

of the Shrine of the Bab

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Introduction to the
Baha'i Community

intercultural performance and service group travels through
Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada, with the
aim of giving young native people a positive view of their
culture and heritage. A Russian journalist facilitates workshops
for students in three Austrian schools to help them learn how to
find positive solutions to moral dilemmas in their lives. In a droughtplagued

region of Ethiopia, a community inaugurates a water pond project that will benefit 300 households and more than 15,000 cattle. At the end of a large conference in Brazil, youth commit themselves to making positive changes in their communities, by starting moral education classes for children and a moral education theater group, and by becoming involved in community-building projects. In Papua New Guinea, people walk for up to two days to witness the official opening of a new primary school in their region. In Stuttgart, Germany, organizers of a panel discussion invite members of diverse religious groups to come together to examine the topic "Religions against Violence," looking at the peace-promoting elements of religions as well as their potential to generate conflict and war. A nongovernmental organization (NGO) in Ghana offers teachers, government ministries, other NGOs, and the media a moral leadership training seminar designed to assist participants to address social problems in that country. In Malaysia,

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a campaign for Asli children combines literacy training with spiritual education. And a performing arts group composed of youth from ten countries travels through Lesotho, performing music and dances on topics such as unity, the elimination of prejudice, drug abuse, and HIV/AIDS.

Although they come from diverse backgrounds and far-flung areas of the planet, these people all share a united view of the world, its future, and their role in shaping it. They are Baha'is. The Baha'i International Community, comprising members of the Baha'i Faith from all over the globe, now numbers more than five million souls. It represents 2,112 ethnic and tribal groups and live in more than 127,500 localities in 190 independent countries and 46 dependent territories. What was once regarded by some as a small, obscure sect was reported by the Britannica Book of the Year 2001 to be the second-most widely spread independent religion in the world, after Christianity. Its membership cuts across all boundaries of class and race, governing itself through the establishment of local and national elected bodies known as Spiritual Assemblies. Its international center and the seat of its world governing council, known as the Universal House of Justice, are located in the Holy Land, in Haifa, Israel. This article offers a brief introduction to the Baha'i community, its history, its spiritual teachings, and its aims and objectives.

Origins

In 1844, a young Persian merchant named Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad declared Himself to be the Promised Qa'im awaited by Shia Muslims. He adopted the title "the Bab," which means "the Gate," and His teachings quickly attracted a large following. Alarmed

by the growing numbers of "Babis," as His followers were known, the Muslim clergy allied themselves with ministers of the Shah in an effort to destroy the infant Faith. Several thousand Babis were persecuted, tortured, and killed in the following years, but the growth of the new religion continued even after the Bab Himself was imprisoned and later executed in July 1850. The horrific treatment of the Babis at the hands of the secular and religious authorities was recorded by a number of Western diplomats, scholars,

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and travelers, who expressed their admiration for the character and fortitude of the victims.

The Babi religion sprang from Islam in much the same manner that Christianity sprang from Judaism or Buddhism did from Hinduism. That is to say, it was apparent early in the Bab's ministry that the religion established by Him was not merely a sect or a movement within Islam but an independent Faith. Furthermore, one of the main tenets of Babi belief was the Bab's statement that He had been sent by God to prepare the way for One greater than Himself, Who would inaugurate an era of peace and righteousness throughout the world, representing the culmination of all past religious dispensations.

Mirza J::Iusayn-'Ali was one of the leading adherents of the Babi Faith Who was arrested and imprisoned during the tumultuous years of the Bab's brief ministry. Because of pressure on the Persian Shah from European diplomats, He was spared from execution but was banished from Persia to Baghdad, Constantinople, Adrianople, and finally the penal colony of Acre in Palestine. Thus, the Persian government, which had secured the support of the rulers of the rival Ottoman Empire in suppressing the new movement, expected that His sphere of influence would be severely limited.

During His initial imprisonment, Mirza J::Iusayn-'Ali had received the first divine intimations that He was the Promised One of Whom the Bab had spoken. He adopted the title "Baha'u'llah," which means "Glory of God," and publicly declared His mission on the eve of His exile from Baghdad, in April 1863. Baha'u'llah was still nominally a prisoner when He passed away near Acre in May 1892, although the authorities had gradually loosened their restrictions as they became acquainted with Him and the nature of His teachings. During the long years of His exile Baha'u'llah revealed the equivalent of more than 100 volumes of writings, consisting of the laws and ordinances of His dispensation, letters to the kings and rulers of the East and the West, mystical teachings, and other divinely inspired writings.

In His Will and Testament, Baha'u'llah appointed His eldest son, 'Abbas Effendi, Who adopted the title "'Abdu'l-Baha" ("Servant of Baha"), as His successor and the sole authoritative interpreter

of His teachings. 'Abdu'l-Baha had shared His Father's long exile
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and imprisonment and was freed only after a new regime was installed by the "Young Turk" movement in 1908. Shortly thereafter, at an advanced age, He embarked on an arduous journey to Europe and America where, from 1911 to 1913, He proclaimed Baha'u'llah's message of universal brotherhood and peace to large audiences, consolidated fledgling Baha'i communities, and warned of the potential catastrophe looming on Europe's darkening horizon. By the outbreak of World War I in 1914, 'Abdu'l-Baha had returned to His home in Haifa, just across the bay from Acre, and devoted Himself to caring for the local people, fending off famine by feeding them from stores of grain He had safeguarded for such an emergency. 'Abdu'l-Baha's humanitarian services and His promotion of intercultural harmony were recognized by the British government, which, at the end of the war, conferred upon Him a knighthood—a title He acknowledged but declined to use. He passed away in 1921 and is buried on Mount Carmel in a vault near the spot where He had interred the remains of the Bab some years before.

Among the legacies that 'Abdu'l-Baha bequeathed to history was a series of letters called the Tablets of the Divine Plan, which He had addressed to the Baha'is of North America during the years of World War I. These 14 letters directed the recipients to scatter to countries on all continents and share with their populations the teachings of Baha'u'llah—a mandate that led to the global expansion of the Baha'i community.

Another legacy of 'Abdu'l-Baha is His Will and Testament, which Baha'is regard as the charter of the administrative order conceived by Baha'u'llah. This document appointed 'Abdu'l-Baha's eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi, as Guardian of the Baha'i Faith and authorized interpreter of its teachings. Successorship to the Founders of the Baha'i Faith would be shared by the Guardian and an elected Universal House of Justice, whose complementary role would be to create legislation supplementing the Faith's scriptures.

During the period of his Guardianship, from 1921 to 1957, Shoghi Effendi concentrated on four main areas: the development of the Baha'i World Centre in the environs of Haifa; the translation and interpretation of the Baha'i sacred writings; the rise and consolidation of the institutions of the Baha'i administrative order;

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and the implementation of 'Abdu'l-Baha's plan for the propagation of the Baha'i Faith around the world.

At the Baha'i World Centre, Shoghi Effendi effected the construction of a superstructure for the mausoleum containing the remains of the Bab, which had been brought secretly from Persia

and interred by 'Abdu'l-Baha in a spot designated by Baha'u'llah on Mount Carmel. Shoghi Effendi beautified and expanded the simple native stone structure, which is today a site of pilgrimage for Baha'is from all over the world. He enhanced the Baha'i properties and initiated construction of the International Baha'i Archives building to house the original Baha'i scriptures and artifacts from the early days of the Baha'i Faith. This building, the first on the arc-shaped path on the site designated as the world administrative center of the Baha'i community, was completed in 1957. Shoghi Effendi's actions laid the foundations, literally and figuratively, for the further development of the Baha'i World Centre.

Shoghi Effendi was also instrumental in interpreting the writings of Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha and in translating them from the original Persian and Arabic into English. The Guardian had served as secretary to 'Abdu'l-Baha for a number of years and was a student at Oxford University at the time of his Grandfather's passing. Shoghi Effendi's mastery of Persian, Arabic, and English, coupled with the authority conferred upon him as the appointed interpreter of the Baha'i writings, made him uniquely qualified to undertake their translation. He also translated *The Dawn-Breakers*, a history of the Babi Faith, authored *God Passes By*, a history of the first century of the Baha'i Faith, and wrote thousands of letters to communities and individuals around the world, elucidating passages from the writings and giving direction and impetus to Baha'i communities.

Development of the Administrative Order

Shoghi Effendi's work in developing the Baha'i administrative order is one of the most dramatic legacies of his years as Guardian. The first step in this development was to encourage the organized, planned expansion of Baha'i communities in places where local and national Baha' f councils, known as Spiritual Assemblies, would

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eventually be established. The Guardian effected this global expansion of Baha'i communities through a series of international plans of varying duration, during which 12 National Spiritual Assemblies were elected.

At the time of Shoghi Effendi's sudden passing in 1957, the Baha'i community was in the middle of a global plan of expansion and consolidation called the Ten Year Crusade. During this period, which concluded in 1963-the centenary of Baha'u'llah's declaration of His mission in the Garden of Riqvfo in Baghdad-the goal was to open 132 new countries and major territories to the Faith and to expand existing communities in 120 countries and territories that had previously been opened. These ambitious targets were in certain instances actually exceeded by the end of the plan, in spite

of the difficulties posed by the Guardian's death.

'Abdu'l-Baha, in His Will and Testament, had authorized the continuation of the Guardianship through the appointment by the Guardian of a successor from among his own sons, should he have them, or other direct descendants of Baha'u'llah. Such a designation was dependent upon the decision of Shoghi Effendi as to whether an individual could be named who met the demanding spiritual qualifications specified by 'Abdu'l-Baha. Shoghi Effendi had no children and died without designating such a Guardian to follow him. He had, however, taken steps towards the election of the Universal House of Justice, the supreme governing body of the Baha'i Faith. He had also appointed a number of individual Baha'is to an auxiliary institution of the Guardianship called Hands of the Cause of God. These individuals had been charged with protecting the unity of the Faith and collaborating with National Spiritual Assemblies around the world to ensure that the goals of the Ten Year Crusade were won. Upon Shoghi Effendi's passing, these men and women guided the Baha'i community to complete the plan initiated by the Guardian and to hold the first election of the Universal House of Justice in 1963.

Conceived by Baha'u'llah Himself, the institution of the Universal House of Justice is established on principles laid down in the Baha'i sacred writings. Its initial election, by the members of the 56 National Spiritual Assemblies that existed in April 1963, clearly demonstrated the principle of unity so central to the Baha'i

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Faith, with the nine members coming from four continents and representing a variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds.

Based on the authority conferred on it by the Founder of the Faith, the Universal House of Justice is now elected every five years and stands as the acknowledged central authority in the worldwide Baha'i community and has, during the past 38 years, launched eight global plans for the advancement of the Faith. From a worldwide population of 408,000 in 1963, the Baha'i community has grown to more than five million members; the number of National and Regional Spiritual Assemblies has grown from 56 to 182; and the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies has increased from 3,555 to 11,746.

Spiritual and Moral Teachings
and Baha'i Community Life

The force that unites this diverse body of people is the vision achieved through their belief in Baha'u'llah as a Manifestation of God, in the social and administrative structures He established, and in the spiritual and moral teachings He propagated. Central to these spiritual teachings is the concept that there is only one God and that the world's great religions have been established by

Messengers or Manifestations of this Divine Reality-Abraham, Krishna, Moses, Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus, and Muhammad-Who have been sent throughout history to deliver a divine message commensurate with humanity's stage of development. Though the religions' social teachings change through this process of progressive revelation, the spiritual essence of all the major religions remains the same: humanity has been created to know and to worship God. The Baha'i perspective sees the cumulative benefits of progressively revealed religions as fundamental to an "ever-advancing civilization." What divides various religious communities, Baha'is believe, comes not from God but from humanity and its accretions to the essential religious teachings brought by the divine Messengers.

At this stage of humanity's development, the unity of the human race must be recognized, the equality of women and men must be established, the extremes of wealth and poverty must

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be eliminated, and the age-old promise of universal peace must be realized. Likening the development of the human race to that of an individual, the Baha'i writings say that we have passed through stages analogous to infancy and childhood and are now in the midst of a tumultuous adolescence, standing on the threshold of maturity. Baha'u'llah taught that humanity is destined to come of age, but the course it takes to achieve that goal is entirely in its own hands.

To promote the development of a society in which Baha'i ideals can be fully realized, Baha'u'llah established laws and moral teachings that are binding on Baha'is. Central to these is daily obligatory prayer. Study of and meditation upon the Baha'i sacred writings each morning and evening is also enjoined. Baha'is between the ages of 15 and 70, with certain exceptions, observe an annual 19-day, dawn-to-dusk fast. Baha'u'llah referred to prayer and fasting as the "twin pillars" of faith, an indication of their importance and the benefits to be gained from them. He also raised work to the level of worship. The main repository of Baha'u'llah's laws is a volume entitled the Kitab-i-Aqdas, or the "Most Holy Book."

There are no dietary restrictions in the Baha'i Faith, but the consumption of alcohol and the use of narcotic and hallucinogenic drugs are forbidden, as they affect the mind and interfere with spiritual growth. Baha'u'llah counseled Baha'is to be honest and trustworthy, to render service to humanity with an abundance of deeds rather than mere words, to be chaste, and to avoid gossip and backbiting. He forbade lying, stealing, adultery, homosexual acts, and promiscuity. The importance of the family is central to Baha'i community life, as is the moral and spiritual education of children.

Baha'is often gather together in their communities to study

the sacred writings of their Faith and to pray, but a central feature in Baha'i. community life is a meeting called the Nineteen Day Feast, at which all members join in worship, consult about community affairs, and socialize. Pending the further development of Baha'i. communities, these meetings often occur in rented facilities, people's homes, or in local Baha'i centers. The Baha'i. writings call for the erection in each community of a beautifully designed House of Worship, surrounded by gardens and functioning as a spiritual center of activity. A variety of social and humanitarian

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institutions are also to be established around it. Seven Baha'i Houses of Worship presently exist, in Australia, Germany, India, Panama, Uganda, the United States, and Western Samoa, and sites have been purchased around the world for the construction of many more. The Houses of Worship are open to people of all faiths or those professing no particular faith—for prayer and meditation.

Services are nondenominational. There are no sermons, only readings and prayers from the Baha'i writings and scriptures of other faiths with music by an a cappella choir. This preserves the sacredness of the experience of hearing and meditating upon the Holy Word without the interference of man-made concepts.

Aims, Objectives, and Activities

As the Universal House of Justice stated in a message addressed to the peoples of the world, written in October 1985, coinciding with the United Nations International Year of Peace, "Acceptance of the oneness of mankind is the first fundamental prerequisite for the reorganization and administration of the world as one country, the home of humankind." The ultimate aim of the Baha'i Faith is the establishment of unity among all the peoples of the world, and it is because of its orientation towards unity on an international scale that the Baha'i community has been active at the United Nations since that organization's inception. Today the Baha'i International Community, an active nongovernmental organization (NGO) that represents the collective voice of national Baha'i communities around the world, enjoys special status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It is particularly involved in addressing human rights issues, the needs of women and children, and environmental concerns, as well as pursuing sound, sustainable development policies. To coordinate its international efforts in these areas, the Baha'i International Community's United Nations Office and Office of Public Information, as well as the Office of the Environment and the Office for the Advancement of Women, collaborate with National Spiritual Assemblies around the world. The Baha'i International Community's activities at the United Nations have earned it a reputation

national and international representatives took active roles in the major world summits and NGO forums sponsored by the United Nations during the 1990s.

Bahá'ís look towards a day when a new international order will be established, a commonwealth to which all the nations of the world will belong. As Shoghi Effendi wrote in 1936: The unity of the human race, as envisaged by Baha'u'llah, implies the establishment of a world commonwealth in which all nations, races, creeds, and classes are closely and permanently united, and in which the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that compose them are definitely and completely safeguarded. This commonwealth must, as far as we can visualize it, consist of a world legislature, whose members will, as the trustees of the whole of mankind, ultimately control the entire resources of all the component nations, and will enact such laws as shall be required to regulate the life, satisfy the needs, and adjust the relationships of all races and peoples. A world executive, backed by an international Force, will carry out the decisions arrived at, and apply the laws enacted by, this world legislature, and will safeguard the organic unity of the whole commonwealth. A world tribunal will adjudicate and deliver its compulsory and final verdict in all and any disputes that may arise between the various elements constituting this universal system. 1

Shoghi Effendi went on to describe the tremendous benefits to humanity resulting from such a world order:

The enormous energy dissipated and wasted on war, whether economic or political, will be consecrated to such ends as will extend the range of human inventions and technical development, to the increase of the productivity of mankind, to the extermination of disease, to the extension of scientific research, to the raising of the standard of physical health, to the sharpening and refinement of the human brain, to the exploitation of the unused and unsuspected resources of the planet, to the prolongation of human life, and to the furtherance of any other

1 Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Selected Letters*, 2d rev. ed. (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1993), p. 203.

agency that can stimulate the intellectual, the moral, and spiritual life of the entire human race. 2

To make its aims and objectives widely known and to promote its perspective on various issues, the Baha'i International Community not only collaborates with like-minded organizations within and

outside of the United Nations, but it engages in public information efforts to bring the spiritual and social principles of the Faith to the attention of people everywhere. The persecution of the Baha'is in Iran since the 1979 Iranian revolution has prompted wide dissemination of information about the Baha'i Faith in the international news media. More than two hundred members of the Faith have been executed for their belief, which is considered as heresy by the regime, and thousands more have been imprisoned, fired from their jobs, or had their homes confiscated or their pensions cut off as a result of government orders. Baha'is around the world have responded in unity to this ongoing persecution in Iran the land in which their religion was born-by petitioning their governments to take action against this injustice. It is, to some degree, as a result of these efforts that the persecutions have not been more extreme, although Iran's Baha'is still face the possibility of arbitrary imprisonment and execution, and are still denied fundamental rights and freedoms. 3

The Baha'i community has also taken a proactive approach in promulgating its views. The statement on peace issued by the Universal House of Justice in 1985, entitled *The Promise of World Peace*, sparked a worldwide campaign of presentations and public awareness programs throughout the International Year of Peace and since, aimed at government figures, leaders of thought, and the general population. The centenary of Baha'u'llah's passing in 1992 was commemorated, in part, with the publication of a statement detailing His life, teachings, and mission, designed to increase knowledge of the Baha'i Faith among members of the public. A statement presenting the Baha'i perspective on social

2 Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahd'u'LLdh*, p. 204.

3 See pp. 143-47 and 291-93 for further information on the continuing persecution of Iran's Baha'i community.

development, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, was disseminated at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in March 1995, and later that year a statement entitled *Turning Point for All Nations* was released as a contribution to discussions on the future of the United Nations during its 50th anniversary. In 1999, the Baha'i International Community released *Who Is Writing the Future? Reflections on the Twentieth Century*.

The Baha'i community has also been continually engaged in a series of international teaching plans. It has seen rapid expansion in different parts of the world, perhaps most notably in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, where national Baha'i communities have been established in recent years following the collapse of long-standing political barriers. New national governing bodies are also being formed elsewhere, as the Universal House

of Justice deems communities to have reached a sufficient level of maturity.

The existence and growth of the Baha'i community offers irrefutable evidence that humanity, in all its diversity, can learn to live and work together in harmony. While Baha'is are not unaware of the turmoil in the world surrounding them, their view is succinctly depicted in the following words, taken from *The Prosperity of Humankind*:

A world is passing away and a new one is struggling to be born. The habits, attitudes, and institutions that have accumulated over the centuries are being subjected to tests that are as necessary to human development as they are inescapable. What is required of the peoples of the world is a measure of faith and resolve to match the enormous energies with which the Creator of all things has endowed this spiritual springtime of the race. ⁴

The source of this faith and resolve is the message offered by the teachings of Baha' u'llah, a message that deserves the thoughtful consideration of all those who yearn for peace and justice in the world.

4 Baha'i International Community's Office of Public Information, *The Prosperity of Humankind* (1995). See *The Bahd'i World 1994-95*, pp. 273-96, for the complete text of this statement.

WRITINGS

AND MESSAGES

Baha' f. Sacred Writings

From the Writings of Baha'u'llah

Know verily that the essence of justice and the source thereof are both embodied in the ordinances prescribed by Him Who is the Manifestation of the Self of God amongst men, if ye be of them that recognize this truth. He doth verily incarnate the highest, the infallible standard of justice unto all creation. Were His law to be such as to strike terror into the hearts of all that are in heaven and on earth, that law is naught but manifest justice. The fears and agitation which the revelation of this law provokes in men's hearts should indeed be likened to the cries of the suckling babe weaned from his mother's milk, if ye be of them that perceive. Were men to discover the motivating purpose of God's Revelation, they would assuredly cast away their fears, and, with hearts filled with gratitude, rejoice with exceeding gladness.

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Bestir yourselves, O people, in anticipation of the days of Divine justice, for the promised hour is now come. Beware lest ye fail to apprehend its import and be accounted among the erring.

qf0

Every Prophet Whom the Almighty and Peerless Creator hath purposed to send to the peoples of the earth hath been entrusted

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with a Message, and charged to act in a manner that would best meet the requirements of the age in which He appeared. God's purpose in sending His Prophets unto men is twofold. The first is to liberate the children of men from the darkness of ignorance, and guide them to the light of true understanding. The second is to ensure the peace and tranquillity of mankind, and provide all the means by which they can be established.

The Prophets of God should be regarded as physicians whose task is to foster the well-being of the world and its peoples, that, through the spirit of oneness, they may heal the sickness of a divided humanity. To none is given the right to question their words or disparage their conduct, for they are the only ones who can claim to have understood the patient and to have correctly diagnosed its ailments. No man, however acute his perception, can ever hope to reach the heights which the wisdom and understanding of the Divine Physician have attained. Little wonder, then, if the treatment prescribed by the physician in this day should not be found to be identical with that which he prescribed before. How could it be otherwise when the ills affecting the sufferer necessitate at every stage of his sickness a special remedy? In like manner, every time the Prophets of God have illumined the world with the resplendent radiance of the Daystar of Divine knowledge, they have invariably summoned its peoples to embrace the light of God through such means as best befitted the exigencies of the age in which they appeared. They were thus able to scatter the darkness of ignorance, and to shed upon the world the glory of their own knowledge. It is towards the inmost essence of these Prophets, therefore, that the eye of every man of discernment must be directed, inasmuch as their one and only purpose hath always been to guide the erring, and give peace to the afflicted These are not days of prosperity and triumph. The whole of mankind is in the grip of manifold ills. Strive, therefore, to save its life through the wholesome medicine which the almighty hand of the unerring Physician hath prepared.

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And now concerning thy question regarding the nature of religion. Know thou that they who are truly wise have likened the world
SACRED WRITINGS

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unto the human temple. As the body of man needeth a garment to clothe it, so the body of mankind must needs be adorned with the mantle of justice and wisdom. Its robe is the Revelation vouchsafed unto it by God. Whenever this robe hath fulfilled its

purpose, the Almighty will assuredly renew it. For every age requireth a fresh measure of the light of God. Every Divine Revelation hath been sent down in a manner that befitted the circumstances of the age in which it hath appeared.

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Behold the disturbances which, for many a long year, have afflicted the earth, and the perturbation that hath seized its peoples. It hath either been ravaged by war, or tormented by sudden and unforeseen calamities. Though the world is encompassed with misery and distress, yet no man hath paused to reflect what the cause or source of that may be. Whenever the True Counsellor uttered a word in admonishment, lo, they all denounced Him as a mover of mischief and rejected His claim. How bewildering, how confusing is such behavior! No two men can be found who may be said to be outwardly and inwardly united. The evidences of discord and malice are apparent everywhere, though all were made for harmony and union. The Great Being saith: O well-beloved ones!

The tabernacle of unity hath been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. We cherish the hope that the light of justice may shine upon the world and sanctify it from tyranny. If the rulers and kings of the earth, the symbols of the power of God, exalted be His glory, arise and resolve to dedicate themselves to whatever will promote the highest interests of the whole of humanity, the reign of justice will assuredly be established amongst the children of men, and the effulgence of its light will envelop the whole earth. The Great Being saith: The structure of world stability and order hath been reared upon, and will continue to be sustained by, the twin pillars of reward and punishment. And in another connection He hath uttered the following in the eloquent tongue: I Justice hath a mighty force at its command. It is none other than

1 Arabic

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reward and punishment for the deeds of men. By the power of this force the tabernacle of order is established throughout the world, causing the wicked to restrain their natures for fear of punishment.

In another passage He hath written: Take heed, O concourse of the rulers of the world! There is no force on earth that can equal in its conquering power the force of justice and wisdom . I, verily, affirm that there is not, and hath never been, a host more mighty than that of justice and wisdom. Blessed is the king who marcheth with the ensign of wisdom unfurled before him, and the battalions of justice massed in his rear. He verily is the ornament that adorneth the brow of peace and the countenance of security.

There can be no doubt whatever that if the daystar of justice, which the clouds of tyranny have obscured, were to shed its light upon men, the face of the earth would be completely transformed

In these days the tabernacle of justice hath fallen into the clutches of tyranny and oppression. Beseech ye the One true God-exalted be His glory-not to deprive mankind of the ocean of true understanding, for were men but to take heed they would readily appreciate that whatever hath streamed from and is set down by the Pen of Glory is even as the sun for the whole world and that therein lie the welfare, security, and true interests of all men; otherwise the earth will be tormented by a fresh calamity every day and unprecedented commotions will break out. God grant that the people of the world may be graciously aided to preserve the light of His loving counsels within the globe of wisdom. We cherish the hope that everyone may be adorned with the vesture of true wisdom, the basis of the government of the world.

The Great Being saith: The heaven of statesmanship is made luminous and resplendent by the brightness of the light of these blessed words which hath dawned from the dayspring of the Will of God: It behoveth every ruler to weigh his own being every day in the balance of equity and justice and then to judge between men and counsel them to do that which would direct their steps unto the path of wisdom and understanding. This is the cornerstone of statesmanship and the essence thereof. From these words every SACRED WRITINGS

enlightened man of wisdom will readily perceive that which will foster such aims as the welfare, security, and protection of mankind and the safety of human lives. Were men of insight to quaff their fill from the ocean of inner meanings which lie enshrined in these words and become acquainted therewith, they would bear witness to the sublimity and the excellence of this utterance. If this lowly one were to set forth that which he perceiveth, all would testify unto God's consummate wisdom. The secrets of statesmanship and that of which the people are in need lie enfolded within these words. This lowly servant earnestly entreateth the One true Godexalted be His glory-to illumine the eyes of the people of the world with the splendor of the light of wisdom that they, one and all, may recognize that which is indispensable in this day.

'*_'

O Oppressors on Earth! Withdraw your hands from tyranny, for I have pledged Myself not to forgive any man's injustice. This is My covenant which I have irrevocably decreed in the preserved tablet and sealed it with My seal of glory.

'*_'

It beseemeth you to fix your gaze under all conditions upon justice and fairness. In The Hidden Words this exalted utterance hath

been revealed from Our Most August Pen:

"O Son of Spirit! The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behoveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes."

They that are just and fair-minded in their judgment occupy a sublime station and hold an exalted rank. The light of piety and uprightness shineth resplendent from these souls. We earnestly hope that the peoples and countries of the world may not be deprived of the splendors of these two luminaries.

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Say: Observe equity in your judgment, ye men of understanding heart! He that is unjust in his judgment is destitute of the characteristics that distinguish man's station.

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Say: Let truthfulness and courtesy be your adorning. Suffer not yourselves to be deprived of the robe of forbearance and justice, that the sweet savors of holiness may be wafted from your hearts upon all created things. Say: Beware, O people of Baha, lest ye walk in the ways of them whose words differ from their deeds. Strive that ye may be enabled to manifest to the peoples of the earth the signs of God, and to mirror forth His commandments.

From the Writings and Utterances of 'Abdu'l-Baha

God be praised! The sun of justice hath risen above the horizon of Baha'u'llah. For in His Tablets the foundations of such a justice have been laid as no mind hath, from the beginning of creation, conceived The canopy of existence resteth upon the pole of justice, and not of forgiveness, and the life of mankind dependeth on justice and not on forgiveness.

qt<.,

And among the teachings of Baha'u'llah are justice and right. Until these are realized on the plane of existence, all things shall be in disorder and remain imperfect. The world of mankind is a world of oppression and cruelty, and a realm of aggression and error. In fine, such teachings are numerous. These manifold principles, which constitute the greatest basis for the felicity of mankind and are of the bounties of the Merciful, must be added to the matter of universal peace and combined with it, so that results may accrue. Otherwise the realization of universal peace by itself in the world of mankind is difficult. As the teachings of Baha'u'llah are combined

with universal peace, they are like a table provided with every kind of fresh and delicious food. Every soul can find, at that table of infinite bounty, that which he desires. If the question is restricted to universal peace alone, the remarkable results which are expected and desired will not be attained. The scope of universal peace must be such that all the communities and religions may find their highest wish realized in it. The teachings of Baha'u'llah are

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such that all the communities of the world, whether religious, political, or ethical, ancient or modern, find in them the expression of their highest wish.

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The bulk of humanity now realizeth what a great calamity war is and how war turneth man into a ferocious animal, causing prosperous cities and villages to be reduced to ruins and the foundations of the human edifice to crumble. Now, since all men have been awakened and their ears are attentive, it is time for the promulgation of universal peace—a peace based on righteousness and justice—that mankind may not be exposed to further dangers in the future. Now is the dawn of universal peace, and the first streaks of its light are beginning to appear. We earnestly hope that its effulgent orb may shine forth and flood the East and the West with its radiance. The establishment of universal peace is not possible save through the power of the Word of God

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Mere knowledge of principles is not sufficient. We all know and admit that justice is good, but there is need of volition and action to carry out and manifest it.

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Let them perform their services with complete sanctity and detachment, and on no account defile themselves by receiving bribes, harboring unseemly motives, or engaging in noxious practices. Let them be content with their wages, and seek distinction in truthfulness, straightforwardness, and the pursuit of virtue and excellence; for vanity in riches is worthy of none but the base, and pride in possessions besemeth only the foolish. To attain to true glory and honor, man should exercise justice and equity, forbear to act in an oppressive manner, render service to his government, and work for the good of his fellow citizens. Were he to seek after aught else but this he would indeed be in manifest loss.

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Among the results of the manifestation of spiritual forces will be that the human world will adapt itself to a new social form, the justice of God will become manifest throughout human affairs,

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and human equality will be universally established Through the manifestation of God's great equity the poor of the world will be rewarded and assisted fully, and there will be a readjustment in the economic conditions of mankind so that in the future there will not be the abnormally rich nor the abject poor. The rich will enjoy the privilege of this new economic condition as well as the poor, for owing to certain provisions and restrictions they will not be able to accumulate so much as to be burdened by its management, while the poor will be relieved from the stress of want and misery. The rich will enjoy his palace, and the poor will have his comfortable cottage.

The essence of the matter is that divine justice will become manifest in human conditions and affairs, and all mankind will find comfort and enjoyment in life.

c'J(,

O friends of God, be living examples of justice! So that by the mercy of God, the world may see in your actions that you manifest the attributes of justice and mercy.

Justice is not limited, it is a universal quality. Its operation must be carried out in all classes, from the highest to the lowest. Justice must be sacred, and the rights of all the people must be considered. Desire for others only that which you desire for yourselves. Then shall we rejoice in the Sun of Justice, which shines from the horizon of God.

Each man has been placed in a post of honor, which he must not desert. A humble workman who commits an injustice is as much to blame as a renowned tyrant. Thus we all have our choice between justice and injustice.

