love and solidity. ...

425.5b In addition to the factors associated with man's station and nature, the Writings indicate that man's soul “is independent of all infirmities of body or mind,” and not only continues to exist “after departing from this mortal world,” but progresses “through the bounty and grace of the Lord.” Therefore, an evaluation of man's material existence and achievements cannot ignore the potential spiritual development stimulated by the individual's desire to manifest the attributes of God and his response to the exigencies of his life, nor can it exclude the possibility of the operations of God's mercy in terms of compensation for earthly suffering, in the next life.

425.6 God in His bounty has endowed every created thing, however humble, “with the capacity to exercise a particular influence, and been made to possess a distinct virtue.” And, reminiscent of the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14–30), Bahá’u’lláh, in the Gleanings (page 149), draws our attention to the need to make efforts to develop and demonstrate in action our God-given potential:

425.6a All that which ye potentially possess can, however, be manifested only as a result of your own volition. Your own acts testify to this truth. ...

425.6b Is it not an evidence of the justice of God that each of us, whether materially comfortable or struggling for physical survival, is assessed in terms of the efforts we have made to seize whatever opportunities existed in our lives, to develop and use our allotted talent, be it large or small? “Each shall receive his share from thy Lord,” is Bahá’u’lláh’s assurance. Thus, if we bestir ourselves, we will all have access to the rewards of this life and the next.

425.7In the same passage from the Gleanings, Bahá’u’lláh also raises the possibility that possessing free will, human beings may well commit evil and “wittingly” break “His law.” By the exercise of his free will, man either affirms his spiritual purpose in life or chooses to perpetuate evil by living below his highest station. The question is asked: “Is such a behavior to be attributed to God, or to their proper selves?” And concludes:

425.7a Every good thing is of God, and every evil thing is from yourselves. ...

425.8 The amelioration of the conditions of the world requires the reconstruction of human society and efforts to improve the material well-being of humanity. The Bahá’í approach to this task is evolutionary and multifaceted, involving not only the spiritual transformation of individuals but the establishment of an administrative system based on the application of justice, a system which is at once the “nucleus” and the “pattern” of the future World Order, together with the implementation of programs of social and economic development that derive their impetus from the grass roots of the community. Such an integrated approach will inevitably create a new world, a world where human dignity is restored and the burden of inequity is lifted from the shoulders of humanity. Then will the generations look back with heartfelt

appreciation, for the sacrifices made by Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís alike, during this most turbulent period in human history.

425.9 With regard to your concern that certain remote geographical regions have historically been deprived of Divine Revelation, the following extracts indicate that there are many other Prophets Who have appeared in the world, but Whose names are not mentioned in the Scriptures with which we are familiar, for example:

425.9a And to every people have we sent an apostle
(Qur'án, XVI:38)

425.9b God hath raised up Prophets and revealed Books as numerous as the creatures of the world, and will continue to do so to everlasting.
(Selections from the Writings of the Báb, p. 125)

425.9c Know thou that the absence of any reference to them [Prophets before Adam] is no proof that they did not actually exist. That no records concerning them are now available, should be attributed to their extreme remoteness, as well as to the vast changes which the earth hath undergone since their time.
(Gleanings, p. 172)

425.9d While Asia has clearly been blessed as the birthplace of many Manifestations of God, we have found nothing in the Writings to suggest exactly where in the world these Messengers of God in the remote past, may have arisen. In a letter written on behalf of the Guardian, we have the promise that "... there always have been Manifestations of God, but we do not have any record of Their names."

425.10 We are instructed to assure you that the Universal House of Justice will offer prayers at the Holy Shrines that your faith may be deepened and your perplexities resolved, and we share with you these solacing words of Bahá'u'lláh:

425.10a O My servants! Sorrow not if, in these days and on this earthly plane, things contrary to your wishes have been ordained and manifested by God, for days of blissful joy, of heavenly delight, are assuredly in store for you. Worlds, holy and spiritually glorious, will be unveiled to your eyes. You are destined by Him, in this world and hereafter, to partake of their benefits, to share in their joys, and to obtain a portion of the sustaining grace. To each and every one of them you will, no doubt, attain.
(Gleanings, p. 329)

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat

426
Responsibilities of Youth at the Age of Maturity
11 April 1985
To an individual Bahá'í
Dear Bahá'í Friend,

426.1 The Universal House of Justice received your very thoughtful letter and instructs us to convey the following answer to you.

426.2 While some opportunities for service in the Administrative Order are clearly reserved for those who are over twenty-one years of age, the importance of attaining spiritual maturity at the age of fifteen is that it marks that

point in life at which the believer takes firmly into his own hands the responsibility for his spiritual destiny. At age fifteen, the individual has the privilege of affirming, in his own name, his faith in Bahá'u'lláh. For while the children of Bahá'í parents are considered to be Bahá'ís, they do not automatically inherit the Faith of their parents. Therefore, when they come of age, they must, of their own volition, express their belief.

426.3 Having reached the age of fifteen, Bahá'í youth are personally responsible for certain spiritual activities such as observing the obligation of daily prayer, keeping the Fast, and they are invited to participate in Bahá'í youth activities. The significance of the age of maturity, however, goes far beyond the fulfillment of responsibilities. The following extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá links the attainment of maturity with the deepening of one's understanding and comprehension of the realities of life, and the enhancement of one's very capacity for understanding:

426.3a Know thou that before maturity man liveth from day to day and comprehendeth only such matters as are superficial and outwardly obvious. However, when he cometh of age he understandeth the realities of things and the inner truths. Indeed, in his comprehension, his feelings, his deductions and his discoveries, every day of his life after maturity is equal to a year before it.

426.4 The signing of a card is simply the means by which the individual indicates his desire to be registered as a Bahá'í youth, as a member of the Bahá'í community, and it enables the National Spiritual Assembly to keep an accurate record of the membership of the community....

426.5 The Universal House of Justice assures you that it will offer prayers at the Holy Shrines that you will strive to become an active and enlightened servant of the Cause of God.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

427

Ridván Message 1985

Ridván 1985

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

427.1 As we enter the final year of the Seven Year Plan, confidence of victory and a growing sense of the opening of a new stage in the onward march of the Faith must arouse in every Bahá'í heart feelings of gratitude and eager expectation. Victory in the Plan is now within sight, and at its completion the summation of its achievements may well astonish us all. But the great, the historic feature of this period is the emergence of the Faith from obscurity, promoted by the steadfast heroism of the renowned, the indefatigable, dearly loved Bahá'í community of Bahá'u'lláh's and the Báb's native land

427.2 This dramatic change in the status of the Faith of God, occurring at so chaotic a moment in the world's history when statesmen and leaders and governors of human institutions are witnessing, with increasing despair, the bankruptcy and utter ineffectiveness of their best efforts to stay the tide of

disruption, forces upon us, the Bahá'ís, the obligation to consider anew and ponder deeply the beloved Guardian's statement that "The principle of the Oneness of Mankind—the pivot round which all the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh revolve— ... implies an organic change in the structure of present-day society, a change such as the world has riot yet experienced."

427.3 Intimations in the non-Bahá'í world of a rapidly growing realization that mankind is indeed entering a new stage in its evolution present us with unprecedented opportunities to show that the Bahá'í world community is not only "the nucleus but the very pattern" of that world society which it is the purpose of Bahá'u'lláh to establish and towards which a harassed humanity, albeit largely unconsciously, is striving.

More Involvement in the Life of Society

427.4 The time has come for the Bahá'í community to become more involved in the life of the society around it, without in the least supporting any of the world's moribund and divisive concepts, or slackening its direct teaching efforts, but rather, by association, exerting its influence towards unity, demonstrating its ability to settle differences by consultation rather than by confrontation, violence or schism, and declaring its faith in the divine purpose of human existence.

427.5 Bahá'í Youth are taking advantage of the United Nations' designation of 1985 as the Year of Youth to launch their own campaign of active cooperation with other youth groups, sharing with them Bahá'í ideals and a vision of what they intend to make of the world. The Bahá'í community will be strongly represented at the culminating event of the United Nations' Decade of Women in this same year. 1986 has been named the Year of Peace, and the Faith will be far from silent or obscure on that issue. Even now the House of Justice is making plans for the presentation of the Bahá'í concepts on peace to the governments and leaders of the world and, through the Bahá'í world community, to its national and local authorities and to all sections of the variegated world society. But it is in the local Bahá'í communities that the most widespread presentation of the Faith can take place. It is here that the real pattern of Bahá'í life can be seen. It is here that the power of Bahá'u'lláh to organize human affairs on a basis of spiritual unity can be most apparent. Every Local Spiritual Assembly which unitedly strives to grow in maturity and efficiency and encourages its community to fulfill its destiny as a foundation stone of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order can add to a growing ground swell of interest in and eventual recognition of the Cause of God as the sole hope for mankind.

427.6 Such considerations as these are now occupying the earnest attention of the Universal House of Justice. Their specific implementation will form a large part of the next Plan which will follow immediately on the completion of the present one and will be of six years' duration. By winning the Seven Year Plan, by consolidating our local communities, and above all by strengthening and deepening our understanding of the purpose of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation we shall be preparing ourselves to play our part in bringing about that transformation of human life on this planet which must take place ere it becomes fit to receive the bounties and blessings of

God's own Kingdom.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice

428
Message to Youth—Scaling the Heights of Excellence
8 May 1985
To the Bahá'í Youth of the World
Dear Bahá'í Friends,

428.1 We extend our loving greetings and best wishes to all who will meet in youth conferences yet to be held during International Youth Year. So eager and resourceful have been the responses of the Bahá'í youth in many countries to the challenges of this special year that we are moved to expressions of delight and high hope.

428.2 We applaud those youth who, in respect of this period, have already engaged in some activity within their national and local communities or in collaboration with their peers in other countries, and call upon them to persevere in their unyielding efforts to acquire spiritual qualities and useful qualifications. For if they do so, the influence of their high-minded motivations will exert itself upon world developments conducive to a productive, progressive and peaceful future.

428.3 May the youth activities begun this year be a fitting prelude to and an ongoing, significant feature throughout the International Year of Peace, 1986.

428.4 The present requirements of a Faith whose responsibilities rapidly increase in relation to its rise from obscurity impose an inescapable duty on the youth to ensure that their lives reflect to a marked degree the transforming power of the new Revelation they have embraced. Otherwise, by what example are the claims of Bahá'u'lláh to be judged? How is His healing Message to be acknowledged by a sceptical humanity if it produces no noticeable effect upon the young, who are seen to be among the most energetic, the most pliable and promising elements in any society?

428.5 The dark horizon faced by a world which has failed to recognize the Promised One, the Source of its salvation, acutely affects the outlook of the younger generations; their distressing lack of hope and their indulgence in desperate but futile and even dangerous solutions make a direct claim on the remedial attention of Bahá'í youth, who, through their knowledge of that Source and the bright vision with which they have thus been endowed, cannot hesitate to impart to their despairing fellow youth the restorative joy, the constructive hope, the radiant assurances of Bahá'u'lláh's stupendous Revelation.

428.6 The words, the deeds, the attitudes, the lack of prejudice, the nobility of character, the high sense of service to others—in a word, those qualities and actions which distinguish a Bahá'í must unfailingly characterize their inner life and outer behavior, and their interactions with friend or foe.

428.7 Rejecting the low sights of mediocrity, let them scale the ascending heights of excellence in all they aspire to do. May they resolve to elevate

the very atmosphere in which they move, whether it be in the school rooms or halls of higher learning, in their work, their recreation, their Bahá'í activity or social service.

428.8 Indeed, let them welcome with confidence the challenges awaiting them. Imbued with this excellence and a corresponding humility, with tenacity and a loving servitude, today's youth must move towards the front ranks of the professions, trades, arts and crafts which are necessary to the further progress of humankind—this to ensure that the spirit of the Cause will cast its illumination on all these important areas of human endeavor. Moreover, while aiming at mastering the unifying concepts and swiftly advancing technologies of this era of communications, they can, indeed they must also guarantee the transmittal to the future of those skills which will preserve the marvellous, indispensable achievements of the past. The transformation which is to occur in the functioning of society will certainly depend to a great extent on the effectiveness of the preparations the youth make for the world they will inherit.

428.9 We commend these thoughts to your private contemplation and to the consultations you conduct about your future.

428.10 And we offer the assurance of our prayerful remembrances of you, our trust and confidence.

The Universal House of Justice

429

Announcement of Completion of a Statement on Peace
Addressed to the Peoples of the World

4 July 1985

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

429.1 JOYFULLY ANNOUNCE COMPLETION STATEMENT ON PEACE ADDRESSED TO PEOPLES WORLD. ARRANGEMENTS BEING MADE PRESENTATION WORLD LEADERS BEGINNING 24 OCTOBER. STATEMENT BEING SENT NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES SHORTLY. OUR HEARTS FILLED GRATITUDE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FOR UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITY ENABLING HIS SERVANTS OFFER HIS HEALING MESSAGE AT THIS CRITICAL TIME FORTUNES MANKIND.

Universal House of Justice

430

Release of a Compilation on the Law of Huqúqu'lláh

4 July 1985

To National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

430.1 At the request of the Universal House of Justice, the Research Department has prepared a compilation of texts on the subject of Huqúqu'lláh. A copy of this compilation is attached for your information. You may share its contents with the friends under your jurisdiction as you see fit.

430.2 As you are aware, the law of Huqúqu'lláh is not applicable universally. Study of these extracts by the friends in communities where this law is not yet binding will help them to prepare themselves for the day when the House of Justice will decide to apply the law progressively to all

communities in the Bahá'í World.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
431
Message to International Youth Conference,
Columbus, Ohio
11 July 1985
To the International Youth Conference in Columbus, Ohio
431.1 OUR HEARTS UPLIFTED HIGH SPIRIT, LOFTY PURPOSES, MULTIFARIOUS FEATURES, REMARKABLE IMPACT INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE COLUMBUS, OHIO, PARTICULARLY DISTINGUISHED BY IMPRESSIVE EXAMPLES SELFLESS SERVICE ITS PARTICIPANTS. THEIR UPRIGHT BEHAVIOR, NOBLE DEEDS, CREATIVE VIGOR HEIGHTENED PRESTIGE OUR GLORIOUS CAUSE INSPIRED JOY HEARTS BELEAGUERED BRETHREN CRADLE FAITH. OFFERING PRAYERS THANKSGIVING, BESEECHING BLESSED BEAUTY GUIDE, PROTECT, CONFIRM YOUTH IN THEIR EARNEST ENDEAVORS MOVE WORLD TOWARDS UNITY PEACE.
Universal House of Justice
432
Inauguration of Public Information Office
at the World Center
11 July 1985
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
432.1 GREATLY PLEASED ANNOUNCE INAUGURATION PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE WORLD CENTER WITH BRANCH OFFICE SOON TO BE ESTABLISHED NEW YORK. THIS NEW AGENCY BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO EXTEND SCOPE COORDINATE WORLDWIDE ACTIVITIES DESIGNED INCREASE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AIMS ACHIEVEMENTS CAUSE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. PROFOUNDLY GRATEFUL BLESSED BEAUTY FURTHER DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENTS HIS UNIQUE ORDER.
Universal House of Justice
433
Election of Delegates to National Conventions
21 July 1985
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
433.1 As you are aware, some national communities elect their delegates to the National Convention on the basis of areas which have Local Spiritual Assemblies, while in other, larger, national communities delegates are elected on the basis of electoral units in which all adult believers have the vote.
Electoral Units
433.2 In view of the growth of the Faith and the developing life of the Bahá'í communities, the Universal House of Justice has decided that, notwithstanding that in some countries the number of believers and of Local Spiritual Assemblies is still small, the time has come for delegates to National Conventions everywhere to be elected on the basis of electoral units, but with the option of introducing certain differences from the procedures followed to date. These differences are explained below and are designed to make the system adaptable to the variations in the make-up of the many

Bahá'í communities and in the geography of the lands in which they are situated.

433.3 The House of Justice has decided that the number of delegates to each National Convention will remain unchanged for the present. However, if a National Assembly finds that under the new system a change would be advisable, it should feel free to write to the World Center stating the reasons for its view.

433.4 When establishing the electoral unit basis for the election of delegates, a National Spiritual Assembly should divide the territory under its jurisdiction into electoral units, based on the number of adult Bahá'ís in each area, in such a way that each unit will be responsible for electing preferably one delegate only.

Unit Conventions

433.5 In addition to the voting, the opportunity for consultation with the delegates is important. Hitherto this has been achieved by calling a convention in each unit to which all the believers in that electoral unit are invited. The voting for delegates has then taken place at the unit conventions with provision for voting by mail for those who do not attend. In some areas these meetings have been very fruitful and have helped to foster collaboration among the believers in the unit. However, in other areas, no doubt for a number of reasons, attendance at unit conventions has been very low, as has been the voting by mail, and this has meant that the delegates have been elected by a relatively small proportion of the electorate. National Assemblies are free to call unit conventions if they find they are successful, but if they find problems of attendance they may follow the alternative method described below.

Alternatives to Unit Conventions

433.6 Where holding unit conventions has proved ineffective, or does not seem to be a viable procedure, a National Assembly may divide each electoral unit into subunits of a convenient size. A meeting could then be held in each subunit to which all the adult believers residing therein would be invited. This should result in the participation of a large number of the believers. It is important to remember, however, that the delegate to be elected represents the entire unit and therefore, although the voting may be carried out in subunits, each voter has all the adult believers resident in the entire unit to choose from in voting for the delegate.

433.7 In some countries, it may even be too difficult to expect the believers throughout a subunit to gather together at a certain time, and so it would not be practical to hold subunit meetings. In such places a central point in each subunit could be chosen for the establishment of a polling station to which the friends would come to leave their ballots on the voting day as and when they can do so.

433.8 When one considers that there are now national Bahá'í communities varying in size from India to a single small island, some established in highly industrialized thickly populated countries, some in widely scattered archipelagos, others covering equatorial jungles and still others embracing icebound arctic wastes, one can appreciate that a great deal of discretion must

be accorded to each National Spiritual Assembly to establish the most effective means for the election of the delegates to its National Convention within the general principles outlined above.

Details to be Worked Out by National Spiritual Assemblies

433.9 Each National Spiritual Assembly should study and master the broad outlines of this system. All matters of detail should be decided by the National Assembly which should ensure that the friends are fully informed and thoroughly understand what they are expected to do. The help and advice of the Counselors and their Auxiliary Board members and assistants could be sought in working out these details and in educating the friends. It may also be desirable for the National Assembly to appoint a special national committee to organize the elections and to oversee them through unit or subunit committees or representatives. Such matters of detail could include the following:

433.9a- The number of delegates to be allocated to each unit. Although one for each unit is preferable, this may not be practicable in certain instances, such as in a unit which contains one or more very large local communities. In such cases it may be necessary to make the unit large enough to be the electoral base for two or possibly three delegates.

433.9b- The number and size of subunits. These could be as many as there are Local Spiritual Assemblies in a unit, the boundaries being so delineated as to include the surrounding isolated believers and Bahá'í groups. It may even be necessary in some remote areas to have subunits in which there are no Local Spiritual Assemblies.

433.9c- The body to be responsible for organizing a unit convention or subunit meeting or for establishing and supervising a polling station. This could be a centrally located, firmly established Local Spiritual Assembly or a committee.

433.9d- The day or days on which the elections should take place. Elections could be carried out in different subunits on different days, extended over a reasonable period of time, if this is felt to be desirable.

433.9e- The manner in which ballots are to be cast, collected, counted, and consolidated with other ballots from the same unit.

433.9f- Procedures to be followed in consultation, if the procedure chosen allows for consultation.

433.9g- A method for monitoring the balloting to ensure that proper Bahá'í procedures are followed, that the ballots are safeguarded, and that a Bahá'í voter cannot cast more than

one ballot.
433.9h- The procedure for holding a second ballot should there be a tie vote for the delegate.
433.9i- The means for announcing to the friends in all units the names of their elected delegates.
433.10 It is the hope of the Universal House of Justice that the implementation of these instructions this year and thereafter will promote Bahá'í solidarity, broaden the basis of representation at the National Conventions and that thereby the work of the Faith in each country will be characterized by greater efficiency and enhanced harmony.
433.11 As this further step in the onward march of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is taken, you are assured of the prayers of the House of Justice at the Holy Shrines that you will be granted vision and wisdom to carry out your task and be enabled to extend the range of your dedicated services to His Cause.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat

434
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,
and Bahá'í Peace activities
5 August 1985
To National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
434.1 In its letter of 23 January 1985 concerning the International Year of Peace, the Universal House of Justice urged Bahá'í communities to reach out to the non-Bahá'í public by finding ways of discussing the important issues of peace with others. One way to make such discussions relevant and effective is for the friends to know and acknowledge and pay just tribute to persons whose lives were dedicated to peaceful means of bettering social conditions.
434.2 One such person was the black American Martin Luther King, Jr., whose promotion of nonviolent means of achieving racial equality in the United States cost him his life. The positive effects of his heroic efforts brought encouragement to downtrodden peoples throughout the world and earned him the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. Four years later he was assassinated. His aspirations for a society in which the races can live in harmony are perhaps best expressed in the famous speech he delivered at a gathering of Some 250,000 people in the capital of the United States in 1963. A copy is enclosed.
434.3 The House of Justice has asked us to call your attention to Dr. King for these reasons. His widow, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, a non-Bahá'í, has written to the House of Justice that a national public holiday has been officially designated in the United States in honor of Dr. King. She intends to make an appeal that on 20 January 1986, the first observance of this holiday, "nations and liberation movements all over the world cease all violent actions, seek amnesty and reconciliation both within and outside of their national boundaries, and encourage all of their citizens to recommit themselves to work for international peace, universal justice and the elimination of hunger and poverty in the world." The House of Justice feels

that Mrs. King has a noble intention to which the friends can lend their moral and spiritual support. Since the date on which action is desired falls within the International Year of Peace, Spiritual Assemblies may consider holding peace conferences on 20 January, or close to that date, and naturally include in the presentations at these conferences references to the life and work of Dr. King. An alternative might be to devote the Bahá'í programs on World Religion Day, 19 January, to peace and on these occasions pay tribute to Dr. King.

434.4 The thought of the House of Justice in suggesting such action is not to promote the holiday for Dr.King, and it does not expect Bahá'í communities everywhere to commemorate his life annually; rather, it wishes to indicate to the friends a legitimate occasion, as illustrated by Mrs. King' s plan, when the Bahá'í peace activities can be associated with the worthy activities of others.

434.5 We are to assure you of the continuing prayers of the House of Justice in the Holy Shrines that your energetic efforts to further the cause of peace throughout the earth may be richly confirmed by the Blessed Beauty.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

435

Development of Local and National Bahá'í Funds

7 August 1985

To National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

435.1 This letter and the annexed memorandum of comments are addressed primarily to those National Spiritual Assemblies whose communities include large numbers of materially poor people but inasmuch as the principles expressed, as distinct from some of the procedures suggested, are of universal application, they are being sent to all National Assemblies.

435.2 There is a profound aspect to the relationship between a believer and the Fund, which holds true irrespective of his or her economic condition. When a human soul accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the Manifestation of God for this age and enters into the divine Covenant, that soul should progressively bring his or her whole life into harmony with the divine purpose—he becomes a co-worker in the Cause of God and receives the bounty of being permitted to devote his material possessions, no matter how meagre, to the work of the Faith.

