The Baha'i Faith in the West: A Survey

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Contents

GyorgyLederer
10.2
""ABit of ExtraneousMatter":
The 1910Bahai Temple Unity Convention
and the Downfall of Henry ClaytonThompson
Jackson Armstrong-[11grartl
1.22
The Plans of Unified Action
Lani Bramson
ill

Beginnings
Outpost of a WorldReligion:
The Baha'i Faith in Australia, 192()..1947
Graham Hassall
The Circle, the Brotherhood,and the EcclesiasticalBody:
The Baha'i Faith in Denmark, 1925-1987
Margit Warburg
The Baha'i Communityin E<finburgh,1946-1950
Jsn1aelValesco

Surveys

Copyr g'1tedma 1al
BAHA’is IN NEW YORK, 1900
'Abdu'l-Karlm-i Tihrani (seated, in turban) was the first Persian teacher sent to the United States by ’Abdu'I-Baba. Front row: Unknown, Thornton Chase, Tihrani, Lua Getsinger. Back row (1. to r.): Anton Haddad, Unknown, Mirza Sinore Raffie (Tihrani's interpreter), Arthur Pillsbury Dodge, and Edward Getsinger.
The Baha'i Faith in the West

by Peter Smith

THEDEVELOPMENT oftbe Baha'i Faith in the West forms an im,portant part of the history of Baha'i expansion.l Tbjs essay attempts to provide a general account of this development, as well as to locate it within the overall context of Baha'i bjstory. Some account of the distribution and social composition of the present Western Baha'i communities is also offered.
Western Baha'i history forms part of the overall history of the Baha'i Faith, but also has its own separate patterns and themes. For convenience, we may divide it into four general phases: the early establishment of the Baba’i Faith in the West; its transformation into more exclusive and organizationally structured forms; its systematic expansion; and its entry into a period of more rapid numerical increase and greater public visibility. Despite the considerable diversity of the Baha'i communities involved (North America, Europe,Australia, New

Zealand, and Hawaii), this pattern has general validity for the West as a whole.

The First Phase: Early Establishment, c.1894-1921

The Kheiralla Period, 1894-1900. The initial establishment of the Baha'i Faith in the West was primarily the work of one man, Ibrahim George Kheiralla (Khayru'llab) (1849-1929).2 Kheiralla was a Syrian Christian who bad only recently become a Baha'i when be migrated to the United States in 1892. Establishing himself in Chicago, he began to organize classes on the Baba'i religion in 1894. These classes presented Kheiralla's own highly syncretic version of the Baha'i teach-

IBRAHIM GEORGE KHEIRALLA, 1899

ings. The classes were pervaded by an aura of mystery, and the name of the new religion was not made public. Only after attending a series of graduated lectures were students told the secret "pith" of Kheiralla's teachings: that God had appeared in the person ofBaha'u'llab and that his son 'Abdu'l-Baha, was the return of Jesus Christ, and was now living in 'A.kkain the Holy Land. Converts were required to write a confession of faith to 'Abdu '1-Bahaand were told God's "greatest name"

(a form of the Arabic word Bah a,meaning glory) as a means by which they could enter into a special relationship with the divine.

This mixture of adventist and esoteric ideas, combined with Kheiralla's own forceful personality, was sufficient to attract a growing number of followers, and by 1900, there were perhaps 1,500 or more American Baba 'is. Given the extreme geographic mobility of Americans at this time, these early Ba.ha' is were scattered across sixty localities in twenty-five States.3 There were also a few converts in Canada, Britain~ and France. The three largest groups were in Chicago, New York City, and Kenosha, Wisconsin. The Baba 'i "community" was socially and religiously diverse, but the majority were native English-speaking, middle-class, \vhite Protestants. Women outnumbered men.

Kheiralla occupied a pivotal role in the network of early American Baba'is. He was the movement's "beloved teacher," and despite the emergence of secondary leaders and a limited organization, Kheiralla's overall leadership remained unchallenged. This situation changed radically following K.heiralla's protracted pilgrimage to 'Akka in 1898-99. Accounts vary, but it seems likely that Kheiralla was reluctant to accept 'Abdu'l-Baha's absolute authority. There were important doctrinal differences between the two men, and Kheiralla appears to have wished to maintain bis dominant position among the American Baba' is.

Whatever the exact motivation involved, Kheiralla found his leadership challenged by some of his fellow pilgrims after his return to the United States in May 1899. A dispute gradually developed, and in March 1900, Kheiralla publicly declared his doubts about 'Abdu' 1-Baha 's authority as Baha'u'llah's successor. A distinguished Iranian Baha'i teacher, 'Abdu'l-Karim Tih.rani, was sent by 'Abdu'l-Baha to ensure the loyalty of the American Baha'is. An open breach ensued, Kheiralla denouncing 'Abdu 'I-Baba in favor of his dissident, disaffected half-brother, Mirza Mu_b.ammad-'Ali. Disma.yed or confused by the bitter dispute, many adherents abandoned the movement. The remainder split into two separate and mutually hostile organizations: a Baha'i majority, loyal to' Abdu'l-Baha; and a "Bahaist" minority, who followed Kheiralla and Muhammad-'Ali. Some individuals fluctuated between the two groups.

The Bahaists. After this schism, the Bahaist group fared poorly, rapidly declining in numbers, so that by 1906, they were reduced to a congregation of forty persons in Kenosha, a small group in Chicago, and a scattering of individuals elsewhere. 4 There were subsequent attempts to expand the movement, but these were unsuccessful. The Kenosha group continued activities until the early 1950s, but the Bahaists evidently lacked the dynamism of the mainstream Baha'is. Despite Kheiralla 's undoubted charm and personal attraction, it seems likely that his denial of 'Abdu'l-Baha removed a key element from the appeal of his teachings. Kheiralla had taught that 'Abdu'l-Baha "vas tl1e return of Christ-a status which 'Abdu '1-Baha emphatically denied,-. and it was to 'Abdu'I-Baha, "the Master," that the majority of the American Baha'is had given their allegiance. Subsequent changes in their theological understanding of bis "station" did not alter that basic allegiance.

'Abdu '/-Baha 's Leadership. The stabilization of the American Baha'i movem.ent after the shock of Kbeiralla's defection was an impressive achievement on the part of 'Abdu'l-Baha and those loyal to him. 5 The American Baba'is bad been thrown into confusion by the dispute. Their former mentor and his teachings had been discredited. Their "Lord" lived thousands of miles away in a remote part of the Turkish Empire. They had only a few typewritten copies of extracts from the Baha'i writings. They had newly become members of a religion that was rooted in the alien culture and languages of the Middle East, b¬?ut they now had little to guide them as to the doctrines and practices that

they should follow. Stabilization ,vas accomplished by a variety of means: 'Abdu'l-Baha's dispatch of a succession of four Iranian Baha'i teachers to provide the American Baha'is with a focus and source of orthodox Baha'i belief (1900-1905); a vast interchange of correspondence between 'Abdu'l-Baha and his American followers~ the piJgrimage journeys to 'Akka o¬?f a small but influential minority of Baha'is; the publication of a substantial body of Baha'i literature in English (such that by 1912, at least seventy books and pamphlets had been produced, including translations of scripture, pilgrimage a.ccounts, and expositions of the Baha'i teachings); and the emergence of a body of native American Baba' i teachers and leaders.

As the Baha'i movement recovered from the shock of 1900, it experienced a revival in numbers as disaffected members returned and new converts were made. Growth was much slower than it had been during the period of Kheiralla's lea.dership,however, and by l 906, the Baha'is were still only able to report a membershipof l,280 to the national census.6 It is not yet clear why growth was so slow after 1900. Perhaps the more "orthodox" version of the Baha'i teachings was less appealing than Kheiralla's synthesis. Or perhaps the American Baha'is' efforts at propagating their beliefs were hindered by their lack of effective organization,or by the factionalismand petty disputes that often dogged the movement. Certainly,the American Baha'is injtialJy lacked a common focus apart from the distant figure of 'Abdu'l-Baha, the Baha'i writings being subject to a variety of individualistic interpretations.

The question of organizationwas in itself a source of disagreement among the early American Baha'is. Nevertheless, limited forms of organization gradually emerged~both in the various local groups and nationally. Many of the local groups began to hold regular business meetings and to elect executive boards to manage their activities.Nationally, the most significant developments were the formation in 1909, of an annual delegate assembly-the Bahai Temple Unity-which took responsibility for the construction of a Baha'i House of Worship (Mashriqu'I-Adhkar) near Chicago,7 and the initiation of a regular national Baha'i periodical, the Bahai News or Star of the West (1910). The leading role in both of these developmentswas played by the Baha'is of Chicago, for many years the largest local group. Baha'i publishing activity also came to be centered in Chicago.

These organizational developments may be assumed to have fostered a growing sense of cohesion as a religious group both locally and nationally.The conception of a distinctive "Baha'i community" gradually emerged.8 Organizationalso provided a new basis for campaigns of activity, such as that of propagating the Baha'i teachings, hitherto largely regarded as a matter of individual initiative. Under 'A.bdu'l-

Baha's guidance, and in contrast to the secrecy of the Kheiralla period, the propagation of the Baha'i Faith-"teachlng"-came to be a major focus of activity.This included regular discussion groups in believers' homes and more formal public meetings. Initially, there were also

many contacts with sympathetic metaphysical groups (New Thought~ Theosophy, Divine Science) and later, as the Baha'is became better known and the basis of their appeal broadened, increasing contacts with liberal Christian churches and with movem.ents concerned with social issues, such as peace and the advancement of women and of African-Americans.

In 1912, 'Abdu'l-Baha came to North America. 9 He stayed for eight months (April-December) and visited Baha'i communities in various parts of the United States and Canada. This visit was of incomparable significance to the Baba'is. Here was their Master, the living exemplar of their religion. He enthused his followers, reiterated over and over again the fundamentals of the Baba 'i Faith, renewed the sense of Baha'i commt1nity, and instilled a tremendous sense of urgency to spread the Baba' i teachings. He also established new links with "progressive" religious and social groups and attracted widespread and generally sympathetic public attention.

With 'Abdu'l-Baha's visit, the number ofBaha'is increased. After his departure, the level of enthusiasm and activity remained high. Some systematic plans for missionary expansion were made, and a scheme for communal funding of itinerant missionary teachers was initiated. By 1916, the Baha'is were able to report a membership of 2,884, this figure seemingly both including and excluding large numbers of sympathizers and peripheral members. lo

'Abdu'l-Baha had predicted war, and the commencement of the European war in 1914 gave the American Baha'is new impetus to their activities. The urgent need for the Baha'i teachings was clearly demonstrated. For many of the Baha'is, the war also assumed apocalyptic importance. 11 Kheiralla had predicted. that the promised Baha'i millennium, the "Most Great Peace," would be established in 1917, and this remained an apocryphal Baha'i belief. American entry into the war (in 1917) was therefore seen as being filled with escbatological import. It also acted as a catalyst for two major dissensions within the community: between Baha'i pacifists and those who felt it their patriotic duty to support the war effort 12; and between the supporters and opponents of the "Chicago Baha'i Reading Room_,.,

These divisions were partly healed and largely overshadowed by the renewal of correspondence with 'Abdu'l-Baha after the war. Call-

ing the Baha'is to work for communal unity, 'Abdu'l-Baba also gave them a new vision of worldwide missionary activity. A new campaign of teaching began within North America, and several individuals migrated overseas to further their religion. There was a sense of a new beginning, which continued even after the communal trauma occasioned by 'Abdu '1-Baha's death in November 1921.

Activities Outside the United States. The early growth of the Baha'i Faith in the West was almost entirely confined to the United States. Moreover, much of the impetus for activity outside the United States came from Americans, and in most instances, the initial establishment of Baba' i groups was the work of expatriate Americans who became Baha'is (as in Paris and London), or of American Baha'is who migrated as missionary teachers of their religion ("pioneers" in modem Baha'i parlance). Baha'i groups were thus established in England and France (both prior to 1900), Hawaii (from 1901), Canada (from 1902), Germany (from 1905), Japan (from 1914), and Australia (from 1920). 13 Only the Baha'i groups in Germany displayed the dynamism of the American Baha'i groups, however. There were individual converts of great ability in both England and France, but overall these new Baha'i groups remained very small and made no significant inroads into their host societies. This was particularly the case with the Paris group, most of whose early members were expatriate Americans. Even 'Abdu'l-Baha's two visits to Europe (August-December 1911; December 1912-June 1913) did not lead to any expansion comparable to that in the United States. 14 There was little organizational development.

The Second Phase: Organizational Transforn1ation, c. 1922-c 1934

'ABou'L-BAHA's DEATH in November 1921, and Shoghi Effendi's succession (January 1922), marked a major turning point in the history of the Baha'i Faith. ln sociological terms, there was a change in the basis of authority of the supreme leadership of the religion: from the personal charismatic authority of 'Abdu'l-Baha (and before him, of

Baha'u'llah) to the institutionaljzed charisma of the office of the Guardianship. This change in leadership was followed by two successive and overlapping organizational changes that marked the establishment of what Shoghi Effendi termed the "formative age" of the Faith. These were the consolidation of the system of local and national Spiritual Assemblies (c. 1922-c. 1934) and the adoption of systematic planning as the cbjef strategy in the propagation of the religion (1926/1937-). This second transformation is dealt with in the next section. As in the earlier period, the United States was the dominant Western Saha' i community.