I hope that each one of you will become just, and direct your thoughts towards the unity of mankind; that you will never harm your neighbors nor speak ill of any one; that you will respect the rights of all men, and be more concerned for the interests of others than for your own. Thus will you become torches of divine justice, acting in accordance with the teaching of Bahf u'llah, who, during His life, bore innumerable trials and persecutions in order to show forth to the world of mankind the virtues of the world of divinity, making it possible for you to realize the supremacy of the spirit, and to rejoice in the justice of God.

From the
Universal House of Justice

The Universal House of Justice, the world governing council of the Bahá'í International Community, is responsible for guiding and coordinating the activities of its 182 national affiliates and the Faith's five million adherents throughout the world.

While it corresponds with individuals and organizations seeking its guidance, the Universal House of Justice also writes letters to National Spiritual Assemblies and to the Baha'is of the world containing major announcements, providing direction, and advising them of opportunities that lie before them. This article highlights major letters written by the Universal House of Justice between April 2001 and April 2002.

Riqvan 15 8 BE message

Each year during the Baha' { Festival of Ri9van, between 21 April and 2 May, the Universal House of Justice addresses a message to the Baha'!s of the world, reviewing the past year and looking forward to the next. The Ri9van 2001 letter, released at the conclusion of a brief Twelve Month Plan, both reflects on it and relates its accomplishments to the foundations laid in the previous Four Year Plan (1996-2000).

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The letter begins by drawing attention to the community's "heightened awareness of the value of process, the necessity of planning and the virtue of systematic action" in "fostering growth" and in "developing the human resources" of the community. In reviewing the process that has led to this significant moment, the House of Justice notes the development of more than 300 training institutes during the Four Year Plan and the greater focus on the spiritual education of children and "junior" youth (aged 12-14) during the Twelve Month Plan. It remarks on the "freshness of vitality" that characterized the conference of the Continental Counsellors and Auxiliary Board members in January 2001, which sparked the announcement of the Faith's entrance into the Fifth Epoch of its Formative Age, and it urges reflection upon "the tumultuous forces that influenced the life of the planet and the processes of the Cause itself at a crucial time in humanity's social and spiritual evolution."

Reviewing external affairs activities during the Twelve Month Plan, the House of Justice mentions the prominent participation of Baha'i representatives in the millennial events called for by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, noting that "the implications of so close and conspicuous an involvement of the Baha'i International Community with the processes of the Lesser Peace will require the passage of time to be properly understood." The House of Justice also finds the colloquium on science, religion, and development in India, organized by the Baha'i International Community's Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity, and the launch of the Baha'i World News Service to be notable accomplishments during this period.

At the Baha'i World Centre, achievements include the occupation by the International Teaching Centre of its permanent

seat, the conference of the Continental Counsellors and Auxiliary Board members, the completion of the Mount Carmel projects in preparation for the official opening of the Terraces surrounding the Shrine of the Bab, the preparation of a new reception center for pilgrims in Haifa, and the construction of a new facility for visitors to the Shrine of Baha'u'llah.

The final point highlighted by the Universal House of Justice in its review of the year is the restoration of the National Spiritual

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Assembly of the Bahi'Is of Indonesia, which had lapsed for almost three decades following a ban on Bahi' activities in 1962.

Having looked back over the past year, the House of Justice then turns its gaze forward. "Two decades from now," it writes, "the Bahi' world will celebrate the centenary of the inception of the Formative Age." The Five Year Plan, it points out, "constitutes the first of a series of campaigns that will be pursued during these twenty years" aimed at accomplishing "a significant advance in the process of entry by troops," which will require "continuity in systematic endeavor" by individuals, institutions, and communities. The aims of the Five Year Plan, in the words of the House of Justice, are "to effect a deeper penetration of the Faith into more and more regions within countries," using approaches such as intensive programs of growth and the "methodical opening of new areas" by individuals who move to settle in those areas as "home-front pioneers."

Looking towards the "enrichment of the devotional life of the community through the raising up of national Houses of Worship" throughout the Fifth Epoch, the House of Justice outlines in the Riklvan letter the immediate task ahead: to erect "the Mother Temple of South America" in Santiago, Chile, thus completing Shoghi Effendi's plan to build Houses of Worship on all continents.

At the Baha'i World Centre the work of those institutions that have recently moved into the new buildings on the Arc will be guided to further development. Attention is to be given to the Centre for the Study of the Texts, particularly in regard to "enriching the translations into English from the Holy Texts," and measures will be taken to welcome larger numbers of pilgrims and visitors. The Riklvan letter concludes by referring to the imminent arrival of Baha'is from all over the world for the events surrounding the official opening of the Terraces of the Shrine of the Bab in May 2001 and by characterizing the occasion as an important milestone that will allow both reflection on the progress made by the Baha' world community throughout the preceding century and a look forward to the future. 1

1 See pp. 37- 73 for an article on the Terraces' official opening and for the full

text of two letters of the Universal House of Justice written for that occasion.

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Other Significant Letters

Baha'i Funds

The establishment of the World Centre Endowment Fund, "for the preservation, upkeep, and security of the edifices and precincts of the Spiritual and Administrative Centres of the Faith," was announced in a letter dated 12 November 2001, which urges Baha'i's to contribute to this special fund so that the "splendor, befitting so sacred a place, be preserved undiminished in the decades and centuries ahead."

Martyrdoms in Tajikistan

A letter dated 27 February 2002 from the Secretariat of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies conveys the sad news of the assassination of two Baha'is in Tajikistan. Rashid Gulov and Afshin Shokoufeh Mosadegh "were killed at the hands of fanatical elements in that country who wished to cause harm to followers of Baha'u'llah." Mr. Gulov was shot and killed on 23 October, and Mr. Mosadegh was shot on 3 December. The House of Justice notes, "The investigation by the Tajik authorities into the murders has shown that the two Baha'is were killed because of their Faith." 2 The previous assassination of another Baha'i, 'Abdu'llah Mogharrabi, two years before, is recalled, and the House of Justice concludes, "A community so distinguished by the sacrifices of martyrs is bound to attract bountiful confirmations of its efforts from on high."

International Pioneering and Traveling Teaching

The subject of international pioneering and traveling teaching-"an indispensable feature of the Baha'i community"-is addressed in a letter dated 10 January 2002 to the Baha'is of the world. Noting that "in the Twelve Month Plan alone, over 1,800 believers from nearly 90 countries set out to serve the Faith in the international field," the House of Justice underscores the importance of such efforts by stating, "Apart from the services such staunch

2 See pp. 304 and 308 for obituaries of Mr. Gulov and Mr. Mosadegh.

souls are able to render the Cause of God, this intermingling of the peoples of the world is vital to the patterns of life that the followers of Baha'u'llah are striving to establish and which are destined to provide an example for the rest of humanity to emulate."

New Publications

Finally, the Universal House of Justice announced the release of several important publications during the year. The first is the

Arabic edition of the Kitab-i-Aqdas, Baha'u'llah's Most Holy Book and the "Charter of the future world civilization," in the words Shoghi Effendi, which was announced in a letter dated 27 April 2001. The second is The Four Year Plan and the Twelve Month Plan, 1996-2001: Summary of Achievements, on 30 January 2002, about which it states, "The volume chronicles the progress of the Faith worldwide during a period of important accomplishments in the Baha'i community, and its careful reading will provide insights into the processes by which the Faith advances through systematic planning and action." The third is The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, which, as the House of Justice writes in a letter dated 8 April 2002, "brings together for the first time the authorized translations into English of the full texts of Baha'u'llah's major Tablets to the kings and rulers of the World." The letter notes that these Tablets were revealed during Baha'u'llah's exiles to Adrianople and Acre and that they "summon their recipients to recognize the Day of God and to arise to the challenges it imposes on them as the trustees of civil authority among the peoples of the world. "

EVENTS

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Official Opening of the
Terraces of the Shrine of the Bab

... it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

On the evening of 22 May 2001, in the gathering dusk, some 3,000 members of the Baha'i Faith, joined by more than 600 special guests, gathered at the foot of Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel. The Baha'is had come from more than 180 countries, as representatives of their communities, to witness the inauguration of the terraces of the Shrine of the Bab, towards the construction of which they had been contributing for more than 13 years. They shared this historic moment with their cobelievers and with the world at large via transmissions on a global satellite network and the World Wide Web, reaching millions of viewers in more than 70 countries.

The call to undertake this immense project had come some 14 years before, in 1987, when the Universal House of Justice stated, "the way is now open for the Baha'i world to erect the remaining buildings of its Administrative Centre," thus fulfilling

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the intent of 'Abdu'l-Baha and bringing to fruition the work of the Guardian in this regard. In its letter, the Universal House of Justice also wrote, "The great work of constructing the terraces, landscaping their surroundings, and erecting the remaining buildings of the Arc will bring into being a vastly augmented World Centre structure which will be capable of meeting the challenges of coming centuries and of the tremendous growth of the Baha'i community ... "1

It was Baha'u'llah Who designated this particular location on Mount Carmel as both the spiritual and the administrative center of His Faith, when He visited Haifa during the last years of His life. In accordance with Baha'u'llah's directive, 'Abdu'l-Baha built the Shrine of the Bab and interred His remains there in 1909. In the middle years of the twentieth century Shoghi Effendi beautified that Shrine and then undertook the construction of a classically designed structure to house the historic and sacred relics of the early period of the Baha'i Faith.

Construction of the seat of the Universal House of Justice commenced in the 1970s and was completed in 1983. Four years later came the call for the building of the remaining structures and the terraces. For Baha'is the world over it was a project of great significance, coinciding with the emergence of their Faith from obscurity. Their contributions, whether large or small, connected them tangibly to the World Centre, and news of the completion of each stage of the construction projects was received with palpable enthusiasm.

No wonder, then, that the Baha'is chosen to represent their national communities arrived in Haifa in May 2001 with a sense of tremendous emotion. "I feel I am in a different world," commented one delegate from Suriname, while another from Belarus said, "The idea that more than 3,000 people can come together to do this, it is an example that can show the way the world can

1 Letter dated 31 August 1987 to the Baha'fs of the world.

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Representatives of more than 180 national Bahd 'i communities gather in Haifa in May 2001.

be, without any problems or prejudice. All over the world, people are waiting for this." "To meet so many brothers and sisters, from different countries, speaking different languages, it brings me great happiness. I feel like I am next to God, with people of different colors, from difference places, and that we are flowers of one garden," said a participant from Bolivia. And another from Uganda: "When

you see this place, you see that peace can come in the world. The

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Participants circumambulate the Shrine of Bahd 'u'lldh as part of the devotional program at Bahji on 21 May.

beauty here, it can bring people together. It is, like the Bible says, the Kingdom of God on earth."

The first event, on Monday 21 May, was a devotional program at the Shrine of Baha'u'llah, where participants prepared themselves spiritually for the week ahead by paying homage to the Founder of their Faith as prayers and readings from the Baha'i sacred writings were read and chanted in Arabic, English, French, Persian, and Russian.

The following morning, participants convened at the Haifa Congress Center for a program featuring remarks by Hands of the Cause of God 'Ali-Akbar Furutan and 'Alf-Mu~ammad Varqa.

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Hand of the Cause of God 'Ali-Akbar Furutan chants a prayer during the devotional program at Bahji.

Matthew Weinberg, Director of Research for the Baha'i International Community's Office of Public Information, delivered a talk about the significance of the occasion, ² and the mayor of Haifa, Amram Mitzna, came to welcome the participants on behalf of the city. Also featured were a youth choir from the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Tabarsi, a group of young Romany musicians from Spain; and soloists performing gospel-style music.

That evening, on the 158th anniversary of the Bab's declaration of His mission, the centerpiece of the inaugural events unfolded at the foot of Mount Carmel. The performance of two original symphonic works, commissioned by the Universal House of Justice and composed by Tolibkhon Shahidi of Tajikistan and Lasse Thoresen of Norway, thrilled those present.

2 See pp. 51-62 for the text of this talk.

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(Above) The more than 3,000 people gathered at the foot of the terraces. (Left) The composers, orchestra conductor, and soloists.

Mr. Shahidi's melodic and lyrical symphonic composition in three movements, entitled "O Queen of Carmel!", is based on a eulogy by Shoghi Effendi to the Shrine of the Bab. Mr. Thoresen's symphonic oratorio "Terraces of Light" in five movements is based on Baha'u'llah's Tablet of Carmel. Both pieces were performed by the Israel Northern Symphony, Haifa, under the direction of Stanley Sperber, and the 70-voice Transylvania State Philharmonic Choir of Cluj, Romania, under the direction of Cornel Graza. Mezzosoprano Patricia Green, tenor Stuart Howe, and baritone Brett Polegato were featured soloists, along with Austrian violinists Bijan Khadem-Missagh, his son Vahid, and his daughter Martha. During the final movement of "Terraces of Light," as dusk was falling, guests watched light flood the 19 newly completed terraces surrounding the Shrine of the Bab, which extend more

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than a kilometer up the face of the mountain. "It was stunning," commented one delegate afterwards. "I felt myself in a different world. In the Baha'i writings, it is said that music gives wings to the soul. And I felt that."

The lighting of the Shrine was particularly poignant for Baha'is, who recalled that the Bab was denied even a single candle by which to read at night during the years He was imprisoned before His execution.

A statement by the Universal House of Justice, prepared for the occasion, described the Shrine as "a monument to the triumph of love over hate" and the surrounding gardens with their "rich variety of colors and plants" as "a reminder that the human race can live harmoniously in all its diversity." In this turbulent time, the statement continued, "There is a light at the end of this tunnel of change, beckoning humanity to the goal destined for it according to the testimonies recorded in all the Holy Books. The Shrine of the Bab stands as a symbol of the efficacy of that age-old promise, a sign of its urgency." 3

The evening event was attended not only by the 3,000 Baha'is, delegates from around the globe but also by some 600 dignitaries, including local and national political figures, local and regional religious leaders, and ambassadors from more than 30 countries. More than 100 members of national and international media were accredited. Throughout the world, millions more watched via

satellite television and Webcast.

The following morning Baha'i participants returned to the open-air amphitheatre at the foot of the terraces for a devotional program before ascending the terraces to circumambulate the Shrine. The prayers and music that formed the program represented a variety of cultures. Choral music was offered by the youth choir from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and an international choir formed at the Baha'i World Centre, joined by a soloist from India, Vivek Nair.

3 See pp. 65- 67 for the complete text of this statement.

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The ascent of the terraces was a profoundly spiritual act for the delegates, many of whom wore traditional native costumes. "I thought of the suffering of the Bab," said one man from Kenya. "He was put in prison and He was mocked and He was martyred and everyone thought that was the end. But now we see the glory that surrounds His Shrine and the adoration people feel when they visit it." A young woman from Mexico recalled the Biblical prophesy of Isaiah: "I thought of where it says, 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.' And when I saw all those people from all these nations, climbing up Mount Carmel, I felt that was the fulfillment of that prophesy. It is a privilege without words to be part of that."

A choir from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (above) and the international choir formed at the Baha'i World Centre (right) performed at the foot of the terraces.

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(Left, from left to right) Architects Fariborz Sahba and Husayn Amanat are introduced by Hushmand Fatheazam, member of the Universal House of Justice.

(Above left) Kevin Locke teaches the audience a song from the Lakota tradition while Zhu Ming Ying looks on. (Above right) Ate/ Sadkaoui performs on the same evening.

Wednesday evening participants again gathered at the Haifa Congress Center. The program celebrated the accomplishments of the two principal architects responsible for the Mount Carmel Projects-Husayn Amanat, who designed the buildings on the Arc, and Fariborz Sahba, who designed the terraces and served as project manager for both the buildings and the terraces. A video documentary depicting the terraces' construction premiered during the evening. The two composers whose works were performed at the official opening were recognized as well. Musical selections from Chinese, Arabic, Indian, and American native traditions were highlighted. In a letter to the Baha'i's of the world written just a month before the inaugural events took place, the Universal House of Justice stated:

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The significance of the occasion lies principally in the pause it will allow for a review of the remarkable distance the Cause has covered in its development during the twentieth century. It will be time, too, for considering the future implications of the phenomenal accomplishments symbolized by the rise of the monumental structures on God's holy mountain—a rise that opens the spiritual and administrative centers of our Faith to the gaze of the world.⁴

This combination of reflection on the past and looking forward to the future formed the basis of Thursday's evening program. First, a dramatic narrative juxtaposed news events in the world at large with dramatic episodes from the history of the Baha'i Faith. And then came the moment awaited eagerly by all delegates: The institution of the Universal House of Justice took the stage and delivered a message looking forward to the challenges and prospects for the Baha'i community. In part, the message stated:

The majestic buildings that now stand along the Arc traced for them by Shoghi Effendi on the slope of the Mountain of God, together with the magnificent flight of garden terraces that embrace the Shrine of the Bab, are an outward expression of the immense power animating the Cause we serve. They offer timeless witness to the fact that the followers of Baha'u'llah have successfully laid the foundations of a worldwide community transcending all differences that divide the human race, and have brought into existence the principal institutions of a unique

and unassailable Administrative Order that shapes this community's life. In the transformation that has taken place on Mount Carmel, the Baha'i Cause emerges as a visible and compelling reality on the global stage, as the focal center of forces that will, in God's good time, bring about the reconstruction of society, and as a mystic source of spiritual renewal for all who turn to it. 5

4 Universal House of Justice, letter to the Baha'fs of the world, Ri~vin 2001.

5 See pp. 69-73 for the full text of this message.

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Participants gather on
the Arc path on Mount
Carmel for the final
devotional program on
Friday morning.

The final official ceremony of the inaugural events was a devotional gathering on Friday morning. Delegates stood along the path connecting the buildings on the Arc on Mount Carmel as they faced the Shrine of the Bab and, across the bay near Acre, the Shrine of Bah' a' u'llah. The Tablets of Visitation, special prayers used by Baha'is when they visit these holy places, were read and chanted as all bowed their heads in reverent silence. Afterwards, participants lingered on the path and the steps of the buildings, mingling and laughing and bidding farewell to their newly met brothers and sisters from around the globe, as they readied themselves to return home.

During their stay at the Baha'i World Centre participants were given much free time for prayer and meditation in the Shrines and gardens. They were also able to visit the grave of Amatu'l-Baha Ru~iyyih Khanum, the monument for which had been completed shortly before the official opening commenced. There they remembered an indomitable soul who had, for more than half a century, tirelessly traveled the globe and encouraged Baha'is everywhere in their efforts to build their communities and teach their Faith.

The Baha'i writings refer to music as a "ladder of the spirit" and drama as "the pulpit of the future." The Universal House of Justice has encouraged the development of the arts in the Faith as the world community has matured, and at the inaugural events, participants experienced the power of the arts to move hearts and

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uplift the spmt. Music-symphonic, choral, vocal solo, and instrumental, whether traditional indigenous, classical, jazz, or gospel-from various parts of the world was featured throughout the programs, and drama also formed part of one of the evenings. No doubt such artistic offerings will inspire other artists to develop their own expressions in the future.

Media coverage of the inaugural events was unprecedented.

Stories were produced by the Associated Press, Agence France Press, Le Monde, the Religion News Service, Trouw (Amsterdam), PTI India News Agency, Itar-Tass, La Stampa, SABC (South Africa), ARD German Radio, and many others. News media crews from CBC-TV (Canada), NBC-TV and CBS-TV (US), The New York Times, BBC Radio, CNN International, UPI, and ORF Austria also covered the story. In Israel, the events were aired live on cable television, and the Israel Broadcast Authority's classical music station also broadcast the 22 May evening event live, relaying it for later broadcast to European Broadcasting Union stations. The Webcast page received almost 40,000 visits during 22 and 23 May.

Following the events, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter, dated 1 June 2001, to the Baha'is of the world, reflecting on what had transpired. It wrote, "Our hearts overflow with joy, our heads are bowed in gratitude to the Blessed Beauty, as we contemplate the astonishing success of the ceremony that inaugurated the Terraces of the Shrine of the Bab." And it continued, "It is too soon to assess the immediate impact of this unexampled global proclamation of the Faith; nor can its implications for the progress of the Cause be immediately understood. There can be no doubt, however, that so vast a proclamation will accrue towards the advancement of the process of entry by troops, on which the energy of the loved ones of Baha'u'llah everywhere must be even more intensively focused than before ..."

May the manifest wonders of the Lord of Hosts invigorate and fortify the friends throughout the world in their devoted endeavors to pursue the avenues of service that He has so graciously opened before them.

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Bahd'is from nearly
two hundred
countries ascend the
terraces of the Shrine
of the Bdb on
Wednesday morning.
A Sacred History

Talk by Matthew Weinberg, given at the Haifa Congress Center on the morning of 22 May 2001

Today we commemorate a sacred history of unexampled love, supreme sacrifice, and divine vision. It is a narrative prefigured in the pronouncements of the great seers of the past. As we stand awestruck at the majestic structures and the "tapestry of beauty" now defining the face of God's Holy Mountain, and ponder the mysterious processes responsible for the remarkable transformation of this once barren domain, the words of Isaiah echo on all sides: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose ... the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God." 1 In an enterprise revealing a tenacity of purpose, a sustained selflessness, and the power of unified action, the followers of the Greatest Name in all corners of the planet seized a unique moment in time. The raising up of this directing center of the Kingdom of Baha'u'llah evokes astonishment at His eternal might and gratitude for His generous dispensations of grace. For we are nothing more than His humble instruments striving to achieve His just and compassionate purpose. The completion of this grand undertaking at once provides evidence of the tangible greatness of the Cause of the 'Abha Beauty and is a testimony to the existence of an objective spiritual reality—for such an accomplishment could not be brought about by human effort and insight alone. Certainly, the spiritual forces involved lie beyond our comprehension. As Baha'u'llah Himself testifies, "This, truly, is a Revelation which revealeth itself only once every five hundred thousand years. Thus have We removed the barrier and lifted the veils." 2

1 Isaiah 35: 1-2.

2 Baha'u'llah, quoted in a letter of Shoghi Effendi to the Baha'fs of the East, Naw-Ruz 101 BE.

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This occasion offers us the opportunity to look back at a fateladen and triumphant spiritual journey.

More than 150 years ago, a youthful Prisoner, banished to a desolate mountain fortress, boldly addressed the ruler of Persia in these words: "I am the Primal Point from which have been generated all created things. I am the Countenance of God Whose splendor can never be obscured, the Light of God Whose radiance can never fade." 3 Speaking with an astounding power reminiscent of the Prophets of old, the Bab proclaimed the arrival of a new Day, that long anticipated moment in human history when the Promised

One would "fill the earth with equity and justice" 4 and "with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. " 5

His "trumpet-blast of knowledge" awakened the darkened land of Persia and endowed all who responded with "a new eye, a new ear, a new heart, and a new mind. "6 His message, though, was not directed to that land alone, for He was the Bearer of a Revelation destined to transform the spiritual life of the human race. "O ye peoples of the earth, " the Bab declared, "Enter ye, one and all, through this Gate "7 To pass through this Door was to step out of the darkness into the light of God's love and compassion; it led to the "Path of Truth" and to the "ways of peace." 8

The Bab was the portal through which the long expected universal Manifestation of God would soon appear. He clarified the central aim of His mission by explaining that "the purpose underlying this Revelation, as well as those that preceded it,

3 The Bab, Selections from the Writings of the Bdb (Haifa: Baha'i World Centre, 1982), p. 12.

4 Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Selected Letters, 2d rev. ed. (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1993), p. 179.

5 Habakkuk 2:14.

6 Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1994), p. 267.

7 The Bab, Selections, p. 56.

8 The Bab, Selections, p. 61 .

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has ... been to announce the advent of the Faith of Him Whom God will make manifest. "9 The basis for all human accomplishment is to be found in the teachings of this Most Great Luminary, and "the sum total of the religion of God," He says, "is but to help Him." 10 For the Bab, a climacteric in human development had been reached, and He was the "Voice of the Crier, calling aloud in the wilderness of the Bayfo" 11 and announcing to humanity that it was entering the period of its collective maturity.

The unbounded ardor and intrepidity engendered by the Bab's clarion call marked the first chapter in an extraordinary drama of spiritual and moral renewal. The heroism of His lovers, their superhuman fortitude, and deeds of consecration shook Persia to its depths and attracted the attention of the world. Engulfed in a maelstrom of fanaticism and hate, the followers of the Lord of the Age evinced prodigies of courage and devotion that defy all description. "Through the blood which they shed," Bahá'u'lláh affirms, "the earth hath been impregnated with the wondrous revelations

of Thy might and ... Thy glorious sovereignty." 12 And it is that same blood, Shoghi Effendi states, which constituted "the seed" of a divinely conceived administrative order "destined to overshadow all mankind." 13 We cannot forget, then, the shedding of this "crimson ink" by the thousands of Babi heroes and heroines when we gaze upon the monumental structures on the Mountain of God.

At the center of our thoughts is the ultimate, the glorious sacrifice of the Exalted One Himself. The "Fruit of the Tree of God's successive Revelations" 14 yielded its precious seed to the

9 The Bab, Selections, p. 106.

10 The Bab, Selections, p. 85.

11 Baha'u'llah, Tablets o/Bahd'u'lldh revealed after the Kitdb-i-Aqdas (Wilmette:

Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1997) , p. 12.

12 Baha'u'llah, cited in Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1995), p. 80.

13 Shoghi Effendi, World Order of Bahd 'u'ldh, p. 52.

14 Shoghi Effendi, cited in The Bab, Selections, p. 3.

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"mill of adversity" 15 in the city of Tabriz, quenching temporarily the "Flame of that supernal Light " 16 When contemplating the inexplicable phenomenon of the Bab's martyrdom our hearts are filled with wonder, and we are moved to exclaim our powerlessness before One Who is Omnipotent. "The whole world," Baha'u'llah testifies, "rose to hinder Him, yet it utterly failed. The more severe the persecution they inflicted on that Sadrih of Blessedness, the more His fervor increased, and the brighter burned the flame of His love." 17 He Who was "the Herald of a new Era and the Inaugurator of a great universal prophetic cycle" 18 had, in the words of one prominent European writer, "sacrificed himself for humanity.... Like Jesus he paid with his life for the proclamation of a reign of concord, equity, and brotherly love." 19

Deprived of the youthful and magnetic Voice which was its instrument, the mysterious "God-borne Force" animating the new Revelation then began to pulsate within the gloom and darkness of the Sfyah-Chal. There, "He, for Whose sake the world was called into being," 20 the Supreme Manifestation of God anticipated by the Bab and all the Chosen Ones before Him, began to radiate the Light of an all-embracing and transformative love. From that "Black Pit" of deprivation and despair, the "Wronged One of the World" and the "All-Knowing Physician" arose to diffuse the "divine remedy" of unity to the ends of the earth. " ... He Who is the

Ancient Beauty hath come," Baha'u'llah Himself avers, " ... that

15 Shoghi Effendi, Messages to the Baha'i World, 1950-1957 (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1995), p. 154.

16 The Bab, Selections, p. 74.

17 Baha'u'llah, The Kicab-i-fqfo (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1993), p. 234.

18 Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 57.

19 A.L.M. Nicolas. See Emily McBride Perigo rd, Translation of French Foot-Notes from The Dawn-Breakers (New York: Baha' I Publishing Committee, n.d.), p. 61.

20 Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1995), p. 56.

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He may quicken the world and unite its peoples. They, however, rose up against Him with sharpened swords, and committed that which caused the Faithful Spirit to lament At one time they cast Him into prison, at another they banished Him, and at yet another hurried Him from land to land. "21

Baha'u'llah suffered so "that all the dwellers of. .. earth" could be "born anew." 22 And as He attests in His Most Holy Book, "Because H e bore injustice, justice hath appeared on earth, and because H e accepted abasement, the majesty of God hath shone forth amidst mankind. " 23 Overcoming torture, imprisonment, betrayal, and exile, and scorned by political rulers and religious leaders alike, He, the "Unifier of the children of men" and the "Organizer of the entire planet," succeeded in bringing into existence a worldwide community dedicated to belief in the oneness of God, the oneness of all the great religions, and the oneness of the human family. H e had revealed Himself to stir humanity from its "strange sleep, " to awaken it to its innate excellence, nobility, and beauty. The mystical quest had been redefined as a quest not only for meaning but for a new way of life. A forsaken and forgotten Prisoner called upon humankind to finally break free from the ancient shackles of prejudice, violence, superstition, and material desire. His tribulations and banishments, the vehicles of a preordained Divine plan, eventually brought Him to this, the "Most Holy Land," the "abode of the Prophets," the geographic and spiritual heart of the planet. And here He raised His "Tabernacle of Glory" on the "Hill of God." T he "New Jerusalem," the "City of God" mentioned in the Tablet of Carmel, the "heavenly Law ... which is the guarantor of human happiness," 24 had been established. The

21 Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 63.

22 Baha' u'llah, Prayers and Meditations (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1998), p. 44.

23 Baha'u'llah, T he Kirab-i-Aqdas (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1993), para. 158, p. 76.

24 'Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahd (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1997), p. 59.

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Lord of Hosts Himself pointed to the spot where the precious remains of His Herald, the "Primal Beauty," should find their permanent place of rest. "The time fore-ordained unto the peoples and kindreds of the earth is now come," Baha'u'llah confirms. "The promises of God, as recorded in the holy Scriptures, have all been fulfilled." 25 The eventual placement of the Holy Dust of the Martyr-Prophet in the mausoleum on Mount Carmel-a signal victory of 'Abdu'l-Baha-and that Shrine's further beautification represented a striking reversal of the tragic circumstances surrounding the Bab's ministry. The juxtaposition of two mountains-Mah-Ku and Carmel-now comes into clear focus. "In this mountain I have remained alone," the Bab laments in referring to Mah-Ku, and "In His presence," He continues, "there is not at night even a lighted lamp!" 26 How mighty is the All-Glorious One! The Bab is no longer alone on the mountain; He is now at the center of "both the visible and invisible worlds": "the Point," as acclaimed by Baha'u'llah, "round Whom the realities of the Prophets and Messengers revolve," 27 and "the Spot," as extolled by the Master, "round which the Concourse on high circle in adoration." 28

The Youth of Shiraz, the "Essence of Essences" and the "Morn of Truth," had journeyed from a castle of oblivion to a lighthouse of splendor lit by the oil of His incomparable sacrifice. The darkness of one had been supplanted by the divine illumination of the other. In remembrance of the linkage between the two mountains, in 1953 Shoghi Effendi reverently placed a fragment of the plaster ceiling of the Bab's prison cell in the fortress of Mah-Ku beneath the gilded tiles of His Shrine's majestic dome. 29

25 Baha'u'llah, The Proclamation of Bahd'u'ldh to the Kings and Leaders of the World (Haifa: Baha'i World Centre, 1967), p. 110.

26 The Bab, Selections, pp. 16, 87.

27 Baha'u'llah, Prayers and Meditations, p. 300.

28 'Abdu'l-Baha, cited in Shoghi Effendi, Citadel of Paith: Messages to America 1947-1957 (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1995), p. 96.

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Thus, as foreseen in the Holy Book, the Spirit of Elijah had come back to the mountain of the Lord to once again serve as a luminous beacon pointing to the "Perfect Way." 30 The Sepulcher of the Bab is the "Queen" at the heart of the world who each day in her evening glory is the visible expression of the Bab's cry: "I am the Lamp which the Finger of God hath lit. .. and caused to shine with deathless splendor." 31 And tonight we shall see yet one more miracle: This mighty Lamp crowned in gold shall be encircled by a myriad other lamps, setting the entire mountain ablaze in light; and so we shall behold light upon light!