435.3 Giving to the Fund, therefore, is a spiritual privilege not open to those who have not accepted Bahá'u'lláh, of which no believer should deny himself. It is both a responsibility and a source of bounty. This is an aspect of the Cause which, we feel, is an essential part of the basic teaching and deepening of new believers. The importance of contributing resides in the degree of sacrifice of the giver, the spirit of devotion with which the contribution is made and the unity of the friends in this service; these attract the confirmations of God and enhance the dignity and self-respect of the individuals and the community.

435.4 To reemphasize the spiritual significance of contributing to the Faith by all members of the Bahá'í community, we quote the following

extract from a letter of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Central and East Africa dated 8 August 1957:

435.4a All, no matter how modest their resources, must participate. Upon the degree of self-sacrifice involved in these individual contributions will directly depend the efficacy and the spiritual influence which these nascent administrative institutions, called into being through the power of Bahá'u'lláh, and by virtue of the Design conceived by the Center of His Covenant, will exert. A sustained and strenuous effort must henceforth be made by the rank and file of the avowed upholders of the Faith ...

435.5 We assure you of our prayers at the Sacred Threshold for your guidance and confirmation as you labor to develop this aspect of Bahá'í life in your communities.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

Development of the Local and National Funds of the Faith

Some Comments and Suggestions

435.6 While the friends have the sacred obligation and privilege to contribute to the Fund, each Local and National Assembly also has the inescapable duty of educating itself and the believers in the spiritual principles related to Bahá'í contributions, to devise simple methods to facilitate the flow and receipt of contributions, and to formulate effective procedures to ensure the wise expenditure of the funds of the Faith. The following comments and suggestions have been compiled at the request of the Universal House of Justice and are being shared with National Spiritual Assemblies to assist them in these important tasks.

435.7 A primary requisite for all who have responsibility for the care of the funds of the Faith is trustworthiness. This, as Bahá'u'lláh has stressed, is one of the most basic and vital of all human virtues, and its exercise has a direct and profound influence on the willingness of the believers to contribute to the Fund.

435.8 Conditions vary from country to country and, therefore, in educating the believers and developing the Fund, each National Spiritual Assembly needs to tailor its actions to the conditions of its area of jurisdiction.

435.9 In many parts of the world gifts of produce and handicrafts may be a large potential source of regular donations and could well be encouraged, proper arrangements being made for their collection and sale and the disposition of the proceeds.

435.10 Pledges can be useful as a means of encouraging contributions, and of bringing the financial needs of the Cause to the attention of the friends. This method can be particularly helpful in a situation where a Spiritual Assembly has a major task to perform, such as the building of a Hazíratu'l-Quds or the establishment of a tutorial school, and needs to have some idea in advance of whether the funds for the project will be available. However, it would be entirely contrary to Bahá'í principles to bring any pressure to bear when calling for pledges or when endeavoring to collect them. Once a pledge has been given it is permissible to remind the donor, privately, of his expressed intention to contribute and to inquire

courteously if it would be possible for him to honor his pledge, but Assemblies must be aware that such pledges are not an obligation in any legal sense; their redemption is entirely a matter of conscience. Lists of those making pledges must not be publicized.

435.11 The beloved Guardian has explained that the general and national interests of the Cause take precedence over local ones; thus contributions to local funds are secondary to those to national funds. However, the stability of the National Assembly rests on the firmness of the Local Spiritual Assemblies, and in the matter of educating the friends in the importance of the Fund, it is often most practical and efficacious to concentrate at first on the development of the local funds and the efficient operation of the Local Spiritual Assemblies. Then, once the friends understand the principle and learn from experience at a local level, they will the more easily understand the importance of the national fund and the work of the National Spiritual Assembly.

435.12 Regarding the local funds, it is suggested that until such time as the friends have developed the habit of contributing regularly and freely, any Local Spiritual Assembly which has a large community might appoint a small committee to assist the local treasurer in the discharge of his responsibilities. Such committees could be appointed after consultation with the Auxiliary Board member or assistant for the area. Great care must be taken in the appointment of the members of the committees; they must be both trustworthy and conscientious and must be imbued with awareness of the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of contributions to the funds. It is envisaged that these Treasury Committees would serve a number of functions:

435.12a- To render general assistance to the treasurer, as needed; for example, members of the committee could assist with issuing receipts or keeping accounts.

435.12b- To arrange for inspirational talks and discussions at Nineteen Day Feasts or at specially called meetings for the education of the friends in the spiritual and practical importance of contributing to the funds.

435.12c- To receive donations of money on behalf of the local treasurer and transmit these to him.

435.12d- To receive gifts of produce and handicrafts. The committee would be responsible for arranging for their sale and for handing over the proceeds to the local treasurer.

435.12e- To receive from the friends written pledges of their hope or intention of making a contribution to the local or national funds, whether in cash or in kind, and to assist in collecting them.

435.13 As to the national fund, in those areas where there are problems as a result of lack of banking facilities, unreliable mail systems and general

difficulties of communication, it would be desirable for the National Spiritual Assembly to appoint a national committee to assist the national treasurer in a manner similar to that outlined above for Local Spiritual Assemblies. Further, it may even be necessary to subsidize, from the national fund, one or more trusted individuals, depending on the size of the national community, who would travel to rural areas to meet with the local Treasury Committees, assist them in the execution of their functions, explain the needs of the national fund, collect the donations to the national fund from the local areas and transmit them to the national treasurer.

435.14 In considering the above suggestions and their applicability to its national community, each National Assembly should also bear in mind the following points:

435.14a- It may find it valuable to study the methods being used already in those rural areas where notable success has been achieved in bringing about participation in sacrifice and giving.

435.14b- Voluntary service for the Faith could also be stressed. It has an effect on the Fund by reducing the cost of carrying out the work of the Faith, and should be undertaken with joy by the friends.

435.14c- It can be useful and helpful for both National and Local Spiritual Assemblies to make plans for financial self-sufficiency, set goals for levels of contributions, and share the news of progress towards such goals.

435.14d- Assemblies should take the members of their communities into their confidence and regularly inform them of the uses to which the Fund is put and the projects for which money is needed.

436

Release of a Compilation on Peace

9 August 1985

To National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

436.1 The Universal House of Justice has asked us to send you the enclosed copy of a compilation on Peace prepared from the Bahá'í Writings and the letters of the House of Justice by the Research Department.

436.2 As indicated in our letter of 2 July 1985, it is intended that the compilation be used to aid study by the friends of the Bahá'í concepts on peace and to facilitate their understanding of the House of Justice's statement on peace recently mailed to you. The House of Justice requests you to disseminate the compilation to the friends along with any advice you may have for its use. It should become a regular reference at summer schools and at other gatherings in which Bahá'í adults and youth study the Teachings. Moreover, the compilation should become a ready resource for those preparing

summaries and commentaries on the statement addressed by the House of Justice to the peoples of the world.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
437
Execution of Two More Bahá'ís;
Bahá'í Students Pressured
19 September 1985
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
437.1 AFTER FEW MONTHS' CESSATION OF EXECUTIONS OF BAHÁ'ÍS IN IRAN, GRIEVED ANNOUNCE TWO FURTHER EXECUTIONS. VALIANT SOULS ARE MR. 'ABBÁS AYDIL-KHÁNÍ AND MR. RAHMATU'LLÁH VUJDÁNÍ. FORMER WAS EXECUTED ON 1 AUGUST IN PRISON WITHOUT ANY NOTIFICATION HIS FAMILY. HIS GRAVE WAS ACCIDENTALLY DISCOVERED NEAR TEHRAN. HE HAD BEEN IMPRISONED ON 26 APRIL 1982 IN ZANJÁN WHERE HE REMAINED UNTIL APRIL 1985 WHEN HE WAS TAKEN TO TEHRAN. HE WAS 45 YEARS OLD AND WAS AN AIR-CONDITIONING TECHNICIAN. MANNER HIS EXECUTION STILL UNKNOWN. HIS WIFE IS ALSO IN PRISON IN ZANJÁN.
437.2 MR. RAHMATU'LLÁH VUJDÁNÍ WAS ARRESTED IN JULY 1984 IN BANDAR-'ABBÁS, WHERE HE WAS EXECUTED BY FIRING SQUAD ON 28 AUGUST 1985. HE WAS 57 YEARS OLD. HIS BODY WAS DELIVERED, AND HIS FUNERAL TOOK PLACE IN PRESENCE HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS. HE WAS A TEACHER BY PROFESSION.
437.3 FROM THE END JANUARY TO SEPTEMBER 1985, 63 BAHÁ'ÍS WERE ARRESTED AND 39 RELEASED. TOTAL NUMBER PRISONERS NOW 741. THIS FIGURE INCLUDES 39 PRISONERS RELEASED DURING PERIOD. BAHÁ'Í STUDENTS OF ALL LEVELS HAVE TO COMPLETE ADMISSION FORMS WHICH INCLUDE SPACE FOR ONLY FOUR OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED RELIGIONS. BAHÁ'Í STUDENTS WHO STATE THEY ARE BAHÁ'ÍS ARE DENIED SCHOOLING OR IF ADMITTED FACE TREMENDOUS PRESSURE AND HARASSMENT. OTHE FORMS PERSECUTION INNOCENT BAHÁ'ÍS PERSIST....
Universal House of Justice
438
The Promise of World Peace
October 1985
To the Peoples of the World
438.1 The Great Peace towards which people of goodwill throughout the centuries have inclined their hearts, of which seers and poets for countless generations have expressed their vision, and for which from age to age the sacred scriptures of mankind have constantly held the promise, is now at long last within the reach of the nations. For the first time in history it is possible for everyone to view the entire planet, with all its myriad diversified peoples, in one perspective. World peace is not only possible but inevitable. It is the next stage in the evolution of this planet—in the words of one great thinker, "the planetization of mankind."
438.2 Whether peace is to be reached only after unimaginable horrors precipitated by humanity's stubborn clinging to old patterns of behavior, or is to be embraced now by an act of consultative will, is the choice before all who inhabit the earth. At this critical juncture when the intractable problems confronting nations have been fused into one common concern for the whole

world, failure to stem the tide of conflict and disorder would be unconscionably irresponsible.

438.3 Among the favorable signs are the steadily growing strength of the steps towards world order taken initially near the beginning of this century in the creation of the League of Nations, succeeded by the more broadly based United Nations Organization; the achievement since the Second World War of independence by the majority of all the nations on earth, indicating the completion of the process of nation building, and the involvement of these fledgling nations with older ones in matters of mutual concern; the consequent vast increase in cooperation among hitherto isolated and antagonistic peoples and groups in international undertakings in the scientific, educational, legal, economic and cultural fields; the rise in recent decades of an unprecedented number of international humanitarian organizations; the spread of women's and youth movements calling for an end to war; and the spontaneous spawning of widening networks of ordinary people seeking understanding through personal communication.

438.4 The scientific and technological advances occurring in this unusually blessed century portend a great surge forward in the social evolution of the planet, and indicate the means by which the practical problems of humanity may be solved. They provide, indeed, the very means for the administration of the complex life of a united world. Yet barriers persist. Doubts, misconceptions, prejudices, suspicions and narrow self-interest beset nations and peoples in their relations one to another.

438.5 It is out of a deep sense of spiritual and moral duty that we are impelled at this opportune moment to invite your attention to the penetrating insights first communicated to the rulers of mankind more than a century ago by Bahá'u'lláh, Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, of which we are the Trustees.

438.6 "The winds of despair," Bahá'u'lláh wrote, "are, alas, blowing from every direction, and the strife that divides and afflicts the human race is daily increasing. The signs of impending convulsions and chaos can now be discerned, inasmuch as the prevailing order appears to be lamentably defective." This prophetic judgement has been amply confirmed by the common experience of humanity. Flaws in the prevailing order are conspicuous in the inability of sovereign states organized as United Nations to exorcise the spectre of war, the threatened collapse of the international economic order, the spread of anarchy and terrorism, and the intense suffering which these and other afflictions are causing to increasing millions. Indeed, so much have aggression and conflict come to characterize our social, economic and religious systems, that many have succumbed to the view that such behavior is intrinsic to human nature and therefore ineradicable.

438.7 With the entrenchment of this view, a paralyzing contradiction has developed in human affairs. On the one hand, people of all nations proclaim not only their readiness but their longing for peace and harmony, for an end to the harrowing apprehensions tormenting their daily lives. On the other, uncritical assent is given to the proposition that human beings are incorrigibly selfish and aggressive and thus incapable of erecting a social

system at once progressive and peaceful, dynamic and harmonious, a system giving free play to individual creativity and initiative but based on cooperation and reciprocity.

438.8 As the need for peace becomes more urgent, this fundamental contradiction, which hinders its realization, demands a reassessment of the assumptions upon which the commonly held view of mankind's historical predicament is based. Dispassionately examined, the evidence reveals that such conduct, far from expressing man's true self, represents a distortion of the human spirit. Satisfaction on this point will enable all people to set in motion constructive social forces which, because they are consistent with human nature, will encourage harmony and cooperation instead of war and conflict.

438.9 To choose such a course is not to deny humanity's past but to understand it. The Bahá'í Faith regards the current world confusion and calamitous condition in human affairs as a natural phase in an organic process leading ultimately and irresistibly to the unification of the human race in a single social order whose boundaries are those of the planet. The human race, as a distinct, organic unit, has passed through evolutionary stages analogous to the stages of infancy and childhood in the lives of its individual members, and is now in the culminating period of its turbulent adolescence approaching its long-awaited coming of age.

438.10 A candid acknowledgement that prejudice, war and exploitation have been the expression of immature stages in a vast historical process and that the human race is today experiencing the unavoidable tumult which marks its collective coming of age is not a reason for despair but a prerequisite to undertaking the stupendous enterprise of building a peaceful world. That such an enterprise is possible, that the necessary constructive forces do exist, that unifying social structures can be erected, is the theme we urge you to examine.

438.11 Whatever suffering and turmoil the years immediately ahead may hold, however dark the immediate circumstances, the Bahá'í community believes that humanity can confront this supreme trial with confidence in its ultimate outcome. Far from signalizing the end of civilization, the convulsive changes towards which humanity is being ever more rapidly impelled will serve to release the "potentialities inherent in the station of man" and reveal "the full measure of his destiny on earth, the innate excellence of his reality."

I

438.12 The endowments which distinguish the human race from all other forms of life are summed up in what is known as the human spirit; the mind is its essential quality. These endowments have enabled humanity to build civilizations and to prosper materially. But such accomplishments alone have never satisfied the human spirit, whose mysterious nature inclines it towards transcendence, a reaching towards an invisible realm, towards the ultimate reality, that unknowable essence of essences called God. The religions brought to mankind by a succession of spiritual luminaries have been the primary link between humanity and that ultimate reality, and have galvanized and refined mankind's capacity to achieve spiritual success together with social progress.

438.13 No serious attempt to set human affairs aright, to achieve world peace, can ignore religion. Man's perception and practice of it are largely the stuff of history. An eminent historian described religion as a “faculty of human nature.” That the perversion of this faculty has contributed to much of the confusion in society and the conflicts in and between individuals can hardly be denied. But neither can any fair-minded observer discount the preponderating influence exerted by religion on the vital expressions of civilization. Furthermore, its indispensability to social order has repeatedly been demonstrated by its direct effect on laws and morality.

438.14 Writing of religion as a social force, Bahá’u’lláh said: “Religion is the greatest of all means for the establishment of order in the world and for the peaceful contentment of all that dwell therein.” Referring to the eclipse or corruption of religion, he wrote: “Should the lamp of religion be obscured, chaos and confusion will ensue, and the lights of fairness, of justice, of tranquillity and peace cease to shine.” In an enumeration of such consequences the Bahá’í Writings point out that the “perversion of human nature, the degradation of human conduct, the corruption and dissolution of human institutions, reveal themselves, under such circumstances, in their worst and most revolting aspects. Human character is debased, confidence is shaken, the nerves of discipline are relaxed, the voice of human conscience is stilled, the sense of decency and shame is obscured, conceptions of duty, of solidarity, of reciprocity and loyalty are distorted, and the very feeling of peacefulness, of joy and of hope is gradually extinguished.”

438.15 If, therefore, humanity has come to a point of paralyzing conflict it must look to itself, to its own negligence, to the siren voices to which it has listened, for the source of the misunderstandings and confusion perpetrated in the name of religion. Those who have held blindly and selfishly to their particular orthodoxies, who have imposed on their votaries erroneous and conflicting interpretations of the pronouncements of the Prophets of God, bear heavy responsibility for this confusion—a confusion compounded by the artificial barriers erected between faith and reason, science and religion. For from a fair-minded examination of the actual utterances of the Founders of the great religions, and of the social milieus in which they were obliged to carry out their missions, there is nothing to support the contentions and prejudices deranging the religious communities of mankind and therefore all human affairs.

438.16 The teaching that we should treat others as we ourselves would wish to be treated, an ethic variously repeated in all the great religions, lends force to this latter observation in two particular respects: it sums up the moral attitude, the peace-inducing aspect, extending through these religions irrespective of their place or time of origin; it also signifies an aspect of unity which is their essential virtue, a virtue mankind in its disjointed view of history has failed to appreciate.

438.17 Had humanity seen the Educators of its collective childhood in their true character, as agents of one civilizing process, it would no doubt have reaped incalculably greater benefits from the cumulative effects of their

successive missions. This, alas, it failed to do.

438.18 The resurgence of fanatical religious fervor occurring in many lands cannot be regarded as more than a dying convulsion. The very nature of the violent and disruptive phenomena associated with it testifies to the spiritual bankruptcy it represents. Indeed, one of the strangest and saddest features of the current outbreak of religious fanaticism is the extent to which, in each case, it is undermining not only the spiritual values which are conducive to the unity of mankind but also those unique moral victories won by the particular religion it purports to serve.

438.19 However vital a force religion has been in the history of mankind, and however dramatic the current resurgence of militant religious fanaticism, religion and religious institutions have, for many decades, been viewed by increasing numbers of people as irrelevant to the major concerns of the modern world. In its place they have turned either to the hedonistic pursuit of material satisfactions or to the following of man-made ideologies designed to rescue society from the evident evils under which it groans. All too many of these ideologies, alas, instead of embracing the concept of the oneness of mankind and promoting the increase of concord among different peoples, have tended to deify the state, to subordinate the rest of mankind to one nation, race or class, to attempt to suppress all discussion and interchange of ideas, or to callously abandon starving millions to the operations of a market system that all too clearly is aggravating the plight of the majority of mankind, while enabling small sections to live in a condition of affluence scarcely dreamed of by our forebears.

438.20 How tragic is the record of the substitute faiths that the worldly-wise of our age have created. In the massive disillusionment of entire populations who have been taught to worship at their altars can be read history's irreversible verdict on their value. The fruits these doctrines have produced, after decades of an increasingly unrestrained exercise of power by those who owe their ascendancy in human affairs to them, are the social and economic ills that blight every region of our world in the closing years of the twentieth century. Underlying all these outward afflictions is the spiritual damage reflected in the apathy that has gripped the mass of the peoples of all nations and by the extinction of hope in the hearts of deprived and anguished millions.

438.21 The time has come when those who preach the dogmas of materialism, whether of the east or the west, whether of capitalism or socialism, must give account of the moral stewardship they have presumed to exercise. Where is the “new world” promised by these ideologies? Where is the international peace to whose ideals they proclaim their devotion? Where are the breakthroughs into new realms of cultural achievement produced by the aggrandizement of this race, of that nation or of a particular class? Why is the vast majority of the world's peoples sinking ever deeper into hunger and wretchedness when wealth on a scale undreamed of by the Pharaohs, the Caesars, or even the imperialist powers of the nineteenth century is at the disposal of thepresent arbiters of human affairs?

438.22 Most particularly, it is in the glorification of material pursuits, at once the progenitor and common feature of all such ideologies, that we find the

roots which nourish the falsehood that human beings are incorrigibly selfish and aggressive. It is here that the ground must be cleared for the building of a new world fit for our descendants.

438.23 That materialistic ideals have, in the light of experience, failed to satisfy the needs of mankind calls for an honest acknowledgement that a fresh effort must now be made to find the solutions to the agonizing problems of the planet. The intolerable conditions pervading society bespeak a common failure of all, a circumstance which tends to incite rather than relieve the entrenchment on every side. Clearly, a common remedial effort is urgently required. It is primarily a matter of attitude. Will humanity continue in its waywardness, holding to outworn concepts and unworkable assumptions? Or will its leaders, regardless of ideology, step forth and, with a resolute will, consult together in a united search for appropriate solutions?

438.24 Those who care for the future of the human race may well ponder this advice. "If long-cherished ideals and time-honored institutions, if certain social assumptions and religious formulae have ceased to promote the welfare of the generality of mankind, if they no longer minister to the needs of a continually evolving humanity, let them be swept away and relegated to the limbo of obsolescent and forgotten doctrines. Why should these, in a world subject to the immutable law of change and decay, be exempt from the deterioration that must needs overtake every human institution? For legal standards, political and economic theories are solely designed to safeguard the interests of humanity as a whole, and not humanity to be crucified for the preservation of the integrity of any particular law or doctrine."

II

438.25 Banning nuclear weapons, prohibiting the use of poison gases, or outlawing germ warfare will not remove the root causes of war. However important such practical measures obviously are as elements of the peace process, they are in themselves too superficial to exert enduring influence. Peoples are ingenious enough to invent yet other forms of warfare, and to use food, raw materials, finance, industrial power, ideology, and terrorism to subvert one another in an endless quest for supremacy and dominion. Nor can the present massive dislocation in the affairs of humanity be resolved through the settlement of specific conflicts or disagreements among nations. A genuine universal framework must be adopted.

438.26 Certainly, there is no lack of recognition by national leaders of the worldwide character of the problem, which is self-evident in the mounting issues that confront them daily. And there are the accumulating studies and solutions proposed by many concerned and enlightened groups as well as by agencies of the United Nations, to remove any possibility of ignorance as to the challenging requirements to be met. There is, however, a paralysis of will; and it is this that must be carefully examined and resolutely dealt with. This paralysis is rooted, as we have stated, in a deep-seated conviction of the inevitable quarrelsomeness of mankind, which has led to the reluctance to entertain the possibility of subordinating national self-interest to the requirements of world order, and in an unwillingness to face courageously the far-reaching implications of establishing a united world authority. It is

also traceable to the incapacity of largely ignorant and subjugated masses to articulate their desire for a new order in which they can live in peace, harmony and prosperity with all humanity.

438.27 The tentative steps towards world order, especially since World War II, give hopeful signs. The increasing tendency of groups of nations to formalize relationships which enable them to cooperate in matters of mutual interest suggests that eventually all nations could overcome this paralysis. The Association of South East Asian Nations, the Caribbean Community and Common Market, the Central American Common Market, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, the European Communities, the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of American States, the South Pacific Forum—all the joint endeavors represented by such organizations prepare the path to world order.

438.28 The increasing attention being focused on some of the most deep-rooted problems of the planet is yet another hopeful sign. Despite the obvious shortcomings of the United Nations, the more than two score declarations and conventions adopted by that organization, even where governments have not been enthusiastic in their commitment, have given ordinary people a sense of a new lease on life. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and the similar measures concerned with eliminating all forms of discrimination based on race, sex or religious belief; upholding the rights of the child; protecting all persons against being subjected to torture; eradicating hunger and malnutrition; using scientific and technological progress in the interest of peace and the benefit of mankind—all such measures, if courageously enforced and expanded, will advance the day when the spectre of war will have lost its power to dominate international relations. There is no need to stress the significance of the issues addressed by these declarations and conventions. However, a few such issues, because of their immediate relevance to establishing world peace, deserve additional comment.