The Admi,1istrative Order. One of Shogru Effendi's cruef concerns when he assumed the office of Guardian was to regularize and consolidate a system of locally and nationally elected Spiritual Assemblies as a means both ot¬? providing the Baha'is with institutionalized leadership and of preparing the way for the future election of the Universal House of Justice. 15 In ApriJ 1922, be issued his ¬?first general letter on the Baha'i "Administrative Order," calling for the urgent establishment of Assembljes wherever this was feasible and for the Assemblies to assume direct authority for all Baha'i activities within the geographical areas of their jurisdictions. A second general letter, in March 1923, amplified and extended these instructions. 16

In the West, developments on these lines proceeded rapidly. National Spiritual Assemblies were formed in Britain and Germany in 1923, while the Executive Board of the American Baha'i Temple Unity was transformed from an executive body implementing the decisions of the Temple Unity's Convention delegates into a directive legislative body vested with authority over the entire American Baha'i community. The process of local Assembly formation also proceeded apace, so that by 1928, there were forty-seven of these bodies in North America, twelve in Europe, and nine in the "Anglo-Pacific'~ (see Table 2, below). Apart from North America, Germany, and Britain, the only other early Western Baha'i "community,, to be able to form its own National Assembly was that of Australia and New Zealand. Progress toward this goal was slow, however, and it was not achieved until 1934, a date which marks the end of the initial phase of National Spiritual Assembly formation (see Table 3). Elsewhere in the West, Baha'i

groups were too small to follow suit,and the various European groups (including France) did not form their National Assemblies until the 1950s or later.

The formationof the Assembliesrepresenteda major change in the structure of the Baha'i communities.There had been organizing bodies before 1922, but they had lacked directive authority.The new Assemblies encouraged a centralization of authority and provided the basis for an assertion of power.This was particularly the case in North America, where the National SpiritualAssembly of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada rapidly assumed its new responsibilitiesand pioneered a series of new administrativearrangements.These included the establishmentof a national office, a full-time salaried national secretary with considerable executive authority, a centralized national fund, and appointed committees responsible for the main areas of Baha'i activity.Everything that was "Baha'i" came within its purview. A defmite legal basis for the administration was also established through formal incorporation,thereby enabling the NationalAssembly

to hold property and receive bequests. At Shoghi Effendi's encouragement, other national Assemblies later followed suit. A related change was in the basis for membership in the Baha'i Faith.17 In place of the vague inclusivity that had formerly prevailed, the National Assembly adopted formal criteria of membership. A membership roll was prepared and new Baha'is were required to record their confessions of faith on "enrollment cards." Existing memberships were validated through the issuing of individual "credential cards." Again, these innovations were later adopted by other national Assemblies.

Opposition and tension. These administrativechanges took place with the approval and often at the express instructionof Shoghi Effendi.As such, they constitute part of his transformation of the Faith: At the same time, however, they initially took place within the context of an American Baha'i community in which there were existing tensions regarding organization,and these tensions were naturally reflected in the manner in which the administrativech.angesproceeded.
Central to this tension were two divergent conceptions of the Baba' i religion and collateral divergent attitudes about the nature of organization. The conceptual tension is partly rooted in the Baha'i writings (and can still. be found in contemporary discourse) in the

claim that the Baha'i Faith is both: l) an independent divine revelation, and 2) the fulfillment of prophesies associated with religions of the past, with which it forms a single and integral "religion of God." In the early American Baha'i community, these claims led to what were essentially rival "exclusivist" and ’’inclusivist" conceptions of the religion. 18 Those who were "inclusivists" saw the Baha'i teachings as an all-embracing spiritual philosophy. It was the universal spirit of the age that was also infused through in all progressive religious and social movement~all of whose members, it was thought, should work together to bring about the spiritual transformation of the world. Being a Baha'i was a matter of sharing this attitude and did not entail membership in a particular religious organization. By contrast, the more exclusivist Baha'is viewed their religion as being based on the revelations ofBaha'u'llah. Being a Baha'i entailed specific adherence to Baha'u'llah's cause and obedience to his teachings. By itself, general adherence to Baha'i principles was not enough.
These contrasting attitudes tended to be linked to divergent attitudes towards authority, and hence towards organization. Thus, the more inclusivist Baha'is were inclined towards an "epistemological individualism" in which the preferred final locus of doctrinal and organizational authority was the individual. Some degree of organization might be necessary, but it should be loosely structured and not curtail individualism. By contrast, the exclusivists were generally inclined to-

wards an "epistemological authoritarianism" in which there were clearly established bases of authority beyond the individual. 19 Correspondingly, they favored the concepts of doctrinal orthodoxy and of regular procedures of organization that should be followed.
There was also a linkage between these divergent attitudes and membership in the "cultic milieu" of the metaphysical movements. 20 Many early Baha'is were drawn from this background, and "inclusivist" Baha'is often retained their links within it, continuing the universalistic and individualistic attitudes that were generally characteristic of that milieu. The Baha'i "exclusivists," by contrast, tended to be unsympathetic towards this milieu and to Baha'i linkages with it.
As far as can be discerned, these divergent attitudes coexisted within the American Baha'i community from 1900 to the early 1930s. The plurality of the community is remarkable and can be largely

attributed to the unusual nature of 'Abdu'I-Baha's leadership and appeal-a forceful claim to charismatic authority combined with a highly permissive style of leadership; and, appeal on the basis of Christian milJennial fulfillment combined with liberal social and religious teachings of the "new age." Common devotion to 'Abdu'l-Baha was able to unite a highly diverse Baha'i community.2 1 The implicit tension between these two attitudes was expressed in the opposition of many early Baha'is towards the development of any strong form of organization. The flexible and relatively non-directive form of organization that did develop allowed the two attitudes to continue to coexist. However, when the American Baha'is were cut off from 'Abdu'l-Baha's encouraging guidance during the First World War, the tensions became explicit and an inclusivistic "cultic" group of Baha'is the 'ading Room-was expelled from the Baha'i community by a well-organized group of exclusivists. 22
'Abdu'l-Baha sought to reconcile the divergent groups when communications were restored, but a polarization of attitudes seems to have occurred. The establishment of the Administrative Order completed the process of polarization. The changes were welcome to the more exclusivist Baha'is, who gave their support to the new administrative institutions and gravitated towards membership in and leadership of them. The inclusivists found themselves increasingly less influential within the Baha'i community. Many were prepa.red to accept the changes-concentrating their efforts on "teaching" rather than administration-but others became apathetic and inactive, while a small minority came out in outright opposition. There was a gradual, but far-reaching, transformation of the community. An ethos of what I would term "organizational exclusivism" came to replace the universalistic and individualistic attitudes that had been prevalent earlier.

The opponents of organization were able to attract a fair amount of attention, especially in the late l 920s when the American administration was becoming finnly established. They articulated disaffection, but did not gain a large following. They were a diverse group: Harrison Gray Dyar (1866-1929), the editor of the New York-based Baha'i magazine Reality (1922-29); Ruth White, an active Baha'i teacher; and Ahmad Sobrab (1893-1958), 'Abdu'l-Baha's former secretary and inteipreter.23 Dyar and White publicly attacked the new administration

and derided Shoghi Effendi-hence putting themselves beyond the pale ofBaba'i orthodoxy~but they were not able to offer an attractive and co.herent alternative to the Baha'i mainstream. Sohrab's critique was more sophisticated, and his "liberal" and universalistic "New History Society,, (1929-c.1958) remained active for many years after he had been excommunicated from the Baba 'i community as a Covenantbreaker. 24

Outside of North America, the only Western Baha'i community to experience outright opposition to the growing Administrative Order was Germany, where a minority of Baha'is under Wilhelm Herrigel formed themselves into a breakaway "Bahai World Union" (c. 1930-1937).25 As in North America, a basic transformation of attitude on the part of the Baha'i community as a whole eventually occurred however. Exclusivism and a more directive system of administration came to be the norm. A similar change was experienced in Britain and Australia-the only other Western Baha'i communities of any size but without any movements of opposition developing. Symbolic of the change was the gradual abandonment of the term "Baha'i Movement/' widely used to describe the religion up to the 1920s, and its replacement with the term "the Baha'i Faith."

The Third Phase: Systematic P1anning, 1926/1937-c.1968

BEFORETHE GENERALACCEPTANCEof the new system of directive Assemblies, most Baha'i activities in the West occurred as a result of indjvidual iojtiatives and enthusiasms. The slow-moving Temple construction project at Wilmette, near Chicago, was one of the few sustained com.munal efforts. Individual initiative was effective in establishing a widespread network of Baha'i groups, in organizing Baha'i meetings, and in securing the publication of a considerable quantity of Baha'i literature (mostly in English, but also in German). It was relatively unsystematic and uncoordinated, however, and in so.me areas (notably France, Britain, and Australia) led to little actual growth.

The idea of a more coordinated approach to Baha'i activities--particularly that of "teaching the Cause"-was highly attractive to a number of Baha'is. As early as 1915, American Baha'fs had made

some moves to implement a systematic national teaching campaign. Support for this idea was increased in 1916, by the receipt of the first of 'Abdu'l-Baha's general letters on teaching, the Tabletsof the Divine Plan, and again in 1919/1920, when the rest of the letters were received and widely discussed.26 Even so, it was only in 1925-after the transition to a more directive form of organization-that a systematic "Plan of Unified Action" (1926-1928)was adopted by the American National Assembly.27 This plan, which received the full backing of Shoghi Effendi, aimed to increase Baha'i teaching endeavors and administrative coordination and to raise sufficient funds to complete the superstructure of the Wilmette Temple. The success of the Plan appears to have been considerably impeded by a general lack of confidence in the NationalAssembly.It was only after the officialend of the plan in 1928, that there was a marked improvement in contributions. However,the more organizedapproachto teaching seems to have been successful and an increasingnumber of new converts were gained. Growth in numbers continued during a second plan (1931-1934), but again, the financial response was disappointing,doubtless in large part because of the Depression.The increase in numbers was a significant element in the transformation of the American Baha'i community. The official United States census figures record a fall between 1916 (2,884 Baha'is) and 1926 (to 1,247), and then an increase by 1936 (to 2,584).28These figureshave yet to be properly evaluated,but they indicate what was probably the general trend: a loss of numbers during the period in which the transition from "universalistic individualism" began, and an increase during the period when greater organization was gaining general acceptance among the Baha'is and a more systematic approach to teaching had been adopted. (On the two Plans of Unified Action, see Loni Bramson's article in this volume.)
As the AdministrativeOrder became an importantelement in what the new Baha'is were taught before they entered the faith, their conversion strengthened the more exclusivistic approach within the Baha'i community.By the mid-1930s, some thirty to forty percent of the American comm11nityhad become Baha'is since 1925.29The two Plans of Unified Action had only limited success in terms of the completion of their stated goals, but they consolidateda general acceptance of "planification" as a normal part of Baha'i activity. Shoghi Effendi

built on this base to launch two American Seven Year Plans (1937-1944; 1946-1953).30 These plans gave the Baha'is specific domestic and international teaching goals, the f1rst plan calling for Baha'is to settle permanently in all American states, Canadian provinces, and

Latin American republics; the second requiring further expansion of the movement throughout the Americas, the establishment of new National Assemblies for Canada and for the South and Central American regions, and the launching of a systematic teaching campaign in Europe. There was also a call for staged work on the Wilmette Temple (finally completed in 1953). As a consequence, Baha'i groups were established throughout North Americ~ even in the southern United States where progress was difficult to accomplish (in part because of the Baha'i teaching of racial equality in what was then a context of institutionalized white supremacy). Growth was slow but steady, so that by 1947, there were over 5,000 Baha'is.3 1 The goal and attainment of Baba 'i "administrative independence" for Canada in the form of the establishment of its own Nation.al Spiritual Assembly in 1948-led to an increase in Baha'i activities in that country. By 1961, there were over 1,000 Baha'is in Canada. 32 Alaska and Hawaii subsequently also became independent communities.

Systematic planning was only adopted in Europe and Australasia in the 1940s, and before that time, the local Baha'i communitjes remained very small. In Europe, tb.e rise of Nazi domination also presented a major challenge to the Baha'is. In 1937, all Baha'i activities and institutions were banned in Ge1many by order of the Gestapo. There was a consequent cessation of Baha'i activities throughout most of continental Europe untiJ 1945-1946, when the German Baha'is and others were able to resume their activities and the American Baha'is began their European teaching campaign. The German and Austrian Baha'is were subsequently given their own plan in 1948 (-1953). Meanwhile, Baha'fs were establishing or reestablishing their residence in most of Western Europe. From the 1950s onwards, a widespread network o.f .Baha'i Assemblies was built up, each Baha'i national community eventually establishing its own National Spiritual Assembly. Some growth also initially occurred in Eastern Europe, but this came to an end with the establishment of communist regimes in the aftermath of the war. Baha'i teach.ing activity in these areas has only re-

cently resumed. In contrast to the rest of Europe, the formerly lethargic British Baha'i community became increasingly active from the mid-1930s onwards (establishing its own publishing trust and summer school in 1937) and was able to continue its activities throughout the war. In 1944, it adopted its own six-year plan of internal expansion, and in 1951 was given a new plan by Shoghi Effendi, which in addition to internal goals, gave the British Baha'is responsibilities for establishing the Baha'i Faith in Africa. In Australia and New Zealand, concerted national activity was impeded by the great distances between the various local groups. A joint National Assembly was formed in 1934, followed by the establishment of a national news bulletin

(1936) and summer school (1938). At Shoghi Effendi's encouragement, a small-scale teaching plan was adopted in 1943, to be followed by a more ambitious national plan in 1947 (-1953). Outside of North America, growth was slow, however. By 1952, there were still fewer than 2,000 Baha'is in Europe and Australasia combined. Germany remained the largest community, with about 600 Baba 'is in 1951; Britain and Australia (with New Zealand) ha.d about 400 each, as did all the other European countries combined. 33

The Western Baha'i communities grew during the 1950s and 1960s with Shoghi Effendi ’s promulgation of a ten-year "Global Crusade" (1953-1963), and the subsequent Nine Year Plan of the Universal House of Justice (1964-1973). Both these plans aimed to increase the number of Baha'is in the main existing communities and to establish new Baba' i groups and institutions throughout the world. Each national Baha'i community had its own plan as a component of the international plan. By 1963, the total number of Western Baha'is, including children and youth, had risen to approximately 25,000 (19,000 in North America, 5,000 in Europe, and 1,000 in Australia and New Zealand), and by I968, there were over 40,000 Baha'is (out of a world total of 1.2 million; see Table 1). Given the small size of the Western comm11nities in the early 1950s (c. 7,000), this increase is quite marked, but it is not overly impressive. 34 In the absence of political constraints, systematic planning provided a basis for sustained growth, but not for any dramatic increase in the number of Baha'is.