"How great is the potency of thy might," is the Guardian's tribute to the "Queen of Carmel," "a might which has bewildered the souls of the favored ones of God and His Messengers!" 32 As she glows with brilliance, and with her wings spread over the guiding institutions of God's Cause, we cannot fail to recall the Divine assurance given to the Bab: "Be Thou patient, O Qurratu'l-'Ayn, for God hath indeed pledged to establish Thy sovereignty throughout all countries and over the people that dwell therein." 33

In our inauguration of a befitting approach to the sacred Spot enshrining the earthly remains of the "Gate of God"-one day to become the "Pathway of the Kings and Rulers of the World"-we can discern a momentous victory of the meek. In accordance with prophecy, at the time of the appearance of the Promised One, it is said that all things are to be reversed. Baha'u'llah explains: "Through this reversal He hath caused the exalted to be abased and the abased to be exalted." 34 The dedicated and selfless efforts of Baha' is across the decades of the twentieth century to raise up and adorn the Shrine of the Bab-as well as the great Administrative Centre in its shadow-is undoubtedly a triumph of the unheard

30 Baha'u'llah, Tablets, p. 103.

31 The Bab, Selections, p. 74.

32 Shoghi Effendi, letter to the Baha'fs of the East, Naw-Ruz 111 BE.

33 The Bab, Selections, p. 57.

34 Baha'u'llah, cited in note 171 in the Kitab-i-Aqdas, p. 238.

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peoples of the world. Adhering to the vision and guidance of the Master and the Guardian, the followers of the Blessed Beauty in

every land-that noble but humble "army of light" -overcame all obstacles and vanquished the forces of darkness that sought to extinguish the Divine Flame kindled by the Bab and intensified by Baha'u'llah. Reflecting on these events we can only say, "Glorified, glorified be His meekness "35

The verdant natural mosaic now extending from the foot to the crest of Mount Carmel presents humankind with a profound message of hope. The struggle for the spiritual regeneration of the world, which is our Faith's ultimate mission, is, in some sense, given expression by the greening and blossoming of this mountain. As the variegated elements of the gardens encircling the Holy Precincts effloresce into ever more resplendent patterns of beauty, so too our teachings tell us "the earth of human potentialities will blossom with its own latent excellence and flower into praiseworthy qualities." 36 But these capacities of the human spirit will only flourish "through the restoring waters of pure intention and unselfish effort." 37 The magnificent gardens and flowing waters now decorating God's "Vineyard" speak to the nobility of human beings-of what is possible for human society to achieve when it consciously turns to the bountiful outpourings of the Holy Spirit. They suggest quite directly that the transformation of the outer world is contingent upon an inner transformation of the heart. In 1911, 'Abdu'l-Baha, in His first public address in the West in London, declared, "This is a new cycle of human power. All the horizons of the world are luminous, and the world will become indeed as a garden and a paradise." 38 As humanity traversed the

35 Bahfu'llah, Gleanings, p. 242.

36 'Abdu'l-Baha, The Secret of Divine Civilization (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1994), p. 4.

37 'Abdu'l-Baha, Secret of Divine Civilization, p. 4.

38 'Abdu'l-Baha, 'Abdu'l-Baha in London: Addresses and Notes of Conversations (London: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1987), p. 19.

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subsequent decades of the century-a century darkened by harrowing periods of ferocity and depravity and illumined by elevating flashes of creativity and unity-'Abdu'l-Baha's vision of a transformed world unfolded. While the full consummation of His vision is likely to occur only in the distant future, its essential features and direction have been irreversibly established. At this juncture, the very purpose of the Baha'i community is to demonstrate that it is possible to create gardens of justice and understanding-patterns of collective life based on trust, cooperation, rectitude of conduct, and genuine concern for others. May

our own unremitting quest for unity in diversity illuminate others. And as the terraced gardens of Carmel manifest in their beauty and diversity the ideal of harmony, may the world itself recognize its capacity to effect the unity which is the only pathway to peace and well-being. We thus offer to humanity two powerful examples: ourselves and this mountain of splendor.

In executing the mandate given to him by the Master, the beloved Guardian, through immense effort and creativity, embellished the Shrine of the Bab with an "exquisite shell," designed the Arc on the Hill of God, and beautified the Holy Precincts.

Each step he undertook in the development of the World Centre was matched by a great thrust forward in the teaching field. As Shoghi Effendi mapped the terrain of Mount Carmel, he also mapped the earth to every last degree. Under his energizing and divinely inspired leadership, and in accordance with the Plan conceived by the Center of the Covenant, a valiant band of believers extended the spiritual dominion of Baha'u'llah to the remotest regions of the globe, presenting to the world a working model of a unified "commonwealth of peoples." 39

This response to the "summons of the Lord of Hosts" led to the great victory of 1963. With the election of the Universal House of Justice, the "sailing of the Ark" of God's laws mentioned in the

The Dawn-Breakers: Nabi's Narrative of the Early Days

39 Shoghi Effendi, trans.,

of the Baha'i Revelation (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1996), p. 667.

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Tablet of Carmel was realized. 40 Through this unique collective act, the long awaited "scales of justice" had been raised by the Baha'is of the world and "the Hand of Omnipotence" had "established His Revelation upon an enduring foundation." 41 The "living waters of everlasting life," Shoghi Effendi indicated, would now "stream forth from that fountain-head of God's World Order upon all the warring nations and peoples of the world, to wash away the evils and iniquities of the realm of dust, and heal man's age-old ills and ailments." 42

The establishment of the Universal House of Justice constituted a remarkable demonstration of the spirit of faith. This spirit was again manifest in the monumental projects of the past decade. Given the privilege of building up the agencies of the New World Order "foreshadowed by the Bab, enunciated by Baha'u'llah, and established by 'Abdu'l-Baha," 43 the projects drew the support of every segment of our community. And how could it be otherwise? For as Shoghi Effendi has explained, the "World Administrative

Center of the Baha'i community . . . stands as the emblem symbolizing the basic unity of all nations, governments, and peoples, and as the seat of sovereignty and the dawning-place of both spiritual and temporal power. It is the supreme center to which the followers of His most sublime and glorious Faith must turn and the focal point which will mirror forth upon all regions the effulgent splendors of the celestial throne of Him Who is the Creator of men. It is the fountain-head of divine civilization which is the fairest, the

40 Shoghi Effendi, letter to the Baha'fs of the East, Naw-Ruz 111 BE, cited in Adib Taherzadeh, *The Covenant of Bahd'u'lldh* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1992), p. 402.

41 Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahd'u'lldh*, p. 109.

42 Shoghi Effendi, letter to the Baha'fs of the East, 27 November 1929, cited in *Covenant of Bahd'u'lldh*, p. 407.

43 Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to America: Selected Letters and Cablegrams Addressed to the Bahd 'is of North America, 1932-1946* (Wilmette: Baha' f Publishing Committee, 1947), p. 49.

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noblest fruit of the Revelation of the Most Great Name "44 This then provides insight into our essential identity. As Baha' u'llah is the Prophet of civilization, we are the builders of civilization. As He is the Divine Educator, we are students learning to apply His teachings to the problems and needs of the world. As He is the Source of light, we are the agents of light, casting beams of love and confidence into the darkness. We are, therefore, instruments amplifying Carmel's call: "He that was hidden from mortal eyes is come! His all-conquering sovereignty is manifest; His all-encompassing splendor is revealed. " 45 Our mission is the spiritual empowerment of the whole of the human family-to open up vistas of justice, freedom, and culture that have never before been seen. "A race of men," Baha'u'llah assures us, "incomparable in character, shall be raised up which ... will cast the sleeve of holiness over all that hath been created"46 The stunning structures on the Arc provide a glimpse of the civilization to be. In their features of balance, proportionality, and harmony they echo Baha'u'llah's exhortation to humanity to return to the Golden Mean, the "Middle Way"-to infuse all human endeavor with equity, mutuality of purpose, and moderation. In their sublimity and elegant solidity, the buildings now erected offer a striking contrast to the disintegrating institutions and bankrupt mores of a directionless society. To a shaken and agitated world they reflect the "calm new light of Peace and of Truth which

envelops, guides, and sustains" those who have embraced the "law and love of Baha'u'llah." 47

The achievement that we have gathered to celebrate is one truly worthy of our spiritual forebears. It is an accomplishment that both vindicates the suffering of the Bab and Baha'u'llah and

44 Shoghi Effendi, letter to the Baha'fs of the East, Naw-Ruz 111 BE.

45 Baha'u'llah, Gleanings, p. 16.

46 Baha'u'llah, cited in Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice* (Wilmette:

Baha'i Publishing Trust, 2000), p. 31.

47 Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahd 'u 'ldh*, p. 109.

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foreshadows the wonders that the age of human maturity will reveal. In bringing these extraordinary projects to fruition we can now begin to visualize what the writer of the Apocalypse saw long ago: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more

pain "48

In pondering the significance of what the lovers of Baha' u'llah have wrought on the mountain of God, we can only recall the words of one of the seven martyrs of Tehran, who, while awaiting the moment of his own death, gazed upon the bodies of the two martyrs who had preceded him and who still lay entwined in each other's embrace. "'Well done, beloved companions!' he cried." 49 Indeed, my brothers and sisters, well done!

48 Revelation 21 :3-4.

49 Shoghi Effendi, trans., *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 454.

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From the Universal House of Justice

On the Occasion of the Official Opening of the
Terraces of the Shrine of the Bab

22 May 2001

With joyful and thankful hearts, we welcome all who have come from near and far to join us on this auspicious occasion for the Baha'is of the world. We acknowledge with deep appreciation the presence of so many distinguished guests.

A century and a half have passed since that unspeakable tragedy in the northwest of Persia when the Bab faced the volley fired at Him from the rifles of 750 soldiers. The soldiers had followed the orders of the highest authorities in the land. The Bab's mangled body was then thrown on the side of a moat outside the city, abandoned to what His cold-blooded persecutors thought would be a dishonorable fate. They had hoped thus to put an end to the growing influence of His teachings on masses of people throughout the country. These masses had accepted, in the face of intense persecution, the Bab's claim to prophethood, and their lives were being transformed spiritually and morally as He prepared them for what He said was the dawn of a new age in which a world civilization would be born and flourish. The expectations that stirred countless hearts were heightened even more sublimely by the Bab's announcement that One greater than He would soon arise, One Who would reveal the unparalleled character of the promised world civilization that would signify the coming of age of the entire human race.

We are met not to lament the tragedy of the Bab's martyrdom and the persecutions that followed; rather have we come to celebrate the culmination and acknowledge the meaning of an unprecedented project that had its beginning over a century ago. It was then that Baha'u'llah, Whom the Ottoman authorities had banished to Acre to serve out His days in confinement, visited Mount Carmel

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and selected the spot where the remains of His Herald would be interred. We humbly trust that the wondrous result achieved by the completion of the nineteen terraced gardens, at the heart of which rises the Shrine of the Bab, is a fitting fulfilment of the vision initiated by Baha'u'llah.

The sufferings sustained by the Bab so as to arouse humanity to the responsibilities of its coming age of maturity were themselves indications of the intensity of the struggle necessary for the world's people to pass through the age of humanity's collective adolescence. Paradoxical as it may seem, this is a source of hope. The turmoil and crises of our time underlie a momentous transition in human affairs. Simultaneous processes of disintegration and integration have clearly been accelerating throughout the planet since the Bab appeared in Persia. That our Earth has contracted into a neighborhood, no one can seriously deny. The world is being made new. Death pangs are yielding to birth pangs. The pain shall pass when members of the human race act upon the common recognition of their essential oneness. There is a light at the end of this tunnel of change beckoning humanity to the goal

destined for it according to the testimonies recorded in all the Holy Books.

The Shrine of the Bab stands as a symbol of the efficacy of that age-old promise, a sign of its urgency. It is, as well, a monument to the triumph of love over hate. The gardens which surround that structure, in their rich variety of colors and plants, are a reminder that the human race can live harmoniously in all its diversity.

The light that shines from the central edifice is as a beacon of hope to the countless multitudes who yearn for a life that satisfies the soul as well as the body.

This inextinguishable hope stems from words such as these from the Pen of Baha' u'llah: "This is the Day in which God's most excellent favors have been poured out upon men, the Day in which His most mighty grace has been infused into all created things." May all who strive, often against great odds, to uphold

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principles of justice and concord be encouraged by these assurances.

In reflecting on the years of effort invested in this daunting project, we are moved to express to the people of Haifa the warmth of the feeling in our hearts. Their city will for all time be extolled by the Baha'is everywhere as the place in which the mortal remains of the youthful Prophet-Herald of their Faith finally found refuge, and this after half a century of having to be secretly moved for protection from one place to another in His native land. The patience and cordiality shown towards the Baha'is throughout the most difficult years of the construction work exemplify the spirit of goodwill in which so much of the world stands so greatly in need. Haifa is providentially situated on Mount Carmel, with its immortal associations with saintly visionaries, whose concern throughout the ages was largely focused on the promise of peace. May Haifa achieve wide renown not just as a place of natural beauty but more especially as the city of peace.

Let the word go forth, then, from this sacred spot, from this Mountain of the Lord, that the unity and peace of the world are not only possible but inevitable. Their time has come.

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(Above left) Youth from around the world reciting a prayer of the Bdb. events.

(Below) The crowd shows its appreciation at one of the

(Above right) The choirs from the Democratic (Below left) A scene from the dramatic

Republic of the Congo and the Bahá'í World narrative. (Below right) The group
Centre perform together. Tabarsi from Spain.
From the Universal House of Justice

To the Believers Gathered for the Events Marking the
Completion of the Projects on Mount Carmel

24 May 2001

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

One hundred and forty-eight years have passed since the moment
in the darkness of the S'iyah-Chal when Baha'u'llah received the
Divine summons to rise and proclaim to all on earth the dawning
of the Day of God:

Verily, We shall render Thee victorious by Thyself and by Thy
pen Ere long God will raise up the treasures of the earthmen who will aid
Thee through Thyself and through Thy Name,
wherewith God hath revived the hearts of such as have recognized
Him.

In terms of historical time, it is but the briefest of spaces that
separates that primal moment from the splendid victory we celebrate
here this week. You who have come together from every corner of
the earth and from every segment of the human family represent
a cross-section of those whom Baha'u'llah has raised up to aid
Him, and no one among us can hope to express adequately the
gratitude we feel at being in that company.

The majestic buildings that now stand along the Arc traced
for them by Shoghi Effendi on the slope of the Mountain of God,
together with the magnificent flight of garden terraces that embrace
the Shrine of the Bab, are an outward expression of the immense
power animating the Cause we serve. They offer timeless witness
to the fact that the followers of Baha'u'llah have successfully laid
the foundations of a worldwide community transcending all
differences that divide the human race, and have brought into
existence the principal institutions of a unique and unassailable
administrative order that shapes this community's life. In the

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transformation that has taken place on Mount Carmel, the Bahá'í
Cause emerges as a visible and compelling reality on the global
stage, as the focal center of forces that will, in God's good time,
bring about the reconstruction of society, and as a mystic source
of spiritual renewal for all who turn to it.

Reflection on what the Bahá'í community has accomplished

throws into heartbreaking perspective the suffering and deprivation engulfing the great majority of our fellow human beings. It is necessary that it should do so, because the effect is to open our minds and souls to vital implications of the mission Baha'u'llah has laid on us. "Know thou of a truth," He declares, "these great oppressions that have befallen the world are preparing it for the advent of the Most Great Justice." "God be praised!" 'Abdu'l-Baha adds, "The sun of justice hath risen above the horizon of Baha'u'llah. For in His Tablets the foundations of such a justice have been laid as no mind hath, from the beginning of creation, conceived." In the final analysis, it is this Divine purpose that all our activities are intended to serve, and we will advance this purpose to the degree that we understand what is at stake in the efforts we are making to teach the Faith, to establish and consolidate its institutions, and to intensify the influence it is exerting in the life of society.

Humanity's crying need will not be met by a struggle among competing ambitions or by protest against one or another of the countless wrongs afflicting a desperate age. It calls, rather, for a fundamental change of consciousness, for a wholehearted embrace of Baha'u'llah's teaching that the time has come when each human being on earth must learn to accept responsibility for the welfare of the entire human family. Commitment to this revolutionizing principle will increasingly empower individual believers and Baha'i institutions alike in awakening others to the Day of God and to the latent spiritual and moral capacities that can change this world into another world. We demonstrate this commitment, Shoghi Effendi tells us, by our rectitude of conduct towards others, by the discipline of our own natures, and by our complete freedom

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from the prejudices that cripple collective action in the society around us and frustrate positive impulses towards change.

The standards set out by the Guardian apply to the entire Baha'i community, both in its collective life and in the lives of its individual members. They hold, however, particular implications for Baha'i youth, who are blessed with the enviable advantages of high energy, flexibility of mind, and, to a great extent, freedom of movement.

The world that Baha'i youth are inheriting is one in which the distribution of educational, economic, and other basic opportunities is grossly unjust. Baha'i youth must not be daunted by such barriers. Their challenge is to understand the real condition of humanity and to forge among themselves enduring spiritual bonds that free them not only from racial and national divisions but also from those created by social and material conditions, and that will fit them to carry forward the great trust reposed in them.

Baha'u'llah encourages us to anticipate from the youth of His community a much earlier advance to maturity than is characteristic of the rest of society. Clearly, that does not in any way diminish the importance of the pursuit of education, of economic realities, or of family obligations. It does mean that Baha'i youth can accept and should be encouraged to accept- a responsibility of their own for moral leadership in the transformation of society. In vindication of these words, we invoke the memory of the One Whose Shrine has today set the Mountain of God ablaze with light, and the memory of the band of youthful heroes and heroines whose greatness of soul and sacrifice of self launched on its course the enterprise in which we are engaged.

The achievement we are today celebrating brings into focus two paradoxical realities. Within the Faith itself, the gathering strength of the Baha'i community presages a great surge forward, intimations of which are already everywhere apparent. Inevitably, as Shoghi Effendi several times emphasized, this advance will excite even more intense opposition than the Cause has so far encountered, opposition that will in turn release the greater forces needed for the still more demanding tasks that lie ahead.

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The world in which our efforts are taking place is likewise undergoing profound changes. On the one hand, the vast network of agencies and individuals that promote understanding and cooperation among diverse peoples affirms ever more powerfully the growing recognition that the "earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens." On the other hand, it is equally clear that the world is moving through a period of social paralysis, tyranny, and anarchy, a period marked by the widespread neglect of both governmental and personal responsibility, the ultimate consequences of which no one on earth can foresee. The effect of both developments, as Shoghi Effendi also pointed out, will be to awaken in the hearts of those who share this planet with us a longing for unity and justice that can be met only by the Cause of God.

A long and arduous process of struggle, experimentation, and construction has led to the victories that lift our hearts as a new century opens. Through the rapidly proliferating system of institutes and the energy being invested everywhere in area growth strategies, the Baha'i community has moved swiftly to capitalize on what has been achieved. However deep may be the gloom enveloping the world, the future has never looked so bright for the prosecution of Baha'u'llah's mission. We who have been privileged to gather here this week have witnessed, with our own eyes, the dawning fulfillment of the words revealed by the Lord

of Hosts on this mountain over a century ago, words which cause the very atoms of the earth to vibrate: "Verily this is the Day in which both land and sea rejoice at this announcement, the Day for which have been laid up those things which God, through a bounty beyond the ken of mortal mind or heart, hath destined for revelation."

Such a privilege carries with it an equally great responsibility, the responsibility to do our part, whatever the sacrifice, whatever the difficulty, to see that the poignant desire expressed by Baha'u'llah on that historic occasion is fulfilled: "Oh, how I long to announce unto every spot on the surface of the earth, and to carry to each one of its cities, the glad-tidings of this Revelation-a Revelation

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to which the heart of Sinai hath been attracted, and in whose name the Burning Bush is calling: 'Unto God, the Lord of Lords, belong the kingdoms of earth and heaven.'"

With all the fervor of thankful hearts, we will pray at the Holy Threshold that Baha'u'llah will bless and confirm every effort you make to advance His purpose for the redemption of humankind and the healing of its ills.

With loving Baha'i greetings,

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

The members of the Universal House of Justice at the Haifa Congress Center on 24 May.

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The Year in Review

Baha'u'llah wrote that the purpose of religion is "to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men," and Baha'is believe that the teachings of their Faith, when they inspire the actions of individuals and communities, can be a motive force for the progress of civilization.

The teachings of the Baha'i Faith include doctrines not only for personal conduct, but also for the physical, moral, and spiritual advancement of all mankind, and the more than five million Baha'is in the world use these as the basis for their relationship with society. Their religion is more than just a private practice; it is a vital process that engages them actively in the development of their own communities and the world around them.

Though the Baha'i community is still very young in relation to other world religions, its activities are rapidly expanding in

both scope and scale. The size of these efforts is not their most important aspect, but rather the spirit that animates them, as Baha'is put the ideals of the Faith into action in communities throughout

1 Baha'u'llih, *Tablets of Bahd 'u'Lldh revealed after the Kitab-i-Aqdds* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1997), p. 168.

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the world. Baha'is are active in such areas as the advancement of women, racial harmony, social and economic development, and also in practices that will encourage the growth and development of their Faith.

This article is not a comprehensive record of these activities, but it highlights major areas and demonstrates the variety of ways in which the Baha'is are working to improve the world in which they live.

Advancement of Women

'Abdu'l-Baha explained that humanity's full potential cannot be reached until equality is realized, saying, "until this equality is established, true progress and attainment for the human race will not be facilitated." 2 Equality between women and men is described as a vital element in the success of humanity as a whole, and in many places pursuing this ideal requires a struggle against entrenched ideas and practices that have historically allocated a lesser place to women in society.

In Brasilia, Brazil, Baha'is focused on using the justice system to promote the advancement of women and organized the National Seminar for the Training of Judges, Prosecutors, and Lawyers on the theme "Protecting Women from Domestic Violence." The seminar, held 5-7 November 2001, was carried out with the cooperation of both local government offices and NGOs, with financial backing from the Ministry of Justice. Additional support was provided by the Brazilian Association of Judges and Prosecutors for Children and Youth (ABMP), the Federal Council of the Brazilian Bar Association, and UNESCO.

Participants in the intensive seminar came from 20 of the country's 27 states and included judges, federal and state prosecutors, and representatives of the Human Rights Commission and the State Bar Association. Though the total number of participants was relatively small, the idea was to assemble people from different

2 'Abdu'l-Baha, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahd during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912*, rev. ed. (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1995), p. 375.

regions of the country and train them so that they could continue the process in their respective areas.

Layli Miller, a Baha'i lawyer with the US-based Tahirih Justice Center (TJC), was the primary facilitator, and the three-day training was based on a booklet she had prepared under the auspices of the TJC. It was printed for distribution to the participants, and each one received 30 copies to be able to reproduce the seminar at the local level. A videotape of selected presentations was also distributed to the participants to assist in their spreading the process throughout the country.

The program included speeches, panel discussions, and a twohour presentation by one of the country's leading NGOs working on the defense of women, El Centro Feminista de Estudios y Asesoría (Feminist Center for Studies and Advisory Services), which provided an overview of current aspects of the juridical situation regarding violence against women.

In India, where a traditionally patriarchal society often reduces the value of women, the Baha'i community worked during the year with religious leaders to raise awareness of the importance of equality while combating violent practices.

Dr. Ali K. Merchant represented the Baha'i community at a convention of national religious leaders on the Abolition of Female Feticide and Infanticide. The conference, held 24 June 2001 in New Delhi, was jointly organized by the Indian Medical Association and the National Commission for Women and brought together more than 400 people. UNICEF, the Department of Women and Child Development, and the Ministry of Human Resource Development were also principal organizers of the meeting, held at the Chinmay Mission Auditorium in New Delhi.

Dr. Merchant shared the Baha'i perspective on the topic and contributed to the unanimous voices of the gathered leaders that the destructive practices of female infanticide and feticide must be eliminated. The group also addressed general practices and attitudes that lead to discrimination against women, which participants identified as stemming from ignorance and prejudice. Dr. Merchant called on the religious leaders who were present to reexamine the sacred scriptures of their religions, which have been used as a means of lowering the position of women in Indian society.

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Other Baha'i communities participated in smaller-scale local efforts, often through the coordination and assistance of local or national Offices for the Advancement of Women. In July 2001, the National Council of Women's Societies held its First Quadrennial National Convention in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The theme of the conference was "Promoting the Rights of Women through the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination

against Women (CEDAW)." Members of the Baha'i Office for the Advancement of Women in Nigeria participated in the conference, along with members of government ministries and NGOs, and were able to promote the Faith's perspective by distributing some 1,500 pamphlets on the Baha'i view of the equality of women and men. Baha'is in Cameroon participated in the commemoration of World Rural Women's Day in Buea, Cameroon, on 15 October. The local Baha'i community of Buea was invited by the provincial delegate of Women's Affairs for the South West Province to collaborate in the celebration. As a result, a Baha'i representative took part in a panel discussion broadcast over the provincial radio station. On the day of the commemoration, another Baha'i representative was present at the ceremony, which was presided over by the Governor of the province.

From 5 to 7 October 2001, members of the Baha'i community of Greece participated in a symposium about the social exclusion and trafficking of women. It was held in Thessaloniki and organized by Medecins du Monde, under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace, and the General Secretariat of Equality.

Social and Economic Development

One of the many ways Baha'is work to advance the welfare of human society is through social and economic development activities. The projects, whether initiated by Baha'is or simply involving them, are intended to increase capacity and build resources while also offering a direct and positive impact.

In Ethiopia, Baha'is in the Weyisso Kenchera community inaugurated a 33,000-cubic-meter water pond project on 5 May 2001.

The project was designed to alleviate the problem of water shortages.

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In Vanuatu, onlookers examine a vehicle running on coconut oil based fuel, developed by a Baha'i in the country to reduce dependence on outside oil and to better use local resources.

John Schramm, the Canadian Ambassador to Ethiopia, officially opened the project, which was completed over a one-year period and was funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Ethiopia originally initiated the project in consultation with local Baha'is, and the entire community was involved in support of the pond project, which will benefit 300 households with approximately 3,000 people and more than 15,000 cattle in the drought-plagued region. The project will not only eliminate the need for migration to search for water but will also substantially decrease the occurrence of water-borne illnesses in the region.

The Brazilian Ministry of Education, as part of a government program to reduce unemployment, granted \$850,000 to the Association for the Cohesive Development of the Amazon (ADCAM), a Baha'i-inspired development organization in the Amazon basin. 3 The grant will allow ADCAM to build and equip a three-story

3 For more information about ADCAM, see *The Baha'i World 1995-96*, pp. 301-05.

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technical education building, to be known as the Masrour Technology Institute, on its 12-acre property in the Sao Jose suburb of Manaus. Construction began in December, leading to completion of the building in July 2002.

Initially, courses will be offered in business management, social development facilitation, and environmental technology, with additional classes in design, nutrition, and air conditioning technology to be included as the teaching staff expands. By 2006, the Institute expects to have a full complement of staff, with the capacity to serve approximately 640 students per year in the main subjects and another 4,350 per year in the shorter, basic-level courses.

ADCAM currently operates three other major programs: an elementary school, a youth leadership project, and a supervised youth service project, which collectively serve more than 700 people. In June, Health for Humanity (HH) and the Mongolian Baha'i Doctors Association organized the first Baha'i International Health Conference in Mongolia. The conference took place 5- 8 June 2001 in Ulaanbataar.

Health for Humanity is a health development organization that focuses its activities around three broad program areas: blindness prevention, public health development, and international exchange. The fundamental belief of HH is that people everywhere have capacity and inherent nobility and can care for themselves when they have the proper education and resources. The Mongolian conference was part of HH's international exchange program, which

Bahd'fs and
representatives of the
Brazilian Ministry of
Education and
Culture, at the
ceremony marking
the agreement
between the Ministry
and ADCAM in

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Participants in a training workshop on moral leadership in Accra, Ghana, in September 2001.

encourages learning experiences and an exchange of medical knowledge and ideas by both volunteers and partners, with ongoing activities in Mongolia and in China.

The International Environment Forum (IEF), a Baha'i-inspired NGO that explores not only technical and scientific solutions to environmental problems but also the potential benefit of new social, cultural, and spiritual insights, organized its fifth international conference in October 2001. The three-day program, titled "Knowledge, Values, and Education for Sustainable Development," was held at Townshend International School in Hluboka nad Vltavou, Czech Republic. Twenty IEF members gathered at the conference, with dozens of others joining via the Internet. Participants included researchers, teachers, students, and professionals from a wide range of disciplines, and practitioners in the field of environment and sustainable development.

In a keynote address entitled "Knowledge and Indicators for Sustainable Development," Prof. Bedrich Moldan of Charles University in Prague, who is the former Czech Minister of the Environment, raised the idea of promoting or establishing a kind

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of "global moral minimum" system of values for the environment. In the end, participants concluded that values and education are not only complementary but also essential to the technical and scientific issues related to sustainable development.

In Ghana, the Olinga Foundation for Human Development, a Baha'i-inspired NGO, is exploring the need for moral leadership as a means to address the social problems in that country. The group organized a moral leadership training workshop in Accra from 3 to 9 September 2001, which was supported by CIDA and Bolivia's Nur University.

The 30 participants came from teacher training colleges, government ministries, NGOs, and the media. John Kepner, Director of Projects at Nur University, and Leslie Casely-Hayford, the Director of the Olinga Foundation, facilitated the training, the framework of which was based on six key elements: service-oriented leadership, leadership in personal transformation, leadership in social transformation, fundamental moral responsibility, belief in the essential nobility of humanity, and development of capacity. Together, these create a system of moral leadership which the organizers believe is sorely needed. Participants learned new training methods, structures, and techniques through workshops and presentations and were given both conceptual and practical tools

that emphasized moral values and means for promoting moral leadership in government, classrooms, and through the media.

Race Unity

The Baha'i Faith teaches that all people are equal, and Baha'is strive to eliminate prejudices that create separations between people based on race, creed, or culture. Far from seeking a uniform whole, though, Baha'i communities are encouraged to integrate the cultures and heritage of the vast palette of humanity. The Baha'i community, which has members from more than 2,000 ethnic and tribal backgrounds, seeks to create a unified planet that is free from racial prejudice and realizes Baha'u'llah's statement that "the earth be regarded as one country and one home." 4

4 Baha'u'llah, Tablets, p. 127.

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In Brazil, a country where race relations are the cause of much national stress, two seminars, one in Brasilia and another in Rio de Janeiro, gathered federal deputies, journalists, researchers, and others to discuss the question of racism in the Brazilian media. The gatherings, held in August, were promoted by the Baha'i community of Brazil, with the support of two other NGOs. Parts of the first seminar were broadcast by the Federal Chamber's television station and were later repeated several times. Some 400 people attended the Rio de Janeiro seminar, which was the larger of the two. Among the participants was the ombudsman of Folha de Sao Paulo, Brazil's leading newspaper, who said that these seminars were instrumental in changing the editorial position of the paper regarding racism in Brazil and the progress of preparations for the World Conference against Racism (WCAR). 5 Instead of the occasional small notes that first appeared in Folha de Sao Paulo, the paper began to dedicate significantly more articles, editorials, and features to developments regarding the WCAR and actions to combat racism in Brazil.

In Australia, more than 500 representatives from government, private, civil, and Aboriginal groups celebrated the unveiling of a monument in Townsville, Queensland. The 47-meter monument depicts a Rainbow Serpent, the creature responsible for the creation of the world according to Aboriginal traditional beliefs.

Farvadin Daliri, an Australian Baha' {, is the manager of the Townsville Migrant Resource Center, which created the serpent. Mr. Daliri also served as the project manager and sculptor for the concrete and steel monument. The project took two years to complete and involved consultation with members of many tribes about the spiritual significance of the project in terms of Aboriginal heritage. During the final stage, five indigenous artists from Townsville's correctional center and Aboriginal artist Jackie Elliute

finished painting the serpent.