438.29 Racism, one of the most baneful and persistent evils, is a major barrier to peace. Its practice perpetrates too outrageous a violation of the dignity of human beings to be countenanced under any pretext. Racism retards the unfoldment of the boundless potentialities of its victims, corrupts its perpetrators, and blights human progress. Recognition of the oneness of mankind, implemented by appropriate legal measures, must be universally upheld if this problem is to be overcome.

438.30 The inordinate disparity between rich and poor, a source of acute suffering, keeps the world in a state of instability, virtually on the brink of war. Few societies have dealt effectively with this situation. The solution calls for the combined application of spiritual, moral and practical approaches. A fresh look at the problem is required, entailing consultation with experts from a wide spectrum of disciplines, devoid of economic and ideological polemics, and involving the people directly affected in the decisions that must urgently be made. It is an issue that is bound up not only with the necessity for eliminating extremes of wealth and poverty but also with those spiritual verities the understanding of which can produce a new universal

attitude. Fostering such an attitude is itself a major part of the solution.
438.31 Unbridled nationalism, as distinguished from a sane and legitimate patriotism, must give way to a wider loyalty, to the love of humanity as a whole. Bahá'u'lláh's statement is: "The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens." The concept of world citizenship is a direct result of the contraction of the world into a single neighborhood through scientific advances and of the indisputable interdependence of nations. Love of all the world's peoples does not exclude love of one's country. The advantage of the part in a world society is best served by promoting the advantage of the whole. Current international activities in various fields which nurture mutual affection and a sense of solidarity among peoples need greatly to be increased.
438.32 Religious strife, throughout history, has been the cause of innumerable wars and conflicts, a major blight to progress, and is increasingly abhorrent to the people of all faiths and no faith. Followers of all religions must be willing to face the basic questions which this strife raises, and to arrive at clear answers. How are the differences between them to be resolved, both in theory and in practice? The challenge facing the religious leaders of mankind is to contemplate, with hearts filled with the spirit of compassion and a desire for truth, the plight of humanity, and to ask themselves whether they cannot, in humility before their Almighty Creator, submerge their theological differences in a great spirit of mutual forbearance that will enable them to work together for the advancement of human understanding and peace.
438.33 The emancipation of women, the achievement of full equality between the sexes, is one of the most important, though less acknowledged prerequisites of peace. The denial of such equality perpetrates an injustice against one half of the world's population and promotes in men harmful attitudes and habits that are carried from the family to the workplace, to political life, and ultimately to international relations. There are no grounds, moral, practical, or biological, upon which such denial can be justified. Only as women are welcomed into full partnership in all fields of human endeavor will the moral and psychological climate be created in which international peace can emerge.
438.34 The cause of universal education, which has already enlisted in its service an army of dedicated people from every faith and nation, deserves the utmost support that the governments of the world can lend it. For ignorance is indisputably the principal reason for the decline and fall of peoples and the perpetuation of prejudice. No nation can achieve success unless education is accorded all its citizens. Lack of resources limits the ability of many nations to fulfill this necessity, imposing a certain ordering of priorities. The decision-making agencies involved would do well to consider giving first priority to the education of women and girls, since it is through educated mothers that the benefits of knowledge can be most effectively and rapidly diffused throughout society. In keeping with the requirements of the times, consideration should also be given to teaching the concept of world citizenship as part of the standard education of every child.
438.35 A fundamental lack of communication between peoples seriously undermines efforts towards world peace. Adopting an international auxiliary language

would go far to resolve this problem and necessitates the most urgent attention.

438.36 Two points bear emphasizing in all these issues. One is that the abolition of war is not simply a matter of signing treaties and protocols; it is a complex task requiring a new level of commitment to resolving issues not customarily associated with the pursuit of peace. Based on political agreements alone, the idea of collective security is a chimera. The other point is that the primary challenge in dealing with issues of peace is to raise the context to the level of principle, as distinct from pure pragmatism. For, in essence, peace stems from an inner state supported by a spiritual or moral attitude, and it is chiefly in evoking this attitude that the possibility of enduring solutions can be found.

438.37 There are spiritual principles, or what some call human values, by which solutions can be found for every social problem. Any well-intentioned group can in a general sense devise practical solutions to its problems, but good intentions and practical knowledge are usually not enough. The essential merit of spiritual principle is that it not only presents a perspective which harmonizes with that which is immanent in human nature, it also induces an attitude, a dynamic, a will, an aspiration, which facilitate the discovery and implementation of practical measures. Leaders of governments and all in authority would be well served in their efforts to solve problems if they would first seek to identify the principles involved and then be guided by them.

III

438.38 The primary question to be resolved is how the present world, with its entrenched pattern of conflict, can change to a world in which harmony and cooperation will prevail.

438.39 World order can be founded only on an unshakeable consciousness of the oneness of mankind, a spiritual truth which all the human sciences confirm. Anthropology, physiology, psychology, recognize only one human species, albeit infinitely varied in the secondary aspects of life. Recognition of this truth requires abandonment of prejudice—prejudice of every kind—race, class, color, creed, nation, sex, degree of material civilization, everything which enables people to consider themselves superior to others.

438.40 Acceptance of the oneness of mankind is the first fundamental prerequisite for reorganization and administration of the world as one country, the home of humankind. Universal acceptance of this spiritual principle is essential to any successful attempt to establish world peace. It should therefore be universally proclaimed, taught in schools, and constantly asserted in every nation as preparation for the organic change in the structure of society which it implies.

438.41 In the Bahá'í view, recognition of the oneness of mankind "calls for no less than the reconstruction and the demilitarization of the whole civilized world—a world organically unified in all the essential aspects of its life, its political machinery, its spiritual aspiration, its trade and finance, its script and language, and yet infinite in the diversity of the national characteristics of its federated units."

438.42 Elaborating the implications of this pivotal principle, Shoghi Effendi,

the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, commented in 1931 that: "Far from aiming at the subversion of the existing foundations of society, it seeks to broaden its basis, to remould its institutions in a manner consonant with the needs of an ever-changing world. It can conflict with no legitimate allegiances, nor can it undermine essential loyalties. Its purpose is neither to stifle the flame of a sane and intelligent patriotism in men's hearts, nor to abolish the system of national autonomy so essential if the evils of excessive centralization are to be avoided. It does not ignore, nor does it attempt to suppress, the diversity of ethnical origins, of climate, of history, of language and tradition, of thought and habit, that differentiate the peoples and nations of the world. It calls for a wider loyalty, for a larger aspiration than any that has animated the human race. It insists upon the subordination of national impulses and interests to the imperative claims of a unified world. It repudiates excessive centralization on one hand, and disclaims all attempts at uniformity on the other. Its watchword is unity in diversity."

438.43 The achievement of such ends requires several stages in the adjustment of national political attitudes, which now verge on anarchy in the absence of clearly defined laws or universally accepted and enforceable principles regulating the relationships between nations. The League of Nations, the United Nations, and the many organizations and agreements produced by them have unquestionably been helpful in attenuating some of the negative effects of international conflicts, but they have shown themselves incapable of preventing war. Indeed, there have been scores of wars since the end of the Second World War; many are yet raging.

438.44 The predominant aspects of this problem had already emerged in the nineteenth century when Bahá'u'lláh first advanced his proposals for the establishment of world peace. The principle of collective security was propounded by him in statements addressed to the rulers of the world. Shoghi Effendi commented on his meaning: "What else could these weighty words signify," he wrote, "if they did not point to the inevitable curtailment of unfettered national sovereignty as an indispensable preliminary to the formation of the future Commonwealth of all the nations of the world Some form of a world superstate must needs be evolved, in whose favor all the nations of the world will have willingly ceded every claim to make war, certain rights to impose taxation and all rights to maintain armaments, except for purposes of maintaining internal order within their respective dominions. Such a state will have to include within its orbit an international executive adequate to enforce supreme and unchallengeable authority on every recalcitrant member of the commonwealth; a world parliament whose members shall be elected by the people in their respective countries and whose election shall be confirmed by their respective governments;and a supreme tribunal whose judgement will have a binding effect even in such cases where the parties concerned did not voluntarily agree to submit their case to its consideration.

438.45 "... A world community in which all economic barriers will have been permanently demolished and the interdependence of Capital and Labor definitely recognized; in which the clamor of religious fanaticism and strife will have

been forever stilled; in which the flame of racial animosity will have been finally extinguished; in which a single code of international law—the product of the considered judgement of the world's federated representatives—shall have as its sanction the instant and coercive intervention of the combined forces of the federated units; and finally a world community in which the fury of a capricious and militant nationalism will have been transmuted into an abiding consciousness of world citizenship—such indeed, appears, in its broadest outline, the Order anticipated by Bahá'u'lláh, an Order that shall come to be regarded as the fairest fruit of a slowly maturing age."

438.46 The implementation of these far-reaching measures was indicated by Bahá'u'lláh: "The time must come when the imperative necessity for the holding of a vast, an all-embracing assemblage of men will be universally realized. The rulers and kings of the earth must needs attend it, and, participating in its deliberations, must consider such ways and means as will lay the foundations of the world's Great Peace amongst men."

438.47 The courage, the resolution, the pure motive, the selfless love of one people for another—all the spiritual and moral qualities required for effecting this momentous step towards peace are focused on the will to act. And it is towards arousing the necessary volition that earnest consideration must be given to the reality of man, namely, his thought. To understand the relevance of this potent reality is also to appreciate the social necessity of actualizing its unique value through candid, dispassionate and cordial consultation, and of acting upon the results of this process.

Bahá'u'lláh insistently drew attention to the virtues and indispensability of consultation for ordering human affairs. He said: "Consultation bestows greater awareness and transmutes conjecture into certitude. It is a shining light which, in a dark world, leads the way and guides. For everything there is and will continue to be a station of perfection and maturity. The maturity of the gift of understanding is made manifest through consultation." The very attempt to achieve peace through the consultative action he proposed can release such a salutary spirit among the peoples of the earth that no power could resist the final, triumphal outcome.

438.48 Concerning the proceedings for this world gathering, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of Bahá'u'lláh and authorized interpreter of his teachings, offered these insights: "They must make the Cause of Peace the object of general consultation, and seek by every means in their power to establish a Union of the nations of the world. They must conclude a binding treaty and establish a covenant, the provisions of which shall be sound, inviolable and definite. They must proclaim it to all the world and obtain for it the sanction of all the human race. This supreme and noble undertaking—the real source of the peace and well-being of all the world—should be regarded as sacred by all that dwell on earth. All the forces of humanity must be mobilized to ensure the stability and permanence of this Most Great Covenant. In this all-embracing Pact the limits and frontiers of each and every nation should be clearly fixed, the principles underlying the relations of governments towards one another definitely laid down, and all international agreements and

obligations ascertained. In like manner, the size of the armaments of every government should be strictly limited, for if the preparations for war and the military forces of any nation should be allowed to increase, they will arouse the suspicion of others. The fundamental principle underlying this solemn Pact should be so fixed that if any government later violate any one of its provisions, all the governments on earth should arise to reduce it to utter submission, nay the human race as a whole should resolve, with every power at its disposal, to destroy that government. Should this greatest of all remedies be applied to the sick body of the world, it will assuredly recover from its ills and will remain eternally safe and secure."

438.49 The holding of this mighty convocation is long overdue.

438.50 With all the ardor of our hearts, we appeal to the leaders of all nations to seize this opportune moment and take irreversible steps to convoke this world meeting. All the forces of history impel the human race towards this act which will mark for all time the dawn of its long-awaited maturity.

438.51 Will not the United Nations, with the full support of its membership, rise to the high purposes of such a crowning event?

438.52 Let men and women, youth and children everywhere recognize the eternal merit of this imperative action for all peoples and lift up their voices in willing assent. Indeed, let it be this generation that inaugurates this glorious stage in the evolution of social life on the planet.

IV

438.53 The source of the optimism we feel is a vision transcending the cessation of war and the creation of agencies of international cooperation. Permanent peace among nations is an essential stage, but not, Bahá'u'lláh asserts, the ultimate goal of the social development of humanity. Beyond the initial armistice forced upon the world by the fear of nuclear holocaust, beyond the political peace reluctantly entered into by suspicious rival nations, beyond pragmatic arrangements for security and coexistence, beyond even the many experiments in cooperation which these steps will make possible lies the crowning goal: the unification of all the peoples of the world in one universal family.

438.54 Disunity is a danger that the nations and peoples of the earth can no longer endure; the consequences are too terrible to contemplate, too obvious to require any demonstration. "The well-being of mankind," Bahá'u'lláh wrote more than a century ago, "its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established." In observing that "mankind is groaning, is dying to be led to unity, and to terminate its agelong martyrdom," Shoghi Effendi further commented that: "Unification of the whole of mankind is the hallmark of the stage which human society is now approaching. Unity of family, of tribe, of city-state, and nation have been successively attempted and fully established. World unity is the goal towards which a harassed humanity is striving. Nation-building has come to an end. The anarchy inherent in state sovereignty is moving towards a climax. A world, growing to maturity, must abandon this fetish, recognize the oneness and wholeness of human relationships, and establish once for all the machinery that can best incarnate this fundamental principle of its life."

438.55 All contemporary forces of change validate this view. The proofs can be discerned in the many examples already cited of the favourable signs towards world peace in current international movements and developments. The army of men and women, drawn from virtually every culture, race and nation on earth, who serve the multifarious agencies of the United Nations, represent a planetary “civil service” whose impressive accomplishments are indicative of the degree of cooperation that can be attained even under discouraging conditions. An urge towards unity, like a spiritual springtime, struggles to express itself through countless international congresses that bring together people from a vast array of disciplines. It motivates appeals for international projects involving children and youth. Indeed, it is the real source of the remarkable movement towards ecumenism by which members of historically antagonistic religions and sects seem irresistibly drawn towards one another. Together with the opposing tendency to warfare and self-aggrandizement against which it ceaselessly struggles, the drive towards world unity is one of the dominant, pervasive features of life on the planet during the closing years of the twentieth century.

438.56 The experience of the Bahá’í community may be seen as an example of this enlarging unity. It is a community of some three to four million people drawn from many nations, cultures, classes and creeds, engaged in a wide range of activities serving the spiritual, social and economic needs of the peoples of many lands. It is a single social organism, representative of the diversity of the human family, conducting its affairs through a system of commonly accepted consultative principles, and cherishing equally all the great outpourings of divine guidance in human history. Its existence is yet another convincing proof of the practicality of its Founder's vision of a united world, another evidence that humanity can live as one global society, equal to whatever challenges its coming of age may entail. If the Bahá’í experience can contribute in whatever measure to reinforcing hope in the unity of the human race, we are happy to offer it as a model for study.

438.57 In contemplating the supreme importance of the task now challenging the entire world, we bow our heads in humility before the awesome majesty of the divine Creator, who out of His infinite love has created all humanity from the same stock; exalted the gemlike reality of man; honored it with intellect and wisdom, nobility and immortality; and conferred upon man the “unique distinction and capacity to know Him and to love Him,” a capacity that “must needs be regarded as the generating impulse and the primary purpose underlying the whole of creation.”

438.58 We hold firmly the conviction that all human beings have been created “to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization”; that “to act like the beasts of the field is unworthy of man”; that the virtues that befit human dignity are trustworthiness, forbearance, mercy, compassion and loving-kindness towards all peoples. We reaffirm the belief that the “potentialities inherent in the station of man, the full measure of his destiny on earth, the innate excellence of his reality, must all be manifested in this promised Day of God.” These are the motivations for our unshakeable faith that unity and peace are the attainable goal towards which humanity is striving.

438.59 At this writing, the expectant voices of Bahá'ís can be heard despite the persecution they still endure in the land in which their Faith was born. By their example of steadfast hope, they bear witness to the belief that the imminent realization of this age-old dream of peace is now, by virtue of the transforming effects of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation, invested with the force of divine authority. Thus we convey to you not only a vision in words: we summon the power of deeds of faith and sacrifice; we convey the anxious plea of our coreligionists everywhere for peace and unity. We join with all who are the victims of aggression, all who yearn for an end to conflict and contention, all whose devotion to principles of peace and world order promotes the ennobling purposes for which humanity was called into being by an all-loving Creator.

438.60 In the earnestness of our desire to impart to you the fervor of our hope and the depth of our confidence, we cite the emphatic promise of Bahá'u'lláh: "These fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."

Universal House of Justice

439

Appointment of Continental Boards of Counselors

24 October 1985

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

439.1 It gives us great happiness to announce the membership of the Continental Boards of Counselors as from the Day of the Covenant, 26 November 1985. The number of Counselors has been increased from 63 to 72 and adjustments have been made in their geographical distribution in consonance with the development of the Faith around the world.

439.2 The membership of the Continental Boards of Counselors as now appointed is:

439.2a Africa (18 Counselors): Mr. Hushang Ahdieh (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Mr. Husayn Ardikání, Mrs. Beatrice O. Asare, Mr. Gila Michael Bahta, Mr. Friday Ekpe, Mr. Oloro Epyeru, Mr. Shidan Fat'he-Aazam, Mr. Kassimi Fofana, Mr. Zekrullah Kazemi, Mr. Muhammad Kebdani, Mrs. Thelma Khelghati, Mr. Roddy Dharma Lutchmaya, Mr. Daniel Ramoroesi, Dr. Mihdí Samandarí, Mrs. Edith Senoga, Mr. Peter Vuyiya, Mrs. Lucretia Mancho Warren, Mr. Mabuku Wingi.

439.2b The Americas (17 Counselors): Dr. Hidáyatu'lláh Ahmadíyyih, Mr. Eloy Anello, Dr. Farzam Arbáb (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Dr. Wilma Brady, Mrs. Isabel P. de Calderón, Mr. Rolf von Czekus, Mr. Robert Harris, Mrs. Lauretta King, Dr. Peter McLaren, Mr. Shapoor Monadjem, Mrs. Ruth Pringle, Mr. Donald O. Rogers, Mr. Fred Schechter, Dr. Arturo Serrano, Mr. Alan Smith, Dr. David R. Smith, Mr. Rodrigo Tomás.

439.2c Asia (19 Counselors): Dr. Sábir Áfáqí, Mr. Burhání'd-Dín Afshín, Dr. Iraj Ayman, Mr. Bijan Fareed, Dr. John Fozdar, Mr. Zabíhu'lláh Gulmuhammadí, Mr. Bharat Koirala, Mr. Rúhu'lláh Mumtází, Mr. S. Nagaratnam, Dr. Perin Olyai, Mrs. Rose Ong, Mr. Khudárahm Paymán (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Mr. Masíh Rawhání, Mr. Vicente Samaniego, Dr. Ilhan Sezgin, U Soe Tin, Mrs. Zena Sorabjee, Dr. Chellie

J. Sundram, Mr. Michitoshi Zenimoto.
439.2d Australasia (9 Counselors): Mr. Suhayl ‘Alá'í, Mr. Ben Ayala, Justice Richard Benson, Dr. Kamran Eshraghian, Mrs. Tinai Hancock, Mr. Lisiate Maka, Mrs. Gayle Morrison, Dr. Sírús Naráqí, Mrs. Joy Stevenson (Trustee of the Continental Fund).
439.2e Europe (9 Counselors): Dr. Agnes Ghaznavi, Mr. Hartmut Grossmann, Mr. Louis Hénuzet (Trustee of the Continental Fund), Mrs. Ursula Mühlschlegel, Dr. Leo Niederreiter, Mrs. Polin Rafat, Mr. Adib Taherzadeh, Mr. Adam Thorne, Mr. Sohrab Youssefian.
439.3 The following nineteen devoted believers who are now being relieved of the onerous duties of membership on the Boards of Counselors, will, as distinguished servants of the Cause, continue through their outstanding capacities and experience to be sources of stimulation and encouragement to the friends.
439.4 Mr. A. Owen Battrick, Mr. Erik Blumenthal, Mrs. Shirin Boman, Mrs. Carmen de Burafato, Mr. Athos Costas, Mr. Angus Cowan, Mrs. Dorothy Ferraby, Mr. Aydin Güney, Dr. Dipchand Khianra, Mr. Artemus Lamb, Mr. Kolonario Oule, Dr. Sarah Pereira, Mrs. Betty R. Reed, Dr. Manúchihr Salmánpúr, Mrs. Velma Sherrill, Mr. Hideya Suzuki, Mrs. Bahíyyih Winckler, Mr. Donald Witzel, Mr. Yan Kee Leong.
439.5 We express to each and every one of these dear friends our heartfelt gratitude and assure them of our prayers in the Holy Shrines for the confirmation of their highly meritorious and self-sacrificing services to the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh.
439.6 At this time when the Bahá’í world is facing the challenge of the International Year of Peace, on the point of completing the Seven Year Plan and standing on the threshold of a new Six Year Plan, we have felt it important to call upon the Counselors from all the continents to gather at the World Center for a conference to deliberate on the tasks and opportunities of the years immediately ahead. This conference will take place from 27 December 1985 through 2 January 1986 and is yet one more sign of the rapid advance and consolidation of the institutions of the Cause of God.
439.7 We are profoundly grateful to the Blessed Perfection for His bountiful confirmations which are enabling His strenuously laboring servants in every part of the world to witness the growing influence of His glorious Cause, and to take part in the vitalizing unfoldment of His Administrative Order.
439.8 It is our fervent prayer at the Sacred Threshold that the followers of Bahá’u’lláh in every land will arise with increased determination and self-abnegation to mirror forth the standards upheld by His potent Faith.
With loving Bahá’í greetings,
The Universal House of Justice

440

Reinterment of Bahá’u’lláh’s Faithful Half-Brother
17 November 1985
To the Bahá’ís of the World
Beloved Friends,
440.1 It is with a feeling of joy and gratitude that we inform the

Bahá'í world of the befitting reinterment of the remains of Mírzá Muhammad-Qulí, the faithful half-brother and companion in exile of Bahá'u'lláh, and of eleven members of his family, in a new Bahá'í cemetery on a hillside looking across Lake Kinneret and the hills of Galilee towards the Qiblih of the Faith. This historic event, coinciding fortuitously with the first formal presentation of The Promise of World Peace to a Head of State, is of especial significance in the annals of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

440.2 On 12 November 1952 the beloved Guardian jubilantly cabled the Bahá'í world his announcement of the acquisition of vitally needed property surrounding the Most Holy Shrine and the Mansion of Bahjí in exchange for land donated by the grandchildren of Mírzá Muhammad-Qulí.

440.3 The land referred to in this cable had been in the possession of Mírzá Muhammad-Qulí on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, at a place called Nuqayb. He and his family lived there and farmed the land for many years and on his passing, at the instruction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, his remains were buried there, as were subsequently those of members of his family.

440.4 In 1937 Kibbutz Ein Gev was established just to the north of the farm, and the two groups of settlers lived as amicable neighbors until the war of 1948 forced the family to leave the land which, lying on the troubled frontier of the new State of Israel, was expropriated by the Government. The grandchildren of Mírzá Muhammad-Qulí gave their rights in the land to the Faith which received in exchange the much needed land in Bahjí. Thus the little cemetery passed out of Bahá'í hands. It remained untouched until 1972 when the decision was made to approach the authorities with a view to embellishing the site and maintaining it as a place of historic significance for the Faith. However, plans had already been made for the extension of the plantings of the kibbutz and the eventual development of the land in a way that would not permit the permanent reestablishment of the cemetery in that place. Negotiations were then entered into, as a result of which another plot of land in the immediate neighborhood, but slightly farther from the shore of the Lake on the slope of Tel Susita, was officially designated a Bahá'í cemetery and given over to the Bahá'í Community. The work of fencing it and planting suitable shrubs and trees was then put in hand and preparations were made to reinter the precious remains of this family.