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Table 2: Selected Baha'i Administrative Statistics, 1928, 1945, 1968, 1987

North America			Europe			Anglo-Pacific			The West (total)		
NSAs	LSAs	Local-ltfes	NSAs	LSAs	Local-lties	NSAs	LSAs	Local-ities	NSAs	LSAs	Local-ities
1928	1	47	67	2	12	65	0	9	9	3	68
141											
1945	1	134	907	2	6	93	l	6	24	4	146 1,024
1968	3	500	2,661	15	178	1,047	3	45	235	21	723 3,943
1987	3	2,110	8,543	20	660	2,907	3	250	591	26	3,020
12,041											

Sources: Calculated from Baha'i World, Vol. 2, pp. 181-91; Baha'i World, Vol. l 0, pp. 551-82; Universal House of Justice, The Baha'i Faith: Statistical Infor-
mation, 1844-1968 (Haifa: Baha'i World Centre, 1968); Universal House of Justice, Department of Statistics, Statistical Summary Tablesfor Semi-Annual Reports of July 1987 {Baha'i World Center, February 1988).
Note: For areas, see Footnote I. The figures for Europe exclude Turkey and the Soviet Caucasian Republics.

Of note was the general pattern of this, with the initial formation of four multi-country,regional Assemblies (one in 1953, and three in 1957), and their subsequent breakdown into their component national units (1962). During this same perio~ three of the four original bi-national Assemblies (Ge1many-Austria,United States-Canada~Australia-New Zealand) also dissolved into their component units, and the discontiguousAmerican states of Alaska and Hawaii formed separate "National" Assemblies. The process of forming National Assemblies

in Europe continued after 1968, all countries outside of the Communist East, apart from Malta and the various "micro-states" (Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino, and the Vatican City), having their own National Spiritual Assemblies by 1978. More recently, the Canary Islands and Sicily have formed separateAssemblies, as has the depend.encyof Greenland.

Other achievements in the West included the construction of Baha'i Houses of Worship in Australia (1957-1961) and West Germany (1960-1964)-with Wilmette, the West now has three out of a world total of seven; the establishmentof administrativeheadquarters

for each national Baha'i community; the establishment of Baha'i publishing trusts for all the major European languages; a massive increase in the range of literature available in the major European languages; and a concerted endeavor to produce literature in the minority languages of Europe and North America.

The Fourth Phase: Mass Teaching, c. 1969 Onwards

BY THE 1960s, active Baha'i communities had been established throughout Western Europe, North America, and the Anglo-Pacific. Baha'i comm11nitiesremained small, however, and the Baha'is were frustrated by their inability to discover any way of securing a rapid increase in numbers. The onset of "mass teaching" and large-scale conversions in various parts of Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia-which occurred from the 1950s onwards-only highlighted the comparative lack of growth in the West. The change in the West came in the late l 960s and early l 970s, with a series of large influxes of new Baha'is.

The primary trigger for this new growth appears to have been the Baha'i response to changes in the semi-autonomous and transnational youth culture, which by the 1960s, had grown to incorporate or influence significant numbers of young people in nearly all Western countries. These changes in the youth culture led to a sudden and widespread growth of social reformism and experimentation. As a non-traditional religious movement committed to concepts of social change, the Baha'i Faith was potentially attractive to those influenced by the youth culture. Successful adaptatio.n of Baha'i teaching methods by some local Baha'i groups led to relatively large numbers of youth converts. News of these successes was rapidly transmitted to other Western Baba' i communities, which then sought to emulate them-invariably with a measure of success. Nearly all Western Baha'i communities gained new converts from the youth culture.

The influx of new young Baba' is had a major transfonnative effect on the existing Baha'i communities. From being an often neglected minority, young Baha'is suddenly became the "spearhead" of

growth. Possessing abundant energy and often more discretionary free time than their elders, they were able to make a major contribution to

Table 3. The Formationof Regional and National SpiritualAssemblies in the West

1923 British Isles (1923-1972)
United Kingdom (1972-)
Ireland (1972-)
Germany and Austria (1923-1937; 1947-1959)
Germany (1959-)
Austria (1.959-)
1925 United States and Canada (1925-1948)
United States (1948-)
Alaska* (1957-)
Hawaii* (1964-)
Canada (I 948-)
1934 Australia and Netti Zealand (J 934- J 957)
Australia (1957-)
New Zealand (1957-)
19S3 Italy and Switzerland (1953-1962)
Italy (1962-)
Sicily* (I 995-)
Switzerland (1962-)
1957 Benelux Countries (l 957-1962)
Belgium (1962-)
Luxembourg (1962-)
Netherlands (1962-)
Iberian Peninsula (1957-J962)
Spain (1962-)
Canary Islands* (1984-)
Portugal (1962-)
Scandinavia and Fin/a11d(1957-1962)
Sweden (1962-)
Denmark (1962-)
Greenland* (1992-)
Norway (1962-)
Finland(1962-)
1958 France (1958-)

1972 Iceland (1972-)
1977 Greece (1977-)
1978 Cyprus (1978-)
1991 USSR (1991-1992)
Russian Federation, Georgia and Armenia (1992-95)

Russia (1995-)
[Georgia (1995-)]
[Armenia (1995-)]
I
Ukraine, BelanlS and Moldova (1992-1996)
Belarus (1995-)
Moldova (1996-)
Ukraine (1996-)
Baltic States (1992-)
Czechoslovakia (1991-1998)
Czech Republic (1998-)
Slovakia (1998-)
Romania (1991-)
1992 Albania (1992-)
Bulgaria (1992-)
Hungary (1992-)
Poland (1992-)
1994 Slovenia and CroaJia(1994-)

Key: The names of National Spiritual Assemblies representing several countries are italicized (e.g., British Isles). Those representing sub-national units are starred (e.g. Alaska*). The dates of existence of National Assemblies are added in parenthesis.
Sources:The Universal House of Justice, Department of Statistics, "National and
Regional Spiritual Assemblies." Mimeographed. Baha'i World Centre, January 1989. Baha'i Worldvolumes.
Note: Dependent and other territories not here considered part of "Western" Baha'i developments are exclude~ specifically, the Caribbean communities of Puerto Rico {with its own N.S.A in 1972), French Guiana. Guadeloupe and Martinique (all 1984).

the further expansion of their religion, not just among other youth, but among various sections of the population. This subsidiary expansion was particularly marked in the United States, where teams of mainly young Baha'is successfully sought to teach their religion to the hith’ erto neglected rural black population of the southern states. The results were impressive, with over 20,000 Baha'i enrollments from these areas being recorded during 1970 and the early months of 1971 alone.35 Conversions of other minority group members were also made. As a result of these gains, the WesternBaha'i population tripled in size between 1968 and 1973-from about 41,000 to about 126,500 (see Table 1). Expansion in North America was greatest in both absolute and proportionalterms (74,000 or an increase of 23%). Proportionally, Australia and New Zealand (2,800 or 187%) were more

successful than Europe (8,300 or 93%) (see Table 4).
This expansion was difficult to maintain. The youth culture itself was highly volatile, and by the early to mid-l 970s it had begun to change again. In common with various other movementsof alternative religiosity,the Baha'is found that their influx of young converts was

Table 4: Baha'i Population Growth, 1963-1988
(percentageincrease by five-year periods)

	1963-68	1968-73	1973-78	1978-83	1983-88
North America	63	239	24	24	11
Europe	82	93	15	5	18
Australia/ New Zealand	50	187	40	17	43
The West	66	206	23	21	13

Source:Calculated from Table 1.
Note: Cyprus and Hawaii are not included in these figures.

slackening off. There was also the major problem.of integrating new Baha'is into established Baha'i communities. There were often considerable cultural differences between the older Baha'is.-predomi-

nantly white and middle-class, with fairly conservative styles of cultural expression-and a proportion of the new Baha'is: youth who were influenced by the anti-establishmentelements of the youth culture; and often poor, and poorly educated, rural African Americans. There were also the logistical problems of socializinglarge numbers of new Baha'is into Baha'i nonns and values, when the Baha'i communities themselves possessed only limited resources in terms of trained and available personnel. These logistical problems were particularly severe in the United States, and there as elsewhere, a proportion of the new converts subsequently ceased to be Baha'is or drifted into inactivity.
There were also intense debates within some of the national Baha'i comm11nities,both about the wisdom of seeking large-scale conversions (and hence relaxing the tra.ditionally strict entrance requirements) and, more implicitly,about the need to maintain the traditional cultural values of those communities. Generally, there was a significant shift in the cultural style of Baha'i activities-including a greater use of music and the development of a more varied range of meetings-as Baha'i communities successfully incorporated a significant proportion of new Baba' is. There were undoubtedly considerable differences in the rates of success in the various communities.
The combination of these external and internal factors resulted in a dramatic downturn in the rate of Baha'i expansion from the mid-1970s onwards (see Table 4). This was despite a large-scale influx of Iranian Baha'is into many Western Baha'i communities following the

Islamic Revolution of 1979. For the West as a whole, the 206% increase of the 1968-1973period was followed by increasesof only 23% and 21% percent for the two following five-year periods (1973-1978, 1978-1983),while for the 1983-1988period, the rate fell even lower to 13%. These figures closely follow changes in the North American community (over 80% of the whole Western Baha'i population for nearly all of this period). Australia and New Zealand, by contrast, maintained a fairly high level of growth 40%, 17%, and 43% respectively for the three successive five-year periods (1973-1978, 1978-1983, 1983-1988)-while European growth (already less marked than the other two regions) fell to 15%, 5%, and 18% for the three periods. By 1988, there were over 200,000 Western Baha'is, as

compared to only 126,500 in 1973, but the rate of growth was appreciably lower.

In conjunction with the lower rate of growth, it is likely that the WesternBaha'i communitieswere more stable in 1988, than they were in 1973. The experience of rapid growth forced them to learn ways of consolidatinglarge numbers of new declarants and subsequentlyof coordinating appreciably larger Baha'i communities.36The apparent trade-off between growth and stability may not always hold, and it may well be that the Western Baha'i communities are now more able to cope successfully with unexpected rapid growth than they were in the early 1970s.Certainly, they continue to seek rapid growth, and the experience of rapid growth seems to have transfonned Western Baha'is' understandingof what is achievable.

Apart from the growth in numbers, the period since the late 1960s has been marked by a major change in the public visibility of Western Baha'i communities.Outside of North America, it seems reasonableto suppose that in the 1960s,the Baha'i Faith was largely unknown to the general public. This is not the case now, as bas been evidenced by the large amount of media coverage the Baha'is have attracted throughout the West in recent years, largely as a result of the combinationof public interest in the persecution of Baha'is in post-revolutionary Iran (1979-) and the Western Baha'is' success in mobilizing media attention.37 The persecutions in Iran have also attracted considerable sympathy from public figures and bodies in the West, as have the issuing of the Universal House of Justice's statement, The Promise of World Peace (1985) and growing Baha'i involvement in socio-economicdevelopment projects.38

The Former Eastern Bloc. The communist regime in Russia and the various communist governments which were established in Eastern Europe after World War II pursued militantly anti-religious policies w.hichprevented Baha'i activities from continuing or starting. The sit-

uation changed dramatically with the collapse of these regimes from 1989 onwards, and the break-up of the Soviet Union (1991). Whereas previously there had been a number of isolated individual Baba'is in several of these countries,organizedmeetings and proclamationevents -such as tours by Westernand Third Worldmusic groups-very rapl'he Baha'f Faith in the We!>-t:ASw-vey

idly led to the growth of Baha'i communities in all these countries. By 1992, a total of 112 local Spiritual Assemblies had been established in the region, and a process of National Assembly formation had begun, with 13 new Assemblies formed by 1998 (Table 3). The countries to have shown the most marked response were Albania and Romania, with large numbers of new Baha.'is. Conditions in the former Yugoslavia proved the most difficult, with National Assembly formation only being possible in Slovenia and Croatia (in 1994, with a joint Assembly).

The Baha'is in the West as an Element in the Overall Development of the Baha'i Faith

THEBAHA'IFAITH is a global religion and the Western Baha'is are only one element in the worldwide population of believers. As a proportion of the whole, the number of Western Baba'is has always been comparatively limited. Up to the 1950s, the Baha'i Faith remained overwhelmingly Iranian in its social base. By the early l 950s, there may have been approximately 200,000 Baha'is worldwide, but no more than l 0,000 were Westerners. 39 The rest were almost all Iranians, including a significant proportion of the Arab and Indian Baba 'i communities. The number of "Third World Baba 'is" outside th.e Islamic heartJand was negligible. This picture changed dramatically when large numbers of Baha'i converts began to be gained in various parts of tbe (non-Islamic) Third World from the late-l 950s onwards .. However, even after the beginnings of large-scale expansion in the West (late-1960s), the number of Western Baha'is remained comparatively small. By 1968, there may have been as many as 1.2 million Baha'is worldwide. Of these, onJy 41,000 were in the West, that is, 3.4 percent of the world total. By 1988, world numbers bad risen to 4.5 million, but Western numbers had only risen to 214,000, or 4.8 percent of the total. 40 Despite small numbers, Western Bah.a'is have played a profoundly significant role in the overall development of the Baha'i religion. This impact has been in terms of its expansion, the development of its administration, and the diversification of its cultural expressions and intellectual life.