The unveiling took place on 23 March, coinciding with National Harmony Day, and included traditional dancing and music in celebrating Aboriginal culture.

5 For a report on the World Conference against Racism, see pp. 125-32.
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Bahá'ís in Peru entertain and educate students with the Universal Peace musical theater program, which teaches the concepts of world citizenship in primary schools.

Racial prejudice was called the "most challenging issue" in America by Shoghi Effendi, and Bahá'ís in the United States are addressing the challenge through efforts such as participation in the Martin Luther King, Jr., Day Parade in Houston, Texas.

Bahá'ís participate in the event annually, along with hundreds of organizations, schools, institutions, and corporations, to promote and honor the diversity of the city. In 2002, however, the chairman and CEO of the MLK Jr. Parade Foundation met with a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly and, responding to the depth of feeling and conviction that the Bahá'ís show in the parade every year, asked them to contribute a float and to both lead and close the parade. He went on to request that the Bahá'ís cosponsor this event with the MLK Foundation and asked them to help in the planning to ensure the success of the parade.

Some 300,000 people attended and four national TV networks broadcast segments of the parade's festivities to a potential audience of millions more throughout the nation. Bahá'í singers also participated in "Celebrating Multicultural Diversity, a Family Concert" held the day before the parade.

In Canada, the Honor All Nations Drum and Dance Group, accompanied by Kevin Locke, traveled through Vancouver Island,
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British Columbia, in June. Honor All Nations is a Bahá'í intercultural performance and service group, and Mr. Locke is a Bahá'í of Lakota heritage who performs several traditional native art forms, including storytelling, hoop-dancing, and flute-playing. The trip focused on Canadian First Nations areas, where many children and youth must deal with the marginalization of their language and culture and often struggle with discrimination, substance abuse, and violence. The group's message of unity and upliftment was meant to provide inspiration to the young people and give them a positive view of their culture and heritage. The trip aimed both to vitalize the culture and to propagate the Bahá'í teachings. The group was warmly received at its many stops, and positive articles about its efforts were published in several local newspapers.

Education

The Baha'i teachings repeatedly emphasize the importance of education, especially that of children, in the various arts and sciences and stress the inclusion of moral and spiritual elements in curricula. Both of these are described as essential to a complete education, and Baha'i classes and schools seek to incorporate these principles into traditional educational disciplines.

One significant Baha'i educational initiative is Landegg International University in Switzerland. On 20 September 2001, Landegg was formally registered by the cantonal and federal authorities as a private university, after meeting the criteria set by the government. Landegg's new status is a recognition by the Swiss government of the legitimacy of Landegg's unique approach to education, which is based on the idea of applied spirituality.

The university, formerly known as Landegg Academy, currently offers undergraduate degrees in four areas: economics and international development; political science and international relations; psychology, human development, and education; and the integrative study of religion. Landegg also offers master's programs in conflict resolution, leadership and global governance, economic and social development, spiritual psychology, and moral education. Over the years, Landegg has established scholarly exchange programs with

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a number of universities, including the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Beijing University in China, the State University of Sergipe in Brazil, and the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh in the United States.

Although the Landegg campus is relatively small, with a current capacity of approximately 100 full-time students, its reach is global. At any given time, only about one-third of the school's students are on campus, while the rest study from afar, using an array of distance-learning technologies but principally e-mail and the World Wide Web.

The Ruaha School, a Baha'i-sponsored school in Iringa, Tanzania, received a two-year \$122,000 grant to build a new girls' dormitory capable of housing 120 students, increasing the school's housing capacity by 46 percent. The new dormitory will provide 1,040 square meters of living space, including a 405-square-meter courtyard. The school, which currently has about 400 students, is owned and operated by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'fs of Tanzania. The grant was given by the Unity Foundation, a Baha'i-inspired development agency in Luxembourg that has also recently provided funding to a health outreach project in Guyana and a nonprofit printing operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that produces low-cost educational materials for community development and projects throughout the country.

Children in front of the Asma of Kakombe School complex in Uvira, South Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo, in June 2001.

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Students at the Bahd '£-run Bad{ School in Panama view displays at the school's science fair.

Ruaha's primary mission is to serve the Tanzanian community by providing quality education at an affordable cost. One of its major goals is to provide education for girls. More than two-thirds of its students are female, in a country where girls make up fewer than half the students enrolled in secondary schools.

While some Baha'i schools are expanding and changing, others are just beginning. On 28 September 2001, the Baha'i community in Daga, Papua New Guinea, witnessed the official opening of the Bonara Community School, a primary school that serves the Milne Bay province. The Baha'is of the Daga area initiated the project with funding and support from the Baha'i community, the government of PNG, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency, which provided funds for four teachers' houses and two large classrooms.

More than 1,000 people attended the opening, with some of the participants walking for up to two days to reach the remote area. Guests included representatives from the provincial government and the National Spiritual Assembly, as well as Continental Counsellor Jalal Mills. Peter Baki of the Department of Education of PNG delivered the opening speech. Mr. Baki praised the Baha'is

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for their efforts and mentioned other Baha'i projects in the area, such as a tree-planting campaign, as well as the school. Though the facility will serve the entire community, he called the Baha'is the "spiritual guardians" of the school.

The Baha'i Center of Learning in Western Australia was opened on 18 August 2001. Some 85 people attended the meeting, including press representatives and dignitaries. The Governor of Western Australia, Lieutenant-General John Sanderson, officially opened the center and spoke about the Baha'i Faith and the purpose of the building, specifically highlighting the Baha'i perspective on education. He also acknowledged the 90 public schools in the area that offer Baha'i education programs. Fiona McDonald, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia, spoke about the purpose of the center, which offers programs about the Baha'i Faith and its teachings as well as in-depth programs based on the Ruhi study materials. 6

Arts

Baha'u'llah wrote, "the true worth of artists and craftsmen should be appreciated, for they advance the affairs of mankind. Just as

the foundations of religion are made firm through the Law of God, the means of livelihood depend upon those who are engaged in arts and crafts." 7 Inspired by Baha'u'llah's words, many Baha'i artists throughout the world use their arts not only to express their Faith, but also as a means to inform others about it.

In the United Kingdom, the Baha'i International Community and Arts for Nature collaborated on an evening which used the arts to remember the life of Amatu'l-Baha Ru}iyyih Khanum, who passed away in January 2000. 8 Apart from being an author, a lecturer,

6 Developed in Colombia, these materials treat a variety of topics such as the development of spiritual qualities, prayer, the soul and the afterlife, carrying out acts of service, the spiritual education of children, Baha'i history, and teaching the Baha'i Faith.

7 Baha'u'llah, cited in "The Arts," The Compilation of Compilations, vol. 1 (Ingleside: Baha'i Publications Australia, 1991), no. 10, p. 3.

8 See The Baha'i World 1999- 2000, pp. 167-95, for a retrospective article about the life of Amacu'l-Baha Ru}iyyih Khanum.

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The cast of performers at an Arts for Nature tribute honoring Ru}iyyih Khdnum, held 15 May 2001 at Canada House in London.

and a leader of the Baha'i community, Ru}iyyih Khanum cared deeply about environmental issues and was an inspiration for the establishment of Arts for Nature, a 14-year-old organization that uses the arts to advocate for environmental issues.

Ru}iyyih Khanum supported the first Arts for Nature event, which was held in 1988 in London and organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature UK and the Baha'i International Community. She gave the keynote address at the event, alongside HRH Prince Philip.

The audience at the memorial evening, held in Canada House in London, included the Duke of Edinburgh, the Duchess of Abercorn, the Canadian High Commissioner, and more than 150 others. The guests enjoyed a reception and dinner, with a musical performance and dramatic presentations. The centerpiece was a theatrical performance entitled "A Life So Noble," which was inspired by Ru}iyyih Khanum's life and portrays four major aspects of her life and character, with a different actress personifying each. The show, written by Beverley Evans and directed by Annabel

Knight, uses words taken from Ru}iyyih Khfoum's writings and talks. Each attendee was given two books: Sacred Earth and Ru}iyyih Khanum's Prescription for Living, based on the Baha'i teachings. Elsewhere in the UK, the Saint Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art in Glasgow mounted an exhibition featuring the Baha'i Faith, which opened 22 June and ran through 21 October. Highlights of the exhibition included works by Baha'i artists, a

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Bahd'i artist Sima Baher standing with a mural that is part of her exhibit "The Earth Is But One Country, " which was displayed in Uruguay in 2001.

multimedia display, and a series of panels describing the history and teachings of the Faith. The Baha'i Publishing Trust of the United Kingdom prepared a booklet to complement the panels, which was made available to museum visitors. More than 40,000 people visited the Baha'i exhibit during its five-month run. Among the artistic displays were a model of the award-winning House of Worship in New Delhi, India, Rob Hain's painting "The Voyages of the Crimson Ark," and three works from a series illustrating The Seven Valleys, one of Baha' u'llah's primary mystical works. Also, a room of the display was used as a "Tranquility Zone," a space for private prayer and meditation. The realization of the exhibition was the result of a long-standing relationship between the Baha' is and the museum, and the displays were partially sponsored by the Baha'i Council for Scotland.

Beyond Words, a Baha'i performing arts group consisting of youth from Albania, Cameroon, Canada, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, South Africa, the UK, and the US, traveled through Lesotho

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for a month, performing music and dances addressing issues such as unity, the elimination of prejudice, drug abuse, and HIV/AJDS. The group performed for 17 organizations during its stay in Maseru, Lesotho. Hundreds attended the performances, many of which were given multiple times in the same location due to public demand. The group's travels and its message were promoted in local media through interviews with members in newspapers, TV, and radio.

The group's 17 November performance was sponsored by the Save the Children Fund UK, and more than 100 youth were invited to attend a full-day workshop on how to take initiative to help others within the country.

Individual Baha' is are also recognized for their achievements as they strive to use the arts to embody the teachings of the Faith and to express their religion through artistic endeavors.

Three Baha'i women toured Canada and the United States

performing music and dance. The program consisted of Persian classical music with three live musicians, Persian classical dance, including a performance about the life of the famous Baha'i poet Tahiri, and songs and dances from Africa. The two-hour performances in five cities were attended by some 1,500 people and were enthusiastically received. After the performances, many audience members asked for literature and information about the Faith.

The performers were Karin Blumenthal from Germany, who performed classical and free-form dances, Ghazal Ighani, a Canadian of Persian origin, and Ranzie Mensah, a Ghanaian living in Italy, who gave vocal performances. Ms. Ighani has two recorded albums, one of Baha'i songs and the other a Persian pop classical album which has been distributed worldwide. Ms. Mensah has recorded five albums and has been featured on national TV shows in Africa, France, and Italy.

Media coverage of the performances included local radio and television announcements and a television interview about the performance at the Alix Goolden Performance Hall in Victoria, British Columbia, which aired on local television several times during the day. Students from the Maxwell International Baha'i School in nearby Shawnigan Lake opened the evening with a play.

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Also in Canada, the Banff Center for Continuing Education announced a Baha'i, Benjamin Hatcher, as the recipient of its 2002 Clifford E. Lee Choreography Award. The award is administered annually by the Banff Center to an emerging Canadian choreographer to encourage his or her professional development. Mr. Hatcher, who is both a dancer and a choreographer, received \$5,000 and the opportunity to spend six weeks in residence at the Banff Center working with professional dancers at the summer dance program. He will also have access to full production support and staging facilities at the center, and his new work will be presented in July 2002.

Involvement in the Life of Society

Baha'i communities, far from being isolated from the world around them, are actively involved in public outreach, desiring to share the spiritual principles and ideals that they believe will bring peace and unity to the world. They seek to demonstrate to the public how the Baha'i teachings can be used to contribute to an "everadvancing civilization."

The terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September provided an opportunity for people all over the world to unite, and Baha'i communities worldwide participated in commemorations to promote the unifying teachings of their Faith.

The Baha'i community of the United States issued a statement on the destiny of America as "the promoter of world peace."

Although the statement does not specifically mention the terrorist attacks, it was designed to offer a new perspective on these and related events. Published 23 December 2001 as a full-page advertisement in The New York Times, the statement says that Baha'is believe the American nation "will evolve through tests and trials to become a land of spiritual distinction and leadership, a champion of justice and unity among all peoples and nations, and a powerful servant of the cause of everlasting peace." 9

The National Spiritual Assembly of Greenland issued a statement to the people of Greenland, expressing "heartfelt condolences for those innocent victims who were struck down by shameless acts

9 For the context of this statement, see pp. 295-97.

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of terrorism." The statement also expressed the view that "Our beloved country also needs to join hands with the other governments as a nation and participate fully in raising the standard of justice and peace amongst all nations." The statement was run in both national newspapers, in Greenlandic and Danish. This marked the first time since the formation of the National Spiritual Assembly in 1992 that it had addressed the people of Greenland.

In Australia, more than 1,000 people attended an interfaith gathering at the House of Worship on 16 September 2001. Members of Bahá'í, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and Muslim faiths offered prayers for the victims of the attacks.

On 15 November, Baha'is in Reykjavik, Iceland, participated in a seminar on religious tolerance, held in connection with the terrorist attacks on 11 September, organized by the Iceland University of Education. The representatives of six religions were invited to participate. Each introduced his or her faith group and answered the following question: "How do you, as a representative of your religion, believe the education system could promote more respect and tolerance towards different religions and their followers?"

Baha'is in Malaysia held a commemorative gathering on 6 October in Ipoh. Around 80 people joined in the "Prayers for World Peace" event, which brought together members of different religious groups in Malaysia, who contributed prayers and writings from many faiths.

Irish Baha'is also participated in an interfaith prayer service in response to the terrorist attacks, hosted by the Redemptorist

President Festus Mogae of Botswana (left) with two of the translators who produced a Baha'i prayer book in the

native Setswana

Language.

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Chief Minister Naveen Patnik of Orissa, India, (center) holding a copy of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* at the ceremony celebrating the translation of the book into the Oriya language.

Fathers Catholic Church in Limerick, Ireland. Thousands of people joined in the program, which included music and readings from various scriptures.

Though the Faith is apolitical in character, Bahá'ís do strive to contribute to the discourse of society by participating in activities and dialogues with governments and leaders of thought and through collaboration with the UN and other international organizations.

On 22 and 23 September 2001, Greek Bahá'ís participated in the first NGO Fair of Volunteerism and Humanitarianism, held at the Zappeion in Athens. The exhibition was held under the auspices of the Department of International Cooperation for Development of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Coalition of NGOs in Greece.

The Bahá'í stand explained the principles that guide the work of the Bahá'í community in social and economic development projects and showed concrete examples of projects in Africa and Europe. There was also a video about the FUNDAEC program in Colombia. Statements by the Baha'í International Community on a variety of subjects such as sustainable development, racism,

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and the role of religion in the advancement of women, were distributed in both Greek and English.

Volunteerism and Humanitarianism was also the theme at the International Fair in Luxembourg on 9 December 2001, which attracted close to 10,000 visitors. The Luxembourg Baha'í Women's organization Union Luxembourgeoise des Femmes Bahá'íes joined some 200 other organizations in this event, which was organized by a commission of the Ministry of Family.

The Baha'ís provided a presentation on the work of the Luxembourgish Baha'í community in the areas of the equality of women and men and service to humanity. The exhibit also included a corner with information materials and Baha'í publications. The Unity Foundation, a Baha'í-inspired NGO, was also represented. The *Luxemburger Wort*, the largest newspaper in Luxembourg, wrote about the participation of the Baha'í community at this event in its 10 December edition.

In September 2001, workshops of the "Stop and Act" program were facilitated for close to 65 students in three Austrian cities. The workshops were initiated by GLOBart, a Baha'í-inspired NGO

dedicated to connecting the arts and sciences, as a social service for schools in Horn, St. Polten, and Wien.

"Stop and Act" was developed by the Russian journalist Shamil Fattakhov. The project was implemented in almost all Southeastern European countries under the title "Promoting Positive Messages Through the Media: The Happy Hippo Show." The project is

Bahd'is in
Mauritius lead
a parade
celebrating World
Religion Day in
January 2002.

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Participants in a panel discussion on "Religions against Violence " in Stuttgart, Germany, at a World Religion Day commemoration on 20 January 2002.

sponsored by the government of Luxembourg as part of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe (formerly the Royaumont Process), a diplomatic initiative launched by the European Union in 1995. The program features short dramatic sketches that center around a moral dilemma, requiring audience members to discuss possible resolutions to the situation. At the end, one of these is chosen and acted out.

Each workshop was followed by a public show, with up to 700 people attending, including representatives of media, local authorities, educators, and social workers. The project was covered in newspapers and on local TV. The same month Mr. Fattakhov, who facilitated the Austrian seminars, was awarded the 2001 Innovation Award by GLOBart.

In the Uni ted States, Prof. Suheil Bushrui, holder of the Baha'i Chair for World Peace at the University of Maryland's Center for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM), presented a Baha'i perspective on ethics and humanity during a workshop organized by CIDCM with the support of the William
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and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The workshop was held at the University of Maryland at College Park on 12 February 2002. Entitled "Separating Fact from Fiction after 9/11: Insights from Conflict and International Development Scholarship," the program featured sessions on radical Islam and Islamic social movements; on policing and law-enforcement against terrorism in the context of democratic societies; and on the impact of the 9/11 events on the US role in international affairs and on the processes of globalization. Participants included representatives of the Office of the UN Secretary General, the US Agency for International

Development, the National Academy of Sciences, the United Nations Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and the Henry Stimson Center, as well as scholars in conflict and peace studies from around the country.

Interfaith Activities

'Abdu'l-Baha wrote that "religion should be the cause of love and agreement, a bond to unify all mankind, for it is a message of peace and goodwill to man from God." 10 His vision of cooperation and amity among religions guides the Baha'i community in its pursuit of unity, and Baha'fs are acutely aware that religion should be a means for the unity of mankind, not for its division.

In 1950 the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'fs of the United States initiated World Religion Day as a means of calling attention to the harmony of spiritual principles and the oneness of the world's religions, and to emphasize that religion is the motivating force for world unity. Now Baha'fs around the globe celebrate the day, commemorated annually on the third Sunday in January, by hosting discussions, conferences, and other events that foster understanding and communication among the followers of all religions.

More than 400 people gathered in Stuttgart, Germany, on 20 January 2002 for a multifaith discussion on the topic "Religions against Violence," which was sponsored by the National Spiritual

10 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Baha'i World Faith* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1956), p. 240.

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Assembly of Germany. Participants on the panel discussed both the peace-promoting elements of religions and their potential to generate conflict and war. All agreed that world religions, if seen in their true essence, are against violence. Faith groups represented at the event included the Central Jewish Council of Germany, the German Buddhist Union, the Department of Theology of the University of Tübingen, the Central Muslim Council of Germany, and Hans Kting's Foundation for World Ethics.

Panelists also noted that competing claims to exclusive truth often prevent religions from establishing a climate of harmony and unity. Prof. Urs Baumann, a Catholic theologian, said the notion that a religion is "the only path to truth and salvation" has all too often been considered the "greatest reason for violence," especially when such a claim becomes institutionalized by government or politics.

Other significant World Religion Day observances included events in Bulgaria, Mongolia, Pakistan, and the United States, where numerous local Baha'i communities sponsored celebrations. In Bulgaria, about 45 people gathered at the national Baha'i

center in Sofia. Participants included followers of diverse religions, academicians, and members of nongovernmental organizations. The program included the reading of prayers by representatives of the Baha'i Faith, Catholicism, Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam. After the devotional program, a talk entitled "Religious Tolerance: Historical Scope and Modern Understanding" was given by Theodore Bourilkov, member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Bulgaria, which sponsored the event. More than 100 people gathered in Ulaanbataar, Mongolia, including representatives of the Baha'i Faith, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. Several government officials and four lecturers from the religious studies department of the national university also attended. In Pakistan, more than 50 people attended a program at Baha'i Hall in Karachi, including members of Pakistan's Zikri community. The Zikri community is a peaceful Sufi sect of Islam. The World Religion Day Web site ¹¹ lists many more countries that participated in 2002's World Religion Day, including Albania,

11 <www.worldreligionday.com>.

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Australia, Austria, Canada, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Slovakia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Vanuatu.

Baha'i communities are also involved in long-term efforts to promote religious harmony and cooperation. One of the most active of these is the Baha'i community in Norway, which participated in the signing ceremony of the Oslo Declaration on Freedom of Religion or Belief on 8 November 2001 as part of an interfaith coalition composed of the major religious groups in the country.

The Declaration was drafted and adopted by a coalition of governments and nongovernmental organizations in August 1998 at an international conference on religious freedom. Among the participants in that conference was the Baha'i International Community. The document demonstrates a collective commitment to religious tolerance and is significant because of the diversity of religious groups that participated in its drafting. Twenty-five groups signed the Declaration. Britt Strandlie Thoresen, member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Norway, represented the Baha'is. Representatives of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, and humanism also participated.

The signing ceremony was initiated by the Cooperation Council of Religions and Life-Stance Communities and the Oslo Coalition of Freedom of Religion or Belief. The Baha'i community

Britt Strandlie

Thoresen, member of

the National
Spiritual Assembly of
Norway, signs the
Oslo Declaration on
Freedom of Religion
or Belief at a
ceremony held at the
Norwegian Academy
of Science and Letters
in November 2001.

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of Norway is a member of both groups. The ceremony took place at the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters and was attended by more than 100 guests, including officials of the Norwegian government, members of Parliament, representatives from some 16 foreign embassies, and members of various human rights groups and academic organizations.

The Declaration specifically affirms that "every human being has a responsibility to condemn discrimination and intolerance based on religions and belief, and to apply religion or belief in support of human dignity and peace." It gives recognition to the idea that "religions and beliefs teach peace and good will."

After the ceremony, Gunnar Sralsett, the Bishop of Oslo and president of the Oslo Coalition of Freedom of Religion or Belief, thanked the participants, stating that he would give a copy of the signed protocol to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, when he came to Oslo on 10 December to receive the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the United Nations.

Dutch Baha'is are also involved in an interfaith initiative, a national initiative on Freedom of Religion and Belief, which was

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Members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Samoa elected in 2001, standing in front of the Samoan House of Worship in Apia.

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created in May 2001 as a result of the conference "Freedom of Religion: A Precious Human Right," held the previous year. The initiative brings together many faiths, whose collective goal is to monitor the situation of religious freedom in the world and to advise the Dutch government on related issues. Situations such as human rights problems related to religious intolerance in Fiji and Macedonia are currently being monitored.

The initiative includes members of the Hindu Council; the Protestant Missionary Council; the Catholic Organization for Ecumenism; the Dutch government's Department of Mission, Church Social Welfare Work, and Development; the Liberal Jewish Council;

the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'fs of the Netherlands; the Dutch Muslim Council; and the Roman Catholic group Justitia et Pax.

In Reunion, Baha'fs strengthened their interfaith dialogue and relations with government officials by participating in a Group for Interreligious Dialogue meeting with the Prime Minister of France, Lionel Jospin, during his visit to the Island on 9 March 2002. Mr. Jospin invited members of religious communities to discuss issues of relevance to the country, including interaction between different religious and ethnic communities, religious lessons in school curricula, and matters of personal morality.

The participation of the Bahf fs was a major step for the community in that country, and the representative of the Faith presented the Prime Minister with several Baha'f documents, including statements of the Baha'f International Community.

Community Development

In the same way that individual Baha'fs are responsible for their personal spiritual development, so are they responsible for promoting creativity, building capacity, and developing distinctive social patterns within the Bahf f communities. Just as individuals are counseled by the Bahf f teachings to "acquire the attributes of spiritual and material perfection,"¹² they must collectively pursue those goals

12 'Abdu'l-Baha, *The Secret of Divine Civilization* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1994), p. 35.

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The President of Singapore, S.R. Nathan, poses with Bahd'i children at the national Naw-Ruz celebration in March 2002.

in more than two hundred countries and territories throughout the world, where Baha'i community life and administration are constantly developing.

A significant step in the development of national communities is the recognition of their National Spiritual Assemblies by their countries' governments. Such registration and incorporation allow the Baha'is to enjoy the same freedoms and protection as their coreligionists.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the Gambia achieved incorporation in January 2002. This, together with the recent recognition and listing by the Department for Religious Affairs of the Baha'i Faith as one among four independent religions in the country, declares the independence of the Faith from its sister communities, safeguards the National Spiritual Assembly's right as the sole legitimate organization to administer the affairs of the Baha'is in the Gambia, and grants full rights to pursue its

humanitarian objectives for the nation.

In Iceland, the civil powers of Baha'i administration were increased through an agreement with the government allowing

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representatives of Local Spiritual Assemblies to be named as Forstolfumalfur ("heads of the faith"). Though their status in the Baha'i community remains unchanged, they gain the responsibility for carrying out matters such as marriages, funerals, and registering children's names.

The Local Spiritual Assemblies of Akureyri, Hafnafjorour, Kópavogur, and Reykjavik are now entitled to carry out these functions, in addition to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Iceland. Previously, there had been only one "head" of the Baha'i Faith in that country.

In the Seychelles, nine local Baha'i communities were officially incorporated by the government, as announced in the Official Gazette of 24 December 2001. Another local community, in Klaipeda, Lithuania, also gained official registration.

The occasion of Naw-Ruz, the Baha'i new year, on 21 March 2002 provided several national Baha'i communities an opportunity both to raise their profiles and to showcase their development to the governments and to the wider community.

In Singapore, President S.R. Nathan and his wife were the guests of honor at the country's Naw-Ruz gathering on 20 March 2002. The celebration included a dinner and musical entertainment provided by several groups, including a Baha'i children's choir. Some 580 people attended the event, and each was given a pamphlet that outlined the meaning of Naw-Ruz, provided a brief summary of the history of the Faith in Singapore, and described the activities of Baha'is in the country and throughout the world.

In a message commemorating the new year, British Prime Minister Tony Blair commended the Baha'i community of the United Kingdom for its "significant contribution" to multiculturalism and interfaith dialogue. The message was read at a reception on 21 March 2002 in the House of Commons, which was attended by nearly 100 people and was sponsored by the All Party Friends of the Baha'i Faith. Participants included members of the British parliament and other government officials, as well as representatives of NGOs and the media.

MP John Battle, the Prime Minister's advisor on interfaith matters, read Mr. Blair's message, which singled out the "contribution of the Baha'i Faith to the stability and prosperity of

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Baha'i youth in Lome, Togo, in a tutor training course for Ruhi study materials in August 2001.

British society as a whole" and said, "I am very encouraged by the vision the Baha'i community demonstrates in recognizing the power of interfaith dialogue and the importance of all citizens fulfilling their potential."

Barney Leith, Secretary-General of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom, addressed the gathering about the UK Baha'i community's Institute for Social Cohesion, an initiative to facilitate dialogue between entities working to build stronger societal bonds in the United Kingdom.

The Baha'i community of Northern Ireland also received Naw-Ruz greetings from the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister of the Province.

In India, the House of Worship in New Delhi was the setting for a Naw-Ruz reception that brought together some 180 Indian and foreign guests. They included members of Indian civil society, high-level Indian politicians, professionals and senior executives of the Indian business community, representatives from various foreign embassies and high commissions, and dignitaries from United Nations agencies. Fariborz Sahba, the architect of the Indian House of Worship, was also among the guests.

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Naw-Ruz celebrations were also held in Bara and Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. The Naw-Ruz program organized by the community of Bata took place at the local Baha'i center and featured artistic presentations such as songs, skits, and dances prepared by the children and youth groups of both Bata and the nearby community of Ntobo. Other presentations included a short introduction to the Baha'i Faith, a talk on the Baha'i calendar, and a slide presentation on the Baha'i World Centre and the terraces of the Shrine of the Bab. Approximately 150 people attended the celebration, including representatives of the Catholic Church in Bara and local elementary and secondary school teachers.

In Malabo, the Naw-Ruz celebration took place in the main hall of the national Baha'i center with the attendance of approximately 80 people, including several professors from the National University of Equatorial Guinea. There were traditional dances performed by a children's group and songs performed by the Baha'i choir of Malabo.

Youth

Baha'i youth hope to rise to meet the expectations set forth by Baha'u'llah in His statement, "Blessed is he who in the prime of his youth and the heyday of his life will arise to serve the Cause of the Lord." 13 In the Baha'i Faith, youth are called upon to use their energy and vitality for the service of their Faith and humanity. One of the ways youth have found to translate their enthusiasm into action is participation in arts workshops that promote the

Baha'i teachings through dance and music. Pacific Flame is one such workshop—a performing arts group from Tonga that brought the Baha'i message to Fiji through music and comedy during its trip in September 2001. The group addresses issues such as substance abuse, family violence, the oppression of women, the oneness of religion, and the oneness of humankind.

Throughout their time in Fiji, the youth of Pacific Flame performed for audiences of all ages, faiths, and ethnic backgrounds,

13 Baha' u'llah, cited in "Youth," *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 2 (Ingleside: Baha'i Publications Australia, 1991), no. 2232, p. 415.

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reaching hundreds of people with their message of love and unity. Their venues ranged from the exclusive Sheraton Resort to a school for disabled children. One evening they performed in a village with no electricity, using only a kerosene lantern and a battery powered CD player. The Sun, one of Fiji's largest newspapers, published an article on the group.

In Budapest, Hungary, members of the Budapest dance workshop Puzzle are helping to promote their message and their methods by training Roma youth in Sarkad to form their own workshop. Many of the young people come from adverse social circumstances, and involvement in the workshops helps not only to uplift them but allows them to help others.

Another of the forums in which Baha'i youth gather to share their enthusiasm for their Faith and create strategies of action are youth conferences such as the Ninth Congress of the Baha'i, Youth Movement of the Americas. More than 600 youth from 15 countries attended the conference to talk about peace, change, and the future. Organized by the Baha'i National Youth Committee of Brazil and held outside Sao Paulo, Brazil, from 17 to 21 January 2002, the event brought together youth from different countries and

Participants in the Day for Children and Youth at the Bahd 'f center in Assomada, Cape Verde, in December 2001.

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backgrounds to share ideas of how to better the world. The Congress was the latest event in an international Baha'i Youth Movement that is focused in the Americas. Through this movement youth dedicate themselves to discovering solutions to the challenges facing the world and to becoming catalysts for spiritual transformation. The youth in Brazil ended the four-day Congress by committing themselves to actions they will take over the next year in order to effect a positive change in their community. Some of these included starting moral education classes for children, making use of the arts as an educational tool, starting a moral education theater group, and becoming involved in community-building projects. Several

groups of youth launched a two-week campaign immediately following the Congress to spread the principles of the Baha'i Faith. Mirroring the activity of the Baha'i Youth Movement, other national and international youth conferences gave Baha'i youth around the world opportunities to gather, reflect, and plan activities. More than 250 youth attended the Fifth Annual Montreal Baha'i Youth Conference, held from 29 to 31 March. The threeday conference attracted youth from 10 countries and consisted of talks, workshops, dance and dramatic performances, audio-visual presentations, and an art exhibit, all revolving around the role of Baha'i youth in the twentieth century and their responsibilities in the century to come. The conference ended with youth resolving to focus their activity in systematic action along three main lines: the establishment or strengthening of study circles, devotional meetings, and community children's classes. Others were also inspired to start community development programs and dance theater workshops within their respective communities.

The national youth conference in Limbe, Cameroon, was held 26-30 July. Close to 150 participants gathered for the event, with support from members of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Africa, the Auxiliary Board, and the National Spiritual Assembly. The program included workshops on the study of the Baha'i writings, and the youth consulted on how they could help in advancing the systematic process of growth of the Baha'i Faith in Cameroon. At the end of the conference, 39 youth volunteered to embark on trips to spread the Baha'i teachings.