440.5 On the morning of Friday 18 October 1985, as the final stage in this process, the remains of Mírzá Muhammad-Qulí himself were ceremoniously conveyed from the old cemetery to the new and were reinterred there in the presence of the Hands of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum and 'Alí-Akbar Furútan, members of the Universal House of Justice and of the International Teaching Center, and a large gathering of World Center friends as well as representatives of the Israeli authorities and of Kibbutz Ein Gev. Mrs. Husníyyih Bahá'í, the granddaughter of Mírzá Muhammad-Qulí, who is now pioneering in St. Lucia in the West Indies, accompanied by members of her family, had been especially invited to attend the ceremony in honor of her illustrious forebear, to whom 'Abdu'l-Bahá paid eloquent tribute in Memorials of the Faithful.

The Universal House of Justice
441
Execution of ‘Azízu’lláh Ashjárí by Firing Squad
24 November 1985
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
441.1 WITH DEEP SORROW ANNOUNCE EXECUTION BY FIRING SQUAD ON 19 NOVEMBER 1985 OF ‘AZÍZU’LLÁH ASHJÁRÍ, A BAHÁ’Í PRISONER IN TABRÍZ. HE WAS FIFTY YEARS OLD AND HAD BEEN IMPRISONED FOR OVER FOUR YEARS. UNLIKE MANY OTHER EXECUTED BAHÁ’ÍS, HIS BODY WAS GIVEN TO THE FAMILY, AND BURIAL TOOK PLACE 22 NOVEMBER. NO OTHER DETAILS AVAILABLE. LATEST INFORMATION RECEIVED INDICATES 767 BAHÁ’ÍS ARE STILL IN PRISON....
Universal House of Justice
442
Presentation of Peace Statement
to the Secretary-General of the United Nations
25 November 1985
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
442.1 ON EVE DAY COVENANT WE ANNOUNCE WITH PROFOUND GRATITUDE SUCCESSFUL PRESENTATION TO SECRETARY-GENERAL UNITED NATIONS STATEMENT PEACE ADDRESSED TO PEOPLES WORLD. PRESENCE AMATU’L-BAHÁ RÚHÍYYIH KHÁNUM AS HEAD DELEGATION BAHÁ’Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY INVESTED THIS EVENT WITH SIGNIFICANCE THAT WILL WARM HEARTS EVOKE ADMIRATION INSPIRE APPRECIATION FUTUR GENERATIONS. PRESENTATION 22 NOVEMBER TO SECRETARY-GENERAL IN CONJUNCTION ONGOING PRESENTATIONS STATEMENT TO HEADS STATE THROUGHOUT WORLD PRESAGES NE STAGE IN RELATIONSHIP BAHÁ’Í COMMUNITY TO UNITED NATIONS. IT IMMEDIATELY LENDS ADDED IMPETUS TO ACTIVITIES INTERNATIONAL YEAR PEACE BEING UNDERTAKEN WITH EXEMPLARY VIGOR EFFICIENCY BY NATIONAL LOCAL BAHÁ’Í COMMUNITIES.
442.2 WE TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY INFORM FRIENDS THAT OF MORE THAN FIFTY HEADS STATE WHO HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED PEACE STATEMENT TWO THUS FAR HAVE DIRECTLY ADDRESSED TO US THEIR POSITIVE THOUGHTFUL RESPONSES, NAMELY, PRESIDENTS COLOMBIA MARSHALL ISLANDS. REPORTS REACHING WORLD CENTER INDICATE INCREASING SYMPATHETIC INTEREST BEING AROUSED BY STATEMENT AMONG PEOPLE ALL LEVELS SOCIETY. WARMLY APPRECIATE ADMIRE CREATIVE ENERGY WHICH FRIENDS EVERYWHERE A APPLYING TO STUDY AND DISSEMINATION THE PROMISE OF WORLD PEACE.
442.3 REMARKABLE RANGE ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE OCCURRED JUST ONE MONTH SINCE RELEASE STATEMENT IMBUES US WITH FEELINGS SATISFACTION JOY. GRATEFULLY RECOGNIZE BLESSINGS BEING SHOWERED COMMUNITY GREATEST NAME AS DERIVING FROM WORLD-AWAKENING SACRIFICES CHARACTERIZING LIVES OUR BELOVED HEROIC BROTHERS SISTERS WHOSE SPIRITUAL RESOURCES INDOMITABLE COURAGE HAVE WITHSTOOD NO LESS THAN SEVEN YEARS UNRELENTING ASSAULTS UNPRECEDENTED UPHEAVALS PERVADING BAHÁ’U’LLÁH’S NATIVE LAND.
Universal House of Justice
443
Presentation of Peace Statement to the
President of the United States
12 December 1985

To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States

443.1 PROFOUNDLY GRATEFUL PRESENTATION PEACE STATEMENT PRESIDENT UNITED STATES RONALD W. REAGAN. THAT THE PRESENTATION OCCURRED AS PART PUBLIC EVENT MARKING HUMAN RIGHTS DAY AND THAT CHIEF EXECUTIVE GREAT REPUBLIC WEST OPENLY CHAMPIONED RIGHTS UNEQUIVOCALLY PROCLAIMED INNOCENCE OUR SORELY WRONGED BRETHREN IN IRAN HAVE INVESTED THIS ACHIEVEMENT WITH SIGNIFICANCE THAT CAN BE APPRECIATED ONLY WITHIN CONTEXT GLORIOUS PROMISES YOUR COUNTRY'S DESTINY RECORDED OUR SACRED SCRIPTURES. ON THIS PORTENTOUS OCCASION WE RECALL WITH HOPE AND JOY PROPHETIC WORDS BELOVED MASTER ADDRESSED YOUR ILLUSTRIOUS COMMUNITY: “THE PRESTIGE OF THE FAITH OF GOD,” HE ASSERTED, “HAS IMMENSELY INCREASED. ITS GREATNESS IS NOW MANIFEST THE DAY IS APPROACHING WHEN IT WILL HAVE CAST A TREMENDOUS TUMULT IN MEN'S HEARTS. REJOICE, THEREFORE, O DENIZENS OF AMERICA, REJOICE WITH EXCEEDING GLADNESS!”

Universal House of Justice

444

Adoption of Resolution in Support of Iranian Bahá’ís
by the United Nations General Assembly—Affirmation
of Emergence from Obscurity

17 December 1985

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

444.1 WITH JOYFUL GRATEFUL HEARTS WE ACCLAIM UNPRECEDENTED RECOGNITION BAHÁ’Í COMMUNITY THROUGH ADOPTION BY UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF RESOLUTION MAKING SPECIFIC REFERENCE PERSECUTED FRIENDS IRAN. FOR FIRST TIME NAME PRECIOUS FAITH BAHÁ’U’LLÁH MENTIONED HIGHEST MOST WIDELY REPRESENTATIVE INTERNATIONAL FORUM YET ESTABLISHED THUS FULFILLING LONG-CHERISHED WISH BELOVED GUARDIAN. SIGNIFICANCE THIS MOMENTOUS DEVELOPMEN ALSO UNDERSCORED BY FACT THAT ONLY IN THREE INSTANCES BEFORE HAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ITSELF ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS CENSURING PARTICULAR COUNTRIES FOR BAD HUMAN RIGHTS RECORDS. PROCESS WHICH RESULTED SUCH A REMARKABLE OUTCOME BEGA TWO YEARS AGO WITH DECISION UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO SEND REPRESENTATIVE IRAN INVESTIGATE VIOLATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS INCLUDING THOSE DIRECTLY AFFECTING BAHÁ’Í COMMUNITY. THE COMMISSION DETERRED IN ITS INTENTION BY IRANIAN AUTHORITIES REFERRED ISSUE TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHERE MATTER WAS DISCUSSED FIRST IN THIRD COMMITTEE WHEN INTERESTS FAITH WERE VIGOROUSLY UPHELD BY REPRESENTATIVES VARIOUS COUNTRIES AND RESOLUTION WAS PROPOSED AND THEN IN PLENARY SESSION WHICH RATIFIED RESOLUTION ON 13 DECEMBER. NOTABLE CONSEQUENCE IS RETENTION ISSUE AGENDA GENERAL ASSEMBLY THUS PERMITTIN INTENSIFICATION EFFORTS RELIEVE SITUATION SUFFERING BELIEVERS IRAN IN ANTICIPATION DAY COMPLETE EMANCIPATION FAITH GOD THAT LAND. WARMLY COMMEND ACKNOWLEDGE UNTIRING EFFORTS UNITED NATIONS REPRESENTATIVES BAHÁ’Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY RESOLUTELY SUPPORTED BY NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIE ALL CONTINENTS.

444.2 OCCURRING IN CONJUNCTION WITH PRESENTATION PEACE STATEMENT BY AMATU’L-BAHÁ RÚHÍYYIH KHÁNUM TO SECRETARY-GENERAL UNITED NATIONS ONLY FEW WEEKS BEFORE, WITH ONGOING DELIVERY SAME STATEMENT TO HEADS STATE THROUGHOUT WORLD AND WITH UNEQUIVOCAL PUBLIC DEFENSE IRANIAN BAHÁ’ÍS BY PRESIDENT UNITED STATES AT HUMAN RIGHTS DAY CEREMONY, THIS INESTIMABLE

ACHIEVEMENT DEFINITELY AFFIRMS EMERGENCE FAITH OBSCURITY HERALDS NEW PHASE IRREPRESSIBLE UNFOLDMENT DIVINELY APPOINTED WORLD ORDER BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.

The Universal House of Justice

445

Message to Conference of Counselors in the Holy Land

27 December 1985

To the Conference of the Continental Boards of Counselors

Beloved Friends,

445.1 With all the warmth of our hearts we welcome you to this historic Conference, to discuss the challenges and opportunities so swiftly devolving upon the struggling Faith of God.

445.2 The main features of this spiritually potent occasion are evident. Your entry upon your new term of office as the Seven Year Plan approaches its conclusion, with the measures to be taken to ensure its success heavy on your shoulders; consideration of the main features of the new Six Year Plan which will terminate on the eve of the Centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh; the golden opportunities offered by the Year of Peace, which must be seized and fully exploited; the dramatic emergence of the Faith from obscurity into the limelight of the world's highest councils, with the attendant enhancement of its status; a tremendous upsurge of zealous activity in the Bahá'í world community as it takes to its heart the recently issued Statement on Peace; the deep and universal commitment already made by that community to a vast variety of social and economic development programs; the widespread and growing awareness among the leaders of mankind that a new stage in human history has opened and that the guidance of the past will not carry it through the emergencies of the present; these, together with the invitation extended to the peoples of the world to examine the Bahá'í community as a working model for the reorganization of the world, are some of the pressures forcing themselves upon the attention of those responsible for the direction, propagation and protection of the Cause of God.

445.3 Who can doubt that we are now entering a period of unprecedented and unimaginable developments in the onward march of the Faith? Some intimation of what these may be can already be deduced and preparations made to deal with them. We know that the present victories will lead to active opposition, for which the Bahá'í world community must be prepared. We know the prime needs of the Cause at the moment: a vast expansion of its numbers and financial resources; a greater consolidation of its community life and the authority of its institutions; an observable increase in those characteristics of loving unity, stability of family life, freedom from prejudice and rectitude of conduct which must distinguish the Bahá'ís from the spiritually lost and wayward multitudes around them. Surely the time cannot be long delayed when we must deal universally with that entry by troops foretold by the Master as a prelude to mass conversion. How are we to prepare ourselves for that examination of the Bahá'í experience which will undoubtedly be made by shrewd and doubting questioners?

445.4 These are some of the subjects before you. The role of the Counselors is all-pervading and vital in the life of the Cause. You must be

wise and steadfast, encouraging and brotherly in all your associations with the believers and in your consultation with National Spiritual Assemblies; through your Board members and their assistants you must strengthen and uplift the Local Spiritual Assemblies and rouse the spirits and enlarge the vision of the believers everywhere. Your prayers in the Sacred Shrines during these few days will strengthen and guide you; be assured of our own prayers for a bountiful outpouring of grace and inspiration as you embark upon the deliberations which will enable you to discharge your sacred and historic duties.

445.5 We wish you a happy, exciting and fruitful conference.

The Universal House of Justice

446

Release of a Compilation on Women

1 January 1986

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

446.1 The Universal House of Justice requested the Research Department to prepare a compilation on the subject of women, taking into consideration the Bahá'í concepts of the equality of the sexes, the role of education in the development of women, family life, fostering the development of women, etc. The compilation has now been completed and a copy is attached.

446.2 It is left to your discretion to determine how best the contents of this compilation can be shared with the believers in your community.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

447

Report from Conference in the Holy Land; the Inception of the Fourth Epoch of the Formative Age

2 January 1986

The Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

447.1 The eager expectation with which we welcomed to the World Center, on 27 December, sixty-four Counselors from the five continents to discuss, with the International Teaching Center, the challenges and opportunities facing the Bahá'í world community, has, at the conclusion of their historic conference, been transmuted into feelings of deepest joy, gratitude and love.

447.2 Graced by the presence of the Hands of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, Ugo Giachery, 'Alí-Akbar Furútan, 'Alí-Muhammad Varqá and Collis Featherstone, the Conference was organized and managed with admirable foresight and efficiency by the International Teaching Center, whose individual members watched over and served untiringly the needs of the participants and the progress of the Conference itself.

447.3 Convened in the concourse of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice as the Counselors of the Bahá'í world entered upon their new five-year term of office, within months of the termination of the Seven Year Plan and the opening of the new Six Year Plan, its aura heightened by the spiritual potencies of the Holy Shrines and the euphoric sense of victory and blessing now pervading the entire Bahá'í world, the Conference attained

such heights of consultative exaltation, spirituality and power as only those serving the Blessed Beauty can enjoy.

447.4 The organic growth of the Cause of God, indicated by recent significant developments in its life, becomes markedly apparent in the light of the main objectives and expectations of the Six Year Plan: a vast expansion of the numerical and financial resources of the Cause; enlargement of its status in the world; a worldwide increase in the production, distribution and use of Bahá'í literature; a firmer and worldwide demonstration of the Bahá'í way of life requiring special consideration of the Bahá'í education of children and youth, the strengthening of Bahá'í family life and attention to universal participation and the spiritual enrichment of individual life; further acceleration in the process of the maturation of local and national Bahá'í communities and a dynamic consolidation of the unity of the two arms of the Administrative Order; an extension of the involvement of the Bahá'í world community in the needs of the world around it; and the pursuit of social and economic development in well-established Bahá'í communities. These are some of the features of the Six Year Plan which will open on 21 April 1986 and terminate on 20 April 1992.

447.5 Ridván 1992 will mark the inception of a Holy Year, during which the Centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh will be observed by commemorations around the world and the inauguration of His Covenant will be celebrated, in the City of the Covenant, by the holding of the second Bahá'í World Congress.

447.6 The beloved Counselors, strengthened and enriched by their experience in the Holy Land, will, as early as possible, consult with all National Spiritual Assemblies on measures to conclude triumphantly the current Plan, and on preparations to launch the Six Year Plan. In anticipation of those consultations, National Spiritual Assemblies will receive the full announcement of the aims and characteristics of that Plan, so that together with the Counselors they may formulate the national plans which will, for each community, establish its pursuit of the overall objectives.

447.7 This new process, whereby the national goals of the next Plan are to be largely formulated by National Spiritual Assemblies and Boards of Counselors, signalizes the inauguration of a new stage in the unfoldment of the Administrative Order. Our beloved Guardian anticipated a succession of epochs during the Formative Age of the Faith; have no hesitation in recognizing that this new development in the maturation of Bahá'í institutions marks the inception of the fourth epoch of that Age.

447.8 Shoghi Effendi perceived in the organic life of the Cause a dialectic of victory and crisis. The unprecedented triumphs, generated by the adamantine steadfastness of the Iranian friends, will inevitably provoke opposition to test and increase our strength. Let every Bahá'í in the world be assured that whatever may befall this growing Faith of God is but incontrovertible evidence of the loving care with which the King of Glory and His martyred Herald, through the incomparable Center of His Covenant and our beloved Guardian, are preparing His humble followers for ultimate and magnificent triumph. Our loving prayers are with you all.

The Universal House of Justice
448
Women—Their Role in Society and
the Establishment of Peace;
Membership on the Universal House of Justice
5 January 1986
To an individual Bahá'í
Dear Bahá'í Friend,
448.1 The Universal House of Justice has directed us to transmit the following in reply to your letter dated 19 December 1985.
448.2 Concerning your request for material relating to the role of women in society and in the establishment of peace, a compilation of extracts from the Writings and Utterances of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and from letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi and the House of Justice, is enclosed. These extracts concern the equality of women, their role, and, either directly or indirectly, their importance to the attainment of peace.
448.3 Additionally, from one of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's previously untranslated Tablets, the following extract is taken:
448.3a The handmaidens of God and the bondsmaids in His divine Court should reveal such attributes and attitudes amongst the women of the world as would cause them to stand out and achieve renown in the circles of women. That is, they should associate with them with supreme chastity and steadfast decency, with unshakeable faith, articulate speech, an eloquent tongue, irrefutable testimony and high resolve. Beseech God that thou mayest attain unto all these bounties.
'Abdu'l-Bahá also stated:
448.3b The woman is indeed of the greater importance to the race. She has the greater burden and the greater work. Look at the vegetable and the animal worlds. The palm which carries the fruit is the tree most prized by the date grower. The Arab knows that for a long journey the mare has the longest wind. For her greater strength and fierceness, the lioness is more feared by the hunter than the lion.
448.3c ... The woman has greater moral courage than the man; she has also special gifts which enable her to govern in moments of danger and crisis. ... ('Abdu'l-Bahá in London, pp. 102–03)
448.3d Consider, for instance, a mother who has tenderly reared a son for twenty years to the age of maturity. Surely she will not consent to having that son torn asunder and killed in the field of battle. Therefore, as woman advances toward the degree of man in power and privilege, with the right of vote and control in human government, most assuredly war will cease; for woman is naturally the most devoted and staunch advocate of international peace. (The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 375)
A further extract about women and peace is taken from a letter written on behalf of the Guardian on 24 March 1945:
448.4 What 'Abdu'l-Bahá meant about the women arising for peace is that this is a matter which vitally affects women, and when they form a conscious and overwhelming mass of public opinion against war there can be no

war. The Bahá'í women are already organized through being members of the Faith and the Administrative Order. No further organization is needed. But they should, through teaching and through the active moral support they give to every movement directed towards peace, seek to exert a strong influence on other women's minds in regard to this essential matter.

448.5 With reference to the membership of the House of Justice being possible only for men, a compilation on this subject is also enclosed. The following extracts are contained in this compilation, but have been selected for separate mention. The first is from Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, section 38:

448.5a The House of Justice, however, according to the explicit text of the Law of God, is confined to men; this for a wisdom of the Lord God's which will erelong be made manifest as clearly as the sun at high noon.

448.6 And from a letter dated 14 April 1975 written on behalf of the House of Justice to an individual believer, are taken these extracts:

448.6a The Universal House of Justice has asked us to assure you that it appreciates the deep concern you express in your recent letter about the membership of the Universal House of Justice being confined to men, and it understands your feeling of frustration at not being able to find an answer that would help you to accept that this is not an injustice being imposed on womankind. The House of Justice agrees with you that our Sacred Writings are replete with passages affirming the equality of both sexes; that from the spiritual point of view, there is no difference between women and men. In fact, many statements made by 'Abdu'l-Bahá extol women. He has said that "in some respects woman is superior to man." …

448.6b The Universal House of Justice points out that when we accept the Manifestation of God for our time, we must accept what He says though at the moment we may not comprehend the meaning of some of His statements. Some things, such as Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings regarding life after death, we have to accept on faith.

448.7 May you be guided and sustained in promoting the Word of God at the meetings you are planning and in the opportunities that occur in your daily life.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

449

Message to National Youth Conference,

Adelaide, Australia

13 January 1986

To the Bahá'í Youth of Australia

449.1 ENTRANCE FAITH FOURTH EPOCH FORMATIVE AGE HERALDS ADVENT NEW CHALLENGES OPPORTUNITIES FRIENDS EVERYWHERE EXEMPLIFY DIVINE QUALITIES FIRMLY ESTABLISH BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY AS MODEL WORTHY EMULATION PEOPLES WORLD INEVITABLY MOVING TOWARD TRANSFORMATION HUMAN SOCIETY AND LAYING FOUNDATIO WORLD PEACE. CONFIDENT ENERGETIC SPIRIT MEMBERS YOUR GENERATION WILL INSPIRE FELLOW BELIEVERS ALL AGES DISCHARGE THEIR SHARE DUTIES OBLIGATIONS DURING YEAR PEACE AS ALL LABOR UNITEDLY FOR VICTORY SEVEN YEAR PLAN AND CONTEMPLATE NEW

LEVELS ACHIEVEMENT COURSE SIX YEAR PLAN.
449.2 OFFERING OUR PRAYERS SUPPLICATIONS YOUR BEHALF. MAY PROMISED BLESSINGS CONFIRMATIONS BAHÁ'U'LLÁH SUSTAIN YOU DURING YOUR DELIBERATIONS AND CROWN YOUR EFFORTS WITH OUTSTANDING VICTORIES.
Universal House of Justice
450
Inaugural Broadcast of Radio Bahá'í Panama
31 January 1986
To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Panama
450.1 DEEPLY GRATIFIED FIRST TRANSMISSION RADIO BAHÁ'Í PANAMA CULMINATION LONG PERIOD TRAINING DEVOTED LABORS BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY GUAYMIES MANY INDIVIDUALS. SUGGEST NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SEEK EXTENSION GRADUATED PROGRAMMING PERIOD AT LEAST 6 MONTHS ENABLE NON PROFESSIONAL STAFF ORGANIZE PROCURE MATERIALS GAIN NEEDED TECHNICAL PROFICIENCIES DEVELOP CULTURAL CENTER CONGRATULATIONS GREAT ACHIEVEMENT.
Universal House of Justice
451
Epochs of the Formative Age
5 February 1986
To all National Spiritual Assemblies
Dear Bahá'í Friends,
451.1 In the letter dated 2 January 1986 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World, reference was made to the inception of the fourth epoch of the Formative Age. In response to questions subsequently put to the House of Justice about the periods related to the earlier epochs of that Age, the Research Department was requested to prepare a statement on the subject. This has now been presented, and a copy is enclosed.
451.2 Kindly share this material of topical interest with the friends, as you deem fit, so that it may be studied in their deepening classes, summer schools, conferences and similar gatherings.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
The Epochs of the Formative Age
Prepared by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice
Introduction:
451.3 In disclosing the panoramic vision of the unfoldment of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh, Shoghi Effendi refers to three major evolutionary stages through which the Faith must pass—the Apostolic or Heroic Age (1844–1921) associated with the Central Figures of the Faith; the Formative or Transitional Age (1921–) the "hallmark" of which is the rise and establishment of the Administrative Order, based on the execution of the provisions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament; and, the Golden Age which will represent the "consummation of this glorious Dispensation." Close examination of the details of Bahá'í history reveals that the individual Ages are comprised of a number of periods—inseparable parts of one integrated whole.
451.4 In relation to the Heroic Age of our Faith, the Guardian, in a letter

dated 5 June 1947 to the American Bahá'ís, specified that this Age consisted of three epochs and described the distinguishing features of each:

451.4a ... the Apostolic and Heroic Age of our Faith, fell into three distinct epochs, of nine, of thirty-nine and of twenty-nine years' duration, associated respectively with the Bábí Dispensation and the ministries of Bahá'u'lláh and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This primitive Age of the Bahá'í Era, unapproached in spiritual fecundity by any period associated with the mission of the Founder of any previous Dispensation, was impregnated, from its inception to its termination, with the creative energies generated through the advent of two independent Manifestations and the establishment of a Covenant unique in the spiritual annals of mankind.