Expa,1sion. The importance of the role of Western Baha'is in Baha'i expansion dates from the first establishment of Baha'i groups in the West in the 1890s. This period marked the decisive socio-cultural breakthrough by which the Baha'i movement transcended the Islamic

miljeu of its birth and demonstratedthe transcultural nature of its appeal. Earlier converts outside the Iranian milieu or its cultural outliers in Central Asia and India had been few.

The conversion of Westernersbrought important new resources to the development of the religion. Unlike their Middle Eastern co-religionists, the new Western Baha'is enjoyed religious freedom. They were largely unconstrained by opposition or persecution. They were also comparativelywell-educated and affluent, and more subtly, were members of the dominant high-status culture of most of the world. Not only were they able to undertake the task of propagating the Baha'i Faith within their own societies, but they were able to contribute significantly to the expansion of the religion into new geographicalareas. The geographical.mobilityof some of the WesternBaha'is was a major factor in the religion's further diffusion. By the 1920s, North American Baha'is ha.dalready attempted to establish Baha'i groups in Japan, South Africa, and various parts of Latin America. With the later adoption of systematic planning goals, these efforts were intensified. During the first and second American Seven Year Plans (1937-1944, 1946-1953),a network of American Baha'i "pioneers" was established throughout much of Latin America and the Caribbean. With the British-coordinatedAfrica project (1951-1953) and the Ten Year Crusade (1953-1963), Europeans, Canadians, Australians, and New Zealanders also began to play a significant role in the religion's international expansion, particularly in Africa and the Pacific. Western Baha'is have continu,edto play a disproportionaterole in international Baba'i pioneering up to the present time. Thus, during the International Seven-YearPlan of 1979-1986,there were some 3,694 pioneer moves. Of these, the largest single group was made up of Baha'is of Iranian background (over 1,900), but there were also some 1,100 Americans and Canadians, while the Anglo-Pacific and many of the European communities were also prominent sources of pioneers.41 Apart from pioneering, Western Baha'is have also acted as itinerant religious teachers-most famously, the much-traveled American

journalist, Martha Root (1872-1939) 42 and have visited and encouraged the Baha'i communities in other parts of the world. Even in the early 1900s, Westerners were visiting the Baha'is of Egypt, the Levan~ Iran, Central Asia, and India, their very presence demonstrating the unity and universal appeal of the new religion. They also sought to offer practical assistance in the form of appeals to the Iranian authorities for religious toleran.ce, and the initiation of educational and medical projects among the Iranian Baha'is. 43 Western Baha'is have also acted as an important source of financial resources, both for international ¬?aaha'i projects and in the assistance of man.y of the poorer Baha'i communities of the Third World. The importance of this fman-

cial role has increased since the Islamic revolution in Iran cut off what was traditionally the major source of international Baha'i funding.

Administration. The second major area in which Western Baha'is have made a significant contribution to the development of the Baha'i Faith as a whole has been in relationship to the Administrative Order. Baba' i administrative institutions existed in Iran from an early date, but the modem system of directive Assemblies and their subsidiary institutions, together with the use of systematic planning, was pioneered largely in the West under the guidance of Shoghi Effendi and in consultation with such prominent Western Baha'is as Horace Holley (1887-1960), long-time secretary of the American National Assembly.44 As described above, many administrative innovations were first made in North America and then extended to other Baha'i communities.

Some indication of this leading administrative role can be gained from the figures for Assembly formation. In 1928, despite constituting only a tiny minority of the total Baha'i population, Western Baha'is had formed some sixty-seven percent of the world total of local Spiritual Assemblies (68 out of 102).45 Even by 1987, they still formed over 16% (3,020 out of 19,273), while they constituted less than five percent of the world Baha'i population.46

Table 5: Level of AdministrativeFunctioning (1987)

	Local SpiritualAssemblies reporting that they regularly organize:				
	Nineteen Day Feasts		Assembly Meetings		
	No.	%	No.	%	Total# of LSAs
North America	1,469	69.6	1,368	64.8	2,110
Europe	601	91.1	570	86.4	660
Anglo-Pacific	229	91.6	212	84.8	250
The West	2,299	76.1	2,150	71.2	3,020
World totals	6,476	33.6	5,771	29.9	19,273

Source: Calculated from Department of Statistics, Summary Tables, July 1987.
Note: For areas, see Footnote 1. The figures for Europe exclude Turkey and Soviet Azerbaijan.

Another important indicator is the high level of administrative functioning in the Western Baba' i communities (Table 5).47 Thus, for the West as a whole, 76% of local Assemblies reported in 1987, that they held the regular Nineteen-Day Feast, which is the religious focus of Baha'i community life. Some 71% also reported that the Assembly itself held regular business meetings. Considering that the local Baba' i communities in the West are mostly quite small, and that the Faith

itself has very few professional administrators (and no priesthood), and thus must rely on the voluntary endeavors of its rank and file members, these are impressively high figures. They compare with 34% of Assemblies worldwide holding Feasts and 30% holding regular meetings. These more modest figures reflect the greater difficulty in administrative functioning that is experienced by many Third-World Baha'i communities.

Western prominence in the development of the Administrative Order is partly attributable to the prevailing conditions of religious freedom, which also enabled Baha'i institutions to gain legal recogni-

tion. A second factor was the resourceful and educated nature of the WesternBaha'i po.pulation,a factor that probably accounts for the high level of administrative functioningin the West.

This second factor also enabled Western Baha'is to play a prominent role in the development of the Faith's international and Third-World leadership.Wester11 Baha'is often acted as the primary agents of diffusion of the Baha'i administrative system, and. they were subsequently prominent among the membershipsof both the National Spiritual Assemblies and Auxiliary Boards throughout much of the Third World.Their role has since lessened with the increasing number of indigenous believers in positions of leadership,but Westernersoften still occupy leadership positions in many Baba'1 communities of the Third World.

As regards the Baba'i Faith's international leadership, it is significant that of the thirty-six individuals who were appointed by Sboghi Effendi as Hands of the Cause (1951-1957) or as members of the first International Baha'i Council (1951-1961), twenty-three (sixty-four percent) were Westerners.Of the rest, twelve were Iranian and one was Ugandan. Similarly,of the twenty individuals elected to the second International Baha'i Council (1961-1963) or the Universal House of Justice (from 1963up to 1998),fifteen were Westerners(eleven Americans, two British, one Australian, one Canadian), and five were Iranians (all with strong links outside of Iran). Finally, of the sixty-seven CounselJors appointed in 1980, twenty-six {thirty-ninepercent) were Westerners.4 8

Cultural Expressions. The third area in which Western Baba' is ha.ve played a prominent role in the overall development of the Baba'i Faith has been in the diversification of its cultural expressions and intellectual Jife.49 Even though the early Western Baha'i groups were quite small when they were first established,they significantlyexpanded tbe range of ways in which the Baha'i movement found cultural expression. The Westerngroups were not occidental transplantationsof Iranian or Middle Eastern Baha'i culture. The WesternBaha'is developed

their own cultural expressions of their religion, as for example, in the forms of their meetings and organi:rntions,their use of American Protestant religious styles (such as hymnody), and-most consciously-their development of distinctively Western presentations of

the Baha'i teachings.50 Although some early Western Baha'is were given Persian names by 'Abdu'I-Baha, and there was widespread use of some o.rientalterms, such as the salutation Allah-u-Abha, oriental forms in general were not adopted. Baha'is retained their Westernpersonal names, behavioral styles, dress, and appearance. (This contrasts markedly with the behavior of converts to some other "immigrant" religions.)

The development of distinctively Western presentations of the Baha'i teachings has as yet been little researched. Quite clearly, the Western Baha'is lived in a different cultural and intellectual milieu from their co-religionistsin the Middle East. In reflecting on their new religion and, more specifically, in attempting to present it to their American, British~French, and German compatriots,the early Western Baha'is were necessarily concerned with their own cultural issues. This is quite clearly shown by the types of questions they addressed to 'Abdu'l-Baha. For example. The early text Some Answered Questions (1908) deals with topics such as biblical interpretation,Christian doctrine, evolutionism,reincarnation,spiritual healing, and industrial disputes.5 1 It is also shown by the writings of early Western exponents of Baha'i teachings, such as I. G. Kheiralla, Hippolyte Dreyfus, Charles Mason Remey, Horace Holley, and John E. Esslemont.52 'Abdu'l-Baha took a very active role in shaping the developmentof Baha'i belief in the West, but this development can best be understood as an interactive process between him and his followers. A similar interactive process occurred d.uringthe leadershipof Shoghi Effendi, with individuals such as Holley and George Townshend making major contributions to the development of Baha'i thinking. More recently, the enormous expansion of Western Baha'i secondary literature reflects the continued contribution of Western Baha'is in this area. The prominent role of Westerners in the recent development of Baha'i scholarship should also be noted.

Given the general cultural dominance of the West in the modem world, Western Baha'i ways of doing things have had a major influence on Baha'i communitiesoutside the West.The most important single instance of this has been the emergence of English as the principal language of international Baha'i comm,inication, but it is also expressed in the preeminenceof WesternBaha'i secondary literature and the prominence of Western styles in areas such as form of meetings, dress, and music.

Distribution and Social Composition

DETAIi.ED STATISTICS for the number and distribution of Western Baha'is are not readily available, but su.chdata as we now have sug' gest three generalizations: I) there has been a marked and persistent disparity between expansio.nin various parts of the West, most notably between North America and Europe; 2) within Europe, success has varied considerably between different parts of the continent; and 3) apart from certain exceptional areas and despite t.herecent larger number of conversions, the Baha'i population in the West remains small.

Area Contrasts. The Baha'i Faith in the West began in the United States, but from there diffused fairly rapidly to Canada and the major states of Europe. Despite this widespread diffusion, the Baha'i groups in Europe, and later in Australia and New Zealand, remained minute until after the Seco.ndWorld War.The United States remained the only WesternBaha'i community of any size. There was then slow, but sustained expansion in many countries until the 1960s and the start of the period of mass teaching.The overallrates of increaseduring this period varied between countries, with those for Australia, New Zealand, and North A.m.ericagreatly exceeding that for Europe.

Table 6: Baha'i Population Densities by Area (1988)

	Estimated Baha'i population('000s)	Baha'is per million	Estimated Total population (millions)
North America	179.0	658	272
Europe	24.5	68	358
Australia/ New Zealand	10.0	500	20
The West	213.5	328	650

Sources: Calculated from Departmentof Statistics, 1988 Memorandum.Population figures taken from Population Reference Bureau, J988 WorldPopulation Data Sheet (Washington.D.C., April 1988).

Note: These figures exclude Cyprus and Hawaii and the population figures for Europe only include those countries in which there were organizedBaha'i communities.All the then Communiststates are therefore excluded.

The comparative situation in the three component areas (North America, Europe, and Australia-New Zealand) in 1988 is shown in Table 6. What is of note here is not only that the North American Baha' is (c. 179,000) then constituted some eighty-four percent of the Western Baha'i population (Europeans, 11.5% with c. 24,500; Australians and New Zealanders, 4.7% with c. 10,000), but that within their own area, the North American Baha' is had the highest population density, with some 658 Baha'is per million, compared with 68 per million in non-communist Europe and 500 per million for Australia and

New Zealand. Clearly, there was (and still is) a marked contrast between the fairly high degree of penetration of their societies which the North American, Australian, and New Zealand Baha'is .have attained, and the low degree attained by their European co-religionists.

Country Comparisons. The degree of penetration a religious group has achieved within a particular society is an important measure of success. In the case of the Baha'is, population density figures on a country-by-country basis are not at present available. It is therefore useful to introduce an alternative measure of degree of penetration, namely, the number ofBaha 'i local Spiritual Assemblies per million population (see Table 7). 53

Table 7: Baha'i Populationand Assembly Densities by Area (1987-1988)

	Baba'is per million (1988)	LSAs per million (1987)	Baba'is per LSA
North America	658	7.8	85
Europeb	68	1.8	37
Australia/ New Zealand	500	11.2	45
The West	328	4.6	71

Sources: Calculated from Department of Statistics, 1988 Memorandum; idem, Summary Tables, July 1987; and Population Reference Bureau, 1988 World Population Data Sheet.
Note: a. These figures exclude Cyprus and Hawaii;
b. "Europe" excludes the Communist states.

These figures again show a clear contrast between the relatively high degree of penetration in North America (7.8 AssembJjes per nullioo) and Australia/New Zealand (I 1.2), and the low degree of penetration in non-commurust Europe (1.8). The .Particularly high figure for Australia/New Zealand is accounted for by the much smaller average size of their local communities (45 Baha,is per Assembly as com.-pared to North America's 85 per Assembly).

Table 8: Assembly Densities for North America and the Anglo-Pacific (1987)

	Local Spiritual Assemblies	LSAs per million population	Total population (millions, 1988 est.)
Canada	344	J 3.2	26.l
United States (contiguous states)	1,698		
Alaska	68		
Hawaii	26		
U.S. total	1,792	7.3	246.1

Australia	164	9.9	16.5
New Zealand	60	18.2	3.3
Totals	2,360	8.1	292.0

Sources: Department of Statistics, Summary Tables, July 1987, and Population Reference Burea~ 1988 World Population Data Sheet.