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Bahd 'is studying training institute materials in Assam, India, in April 2002.

Some 210 individuals from 14 different countries attended the Eighth ASEAN 14 Baha'i Youth Conference at the Kampaeng Saen Agriculture Training Center in Nakhon Prathom, Thailand, from 22 to 25 December. The theme of the conference was moral leadership and learning how to be a source of social good. The first day was marked by the reading of a letter from the Universal House of Justice, which urged the youth to ask themselves how, as individuals, as members of local and national committees, and as the vanguard of an entire generation in their region, they could ensure that the advancement of the process of entry by troops called for by the Five Year Plan is achieved in each of their countries. There were workshops on the crises of our times, prevailing mental models, the conceptual framework of moral leadership, and the role of youth in society.

Sharing the Baha'i Message

Of all the activities of the Baha'i community, none is seen as more

fundamentally important or meaningful than teaching the Baha'i

14 Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

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Faith, an undertaking which is called "the greatest of all divine bestowals." 15 For Baha' Is, this teaching represents more than a mere numerical increase; it is a measure of humanity's response to the message that they believe is the means for the advancement of the whole human race.

In the Hawaiian Islands, more than 80 Baha'is from throughout the Pacific participated in the Ocean of Light project, designed to systematically inform people in the Pacific region about the Baha'i teachings. Baha'is from Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, and other neighboring islands joined together for the project, which culminated in the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Faith in the Pacific islands. 16

The project included large public gatherings, which attracted hundreds of people to hear the Baha'i message, sessions where Baha' is discussed ways to propagate their Faith, and trips by groups of people to cities, towns, and villages to teach their Faith to local residents.

Programs of Baha'i training institutes are becoming one of the features of Baha'i community life, and through their curricula, Baha'is learn systematic methods for contributing to the spiritual and administrative growth of their communities, offering service, expressing their faith through arts and music, and teaching the Faith to others. 17

Institutes can also address issues such as health care, literacy, and the equality of women and men-issues which relate directly to the broader society. In Malaysia, a literacy campaign for junior youth among the native Asli people incorporates literacy training with systematic study of the Baha'i writings, all in the Malay language. The literacy program will allow those who participate to move on to other institute training such as the Ruhi study materials, which are widely used in Baha'i communities around the world.

15 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Japan Will Turn Ablaze* (Tokyo: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1993), p. 12.

16 For a report of these events, see pp. 114- 17.

17 For more about training institutes, see *The Baha'i World 2000- 2001*, pp. 191- 99.

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Bahd 'is in Peru participate in a Ruhi training course in Lake Titicaca in November 2001.

In Japan, Baha'fs introduced training institute materials to members of the Airaku Church after members of the church expressed interest in how the Baha' {s learn about their own religion and apply the teachings to their lives. A session with the Ruhi study materials was held at the Airaku Church in Kurume City on 19 October 2001. Approximately 30 people participated, responding well to the session and expressing interest in continuing the sessions and in making contact with Baha'!s in Brazil and Chicago, where there are other branches of the church. Many also wanted to know more about how the Baha' fs' lives are affected by the teachings of their religion.

In most cases, the efforts of Baha'fs to teach the Faith are concentrated on individuals establishing a connection with other people and expressing their relationship to the Faith and what it means in their lives. Olya Roohizadegan, an Iranian Baha'i who escaped death at the hands of her own government because of her beliefs, now travels throughout the world and tells her story not as one of suffering and oppression, but as one of hope-the hope given to her by the Baha'i teachings.

In the summer of 2001, Mrs. Roohizadegan traveled extensively through Canada and the United States, giving public talks about

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In Melbourne, Australia, a group of Bahd 'f youth calling themselves "Clown Nine " have been using dance, music, and clowning to promote virtues and the principles of the Faith.

her own life and Faith, and in many cases presenting people with their first encounter with the Baha'i Faith. Her story has made an impact on many people and has received extensive media coverage from those impressed by her story of triumph over adversity.

Baha'!World Centre

At the heart of the worldwide Baha'i community is the Baha'i World Centre, the spiritual and administrative center of the Baha'i Faith. The Universal House of Justice and International Teaching Centre coordinate and direct the activities of Baha'i communities, and the World Centre houses the holiest places for Baha'is, the Shrines of Bahi'u'llah and of the Bab. Shoghi Effendi described the World Centre as the place "where the processes disclosing [the

Baha'i Faith's] purposes, energizing its life, and shaping its destiny all originate." 18

This year, the activities at the Baha'i World Centre in Haifa, Israel, were focused primarily on events surrounding the long-awaited inauguration of the terraces of the Shrine of the Bab on Mount Carmel. 19 In addition to this historical development, other progress was evident. In Bahji, for example, near the Shrine of Baha'u'llah, a new Visitors' Center opened which now serves as a

18 Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette: Baha' f Publishing Trust, 199 5), p. 355.

19 For a report of these events, see pp. 37-73.

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Exterior of the recently completed Bahji Visitors' Center near the Shrine of Bahd'u'lldh.

reception area for the thousands of Baha'i pilgrims who travel there annually to visit that holy place.

The Visitors' Center is a complex of facilities that encompasses several courtyards, a monumental gate structure, and a 400-squaremeter reception hall. The building has been designed in keeping with the setting around the Shrine of Baha'u'llah, and the entire complex aims both to enhance the graceful simplicity and gentle aura of spirituality of the Shrine and to create an atmosphere for visitors that prepares them for their spiritual encounter with the Shrine.

Adjacent to the pilgrim facilities is a wing which houses the Visitors' Information Center, for the reception of special visitors to Bahjf. 20 It has an information gallery, an audio-visual hall, and a lounge to receive visitors.

2 °For more information about visirors ro the Baha'i World Cenrre, see pp. 139-40.

ERRATUM: In *The Baha'i World 2000-2001* the photo caption on p. 69 of the Year in Review should read: Jamshed Fozdar stands with Dr. A. T Ariyaratne, the founder and president of the humanitarian organization Sarvodaya, in front of Dr. Ariyaratne's Vishva Niketan Peace Center in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Anniversaries of

Baha' { Communities

In 2001-02, Bahd'f communities in

Hawaii, Uganda, and Sarawak

celebrated significant anniversaries

connected to the establishment of the

Bahd 'f Faith in their lands.

U nlike much older Faiths, which measure milestones in centuries or millennia, adherents of the Baha'i Faith still see ample significance in the few years and decades since

the founding of many national Baha'i communities. The passing years are characterized internally by growth and consolidation and externally by an increasing recognition from governments, civil organizations, and other religions.

In 2001, two communities, Uganda and Sarawak, each celebrated 50 years of the Baha'i Faith within their countries, while the Baha'is of the Hawaiian Islands celebrated a full century of progress in the Pacific region.

These anniversaries chart from the time each location is "opened" to the Baha'i Faith-when the first Baha'i takes up residence there. In each country, it was the efforts of individual "pioneers" that sparked the growth of these communities, which are now thriving, in the years since the introduction of the message of Baha'u'llah to their people.

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Hawaiian Islands

The first Baha'i to set foot in the Hawaiian Islands was Hand of the Cause of God Agnes Alexander, who was born in Hawaii and was the granddaughter of missionaries. Miss Alexander first heard about the Baha'i Faith while on a trip to Europe, and when she returned home as an adult, on 26 December 1901, she was the first to bring word of the Baha'i Faith to the Hawaiian Islandsand, indeed, the entire Pacific region. Though she herself had been a Baha'i for just over a year at that time, she ultimately devoted her life to spreading the teachings of Baha'u'llah throughout the Pacific and during her travels to Canada, China, Europe, Japan, the Philippines, and the United States.

Miss Alexander passed away in 1971 in Honolulu, Hawaii.

There, almost exactly one hundred years after she had brought the Baha'i teachings to the Islands, more than 1,000 Baha'is from some 53 countries gathered in Honolulu from 20 to 23 December 2001 for the four-day "Fire in the Pacific" celebration. They came from all over the Pacific, from Canada, Europe, Latin America, the United States, and even from as far away as Asia and Africa to celebrate the centenary of the Baha'i Faith in the Hawaiian Islands. The first local Baha'i community formed in 1902, a year after the introduction of the Faith to Hawaii. The National Spiritual

Princess To'oa Tosi Mafietoa, who read a message to the anniversary gathering in the Pacific from her father, His Highness Susuga Malietoa Tanumafili II, the king of Western Samoa, who is a Bahd 'i.

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A few of the 1,000 people who came from Baha'i communities around the world for the celebration in Honolulu.

Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands, with its seat in Honolulu, was established in 1964. Today, the Baha'i community of the Islands includes more than 3,500 people in nearly 30 local communities with 22 Local Spiritual Assemblies.

External recognition of a century's worth of growth and achievement came in the form of extensive media coverage and attendance by a number of prominent people. Her Highness Susuga To'oa Tosi Malietoa extended greetings at the opening session on behalf of her father, His Highness Susuga Malietoa Tanumafili II, the head of state of the independent nation of Western Samoa. Ka'ulu Kukui Thomas, retired Hawaii State Court Judge and trustee for the Queen Liliuokalani Trust, welcomed the participants on behalf of the Hawaiian people. Honolulu Mayor Jeremy Harris greeted conference attendees during the plenary session on Saturday morning, and Honolulu's top-rated television station KHON gave extensive coverage to a parade from the burial place of Hand of the Cause Martha Root to the cemetery where Hand of the Cause Agnes Alexander is buried.

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A choir performing at the anniversary celebration, which featured dramatic and musical performances.

Drama, music, and other arts were an essential part of the conference, with numerous presentations by Baha'i artists highlighting the event. Musician and Grammy-winner K.C. Porter performed with local musicians; Australian actor Philip Hinton presented "Portals to Freedom," the story of Howard Colby Ives; and Nadema Agard, a community service outreach specialist with the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, presented a workshop on the sacred feminine presence in the arts of Native Americans. Also part of the celebration was a tribute to Miss Alexander, when some 600 people visited her final resting place to remember her and her contributions to the community a century earlier.

On Sunday, 23 December, the conference sponsored a traditional outdoor Ho'olaule'a, or festival, at the McCoy Pavilion in Ala Moana Beach Park. The Ho'olaule'a featured top local entertainers Amy Hanaiali'i, Hapa's Barry Flanagan, Martin Pahinui, Sean Na'auao, and Ernie Cruz, as well as Mr. Porter. The event also showcased entertainment by dancers from other Pacific Islands, along with arts, crafts, and traditional Hawaiian food.

In addition to reflecting on the history of the community, the conference focused on issues relevant to the Pacific region, highlighting moral and spiritual education for children, the situation of indigenous peoples and their contribution to world society, and the use of the arts as a means for positive social change.

In total, the conference featured more than 80 workshops, lectures, and performances. Session topics ranged from a presentation on the successes of a Baha'i vocational school in Kiribati

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to discussions on the use of consultation in Baha'i community life.

The conference brought together a view of both the past and the future, and in plenary sessions the focus was largely on how Baha'is can use the teachings of the Faith—such as the equality of women and men and the recognition of humanity's essential oneness—to continue making positive contributions to communities in the Pacific region.

Uganda

The message of the Baha'i Faith was first carried to Uganda by a small group of Baha'is who arrived there on 2 August 1951. Hand of the Cause of God Musa Banani, his wife Sami'ih, their daughter Violette and her husband 'Ali Nakhjavani, and Philip Hainsworth¹ arrived in Kampala with the intent of establishing the Faith in that country.

The first Ugandans became Baha'is later in 1951, and the following year, Enoch Olinga became the third native Ugandan to declare his belief in the Baha'i Faith. Within months, he was elected as a member of the first Local Spiritual Assembly formed in Kampala. In 1957, Mr. Olinga was appointed as a Hand of the Cause of God and through his tireless activity became instrumental in the spread of the religion throughout his own country and the whole of Africa.

The principles of unity and social progress offered by the Faith soon won acceptance from individuals in every region of Uganda and most major tribal groups. Within two years the community had expanded to nearly 300 members in some 25 localities who represented 20 tribes. In the 50 years since those beginnings, the Faith has grown to include an estimated 105,000 members in nearly 3,000 localities.

In 1955, though the Faith had been introduced in the country scarcely four years before, Shoghi Effendi announced plans to construct a House of Worship in Kampala. Construction of the

¹ See pp. 304-05 for Mr. Hainsworth's obituary.

Some of the 2,000 people who gathered at Uganda's 50th anniversary

jubilee, in front of the House of Worship in Kampala.

nine-sided Temple began in 1957 and was completed in January 1961.

Like most of the rest of Uganda, the Baha'i community suffered in the 1970s during the repressive regime of Idi Amin. Along with many other religious groups, the Baha'i Faith was banned in 1977. After Amin was ousted in 1979, it was legally reconstituted, allowing the community to continue its development.

"The time from 1977 to 1981 was a period of great trial for the Ugandan community generally, and there are stories of many heroic feats and sacrifices by Bahi'is during this time," said John Anglin, Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahi'is of Uganda. "But the 1990s were a period of rebuilding our former capacity and strength."

The Baha'is commemorated the anniversary of their community in a week-long Jubilee that featured a statement by Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, which was read on 2 August 2001 by Capt. Michael Mukula, State Minister for Health, before a crowd of some 2,000 people at the Baha'i House of Worship in Kampala. The President's message praised the Faith's record of promoting harmony and development in a country that has often been divided by tribalism.

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"In Uganda we are constantly fighting against ethnic and religious sectarianism and our politics were played out and polarized along those major fault lines for a very long time," wrote President Museveni, explaining that his government has sought to "bring all the people together irrespective of their faith, race, color, or ethnicity."

"We have been doing what you in the Baha'i Faith began to do a long time ago," his message continued. "Yours is a very useful message and can contribute greatly to nation building."

President Museveni also said that his government shares a commitment to bring about equality between women and men, writing, "I appeal to members of the Baha'i Faith, who hold the equality of rights and opportunities for women and men as an act of faith and as their basic principle, to join in our crusade for the empowerment of women."

Among other highlights of the anniversary festivities, which began on 31 July in Kampala and ended on 5 August in Tilling, Kumi District, in Eastern Uganda, were the presence of four of the founding members of the community, the attendance of various officials in the Ugandan government, and extensive coverage of the celebration in the Ugandan media.

'AH Nakhjavani, who is currently a member of the Universal House of Justice, and his wife Violette were both among the

founding members of the Baha'i community who attended the

Capt. Michael Mukula,
State Minister for Health
in Uganda, reads President
Museveni's message to the
Bahd'fs gathered for the
anniversary festivities.

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event. Mr. Nakhjavanl spoke at several events during the week
on the theme "The Spiritual Destiny of Africa."

Philip Hainsworth, another of the founders who returned for
the celebration, spoke about the importance of the Baha'i
community of Uganda in the expansion of the Faith to other African
nations in the 1950s and 1960s, in the community's hosting of
various international conferences, and in its choice as the site of
the House of Worship, a well-known landmark in Kampala.

The Ugandan Baha'i community is also known for its sponsorship of social and
economic development projects. The Faith

operates two primary schools, in Odusai in Pallisa District and in
Tilling in Kumi District. With close to 1,000 students and a solid
reputation for excellence, the school in Tilling is now considered
to be the top one in the district. The Baha'i-inspired nongovernmental
organization UPLIFT operates a literacy project in the
northern region of Uganda, where literacy rates are low. The project
is focused around the town of Packwach in Nebbi District and
serves close to 200 people in six communities.

In recognition of initiatives such as these, government officials
present at the Jubilee events commended the Ugandan Baha'i
community's contribution to the country's development. At the

George Olinga (left) and Capt. Michael Mukula (center) sit with
founding members of the Ugandan Bahd'i community, 'Ali and Violette
Nakbjavdni.

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Philip Hainsworth, one of
the first Bahd 'is in
Uganda, with his wife Lois
in front of the House of
Worship in Kampala at the
anniversary festivities.

opening ceremony on 31 July, the Honorable Zoe Bakoko Bakoru,
the Minister of Gender, Labor, and Social Development, was the
featured speaker. Ms. Bakoko Bakoru praised the Baha'is for their
unity and for their support of equal rights for women. She urged
the Baha'i community to work harder to spread such teachings

and to undertake more development work. The Minister was also present on 5 August at the closing event in Tilling.

At a Jubilee event on 3 August at the Baha'i center in Bweyeyo, Luwero District, the guest of honor was Edward Masiga, the Resident District Commissioner. The local Baha'i community there operates a community school with about 40 students. Mr. Masiga urged the Baha'is to spread their principles "aggressively," adding that he hoped they would undertake more development projects like the school.

At least three major television stations (CTV, UTV and WBS) carried two- to three-minute segments on their evening news broadcasts. The government newspapers The New Vision and Etop carried articles with color photographs of Jubilee events. The newspapers Monitor and Sunrise and numerous radio stations also covered the celebrations.

"Now, over the next ten years, we expect to see steady growth both in numbers and also in capacity and maturity," said Mr.

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Anglin. "The successful conclusion of the Jubilee events is one of the signs of this new capacity and new willingness to achieve."

Sarawak

The dawn of the Baha'i Faith in the Malaysian state of Sarawak came in 1951, when a group of Baha'is arrived to settle in the city of Kuching. Two years later, the first Local Spiritual Assembly formed in Kuching and the Spiritual Assembly of Malaysia formed 12 years later, with jurisdiction over Sarawak, as the Baha'i community there continued to grow.

In 1998, the Universal House of Justice announced the formation of the Spiritual Assembly of Sarawak. Though the state is politically a part of Malaysia, its Assembly has a separate jurisdiction.

The celebration of the Baha'i community's 50th anniversaryits "golden jubilee"-comprised three events, the centerpiece of which was a reception in the Majlis Bandara Kuching Selatan City Hall in Kuching. More than 500 people attended the gathering, held on 11 November 2001. The community invited Baha'is who had been among the first in Sarawak, including Jamshed and Paravati Fozdar. The Fozdars, who now live in Singapore, were the first Baha'is to settle in Kuching in 1951, and they contributed to the celebration by sharing stories of the history of the Baha'i Faith in Sarawak. Others who were early Baha'is in the state, many of whom still reside in Sarawak, also attended, as did Zena Sorabjee of the Continental Boards of Counsellors in Asia and representatives from the neighboring communities of Indonesia, Malaysia, Sabah, and Singapore.

In addition to stories about the formation and growth of the Faith in Sarawak, the gathering was enhanced by the contributions of some of the youth of Sarawak, who organized performances of songs and dances and chanted prayers.

The youth performed again later that same evening at the Grand Ballroom of the Kuching Hilton Hotel, where the Baha' is hosted a dinner and reception that showcased the progress of the Faith in Sarawak—progress easily demonstrated by the spread of the Faith to more than 30,000 believers within the state in some 1,400

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local communities. The community now includes more than 100 Local Spiritual Assemblies and 65 local Baha'i centers.

Other communities throughout Sarawak, notably Miri and Kampong Mujat, also held receptions to commemorate the anniversary, with the Kampong Mujat event bringing together more than 300 people and the Miri celebration attracting more than 250.

World Conference against Racism

The mission statement of the Nongovernmental Organizations Forum of the United Nations World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance, held 28 August to 1 September 2001 in Durban, South Africa, opens with a dire assessment of the current state of race relations and asserts that an urgent need exists for steps to be taken towards racial reconciliation. It states unequivocally: "The last century has witnessed the most severe, serious, and devastating expressions of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance Racism is still with us in varying forms and degrees and it is in fact gaining more ground as the process of globalization unfolds. This Third World Conference on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance is another attempt to contain and address this evil reality." ¹

The NGO Forum was one of three events, along with the governmental conference and a student summit, related to the UN's World Conference against Racism (WCAR). The events gathered some 2,300 representatives from 163 countries, including 16 heads of state, 58 foreign ministers, and 44 ministers, as well as nearly

¹ The mission statement of the NGO Forum is available at <www.racism.org.za/mission.html>.

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4,000 representatives of nongovernmental organizations, to discuss these serious issues. Following similar conferences in 1978 and 1983, the latest WCAR was meant to create resolutions in the form of two documents: a declaration and a plan of action. The Conference itself was, however, fraught with challenges, revealing

the complexity of the issues involved and the sensitivity with which they must be addressed in order for meaningful change to occur.

The possibility of requiring reparations for the past practice of slavery and the degree to which the conflict in the Middle East can be related to racism were both sources of heated disagreements. Strained political debates over these and related issues caused the withdrawal of Israel's delegation from the Conference and the early exit of the United States government representatives.

The NGO Forum stood as the voice of civil society at the Conference, with nongovernmental organizations representing a host of interests and agendas. The Baha' 1 International Community (BIC) was one of nearly 2,000 NGOs present at the Forum, which was composed of "caucuses" of different interest groups.

The Baha'i International Community's delegation participated in both the Religious and Spiritual Caucus and the International NGO Caucus. The BIC also set up an exhibition booth at the NGO Forum and distributed copies of the publication "One Same Substance: Building a Global Culture of Racial Unity," which

Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, who served as Secretary-General of the UN's World Conference against Racism, speaking at the Conference.

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provides an outline of the efforts of Baha'is around the world to realize this teaching of Baha'u'llah:

Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth, and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. 2

Despite its problems, the WCAR had high aims that, in many ways, mirror those of Baha'u'llah's vision. In her address to the Conference's Preparatory Committee on 1 May 2000, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and Secretary-General of the World Conference against Racism Mary Robinson acknowledged the potential of the event, saying it could "shape and embody the spirit of the new century, based on the shared conviction that we are all members of one human family. The challenge is there to make this Conference a landmark in the struggle to eradicate all forms of racism." Pointing out the wrongs of inequality and identifying them as a major source of social upheaval, she characterized the fight against racism as an act of prevention

that serves to reduce racial and ethnic tensions and the conflicts they engender.

"If the World Conference is to make a difference," she said, "it must not only raise awareness about the scourge of racism, but it must lead to positive actions at the national, regional, and international levels that can bring relief to those who bear the brunt of racism and racial discrimination. This is a subject that requires firmness of resolve, disciplined and persistent action, and clear-sighted thinking."

The Baha'i community works to pursue those goals. Indeed, during more than 50 years of collaboration between the Baha'i International Community and the United Nations, Baha'is have supported many UN resolutions that have promoted the understanding of equality. For example, the BIC supported the UN

2 Baha'u'llah, *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Baha'f Publishing Trust, 1994), Arabic no. 68, p. 20.

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The Bahá'f International Community's delegation to the WCAR, which consisted of an Afro-Brazilian, a member of the Kikuyu tribe of Kenya, an African American, a Maori, a Spanish Roma, and an Iranian.

Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and the 1965 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and it participated in and made statements to the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna.

Baha'i communities around the world are dedicated to making oneness a reality, and this was evident in the diversity of the Baha'f delegation to the World Conference against Racism, which included an Afro-Brazilian, a member of the Kikuyu tribe of Kenya, an African American, a Maori, a Spanish Roma, and an Iranian. They served as a small sample of the worldwide Baha'i community, which has members from more than 2,100 ethnic groups and tribal backgrounds in more than 230 countries and territories.

Diane 'Ala'f, who works for the Baha'i International Community's United Nations Office in Geneva and headed the Baha'i

International Community's delegation to the WCAR, was nominated as an alternate head of the International NGO Caucus and as the cochair of the Religious and Spiritual Caucus.

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South African Baha'is

The Baha'fs of South Africa were also represented at the NGO Forum. The secretary of the country's National Spiritual Assembly represented the Baha'i community in the South African National Religious Leaders Forum and was selected to represent the NRLF

at the WCAR.

In South Africa, Baha'is are especially sensitive to the divisive influence of racism. For the more than 50 years of apartheid, they

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dealt with laws that made the practicing their ideal of racial harmony not only difficult but also illegal. Throughout those years, however, the Baha'i community remained unswervingly committed to maintaining an integrated community.

The Baha'i community in South Africa has been integrated since the Faith's establishment in that country in 1911. Because of apartheid-era laws against integrated public meetings, the Baha'is held administrative and devotional meetings in their homes. The National Spiritual Assembly of South Africa, first elected in 1956, had five black and four white members, an extremely rare degree of racial integration for any national organization at the time.

When apartheid made the integration of national bodies illegal, it was the white members who forfeited their membership on the Assembly.

In 1997, while many other religious communities throughout South Africa offered apologies to the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission for their practices under apartheid, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of South Africa issued a statement that summarized the important place of racial integration in Baha'i belief. It gave a summary of the endurance of the Baha'i community during the apartheid years and explained that, despite difficulty and harsh legislation, the Baha'is clung to the ideals of their Faith.

Of the 10,000 people in the South African Baha'i community today, more than 90 percent would have been classified as "nonwhite" under apartheid laws. Members come from nearly all the tribal and ethnic groups in the country. And although many of those groups, such as the Zulu and Xhosa tribes, are in conflict with one another, tribal members are united in their beliefs as Baha'is.

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Preparations for the WCAR

Around the world, Baha'is were also involved in preparations for the Conference. In Brazil, where almost half the population is of African descent, the national Baha'i community was recognized by its government as being at the forefront of racial issues. At the invitation of the country's government, the Brazilian Baha'i community sent a delegation to the Preparatory Conference for the WCAR held in Geneva 21 May through 1 June 2000.

Shortly after the end of the WCAR, Baha'is in Brazil met with government officials of their country to assist with setting up a special commission on race relations. The commission was established on 12 September and the Baha'is requested that the President

of Brazil hold a national seminar on racism, a suggestion that was approved by the Secretary-General of the President's office; the Baha'i community was later asked to join the preparatory committee for the UN conference.

Unfortunately, Baha'is were debarred from participating in another preparatory conference in Tehran, Iran, in February, as the Iranian government refused to accept the application of the Baha'i delegates. In spite of the fact that the Baha'is met all administrative and procedural requirements and included a letter of accreditation from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in their applications, the BIC delegates were not permitted to attend. Ms. Robinson publicly expressed her dismay at the exclusion of the Baha'i International Community from the meeting.

Declarations

The government leaders' conference ended with the representatives agreeing on an international action plan that offered condemnation of racism, xenophobia, and intolerance in all forms and a call for concrete actions on behalf of the international community to eliminate these forces. While some countries expressed reservations about the text of the final document, more than 160 nations that attended the conference finally agreed to the action plan. In the end, it took the addition of a day to the original program for participants to produce a document that all would endorse.

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A key aspect of the governments' resolution is the statement that slavery is and always has been a crime against humanity. The text expresses regret over the human suffering caused by the practice, which is referred to as a "historical injustice" which "undeniably contributed to poverty, underdevelopment, marginalization, social exclusion, economic disparities, instability, and insecurity which affects many people in different parts of the world "

The text further specifies actions in areas such as debt relief, poverty eradication, building or strengthening democratic institutions, promotion of foreign direct investment, market access, agriculture and food security, technology transfer, health, education, and the "facilitation of welcomed return and resettlement of the descendants of enslaved Africans." The program of action also includes calls for all nations to ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) by 2005.

At the conference's conclusion, Ms. Robinson said, "Many questioned whether it would be possible to reach consensus, but we have succeeded and that is no small achievement. We now have a series of concrete recommendations-for national plans and programs, for better treatment of victims, for tougher

antidiscrimination legislation and administrative measures, for universal ratification and implementation of ICERD and other relevant international treaties, for strengthening education (a most important area), for improving the remedies and recourses available to victims, and many more."

The NGO Forum, meanwhile, issued a 9,000-word declaration that included almost entirely the positions of the various caucuses due to the NGO Forum's International Steering Committee's decision to include language from all of the groups. The declaration is somewhat convoluted and sometimes contradictory as a result, but it reflects the diversity of views at the Forum.

In addition to the declaration issued by the Forum, the Baha'i International Community also issued a statement to the conference that outlined the Baha' 1 perspective on racial relations and the need for harmony among the people of earth. 3

3 For the full text of this statement, see pp. 273-78.

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Conclusion

The BIC delegation's head, Ms. 'Ala', saw the results of the conference as a positive, if not final, step. "In the past," she said, "people had a tendency to view racism through their own eyes. And many equated racism with just the problem between blacks and whites. But this conference, because of the diversity of issues addressed and the wide range of delegations among the NGOs, raised awareness that racism is multifaceted in its scope. It gave voice to some of the previously voiceless groups, like the Roma. It drew attention to the fact that slavery is still practiced in some countries at the beginning of the 21st century. And it also showed how racism and religious intolerance and various forms of xenophobia cannot be dissociated from each other."

Despite the adoption of the action plan by the WCAR, many problems remain. The attitudes and practices that necessitated the conference itself have been, in most cases, entrenched for generations. But the conference was a positive step towards acknowledgement of the problems and will lead, eventually, to their eradication.

Baha'i International Community

ACTIVITIES

The Baha'i International Community (BIC) represents, at the United Nations and at international gatherings, the more than five million Baha' is living in some 236 countries and dependent territories around the world. Its 182 national and regional administrative bodies are engaged in a wide range of activities aimed at creating a just and peaceful society. In recent years, Baha'i International Community activities at the local,

national, and international levels have centered on four major themes: human rights, moral development, the advancement of women, and global prosperity.

The Baha'i International Community's United Nations Office (BIC-UNO) and its Office of Public Information play complementary roles in this work. The United Nations Office offers Baha'i perspectives on global issues, supports UN programs, and assists its national affiliates to work with their governments and other organizations in their own countries to shape policies and programs that will foster peace and prosperity. The Office of Public Information coordinates and stimulates the public information efforts of national Baha'i communities, disseminates information about the Baha'i Faith around the world, oversees production of the award-winning newsletter *One Country*, and maintains the official Web sites of the Baha'i International Community.

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United Nations

National Baha'i communities have been encouraged by the Baha'i International Community's United Nations Office to expand their work with the United Nations in their own countries and regions, focusing in recent years on the Decade for Human Rights Education. ¹ The training provided and the experience gained have prepared a number of national Baha'i communities to assume an increasing role in representing the Baha'i International Community at UN meetings and conferences. This collaboration with national affiliates became particularly important this year, when the BIC UNO lost three of its most experienced representatives. Giovanni Ballerio, so visible in the work for the advancement of women for over twenty years, ultimately lost his battle with cancer. ² Techeste Ahderom, Principal Representative for more than a decade, and Lawrence Arturo, Director of the Office of the Environment, left to pursue other career goals. Acting Principal Representative Bani Dugal Gujral assumed responsibility for the human rights portfolio while continuing to direct the work of the Office for the Advancement of Women.

¹ Since the founding of the United Nations in 1945, the Baha'i International Community has consistently supported the principles set forth in the UN Charter and has helped to achieve the organization's social and educational objectives. Formally affiliated with the UN since 1947, the Baha'f International Community was granted special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1970 as an international nongovernmental organization (NGO). Consultative status with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was accorded in 1976, and then with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in 1989. That same year, the BIC established a working

relationship with the World Health Organization (WHO). The BIC has United Nations Offices in New York and Geneva and maintains representations to United Nations regional commissions in Addis Ababa, Bangkok, and Santiago, and to the UN offices in Nairobi, Rome, and Vienna. Its Office of the Environment, established in 1989, and its Office for the Advancement of Women, established in 1992, function as adjuncts of the United Nations Office.

2 See p. 302 for Mr. Ballerio's obituary.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

The Baha'i International Community's long-standing dedication to human rights and its recent global campaign in support of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004, are firmly grounded in the conviction that human rights and responsibilities are indispensable to the creation of a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world order.

For the third time in the history of the UN, racism, considered by Baha'is to be one of the most persistent evils in the world, was the theme of a major global conference, the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance, held in Durban, South Africa, in September 2001.