451.5 The Formative Age, in which we now live and serve, was ushered in with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Its major thrust is the shaping, development and consolidation of the local, national and international institutions of the Faith. It is clear from the enumeration of the tasks associated with the Formative Age that their achievement will require increasingly mature levels of functioning of the Bahá'í community:

451.5a During this Formative Age of the Faith, and in the course of present and succeeding epochs, the last and crowning stage in the erection of the framework of the Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh—the election of the Universal House of Justice—will have been completed, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Mother Book of His Revelation, will have been codified and its laws promulgated, the Lesser Peace will have been established, the unity of mankind will have been achieved and its maturity attained, the Plan conceived by 'Abdu'l-Bahá will have been executed, the emancipation of the Faith from the fetters of religious orthodoxy will have been effected, and its independent religious status will have been universally recognized, ...

451.6 The epochs of the Formative Age mark progressive stages in the evolution of the organic Bahá'í community and signal the maturation of its institutions, thus enabling the Faith to operate at new levels and to initiate new functions. The timing of each epoch is designated by the Head of the Faith, and given the organic nature of evolutionary development, the transition from one epoch to another may not be abrupt, but may well occur over a period of time. This is the case, for example, in relation to both the inception of the Formative Age and the end of its first epoch. In relation to the former, the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá is the transitional event most often identified with the close of the Heroic Age and the beginning of the Formative Age. However, the Guardian also asserts that the Apostolic Age of the Faith concluded "more particularly with the passing [in 1932] of His well-beloved and illustrious sister, the Most Exalted Leaf—the last survivor of a glorious and heroic age." With regard to the termination of the first epoch of the Formative Age, Shoghi Effendi has placed this between the years 1944 and 1946.

451.7 Before describing the individual epochs of the Formative Age, it is important to comment on the use of the term "epoch" in the writings of the Guardian. In a letter dated 18 January 1953, written on his behalf to a National Spiritual Assembly, it is explained that the term is used to apply both to the stages in the Formative Age of the Faith, and to the phases in the

unfoldment of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Divine Plan. We are currently in the fourth epoch of the Formative Age and the second epoch of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Divine Plan. (The first epoch of the Divine Plan began in 1937, with the inception of the First Seven Year Plan of the North American Bahá’í community, and concluded with the successful completion of the Ten Year Crusade in 1963. The second epoch of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Divine Plan commenced in 1964 with the inauguration of the Nine Year Plan of the Universal House of Justice.)

451.8 The primary focus of this statement is on the epochs of the Formative Age of the Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh.

The First Epoch of the Formative Age: 1921–1944/46

451.9 The first epoch of this Age witnessed the “birth and the primary stages in the erection of the framework of the Administrative Order of the Faith.” The epoch was characterized by concentration on the formation of local and national institutions in all five continents, thereby initiating the erection of the machinery necessary for future systematic teaching activities. This epoch was further marked by the launching, at the instigation of the Guardian, of the First Seven Year Plan (1937–1944) by the American Bahá’í community. This Plan, drawing its inspiration from the Tablets of the Divine Plan, represented the first systematic teaching campaign of the Bahá’í community and inaugurated the initial stage of the execution of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Divine Plan in the Western Hemisphere.

The Second Epoch of the Formative Age: 1946–1963

451.10 This epoch extended the developments of the first epoch by calling for the consummation of a laboriously constructed Administrative Order,” and was to witness the formulation of a succession of teaching plans designed to facilitate the development of the Faith beyond the confines of the Western Hemisphere and the continent of Europe. This epoch was distinguished, in the first instance, by the simultaneous and often spontaneous prosecution of Bahá’í national plans in both the East and the West. For example, in a letter written at Naw-Rúz 105 [1949] to the Bahá’ís in the East, the beloved Guardian listed the specific plans undertaken by the United States, British, Indian, Persian, Australian and New Zealand, and Iraqi National Spiritual Assemblies, and indicated that this concerted action signalized the transition into the second epoch of the Formative Age. The internal consolidation and the administrative experience gained by the National Assemblies was utilized and mobilized by the Guardian with the launching of the Ten Year World Crusade—a crusade involving the simultaneous prosecution of twelve national plans. The plans derived their direction from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Divine Plan, and the goals were assigned by Shoghi Effendi from the World Center of the Faith. A second distinguishing feature of this epoch was the “rise” and “steady consolidation” of the World Center of the Faith.

451.11 The second epoch thus clearly demonstrated the further maturation of the institutions of the Administrative Order. It witnessed the appointment of the Hands of the Cause, the introduction of Auxiliary Boards, and the establishment of the International Bahá’í Council. The culminating event of the epoch

was the election of the Universal House of Justice in 1963. It further demonstrated the more effective and coordinated use of the administrative machinery to prosecute the goals of the first global spiritual crusade, and the emergence in ever sharper relief of the World Center of the Faith.

The Third Epoch of the Formative Age: 1963–1986

451.12 In addressing the British National Spiritual Assembly in 1951, the Guardian foreshadowed "worldwide enterprises destined to be embarked upon, in future epochs of that same [Formative] Age, by the Universal House of Justice." In announcing the Nine Year Plan, "the second of those world-encircling enterprises destined in the course of time to carry the Word of God to every human Soul," the Universal House of Justice embarked upon the process anticipated by the Guardian and proclaimed the commencement of the third epoch of the Formative Age, an epoch which called the Bahá'ís to a yet more mature level of administrative functioning, consistent with the expected vast increase in the size and diversity of the community, its emergence as a model to mankind, and the extension of the influence of the Faith in the world at large. The House of Justice, in a letter dated October 1963, stated:

451.12a Beloved friends, the Cause of God, guarded and nurtured since its inception by God's Messengers, by the Center of His Covenant and by His Sign on earth, now enters a new epoch, the third of the Formative Age. It must now grow rapidly in size, increase its spiritual cohesion and executive ability, develop its institutions and extend its influence into all strata of society. We, its members, must, by constant study of the life-giving Word, and by dedicated service, deepen in spiritual understanding and show to the world a mature, responsible, fundamentally assured and happy way of life, far removed from the passions, prejudices and distractions of present day society.

451.12b The period of the third epoch encompassed three world plans, involving all National Spiritual Assemblies, under the direction of the Universal House of Justice, namely, the Nine Year Plan (1964–1973), the Five Year Plan (1974–1979), and the Seven Year Plan (1979–1986). This third epoch witnessed the emergence of the Faith from obscurity and the initiation of activities designed to foster the social and economic development of communities. The institution of the Continental Boards of Counselors was brought into existence leading to the establishment of the International Teaching Center. Assistants to the Auxiliary Boards were also introduced. At the World Center of the Faith, the historic construction and occupation of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice was a crowning event.

The Fourth Epoch of the Formative Age: 1986–

451.13 In a letter dated 2 January 1986 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World, the Supreme Body announced the inception of the fourth epoch of the Formative Age. It highlighted the significant developments that had taken place in the "organic growth of the Cause of God" during the course of the recently completed third epoch, by assessing the readiness of the Bahá'í community to begin to address the objectives of the new Six Year Plan scheduled to begin on 21 April 1986, and, outlined the general aims and characteristics of this new Plan. Whereas

national plans had previously derived largely from the World Center, in this new epoch the specific goals for each national community will be formulated, within the framework of the overall objectives of the Plan, by means of consultation between the particular National Spiritual Assembly and the Continental Board of Counselors. As the Universal House of Justice states:

451.13a This new process ... signalizes the inauguration of a new stage in the unfoldment of the Administrative Order. Our beloved Guardian anticipated a succession of epochs during the Formative Age of the Faith; we have no hesitation in recognizing that this new development in the maturation of Bahá'í institutions marks the inception of the fourth epoch of that Age.

Future Epochs

451.14 The tasks that remain to be accomplished during the course of the Formative Age are many and challenging. Additional epochs can be anticipated, each marking significant stages in the evolution of the Administrative Order and culminating in the Golden Age of the Faith. The Golden Age, itself, will involve "successive epochs" leading ultimately to the establishment of the Most Great Peace, to the World Bahá'í Commonwealth and to the "birth and efflorescence of a world civilization."

452

Plans for the Dedication of the Mother Temple of the Indian Subcontinent, New Delhi

24 February 1986

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

451.1 JOYFULLY ANNOUNCE DEDICATION MOTHER TEMPLE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT WILL BE HELD NEW DELHI 23–27 DECEMBER 1986. AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚHÍYYIH KHÁNUM WILL REPRESENT UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE THIS HISTORIC OCCASION AND DEDICATE TEMPLE. TEMPLE DEDICATION COMMITTEE FORMED UNDER AEGIS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IND WILL CONVEY NECESSARY INFORMATION.

Universal House of Justice

453

The Six Year Plan—Major Objectives and Setting National Goals

25 February 1986

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The Six Year Plan

453.1 On 2 January 1986, on the closing day of the Counselors' Conference, the Universal House of Justice announced certain features of the Six Year Plan and the methods by which they national goals were to be worked out in consultation between the Counselors and National Spiritual Assemblies. Before Ridván you will receive a message from the Universal House of Justice to the entire Bahá'í world and also one addressed specifically to the Bahá'ís within the jurisdiction of each National Spiritual Assembly.

453.2 In the meantime the House of Justice wishes you to begin your consultations on the goals of the Six Year Plan for your country. The preliminary steps in goal-setting have already been taken, namely the assessment of each country's strengths and weaknesses which the National

Spiritual Assemblies recently made at the request of the Universal House of Justice, and which will undoubtedly be of great assistance to each one of you as you enter the next stage of the process.

453.3 The House of Justice has instructed us to send you the following additional guidelines together with the enclosed statement of the major objectives of the plan at the national level, which includes some suggestions for specific goals to provide a basis for your consultations. You should not, however, confine yourselves to those suggestions.

453.4 A special characteristic of the Six Year Plan is that the conceiving of the detailed national goals is itself to be one of the tasks of the Plan, but this fact should not hold up in any way the activities of your communities. With this letter you are being acquainted with the major objectives of the plan, and every believer, every Local Spiritual Assembly, and all the national committees can pursue immediately, with increasing vigor, many projects towards their attainment, both projects already in process and others which will be newly conceived, so that when the specific national goals for each community are announced they will be received by a united company of devoted followers of Bahá'u'lláh already in the full flood of activity.

453.5 It is the hope of the Universal House of Justice that each National Assembly will be able to meet before Ridván with a representative of the Continental Board of Counselors so that from this initial consultation a basis will be laid for consultation on the goals at the National Conventions.

453.6 Other consultations will no doubt continue following the Ridván Festival. Their duration will depend on the condition of each national community, its size and the complexity of its circumstances. As soon as specific goals have been formulated and agreed, they should be immediately sent to the World Center. They will then be considered by the Universal House of Justice and the International Teaching Center, and, as soon as possible, the National Assembly will be informed of the approval or modification of its proposal. Each submission will be considered on its arrival; the earlier they arrive the better, and in no case should a submission reach the World Center later than 1 November 1986.

453.7 Among the elements of the plan which are not covered by the list of major objectives are the goals for international assistance including pioneering, resident teaching projects, traveling teaching, assistance for development projects, and for the acquisition of properties and vehicles. Notes relating to these elements have been provided to the Continental Boards of Counselors, who will share them with National Assemblies during the process of consultation. Since they are international in nature, these goals will have to be consolidated and approved at the World Center before being generally announced.

453.8 Though the institutions of the Faith are responsible for planning the goals and activities of the Cause, for stimulating and encouraging the believers to arise, and for supporting and unifying them in their services, it is, in the final analysis, through the spiritual decisions and actions of the individual believers that the Faith moves forward on its course to ultimate victory. It is the ardent hope of the Universal House of Justice that every

faithful follower of Bahá'u'lláh will search his or her heart and turn with full attention and loving self-sacrifice to the consideration of the goals of the Six Year Plan, and determine how to play a part in theirachievement.

453.9 The prayers of the Universal House of Justice and the International Teaching Center at the Sacred Threshold will surround the institutions of the Faith in every continent and nation as you assume your weighty task of conceiving the goals which will guide the national communities of the Faith through the next six years.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

The Six Year Plan

143–149 ? 1986–1992

The Major Objectives

453.10The major objectives of the Six Year Plan include: carrying the healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the generality of mankind; greater involvement of the Faith in the life of human society; a worldwide increase in the translation, production, distribution and use of Bahá'í literature; further acceleration in the process of the maturation of national and local Bahá'í communities; greater attention to universal participation and the spiritual enrichment of individual believers; a wider extension of Bahá'í education to children and youth and the strengthening of Bahá'í family life; and the pursuit of projects of social and economic development in well-established Bahá'í communities.

* * *

453.11 Set out below are suggestions for possible ways of achieving the above

objectives to act as a basis for consultation and a stimulus for thinking. National Assemblies should not confine themselves to these points if they feel that there are other matters which deserve attention.

1. Carrying the healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh

to the generality of mankind

Increase the number of believers from all strata of society, identifying as goals of the plan those specific sectors, minority groups, tribal peoples, etc. which are at present underrepresented in the Bahá'í community and which will, therefore, be given special attention during the plan.

Increase the number of localities where Bahá'ís reside, opening, in the process, virgin states, provinces, islands or other major civil subdivisions of the country.

Seize teaching opportunities by planning projects in areas where receptivity is found, aiming at large-scale enrollment and entry by troops where possible.

Be alert to opportunities for international collaboration with other Bahá'í communities in the promotion of the Faith through: border teaching projects; the sending of traveling teachers; and the teaching of special groups such as those temporarily abroad for study or work, particularly those from countries which are difficult of access, such as China or countries in Eastern Europe.

Raise up homefront pioneers and traveling or resident teachers to assist in the fulfillment of teaching goals and plans.

Utilize mass media systems for greater proclamation.
Make use of drama and singing in the teaching and deepening work and in Bahá'í gatherings, where advisable.
2. Greater involvement of the Faith in the life of human society
Develop the proper understanding and practice of consultation among members of the Bahá'í community and in the work of Bahá'í institutions, and foster the spirit of consultation in the conduct of human affairs and the resolution of conflicts at all levels of society.
Foster association with organizations, prominent persons and those in authority concerning the promotion of peace, world order and allied objectives, with a view to offering the Bahá'í teachings and insights regarding current problems and thought.
Train suitable Bahá'ís to undertake public relations activities.
Foster appreciation of the Faith in scholarly and academic circles by developing Bahá'í scholarship, by endeavoring to have the Faith included in the curricula and textbooks of schools and universities, and by other means.
Encourage Bahá'í youth to move towards the front ranks of those professions, trades, arts and crafts necessary to human progress.
Promote the establishment of Bahá'í clubs in universities and other similar educational institutions.
Foster the practice of the equality of the sexes both in the life of the Bahá'í community and in society as a whole and, for this purpose, hold special conferences and training programs for women and for men.
3. A worldwide increase in the translation, production, distribution and use of
Bahá'í literature
Foster the use of Bahá'í literature, especially in local languages, supplemented as need be by tape recordings and visual aids.
Improve the distribution of Bahá'í literature by taking specific steps, such as the establishment of regional depots where necessary, and the education of Local Spiritual Assemblies in the responsibilities to acquaint the friends with Bahá'í literature and ensure its easy availability.
Produce greater supplies of Bahá'í literature in accordance with well-thought-out plans of translation, production and distribution.
Produce, where required for translations into vernacular languages, simplified versions of the Sacred Scriptures, the writings of the Guardian and the statements of the Universal House of Justice.
Establish Bahá'í lending libraries.
4. Further acceleration in the process of the maturation of local and national Bahá'í
communities
Adopt specific programs to assist and encourage the development of isolated centers into groups, and groups into communities with Local Spiritual Assemblies, resulting in a steady increase of such Assemblies.
Adopt specific goals and programs to consolidate and strengthen Local Spiritual Assemblies, so that they will:
453.15a - Hold regular meetings with harmonious and productive

consultation,
Properly organize and conduct the work of their secretariat and treasury,
Appoint and coordinate the work of local committees for special aspects of their
work, such as teaching, child education, youth activities, literature distribution,
etc.,
Win the respect and confidence of their local communities so that the believers will turn to them for the resolution of problems and advice in their services to
the Cause,
Where appropriate, acquire and develop the use of local centers,
Obtain incorporation or equivalent recognition as a legal entity,
Exercise their responsibilities in relation to marriages, births, transfers of membership, marriages and deaths.
Maintain registers of declarations, births, transfers of membership, marriages and deaths.
Adopt specific goals and programs to consolidate communities with Local Spiritual Assemblies so that the believers will be encouraged to:
453.15b - Attend regularly Nineteen Day Feasts and the observances of Bahá'í Holy Days,
and enhance the spiritual quality of such gatherings,
Pursue local teaching and deepening activities,
Foster the realization of the equality of then and women,
Develop local activities for children and youth,
Support the fund,
Carry out extension teaching projects.
Develop the functioning of National Spiritual Assemblies, adopting specific plans and programs to:
453.1c - Improve their standard of united, productive, loving consultation,
Develop efficiently functioning national secretariats,
Enhance the standard of the functioning of national treasuries and promote the goal of financial independence of the national Bahá'í community,
Appoint strong national committees to carry out, under the general supervision of the National Spiritual Assembly, the many specialized aspects of the work of the Cause, including the detailed planning and prompt execution of the work necessary to achieve all the goals of the Six Year Plan.
Acquire, where needed and feasible, national and local properties, such as Hazíratu'l-Quds, teaching institutes, summer schools, Bahá'í cemeteries, etc.
and ensure their proper care and maintenance.
Obtain, where legally possible, official recognition for Bahá'í marriage and holy
days and exemption from the payment of taxes on Bahá'í institutions and their
activities.

Ensure the rapid and regular dissemination of news to all believers.
Hold regular, well-planned and well-run summer and winter schools and conferences at costs and in localities which will permit the largest attendance.
Encourage collaboration between or amongst Local Spiritual Assemblies in mutually agreed projects.
Develop and administer correspondence courses for teaching and deepening.

5. Greater attention to universal participation and the spiritual enrichment of individual believers

Promote universal participation in the life of the Faith and an increased sense of their Bahá'í identity among children, youth and adults.
Encourage, where feasible, the practice of dawn prayer.
Encourage individual believers to adopt teaching goals for themselves.
Carry out activities designed to deepen the believers in both a spiritual and intellectual understanding of the Cause.
Encourage believers to make greater use of Bahá'í literature.
Encourage the believers to enhance their command of language to assist them to understand the Bahá'í writings ever more clearly.
Develop and foster Bahá'í scholarship and lend support to the Associations for Bahá'í Studies.
Foster obedience to the Bahá'í laws of personal behavior such as abstention from the drinking of alcoholic beverages and from the taking of habit-forming drugs, and inspire the believers to follow the Bahá'í way of life.

6. A wider extension of Bahá'í education to children and youth, and the strengthening of Bahá'í family life

Encourage the holding of regular classes for the Bahá'í education of children.
Develop systematic lesson plans and other materials for the Bahá'í education of children.
Train believers to teach Bahá'í children's classes.
Establish a program for the guidance of parents, especially mothers, in the care and training of Bahá'í children.
Sponsor institutes on Bahá'í marriage and family life.
Encourage community activities involving Bahá'í families.

7. The pursuit of projects of social and economic development in well-established Bahá'í communities

Encourage Local Spiritual Assemblies and the rank and file of the believers to consider ways in which they can advance the social and economic development of their communities.

Establish tutorial schools and preschools where needed and feasible.
Encourage and sponsor adult literacy programs where needed, especially for women.
Foster collaboration with other agencies involved in social and economic development in areas where the Bahá'í communities can contribute to the work.
454
Passing of Angus Cowan, Continental Counselor
12 March 1986
The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada
454.1 HEARTS GRIEF-STRICKEN PASSING OUTSTANDING PROMOTER CAUSE ANGUS COWAN. HIS SERVICES AS PREEMINENT BAHÁ'Í TEACHER OF INDIAN PEOPLES, HIS UNCEASING LABORS THROUGHOUT LONG YEARS DEVOTION RANGED FROM LOCAL AND NATIONAL SPIRITU ASSEMBLIES TO AUXILIARY BOARD AND BOARD COUNSELORS. HIS COMPASSION, COURTESY, HUMILITY, MAGNANIMITY UNFORGETTABLE. BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY CANADA ROBBED OF A DEDICATED NOBLE WORKER WHO BORE HIS SUFFERINGS TO THE VERY END WITH EXEMPLARY FORTITUDE. CONVEY LOVING CONDOLENCES HIS BELOVED WIFE AND FAMILY AND ASSURANCES ARDENT PRAYERS HIS RADIANT SOUL'S PROGRESS THROUGHOUT WORLDS GOD.
Universal House of Justice
455
Women—Reasons for Exemption from Acts of Worship
17 March 1986
To an individual Bahá'í
Dear Bahá'í Friend,
455.1 The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 4 March 1986 seeking clarification of a statement concerning certain obligations of women found in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. We are directed to convey the following.
455.2 There is nothing in the teachings of the Faith to state that women in their courses are exempt from fasting and from offering the obligatory prayers because they are unclean.
455.3 The concept of uncleanness as understood and practised in the religious communities of the past has been abolished by Bahá'u'lláh. As you are aware, He says that through His revelation "all created things were immersed in the sea of purification" (God Passes By, page 154). This should, of course, be understood in the context of His clear instructions about the necessity for all to exemplify immaculate cleanliness, especially when engaged in acts of worship.
455.4 We are to confirm that you are quite right in pointing out that the term used in this regard in the Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas [p. 36, (4) (c)] is "exemption," not prohibition.
With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat
456
Ridván Message 1986
Ridván 1986
To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

456.1 The Divine Springtime is fast advancing and all the atoms of the earth are responding to the vibrating influence of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. The evidences of this new life are clearly apparent in the progress of the Cause of God. As we contemplate, however momentarily, the unfolding pattern of its growth, we can but recognize, with wonder and gratitude, the irresistible power of that Almighty Hand which guides its destinies.

Review of Notable Achievements during the Seven Year Plan

456.2 This progress has accelerated notably during the Seven Year Plan, witnessed by the achievement of many important enterprises throughout the Bahá'í world and vital developments at the heart of the Cause itself. The restoration and opening to pilgrimage of the southern wing of the House of 'Abdu'lláh Páshá; the completion and occupation of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice; the approval of detailed plans for the remaining edifices around the Arc; the expansion of the membership and responsibilities of the International Teaching Center and the Continental Boards of Counselors; the establishment of the offices of Social and Economic Development, and of Public Information; the dedication of the Mother Temple of the Pacific, and dramatic progress with the building of the Temple in India; the expansion of the teaching work throughout the world, resulting in the formation of twenty-three new National Spiritual Assemblies, nearly 8,000 new Local Spiritual Assemblies, the opening of more than 16,000 new localities and representation within the Bahá'í community of 300 new tribes; the issuing of 2,196 new publications, 898 of which are editions of the Holy Text and the enrichment of Bahá'í literature by productions in 114 new languages; the initiation of 737 new social and economic development projects; the addition of three radio stations, with three more soon to be inaugurated—these stand out as conspicuous achievements in a Plan which will be remembered as having set the seal on the third epoch of the Formative Age.