In terms of individual differences between countries (Tables 8 and 9). we may note that the highest Assembly densities were in Iceland (60) and Luxembourg (30). These were then followed by the four non-European states: New Zealand, Canada, Australia, and the United States (ranging from 18.2 to 7 .3). Of the remaining European states, seven had densities over 3.0: Cyprus, Ireland, Switzerland, Norway~ Finland, the United Kingdom, and Sweden; five had densities between 1.8 (the European average) and 2.5: Austria, Malta, Denmark, Portugal, and the Netherlands; and six had densities of 1.5 or less: Spain,

Table 9: Assembly Densities for Europe (1987)*

Local Spiritual Assemblies	LSAs per million population	Total popula- tion (millions, 1988 est.)	Religion3
Austria	19	2.5	7.6 C
Belgium	14	1.4	9.9 C
Canary Islands	11		
Cyprus	5	7.1	0.7 0/M
Denmark	12	2.4	5.1 P
Finland	17	3.5	4.9 P
France	30	0.5	55.9 C
Germany (Federal Republic)	89	1.5	61.2 PIC
Greece	4	0.4	IO.I 0
Iceland	12	60.0	0.2 P
Ireland	19	5.4	3.5 C
Italy	52	0.9	57.3 C
Luxembourg	12	30.0	0.4 C
Malta	1	2.5	0.4 C
Netherlands	27	1.8	14.7 P/C
Norway	15	3.6	4.2 P
Portugal	25	2.4	10.3 C
Spain	46		
Sweden	27	3.2	8.4 P
Switzerland	31	4.7	6.6 P/C
United Kingdom	188	3.3	57.l P
Otberb	4		C
Total	660	1.8	357.5
Protestant	418	2.6	162.4

Catholic/Orthodox 242 1.2 195.1
Sources: Department of Statistics, Summary Tables, July 1987, and Population Reference Bureau, J988 WorldPopulation Data Sheet.
Notes: a. C-Ode: C = PredominantlyRoman Catholic
0 = PredominantlyEastern Orthodox
P = PredominantlyProtestant
0/M = Orthodox majority with large Muslim minority
P/C = Protestant majority with large Catholic minority
b. Andorra, Liechtenstein,Monaco, San Marino.
' Eastern Europe and Russia are not included.

West Germany, Belgi11m, Italy, France, and Greece. Of note is the complete absence of any local Assemblies in then communist Eastern Europe.

The only clear pattern that emerges from these figures is the higher densities for the non-European states and a general tendency for those European states that are predominantly Protestant to have higher Assembly densities than those that are predominantly Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox (2.6 as compared with 1.2). Even here, there are important exceptions, as in the case of Catholic Ireland (5.4) and West Germany (1.5) with its Protestant majority. Further research is evidently needed, but no general theory to account for¬?these differences as yet presents itself. There are, however, a number of factors that may be relevant.

The most evident of these is government opposition to religious missionary activity. Generally speaking, unless a religion is already well established in a society, effective government opposition will prevent or greatly restrict its expansion. Such certainly was the case for the Baha'is of Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Eastern Europe until the political liberalization of their countries.

A second factor that appears to be relevant is the Baha'i emphasis on achieving widespread diffusion of their religion. The establishment of even one local Assembly in a country or territory with a small population will produce a high Assembly de.nsity figure (e.g. Malta with one Assembly and a density of 2.5). Generally then, those countries with very small populations tend to have higher density figures, as in the cases of Luxembourg (30) and Iceland (60), both of which have populations of less than one million. There is still a great deal of variation between countries of similar popuJation size, however, as for example, between the United Kingdom (3.3) and Italy (0.9), both with populations of (then) 56 million, or as between Portugal (2.4) and Greece (0.4), both with populations of IO million.

A third possible factor is the degree to which a particular culture accepts alternative forms of religiosity. Those states in which there is considerable religious diversity (such as those of North Am.erica and

the Anglo-Pacific) generally have higher densities than those in which there is little diversity and in which conversion to a non-traditional religion is correspondingly a more socially deviant act. This is a difficult relationship to establish with any degree of certainty, however; and

there are notable exceptions such as Catholic-majority Portugal and Ireland. Local factors are also undoubtedly of considerable importance. However, a full consideration of such factors will require more research.

Size. The differences in Assembly densities and the differences in degree of penetration they reflect are important, but they also need to be put in the context of the overall small size of the Western Baha'i communities, particularly in Europe. Even in North America, the Baha'i population represents only some 0.066 percent oftbe total population, and the EuropeanBaha'i population represents less than 0.007 percent of its total population.54Considering that this is after ninety years of Baha'i activity in the West, these are not high figures-particularly when compared with some parts of the Third World where the historical depth of Baba'i expansion is much more recent. Thus, in 1986, of thirty-four listed countries or territories with an adult Baha'i population equal to or in excess of l % of the total adult population, only one Alaska, with 1.43% was in the West, the rest being in Africa (four), Asia (three), Latin America and the Caribbean(twelve), and the Pacific Islands (fourteen).55

Social composition. T.herehave been few studies of the social composition of the Western Baha'is, but the overall impression is that until comparatively recently, urban, middle-class, white Protestants were the predominant group in most Western Baha'i communities.The following section provides an overview of five socio-demographicvariables: (i) gender, (ii) age, (iii) class and occupation, (iv) race and ethnicity, and (v) religious background.56

(I) GENDER

Females have generally outnumbered males. The predominanceof females is apparent in a variety of surveys, sample surveys and censuses (Table 10). Approximately two-thirds of the American converts prior to 1900were female,57 and a similar proportion is shown in studies of AmericanBaba' is up to the 1950s,as also of Danish Baba' is in the late 1950s. More recent data for the 1979-1981period from Britain, New

Zealand, Denmar~ and Los Angeles shows a slight predominance of females over males (54-56%). Only one data set (Austria, 1976) shows

a female minority (44%). In the Danish case, this more equal sex ratio is partly due to the incorporation of Iranian Baha'is into the community, the native Danish Baba,is being 59% female.58 It is of note that despite their smaller number, men have tended to be predominant in

Table 10: Gender Composition of Various Baha'i Populations

Year and Place	Female(%)	N	Source
U.S., 1906	65.8	1280	U.S., 1906 Census
U.S., 1916	66.9	27238	U.S., 1916 Census
U.S., 1936	67.4	5258	U.S., 1936 Census
New York, 1953	61.1	90	Berger
Denmark, 1959	66.0	50	Warburg
Austria, 1976	44	(349)	f iscber-Kowalski & Bucek
Los Angeles, 1979	53.9	1158	Smith
U.K., 1979	55.0	1498	Smith
New Zealand, 1979	55.6	356	Ross (N.Z. norm = 50.08)
Denmark, 1981	56.0	184	Warburg

Sources: United States, Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, Census of Religious Bodies, 1906, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1910);¬?united States, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the
Census, Census of ReligiottS Bodies, 1916, 2 vols. (Washington, O.C., Government Printing Office, 1919); idem, Census of Religious .Bodies, 1936. Berger, "From Sect to Church: A Sociological Interpretation of the Bah!'i Movement." Ph.D. dissertation (New School for Social Research, New York, 1954);Margit Warburg, "The Circle" (this volume); Marina Fischer-Kowalski and Josef Bucek, Structuren der socia/en Ungleichheit in fiJsterreich, Teil II: Endbericht,
Band 2 (Vienna, Bundersmi.nisterium fiir Wissenscbaft und Forschung, 1978); Peter Smith, "A Sociological Study of the Babi and Baha'i Religions," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Lancaster, 1982); Margaret J. Ross, "Some Aspects of the Bahti'i Faith in New Zealand," M.A. thesis (University of Auckland, 1979).
Notes: See footnote S6.
a. Totals represent the number of males plus females rather than the total number reported.

Western Baha'i leadership roles. However, women have always constituted an important minority of leaders. More detailed statistics are not at present available to the author, but as of 1988, some 37% of National SpiritualAssembly members and 42% of Auxiliary Board members in the Americas as a whole (that is, includingLatin America) were women. The comparable figures for Europe were 28% and 31%, and for Australasia as a whole 26% for both.59

(n) AGE

Most of the early surveys of Baha'i membership concentratedon adult members. Indeed. for many years there was a tendency for only adult Baha'is to be fully incorporated into the Western communities. The predominance of adults is indicated in the 1936-1937 American data in Table 11, with only a little over 1% of the sample being aged less than twenty-one.Also of note is that a majority (65%) of the sample is over the age of forty. It has been noted that the early Australian Baha'i community was also predominantly middle-agedor elderly.60

Table 11: Age Distributionsof Various Baha'i Populations

Age Group	North America, 1936-37 (0/4)	United Kingdom, 1979 (%)	Los Angeles, 1979 (o/o)
0-14	0.4	2.7	2.5
1.3	19.6	18.6	
15-20	0.9	16.9	16.1
21-30	12.9	29.7	23.7
33.2	43.2	45.7	
31-40	20.3	13.5	22.0
41-50	22.9	19.6	13.6
42.6	30.4	22.9	
51-60	19.7	10.8	9.3
Over60	22.8	6.8	12.7
N =542	N = 148	N = 118	

Sources: Smith, "Sociological Study," p. 438. See footnote 56.

Modem Western Baha'i communities have generally shown a very different age structure, with a general predominance of those under the age of 41. During the 1970s at least, there was also a significant proportion under the age of 21. The two data sets given for 1979 (United Kingdom and Los Angeles) are probably not untypical, each with almost 20% in the 0-20 age group and well over 40% in the 21-40 group. In each population, there is a substantial proportion in the 41-60 age group (30% and 23% respectively), but a relatively small percentage over the age of 60 (7% and 13%). The method of data collection is likely to have excluded a large number of Baha'i children from these two samples, so the overall youthfulness of modem Baha'i populations is likely to be understated.

(Ill) CLASS AND OCCUPATION

The early American Baha'i community appears to have been generally middle class.61 Certainly, those who were prominent within it included many business and professional men or their wives. It was also largely urban at a time when most Americans were still living in

small towns and rural areas. There were, however, marked differences between the various Baha'i communities. 62 Chicago may have been predominantly middle-class. Thus, in 1899, out of 236 Chicago Baha'is whose occupation is known (out of a total Baha'i community of about 790), sixty-five (28%) were professionals (doctors, teachers, engineers and lawyers, etc.), twenty (8%) of the men were in business, fifty-five (23%) were clerks, stenographers or bookkeepers, and a number were skilled artjsans. There were none of the very rich or the highly educated. Nor were there any factory workers. 63 By contrast with Chicago, the Baha'i community of Kenosha, Wisconsin, seems to have been predominantly working-class. In 1899, out of eighty-one Baba'is whose occupation is known (out of a total Baha'i community of about 191), forty-three were "employees," "laborers," or machinists. There were also a small number of skilled artisans, engineers and small businessmen. 64 Information on other local Baha'i communities is more sketchy. New York City and some of the other East Coast communities included Baha'is who were prominent businessmen and professionals or who were members of the social elite, but there were also clerks and skilled artisans. The Cincinnati community appears to have resembled Chicago in its social composition; that of Racine (Wisconsin) resembled Kenosha.65

Table 12: Occupational Composition of Various Baha'i Populations

Occupational Category	New York 1953		Los Angeles 1979		United Kingdom 1979		New Zealand 1979	
	No.	%	No.	o/o	No.	%	No.	
Professional	37	41.6	26	22.0	37	25.9	65b	18.4
Business and Administration	8	9.0	15	12.7	12	8.4	14	4.0
Clerical	22	24.7	19	16. l	13	9.1	45	12.7
Skilled Manual	6	6.7	3	2.6	6	4.2	35	9.9
Semi-/Unskilled Manual	3	3.4	7	5.9	5	3.5	34	9.6
Students	-	-	20	17.0	38	26.6	43	12.2
Housewives	10	11.2	8	7.3	24	16.8	84	23.8
Retired	1	I.I	11	10.0	7	4.9	22	6.2
Non/unemployed	2	2.2	I	0.9	I	0.7	ll	3.1
Totals	89	100.0	110	100.0	143a	100.0	353	100.0

Sources: Berger, "From Sect to Church," p. 131; Ross, "Baha'i Faith in New Zealand" (adapted);Smith, "SociologicalStudy."See footnote 56.
Notes: Occupational categories for the Los Angeles and United Kingdom samples derived from Gabriel Kolko, Wealth and Power in America: A11Analysis of Social Class and Income Distribuh¬?on (New York:Praeger, 1962).

’ a. Excludes7 school children
b. Includes IO "artists"

The predominantly middle class status of many Western Baha'i communities is also suggested by some more recent data on occupational distribution for populations or sample populations in several countries (Tables 12 and 13). Of these, the sample surveys of New York, Los Angeles, and the United Kingdom most clearly reveal a predominance of professional, business, administrative and clerical occupations, together with a sizeable number of (potentially middle-class) college students in the latter two cases. Taken together, these groups constitute some 75% (New York), 73% (Los Angeles) and 70% (U.K.)

of the sample populations. By contrast, the combined totals for skilled, and semi- and unskilled manual workers amounts to only about one-tenth of each sample (l 0%, 9%, and 8% respectively). By contrast, the New Zealand survey reveals a much larger pro-portion of manual workers (19.5%) and unemployed (3.1 %). Even here, students and the middle-class occupations comprise 47% of the population. It may also be that many in the large category of housewives (23.8% in New Zealand) are also members of middle-class households, but this is uncertain.