The Baha'f International Community was an active participant in the preparatory process leading up to the conference, monitoring all government preparatory meetings, serving on the coordinating committee for the Conference and its NGO Forum, and engaging in a wide variety of seminars and workshops. The BIC submitted a written statement to the conference and produced a booklet entitled "One Same Substance: Building a Global Culture of Racial Unity," which documents the worldwide Baha'i community's historic example and record of action for race unity. 3

The Baha'f International Community also sent a delegation to the International Consultative Conference on School Education in relation with Freedom of Religion and Belief, Tolerance, and Non-Discrimination, held in Madrid in November 2001. The conference was jointly sponsored by the UN and the government of Spain and the BIC was chosen to have one representative financed by the Spanish government. The BIC's oral intervention and its written statement stressed the importance of moral education that draws on both the methods of science and the insights of religion, that teaches the appreciation of diversity, that distinguishes between unity and uniformity, and that eschews coercion in matters of faith. 4

3 For a report of the WCAR, see pp. 125-32. For the Baha'i International Community's written statement to the Conference, see pp. 273-78.

4 For the text of the statement, see pp. 255-61.

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As part of the Baha'i International Community's global campaign to mobilize support for the UN Decade for Human Rights Education, a number of national Baha'i communities have focused on including moral education and human rights education in school curricula. The campaign, which emphasizes cooperation and partnerships with governments, UN agencies, and NGOs over unilateral action, has involved nearly 100 national Baha' f communities. Many of these communities have undertaken national plans and provided diplomatic training for local Baha'fs interacting with government officials and NGOs in support of the Decade. In Mozambique, the training of local volunteers has made it possible for the Baha'i community to increase its involvement in the affairs of the country. This increased expression of interest in public affairs has resulted in invitations for the Baha' is to participate in government seminars encouraging religious organizations to enter into partnerships with the government and emphasizing the role of religious communities in individual and social transformation. In addition to these initiatives to promote human rights, the Baha'i International Community is also active in the defense of its own community and the right of Baha'is throughout the world to practice their faith, both by making use of the United Nations' human rights machinery and by meeting with diplomats on behalf of Baha'fs experiencing difficulties in their countries. The role of National Spiritual Assemblies, which liaise with their governments on behalf of the Baha'is in Iran, has been critical to the success of past resolutions. Annual training seminars, organized by the BIC United Nations Office, bring together representatives of National Spiritual Assemblies for consultations aimed at coordinating their efforts to defend the Faith and for workshops designed to sharpen their diplomatic skills. The sixth such training session was held in Acuto, Italy, in September 2001.

The Baha'i International Community has also continued its efforts to secure relief from persecution for the Baha'fs in Iran and in Egypt, where several Baha'is remain imprisoned for their beliefs. 5

5 For information about the situation of the Baha'i community in Iran, see the article on pp. 143-47 and the statement on pp. 291-93.

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ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

The Office for the Advancement of Women focused this year on the connection between the status of women and the theme of a special session of the General Assembly held this year on the HIV/AIDS pandemic, held in June 2001. At that session, the BIC circulated a written statement on gender equality and AIDS that emphasized

the need to transform the attitudes and behaviors that spread the disease. 6 The statement directs attention to the important roles of men and faith communities in turning the tide of this pandemic. The Baha'is have also consistently supported African Action on AIDS, an NGO formed to care for and educate some of the millions of children in Africa orphaned by this disease. In December 2001 the BIC hosted the 10th anniversary celebration of African Action on AIDS, which included a discussion of best practices and goals for the future.

More than 60 national Baha'i communities have now established Offices for the Advancement of Women. These offices-and other national committees and task forces-assist National Spiritual Assemblies to promote the full participation of women both in the life of the Baha'i community and in the world at large. The Baha'i International Community supports these offices with materials, advice, and guidance, and draws on those who have gained experience at the national level to help represent the BIC at such UN events as the Special Session on Children and the Commission on the Status of Women.

Six national communities were represented on the BIC delegation to the 46th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. At the Commission Bani Dugal Gujral spoke on an NGO panel addressing the concerns of women as they change with age and participated in a workshop sponsored by the NGO Committee on UNIFEM on "Eradicating Poverty through Empowering Women." The BIC also cosponsored a workshop entitled "Effective Approaches to Empowerment through Training: Using Spiritual Principles to Eradicate Poverty," which featured a presentation by Janak Palta McGilligan, the director of the Barli Vocational Institute for Rural

6 For the text of the statement, see pp. 287-90.

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Women. The Institute, which first gained attention in the 1980s for its role in eliminating guinea worm from villages in the district, is now being recognized for its use and dissemination of solar cooker technology and the transforming effect of its program of life skills training for tribal girls. 7

MEETINGS

The Baha'i International Community held offices on 10 NGO committees and task forces this year, chairing the NGO committees on UNICEF, UNIFEM, and Freedom of Religion or Belief; the NGO task force on restructuring the NGO Committee on UNICEF; and convening the Advocates for African Food Security: Lessening the Burden for African Women Farmers. The BIC also cochaired, for the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, the planning group for NGO Consultation Day at the Commission on the Status of

Women. In New York, the BIC cohosted a breakfast for NGO representatives to meet girls participating in the Preparatory Committee of the General Assembly Special Session on Children, a breakfast to celebrate the 25th anniversary of UNIFEM, and two receptions honoring committee members of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). A reception was also held to welcome the new executive director of the Conference of NGOs, which was attended by the president of the 56th General Assembly and other dignitaries. In Geneva the BIC hosted a number of meetings and receptions to support its work with the UN Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, as well as a consultation with the NGO Liaison for the World Conference against Racism.

Other meetings and UN sessions monitored by the Baha'i International Community this year include the Second World Assembly on Ageing; the Fourth Session of the UN World Youth Forum; the Preparatory Committee for the Third International Conference on the Least Developed Countries; the 10th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development; the 40th Session

7 For a profile of the Barli Development Institute, see *The Baha'i World 2000-2001*, pp. 219-27.

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of the Commission for Social Development; the Substantive Session of ECOSOC; the 57th Session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; the 25th and 26th Sessions of CEDAW; the 54th World Health Assembly; as well as meetings of the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy; the UNICEF Executive Board; the 89th Session of the International Labour Organization (ILO); and the 52nd Session of the Executive Committee of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Program (UNHCR).

Public Information

Based at the Baha'i World Centre in Haifa, Israel, with an office in Paris, the Baha'i International Community's Office of Public Information oversees and organizes public information work throughout the worldwide Baha'i community and works with a network of National Public Information Officers (NPIOs) who carry out the external affairs and public information work of National Spiritual Assemblies.

The Haifa Office receives dignitaries and other important visitors, and from 21 April 2001 to 21 April 2002, the Office arranged more than 360 special visits for nearly 6,000 dignitaries,

leaders of thought, and prominent people from 70 countries. The visitors covered a broad range of professions including government officials, diplomats, religious leaders, professors, researchers, educators, students, writers, journalists, film crews, tour operators, business people, and members of civil society and nongovernmental organizations.

Visitors from Israel included the country's President, members of the Knesset, the Attorney General, military court judges, the President of the Israel Olympic Committee, and other government officials. Also visiting were mayors of cities throughout Israel, the Patriarch of the Armenian Church in Israel, and university professors. The Office received 19 ambassadors from 18 countries and other government ministers and officials, including those from Belarus, China, the Republic of the Congo, the Czech Republic, THE BAHAI WORLD 2001-2002

Egypt, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Honduras, Hungary, Latvia, the Seychelles, Switzerland, the United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, and Vanuatu.

In addition to these special visits, the Office also manages a Guided Tours Operations office that oversees a reservation system for public tours of the terraced gardens. Weekly, an average of some 5,200 people take the guided tours in groups, and a total of more than 211,000 people took guided tours since they commenced on 4 June 2001. In addition, more than 17,000 people per week visit the gardens, with more than one million in total visiting in the past year, compared to some 250,000 during the same period the previous year.

The Office also received film crews, journalists, and photographers from CNN, CCTV (China Central TV), NBC, CBS, ORF Austria, ARD Germany, SAT 1 Germany, German National Radio WDR, BBC Radio, The New York Post, Le Monde, Cox newspapers, The Hindu, and National Geographic television, among others, resulting in plentiful media coverage both within Israel and internationally.

Much of the media coverage centered on the inauguration of the terraces of the Shrine of the Bab on Mount Carmel. 8 The Office was responsible not only for contacts with international media but also for training NPIOs in their own national efforts to promote the event. The Office prepared and distributed press materials in English, German, French, and Spanish for use by Baha'i communities around the world.

The Paris Office was also devoted to supporting Baha'i communities and NPIOs around Europe in their contacts with the media for the opening of the terraces.

In collaboration with the Audiovisual Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of France, a 40-minute video was produced

from the live satellite broadcast of the terraces' inauguration. The Paris branch of the Office of Public Information also continued its work of assisting in public information work in Europe and the francophone world through such efforts as continued support of the "Promoting Positive Messages through the Media"

8 For more on the inaugural events, see pp. 37-73.

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project, within the framework of the Stability Pact (formerly the Royaumont Process) to promote stability and good relations in Southeastern Europe. 9 The success of the pilot program in schools in Bucharest, Romania, 10 led to the launching of the third phase of the follow-up, with the extension of the project to schools outside the Romanian capital. A training seminar with Prof. Charles Lerche and Shamil Fattakhov was organized for teachers from outside Bucharest from 22 to 30 July 2001 and was followed by the implementation phase in several schools in the region of Cluj and in the towns of Napoca, Giurgiu, and Braila. Follow-up has also continued in Bucharest.

In March 2002, the Office of Public Information's Paris branch organized the ninth European Public Information Management Seminar in Budapest, Hungary, in collaboration with the National Spiritual Assembly of that country. The event assembled nearly 100 participants from over 35 countries and was the largest seminar to date.

In addition to this European-wide seminar, other training programs and seminars were organized at the request of national Baha'i communities around Europe, such as the launching of a national training seminar on public information in Spain in September 2001; a training seminar on external affairs for the European Baha'i Youth Council in December 2001; and a regional training seminar in January 2002 in Bucharest, Romania, for Romania, Moldova, and Bulgaria.

The year 2001-02 also saw the development of the presence of the Baha'i International Community within the framework of the United Nations International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of World, with the BIC's involvement in this project co-coordinated by the Paris branch. The Office also continued distribution of its monthly European Public Information Bulletin, a service that chronicles the public information activities of the Baha'i community throughout Europe. One Country, the official newsletter of the Baha'i International Community, entered its 13th year of publication. Published quarterly

9 See The Bahd'i World 1998- 99, pp. 145- 50.

10 See The Bahd'i World 2000-2001 , p. 128.

in English, French, German, Chinese, Spanish, and Russian, It reached nearly 50,000 readers in at least 180 countries. During 2001-02, One Country won a number of awards, including an Apex 2002 Award for its story "On Mount Carmel, newly completed garden terraces are officially opened," which appeared in the April-June 2001 issue. A second award, for newsletter writing in general, was also received from Apex. In April 2001, the Religion Communicators Council gave One Country two "Awards of Excellence," one in the category for newsletters overall, and one for writing, for the story "In Nepal, a novel project mixes literacy and microfinance to reach thousands," which appeared in the January-March 2001 issue.

During the year, in addition to covering the opening of the terraces in May 2001, One Country featured a series of stories on significant Baha'i-inspired education institutions and their programs, including stories on Nur University's moral leadership program in Bolivia; Landegg International University and its Education for Peace program in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the City Montessori School in Lucknow, India. It also reported on the United Nations' World Conference against Racism and lead-up conferences for the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development, and gave exclusive coverage to the Science of Morality conference held in London in February 2002.

The Bahd't World Web site, 11 now in its sixth year, averaged approximately 50,000 visits per month in early 2002. The site contains information about the Baha'i teachings and about communities worldwide. In addition, it has links to the official Web sites of 71 national Baha'i communities.

The Office of Public Information also maintains the Baha'i World News Service, 12 which offers feature stories about Baha'i activities. The site was launched in 2000 and currently averages more than 40,000 visits per month.

11 <www.bahai.org>.

12 <www.bahaiworldnews.org>.

Update on the Situation
of the Baha'is in Iran

On 19 December 2001 the 56th Session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted yet another resolution defending the rights of Baha'is in Iran. With a vote of 72 in favor, 49 against, and 46 abstentions, the General Assembly once again expressed its concern "at the still-existing discrimination against persons belonging to minorities, in particular against the Baha'is, Christians, Jews, and Sunnis." The resolution called upon the Iranian government "to eliminate all forms of discrimination based on religious grounds or against persons belonging to minorities and to address this matter in an open manner, with the full

participation of the minorities themselves, as well as to implement fully the conclusions and recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance relating to the Baha'is and other minority religious groups until they are completely emancipated." It further indicated the General Assembly's decision to continue to examine the human rights situation in Iran during its next session.

The 1996 report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Abdelfattah Amor, called for the Baha'is to be given the

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rights to bury their dead, to enjoy freedom of movement, to have unimpeded access to education and employment, to have security of the person and physical integrity, to have the freedom to manifest their belief, to receive equal treatment by the judiciary, and to have equal rights with other citizens. Dr. Amor also called for the review and setting aside of all death sentences pronounced against Baha'is on the basis of their belief, the return of community properties and compensation for the destruction of places of worship, and the reestablishment of Baha'i institutions. These recommendations have been reiterated by Dr. Amor throughout the years since and have also been endorsed by the UN's Special Representative on Iran, Maurice Copithorne, but they have never been implemented by the Iranian authorities.

While the Iranian government has introduced some reforms that have lessened the severity of the persecutions against the Baha'i community in that country, the changes are largely cosmetic in nature. The death sentences against all imprisoned Baha'is have been commuted, but as of April 2002 five Baha'is remained in jail solely because of their faith—two facing life imprisonment. While the number of long-term imprisonments has decreased, the government continues to pursue a policy of random short-term arrests and imprisonments, creating an atmosphere of insecurity and uncertainty among Baha'is, who never know when they or their loved ones may be detained—or for how long.

While Mr. Copithorne had suggested in his report the previous year that the situation in connection with the confiscation of the Baha'i cemetery in Tehran had been rectified by the government, this was, in fact, not the case. In his January 2002 report to the General Assembly, he wrote: "... as a complex has been built over the old Baha'i cemetery in Tehran, the Iranian authorities had allotted other land for this purpose. It is now reported that the land offered is in fact wasteland, with no access to water. Further, the community has been denied permission to mark individual graves or to construct mortuary facilities."

Mr. Copithorne also noted, "Despite some promising reports,

the Special Representative understands that the Baha'i community continues to experience discrimination in the areas of, inter alia, education, employment, travel, housing, and the enjoyment of

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cultural activities. Baha'is are still prevented from participating in religious gatherings or educational activities."

Citing the example of a judicial decision in September 2001 regarding the confiscation of Baha'i properties, Mr. Copithorne wrote:

... the verdict declares that the "seizure and confiscation of the properties belonging to the misguided sect of Baha'ism is legally and religiously justifiable" and states that "the cultural activities of the misguided sect of Baha'ism-as prescribed by the order of His Excellency the Supreme Leader-do need to be seriously opposed." This would seem to indicate that the 1991 memorandum on "The Baha'i Question," issued by the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council and approved by the Supreme Leader, is still in force and therefore that discrimination against Baha'is continues to be official practice, a situation that the Special Representative deeply deplors.

This same judicial decision, delivered in connection with the confiscation of properties used by the Baha'i Institute of Higher Education, also underscores the Iranian authorities' active efforts to prevent Baha'i children from identifying themselves as such if they wish to attend school, to prevent Baha'i youth from pursuing a higher education in officially recognized institutions of learning, and to close down any kind of program set up by the Baha'is themselves to provide for the education of their children and youth. In April 2002 at the 58th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, various governmental delegations spoke in defense of the Baha'is. ¹ In her statement on the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in any part of the world (item 9), the Canadian ambassador specifically mentioned the situation of the Baha'is in Iran, noting "the steady deterioration of the human rights situation in the country over the past year." She expressed Canada's concern for "the discrimination against religious minorities, notably the Baha'is," urging the government "to proceed down the path of reform and to respect, in word and deed, the human rights of all its people."

1 See pp. 291-93 for the text of the statement given by the Baha'is International

Community at the Human Rights Commission.

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The Australian ambassador also mentioned the situation of the Baha'is in his statement to the Commission on item 9, saying

that Australia remains concerned about "violations of due process and suppression of freedom of expression" in Iran. He urged the government "to undertake judicial reform, to allow a visit by the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights and to ensure that minorities, most notably Jews and Baha'is, are accorded the full protection of the law under the Iranian Constitution." The Irish delegation also mentioned "the continued discrimination against members of the Baha'i faith in many parts of the world."

One nongovernmental organization, the American Jewish Committee, speaking in defense of Iran's Baha'f community, cited the report of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, which noted that the Baha'is "suffer the worst forms of religious persecution at the hands of the state." ²

Renewed concerns for the welfare and safety of the Baha'f community in Iran arose at the Human Rights Commission session when it rejected a resolution condemning human rights violations in Iran. Up to that point, the United Nations, through its General Assembly, Third Committee, and the UN Commission on Human Rights, had passed 18 resolutions regarding human rights conditions in Iran, including the situation of religious minorities, and particularly mentioning the Baha'is. This leaves Iran's Baha'is in an extremely vulnerable position, as they rely heavily on the international community to monitor the situation and prevent the worst forms of the systematic persecution visited by the Iranian government on the Baha'i community since the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Baha'is in other countries also found themselves in perilous conditions during the year. Two Baha'is in Tajikistan were murdered because of their religious convictions, ³ and harassment and persecution of Egypt's Baha'i community continues.

In Tajikistan, Rashid Gulov was shot and killed on 23 October 2001 as he was returning from work to his home in Dushanbe.

² Report of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, 1 May 2001, <WWW.uscirf.gov/reporrs/O1May01/2001annRpt.pdf>.

³ See pp. 304 and 308 for more information.

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Afshin Shokoufeh Mosadegh was shot outside his home, also in Dushanbe, on the morning of 3 December 2001 and died en route to the hospital. Both men were devoted, active members of the Baha'i community and served as members of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Dushanbe. Mr. Mosadegh had previously served as a member of the country's National Spiritual Assembly. Only two years previously, another member of Tajikistan's Baha'i community, 'Abdu'llah Mogharrabi, was also assassinated. Tajik authorities who investigated the two latest killings determined that both men were killed because of their Faith.

In Egypt, Baha'is continue to face arbitrary arrests and imprisonment, periodic hate campaigns in the government-controlled media, prohibition from functioning as a religious community, and denial of members' civil and human rights. This latter case was presented to the Human Rights Commission in an oral statement presented by the Baha'i International Community on 12 April 2002, ⁴ with the request that the Egyptian government take the required steps to remove official obstructions and restrictions imposed on the Baha'is in that country.

Baha'is in countries such as Iran, Tajikistan, and Egypt are not seeking special privileges. All they wish is the recognition of their basic civil and human rights. With the failure of the United Nations Human Rights Commission to pass the resolution condemning Iran's systematic violations of human rights, Baha'is throughout the world worry that the international community, whose influence has done much to mitigate the severity of the persecution of Baha'is in Iran, will not be able to monitor the situation as effectively as it had previously done. Fanatical elements, in Iran and other countries, may become bolder with such an opening. The international community must not neglect its responsibility to challenge governments that either initiate or are complicit in such persecution.

⁴ For more background on the situation of the Baha'i community in Egypt, see *The Baha'i World 2000-01*, pp. 257-60.
European Baha'i Business Forum

When the Spirit in Business World Conference convened in New York City in April 2002, it attracted more than 500 participants from 30 countries for exploration of the theme "Ethics, Mindfulness, and the Bottom Line." Organized by the Spirit in Business Institute, the conference was part of an increasing discussion throughout the business world about improving practices through ethical and spiritual means.

Marcello Palazzi, businessman and founder of the Progressio Foundation, ¹ was one of the organizers of the conference and is also a member of the European Baha'i Business Forum (EBBF), a group that is working to change practices by integrating practical business needs with the principles of the Baha'i Faith.

Though the combination of religion and business will seem incongruous to some, members of the EBBF believe that religion—specifically its moral and spiritual influence— is just what is needed

¹ The Progressio Foundation is dedicated to "crafting strategic enterprise initiatives that advance human progress." It has been involved in developing agendas for international social development projects such as the State of the World Forum, the UNESCO Business Forum, and Habitat II.

to guide the business world as old ways of business are confronted with the challenges of globalization and a collapsing moral framework.

The group began in 1990 as an informal network based in Paris, with the intent of bringing together Baha'is in business to discuss ways to deal with ethical problems they encountered in their work. Gradually, though, the organization began to expand its focus. The group's charter was written in 1992, and in 1993 the EBBF was registered in France as a nonprofit organization. It has since grown from its initial 15 members to include nearly 300 people involved in business and management in some 50 countries. There are affiliates of the EBBF in nine European nations, and in Brazil, Ecuador, Russia, Turkey, and the United States. 2 "The EBBF's work," said Mr. Palazzi, "is about the values and principles which unite men from all religions and countries in their practice of business. Good business, like good governance, rests on these values and principles. Without them, there is nothing." George Starcher, Secretary-General of the organization, said that "a major transformation will be required on the part of individuals and the values that govern the world economy. Appropriate global approaches and institutions will have to develop to solve global problems."

Mr. Starcher, who has been with the group since its beginning, has an MBA from Harvard and spent two decades with a leading international management consulting firm before founding his own management consulting practice. He is now a member of the Board of Directors of the European Center for Continuing Education (CEDEP) at Fontainebleau, France.

The mission of the EBBF, according to its Web site, is "to promote ethical values, personal virtues, and moral leadership in business as well as in organizations of social change." Its seven essential values are "ethical business practices; the social responsibility of business; stewardship of the earth's resources; partnership of women and men in all fields of endeavor; a new paradigm of work; nonadversarial decision-making through consultation; the application

2 A full list of affiliates and contact information is available on the EBBF's

Web site, <www.ebbf.org>.

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of spiritual principles, or human values, to the solution of economic problems."

"All seven of our core values exemplify Baha'i principles," said Mr. Starcher, "and all are fundamental to achieving a responsible business community." Some of these motivating ideas are unique

to the Baha'i Faith, which holds that work is a form of worship. While it is motivated by Baha'i principles, the organization is open to anyone who shares the same values and seeks to promote ethical and responsible interests. These ideas are not exclusive to religion, but the EBBF is proving that spirituality can be a strong motivator for change. Mr. Palazzi, who is not a Baha'i, says that what is needed is "an active engagement of more faiths from around the world."

"My foundation," he said, "is working with the EBBF to do so in a new initiative, the Spirit in Business World Institute, which aims to integrate business leaders from as many faiths as possible Whilst not new, this need is more pressing than ever, in the wake of the Enron scandal, the Argentinean economic collapse, stock market deflation, and the general divorce of business from ethics. Its professionalism, integrity, good management, and networking capacity have created a unique community of committed business leaders."

Wendi Momen, President of the EBBF, has been involved with the group since it was founded in 1990. Dr. Momen is a nonexecutive director of the Bedfordshire Health Authority and a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United Kingdom.

"The main functions, it seems to me," Dr. Momen said, "are to enable people in business who are non-Baha'is to become familiar with and to adapt to their own situation the ethical and economic principles found in the writings of the Baha'i Faith and to help Baha'is who are in business to use these principles ever more fully in their businesses. [The EBBF] also needs to reach out to young people who are entering business with these values and principles."

The organization's first participation in a major conference took place in March 1995, at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, Denmark, where EBBF members delivered six symposia on such themes as "Basic Values for a

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Prosperous World," "Developing an Ethical Business Environment," and "Encouraging Entrepreneurship in Women." The EBBF was also involved in the development of the follow-up conference, Copenhagen + 5, which was hosted in Geneva in July 2000. There the Forum again sponsored six sessions, addressing ethics, prosperity, and the changing role of business.

Since the EBBF's initial participation in the World Summit for Social Development, its prestige and profile have grown, and the organization has expanded its collaboration with other, likeminded groups.

"The most positive reception is from students of business and economics," said Mr. Starcher. That response has come most notably from AIESEC (Association Internationale d'Etudiants en Sciences

Economiques et Commerciales), the world's largest student-run, nongovernmental organization. AIESEC consists of more than 30,000 students of business and economics representing 85 nations and some 800 universities.

This relationship grew out of workshops that the EBBF facilitated at Habitat II in Istanbul. It led directly to collaboration on AIESEC's general theme conference that year, where EBBF representatives made presentations to the students and distributed its paper "Corporate Social Responsibility and Business Success" to the 500 conference participants.

The EBBF recently assisted with organizing AIESEC's largest international event, the 53rd International Congress in Lenk, Switzerland, held 17-25 August 2001, titled "Youth Leadership Shaping the Global Village." George Starcher and EBBF member Daniel Schaubacher spoke at the conference on the subjects of moral leadership and future leadership trends.

"Our feeling is that generally, probably students are more open to the values we're trying to promote than our own generation," said Mr. Starcher. Of the EBBF's collaboration with AIESEC, he said, "We give it a very high priority. [AIESEC's] values are the same as ours. "

Lawrence Miller, a member of the EBBF, now serves as a top advisor to the AIESEC board and is involved with evaluating and overhauling its management scheme, while Mr. Starcher is a member of the International Advisory Group of AIESEC International.

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Another of the EBBF's major cooperative efforts was coauthoring, with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the 120-page "Joint Working Paper on Socially Responsible Enterprise Restructuring," which was first published in April 2000 and has now appeared in a condensed form and has been translated into several languages.

The Russian translation of the joint paper was used as the basis of a two-week training program on the subject of socially responsible enterprise restructuring, which was jointly administered by the EBBF and the ILO. Nine members of Russia's Parliament were among the 18 participants at the conference, held in November 2001 at the International Training Center of the International Labour Organization in Turin, Italy. Other participants included an economist working for the President of Russia and representatives from offices involving social and labor policy in that country.

Additional collaboration along these same lines is planned, with the possibility of doing restructuring training in some Central and Eastern European countries in the near future.

Michael Henriques, Director of the ILO's Job Creation and Enterprise Department, said that the venture between the EBBF

and the ILO has little to do with the religious orientation of the group, but "more because we had a meeting of minds on the issues of restructuring."

"I think that ethical issues are coming to the forefront in a whole range of different areas," he said. "What we call corporate social responsibility has a sense of wider responsibility attached to it-of ethics and so on. I think that we see those issues becoming an increasingly important part of the agenda."

Socially responsible business practices were also the basis for collaboration between the EBBF and the European Commission (EC), in the form of the EBBF's response to the Green Paper on "Promoting a European Framework for Corporate Social Responsibility. " The EBBF response outlines guiding principles in corporate responsibility and gives proposals for further collaboration between the EBBF and the European Union. 3

3 The submission can be read on the European Commission's Web site, at europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-dial/csr/ebbf_eu_enO11212.htm.

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The broadening appeal of the EBBF was demonstrated at its 11th annual conference, held 22-24 September 2001 at the dePoort Conference Center in the Netherlands. More than one-third of the nearly 100 participants were not members of the EBBF but still responded to its message of social responsibility and its pursuit of global prosperity. The conference, titled "The Role of Business in Enhancing the Prosperity of Humankind, " was dedicated to exploring the group's vision "to enhance the well-being and prosperity of humankind."

In addition to organizing such conferences and collaborating with other organizations, the EBBF also publishes documents such as "Emerging Values for a Global Economy," "The Role of Business in Enhancing the Prosperity of Humankind," "Towards a New Paradigm of Management," "Ethics and Entrepreneurship-An Oxymoron?", and "A Spiritual Approach to Microcredit Projects." All of the EBBF's publications are meant to articulate its valuesbased approach to business and how that approach can be successfully applied to modern businesses.

The Forum's ideas are still new and surprising to some, but both the EBBF and its approach are rapidly gaining acceptance and recognition.

"When the EBBF started," said Dr. Momen, "hardly anyone was talking about spirituality in the workplace-now it is a commonplace; similarly with values and moral leadership. So the EBBF is a much more comfortable 'fit' now in the business world and is much more readily accepted I believe that society needs the values and ideas that the EBBF promotes. It is hard to get across to some that business ethics make good business sense and

are not a luxury. It is only when a big company collapses as a result of unethical dealings that people seem to understand this."

ESSAYS~ STATEMENTS~

AND PROFILES

World Order and

Global Governance

A BAHAI PERSPECTIVE

Paul Vreeland suggests that a convergence of features of a new world order proposed by contemporary scholars with those offered by the literature of the Bahá'í Faith will lead to reformulated definitions of world order and global governance.

The call for a new world order, or at least for global structural transformation, is not a late-breaking news item. "It appears we are now at the threshold of a new era in world politics," write the authors of a popular university text. ¹ When the Iron Curtain collapsed upon the world stage, ending the drama of the Cold War, political analyst Francis Fukuyama announced "the end of history,"² and in 1992 former US President George Bush described the changes in the global political arena as being of "biblical

¹ Charles W. Kegley and Eugene R. Wittkopf, *World Politics: Trend and Transformation*, 6th ed. (Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

² "What we may be witnessing [is] not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government." Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" in *The National Interest* (Summer 1989), available at <WWW.wku.edu/~sullib/history.htm>.

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proportions." What writer has not supported a consensus that we are at a critical juncture in world history? Regardless of the theories used to describe historical precedents and visions offered for the future, our world order is in a turbulent transition.

Whisperings for reform grow louder. Whether we tinker with the mechanisms of the United Nations system to tune their functionality or we deconstruct and re-engineer the overall organization, a sense of urgency is building. The present moment is viewed by some as a "window of opportunity" for serious reform and by others as the last chance to cut short a string of failures leading to an impending collapse. What will happen if the opportunity is missed or the chance lost? An environmental disaster of biospheric proportions? A Marxist-styled class revolution led by the Third World in an attempt to overthrow the "apartheid"

of the global economy? A proliferation of ethnic violence and massive violation of human rights? While predictions of our future differ, agreement regarding our present need is growing. There is little doubt that we need a new world order. Agreement is strengthening, too, with regard to common ground criteria describing that order.

There is growing recognition of the need for "top-down" governments to better accommodate the voices of grassroots organizations and other "bottom-up" structures of civil society. James N. Rosenau, author of "Governance in the Twenty-first Century," suggests:

In order to acquire the legitimacy and support they need to endure, successful mechanisms of governance are more likely to evolve out of bottom-up than top-down processes. As such, as mechanisms that manage to evoke the consent of the governed, they are self-organizing systems, steering arrangements that develop through the shared needs of groups and the presence of developments that conduce to the generation and acceptance of shared instruments of control. ³

Protests outside the barricades and locked doors of recent summits such as those held by the World Trade Organization and the

3 James N. Rosenau, "Governance in the Twenty-first Century," *Global Governance*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Spring 1995), p. 17.

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International Monetary Fund may be seen as grassroots calls for the shared instruments of control mentioned by Rosenau.

While voices of civil society are crying to be heard, others are demanding a lessening of control by top-down structures through the curtailment of the powers of national sovereignty. Yoshikazu Sakamoto, a political scholar presently Professor Emeritus of International Politics at the University of Tokyo, writes, These resonance effects [of global democratization] are creating a world situation where, despite inevitable occasional setbacks, democracy and human rights are assuming the character of international/global norms that may transcend a state's sovereignty and go beyond the sum total of the norm of individual states. ⁴

The effectiveness of a global organization such as the United Nations is dependent upon the degree of unanimity among member states ceding to it shares of their national sovereignty.