Emergence from Obscurity

456.3 The opening of that Plan coincided with the recrudescence of savage persecution of the Bahá'í community in Iran, a deliberate effort to eliminate the Cause of God from the land of its birth. The heroic steadfastness of the Persian friends has been the mainspring of tremendous international attention focused on the Cause, eventually bringing it to the agenda of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and, together with worldwide publicity in all the media, accomplishing its emergence from the obscurity which characterized and sheltered the first period of its life. This dramatic process impelled the Universal House of Justice to address a Statement on Peace to the Peoples of the World and arrange for its delivery to Heads of State and the generality of the rulers.

Maturation of the Institutions of the Cause

456.4 Paralleling these outstanding events has been a remarkable unfoldment of organic growth in the maturity of the institutions of the Cause. The development of capacity and responsibility on their part and the devolution upon them of continually greater autonomy have been fostered by the

encouragement of ever closer cooperation between the twin arms of the Administrative Order. This process now takes a large stride forward as the National Spiritual Assemblies and Counselors consult together to formulate, for the first time, the national goals of an international teaching plan. Together they must carry them out; together they must implement the world objectives of the Six Year Plan as they apply in each country. This significant development is a befitting opening to the fourth epoch of the Formative Age and initiates a process which will undoubtedly characterize that epoch as national communities grow in strength and influence and are able to diffuse within their own countries the spirit of love and social unity which is the hallmark of the Cause of God.

World Center Goals

456.5 The goals to be achieved at the World Center include publication of a copiously annotated English translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and related texts, education of the Bahá'í world in the law of the Huqúqu'lláh, pursuit of plans for the erection of the remaining buildings on the Arc, and the broadening of the basis of the international relations of the Faith.

456.6 The major world objectives of the Plan have already been sent to National Spiritual Assemblies and Continental Boards of Counselors for their mutual consultation and implementation.

456.7 Dear friends, as the world passes through its darkest hour before the dawn, the Cause of God, shining ever more brightly, presses forward to that glorious break of day when the Divine Standard will be unfurled and the Nightingale of Paradise warble its melody.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

Glossary

Glossary

Note: Boldface terms within entries are cross-references to other entries that define or amplify essential terms. A number of entries are based on explanations found in "Definitions of Some of the Oriental Terms Used in Bahá'í Literature" in The Bahá'í World: An International Record, Volume XVIII, 1979-1983, pp. 897-904. Other entries are based on explanations found in the notes and glossary in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. References to Tablets of the Divine Plan cite Tablet and paragraph numbers, e.g., "TDP 6. 8." References to messages in the text give the message number, e.g., "message no. 222."

A

'ABDU'L-'AZÍZ Sultán of Turkey, 1861-76. He was responsible for Bahá'u'lláh's banishments to Constantinople, to Adrianople, and to the prison-fortress of 'Akká, Palestine. Willful and headstrong, 'Abdu'l-'Azíz was known for his lavish expenditures. Bahá'u'lláh stigmatized him in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas as occupying the "throne of tyranny." His fall was prophesied in a Tablet (circa 1869) addressed to Fu'ád Páshá, Ottoman Foreign Minister while Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned in 'Akká. As a result of public discontent, heightened by a crop failure in 1873 and a mounting public debt, he was deposed by his ministers on 30 May 1876.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ Servant of Bahá: the title assumed by ‘Abbás Effendi (23 May1844-28 November 1921), eldest son and appointed successor of Bahá’u’lláh and the Center of His Covenant. Upon Bahá’u’lláh’s ascension in 1892, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá became Head of the Bahá’í Faith in accordance with provisions revealed by Bahá’u’lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Book of the Covenant. Among the titles by which He is known are the Center of the Covenant, the Mystery of God, the Master, and the Perfect Exemplar of Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings. See Tablets of the Divine Plan and Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

‘ABDU’L-HAMÍD II Sultán of the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909. He and his uncle, Sultán ‘Abdu’l-‘Azíz, who preceded him, were responsible for forty-six of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s fifty-six years of imprisonment and exile and for Bahá’u’lláh’s banishments to Constantinople, Adrianople, and ‘Akká. The Young Turks Rebellion in 1908 forced ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd to reinstate the constitution he had suspended and to free all political and religious prisoners. As a result, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was released from house arrest in September 1908. ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd was deposed the following year.

ABHÁ Most Glorious. See Alláh-u-Abhá; Ya Bahá’u’l-Abhá.

ABHÁ BEAUTY A translation of Jamál-i-Abhá, a tide of Bahá’u’lláh.

ABHÁ KINGDOM The Most Glorious Kingdom: the spiritual world beyond this world.

ABHÁ PARADISE See Abhá Kingdom.

ADAMIC CYCLE See Cycle.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER The international system for the administration of the affairs of the Bahá’í community. Ordained by Bahá’u’lláh, it is the agency through which the spirit of His revelation is to exercise its transforming effects on humanity and through which the Bahá’í World Commonwealth will be ushered in. Its twin, crowning institutions are the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice. The institutions that make it up and the principles by which it operates are set forth in the writings of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Its structure was further clarified and raised up by Shoghi Effendi during his ministry as Guardian of the Faith (1921-57). This process of elucidation continues through guidance from the Universal House of Justice, the supreme governing and legislative body of the Bahá’í Faith, which is supported by National and Local Spiritual Assemblies elected by members of the Bahá’í community. These local and national bodies are invested with the authority to direct the Bahá’í community's affairs and to uphold Bahá’í laws and standards. They are also responsible for the education, guidance, and protection of the community. The Administrative Order also comprises the institutions of the Hands of the Cause of God, the International Teaching Center, and the Continental Boards of Counselors and their Auxiliary Boards and assistants, who bear particular responsibility for the protection and propagation of the Faith and share with the Spiritual Assemblies the functions of educating, counseling, and advising members of the Bahá’í community. Other institutions of the Administrative Order include Huqúqu’lláh, the Bahá’í Fund, the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár, and the Nineteen Day Feast. The present Bahá’í Administrative Order is the

precursor of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh and is described by Shoghi Effendi as its "nucleus" and "pattern."

AFNÁN Twigs: the Báb's kindred; specifically, descendants of His three maternal uncles and His wife's two brothers.

AGES The Bahá'í Dispensation is divided into three Ages: the Heroic, Formative, and Golden Ages. The Heroic Age, also called the Apostolic or Primitive Age, began in 1844 with the Declaration of the Báb and spanned the ministries of the Báb (1844-53) Bahá'u'lláh (1852-92), and 'Abdu'l-Bahá (1892-1921). The transitional event most often identified with the end of the Heroic Age and the beginning of the Formative Age is the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1921. The Formative Age, also known as the Age of Transition or the Iron Age, began in 1921 when Shoghi Effendi, according to instructions in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament, became the Guardian of the Cause of God and began to build Bahá'u'lláh's Administrative Order. The Formative Age is the second and current Age; it is to be followed by the third and final Age, the Golden Age destined to witness the proclamation of the Most Great Peace and the establishment of the Bahá'í World Commonwealth. "The emergence of a world community, the consciousness of world citizenship, the founding of a world civilization and culture," Shoghi Effendi wrote, "—all of which must synchronize with the initial stages in the unfoldment of the Golden Age of the Bahá'í Era should, by their very nature, be regarded, as far as this planetary life is concerned, as the furthermost limits in the organization of human society, though man, as an individual, will, nay must indeed as a result of such a consummation, continue indefinitely to progress and develop." For a discussion of the significance of the Formative Age, see message no. 95; for an explanation of the epochs of the Formative Age, see message no. 451. See also Dispensation; Epochs; Bahá'í World Commonwealth.

AGHSAN Branches: the sons and male descendants of Bahá'u'lláh.

'AKKÁ A four-thousand-year-old seaport and prison city in northern Israel surrounded by fortress-like walls facing the sea. In the mid-1800s 'Akká became a penal colony to which the worst criminals of the Ottoman Empire were sent. In 1868 Bahá'u'lláh and His family and companions were banished to 'Akká by Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz. Bahá'u'lláh was incarcerated within its barracks for two years, two months, and five days. Restrictions were gradually relaxed, and He lived in a series of houses within 'Akká until June 1877, when He moved outside the city walls to the Mansion of Mazra'ih. Bahá'u'lláh named 'Akká "the Most Great Prison."

ALLÁH-U-ABHÁ God is Most Glorious: the Greatest Name, adopted as a greeting

among Bahá'ís during the period of Bahá'u'lláh's exile in Adrianople (1863-68).

AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚHÍYYIH KHÁNUM Née Mary Maxwell (b. 1910), also called Rúhíyyih Rabbani; daughter of May Bolles Maxwell and Sutherland Maxwell of Montreal, and wife of Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. On 26 March 1952, succeeding her illustrious father, she was appointed a Hand of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land. Rúhíyyih (meaning "spiritual") is a name given to her by Shoghi Effendi on their marriage. Khánum is a Persian tide meaning "lady," "Madame," or "Mrs." The title Amatu'l-Bahá (meaning "Maidservant of Bahá") was used by the Guardian in a cable to a conference in Chicago in 1953. Rabbani is a surname given to Shoghi Effendi by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

ANCIENT BEAUTY A translation of Jamal-i-Qadím, a name of God that is also used as a title of Bahá'u'lláh, Who is the latest Manifestation of God to humankind. One cannot always say categorically in any passage whether the reference is to God, to Bahá'u'lláh, or to both.

ANCIENT OF DAYS See Ancient Beauty.

APOSTOLIC AGE See Ages.

AQDAS Most Holy. See Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The.

ARC The line of a curved path laid out by Shoghi Effendi on Mount Carmel, stretching across the Bahá'í properties near the Shrine of the Báb and centered on the Monument Gardens. On this Arc the seats of the "world-shaking, world-embracing, world-directing administrative institutions" of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh are to be located (MA, pp. 32-33). Within the Arc are the resting-places of the Greatest Holy Leaf; her brother, the Purest Branch; and her mother, the Most Exalted Leaf. Edifices already constructed on the Arc include the International Bahá'í Archives building (completed in 1957), which is to be extended, and the seat of the Universal House of Justice (completed in 1982 and occupied in 1983). Buildings yet to be completed include the International Bahá'í Library and the seats for the International Teaching Center and the Center for the Study of the Texts. See also Administrative Order; World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

ARK The word "ark" means, literally, a boat or ship, something that affords protection and safety, or a chest or box. It is used in two senses in the Bible. In the first sense it refers to the Ark of Noah, which He was bidden to build of gopher wood to preserve life during the Flood. In the second sense it refers to the Ark of the Covenant, the sacred chest representing to the Hebrews God's presence among them. It was constructed to hold the Tablets of the Law in Moses' time and was later placed in the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Jerusalem. The Ark, as a symbol of God's Law and the Divine Covenant that is the salvation of the people in every age and Dispensation, appears in various ways in the Bahá'í writings. Bahá'u'lláh refers to His faithful followers as "the denizens of the Crimson Ark"; He refers to the Ark of the Cause and also to the Ark of His Laws. A well-known passage in which this term is used appears in the Tablet of Carmel: "Ere long will God sail His Ark upon thee, and will manifest the people of Bahá who have been mentioned in the Book of Names." Shoghi Effendi explains that the Ark in this passage refers to the

Bahá'í Administrative Center on Mount Carmel and that the dwellers of the Ark are the members of the Universal House of Justice.

ARMY OF LIGHT Generally, the Bahá'í community, but more particularly the "heavenly armies" — "those souls," according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "who are entirely freed from the human world, transformed into celestial spirits and have become divine angels. Such souls are the rays of the Sun of Reality who will illumine all the continents" (TDP 8.2).

ÁSÍYIH KHÁNUM Navváb (an honorific implying "Grace" or "Highness"); the Most Exalted Leaf: wife of Bahá'u'lláh and mother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahíyyih Khánum, and Mírzá Mihdí. She was married to Bahá'u'lláh in 1835, accompanied Him in His exiles, and died in 1886. Bahá'u'lláh named her His "perpetual consort in all the worlds of God." Her resting-place is in the Monument Gardens on Mount Carmel, next to the tomb of Mírzá Mihdí and near that of the Greatest Holy Leaf.

AUTHOR OF THE BAHÁ'Í REVELATION Bahá'u'lláh.

AUXILIARY BOARDS An institution established by Shoghi Effendi in 1954 to act as "deputies, assistants and advisers" to the Hands of the Cause of God as they carry out their twin duties of protection and propagation. With the formation of the Continental Boards of Counselors in 1968, the Hands of the Cause of God were freed of responsibility for appointing, supervising, and coordinating the work of the Auxiliary Boards, and these functions were transferred by the Universal House of Justice to the Continental Boards of Counselors. There are two Auxiliary Boards, one for protection and one for propagation; members serve on one of the two boards. In a letter dated 7 October 1973 (see message no. 137) the Universal House of Justice authorized the appointment of assistants to Auxiliary Board members.

B

BÁB, THE The Gate: title assumed by Siyyid 'Alí Muhammad (20 October 1819-9 July 1850) after declaring His mission in Shiraz in 1844. The Báb's station is twofold: He is a Manifestation of God and the Founder of the Bábi Faith, and He is the Herald of Bahá'u'lláh. A detailed, moving, and authoritative work titled The Dawn-Breakers (written by Nabíl-i-Zarandí and translated by Shoghi Effendi) recounts the Bib's life and His followers' exploits. See Balyuzi, The Báb.

BÁBÍYYIH, THE The Bábí place or the center of the Bábís: a house in Mashhad, Iran, that served as a residence for Mullá Husayn (the first of the Letters of the Living) and Quddús (also a Letter of the Living, whose rank was second only to that of the Báb) and as a place to which inquirers came to learn about the Bábí Faith. The Bahá'í historian Nabíl writes that "A steady stream of visitors, whom the energy and zeal of Mullá Husayn had prepared for the acceptance of the Faith, poured into the presence of Quddús, acknowledged the claim of the Cause, and willingly enlisted under its banner. The all-observing vigilance with which Mullá Husayn labored to diffuse the knowledge of the new Revelation, and the masterly manner in which Quddús edified its ever-increasing number of adherents, gave rise to a wave of enthusiasm which swept over the entire city of Mashhad, and the effects of which spread rapidly beyond the confines of Khurásán. The house of Bábíyyih

was soon converted into a rallying center for a multitude of devotees who were fired with an inflexible resolve to demonstrate, by every means in their power, the great inherent energies of their Faith." (DB, p. 267)

BAHÁ'Í ELECTIONS See Elections, Bahá'í.

BAHÁ'Í FUND See Fund.

BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY An international body made up of Bahá'í institutions, local and national, continental and international, all closely interrelated, and comprising the worldwide membership of the Bahá'í Faith. Since 1948 the Bahá'í International Community has been affiliated with the United Nations' Office of Public Information. In 1967 the Universal House of Justice assumed the function (shouldered for many years by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States) of representing the Bahá'í International Community in its capacity as a nongovernmental organization at the United Nations. In 1970 the Bahá'í International Community was granted consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and in 1976 it became affiliated with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, formerly named the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund). It is also affiliated with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). In its work with the United Nations, the Bahá'í International Community participates in meetings of United Nations bodies concerned with such issues as human rights, social development, the status of women, the environment, human settlement, food, science and technology, population, the law of the sea, crime prevention, substance abuse, youth, children, the family, disarmament, and the United Nations University.

BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTER The world spiritual and administrative centers of the Bahá'í Faith located in the twin cities of 'Akká and Haifa in Israel.

See also Arc; Administrative Order.

BAHÁ'Í WORLD COMMONWEALTH The future Bahá'í community of nations, Shoghi Effendi explains, that will operate "solely in direct conformity with the laws and principles of Bahá'u'lláh" and will be animated wholly by His spirit. Its "supreme organ" will be the Universal House of Justice functioning in "the plenitude of its power." Its advent will "signalize the long-awaited advent of the Christ-promised Kingdom of God on earth." It will serve as both "the instrument and the guardian of the Most Great Peace." Within the Bahá'í World Commonwealth "all nations, races, creeds and classes" will be "closely and permanently united," and "the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that compose them" will be "definitely and completely safeguarded. This commonwealth must, as far as we can visualize it, consist of a world legislature, whose members will, as the trustees of the whole of mankind, ultimately control the entire resources of all the component nations, and will enact such laws as shall be required to regulate the life, satisfy the needs and adjust the relationships of all races and peoples. A world executive, backed by an international Force, will carry out the decisions arrived at, and apply the laws enacted by, this world legislature, and will safeguard the organic unity of the whole commonwealth. A world tribunal will adjudicate and deliver its compulsory and final verdict in all and any disputes that may arise

between the various elements constituting this universal system.... A world metropolis will act as the nerve center . . . , the focus towards which the unifying forces of life will converge and from which its energizing influences will radiate." The world commonwealth will include a system of international communication; an international auxiliary language; a world script and literature; a uniform and universal system of currency, weights, and measures; and an integrated economic system with coordinated markets and regulated channels of distribution. See also World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH The Glory of God: title of Mirza Husayn-'Alí Núrí (12 November 1817-29 May 1892), Founder of the Bahá'í Faith. For accounts of His life, see Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By; Nabíl, Dawn-Breakers; and Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh: The King of Glory. Bahá'u'lláh is referred to by a variety of titles, including the Promised One of All Ages, the Blessed Beauty, the Blessed Perfection, the Morn of Truth, the Abhá Luminary, the Dayspring of the Most Divine Essence, the Ancient Beauty, the Ancient Root, the Ancient of Days, the Author of the Bahá'í Revelation, the Mystic Dove, the Sovereign Revealer, the Judge, the Redeemer, the Divine Physician, the Prince of Peace, the Pen of Glory, the Pen of the Most High, the Supreme Pen, the Lord of Hosts, and the Lord of the Age. See also Book of the Covenant; Hidden Words, The; Kitab-i-Aqdas, The.

BAHÍYYIH KHÁNUM (1846-1932) The Greatest Holy Leaf; the Most Exalted Leaf saintly daughter of Bahá'u'lláh and outstanding heroine of the Bahá'í Dispensation. Her death in 1932 marked the final end of the Heroic Age of the Bahá'í Faith, which had drawn to a close with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1921. A monument erected in her memory symbolizes the Bahá'í World Order; its location is Mount Carmel, within the Arc and in close proximity to the resting-places of her brother, Mirzá Mihdí; her mother, Ásiyih Khanúm; and the wife of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Munírih Khanúm. Her station as "foremost woman of the Bahá'í Dispensation" and her rank among women are paralleled only by such heroines of previous Dispensations as Sarah, Ásiyih, the Virgin Mary, Fátimih, and Táhirih. For a compilation of Bahá'í writings about Bahíyyih Khanúm and for some of her own letters, see Bahíyyih Khanúm: The Greatest Holy Leaf (1982).

BAHJÍ Delight, gladness, joy: the name of the property north of 'Akká where the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh is situated and where Bahá'u'lláh lived from 1880 until His ascension in 1892. Its extensive gardens were created by Shoghi Effendi and expanded by the Universal House of Justice. The Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí is the Qiblih of the Bahá'í world.

BAYÁN Exposition, explanation, lucidity, eloquence, utterance: the title given by the Báb to two of His major works, one in Persian, the other in Arabic. It is also used sometimes to denote the entire body of His writings.

B.E. Bahá'í Era: denotes the nineteen-month Badí calendar, which is reckoned from 21 March 1844, the year of the Báb's declaration of His mission.

BEST BELOVED See Ancient Beauty.

BLESSED BEAUTY A translation of Jamál-i-Mubárak, a title of Bahá'u'lláh. See also Ancient Beauty.

BLESSED PERFECTION A translation of Jamál-i-Mubárak, a title of Bahá'u'lláh. See also Ancient Beauty.

BOOK OF THE COVENANT A translation of Kitáb-i-'Ahd (sometimes referred to as Kitab-i-'Ahdi, meaning "the Book of My Covenant"): Bahá'u'lláh's last will and testament, designated by Him as His "Most Great Tablet" and alluded to by Him as the "Crimson Book." The last Tablet revealed before His ascension, it was written in His own hand and entrusted, shortly before His passing, to His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá. In it Bahá'u'lláh clearly designates 'Abdu'l-Bahá as His successor and as the Center of His Covenant, providing for the continuation of divine authority over the affairs of the Faith in the future.

C

CARMEL See Mount Carmel.

CENTER OF THE COVENANT A title of 'Abdu'l-Bahá referring to His appointment by Bahá'u'lláh as the successor to whom all must turn after Bahá'u'lláh's passing. See also Covenant; Book of the Covenant.

CENTRAL FIGURES A collective reference to Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith; the Báb, Forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh and Founder of the Bábí Faith;
and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, authorized Interpreter of the Bahá'í writings.

CHIEF STEWARDS See Hands of the Cause of God.

COMMUNITY OF THE MOST GREAT NAME The Bahá'í community. See also Greatest Name.

CONCLAVE The consultative meetings of the entire body of the Hands of the Causee of God. Following Shoghi Effendi's death in 1957, the meetings were held over a period of several days each autumn from 1957 through 1962, when the Hands were responsible for maintaining the unity of the Bahá'í community and for completing the goals of the Ten Year World Crusade. Conclaves continued to be held for a number of years after the election of the Universal House of Justice and were the occasion of consultations between the House of Justice and the body of the Hands on many matters of great significance for the Bahá'í Faith.

CONCOURSE ON HIGH The company of holy souls of the spiritual world.

CONSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE A document adopted by the Universal House of Justice on 26 November 1972. It consists of two parts: the Declaration of Trust, which sets forth the origins and duties of the Universal House of Justice, and the By-Laws, which specify the terms under which the Universal House of Justice operates and define its relationship to other institutions of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

CONSULTATION In Bahá'í usage, a technical term referring to the process of collective Bahá'í decision-making. The aim of Bahá'í consultation is to arrive at the best solution or to uncover the truth of a matter. Among the requisites for consultation thatare set out in the Bahá'í writings are love, harmony, purity of motive, humility, lowliness, patience, and long-suffering. Individuals not only have the right to express their views, but they are expected to express them fully and with the utmost devotion, courtesy, dignity, care, and moderation. If unanimity is not achieved, decisions are

arrived at by majority vote. Once a decision is reached, all parties, having had the opportunity to express their views fully, are to work together wholeheartedly to implement it. If the decision is wrong, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says, through unity the truth will become evident and “the wrong made right.”

CONTINENTAL FUND See Fund.

CONTINENTAL BOARDS OF COUNSELORS An institution of the Bahá’í Administrative Order established by the Universal House of Justice in 1968 to extend into the future the functions of protection and propagation of the Faith assigned to the Hands of the Cause of God by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His Will and Testament. Its members are appointed to five-year terms by the Universal House of Justice and serve in five zones—Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australasia, and Europe. The International Teaching Center coordinates the work of the Continental Boards of Counselors, who are assisted in their work by Auxiliary Board members, whom they appoint and supervise. See also Auxiliary Boards; Hands of the Cause of God; International Teaching Center.