Table 13: Occupational Composition of the Baha'is of Austria (1976) (National figures in parentheses)

Occupational Category	o/o
School children and students	33.3 (22.2)
Worken	5.4 (20.0)
Clerical and civil servants	28.0 (16.7)
Self-employed	14.0 (6.7)
Housewives	16.1 (10.0)
Pensioners	3.2 (24.2)
Total	100.0 (l 00.0)

Source: Adapted from Fisher-Kowalski and Bucek, Strocturen der socio/en Ungleichheit in 0sterreich, p. 22, excluding the category of pre-school cbjldren (Baha'i: 7%; national: 10%).

The Austrian data (Table 13) is less easy to interpret, the category of "workers" being quite vague, and the categories of school children (non-class specific) and college students being combined. However, the contrast between the Baha'i and national figures is clear, the Baba 'is having an appreciably larger proportion of clerical workers and civil servants (I .7 times as many), self-employed (x 2.1), and housewives (x 1.6), but an appreciably smaller proportion. of "work-

ers" (x 0.27). A marked difference in age structure is also suggested, the Baha'is having 1.5 times as large a proportion of school children and students as the nation as a whole, but only about one-tenth of the proportion of pensioners.

As between the various middle-classcategories,the largest in each case is that of professionals(the less specific Austrian data is here excluded), business, administrativeand.clerical categories being significantly less well represented. Within the category of professionals, no one type of profession is consistently over-represented.In Berger's New York.study, seventeen out of the thirty-seven professionals (almost baJf) were identified as members of the "marginal intelligentsia," a type which Berger implied might be particularly attracted to the Baha'i teachings.66 This type is less well representedin the Los Angeles (eleven out of twenty-six) and British (five out of thirty-seven) samples, but it is notable that ten out of the sixty-five New Zealand professionals were specifically identified as "artists." Another type well representedis that of the medical and "caring" professions.These comprisednineteen out of thirty-sevenin Britain, thirteenout ofthirty-seven in New York, and six out of twenty-six in Los Angeles. Another indicationof the predominantlymiddle-classcomposition of Western Baha'i communities is provided by the high educational levels recorded in several sets of survey data. We find 28.5% and 26.6%, respectively, of participants in the British and New Zealand surveys had either received or were receiving degree level education (8.6 percent of the British sample at higher degree level), and a further 12.6% of the British sample had received or were in pursuit of other higher certificates.67 An American (1968) and the New Zealand surveys also recorded significantly higher educational levels among the Baha'is than in the national popu1ations.68Of those taking or possessing degrees, no particular subject bias was discernible in the British sample.

A third indication of at least the British Baha'is' middle-class status lies in their readership of newspapers. Of 151 individuals, forty-one obtained copies of one or more "quality" dailies (Guardian, Telegraph,or 1imes), while a further seventeen only obtained copies of a Sunday quality paper or periodical (especially the American Tzme magazine). Of those who did not obtain quality papers, ten obtained copies of the up-market tabloids (Express and Mail), seven obtained

copies of other popular dailies, and 76 reported reading no national newspapers at all. No marked political bias was discernible in the choice of papers. Sixty-nine individuals also subscribed to one or more

magazines, but no overall trend seemed evident in their choice. 69
As to class mobility, only the British sample survey contained pertinent data, although the high rate of non-response (36%) to the question about parental occupation must cast doubt on its usefulness. Of those who responded to this question, most of those employed (thirty-one out of forty-eight) had fathers in the same occupational category as themselves; 68.0% of the fathers were categorized as professional or business, 3.1% as clerical, and 28.9% as manual. Despite the low response rate, some definite upward mobility is suggested by these figures. While only eleven individuals were currently in manual occupations, at least twenty-eight had fathers who were so engaged. 70
These various data sets are indicative of what has probably been the prevailing class composition of most (if not all) Western Baha'i communities for most of their history. That is, while there has always been some diversity of class membership, middle-class groups have always been disproportionately over-represented, even when they have not constituted an absolute majority of the membership. By contrast, working-class and socially elite groups have been greatly underrepresented. This is not necessarily a fixed pattern. The conversion of members of North American minority groups-notably reservation-living Amerindians and rural southern black Americans, both groups which have been at the bottom of the North American class structure-indicates that the potential appeal of the Baha.'i Faith in the West is not limited to a single class category. The long-tenn success of the Baha'is in appealing to such groups and successfully incorporating them fully into their community structures has yet to be adequately assessed, however. Given that middle-class leadership and cultural styles appear to continue to be dominant within Western Baba' i communities, it may well be that members of these minority groups who are more upwardly mobile will be fully integrated, while others who are not will be merely encapsulated as members of essentially marginal enclaves within the community as a whole. 71 The geographical localization of the majority of these minority group members could well encourage such encapsulization.

(IV) RACEAND ETHNICITY

In North America, the overwhelming majority of early Baha'is were white, but some black converts were made from the J 890s onwards. The Baha'i teachings concerning racial equality distinguished it from most other white-dominatedAmerican religious organizations of the time. Black Baha'is became a significant minority of Baha'i membership.By the 1930s, some 7% of the community was black, as were 13% of a sample of newly declared Baha'is in 1968(Table 14).72 Since then, the proportion of black Baba'is has massively increased, not only in the southern states where large-scaleenrollments have oc-

curred, but also in urban communitiessuch as Los Angeles (Table 14), where 23% of the sample were black.

Table 14: Racial and National Composition
or VariousBaha'i Populations

Racial/National Category	N America 1936-37		US enrollments December 1968		Los Angeles 1979		UK 19798	
	No.	%	% (U.S. average)		No.	%	No.	%
American (US)								
Black	40	6.7	13	(10.55)	27	22.9		
White	554	92.2	87	(87.77)	40	33.9		
(exd lrania.ns)								
British (UK)							91	60.3
Iranian/Middle Eastern	5	0.8			38	32.2	48	31 .8
Other	2	0.3	0	(1.68)	6	5.1	ll	7.3
Non-response			-	-	7	5.9	1	0.7
Total	601	100.0	(N = 160)		118	100.0	151	100.0

Sources: Hampson, "Growth and Spread," p. 347; Smith, ~'sociologicalStudy," p. 436. See footnote 56.
Note: a. British figures by nationalityrather than "race."

Althoughfewerin numbers,NativeAmericanshaveaJsocometo constitutea distinctive (but localized)minority within the North Amer-

ican Baha'i communities. This has particularly been the case in Canada, where in the early 1960s, Amerindians comprised as much as one-quarter of the Baha'i community. 73
Of white Americans, the majority of early Baba' i converts were of northwest European origin, whether native-born or recent immigrants (there were appreciable numbers of both). 14 By national origin, the largest group was of British stock (33% of the 1936-1937 sample, and 38% of those sample members that had become Baha'is by 1919), followed by Germans (15% and 34% respectively) and Scandinavians (7% and 8%). Almost all were former Protestants. T.he Irish and eastern and southern European groups-mostly non-Protestants, and who at that time were of much lower social status--were little represented. Outside North America, at present we have little data. In common with Baha'i teaching endeavors throughout the rest of the world, Western minority groups have often been specially targeted for teaching. Thus, in Europe alone, Baha'i literature has been produced in some seventy separate languages and dialects, 75 and systematic attempts have been made to gain converts among such groups as the Lapps (Same), Romany, and Chinese. However, apart from refugees from Portugal's former African territories and Turkish migrants, significant numhers of

conversions do not appear to have taken place. The British Baha'i community may be indicative here, the substantial minorities of peoples of Afro-Caribbean, South Asian, or Chinese origin or descent being almost entirely unrepresented. ln my 1979 sample survey (Table 14), there was a small "new-commonwealth" element (most of the 7.3% "other"), but most of these were students or medical workers from the Indian Ocean islands and Malaysia, and were likely to have become Baha'is before their arrival in Britain. Greater success in teaching minority peoples bas been achieved in the Anglo-Pacific, not only in the cosmopolitan state of Hawaii, but also in New Zealand and Australia, where there are numbers of Maori and Aboriginal Baba' is. Of considerable importance in almost all Western Baha'i communities are numbers oflranjan Baha'is. lraniaos have constituted an active element in some Western Baha'i communities since the early 1900s. But it is only since the troubled years which led up to the Islamic Revolution in Iran (1979) that large numbers of Iranians have settled in the West. In the British and Los Angeles sample surveys, Iranians constituted close to one third of the populations (32% in each),

and it is likely that in some communitiesthe proportion is even higher. The effect of this influx has varied considerably.While in some communities the Iranian Baha'is have become an active and well-integrated element within the Baba'i population as a whole, it is evident that this has not always occurred, and that major cultural divisions developed at least initially within some Western communities between indigenous and Iranian Baha'is. Studies in Britain and Italy suggest that, in those countries at least, the Iranian immigrantsbecame well integrated quite quickly in terms of administrativeinvolvement in their host Baba'i comm\1oities.There was also a high level of intermarriage between the Iranians and local Baha'is. 76

(v) RELIGIOUSBACKGROUND

Excluding Iranian Baha'i immigrants, the majority of Western Baba'is are first-generationconverts. In the United States, in particular, there are families that have been Baha'i for several generations, but these are a minority in the Baha'i population as a whole. Some indication of this is provided by the data in Table 15. Excluding Middle Easterners from the Los Angeles and British samples (i.e., reading columns 4b and Sb), those of Baha'i background in each survey are in the range of 4.5% to 7%.

Until fairly recently,the vast majority of Westernerswho became Baha'is were of Protestant background. This was true throughout the West, and in Europe was reflected in the much slower growth of the religion in those countries that are predominantlyRoman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox. Greater numbers of Catholic converts have been

gained in recent years, but overall, Protestants (active or nominal) still constitute the predominant source of new Western Baba'is outside of the former Communist states. This predominance is reflected in Table 15. Again excluding Iranians from the Los Angeles and British samples, the percentage of Protestants in the surveys ranges from 41.3% (Los Angeles) to 65% (USA, 1968),while the percentage of Catholics ranges from 5.2% (North America, 1936-37) to 15% (USA, 1968). Several surveys also record an appreciable percentage of individuals (6.0%-16.6%)who identified themselves only as having been "Christians," but whom it might be assumed were Protestants.As regards the type of Protestants that have become Baha'is, it would appear that, at

Table 15: PreviousReUgiousAffiliations of VariousBaha'i Populations,1934-1979

1	2	3	4	5		
North America 1936-7(’/4)	New York 1953 ¬æ (a)	U.S.A. 1968 % (b) Non-	Los Angeles 1979 (a)	(b)	United Kingdom 1979	
Religion	TotaJ Iranians (o/o)	Total 0 /4	British ’;. Nationals (%)			
Baha'i	4.5	5.6	7	35.6	5	35.8 5.5
Catholic	5.2	7.8	15	7.6	11.3	6.6 8.8
Protestant	56.9	54.5	65	28.9	41.3	28.5 46.1
"Christian"	16.6	-	6.8	JO	6.0	8.8
Jewish	2.5	16.7	4	9.3	13.8	2.0 3.3
OtherWestern groups	6.5	2.2	-	2.5	3.8	4.6 6.6
Eastern religions	0.8	l .I	-	2.5	3.8	6.6 5.5
No religion	7.0	12.2	7	7.6	11.3	10.6 l 5.4
Mixed	-	-	3	-	-	- -
(N=<iOI)	(N=90)	(N=l60)	(N=ll8)	(N=80)	(N=l51)	(N=91)

Sources: Berger, "From Sect to Church," pp. 133-34; Hampson, "Growth and Spread," p. 347; Smith1 "Sociological Study," p. 440. See footnote 56.

least in Britain and North America, the majority has been drawn from the mainstream churches and denominations, rather than from the smaller and less conventional Protestant groups. Some indication of

this is provided in Table 16, whlch shows some 33% of the sample being drawn from the main "Anglo-Saxon" churches, while a further 11% is drawn from the "German/Scandinavian" Lutheran churches. The relatively Largeproportion (5%) of ultra-liberal Unitarians and Universalists is also of note in this sample of early Baha'is.

Table 16: Religious Backgrounds of a Group of Early American Baba'is

"Christian"	28	
Episcopalian	16	Total "main
Methodist	16	denominations"
Congregationalist	JO	=64
Presbyterian	16	Total assumed
Baptist	6	Protestant
Lutheran	21	= 137
Unitarian/ Universalist	10	
"Protestant"	11	
Other Protestant	3	
Catholic	7	
Swedenborgian	l	Total
Christian Science	3	"metaphysical"
New Thought	l	=6
Theosophy	l	
Mormon	l	
Jewish	2	
Muslim	2	
Baha'i	27	
None	10	
Insufficient data	5	

Source: Peter Smith, ~'The AmericanBaha'i Community.1894-1917: A Preliminary Survey" in Moojan Momen, ed., Studies in Babi and Baha'i History, Vol. 1 (Los Angeles, KalimatPress, 1982) p. 120. Calculated from a sampleof 1936 "Baha'i Historical Record Cards." See footnote56.

The survey data includes an appreciable number of marginal- and non-Christians. In Table 15, these comprise Jews (2.5% to 4% in the country surveys excluding Iranians, 13.8% and 16.7% in the Los Angeles and New York City samples); Eastern religions (mostly Buddhist or Indian, 0% to 5.5%); unorthodox Western religious groups such as the Latter-Day Saints (Monnons) and Christian Scientists (2.25 to

6.5%); and individuals without a former religion (7% to 15.4%). The Largeproportion of the non-religious and, in certain localities, Jews is

noteworthy. Of those drawn from the unorthodox Western. groups, the majority in the earlier American samples (North America, 1936-1937; New York, 1953) were former members of the various "metaphysical" groups such as Christian Science, New Thought, and Spiritualism. The large number of early converts drawn from this background bas also been noted in more qualitative research accounts. 77 Jn the more recent surveys, there is a greater range of unorthodox backgrounds, severaJ former Latter-Day Saints being included.