While one criterion is the accommodation of the voices of grassroots organizations and other bottom-up structures of civil society, another criterion gaining acceptance is that the new world order will have to assure an equity of powers granted to its member nations and, at the same time, grant powers to local and regional interests. This means that the authority of a global order will have both horizontal and vertical integration: horizontal among state

powers and vertical between bottom-up and top-down organizations. If the power of grassroots organizations is to be given legitimate recognition and that of nation states limited, how then will they be balanced? W Andy Knight, editor of *Global Governance* journal and a scholar who has written extensively on the United Nations and conflict resolution, observes:

Given the complexity of this issue, whatever form of governance we envision for the future should support the view that the institutions designed to manage human problems must be developed at every level: global, regional, national, and local.

4 Yoshikazu Sakamoto, "A Perspective on the Changing World Order: A Conceptual Prelude," in *Global Transformation: Challenges to the State System*, ed. Yoshikazu Sakamoto (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1994), p. 34.

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It should also include all potential actors that play a role in governing (states, regional bodies, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, and individuals of civil society). This can be done by embracing the normative notion of panarchy, i.e. "rule of all by all for all." A subsidiarity model of global governance can be used as an overarching framework within which this "new" governance structure can develop. 5

Subsidiarity has played an important role in the development of the European Union, whose Commission defines it "as a guiding principle to imbed multilevel input in a bottom-up fashion, especially in on-the-spot sourcing of policies on water, energy, transport, etc." 6 Looking at its application in the division of labor and in conflict resolution, Knight sees subsidiarity as a principle by which "a central authority" performs "only those tasks which cannot be performed at a more immediate or local level." With the subsidiarity model, the delegation of state powers to a local or regional institution or agency is made possible when that agency aligns its will with that of the overarching global body.

A third criterion for the future world order is the acceptance of unity in diversity as a governing principle. York University scholar Robert W Cox, a theorist in the fields of international organization and political economy, claims that a posthegemonic or new world order would need to be established upon the search for shared values. In *Approaches to World Order*, which he coauthored with Timothy Sinclair, Cox writes that with the acceptance of unity in diversity as a governing principle, two conditions must be met: "The first condition would be mutual recognition of distinct

5 W Andy Knight, "Towards a Subsidiarity Model for Peacemaking and Preventive Diplomacy: Making Chapter VIII of the UN Charter Operational," *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1996), p. 42. See also

Adapting the United Nations to a Postmodern Era: Lessons Learned (London: MacMillan/Palgrave, 2001); A Changing United Nations: Multilateral Evolution and the Quest for Global Governance (London: Macmillan/Palgrave, 2000); and United Nations and Arms Embargoes Verification (Lewiston: Mellen Press, 1998).

6 European Commission, Secretariat-General, Terms of Reference for Working Group V (Brussels: 16 November 2000), available at <europa.eu.im/comm/governance/areas/group 11 /mandate_en. pdf>.

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traditions of civilization ... mutual recognition implies a readiness to try to understand others in their own terms. " But mutual recognition and openness to other traditions are not enough. Cox goes on to say that collectively we must press further to arrive at a consensus of understanding of shared principles. Those shared principles, while protecting a diversity of cultures, will maintain unity and facilitate the coexistence of traditions. This governing principle, he says, is driven by "requisites of survival and sustained equilibrium in global ecology," "restraint in the use of violence to decide conflicts," and the need "to develop procedures for coping with conflict that would take account of distinct coexisting normative perspectives. "7 Beyond mutual recognition, then, lies an accord for mutual cultural protection-an accord that must be attained if we are to survive.

What we need, in other words, is a new world order rooted in present-day reality yet radically different in conception. We need something that, by virtue of its historical precedents, is recognizable, yet carries none of the flaws, weaknesses, and failures of presentday mechanisms. What we want is the promised kingdom of God on earth without the associated apocalypse. And yet the only faith many seem to have is in the latter.

There is a wealth of literature describing the nature and characteristics of the disintegrative crises of our times. That body of observation will not be augmented here. Rather, three paths of change will be examined-paths anticipated by the literature of the Baha'i Faith. The first path leads to a collective political peace agreement termed the Lesser Peace. The second path, developing simultaneously with the first, leads to an emerging global, nonpartisan, supranational administrative structure. The third is the convergence of the two other paths leading to the formulation of a new definition of global governance. But what of the old

7 Robert W Cox, "Towards a Posthegemonic Conceptualization of World Order: Reflections on the Relevancy of Ibn Khaldun" (1992), in Robert W Cox and Timothy Sinclair, Approaches to World Order (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) , pp. 152-53. Here, Cox suggests, "A posthegemonic order would have to derive its normative content in a

search for common ground among constituent traditions of civilization "

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definition? What is the current distinction between world order and global governance? James Rosenau writes:

In sum, while politicians and pundits may speak confidently or longingly about establishing a new world order, such a concept is meaningful only as it relates to the prevention or containment of large-scale violence and war. It is not a concept that can be used synonymously with global governance if by the latter is meant the vast numbers of rule systems that have been caught up in the proliferating networks of an ever more interdependent world. ⁸ Thus, until the definitions are reformulated, the function of world order is to maintain universal peace while that of global governance is to administer the complex affairs of the planet.

Path 1: The Lesser Peace

Unlike the League of Nations and the United Nations, the goal of the Baha'i world order is not limited to global collective security, which is an intermediate yet critically important stage in the development of a new system of global governance. That stage will be inaugurated when the heads of sovereign states formalize a peace agreement, a solemn and sacred pact, which Baha'u'llah (1817-92), the Prophet-Founder of the Baha'i Faith, described as "the chief instrument for the protection of all mankind." ⁹ The fundamental principle of the pact is that all governments must enforce the submission of any government that violates any provision of the agreement, ¹⁰ one of which is that all states cede any and all

⁸ Rosenau, p. 17.

⁹ Baha'u'llah, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1988), p. 30.

¹⁰ "The fundamental principle underlying this solemn Pact should be so fixed that if any government later violate any one of its provisions, all the governments on earth should arise to reduce it to utter submission, nay the human race as a whole should resolve, with every power at its disposal, to destroy that government. Should this greatest of all remedies be applied to the sick body of the world, it will assuredly recover from its ills and will remain eternally safe and secure." The settlement of national boundaries is one of the conditions of this pact. 'Abdu'l-Baha, *The Secret of Divine Civilization* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1994), p. 65.

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claims to make war. ¹¹ What Baha'u'llah envisioned during the latter half of the twentieth century was a multilateral structure with teeth. Both the agreement and the period it introduces are termed the Lesser Peace.

Simultaneous and universal disarmament will be one of the

features of that political unity, as will the limitation of arms to insure internal security. Other features will include an empowered international police force, the implementation throughout the nations of programs of education for peace, the ceding of certain rights to impose taxation, and the reallocation of defense funds for socioeconomic development. Economic, travel, and transportation sanctions will be imposed against governments engaging in armed conflicts. The political unity will see the evolution of super-state institutions such as an international court of arbitration with representation from all nations and an international border commission. Decisions of the tribunal will be binding and enforced by compulsory support of all governments. The germ of such an international tribunal foreseen by Baha'u'llah has already been realized. 12

While the Lesser Peace recognizes the moral right of the individual and grassroots institutions to a voice, it cannot claim to be a bottomup world order because its focus is not solely on the empowerment of the individual. It also demands the accountability of political institutions to establish consensus. As 'Abdu'l-Baha wrote: "The sovereigns of the world ... must conclude a binding treaty, and establish a covenant, the provisions of which shall be sound, inviolable, and

11 "Some form of a world super-state must needs be evolved, in whose favor all the nations of the world will have willingly ceded every claim to make war, certain rights to impose taxation, and all rights to maintain armaments, except for purposes of maintaining internal order within their respective dominions." Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahd'u'lldh: Selected Letters*, 2d rev. ed. (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1993), p. 40.

12 "A world tribunal will adjudicate and deliver its compulsory and final verdict in all and any disputes that may arise between the various elements constituting this universal system." Baha'u'llah, *The Proclamation of Bahd'u'lldh to the Kings and Leaders of the World* (Haifa: Baha'i World Centre, 1967), p. xi.

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definite. They must proclaim it to all the world, and obtain for it the sanction of all the human race." 13

Baha'i literature does not offer a blueprint for the attainment of the Lesser Peace, which the Baha'i Faith views as a secular and political accomplishment. That is, the Baha'i Faith does not see itself as a principal actor. However, its literature does identify a few of the more salient features from which certain reforms can be envisioned. One such reform would be the establishment of a single super-state power. The super-state entity must represent all countries of the planet and be sanctioned by the entire human race.

Another example of reform would be the discontinuation of the right of state sovereignty to the power of veto. Such a right

maintains the power of member states at the expense of a collective authority represented by a majority vote. In essence, the exercise of a veto nullifies the power of a transcendent political unity, presently limited to the five permanent members of the Security Council. Chapter VII, Article 43 of the UN Charter calls upon members for voluntary cooperation in actions of peace-enforcement. The Baha'i call for a "solemn pact" implies a more than occasional cooperation among "all countries." For the security of the collective, no member will be able to opt out of an agreement sanctioned by the entire human race.

The enforcement of peace by an international police force should not depend upon the willingness of member states to volunteer their military resources. The present practice also maintains the status quo powers of states at the expense of the collective. In the future, member states will have been disarmed and the super-state will have autonomous resources, perhaps managed by a mechanism such as an empowered Military Staff Committee.

13 Cited in Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahd'u'lldh*, p. 192. Loni Bramson-Lerche provides another example of that political accountability, writing: "... soldiers must require from their governments clear explanations as to first, how and why conditions have degenerated to such a state that war has become necessary, and second, that the war to be waged is just." Loni Bramson-Lerche, "An Analysis of the Baha'i World Order Model," *Emergence: Dimensions of a New World Order*, ed. Charles Lerche (London: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1991), p. 24.

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Similarly, because it sacrifices the power of the collective for the preservation of state sovereignty, Article 51, 14 which treats the issue of self-defense, would need to be repealed. No member would have the right to self-help in the event of armed aggression from another member. All members would be required to trust in the principle of collective self-defense.

Implications of the Lesser Peace for constructive UN reform pose some challenging questions. What mechanism(s) would be used to secure the "sanction of all the human race"? How would the super-state deal with member states abstaining from peace enforcement actions? Where would an international police force and its military resources be stationed? What mechanisms would ensure the protection of the civil and human rights of groups within states? As difficult as these questions may be, the gap between the ideals of the Lesser Peace and movement towards their realization is bridgeable.

There is a growing body of criticism of the weaknesses and failures of the United Nations to meet contemporary challenges. Similarly there is a growing number of proposals for UN reform. One "selected bibliography on United Nations reform" lists 189

significant works. 15 Among the more notable studies is *Our Global Neighbourhood: The Report of the Commission on Global Governance*, 16 which was prepared on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. The UN General Assembly itself had also

14 Article 51, Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter reads, "Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defense shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security."

15 Independent Working Group on the Future of the United Nations, Yale University Library and Social Science Statistical Laboratory, available at <www.library.yale.edu/un/un2a6a.htm>.

16 New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

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appointed five working groups to study reform in preparation for the anniversary.

In October 1995 the Bahá'í International Community offered its statement *Turning Point for all Nations*, in which it supports appeals for the redistribution of UN General Assembly representation to reduce the influence of state sovereignty, calls for compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a minimum standard for membership, and endorses an expanded notion of collective security so as to include responses to such threats to world order as are posed by unsustainable environmental actions and international drug trafficking. 17

An earlier statement by the international governing body of the Bahá'í is, while expressing confidence in the future, describes the concerted actions required for the Lesser Peace as being blocked by a "paralysis of will." In the document entitled *The Promise of World Peace*, the Universal House of Justice writes:

Certainly, there is no lack of recognition by national leaders of the world-wide character of the problem, which is self-evident in the mounting issues that confront them daily. And there are the accumulating studies and solutions proposed by many concerned and enlightened groups as well as by agencies of the United Nations, to remove any possibility of ignorance as to the challenging requirements to be met. There is, however, a paralysis of will; and it is this that must be carefully examined and resolutely dealt with. This paralysis is rooted, as we have stated, in a deep-seated conviction of the inevitable quarrelsomeness of

mankind, which has led to the reluctance to entertain the possibility of subordinating national self-interest to the requirements of world order, and in an unwillingness to face courageously the far-reaching implications of establishing a united world authority. It is also traceable to the incapacity of largely ignorant and subjugated masses to articulate their

17 See *Turning Point for all Nations: A Statement of the Bahá'í International*

Community on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations (New York: Bahá'í International Community, 1995); reprinted in *The Bahá'í World 1995-96*, pp. 241-83.

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desire for a new order in which they can live in peace, harmony, and prosperity with all mankind. 18

A stalemate exists between the forces promoting the interests of UN reform and those vested in the maintenance of the political status quo. The confidence of the Bahá'í community is that the stalemate will be broken. Reformists are divided in two groups. The first includes those who see a "window of opportunity" and envision the end of the paralysis prompted by the recognition of the need to avert an imminent global catastrophe. The second group comprises those who see an impending collapse of the UN structure and who fear that political unity may be an accomplishment required to respond to the aftermath of such a catastrophe. Whether proactive or reactive, any movement towards Lesser Peace ideals must be reformist and substantially more constructive than a limited tinkering to optimize a functionality which is, at best, situational. W Andy Knight observes:
... the fifty-year-old UN system is now left with two basic choices: dissolution or succession. Given the persistence of the idea that the fate of humankind depends on state-society collaboration and cooperation around common security issues, dissolving the UN can be considered nothing more than "throwing out the baby with the bathwater." As several commentators have noted in the past, the elimination of the UN today may only result in the reinvention of the wheel tomorrow.... The problem [of reform] ... is that, given the turbulence of the present transitional period, the required task will not be unlike "trying to change the wing of an airplane while it is still in flight." It is an assignment that demands every ounce of our imagination and that will have to involve both reflexive adaptation and learning strategies if we are to prevent a disastrous crash. 19

18 *The Universal House of Justice, The Promise of World Peace* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1985), p. 9.

19 W Andy Knight, "Beyond the UN System? Critical Perspectives on Global

Governance and Multilateral Evolution," *Global Governance* 1, (1995), pp. 251-52.

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The UN Millennium Summit and Assembly was convened in September 2000 with the United Nations structure a topic high on its agenda. At this gathering the Commission on Global Governance presented another study, "The Millennium Year and the Reform Process," in which it notes:

... by and large the UN's member governments have been less ready to countenance change than we had urged. Prolonged discussions in working groups set up by the General Assembly have produced meagre agreement. The status quo remains undisturbed in the Security Council, where key dispositions stay frozen in their 1945 mould. The call for democratic oversight of the global economy has gone unheeded. In some respects, developments since we issued our report have made the need for changes in governance more compelling. 20

Still the paralysis. The essential consideration for the reformists is that they have but one system with which to work. What multilateral system of governance other than that of the United Nations exists today?

Path 2: The Baha'i Administrative Order as an Emerging Global Structure and Model of World Order

In October 1985 the international governing body of the Baha'i community addressed the peoples of the world: "If the Baha'i experience can contribute in whatever measure to reinforcing hope in the unity of the human race, we are happy to offer it as a model for study." 21 The model offered by that experience is one that asserts the dependency of planetary survival upon our recognition of the end of nationalism and upon an emerging global consciousness of the unity of mankind. That model is called the Baha'i administrative order.

In 1936, well before former US President George Bush gave the international media the phrase "new world order" to add to its glossary, Shoghi Effendi, who devoted his ministry to

20 The Commission on Global Governance, available at <www.cgg.ch/millennium.htm>.

21 The Universal House of Justice, *Promise of World Peace*, p. 20.

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implementing the Baha'i administrative order, wrote of it as "the very pattern of the New World Order destined to embrace in the fullness of time the whole of mankind." 22 The existence of a tangible base for this prediction is perhaps the most convincing argument for the study of the Baha'i model. It is an organic entity, a worldembracing structure in which at least 235 independent nations

and major territories are represented, a structure described as "embryonic and steadily unfolding." ²³ The UN, with 191 member states, has also been described as "an embryonic or primitive form of such governance." ²⁴

The Baha' I administrative order has been characterized by Shoghi Effendi as "fundamentally different than anything ... previously established." "It would be utterly misleading to attempt a comparison between this unique, divinely conceived Order and any of the diverse systems which the minds of men, at various periods of their history, have contrived for the government of human institutions." ²⁵ In other words, the administrative order is not to be measured by the faulty yardsticks of failed systems of the past. It is, of itself, a standarda standard that has yet to be fully embodied.

Second, it would be a mistake to claim that a spiritually principled order does not have a historical legacy. Robert W Cox suggests a closer examination of the tradition of Islam, the legacy of which sets the framework for our understanding of the role of the divine in world order and, more specifically, in the Baha' I administrative order. Because the Baha' I administrative order is not a system of secular political governance, it may challenge the understanding of Westerners in whom the concept of the separation of church and state is deeply entrenched. While the Baha'i administrative order will not be compared with Islamic institutions, the forces leading to the rise of Islam may offer clues to an understanding of how the Baha' I administrative order and the

²² Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahd'u'lldh*, p. 144.

²³ Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to the Bahd 'i World 1950-1957* (Wilmette: Baha' f Publishing Trust, 1971), p. 60.

²⁴ W Andy Knight, "Towards a Subsidiarity Model. ..," p. 34.

²⁵ Cited in *Individual Rights and Freedoms in the World Order of Bahd 'u'lldh*

(Haifa: Baha'i World Centre, 1988), p. 5.

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Lesser Peace will evolve. Some of those forces will be examined momentarily.

Last, the Baha'i administrative order calls for a redefinition of present-day concepts of freedom, individual rights, democracy, and the nature of man. Yoshikazu Sakamoto, writing in *Global Transformation*, recognizes the "need for a new way of conceptualizing democratization in a time of internationalization." ²⁶ Old world constructs are permeated with beliefs founded in classical realism, which holds that international systems are anarchic and that competition and conflict are the norm. Driven by needs for domination and exploitation, the natural state of man is one of "war of all against all." ²⁷ This is the "deep-seated conviction of the inevitable quarrelsomeness of mankind," contributing to the

paralysis of will. The most significant challenge posed by the Baha'i administrative order is the one it offers to classical realism's view of human nature.

This examination of the Baha'i model is premised upon two assumptions: divinity is a source of active forces within the system, and the nature of man is essentially noble.

Divinity in World Order

Robert W Cox is well known among scholars for his suggestion that "Theory is always for someone and for some purpose." 28 According to Cox, there are two categories of world order theory. One is concerned with problem solving, taking the existing world order as a given and addressing itself to its maintenance. The other critical theory is concerned with change and the structural evolution or transformation of world orders. Within Cox's notion of critical theory is the view of historical structures as elements of

26 Sakamoto, p. 34.

27 From Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*. Other major contributors to the philosophy of political classical realism include Machiavelli, Rousseau, Carr, and Morgenthau.

28 Robert W Cox, "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2 (1981), p. 128.

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world order, entmes compnsng a constellation of interacting material forces, ideas, and institutions. Of interest here is the role of ideas, ideologies, cultural values, and what Cox calls inter-subjective meanings. Intersubjective meanings, the understandings shared by people within the structure, cannot be separated or isolated from the historical structure. For example, the concept of human nature as driven by self-interest cannot be isolated from the social order that it serves to justify. Cox asserts that ideas and understandings are "the intersubjective meanings that constitute the order itself." 29 Critical theorists such as Cox want to understand how historical structures emerge and transform, an interest pursued here.

If we accept the role of ideas and ideologies in the evolution of world orders and apply Cox's definition of historical structure, we see that the Baha'i model is one in which divinity as a systemic force is as much an influential element as other nonhuman, regulatory forces such as climatic variation. While divine forces do not lend themselves to formulations of empirical statements, they exist within historical contexts, and the world orders they have spawned can be examined in the light of the critical theory. 30 The function of religion is transformational, and the nature of governance systems inspired by religion is to realize changes in

normative and ethical values revealed by sources of the divine sources viewed as exogenous to traditional models of world order.

The need for transformation-personal and collective-is assumed,

29 Robert W. Cox, "Multilateralism and World Order" (1992), in Cox and Sinclair, *Approaches to World Order*, p. 514.

30 Divinities and their kingly representatives were manifest in the political structures of Sumeria, ancient Egypt, classical Greece, the Mayan and Aztec civilizations of the West, and the French monarchy. Socrates acknowledged his responsibility to the gods of the state, and Zeno formulated a concept of a universal city under a deity of the universe. As the Roman civilization weakened, St. Augustine (354-430 CE) proposed *De civitate Dei* which has been credited as Charlemagne's inspiration for the Holy Roman Empire. A Christian state was later suggested by St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-74 CE) in his *De regimine principum*, *Evangelia S. Matthaei Commentaria*, and *Scriptum super Sententiis*. In practical terms, the influence of the Christian church in the governance of loosely associated European feudal states during the Middle Ages needs also to be considered.

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for if the need did not exist, then what is the *raison d'être* of religion or of the divinity? World orders, like religions and the civilizations they inspire, follow a cycle of growth and decay, "from barbarians to bureaucrats." 31 Divinely inspired new world orders are necessary from time to time to revitalize human civilization. Dead civilizations can no more effect their own resurrection than plants can grow in the absence of light. Yoshikazu Sakamoto, describing state sovereignty as a myth because it refuses to admit to endogenous revolutions and external interventions, writes, "No significant political transformation can take place without this 'externality' of the sources of change." 32

The emergence of the Bahá'í administrative order coincides with the end of the period of nation building—a period that began with the advent of Islam in 622 CE. The nations of Islam are theocracies, and they include many present-day governments. On the other hand, the Western concept of nationhood, beginning with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, is that of a secular institution. Ibn Khaldun of Tunis (1332-1406), an Islamic historian and theoretician on the rise and fall of political powers, describes the difference between Christianity as a social force and Islam as a political one. He writes:

... in view of the need for authority in every human grouping and society, a chief is needed who will guide men towards objects which are advantageous to them and will force them to keep away from those things that are harmful. Such chiefs are known as Kings Hence, in Islam, Caliphate and Kingship are conjoined, in order to unite all efforts towards a common end.

[The leaders of religions other than Islam] do not concern themselves with political affairs, but leave the temporal power in the hands of men who have seized it by chance or for some reason with which religion has nothing to do. Sovereignty exists among such peoples owing to social solidarity ... their religion as such, however, does not impose any sovereignty on them seeing that

31 This expression is derived from the title of a book *Barbarians to Bureaucrats: Corporate Life Cycle Strategies: Lessons from the Rise and Fall of Civilizations*, Lawrence M. Miller (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1989).

32 Sakamoto, p. 33.

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it does not demand of them dominion over other peoples, as is the case with Islam, but merely the establishing of their faith among themselves. 33

Khaldun is suggesting that the "common end" of Islam is a unity—a political order and system of governance in which the religion of the state exists for the collective well-being of Muslims "and other peoples." Because other religious leaders focus their attention on the social solidarity of their own peoples, they exert no influence over others, and create and sustain no political order that would unite them under a more global umbrella.

Robert W Cox explains the role of Muhammad's prophethood as a function of that political order. Divinity, he says, plays a part in the historical structure. He observes:

The Law, revealed by the Prophet as the guidelines for human life, was the basis for the state. Politics, the construction and maintenance of the state, was a matter for rational scientific enquiry. A prophet, indeed, to be effective, would need to function rationally in being able to communicate and to build the human foundation for the revealed message.³⁴

Regardless of whether religions have developed into social or political forces, the question is how does the appearance of a Christ or Muhammad seed the creation of a new order? From his analysis of Ibn Khaldun's work, Robert W Cox explains that there are two essential elements in the historical structures of the Christian and Islamic orders. Divinity as a systemic force is one. The other is what Khaldun terms 'asabiya—a term translated variously as tribal solidarity, community spirit, nationalism, and 'esprit de corps'. Khaldun asserts that without the state, the concept of 'asabiya is superfluous and that the rise and fall of the state is a function of the strength of 'asabiya. Cox goes further to suggest that prophecy, in the epistemology of Ibn Khaldun, is inoperative without this intersubjective meaning or 'asabiya.

33 Nosratollah Rassekh, "Islam : The First 138 Years, " *World Order*, vol. 15,

no. 1/2 (Fall 1980/Winter 1981), p. 7.

34 Robert W Cox, "Towards a Posthegemonic Conceptualization of World Order," in Cox and Sinclair, *Approaches to World Order*, p. 145 .
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Do energies such as 'asabiya, as intersubjective meanings, exist prior to the revelations they welcome? After all, every advent has been awaited by those claiming to follow the prophecies of the preceding one; the function of prophecy being to create the anticipatory and welcoming 'asabiya and to prepare the way for the new messenger. The argument would maintain that these forces, as intersubjective meanings, are derived from within the system and are the means by which the exogenous forces of the prophet are accommodated. There is a chicken-and-egg argument here. Do historical structures contain the seed of divinely revealed ideologies, which in the fullness of time become the foundation of their intersubjective meaning-or do the revelations contain the seed of the new historical structures they will foster?

From the Baha'i perspective, the world order of Baha'u'llah is inseparable from His revelation. It cannot consider itself to be an order actualized by an outside influence. Rather it demands an expansion of the definition of world order to accept the influence of divinity within it. The source of 'asabiya is as divine as the revelation that it embraces-a revelation that fuels the continuing evolution of shared values. In other words, each world order contains within it the germ of the culture that will accept its successor. To borrow from the language of Cox, "supraintersubjectivity" as a global consciousness exists in God's Master Plan. The historical succession of orders is leading humanity towards the emergence of the consciousness of the oneness of mankind. Cox asks: "... is the only model of the future one in which differences become absorbed into a new unity, a new global hegemony, perhaps the creation of a new global Mahdi? (The global Mahdi could take the form of a collectivity rather than an individual.)" 35 Just what is this Mahdi? In Islamic tradition, the Mahdi is the messiah. For Baha'is the new global Mahdi is Baha'u'llah, and the Mahdi as a collectivity suggested by Cox may be the administrative order an order that is inseparable from Baha'u'llah's revelation.

35 Robert W Cox, "Towards a Posthegemonic Conceptualization of World Order," in Cox and Sinclair, *Approaches to World Order*, p. 168.
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The failure of religious political orders of the past has been the corruption of their powers by representative temporal successors. No prophet or founder of a major faith has detailed provision for religious-state succession. The "effectiveness" of the revealed "Law" depends upon institutions that carry on the functions of the prophet

or founder after his passing. As sociologist Max Weber would have it, the charisma of the prophet must become "routinized" or institutionalized. ³⁶ For example, the intention of the institutions of the papacy and the caliphate is to perpetuate and reflect the charismatic authority of Jesus Christ and Muhammad. However, because these institutions lack scriptural legitimacy, they have failed to protect Christianity and Islam from schisms. That is, lack of scriptural legitimacy has opened the doors of dissension, fragmenting their world orders.

Baha'is, on the other hand, possess a body of literature revealed by the central figures of their Faith that legitimizes their administrative order. The Baha' (model is initially described in Baha'u'llah's book of laws, the Kitab-i-Aqdas, and in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'u'llah's appointed successor. Recalling the distinction made earlier between world order and global governance—that world order maintains universal peace while global governance administers the complex affairs of the planet—we see that the Baha' f model is one of both world order and governance. It is a system of world order in the sense that the revelation describes the succession of divine authority and the nature of institutions that inherit it. Serving to protect the Faith from schism, the Baha'i administrative order can be viewed as system preserving its integrity and maintaining an internal and presently limited collective security. It is also a system of governance in the sense that it anticipates the need for future societal administration.

³⁶ For a further exploration, see Peter Smith, "The Rourinization of Charisma?"

Some Comments on 'Motif Messianique et Processus Social dans le Bahaisme,'" Occasional Papers in Shaykhi, Bdbi, and Baha 'i Studies vol. 3, no. 6 (November 1998), available at <www2.h-net.msu.edu/~bahai/bhpapers/vol2/motif.htm>.

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The Nature of Man

The other assumption guiding our examination of the Baha'f model is that man, created in the spiritual image of God, is noble.

Baha'u'llah tells us: "O Son of spirit! Noble have I created thee, yet thou hast abased thyself. Rise then unto that for which thou wast created." ³⁷

The Baha'f view of human nature does not reject the role of realism's will to power as a motivational force in the lives of individuals and sovereign states. Rather, it finds that realism presents only half the picture. While man does possess a material (animalistic), self-serving, and aggressive nature, he also possesses a spiritual nature that must, as he matures, subdue and subordinate the forces of the former. The concept of the nobility of humankind is essential to Baha'f world order. Baha'u'llah writes, "All men have

been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization." 38 The Baha' f view accepts the notion that the whole of world order cannot be inconsistent with its constituent parts. It would assert that the failure of contemporary realism is the failure of competitive nation-states, hungry for sovereignty, to accommodate a grassroots consensus desiring peace. This inconsistency exists both between and within nations. The nobility of humankind begs us to consider a noble form of global governance in which realism's ideas of competition for power and dominance would be viewed as a form of self-destruction. The concept of man's nobility allows us to assert universal peace as the reflection of both sovereign and popular will. A world order of liberal pluralism is sustainable. There are at least two problems that the practical demonstration of this nobility must confront. There is the necessity to divorce ourselves from culturally ingrained practices of responsible democracy and comply with the requisite spiritual practices of representative but non-responsible democracy called for by a Baha'f system of governance. That is to say, can we elect our representatives

37 Baha'u'llih, *The Hidden Words of Bahd'u'lldh* (Wilmette: Baha'f Publishing Trust, 1994), Arabic no. 22, p. 9.

38 Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahd'u'lldh* (Wilmette: Baha'f Publishing Trust, 1994), p. 215.

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and entrust them with the freedom to vote according to their consciences rather than requiring them to sort out a melange of constituency opinion on every matter? The second problem is that global liberal pluralism has no historical precedents. A world citizenship has not yet been empowered.

The normative model of Baha'i world order and global governance is characteristically both top-down and bottom-up. It is also composite in that it embraces features of democratic, autocratic, and aristocratic systems-features that will be described subsequently. As noted earlier, it sees two related paths or processes of development, which will eventually converge. One is the administrative order practiced today by the Baha'i community, and the other is evident in secular trends of globalization and integration-trends that will see the attainment of an enforceable and universal peace agreement.

The Baha'i Administrative Order

Does the community serve the individual or does the individual serve the community? The Baha'i model reflects aspects of communitarianism as described by proponent Michael Sandel, author of *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*. 39 Comm unitarianism claims that individuals are "constituted by their obligations to communities rather than that communities are constituted by the participation of rights-bearing persons." 40 In the debate between

39 Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

40 The relationships between community, individuals, and institutions are described by the Universal House of Justice as follows: "The individual's relationship to society is explained by Shoghi Effendi in the statement that 'The Baha'i conception of social life is essentially based on the principle

of the subordination of the individual will to that of society. It neither suppresses the individual nor does it exalt him to the point of making him an antisocial creature, a menace to society. As in everything, it follows the 'golden mean'. ... Among the responsibilities assigned to Baha'i institutions which have a direct bearing on these aspects of individual freedom and development is one which is described in the Constitution of the Universal House of Justice: 'to safeguard the personal rights, freedom, and initiative of individuals.'" The Universal House of Justice, Individual Rights and Freedoms, pp. 20-21.