CONTINENTAL PIONEER COMMITTEES Responsible for gathering and supplying information for and about pioneers and international traveling teachers. Their work complements the functions of the Continental Boards of Counselors and National Spiritual Assemblies. There are five such committees: one each for Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australasia, and Europe. Members are appointed by the Universal House of Justice; their work is directed by the International Teaching Center.

COVENANT Generally, an agreement or contract between two or more people, usually formal, solemn, and binding. The Universal House of Justice explains, in a letter dated 23 March 1975, that a religious covenant is “a binding agreement between God and man, whereby God requires of man certain behavior in return for which He guarantees certain blessings, or whereby He gives man certain bounties in return for which He takes from those who accept them an undertaking to behave in a certain way.” The Universal House of Justice also explains that there are two types of religious covenant: “There is ... the Greater Covenant which every Manifestation of God makes with His followers, promising that in the fullness of time a new Manifestation will be sent, and taking from them the undertaking to accept Him when this occurs. There is also the Lesser Covenant that a Manifestation of God makes with His followers that they will accept His appointed successor after Him. If they do so, the Faith can remain united and pure. If not, the Faith becomes divided and its force spent.” In the Bahá’í Dispensation the Greater Covenant refers to the renewal of God's ancient Covenant through the appearance of the twin Manifestations of God, the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh, and the promise of another Manifestation to come in the future after the passage of at least one thousand years. The Lesser Covenant, in this case, refers to Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant with His followers, which establishes ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant. It confers upon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá the authority to interpret Baha'u'llih's writings in order “to perpetuate the influence” of the Faith and to “insure its integrity, safeguard it from schism, and stimulate its world-wide expansion.” The Lesser

Covenant also establishes the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice as the twin successors of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

COVENANT-BREAKER A Bahá'í who attempts to disrupt the unity of the Faith by defying and opposing the authority of Bahá'u'lláh as the Manifestation of God for this Age, or His appointed successor, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, or after Him, the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice. Bahá'ís who continue, despite remonstrances, to violate the Covenant are expelled from the Faith by the Universal House of Justice. This provision preserves the unity of the Faith, which is essential to achieving its cardinal purpose of unifying humankind. It also preserves the purity of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings from the disruptive influence of egoistic individuals who, in past Dispensations, have been responsible for dividing every religion into sects, disrupting its mission, and frustrating to a large degree the intention of its Founder. See also Covenant.

CRADLE OF THE FAITH Iran, the homeland of the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths and of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

CRUSADE, TEN YEAR WORLD The international teaching plan inaugurated by Shoghi Effendi in 1953 and completed in 1963, some six years after his death. It was the first global plan in which all national Bahá'í communities pursued their respective goals in one coordinated effort. It culminated with the first election of the Universal House of Justice at Ridvan 1963.

CYCLE A unit of time comprising the Dispensations of numerous consecutive Manifestations of God. For example, the Adamic, or Prophetic, Cycle began with Adam and ended with the Dispensation of Muhammad. The Bahá'í Cycle began with the Báb and is to last at least five hundred thousand years.

D

DANIEL'S PROPHECY The prophecy contained in Daniel 12:12: "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." 'Abdu'l-Bahá comments in a Tablet to a Kurdish Bahá'í, "Now concerning the verse in Daniel, the interpretation whereof thou didst ask. ... These days must be reckoned as solar and not lunar years. For according to this calculation a century will have elapsed from the dawn of the Sun of Truth, then will the teachings of God be firmly established upon the earth, and the Divine Light shall flood the world from the East even unto the West. Then, on this day, will the faithful rejoice!" 'Abdu'l-Bahá further explains in the same Tablet that the 1,335 years must be reckoned from 622 A.D., the year of Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Medina. Shoghi Effendi associates Daniel's reference to the 1,335 days and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's statements about the prophecy with the centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's declaration of His mission in 1863 and with the worldwide triumph of the Faith. He stressed that the prophecy refers to occurrences within the Bahá'í community, rather than to events in the outside world. While Shoghi Effendi clearly allied the Faith's triumph with the successful completion of the third teaching plan to be undertaken by the Bahá'ís, in his letters and in those written on his behalf, four specific dates are mentioned as marking the fulftllment of Daniel's prophecy: 1953, 1957, 1960, and 1963. Regarding the year 1960 (derived by a lunar reckoning), Shoghi Effendi anticipated, in God Passes By, p. 151,

and in a number of his letters, the successful completion of a third Seven Year Plan that was to be inaugurated. Had there been a third Seven Year Plan, it would have concluded in 1960, one hundred lunar years after Baha'u'llah's declaration. When the Ten Year Crusade (1953-63) was announced in 1952, Shoghi Effendi linked its completion with the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy. There are also several references in letters written on Shoghi Effendi's behalf that give 1957 as the date of the prophecy's fulflllment. In still other letters Shoghi Effendi allies the “hundred lunar years” after Bahá’u’lláh’s declaration with the year 1953, although the significance of this hundred years is unclear. Thus it seems the prophecy is not fulfilled by a single date but, rather, by a process that extended over a period of time. A letter dated 7 March 1955 written on Shoghi Effendi’s behalf says, “In the Ten Year Crusade, we are actually fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel, because with the completion of the Ten Year Crusade in 1963 we will have established the Faith in every part of the globe.” Thus the fulfillment of the prophecy coincided with the period of the Ten Year Crusade, a span of time that included 1953, 1957, 1960, and 1963.

DAWN-BREAKERS The Bábís and early Bahá’ís, many of whom gave their lives as martyrs.

DAWNING PLACE OF REVELATION A title of Baha’u’llah, or of any Manifestation of God.

DAY OF THE COVENANT 26 November, the day ‘Abdu’l-Bahá selected for commemorating the inauguration of Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant. The Bahá’ís wished to celebrate ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s birthday, but He did not want this because it coincides with the anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb (23 May), when all attention should be given to that sacred event. He gave them instead the Day of the Covenant to celebrate, choosing a date that is six Gregorian months away from the commemoration of Bahá’u’lláh’s Ascension. See also Covenant.

DAY OF GOD An expression used variously, according to context, to refer to the appearance of a Manifestation of God, to the duration of His life on earth, or to the duration of His Dispensation. It is also used to refer specifically to the advent of Bahá’u’lláh.

DAY OF JUDGMENT The time of the appearance of the Manifestation of God, when the true character of souls is judged according to their response to His Revelation.

Also known as the Day of Resurrection.

DAYSPRING OF DIVINE GUIDANCE A title of Bahá’u’lláh.

DISPENSATION The period of time during which the laws and teachings of a Prophet of God have spiritual authority. For example, the Dispensation of Jesus Christ lasted until the beginning of the Muhammadan Dispensation, usually fixed at the year 622 A.D., the year Muhammad emigrated from Mecca to Medina. The Islamic Dispensation lasted until the advent of the Báb in 1844. The Dispensation of the Bab ended when Bahá’u’lláh experienced the intimation of His mission in the Siyáh-Chál, the subterranean dungeon in Tehran in which He was imprisoned between August and December 1852. The Dispensation of

Bahá'u'lláh will last until the advent of the next Manifestation of God, which Bahá'u'lláh asserts will occur in no less than one thousand years.
DIVINE ESSENCE God.
DIVINE PEN A title of Bahá'u'lláh.
DIVINE PLAN The Plan for the dissemination of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the world, conceived by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and entrusted to the Bahá'ís of North America in fourteen letters called the Tablets of the Divine Plan. The Divine Plan was implemented by Shoghi Effendi and is pursued today under the guidance of the Universal House of Justice. Teaching Plans undertaken within the framework of the Divine Plan include the first Seven Year Plan (1937-44); the second Seven Year Plan (1946-53) pursued at first by the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada and extended by supplementary plans adopted with the approval or at the behest of Shoghi Effendi by the British Isles, Egypt and the Sudan, Germany, India, Iran, and Iraq; and the Ten Year World Crusade (1953-63), all of which were inaugurated by Shoghi Effendi, and the Nine, Five, Seven, Six, Three, and Four Year Plans launched by the Universal House of Justice. The Divine Plan is divided into epochs. The first epoch included the years 1937-63. We continue to be in the second epoch. The epochs of the Divine Plan are different from those of the Formative Age. See also Crusade, Ten Year World; Epochs; Plans; Tablets of the Divine Plan.
DIVINE THRESHOLD See Sacred Threshold.
E
EASTERN PILGRIM HOUSE See Pilgrim House.
ELECTIONS, BAHÁ'Í Elections conducted according to Bahá'í principles to select individuals to serve as members of Local and National Spiritual Assemblies and the Universal House of Justice. Elections for Local Spiritual Assemblies are generally held on 21 April, the first day of the Ridván Festival (21 April-2 May), but in certain circumstances can be held on any day during Ridván. Elections for National Spiritual Assemblies are held annually during Ridván. Elections for the Universal House of Justice are held every five years. All adult members in good standing in a Bahá'í communiry may vote for the members of their Local Spiritual Assembly; Bahá'ís in an electoral unit elect one or more delegates who, in turn, elect the members of the National Spiritual Assembly at the national convention. The members of the National Spiritual Assemblies elect the members of the Universal House of Justice at an international convention. Shoghi Effendi advises electors "to consider without the least trace of passion and prejudice, and irrespective of any material consideration, the names of only those who can best combine the necessary qualities of unquestioned loyalty, of selfless devotion, of a well-trained mind, of recognized ability and mature experience." There are no nominations. Campaigning and electioneering are forbidden. Ballots are cast in a prayerful atmosphere, and the nine persons receiving the most votes are considered chosen by God. Members of a minority race or group are given preference when tied for the ninth position; otherwise, ballots are cast to break the tie. A unique and significant aspect of all Bahá'í elections is the fact that voters elect with the understanding that

they are free to choose whomever their consciences prompt them to select, and they freely accept the authority of the outcome.

EPISTLE A formal or elegant letter or treatise; a composition in the form of a letter.

In Bahá’í usage it refers to certain writings of Bahá’u’lláh—for example, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf.

EPOCHS Major units of time used to mark the unfoldment of the Divine Plan and the Formative Age. The first epoch of the Divine Plan included the years 1937-63, for whose execution the machinery of the Administrative Order was erected (1921-37) and during which the Faith was expanded throughout the Western Hemisphere (1937-1944/46) and then extended beyond the Western Hemisphere and Europe to the rest of the world. We are now in the second epoch of the Divine Plan. The first epoch of the Formative Age (1921-46) began with the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in 1921 and ended with the conclusion of the first Seven Year Plan pursued by the Baha'is of North America under Shoghi Effendi's direction. The second epoch of the Formative Age (1946-63) began with the launching of the second Seven Year Plan and the adoption of similar plans by other national communities throughout the Baha'i world and ended with the conclusion of the Ten Year Crusade and the election of the Universal House of Justice. The third epoch of the Formative Age (1963-86) included the Nine, Five, and Seven Year Plans formulated by the Universal House of Justice. The fourth and current epoch of the Formative Age began in 1986. Its inception was marked by the participation of National Spiritual Assemblies in formulating their own goals for the Six Year Plan (1986-92). For more information on the epochs of the Formative Age, see message no. 451. See also Ages.

F

FAST, THE A nineteen-day period (2-21 March, the Bahá’í month of ‘Ala’, or Loftiness) of spiritual renewal and development during which Bahá’ís abstain from food and drink from sunrise to sunset. A symbol of self-restraint, the Fast is a time of meditation, prayer, and spiritual recuperation and readjustment.

FEAST See Nineteen Day Feast.

FIRESIDE An informal Bahá’í gathering held for the purpose of discussing the Baha'i Faith and sharing its teachings.

FOLLOWERS OF THE GREATEST NAME Bahá’ís; followers of Bahá’u’lláh. See also Greatest Name.

FORMATIVE AGE See Ages.

FRIENDS Bahá’ís.

FUND The institution of the Bahá’í Fund, of which there are four main funds, operates on the international, continental, national, and local levels. The Bahá’í International Fund is administered by the Universal House of Justice and is used to support the work of the Faith at the Bahá’í World Center and to sustain national communities unable to meet their own expenses. The International Deputization Fund, a subsidiary of the Bahá’í International Fund, supports the work of pioneers and traveling teachers and is

administered by the International Teaching Center. The Persian Relief Fund, originally established by the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran to assist victims of persecution by the Islamic Republic, is also a subsidiary of the Baha'i International Fund and is administered by the Universal House of Justice. The Continental Bahá'í Fund supports the work of the Continental Boards of Counselors and the work of their Auxiliary Boards. Each National Spiritual Assembly and Local Spiritual Assembly administers its own National and Local Fund, respectively. The funds of the Bahá'í Faith are managed according to principles laid down by Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi. Foremost among the principles are: (1) Except for the portion of the Bahá'í Funds devoted exclusively to charitable, philanthropic, or humanitarian purposes, contributions are accepted only from those who have identified themselves with the Bahá'í Faith and are regarded as its avowed and unreserved supporters. (2) Contributing to the Funds is both a spiritual privilege and a responsibility. (3) All contributions to the Bahá'í Funds are voluntary. (4) The degree of sacrifice and love of the contributor is more important than the amount given. (5) Appeals for donations must be dignified and general in character. (6) Confidentiality of contributions is to be strictly preserved. (7) Receipts are to be issued. Shoghi Effendi referred to the Funds as "the life-blood" of the Bahá'í institutions.

G

GOD'S HOLY MOUNTAIN See Mount Carmel.

GOD'S MAJOR PLAN See Major Plan of God.

GOD'S MINOR PLAN See Minor Plan of God.

GOLDEN AGE See Ages.

GREATEST HOLY LEAF See Bahíyyih Khánum.

GREATEST NAME The name Bahá'u'lláh ("the Glory of God") and its derivatives, such as Alláh-u-Abhá ("God is Most Glorious"), Bahá ("glory," "splendor," or "light"), and Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá ("O Thou the Glory of the Most Glorious!"). Also referred to as the Most Great Name.

GUARDIANSHIP The institution, anticipated by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and established by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will and Testament, to which Shoghi Effendi was appointed. Shoghi Effendi explains that the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice constitute the twin pillars of the World Order of Baha'u'llah and are the twin successors of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Guardian's chief functions are to interpret the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá and to be the permanent head of the Universal House of Justice. See also Shoghi Effendi.

H

HANDS OF THE CAUSE OF GOD Eminent Bahá'ís appointed by Bahá'u'lláh to stimulate the propagation and ensure the protection of the Faith. 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will and Testament conferred authority on the Guardian to appoint Hands of the Cause and specified their duties. Shoghi Effendi, in a message dated October 1957 to the Bahá'í world, called the Hands of the Cause of God "the Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World

Commonwealth." After his death on 4 November 1957 the Hands of the Cause of God assumed responsibility for preserving the unity of the Bahá'í Faith and for guiding the Bahá'í world community to the victorious completion of the Ten Year World Crusade planned by Shoghi Effendi. They also called for the election of the Universal House of Justice in 1963 and requested the friends not to elect them, leaving them free to discharge their own specific responsibilities. Following the formation of the Universal House of Justice, five Hands of the Cause of God were selected by fellow Hands of the Cause to serve at the Bahá'í World Center, while the rest continued their continental responsibilities, which included overseeing the work of the Auxiliary Board members. Finding itself unable to appoint or legislate in order to appoint additional Hands of the Cause of God, the Universal House of Justice, in a cable dated 21 June 1968 and a letter dated 24 June 1968, announced the establishment of the institution of the Continental Boards of Counselors to extend the functions of the Hands of the Cause of God into the future. The Hands of the Cause of God were then freed of responsibility for directing the work of Auxiliary Board members and were all given worldwide responsibilities. See also Auxiliary Boards; Conclave; Continental Boards of Counselors; International Teaching Center.

HARAM-I-AQDAS The Most Holy Court: a designation Shoghi Effendi gave to the northwestern quadrant of the gardens surrounding the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahjí. It lies immediately outside the entrance to Bahá'u'lláh's tomb.

HAZÍRATU'L-QUDS The Sacred Fold: official title designating the headquarters of Bahá'í administrative activity in a particular country or region.

HIDDEN WORDS, THE Bahá'u'lláh's most important ethical work. Revealed circa 1858. Described by Shoghi Effendi as a "marvelous collection of gem-like utterances ... with which Bahá'u'lláh was inspired, as He paced, wrapped in His meditations, the banks of the Tigris." Originally designated "The Hidden Book of Fátimih," the title of this work is an allusion to the Muslim tradition that the Angel Gabriel revealed a Book to Fátimih to console her following the death of the Prophet Muhammad, her Father, and that this Book remained hidden in the spiritual worlds thereafter.

HEROIC AGE See Ages.

HOLY DAY A day commemorating a significant Bahá'í anniversary or feast. The nine Baha'i holy days on which work should be suspended include:

The Feast of Naw-Rúz (New Year), 21 March
The first day of Ridván, 21 April
The ninth day of Ridván, 29 April
The twelfth day of Ridván, 2 May
The anniversary of the Declararion of the Báb, 23 May
The anniversary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, 29 May
The anniversary of the Martyrdom of the Báb, 9 July
The anniversary of the Birth of the Báb, 20 October
The anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, 12 November
The Day of the Covenant, 26 November, and the Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá,

28 November, are commemorated annually but are nor days on which work is to be suspended.

HOLY PLACES Sites in Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Israel that are associated with significant events in the lives of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

HOLY SHRINES See Shrine.

HOLY TEXTS See Sacred Scriptures.

HOLY THRESHOLD See Sacred Threshold.

HOSTS 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains that "The blessed Person of the Promised One [Bahá'u'lláh] is interpreted in the Holy Book as the Lord of Hosts—the heavenly armies. By heavenly armies those souls are intended who are entirely freed from the human world, transformed into celestial spirits and have become divine angels. Such souls are the rays of the Sun of Reality who will illumine all the continents" (TOP 8.2).

HOUSE OF 'ABDU'LLÁH PÁSHÁ The house in 'Akká that 'Abdu'l-Bahá rented in 1896 and that served as His residence until He moved to Haifa in 1910. For a discussion of the historical significance of the House, see message no. 157.

HOUSES OF WORSHIP See Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

HUQÚQU'LLÁH The Right of God: one of the fundamental Bahá'í ordinances of the Bahá'í Faith, it is a great law and a sacred institution laid down by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitib-i-Aqdas. It is one of the key instruments for constructing the foundation and supporting the structure of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. Its far-reaching ramifications extend from enabling individuals to express their devotion to God in a private act of conscience that attracts divine blessings and bounties for the individual, promotes the common good, and directly connects individuals with the Central Institution of the Faith, to buttressing the authority and extending the activity of the Head of the Faith. The law prescribes that each Bahá'í shall pay a certain portion of his accumulated savings after the deduction of all expenses and of certain exempt properties such as one's residence. These payments provide a fund at the disposition of the Head of the Faith for carrying out beneficent activities. Huqúqu'lláh is administered by the Universal House of Justice, and payments are made to trustees appointed by the Universal House of Justice in every country or region. In providing a regular and systematic source of revenue for the Central Institution of the Cause, Bahá'u'lláh has assured the means for the independence and decisive functioning of the World Center of His Faith. The fundamentals of the law of Huqúqu'lláh are promulgated in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Further elaborations of its features are found in other writings of Bahá'u'lláh and in those of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, and the Universal House of Justice. The law was codified in 1987 and made universally applicable as of Ridván 1992 to all who profess belief in Bahá'u'lláh. For further information, see Huqúqu'lláh: Extracts from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi and The Universal House of Justice (1986).

I

INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES An institution at the Bahá'í World Center that preserves the writings and sacred relics of the Central Figures of the Faith and Shoghi Effendi as well as other historical documents and items. The International Archives Building, completed in 1957, was the first of five buildings on the Arc on Mount Carmel to be constructed.

INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í CONVENTION An event held every five years in Haifa, Israel, at which members of National Spiritual Assemblies from around the world gather to elect the members of the Universal House of Justice.

INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL A nine-member body that served as the precursor of the Universal House of Justice and was first appointed by Shoghi Effendi in the closing months of 1950 and announced to the Baha'i world in 1951. After the Guardian's passing, it was elected in 1961 by members of National Spiritual Assemblies. Its threefold function, assigned by Shoghi Effendi, was to forge links with the state of Israel, to assist the Guardian in erecting the superstructure of the Shrine of the Báb, and to negotiate with civil authorities about the application of the Bahá'í laws of personal status for Bahá'ís residing in the Holy Land. After Shoghi Effendi's passing, the International Bahá'í Council, at the request of the Hands of the Cause of God, took responsibility for helping to maintain the World Center properties and helping to establish the Universal House of Justice. Those whom Shoghi Effendi appointed to the International Bahá'í Council were Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum, Charles Mason Remey, Amelia Collins, Ugo Giachery, and Leroy Ioas, who were all subsequently appointed Hands of the Cause of God, as well as Jessie Revell, Ethel Revell, Lutfu'lláh Hakím, and Sylvia Ioas. Members elected in 1961 by the National Spiritual Assemblies were Jessie Revell, Álí Nakhjavání, Lutfu'lláh Hakím, Ethel Revell, Charles Wolcott, Sylvia Ioas, Mildred Mottahedeh, Ian Semple, and Borrah Kavelin. The International Bahá'í Council ceased to exist upon the election of the Universal House of Justice in 1963.

INTERNATIONAL FUND See Fund.

INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTER An institution established by the Universal House of Justice in 1973, the members of which are the Hands of the Cause of God and Counselors appointed by the Universal House of Justice to serve at the Bahá'í World Center. Among the institution's many responsibilities are making reports and recommendations to the Universal House of Justice, coordinating and directing the work of the Continental Boards of Counselors, being fully informed of the Faith's condition throughout the world, watching over the security and ensuring the protection of the Faith, and being alert to possibilities for extending the teaching work and for developing social and economic life both inside and outside the Bahá'í community.

K

KING OF GLORY A title of Bahá'u'lláh.

KITAB-l-'AHD, THE See Book of the Covenant.

KITÁB-I-AQDAS, THE The Most Holy Book (Kitáb means "book"; Aqdas means "Most Holy"): the chief repository of Bahá'u'lláh's laws and the Mother Book of His revelation, revealed in 'Akká in 1873 and termed by

Shoghi Effendi “the Charter of the future world civilization.” For a summary of its contents, see GPB, pp. 214-15.

KNIGHTS OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH The title given by Shoghi Effendi to Bahá’ís who settled in the goal countries enumerated at the outset of the Ten Year World Crusade as having no Bahá’ís living in them. All those who settled in such territories during the Holy Year October 1952-October 1953 and, thereafter, the first to settle in the remaining territories were designated Knights of Bahá’u’lláh. The names of the Knights of Bahá’u’lláh are inscribed on a scroll that was laid beneath the floor inside the entrance door of the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh in May 1992 during the Holy Year commemorating the centenary of Baha'u'lIah’s ascension.

L

LESSER PEACE The first of two major stages in which Bahá’ís believe peace will be established. The Lesser Peace will come about through a binding treaty among the nations for
the political unification of the world. It will involve fixing every nation’s boundaries, strictly limiting the size of armaments, laying down the principles underlying the relations among governments, and ascertaining all international agreements and obligations. Its inception will synchronize with two processes operating within the Bahá’í Faith—the maturation of local and national Bahá’í institutions and the completion of specified buildings around the Arc on Mount Carmel—and will portend the coming of the Most Great Peace.