It is not yet possible to generalize about the former theological orientations of Western Baha'is. Certainly, many of the early American Baha 'is were religious liberaJs, as may be evidenced by the appreciable number of Unitarian-UniversaJists and metaphysical group members among the early converts. Again, few if any extremely conservative or fundamentalist Christians appear to have been converted during the period covered by this survey. A range of attitudes is evident among both the early Western Baha'is and their modem-day successors, however. Liberal, conservative, and fundamentalist orientations are discernible, and it is likely that these distinctive attitudes are at least partly traceable to the pre-Baha'i worldviews of the adher-
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ents. This is a topic that requires further research. The level of previ-
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I ous religious activity and involvement is another factor of interest. Again, generalization is not yet possible, beyond noting a considerable
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range: from those who formerly had little religious involvement to those who had been highly active religiously, whether as orthodox Christians or as religious seekers.

Conclusion

FURTHER STUDY of the various Western Baha'i communities is evidently necessary. As yet, we have comparatively little material on which to base any detailed account of the development of the Baha'i Faith in the West or to describe its present character. Of course, this is not an isolated lacunae: Baha'i Studies as a whole has tended so far-to focus on the history and texts of the earlier "heroic age" of

Baha'i development, and to neglect both more recent developments and more sociologicalperspectives.I would hope that the present summary has the value of alerting readers to some of the research questions that need to be addressed, and of encouraging other researchers to take up the work of examining them. Certainly,despite the comparatively small number of Baha'is in the West, Western Baba'is and Western Baha'i communitieshave played a major role in the development of the Baha'i Faith. As such, they constitute an important topic

of enquiry.Again, in terms of the history and sociology of religions in the West, the Baha'i Faith is surely of interest, constituting as it does an example of a non-Christian religious movement which has succeeded in becoming part of Westernreligiosity, having sustained itself in the West for over a centu.ry,and having now established itself in every part of the Western world.

NOTES

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particular thanks are also due to Dr. Moojan Momen and Dr. Ahang Rabbani for their assistance. This paper was prepared in 1997 and it bas not been possible to
update it.

1. Peter Smith, The Babi and Baha'i Religions: From Messianic Shi'ism to a World Religion (Cambridge University Press, 1987) pp. 162-71. The term "West" refers collectively to North America, Europe, and the Anglo-Pacific. North America refers to the continental United States and Canada, i.e., including Alaska, but excluding Hawaii. Puerto Rico and other U.S. Caribbean territoriesare not included.Europe here refers to tbe countries of Westernand Eastern Europe, together with the European part of Russia. It also includes Cyprus. The former Soviet Caucasian republics and Turkey are excluded, despite this latter country being included as part of Europe in recent Baba'i statistical digests. European external dependencies {e.g., French overseas departmentsin the Caribbean)are also excluded,with the exceptionof Greenland. The Anglo-Pacific refers to Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii. The boundariesof the first two areas are delineated in Smith, TheBabi and Baha'i Religions, Map 2. Baha'i usage has varied over time, and in some of the figures cited here, the relatively small Baha'i communityof Hawaii is included with North America. In several instances, because of conflicting area definitions, both Hawaii and Cyprus (also a very small Baha'i community)are excluded altogether from statistical tables in the present article.

2. On Kheiralla and the early establishment of the Baha'i religion in North America, see Richard Hollinger, ..Ibrahim George Kheiralla and the Baha'i Faith in America" in Juan R. Cole and Moojan Momen, eds., From Iran East and West. Studies in Babf and Baha ¬?; History, Vol. 2 {Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1984) pp. 95-133; and Robert H. Stockman, The Baha 'l Faith in America, Vol. l: Origins, I 892-1900 (Wilmette, Ill.: Baba 'f Publishing Trust, 1985).

3. Stockman, Baha'i Faith in An1erica, p. 163. These included a Baha'i group in Washington, D.C. On numbers, see also Richard Hollinger, "The Baha'i Faith

in America, 1894-1900," paper presented at the Second Los Angeles Baha'i History Conference, August-September 1984; and Peter Smith, "The American Baha'i Community, 1894-1917: A Preliminary Survey" in Moojan Momen, ed., Studies in Babi and Baha'i History, Vol. 1 (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1982) pp. 203-204.

4. On the Behaists, see Richard Hollinger, "The Behaists of America," unpublished paper.

5. For a general account of this period, see Smith, "American Baha'i Community," pp. 85-223, and Robert Stockman, The Bah.ti'i Faith in America, Vol. 2: Early Expansion, 1900-1912 (Oxford: George Ronald, 1995). See also Smith, Babi and Baha'i Religio11s,pp. 100-114.

6. United States, Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, Census of Religious Bodies, 1906, Vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, l 910) pp. 41-42.

7. On the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar project, see Bruce Whitmore, The Dawning Place: The Building of a Temple, The Forging of a North American Bah<i'i Community (Wilmette, Ill.: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1984).

8. Sociologists and Baha'is have developed varying definitions for the basic so-
ciological terms ..community" and "group." For modem Baba'is, "community" refers to any centrally administered collectivity of BabA’is (e.g., the local Baha'i community of Los Angeles, the nationaJ Baha'i community of Canada, the world Baha'i community). "Baha'i International Community" refers to the collective representation of the Baha'i Faith at the United Nations
and its related bodies. "Group" is used by modem Baha'is to refer to a local body of Baha'is that has not yet formed a local Spiritual Assembly. By contrast, sociologists generally use the term "community" to refer to a relatively large group of people \Vho live and work together, and whose basic needs are largely satisfied within the group, e.g., a local village community. The term "group" is used to refer to any number of people who interact together and have some sense of shared identity, e.g., a family, a formal organization (such as the Baha'i Faith), or a community. The present work employs the modem Baba'(usage of "community." Most Baha'i "communjties" are not in fact communities in a sociological sense, but the term is both ubiquitous in Baha'i literature and is of use as a general referent. However, the Baha'i usage of the
term "group" is overly technical in tbe present context, and the more general sociological usage is retained.

9. The most detailed account of' Abdu' I-Baba 's visit to North America is Mirza
Mahmud Zarqani, Kitab-i Badayi 'u 'I-Athar, 2 vols. (Hofheim-Langenhain:

Baha'i-Verlag, reprinted from the original 1928 edition). An English translation of this work has recently become available: Mahmuds Diary. Trans. by

Mohi Sobhani and Shirley Macias (Oxford: George Ronald, 1998). See also H. M Balyuzi, 'Abdu'l-Baha: The Centre of the Covenant of Baha'u'l/ah (London: George Ronald, 1971) pp. 171-339, which draws extensively on Zarqanf; Alan Lucius Ward, "An Historical Study of the North American Speaking Tour of' Abdu' I-Baba and a Rhetorical Analysis of His Addresses," Ph.D. dissertation (Ohio University, 1960); and idem, 239 Days: 'Abdu'J-Baha ~-Journey in America (Wilmette, lli.: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1979).

l 0. United States, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Census of Religious Bodies, 1916, (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office 1919) Vol. 2, pp. 43-45. There is a reference to 5,000 Baha'is in 1913, immediately following' Abdu'l-Baha's visit (Star of the West, Vol. 4, p. 139). If valid, we may assume that this figure included sympathizers. Hollinger notes the vague terms of membership of many local Baha'i groups at this time (Richard Hollinger, ed., Community Histories: Studies in the Babi and Baha'i Religions, Vol. 6 (Los Angeles: Kali.mat Press, 1992) pp. xi-xiii.

11. Smith, uAmerican Baha'i Community," pp. 155-61. See also Peter Smith, "Millenarianism in the Babi and Baba 'i Religions" in Roy Wallis, ed., Millennialism and Charisma (Belfast: Queen's University, 1982) pp. 231-83.

12. Richard HolJinger, "Baba' is and American Peace Movements" in Anthony A. Lee, ed., Circle of Peace: Reflections on the Baha '{ Teachings(Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1985) pp. 3-19.

13. There has been Uttle systematic study of Westem Baha'i history outside of the United States. On Australia, see Graham Hassa.ll, ~'The Baha'i Faith in Australia, 1920-I 963," paper presented at the Second Los Angeles Baha'i History Conference, August-September 1984, and "Outpost of a World Religion: The Baha'i Faith in Australia, 1920-1947" (in this volume). On Britain, see Philip Smith, "From a Movement to a Religion: An Examination of the Development of the Baha'i Faith in Britain from 1900 to 1950," M. Phjl. thesis (University of Birmingham, 1987); idem., "The development and influence of the Baha'i Administrative Order in Great Britain, 1914-50" in Hollinger, Community Histories, pp. 153-215; idem., "What was a Baha'i? Concerns of British Baha'is, 1900-1920" in Moojan Momen, ed., Studies in Honor of the late Hasan M. Balyuzi: Studies in the Ba.bi and Baha'i Religions, Vol. 5 (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1988}pp. 219-51. On Canada, see Will van den Hoonaard, "The development and decline of an early Baha'i community: Saint John, New Brunswick., Canada, 1910-1925" in Hollinger, Com,nunityHistories, pp. 217-39; The Origins of the Baha '[Community of Canada, 1898-1948 (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996). On Denmark, see Margit Warburg, "From Circle to Community: The Baha'i Religion in Denmark, 1925-2002" (in this volume). On Germany, see Rai.ner Flasche, "Oje Religion der Einheit und Selbstverwirklichung der Menscbichte und Mission der Baha'i in Oeutschland," Zeitschriflfiir Missionwissenschaft und Religion, Vol. 16, no. 3 (1977) pp. 188-213. On Hawaii, see Agnes B. Alexander, Forty Yearsof the Baha 'f Cause in Hawaii, 1902-1942 (Honolulu: National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the

Hawaiian Islands, 1974). On New Zealand, see Margaret J. Ross, "Some Aspects of the Baha'i Faith in New Zealand," M.A. thesis (University of Auckland, 1979).
14. On 'Abdu'l-Baha's visits to Europe, see Balyuzi, 'Abdu'I-Baha, pp. 250-68, 454-96. On his visit to Britain, see Lady [S. L.] Blomfield, The Chosen High-lvay (Wilmette, TU.:Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1967); Eric Hammond, Abdul Baha in Londo,, (East Sheen, Surrey: Unity Press, for the Bahai Publishing Society, 1912; Rev. edition. London: Baha'i Publisbjng Trust, 1982); and Anjam Khursheed, The Seven Candles of Unity: The Story of 'Abdu 'I-Boho in Edinb11rgh{London: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1991).
15. On the early development of the Administrative Order, see Sboghi Effendi, God Passes By (Wilmette, 111.:Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1944) pp. 323-53. See also Smith, Babi and Baha'i Religions. pp. 120-22.
16. Shoghi Effendi, Baha'i Administration, 5th edition (Wilmette, Ill.: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1945) pp. 17-25, 34-43.
17. Smith, Babi and Baha'i Religions, pp. 145-46.
l 8. Ibid., pp. 112-13, 181.
19. On these contrasting epistemologies, see Roy WalJjs, "Ideology, Authority and the Development of Cultic Movements," Social Re.search, Vol. 412 (1974) pp. 299-327.
20. Smith. "American Baha'i Community," pp. 121, 161-70.
21. Ibid., pp. 103-105, 195.
22. Ibid., pp. 189-94.
23. On Dyar, see Peter Smith, "Reality Magazine: Editorship and Ownership of an American Baha'i Periodical" in J. R. Cole and M. Momen, eds., From Iran East and West, Stttdie.s in Babi and Baha 'f History, Vol. 2 (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1984) pp. 135-55. On White and Sobrab, see Vernon Elvin Johnson, "An Historical Analysis of Critical Transformations in the Evolu-tion of the Baha'i World Faith," Ph.D. dissertation (Baylor University, Tex.as, 1974) pp. 306-21. On White, see Loni Bramson-Lerche, '-'-Someaspects of the establishment of the GuarcUanship" in Momen, Studies in Honor of the Late Hasan M. Balyuzi, pp. 253-93.
24. For his own accounts, see Ahmad Sohrab, Broken Silence: The Story of Today's Struggle for Religious Freedom (New York: Universal Publishing Co., for the New History Society, 1942), and nie Story of the Divine Plan, Taking Place During and Immediately Follol-ving World War I (New York:: New Hjstory Foundation, 1947). For a brief account written on behalf of Shogbi Effendi, see Shoghi Effendi, The Light ofDivine Guidance: The Mes-sages from the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith to the Baha 'is of Germany and Austria (Hotbeim-Langeohain: Baha'i-Verlag, 1982) pp. 135-36.
25. Bramson-Lerche, "Some aspects of the establishment," p. 280.
26. 'Abdu'I-Baha, Tablets of the Divine Plan, Rev. edition (Wilmette, fll: Baha'i
Publishing Trust, l 993).
27. See Loni Bramson-Lercbe, "The Plans of Unified Action: A Survey" (this volume).
28. United States, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Censtts of

Religious Bodies, /916, Vol. 2, pp. 43-45; idem, Census of Religious Bodies,

1926, Vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1929-1930) pp. 70-76; idem, Census of Religious Bodies, 1936, Vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1939-1941)pp. 76-82.
29. Personal communicationfrom Richard Rollinger.
30. The whole topic of planned Baha'i expansion is discussed in Arthur Hampson, ..The Growth and Spread of the Baha'i Faith," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Hawaii, 1980).
31. Baha 'I News, No. 193, p. 8.
32. David Millett) "A Typology of Religious Organizations Suggested by the Canadian Census," Sociological Analysis, Vol. 30 (1969) p. 109.
33. National SpiritualAssembly of the Baha'is of the British Isles, World.Development of the Faith (London: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1952)p. 29; and Hassall, "Baha'i Faith in Australia," p. 12.
34. Different methods of compiling population data may have exaggerated the extent of the increase between the early 1950sand 1963estimates.The 1950s figures are here assumed to exclude children.
35. Christian Century, Vol. 88, p. 616.
36. Of particular importance here was the opening of a Baba'i radio station in Hemingway,South Carolina (1984), in the area of the greatest concentration of new Baha'is in the United States. See UniversalHouse of Justice, Department of Statistics (comp.), The Seven Year Plan, 1979-1986: Statistical Report, Ridvan 1986 (Haifa: Baha'i World Centre, 143 B.E./1986) pp. 114-15.
37. Ibid., pp. 124-28.
38. Ibid., pp. 131-37.On development, see pp. 108-15.Universal House of Justice, The Promise of World Peace (Haifa: Baha'i WorldCentre, 1985).
39. Peter Smith and Moojan Momen, "The Baha'i Faith, 1957-1988:A Survey of ContemporaryDevelopments,"Religion, Vol. 19 (1989) pp. 63-91.
40. Calculated from Universal House of Justice, Department of Statistics, Memorandum, dated 15 May 1988. In author's possession.
41. Universal House of Justice, Department of Statistics, Seven Year Plan, Ridvan 1986, p. 56.
42. On Root, see The Baha'i World, Vol. 8, pp. 643-48; M. R. Garis, Martha Root: Lioness at the Threshold (Wilmette, Ill.: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1983);Barron Deems Harper, Lights of Fortitude: Glimpses into the lives of the Hands of the Cause of God (Oxford: George Ronald, 1997) pp. 112-22.
43. See, in particular, R. Jackson Armstrong-Ingram,"American Baha'i Women and the Education of Girls in Tehran, 1909-1934"in Peter Smith~ed., In Iran, Studies in Bab¬£ and Baha'i History, Vol 3. (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1986) pp. 181-210.
44. On Holley, see Baha'i World, Vol. 13, pp. 849-58; Harper, Lights of Fortitude, 253-64.
45. Calculated from The Baha'i World, Vol. 2, pp. 181-91. See also Smith, Babi

and Baha'i Religions, pp. 166-67.
46. Calculated from Universal House of Justice, Department of Statistics, Statistical Summary Tables for Semi-Annual Reports of July 1987 (Haifa: Baha'i WorldCentre, February 1988) and idem, Memorandum,dated 15 May 1988.

47. On administrative functioning in general, see Universal House of Justice, Department of Statistics, Seven Year Plan, Ridvan 1986, pp. 65-80.
48. Smith, Babi and Baha'i Religions, p. 172.
49. "Cultural expressions" here refers to all formal and informal patterns of behavior and belief that are characteristic of a religious group as a collectivity, and which new members acquire through socialization. They include forms and styles of interaction between members; the conduct of meetings (both formal and infonna.l); forms of organizations; attitudes towards outsiders and towards the socialization of children and new members; forms of personal behavior and appearance (dress, hair, etc.); and artistic expressions. Intellectual expressions (folk tales, formal reHgious codes, scriptural interpretations, etc.) constitute a specialized form of cultural expression. As in most religious movements, only a few of the cultural expressions of being a Baba 'i are scripturally prescribed. Most patterns of Baha'i collective life emerge in the process of group interaction. In the Bahi\'i case, these now vary quite considerably from one society to another, no doubt re.fleeting the Baba 'i principle of tolerance of diversity.
50. The topic of Western Baha'i cultural styles has received little scholarly attention. See R. Jackson Armstrong-Ingram, Music, Devotions, and Mashriqu '1-Adhkar, Studies in Bab/ and Baha'i History, Vol 4 (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1987), and Sandra S. Kahn, "Encounter of Two Myths, Baha'i and Christian, in the Rural American South: A Study in Transmythicization,., Ph.D. dissertation (University of California at Santa Barbara, 1977) for discussions of particular topics. More generally, see the various national Bahi\'i periodicals.
51. 'Abdu'I-Baha. Some Annvered Questions, collected and trans. L. C .. Barney (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1908); Rev. edition (Wilmette, Ill.: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1981).
52. On Kheiralla's in.fluence and writings, see the works by Ho1linger and Stockman (note 2, above). For the rest, see Hippolyte Dreyfus, Essai sur le Behafsme(Paris: Leroux. 1908); idem. The Universal Religion: Bahaism (London: Cope & Fenwick, 1909); John E. Esslemont, Baha 'u 'lltih and the New Era (London: Allen and Unwin, 1923; subsequent editions have been

posthumous1y revised and edited); Horace Holley, Bahaism: The Modern Social Religion (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1913) and Bahai: The Spirit of the Age (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Tubner and Co., 1921); Charles Mason Remey, The Bahai Movement: A Series of Nineteen Papers, 2d ed. (Washington, D.C.: J. D. Mjlans and Sons, 1913) and The Bahai Revelation and Reconstruction (Chicago: Bahai Publishing Society, 1919).
53. Data on the number and location of Baha'i Spiritual Assemblies is readily available. A local Spiritual Assembly is generally formed when there are nine or more adult Baha'is (aged 21 or over) in a particular locality. As great efforts are made to ensure the continued existence of an Assembly after one has been formed, its existence indicates a certain minimum level of Baha'i activity and the presence of w.hat is effectively a Baha'i congregation.
54. Those countries io which there were then no organized Baha'i communities (i.e., Eastern Europe) are here excluded.

55. Universal House of Justice, Department of Statistics, Seven Year Plan, Ridvan 1986, p. 51.
56. The main sources of data for Tables 10-16 are as follows: (1) the United States Censuses of Religion for 1906-1936;(2) a one-third sample (n-=60l) by the present author of the set of "Barut'i Historical Record Cards" collected
by the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada in or about 1936 (Wilmette, Ill., National Baha'i Archives); (3) a sample survey (n=90) of Baha'is in New York City in 1953. See Peter L. Berger, "From Sect to Church: A Sociological Interpretation of the Baha'i Movement," Ph.D. dissertation (New School for Social Research, New York, 1954) pp. I 31-39; (4) an unpubljshed survey (n:::160) of newly-enrolledAmerican Baha' is conducted in.December 1968 (National SpiritualAssembly of the Baha'is of the United States, Department of Personnel and AdministrativeServices, "A Statistical Comparison of the Background of Newly Enrolled Baba'is with the U.S. Population" (Wilmette, Ill: National Baha'i Center, 1969)). See Arthur Hampson, 'The Growth and Spread of the Baha'i Faith," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Hawaii, 1980), pp. 344 49; (5) a survey of the Baba'is of Austria in 1976 (n=349) produced as part of a study of social groups by the Austrian Ministry of Scjence and Research. See Marina Fischer-Kowalski and Josef Bucek, Structuren der socio/en Ung/eichheit in f!Jsterreich, Tei/ If: Endbericht, Band 2 (Vienna: Bundersminjsterium filr Wissenschaft und Forschung, 1978); (6) a survey of the New Zealand Baha'i community in 1978 (n=356). See Margaret J. Ross. "Some Aspects of the Baba'i Faith in New Zealand," M.A. thesis (University of Auckland, 1979);(7) a sample survey (n=l51) of British Baha'is by the present author in 1978; (8) a sample survey (n=118) of Los Angeles Baba'is conducted on behalf of the author in 1979; and (9) a series of figures on the composition of the Danish Baha'i community in 1959, l962, and 1981, in Warburg,"From Circle to Community." The sample surveys of New York (Berger), Britain (Smith) and Los

Angeles (Smith) were conducted at second hand, through the intennediary of Local Spiritual Assembly officers who distributed and collected the survey questionnaireson the authors' behalf at regular Baha'i Nineteen Day Feasts. Most religiously active Baba'is attend these Feasts and most or all of those present at each Feast completed the questionnaires. The New York survey represented between one-third and one-half of the total Baha'i community, the British survey about fifty-two percent of the adult and youth membership of the nineteen local communities that participated (of a sample of twenty-nine that were contacted), and the Los Angeles survey about seventeen percent of local membership.

57. Hollinger, "Baha'i Faith in America."

58. Warburg,"From Circle to Community."

59. Universal House of Justice, Department of Statistics, Memorandum, 15 May 1988. The comparable figures for Africa were twenty-four and eighteen percent, and for Asia, eighteen and twenty-two percent. The world figures were twenty-sevenpercent for both National Assembly and Auxiliary Board Members. By I 996, the Assembly figures were forty-onepercent for America and

Europe and thirty-six percent for Australasia. The world figure was thirty-two percent (Universal House of Justice, The Three Year Pla11,1993-1996. Summary of Achievements.Baha'i World Centre. 1997, p. 164).

60. Hassall, "Baha'i Faith in Australia, 1920-1963."

61. Class categorization remains a matter of debate among ociologi ts. It also tends to be popularly perceived in quite different ways by Europeans and North Americans.The conceptualizationused here is that Western industrial societies comprise small minorities of people who primarily subsist through their ownership of capital or land, and an overwhelming majority who subsist through the sale of their labor power or the receipt of benefits and pensions. Of those who sell their labor power, important distinctions have developed between people with different degrees of responsibility and control within their working Lives and with associated differences in "life chances" and lifestyle. In operational terms, involvement in non-manual (middle-class) or manual (working-class) work is basic, but so also are the distinctionswithin each general category: between the professionaland managerial upper mjddle class and lower middle class groups such as clerical workers; and between upper working class artisans and the lower working class of unskilled, semi-skilled, and casual workers. There is also an underclass of the long-term unemployed and others who must subsist largely on state and ot.herbenefits and pensions.

62. Stockman, Baha'i Faith in Alnerica, Vol. l, pp. 85-135; Hollinger, "Baha'i Faith in America."

63. Stockman, Baha'i Faith in America, pp. 100-101, 163.

64. Ibid., pp. 112-13, 163.

65. lbid.,pp.113-14, 126-35.

66. Berger, "From Sect to Church," pp. 131-32.

67. Smith, "Sociological Study"; Ross, "Baha'i Faith in New Zealand."

68. Hampson, "Growth and Spread," p. 346; Ross. "Baha'i .Faith in New Zealand;' pp. 155-56.
69. Smith, "Sociological Study," p. 435.
70. Ibid.
71. My own impressions are that a similar pattern has been in operation within the British Baha'i community, working class converts being both less numerous and more likely to becotne marginalized unless they are socially upwardly mobile.
72. Of the 1936-37 sample (n~Ol), 197 individuals had become Baha'is by 1919. Of this sub-group, twelve (6.1%) were black. (Smith, "American Baha'i Community,"pp. 118-19).
73. Baha 'I World,Vol. 13, p. 258.
74. Stockman, Baha'i Faith in America, Vol l, pp. 94-100, 113, 114, 126.
75. Elias Zoboori, Names and Numbers:A Baha'i History ReferenceGuide.National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Jamaica, 1990, pp. 165-68.
76. Moojan Momen, "The integration into the British Baha'i community of re¬?-
cent Iranian Baha'i migrants." Baha ¬?; StudiesBulletin, Vol.4, nos. 3-4 (April
1990), pp. 50-53; Chantal Saint-Blancat, "Nation et religion chez les immi-

gresiraniens en ltalie." Archives des science social des religio11s,Vol. 68 (1989), pp. 27-37.
77. Smith, "American Baha'i Community," pp. 119-21, 125-26, 161-63; Stockman,Baha'i Faith in America, pp. 101-103.

Turkestan, with Shaykh Faraju'llab on Egypt and Mirza MuhammadHusayn Vakil on Iraq.2
c) Passages from what was known as "Shoghi Effendi's Diary." These were typewrittencopies of English notes taken by Shoghi Effendi of 'Abdu 'I-Baba's utterances and correspondenceduring most of 1919, and part of 1920.3

The importance of this material lies in the fact that this is the first attempt to survey the whole worldwide Baha'i community and presents a valuable picture of this community at an early date. In addition, the material is of value for the historical informationprovided by such important figures. It is, of course, a pity that Esslemont did not ever write the chapter itself, as his assessment of this material would also have been valuable.
Most of this material was collected by Esslemont during his pilgrimage to Haifa, November 5, 1919, to January 23, 1920. This includes all the oral material collected, and Esslemont probably asked

for the written material at the same time. The account of the Baha'i community in Germany by Alma Knobloch is dated March 1920, and is sent from Stuttgart. So Esslemont presumably arranged this piece after his return from Haifa.

The material is reproduced here exactly as it was written with no change to the transliteration.The punctuation has, on occasions, been altered to make the sense clearer and some material has been added in brackets. The first item reproduced below is Esslemont's own plan for the proposed chapter. The original item is in Esslemont's handwriting:

Progress of [thel Baha'i Movement
I. Persia. History: Present Position: Women's organintion, need for. S.A. [Spiritual Assembly]-Election; Functions; Funds. Various kinds of meetings.
II. Turkestan. Immigration of Persians to lskabad about 1880. Reprieve of murders; School and Mashraku'l Azlcar. Public Library. Star of the East. 2nd Mashraku'l Azkar in Marv.
m. America. Parliament of Religions in 1893. Words of B[aha'u'Uah). K.hayrullah; Thornton Chase. 1894-5 Bahais. 1895 Classes started. 1896 hundreds ofbelievers in Chicago. 1897. N.Y. [New York] as-