LETTERS OF THE LIVING A translation of Hurúf-i-Háyy. The first eighteen people who independently recognized and believed in the Báb. Together with Him, they form the first Váhid (“Unit”) of the Bábi Dispensation. The word Háyy, which is the Name of God “The Living,” has the numerical value of eighteen in the abjad system of notation in which each letter of the Arabic alphabet is assigned a specific numerical value. The word “Váhid” has the numerical value of nineteen.

LIFEBLOOD OF THE CAUSE The Bahá’í Fund.

LORD OF HOSTS A title of Bahá’u’lláh. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explains that “what is meant in the prophecies by the ‘Lord of Hosts’ and the ‘Promised Christ’ is the Blessed Perfection [Bahá’u’lláh] and His holiness the Exalted One [the Báb].” See also Hosts.

LORD OF THE AGE A designation of the Manifestation of God in each Dispensation. In Islam it was a title given to the promised Qa’im and, therefore, is applied in Bahá’í terminology particularly to the Báb.

M

MAJOR PLAN OF GOD God’s plan for humanity that is tumultuous and mysterious in its progress. Its purpose in this cycle is to unify the human race and to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. See also Minor Plan of God.

MANIFESTATION OF GOD Designation of a Prophet “endowed with constancy” Who is the Founder of a religious Dispensation, inasmuch as in His words, His person, and His actions He manifests the nature and purpose of God in accordance with the capacity and needs of the people to whom He comes.

MASHRIQU’L-ADHKÁR The Dawning Place of the Praise of God: a title designating a Bahá’í House of Worship or Temple. Houses of Worship have

been constructed in Wilmette, near Chicago, Illinois; Kampala, Uganda; Ingleside, near Sydney, Australia; Langenhain, near Frankfurt am Main, Germany; Panama City, Panama; Apia, Western Samoa; and New Delhi, India. The first Baha'i House of Worship, built in 1902 in ‘Ishqábád, Turkmenistan, was damaged by an earthquake in 1948 and, following heavy rains, had to be razed in 1963. For a
full description of the institution of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár, see BW 18:568-88.

MASTER A title of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá referring to the virtues He manifested and to His role as an enduring model for humanity to emulate.

MAZRA‘IH A country mansion near the village of Mazra‘a, several miles north of the prison city of ‘Akká and about a half-mile from the Mediterranean Sea. Bahá’u’lláh lived at Mazra‘ih for about two years after leaving ‘Akká in 1877. The mansion looks eastward to the hills of Galilee and has a pool and gardens.

MECCA The holy city of Islam, the birthplace of Muhammad (570 A.D.). In Mecca, the principal place of pilgrimage of the Muslim world, stands the Great Mosque surrounding the Ka‘bih (Kaaba), the ancient cubical temple believed to have been built by Abraham and Ishmael, which is the Muslim Qiblih.

MIHDÍ, MÍRZÁ The Purest Branch: a son of Bahá’u’lláh and brother of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He died at the age of twenty-two in 1870 when he fell through a skylight while rapt in prayer on the roof of the prison barracks in 'Akka. He asked Bahá’u’lláh to accept his life as a ransom so that pilgrims prevented from attaining Bahá’u’lláh presence would be enabled to do so. Bahá’u’lláh, in a prayer, made this astounding proclamation: “Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! Thou seest Me in the hands of Mine enemies, and My son blood-stained before Thy face, O Thou in Whose hands is the kingdom of all names. I have, O My Lord, offered up that which Thou hast given Me, that Thy servants may be quickened and all that dwell on earth be united.”

MINOR PLAN OF GOD The part of God’s Plan that is revealed by Bahá’u’lláh to His followers and is laid out for them in detailed instructions and successive plans by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, and the Universal House of Justice. In contrast to the Major Plan of God, it proceeds in a methodical, ordered way, disseminating His teachings and raising up the structure of a united world society.

MOST EXALTED LEAF See Ásiyih Khanúm and Bahíyyíh Khanúm.

MOST GREAT FESTIVAL See Ridván.

MOST GREAT NAME See Greatest Name.

MOST GREAT JUBILEE The centenary of the declaration of Bahá’u’lláh’s prophetic mission in the Garden of Ridván in Baghdad, 22 April-3 May 1863. It was commemorated by the first Baha'i World Congress, held in Royal Albert Hall, London, during the Ridván Festival (28 April-2 May) 1963. The Most Great Jubilee coincided with the victorious completion of the Ten Year World Crusade Shoghi Effendi launched in April 1953 (fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel 12:12 regarding the spread of the Bahá’í Faith throughout the world) and the establishment of the Universal House of Justice elected a few days

earlier in Haifa, Israel. See also Daniel's Prophecy.
MOST GREAT OCEAN See Ancient Beauty.
MOST GREAT PEACE The second of two major stages in which Bahá'ís believe peace will be established. The Most Great Peace will be the practical consequence of the spiritualization of the world and the fusion of all its races, creeds, classes, and nations. It will rest on the foundation of, and be preserved by, the ordinances of God. See also Lesser Peace.
MOST GREAT PRISON The prison city of 'Akká in which Bahá'u'lláh, His family, and companions were confined from 31 August 1868 until June 1877.
MOST HOLY BOOK See Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The.
MOST HOLY SHRINE The Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahjí.
MOTHER TEMPLE Refers to the first Bahá'í House of Worship to be built in a hemisphere or continent. For example, the Bahá'í House of Worship outside of Frankfurt am Main, Germany, is known as the Mother Temple of Europe; the House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, the Mother Temple of the West.
MOUNT CARMEL A mountain in Israel on which the Shrine of the Bab and the Bahá'í World Center are located. The home of the prophet Elijah, it is referred to by Bahá'u'lláh as "the Hill of God and His Vineyard" and was extolled by Isaiah as the "mountain of the Lord" to which "all nations shall flow." On it Bahá'u'lláh pitched His tent and revealed the Tablet of Carmel, the charter of the world spiritual and administrative centers of the Bahá'í Faith. See also Arc; Bahá'í World Center.
MYSTERY OF GOD A translation of Sirru'lláh, a title Bahá'u'lláh gave to 'Abdu'l-Bahá referring to His unique spiritual station in which the incompatible characteristics of human nature and superhuman knowledge and perfection are blended and completely harmonized.

N

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES See Spiritual Assemblies.
NATIONAL CONVENTION The institution that elects the members of the National Spiritual Assembly during the annual Ridván Festival (April 21-May 2). At unit or "district" conventions, adult Bahá'ís elect delegates who, in turn, attend the National Convention. There the delegates vote to elect the members of the National Spiritual Assembly, consult about the affairs of the Faith, and offer recommendations to the National Spiritual Assembly. See also Elections, Bahá'í.
NAWNAHÁLÁN Children: the name of a Bahá'í-owned commercial investment company founded in 1917 in Iran, through 'Abdu'l-Bahá's encouragement, to help Bahá'í children learn to plan for the future and live thriftily by depositing a portion of their allowances each week. It later became the financial arm of the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran. In 1979 the Nawnahálán Company was seized by Iranian authorities, its assets were confiscated, and its staff were denied their salaries and prevented from working.
NAW-RÚZ New Day: Bahá'í New Year's Day, the date of the vernal equinox. A Bahá'í holy day on which work is suspended, it is celebrated in the West on 21 March, until such time as the Universal House of Justice fixes the standard for the date throughout the world in accordance with astronomical

data.
NIGHTINGALE OF PARADISE See Ancient Beauty.
NINE YEAR PLAN The first teaching plan launched by the Universal House of Justice. It encompassed the years 1964-73. See also Plans.
NINETEEN DAY FEAST A Bahá'í institution inaugurated by the Báb and confirmed by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. It is held on the first day of every Bahá'í month, each consisting of nineteen days and bearing the name of one of the attributes of God. The Feast is the heart of Bahá'í communiry life at the local level and consists of devotional, consultative, and social elements.
O
ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH See World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.
P
PEERLESS BELOVED See Ancient Beauty.
PEN OF GLORY, PEN OF THE MOST HIGH See Ancient Beauty.
PEOPLE OF BAHÁ. Generally, the members of the Bahá'í community. Shoghi Effendi explains that in the Tablet of Carmel "the people of Bahá" refers to the members of the Universal House of Justice.
PILGRIMAGE A journey made with the intention of visiting a shrine or holy place. For Bahá'ís it is both a privilege and an obligation, although it is only obligatory for men who are able to make the journey. In the Kitab-i-Aqdas Bahá'u'lláh specifically ordains pilgrimage to the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad and to the House of the Báb in Shiraz. On the day of Bahá'u'lláh's ascension, the room where His Holy Dust was laid became a third center of pilgrimage—the most holy spot and the Qiblih of the Bahá'í world—for at least the next thousand years. Under current conditions, Bahá'ís assume that the obligation of pilgrimage is satisfied by a visit to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh and the Shrine of the Báb in the Holy Land. The first group of Western pilgrims arrived in ʻAkká on 10 December 1898 and included Edward and Lua Getsinger; Phoebe Hearst; Mrs. Hearst's butler, Robert Turner, who was the first African-American in the West to become a Bahá'í; and Mrs. Thornburgh.
PILGRIM HOUSE A house for visiting pilgrims that Mírzá Jaʻfar Rahmání built, with ʻAbdu'l-Bahá's permission, near the Shrine of the Báb. ʻAbdu'l-Bahá composed a dedicatory inscription that appears above its entrance: "This is a spiritual Hostel for Pilgrims, and its founder is Mírzá Jaʻfar Rahmání 1327 A.H. [1909]." It was completed in 1909 and was known as the Eastern or Oriental Pilgrim House. In 1969 the increasing number of pilgrims led the Universal House of Justice to decide that pilgrims should be accommodated in hotels, thereby enabling it to convert the pilgrim house into a reception center. A Western Pilgrim House was built across the street from the House of ʻAbdu'l-Bahá in Haifa, shortly after His passing, with funds American Bahá'ís had contributed and in accordance with a design ʻAbdu'l-Bahá had selected and modified. In 1963 the Universal House of Justice established its offices in the Western Pilgrim House. In 1983, after the completion of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, the Western Pilgrim House became the seat of the International Teaching Center.

Another pilgrim house is located at Bahjí, near the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh.

PILLARS OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE National Spiritual Assemblies. See also Spiritual Assemblies.

PIONEERS Bahá'ís who leave their hometown or country to reside elsewhere for the purpose of teaching the Bahá'í Faith.

PLANS Refers to the courses of action devised by Shoghi Effendi and, later, by the Universal House of Justice for expanding and consolidating the Bahá'í Faith within the framework of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan. Teaching Plans launched by Shoghi Effendi include the first Seven Year Plan (1937-44) and the second Seven Year Plan (1946-53) pursued by the Bahá'ís of the United States; a Six Year Plan pursued by the Bahá'ís of the British Isles (1944-50); plans of varying durations separately pursued between 1947-53 by the National Spiritual Assemblies of Canada, of Central America, of South America, of Australia and New Zealand, of India, Pakistan, and Burma, of Germany and Austria, of Iran, of Iraq, and of Egypt and the Sudan; the Two Year Plan for the development of the Faith in Africa; and the Ten Year World Crusade (1953-63) pursued by the worldwide Bahá'í community. The Universal House of Justice has launched the Nine Year Plan (1964-73), the Five Year Plan (1974-79), the Seven Year Plan (1979-86), the Six Year Plan (1986-92), the Three Year Plan (1993-1996), and the Four Year Plan (1996-2000). See also Major Plan of God and Minor Plan of God.

PROMISED ONE A title of Bahá'u'lláh.

PUREST BRANCH, THE See Mihdí, Mírzá.

Q

QIBLIH "That which one faces; prayer-direction; point of adoration": the focus to which the fuithful turn in prayer. The Qiblih for Muslims is the Ka'bih in Mecca; for Bahá'ís it is the Most Holy Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí, "the Heart and Qiblih of the Bahá'í world."

R

REMOTE PRISON The city of Adrianople (now Edirne, Turkey), to which Bahá'u'lláh was banished from 12 December 1863 through 12 August 1868. Adrianople is in western Turkey, on its border with Greece and Bulgaria.

REVELATION The conveying of truth from God to humanity. The word is used to refer to the process of divine communication from God to His Manifestation and from the Manifestation to His people; to the words and acts of such communication themselves; and to the entire body of teachings given by a Prophet of God.

RIDVÁN The Islamic name of the gardener and custodian of Paradise. In Bahá'í terminology the word denotes both "garden" and "paradise"; however, it has also been used to denote God's good-pleasure and His divine acceptance. The Ridván Festival, the holiest and most significant of all Bahá'í festivals, commemorates Bahá'u'lláh's declaration of His mission to His companions in the Garden of Ridván in Baghdad in 1863. It is

a twelve-day period celebrated annually, 21 April-2 May. It is also called the Most Great Festival. During each Ridván Festival Local and National Spiritual Assemblies are elected, and, once every five years, the Universal House of Justice is elected.

RUHÍYYlH KHÁNUM, AMATU'L-BAHÁ. See Amatu'l-Bahá Ruhíyyih Khánum.

S

SACRED SCRIPTURES, SACRED TEXTS The Holy Books of the world's religions. Also refers to the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

SACRED THRESHOLD A term used metaphorically and respectfully to denote approach to the Presence of God and, hence, to the precincts of a holy place such as a shrine. It is also sometimes used literally to denote the actual outer or inner threshold of a holy shrine.

SEAL OF THE PROPHETS A title of Muhammad.

SHOGHI EFFENDI The title by which Shoghi Rabbáni (1 March 1897-4 November 1957), great-grandson of Bahá'u'lláh, is generally known to Bahá'ís. (Shoghi is an Arabic name meaning "the one who longs"; Effendi is a Turkish honorific signifying "sir" or "master.") He was appointed Guardian of the Baha'i Faith by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will and assumed the office upon 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing in 1921.

SHRINE The original meaning of the word is a casket or case for books, but it later acquired the special meaning of a casket containing sacred relics, and thence a tomb of a saint, a chapel with special associations, or a place hallowed by some memory. It is used to denote the latter in Bahá'í terminology. The term "Holy Shrines," for example, refers to the burial places of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The House associated with the visit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Montreal was designated by Shoghi Effendi as a Bahá'í shrine. Also, when referring to the All-American Convention held in 1944 to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the inception of the Bahá'í Faith, the Guardian wrote of the representatives of the American Bahá'í community's being "Gathered within the walls of its national Shrine—the most sacred Temple ever to be reared to the glory of Bahá'u'lláh" (GPB p. 400).

SÍYÁH-CHÁL Black Pit: the subterranean dungeon in Tehran in which Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned August-December 1852. Here, chained in darkness three flights of stairs underground, in the company of his fellow-Bábís and some 150 thieves and assassins, He received the first intimations of His world mission.

SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES Administrative institutions of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order that operate at the local and national levels and are elected according to Bahá'í principles. They are responsible for coordinating and directing the affairs of the Bahá'í community in their areas of jurisdiction. The institution of the Local Spiritual Assembly is ordained by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas (referred to there as the "House of Justice"); the institution of the National Spiritual Assembly is established by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will and Testament. The term "Spiritual Assembly" was introduced by 'Abdu'l-Bahá so that, while the Faith is still generally unknown, people will not make the erroneous deduction from the term "House of

Justice" that it is a political institution. Regional Spiritual Assemblies have been elected in many areas and are gradually reduced in size and eventually replaced by National Spiritual Assemblies as the Faith expands and consolidates itself. See also Elections, Bahá'í.

STEWARDS, CHIEF See Hands of the Cause of God.

SUPREME HOUSE OF JUSTICE See Universal House of Justice.

SUPREME PEN A title of Bahá'u'lláh.

SÚRIY-I-MULÚK Tablet to the Kings: revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in Adrianople, referred to by Shoghi Effendi as "the most momentous Tablet revealed by Bahá'u'lláh." In it Baha'u'llah addresses collectively the monarchs of East and West, the Sultán of Turkey, the kings of Christendom, the French and Persian ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire, the Muslim clergy in Constantinople, the people of Persia, and the philosophers of the world. In the Súriy-i-Mulúk Bahá'u'lláh unequivocally and forcefully proclaims His station. See Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh (pp. 7-12, 47-54, 102-03) for passages of the Súriy-i-Mulúk that have been translated into English.

T

TABLET OF CARMEL The charter of the world spiritual and administrative centers of the Bahá'í Faith, revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in 1890 during one of His visits to Mount Carmel. See GWB, pp. 14-17, or TB, pp. 3-5.

TABLETS Refers to letters revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

TABLETS OF THE DIVINE PLAN Fourteen Tablets revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1916 and 1917 and referred to as the charter for propagating the Bahá'í Faith. Addressed to the Bahá'ís of North America, the Tablets convey His mandate for the transmission of the Bahá'í Faith throughout the world. See also Divine Plan.

TEN-PART PROCESS A ten-part process of divine revelation described by Shoghi Effendi. It began with Adam and is to end with the erection of the entire machinery of Bahá'u'lláh's Administrative Order and the suffusion of the light of His Revelation, throughout future epochs of the Formative and Golden Ages of the Faith, over the entire planet.

The ten-part process, Shoghi Effendi writes, began "with the planting in the soil of the divine will, of the tree of divine revelation, and which has already passed through certain stages and must needs pass through still others ere it attains its final consummation. The first part of this process was the slow and steady growth of this tree of divine revelation, successively putting forth its branches, shoots and offshoots, and revealing its leaves, buds and blossoms, as a direct consequence of the light and warmth imparted to it by a series of progressive Dispensations associated with Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad and other Prophets, and of the vernal showers of blood shed by countless martyrs in their path. The second part of this process was the fruition of this tree, 'that belongeth neither to the East nor to the West,' when the Báb appeared as the perfect fruit and declared His mission in the Year Sixty [1844] in the city of Shiraz. The third part was the grinding of this sacred seed, of infinite preciousness and potency, in the mill of adversity, causing it to yield its oil, six years later, in the city of Tabríz

[1850]. The fourth part was the ignition of this oil by the hand of Providence in the depths and amidst the darkness of the Síyáh-Chál of Tehran a hundred years ago [1852]. The fifth, was the clothing of that flickering light, which had scarcely penetrated the adjoining territory of Iraq, in the lamp of revelation, after an eclipse lasting no less than ten years, in the city of Baghdad [1863]. The sixth, was the spread of the radiance of that light, shining with added brilliancy in its crystal globe in Adrianople [1863-1868], and later on in the fortress town of ‘Akká [1868-1877], to thirteen countries in the Asiatic and African continents. The seventh was its projection, from the Most Great Prison, in the course of the ministry of the Center of the Covenant [1892-1921], across the seas and the shedding of its illumination upon twenty sovereign states and dependencies in the American, the European, and Australian continents. The eighth part of that process was the diffusion of that same light in the course of the first, and the opening years of the second, epoch of the Formative Age of the Faith [1921-1953], over ninety-four sovereign states, dependencies and islands of the planet, as a result of the prosecution of a series of national plans, initiated by eleven national spiritual assemblies throughout the Bahá’í world, utilizing the agencies of a newly emerged, divinely appointed Administrative Order, and which has now culminated in the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Bahá’u’lláh’s Mission. The ninth part of this process—the stage we are now entering [1953]—is the further diffusion of that same light over one hundred and thirty-one additional territories and islands in both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres, through the operation of a decade-long world spiritual crusade whose termination will, God willing, coincide with the Most Great Jubilee commemorating the centenary of the declaration of Bahá’u’lláh in Baghdad. And finally the tenth part of this mighty process [1963-] must be the penetration of that light, in the course of numerous crusades and of successive epochs of both the Formative and Golden Ages of the Faith, into all the remaining territories of the globe through the erection of the entire machinery of Bahá’u’lláh’s Administrative Order in all territories, both East and West, the stage at which the light of God’s triumphant Faith shining in all its power and glory will have suffused and enveloped the entire planet” (MBW, pp. 154-55).

TEN YEAR WORLD CRUSADE See Crusade, Ten Year World.

TONGUE OF GRANDEUR See Ancient Beauty.

TRANSITION, AGE OF or PERIOD OF See Ages.

TWIN HOLY CITIES Haifa and ‘Akká Israel.

TWIN HOLY SHRINES The Shrines of Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb. See also Shrines.

U

UMÁNÁ COMPANY The Umana (Trustees’) Company was formed in Iran to be the registered owner of all Bahá’í properties, both local and national. Within a few months after the Islamic Republic was established in March 1979, agents of the revolutionary government, acting on the authority of an order from the Office of the Public Prosecutor of the Islamic Republic, seized its assets, properties, and furnishings and dismissed its employees. Among the properties

the Umáná Company held were holy places, including the House of the Báb in Shiraz, houses of Bahá'u'lláh in Tehran and Tákur, a temple site, the national Bahá'í headquarters, Bahá'í cemeteries, and a Bahá'í-operated hospital in Tehran.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE The supreme governing and legislative body of the Bahá'í Faith. The Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice are the twin, crowning institutions of the Baha'i Administrative Order. Elected every five years at an international Bahá'í convention, the Universal House of Justice gives spiritual guidance to and directs the administrative activities of the worldwide Bahá'í community. It is the institution Bahá'u'lláh ordained as the agency invested with authority to legislate on matters not covered in His writings. In His Will and Testament 'Abdu'l-Bahá elaborates on its functions and affirms that it is infallibly guided.

V

VAKÍLU'D-DAWLIH A state title, meaning deputy or representative of the government, that refers to Muhammad Taqí Afnán, cousin of the Bab and chief builder of the 'Ishqábád Temple.

VICAR OF THE PROPHET OF ISLAM The Sultán of the Ottoman Empire, alluding to his claim to be the Caliph, or successor of Muhammad within Sunni Islam.

W

WESTERN PILGRIM HOUSE See Pilgrim House.

WILL AND TESTAMENT OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ A document that Shoghi Effendi says is "unique in the annals of the world's religious systems," the Will and Testament is the charter of the Administrative Order of the Bahá'í Faith. Written, signed, and sealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Will and Testament consists of three sections written at three different times between 1901 and the year of His passing. The Will and Testament affirms "the two-fold character of the Mission of the Bab," which was to bring an independent revelation from God and to herald the coming of another, greater revelation through Bahá'u'lláh. It also "discloses the full station of" Bahá'u'lláh as the "Supreme Manifestation of God," declares the fundamental beliefs of the Bahá'í Faith, establishes the institution of the Guardianship, and appoints Shoghi Effendi as Guardian. It provides for the election of the Universal House of Justice and defines its scope. It also creates the institution of the National Spiritual Assembly, provides for the appointment of the Hands of the Cause of God and prescribes their obligations, and exposes the conduct of the Covenant-breakers.

WORLD CENTER See Bahá'í World Center.

WORLD CONGRESS See Most Great Jubilee.

WORLD CRUSADE See Crusade, Ten Year World.

WORLD ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH Bahá'u'lláh's "scheme for world-wide solidarity" that is "destined to embrace in the fullness of time the whole of mankind." The current Bahá'í Administrative Order is its nucleus and pattern, providing the "rudiments of the future all-enfolding Bahá'í Commonwealth."

Y

YÁ ‘ALÍYYUL-A‘LÁ O Thou the Exalted, the Most Exalted! A form of the Báb’s name that is used as an invocation.
YÁ BAHA’U’L-ABHÁ O Thou the Glory of the Most Glorious! A form of Bahá’u’lláh’s
name (the Greatest Name) that is used as an invocation.
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