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statist sovereignty and the morality of individual rights and freedoms of the libertarians, communitarianism is the middle ground. Bruce Frohnen is a critic who has led the libertarian-communitarian debate. In a review of communitarian thought, one commentator describes Frohnen's approach as follows:

[He] argues that the communitarians' proposed remedies-such as more democratic deliberation about the common good and rhetorical appeals to self-sacrifice-will be ineffective without a belief in a transcendent source of substantive values. In effect, communitarians seek to create a religion of the state, "to instill in us a faith in civil or political rather than spiritual religion." Such a project, Frohnen believes, is doomed to failure, for politicians "cannot replace God." They are at least as flawed as those whom they seek to lead. 41

The Baha'i administrative order, by positing a belief in a "transcendent source" of normative values, answers Frohnen's criticism. The Baha'i model would spiritualize the order. Those elected to serve the Baha'i administration are assumed to be conscious of their responsibility and accountability to God for their actions and decisions. Intent on rational and dispassionate discourse, they pray that they will be divinely inspired when making decisions affecting the community.

The basic unit of the Baha'i administrative order is the local Baha'i community, which includes families, individuals, and local institutions. 42 Concepts of power and authority are separated

41 Tom Palmer, review of Bruce Frohnen, *The New Communitarians and the Crisis of Modern Liberalism* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996) in *The Globe and Mail* (Saturday, 6 October 1996), 010.

42 In a message to the Bahais throughout the world, the Universal House

of]justice writes: "A community is more than the sum of its membership; it is a comprehensive unit of civilization composed of individuals, families, and institutions that are originators and encouragers of systems, agencies, and organizations working together with a common purpose for the welfare of people both within and beyond its own borders; it is a composition of diverse, interacting participants that are achieving unity in an unremitting quest for spiritual and social progress. Since Baha'is everywhere are at the very beginning of the process of community building, enormous effort must be devoted to the tasks at hand." The Universal House of Justice, Ri4van message 153 BE (April 1996), para. 25.

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in the Baha'i model. Authority is invested in the elected institutions of Local and National Assemblies and the international governing body ordained by Baha'u'llah. The power to actualize the authority and the decisions and guidance of those institutions is exercised by individuals. Noting this relationship, Shoghi Effendi "explained that without the support of the individual, 'at once wholehearted, continuous and generous,' every measure and plan of his [National Assembly] is 'foredoomed to failure.'" 43 The relationship between individuals and institutions is manifest in the ongoing consultative dialogue between communities and their Local Assemblies.

The Baha'i view holds that traditional models of liberal pluralism, expressed in the ideals of representative and responsible democracy, are untenable. How can an elected official represent the divergent views of his constituents? Given a multitude of issues and influences of different interest groups, how can that official be said to be responsible to all who elected him? Elections are costly affairs through which the voice of the electorate is counted on a relatively occasional basis. Representative democracy exists only at the moment that the "batch" process of election is conducted. In the Baha'i administrative order, members of Assemblies are elected by a nonpartisan process of secret ballot. They are not responsible to the electorate; rather they are accountable to themselves and to their relationship to God, to Whom they turn for guidance.

Practical application of these spiritual principles requires the members to divorce themselves from traditional influences of responsible democracy. The spiritualization of elections is reinforced by procedures of prayer and secret ballot. The campaigns and nominations of partisan politics are prohibited. Baha'is are encouraged to vote for character—those who best exemplify five qualifications: 1) unquestioned loyalty, 2) selfless devotion, 3) a well-trained mind, 4) recognized ability, and 5) mature experience. Baha'is regard issue-centered political campaigns as divisive and contrary to the spiritual principle of the power of unity. In an issues-based system, the reasons a person is elected at the outcome of a campaign are

not always applicable to the issues that arise later in his or her

43 Cited in the Universal House of Justice, *Ric:lvn* message 153 BE, para. 22.
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term. We may find that the person represents our views on abortion but that he or she subsequently fails to support our concerns about anti-tobacco legislation. And who knows what questions will be put on the table tomorrow?

While Assemblies are elected annually, community members have the opportunity to address their Assembly at least once each Baha'i month at gatherings that are also legitimized institutions of the Baha'i Faith. 44 Dialogue is entertained following guidelines of "consultation," which are more spiritual than procedural. 45 Baha'i consultation cannot be compared with Robert's Rules of Order or other notions of adversarial or parliamentary procedures.

Addressing a session of the United Nations Commission, the Baha'i International Community explains: "The goal of consultation is not to win, but to find the truth. Therefore, opinions are to be offered humbly, not as definitive and final, but as contributions to the collective effort." 46 Just as Baha'is must disentangle themselves from older concepts of democratic elections if they are to practice the ideals promulgated by their literature, so too must their application of the principles of consultation be freed from popular Western concepts of individual rights and freedoms that undermine

44 The community gathering, termed the Nineteen Day Feast, is held every

19 days-once a month on the Baha'i calendar. "The Nineteen Day Feast is an institution of the Cause, first established by the Bab, later confirmed by Baha'u'llah, and now made a prominent part of the administrative order of the Faith." Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany and Austria, 28 May 1954, in *Lights of Guidance*, ed. Helen Hornby (New Delhi: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1983), no. 509, p. 191.

45 Shoghi Effendi, *Bahd'i Administration* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 88. Consider also: the qualifications or "prime requisites for them that take counsel together are purity of motive, radiance of spirit, detachment from all else save God, attraction to His Divine Fragrances, humility, and lowliness amongst His loved ones, patience and long-suffering in difficulties, and servitude to His exalted Threshold." 'Abdu'l-Baha, cited in *Bahd 'i Administration*, p. 21.

46 Baha'i International Community, *Equality in Political Participation and*

Decision-Making: A Statement to the 34th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (Vienna: Baha'i International Community, 1990).

the authority of their institutions and the greater interests of their communities.

In addition to those community gatherings, members can correspond at any time with the institutions at any level. Similarly, the international governing body communicates with National Assemblies and with individual members. This order promotes a vertical flexibility in both communication and the execution of tasks, a flexibility that is not characteristic horizontally. There is less communication or shared execution between National Assemblies or between Local Assemblies, unless there is an assignment of a collaborative task by a higher institution. Cooperative linkages and liaisons within the Baha'i order are ad hoc and task-oriented. This practice is a limited demonstration of W. Andy Knight's subsidiarity model of global governance, "in which lower levels of governance are not denied of their competencies as long as they are capable of carrying out specific tasks assigned them." For example, the National Assemblies of Alaska, Canada, Scandinavia, and the northern countries of the former Soviet Republic may be assigned a specific arctic project by the international governing body. As Knight notes, this model "would allow the more immediate levels (those most affected by a decision-making fallout) to be responsible for carrying out global governance tasks which they can effectively and efficiently handle." 47

Other components of the Baha'i community are appointed Counsellors and their assistants. They are not invested with authority but function rather as advisors and facilitators charged with the responsibility of community development and of encouraging members to participate in building and strengthening the order. This appointed institution of the Counsellors is an indispensable component of the administrative order, and the degree of success in significant undertakings is attributed to the quality of the collaboration between the elected and appointed institutions. 48

47 W. Andy Knight, "Towards a Subsidiarity Model. . .," p. 32.

48 The relationship between the various components of the Baha'i administrative order is captured in the following passage: "Authority and direction

flow from the Assemblies, whereas the power to accomplish the tasks resides primarily in the entire body of the believers. It is the principal (cont'd)

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The model of the Baha'i administrative order is recursive. The structure of the national community is a macrocosmic replica of the structure of the local community. The differences between the local and national communities are differences in scope of jurisdiction. On the local level, the community gathering is the institutionalized interface between individuals and the governing

body. On the national level, that interface is the national convention where communities are represented by their elected delegates who are charged with the responsibility of electing the members of the National Assembly. The same spiritual practices and procedures that are applied on the local level are applied here. The work of advisory members serving on local and regional levels is coordinated by Counsellors working in national and international arenas. Thus the basic structure of the community is descriptive of the local, national, and global components of the administrative order. The cells of the global structure are the national and territorial communities and the interfacing institution is the international convention, where the members of all National Assemblies elect the nine members of the supreme governing body.

The Baha'i administrative order is a model of governance presently limited in the sense that its only practical application is in governing the affairs of the Baha'i community. As an embryonic order, its activities focus on expansion and consolidation. On the local level community efforts may range from the organization of social events to village literacy campaigns. At higher levels the administrative order may be concerned with the appointment of delegations to represent the Faith in meetings with ministers of state and other high ranking officials and with the participation in world summits such as those on sustainable development (Johannesburg, 2002) and world peace (New York, 2000).

task of the Auxiliary Boards to assist in arousing and releasing this power. This is a vital activity, and if they are to be able to perform it adequately they must avoid becoming involved in the work of administration "

The Universal House of Justice, letter to the Continental Boards of Counsellors and National Spiritual Assemblies, 1 October 1969, in *Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1968-1973* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1976), p. 30.

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Shoghi Effendi, the visionary responsible for developing the Baha'i administrative order as conceived by the Faith's Founders, observed that it is "the very pattern of the New World Order destined to embrace in the fullness of time the whole of mankind." The Baha'i administrative order is organic and elastic, and it will expand as the community it serves expands.

Convergence

Recalling the distinction between world order and global governance made earlier and Rosenau's observation that world order is a meaningful concept "only as it relates to the prevention or containment of large-scale violence and war," then our demands for collective security should be met by the Lesser Peace. Why then is the Lesser Peace not sufficient as a new world order? Why

would the Baha'i administrative order as a system of governance need to evolve and expand? Why even consider the convergence of the Lesser Peace and the administrative order?

In the Baha'i view, the applicability of James Rosenau's conception of world order breaks down after the attainment of the Lesser Peace. The goal of the Lesser Peace is collective security, but the goal of the Baha'i world order is world unity-unity being more broadly defined than simple political accord. The unity of the Baha'i world order will demand an allegiance to the sustainability of a planetary state that supersedes any allegiance one would give to a sovereign nation. The cessation of war and the containment of armed aggression is not enough. The meaning of "disarmament" is conditioned by our definition of "violence"-but disarmament should be applied to all the weapons in contemporary arsenals-weapons that include poverty and economic oppression, environmental negligence, the inequitable distribution of rights to education, and the suppression of the voice of women. Containment and disarmament now escape the bounds of James Rosenau's definition of world order and require the application of "a vast number of rule systems" of social institutions for global governance.

The Lesser Peace will be a political achievement. The international governing body of the Baha'i Faith has noted, "Mankind
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at that time can be likened to a body that is unified but without life [T]he task of breathing life into this unified body ... is that of the Baha'is." 49 According to James Rosenau's definitions, our discussions of the administrative order have described a system of limited global governance. If, however, the expansion of Baha' f communities requires the Assemblies of the administrative order to take on more of the responsibilities of polities, then that system can be described as both a world order and a system of global governance. When its present function of maintaining the integrity of the Baha'i community and safeguarding it from schism is applied to the entire global community, its goal can be said to be broader than the confinement of violence. Its goal then becomes the maintenance of a world unity that now defines a new world order a maintenance that must consider the intentions and impact of the full range of governance decision-making.

Consider then, the following characteristics of the new world order described by Baha' f literature, not from the viewpoint of the containment of violence, but the maintenance of world unity. The new order will be a super-state commonwealth of nations with a world legislature to which are ceded certain responsibilities such as the authority to enact new laws and to create new institutions. The members of the legislature will "as the trustees

of the whole of mankind, ultimately control the entire resources of all the component nations " 50 There will be "an international executive adequate to enforce supreme and unchallengeable authority" 51 "backed by an international Force . . . [that] will safeguard the organic unity of the whole commonwealth." 52 Embracing both top-down and bottom-up interests, the new order will establish a world parliament with members elected by civil society and confirmed by national governments. A supreme tribunal will have the power of binding (compulsory) adjudication of a single code

49 The Universal House of Justice, *Wellspring of Guidance: Messages 1963-1968* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1976), pp. 133-34.

50 Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahd'u'lldh*, p. 203.

51 Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahd'u'lldh*, p. 40.

52 Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahd'u'lldh*, p. 203.

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of international law sanctioned by "the instant and coercive intervention of the combined forces of the federated units." 53 The maintenance of world unity, within a community composed of members cognizant that they are world citizens, is to be promoted by the adoption of a world currency, script, systems of weights and measures, and a universal auxiliary language. The world order will see the coordinated development of economic resources and markets, the elimination of economic barriers, and the recognition of "the interdependence of Capital and Labor." 54

In the Baha' { perspective, the two evolving models of the Lesser Peace and Baha' { administrative order will merge to form a future cosmopolitan (top-down and bottom-up) world order. The topdown model of the Lesser Peace will accommodate nation-states into the new world order, but national sovereignty will be limited with many powers ceded to the institution of the super-state. The model of Baha'i administration will contribute the bottom-up democratic features of republicanism, with National Assemblies evolving into agencies of sovereign states. The model is composite, too, in that it contains elements of autocratic and aristocratic systems, while being distinct from them. 55 Aspects of autocracy

53 Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahd 'u'lldh*, p. 41.

54 Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahd'u'lldh*, p. 41.

55 "Neither in theory nor in practice can the administrative order of the Faith of Bahfu'llah be said to conform to any type of democratic government, to any system of autocracy, to any purely aristocratic order, or to any of the various theocracies, whether Jewish, Christian, or Islamic, which mankind has witnessed in the past. It incorporates within its structure certain elements

which are to be found in each of the three recognized forms of secular

government, is devoid of the defects which each of them inherently possesses, and blends the salutary truths which each undoubtedly contains without vitiating in any way the integrity of the Divine verities on which it is essentially founded. The hereditary authority which the Guardian of the administrative order is called upon to exercise, and the right of the interpretation of the Holy Writ solely conferred upon him; the powers and prerogatives of the Universal House of Justice, possessing the exclusive right to legislate on matters not explicitly revealed in the Most Holy Book; the ordinance exempting its members from any responsibility to those whom they represent, and from the obligation to conform to their (cont'd)

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are present in the system as the elected representatives of an international legislature can be said to have exclusive rights to legislate on matters not specified by the authority of Baha'i scripture. Aspects of aristocracy, or "rule by the best," are manifest in the election of delegates to national conventions, who in turn, elect those who will participate in international conventions and the election of the members of the supreme governing body. Baha'u'llah also maintains kingship within the future world order. 56

As noted earlier, Baha'i literature does not offer a blueprint of the Lesser Peace. Nor does it describe in detail the future world order. The revelation of Baha'u'llah, containing laws and ordinances that are to be implemented by the new world order, places its emphasis on the administrative order that is its "structural basis." The administrative order, as it grows and matures, is seen to be the link to the future world order, the "golden age" of humankind predicated not upon collective security, but upon unity.

The Baha'i model challenges present notions of "democracy" and "individual freedoms." It calls us to broader definitions of "world order" and "global governance." It sees, in unity, the foundation of an enduring peace. Political unity and peace and the cessation of war are not the goals of an enlightened collective security. Unity, in the world order of Baha'u'llah, must be observed in all aspects of collective endeavor. Unity, as the goal of world

views, convictions or sentiments; the specific provisions requiring the free and democratic election by the mass of the faithful of the Body that constitutes the sole legislative organ in the world-wide Baha'i community these are among the features which combine to set apart the Order identified with the Revelation of Baha'u'llah from any of the existing systems of human government." Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1995), pp. 326-27.

56 "According to the fundamental laws which We have formerly revealed

in the *Kitab-i-Aqdas* and other Tablets, all affairs are committed to the care of just kings and presidents and of the Trustees of the House of Justice The system of government which the British people have adopted

in London appeareth to be good, for it is adorned with the light of both kingship and of the consultation of the people." Bahi'u'llah, Tablets of Bahd'u'lldh revealed after the Kitdb-i-Aqdas (Haifa: Baha'i World Centre, 1982), p. 93.

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order, accommodates interconnected economic, environmental, social, and political spheres. Global governance is thus the means of a unified world order, not its end.

"O ye children of men," He [Baha'u'llah] thus addresses His generation, "the fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race " The well-being of mankind He declares, "its peace and security are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established. " "So powerful is the light of unity," is His further testimony, "that it can illuminate the whole earth This goal excelleth every other goal, and this aspiration is the monarch of all aspirations. " "He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful," He, moreover, has written, "cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body.... " 57

What are the obstacles to the fulfillment of the Baha'i promise? Those who presently influence political dynamics must renounce the constraints of a Hobbesian view of brutish human nature and demonstrate a willingness to accept the nobility of mankind. Nor will the promise be fulfilled if we fail to develop a consciousness of the essential unity of mankind and to strip religion of irrational dogma and to critically examine it as a contributing force to the renewal of civilization. A tall order, yes. But perhaps the forces compelling globalization are the winds that presently fill the sails of the ark of world order. Obstacles? One would do better to ask, where are the fruits of Enlightenment thinking and materialistic theory? What other systems of global governance invite critical examination? What other promises? What other alternatives?

57 Shoghi Effendi, World Order of Bahd'u'lldh, pp. 202-03 .

Fostering the Spiritual

Education of Children

Barbara Johnson discusses the importance of spiritual and moral education in child development, Looking at similarities between Bahd 'f efforts and the thinking of current experts in the field.

W; hile the spiritual education of children has been an ntegral part of Baha'i activities from the earliest days o the Baha'i Faith, since 2000 the worldwide Baha'i community has redoubled its efforts on behalf of children

everywhere. Stimulated by a letter written by the Universal House of Justice in April of that year, Baha'is are responding to the call to undertake "urgent and sustained effort in the interests of children and the future. " In that letter, the Universal House of Justice observes:

In the current state of society, children face a cruel fate. Millions and millions in country after country are dislocated socially. Children find themselves alienated by parents and other adults whether they live in conditions of wealth or poverty. This alienation has its roots in a selfishness that is born of materialism that is at the core of the godlessness seizing the hearts of people everywhere. The social dislocation of children in our time is a sure mark of a society in decline; this condition is not, however, THE BAHAI'f WORLD 2001-2002

confined to any race, class, nation, or economic condition-it cuts across them all. 1

In response to that letter, Baha'i communities around the world are striving to address this critical need according to their circumstances.

In Cape Town, South Africa, for example, a small weekly Englishlanguage class for Congolese and Rwandan refugees has expanded to include an after-school Baha'i children's enrichment program that has attracted 25 children of refugee, 'colored,' and 'black' South African backgrounds, as well as devotional gatherings open to all, regular study circles for adults, and a small but sustainable social and economic development project. Nearby communities have requested help in initiating similar projects in their own localities. 2

With support from government and nongovernmental organizations, an Education for Peace project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, initiated by Landegg International University in Switzerland, has provided training in the principles and skills of peacemaking to 6,000 students, 10,000 parents, and 400 teachers of Bosnian, Croat, and Serb ethnic groups in three cities. The goal is to break down the cycle of violence that has afflicted the children of the Balkans in places such as Iidza, where some 70 percent of the children in the primary school have lost one or both parents to ethnic conflict.

The President of the Navajo Nation appealed for help from the Native American Baha'i Institute in the southwestern United States after learning that the Institute offered training for parents. As a nearby community had just lost a youth to suicide, the community, the school board, and the local political leadership invited the Institute to adapt and offer its spiritual parenting program, part of the US Baha'i community's core curriculum for spiritual education, to the population at large.

1 The Universal House of Justice, message to the Baha'is of the world,

Ri4van 157 BE (April 2000).

2 Information in this essay about Baha'i educational initiatives around the world has been taken from reports gathered by the Baha'i World Centre and by national Baha'i institutions and agencies.

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Residents of the mountain village of Quebrada Venado on the Ngabe-Bugle (Guaymi) reservation in Panama, appreciative of the efforts of teachers-one of whom has volunteered full-time for seven years-in their only school, say, "I cannot read or write, but my children will learn to read and write," and "With this school, our children will be freed from the darkness of ignorance. These children are our future ."

As the Baha'i community undertakes these grassroots efforts on behalf of children, it is attempting to explore a preliminary series of questions to assist it to increase the effectiveness of these efforts: What can be learned from the extensive scriptural references and history of the Baha' 1 Faith about the process of spiritual education? What can be learned from other educators? What sorts of community and institutional support reinforce these efforts? How can Baha'i communities collaborate with like-minded organizations so that all children increasingly "shine as the emblems of a better future?" 3

Regarding the importance of spiritual education, Baha'u'llah teaches: "That which is of paramount importance for the children, that which must precede all else, is to teach them the oneness of God and the laws of God." 4 'Abdu'l-Baha observes that children "are even as young plants, and teaching them the prayers is as letting the rain pour down upon them, that they may wax tender and fresh, and the soft breezes of the love of God may blow over them, making them to tremble with joy." 5 He further states that spiritual education adorns the human spirit with attributes of the divine, 6 and it includes instructing children in all the beneficial arts and sciences as well as "teaching them altruism" and "service

3 The Universal House of Justice, message to the Baha'fs of the world, Ric;lvan 157 BE.

4 Baha'u'llah, cited in "Baha'i Education," The Compilation of Compilations,

vol. 1 (Ingleside: Baha'i Publications Australia, 1991), no. 565, p. 248.

5 'Abdu'l-Baha, cited in "Baha'i Education," no. 603, p. 268.

6 'Abdu'l-Baha, The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-

Bahd during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912, rev. ed. (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1995) , p. 350.

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to the oneness of the world of humanity." 7 From a Baha'i perspective,

then, spiritual education may be seen as the application of the Word of God to human experience. Education becomes "spiritual" when it is undertaken in light of a deep conviction that the universe came into being through the creative power of an "unknowable Essence" called God, that educating one's inner reality prepares an individual for a life beyond this material existence, that the world's great religions have provided the impetus for human development throughout the ages, and that all of the world's diversified peoples make up "a single human race" with the earth as its "common homeland."8

Historical Perspective

Baha'u'llah's writings have guided the spiritual education of children from the earliest days of the Faith, inspiring the creation of local Baha'i classes since the mid-nineteenth century. Baha'u'llah Himself provided for the education of His extended family while still in Tehran and throughout His life in prison and exile, according to His extremely limited means. In Acre, the children of His large extended family "looked upon Baha'u'llah as another loving Father; to Him we carried all our little difficulties and troubles. He took an interest in everything which concerned us."9

'Abdu'l-Baha shared His Father's interest in the education of children. He arranged for their schooling in Haifa and Acre, in the village to which they were removed for their safety during World War I, and in Egypt, England, and Lebanon as they grew older. He arranged special meetings with children in each of the major cities He visited during His extended travels in the West. And He taught them Himself:

7 'Abdu'l-Baha, cited in *Lights of Guidance*, ed. Helen Hornby (New Delhi: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1988), p. 212.

8 The Universal House of Justice, letter to the world's religious leaders, April 2002.

9 Tuba Khan um, quoted in *Lady Blomfield, The Chosen Highway* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1967), p. 98 .

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Despite the enormous press of work, the Master ['Abdu'l-Baha] found time once in every week to hold a class for small Baha'f children. Here they would recite the short Tablets they had learned by heart and bring samples of their handwriting to show Him. He loved them. He showed great concern, wishing them to learn the principles of Baha'i conduct. Although He was firm, He strictly forbade anyone to strike a child or use the customary rod and punish them. He told their parents and teachers to emphasize the importance of good conduct and said that in this way, if the child failed in some particular, the very reminding

the child that he had failed would impress that child as a severe punishment. The child would thus learn to avoid even the slightest failure in good conduct and grow up and recognize good conduct as the true mark of a Baha'i. 10

After the passing of Baha'u'llah, 'Abdu'l-Baha's numerous letters to Baha'fs in both the East and the West encouraged them to foster the spiritual education of children. While the Baha'fs in the West focused on spiritual education classes, Baha' !s in the East established schools emphasizing literacy and academic studies as well as spiritual education. In many cases they were the only schools available to children in those communities. In Ashkhabad, Russia, Baha'!s had founded schools for both girls and boys by 1907. These were the first modern schools to be established in that region and earned a reputation for excellence. In the early years of the twentieth century, Baha' { schools were also founded in some 40 cities and villages throughout Iran, including the Tarbiat Schools for boys and girls in the capital city.

Although the Iranian government suspended these schools in 1934, the Baha'f community has continued to provide systematic spiritual education classes for children, combined with tutoring as needed in academic subjects and periodic visits to learn the accomplishments and needs of each child. This system of spiritual education and training became so effective that at the time of the 1979 revolution in Iran, the Baha' is had achieved full literacy in their community and demonstrated a resiliency and depth of faith

10 Marzieh Gail, *Summon up Remembrance* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1987), p. 138.

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that enabled them to endure persecution for their Faith. Their steadfastness and courage included all social classes, men, women, youth, and children. 11

Studying the Word of God

The Baha'i community in Iran achieved so outstanding a result that when the Universal House of Justice called on Bahi'is around the world to eliminate illiteracy from the Baha'i community as a whole, they were encouraged to follow the example set by their fellow believers in the cradle of their Faith. The Baha'i community's success stems from its understanding of literacy, which it sees as more than "the set of knowledge, qualities, skills, attitudes, and capacities that enable individuals to preserve self-esteem by assuming both control over their own growth, and by becoming active participants in a process of social change that will lead to a more peaceful, just, and harmonious society," 12 as the term has been defined by a United Nations committee. For Bahi'is, literacy provides the human soul with direct access to the transformative

influence of the Word of God.

11 A letter written from Iran in 1981 provides numerous examples of the courage of these children, including the following:

Akram, the 11-year-old daughter of 'Alf Mutahhari, one of the seven martyrs of Yazd, is another example of such heroism. After her father and the six others were martyred, she went to school and the teacher asked the students in her class to write an essay about their experiences during the summer vacation. Akram wrote a sweet and factual essay about what had happened to her family during the summer-how the Revolutionary guards and others came to their house and took her beloved father away, how they kept him in prison for some time, how she met him in prison, and finally about his martyrdom.

Although her essay was "so moving that it brought tears to the eyes of the teacher and the children in her class," Akram was threatened with dismissal for writing about her experience. Eventually she was permitted to stay in school after complying with the requirement to write an essay on another topic.

From "Baha'i Children: Courageous, Steadfast," US Baha'i News (November 1981), p. 3.

12 Statement by the International Committee on Literacy, United Nations

International Literacy Year, 1990.

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Psychiatrist and writer Robert Coles, who has spent the last 30 years listening to children and recording his observations of their thoughts about life's journey, has written: "The longer I've known children, the more readily I've noticed the abiding interest they have in reflecting about human nature, about the reasons people behave as they do, about the mysteries of the universe as evinced in the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars." 13 It is these mysteries that the Word of God addresses.

The scriptures of the world's great religions extol the Word of God "as the medium of celestial power and the wellspring of all spiritual, social, and material progress." 14 It unlocks "the doors of the hearts of men," 15 moves human souls, and harmonizes "the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas, and convictions of the children of men." 16 Baha'u'llah instructs parents, institutions, and every member of the Baha'i community to assure that each child learns to read and write. 17

For this reason, spiritual education programs must also foster the development of literacy in areas where other schooling is not available. In these simple neighborhood schools-open to both Baha'i children and children of other Faiths-basic reading and writing is taught along with moral lessons based on study of brief selections from Baha'i and other scriptures that young learners learn to apply to their own lives.

Many children around the world begin their Baha'i studies with a Baha'i kindergarten program developed by the Ruhi Institute in Colombia. In Nepal, the Sardar community has benefited from this approach. Although Sardar children had access to a school, they had never enrolled simply because "it was not done," but

13 Robert Coles, *The Spiritual Life of Children* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990), p. 332.

14 *The Universal House of Justice, A Wider Horizon: Selected Messages of the Universal House of Justice* (Riviera Beach: Palabra Publications, 1992), p. 142.

15 Baha'u'llih, *Tablets of Bahd'u'ldh revealed after the Kitdb-i-Aqdas* (Wilmette:

Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1997), p. 173.

16 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahd* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1997), p. 291.

17 Baha'u'llah, *Tablets*, pp. 90, 128.

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after seeing the effects of Baha' { kindergarten classes on their children, the Sardars enrolled them in the public school as well. The most widespread use of tutorial schools occurs in localities where there are no other schools at all, including communities in Cambodia, China, Colombia, India, Panama, and many other areas throughout the world. In the village of Tafatafa, on the island of Upolu, Western Samoa, the small Baha'f children's classes, attended by both Baha'!s and other village children, have attracted the attention of the mayor, who has requested that they expand to include the study of mathematics and English as well. In Guyana, more than 10,000 young people, ages 10-16, have participated in a literacy program that "enables youth to read the text, feel the power of the words, understand them, and put them into action." Literacy programs for adults may also include components for children, as in Uganda. And moral education programs for teachers may include literacy components, as has occurred in Ghana.

When Baha'f spiritual education classes take place within staterun schools or other academic settings, they serve children of many different faiths. These schools make use of such curriculum materials as *The Virtues Guide* or *Thoughts: Education far Peace and One World* because these materials utilize brief quotations from many of the world's scriptures along with stories and other activities. Communities in Bermuda, Canada, the Canary Islands, Honduras, India, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russia, Sabah, the Solomon Islands, Taiwan, and the United States have all used these materials. Other school-based spiritual education programs create materials tailored to their circumstances. In Australia, some 3,400 children participate in Baha'

{ classes in state schools each year. Individual Baha' { schools in Canada, India, Macau, Panama, Tanzania, Thailand, and Zambia have designed curriculum materials that foster the spiritual development and service capabilities of their students. In areas where a public school system can be counted on for basic literacy, Baha'f approaches to moral and spiritual education may utilize some of these same materials to attract the children's hearts to the beauty of the Word of God. Such communities also make extensive use of the systematic, sequential spiritual education materials developed originally by Hand of the Cause of God 'AH-Akbar Furutan for Baha'i schools in Iran, or by the National Spiritual

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Assemblies of Australia, the United Kingdom, or the United States. In Australia, Internet-based Baha'i classes for children are posted on a monthly basis.

A Teacher's Influence

During this time of transition to a global society, when more than half of the world's population is under the age of 25 and children bear the brunt of social problems that they did not create, they need more than access to the Word of God. They need caring adults to intervene in their behalf. Children are not meant to grow up alone, yet increasingly "the extended family of traditional societies is giving way to nuclear families, which in turn are dissolving into single-parent families and the no-parent families of many street children. " 18

Studies of children's resilience in such highly challenging circumstances indicate that many factors can increase their chances for success. These factors range from qualities of the individuals themselves, to the structure of their family lives, to their interpersonal skill development, to the level of care that other individuals provide. Summarizing studies of resilient children, Julius Segal calls our attention "to the presence in their lives of a charismatic adult-a person with whom they can identify and from whom they gather strength. And in a surprising number of cases, that person turns out to be a teacher." 19

The significance of caring adults in the lives of children can be demonstrated by the disastrous effects of their absence. Following World War II, Reuven Feuerstein accepted the new state of Israel's challenge to educate children freed from Nazi concentration camps. For all practical purposes these children had lacked father and mother, extended family, and teacher. They were not culturally different; they had been deprived of the process of enculturation.

18 Richard R. Schubert and Rick R. Little, "Our Children Are the Community of the Future," in *The Community of the Future*, ed. Francis Hesselbein, et al, Drucker Foundation Future Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), p. 242.

19 Julius Segal, "Teachers Have Enormous Power in Affecting a Child's Self-Esteem," *The Brown University Child Behavior and Development Newsletter*, no. 4 (1988), p. 2.
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They had endured unspeakable cruelties and had neither family nor community to welcome them when they were released from the horrors of the camps. What could education mean for them? For these children, and later for many other refugees, Feuerstein established special treatment groups in Youth Villages "where incoming Jewish children from various parts of the world could, under intense educational and ideological pressure, become Israeli in a very short period of time." 20 The unconditional acceptance, focused discipline, hard work, intense interactions, and eventual mainstreaming in the Youth Villages produced remarkable results, as these children were successfully integrated into Israeli society after an average of two years.

Similar interventions transfer to a wide variety of settings. When caring adults assist children to find meaning and significance in the events of their lives, the children are later able to discover meaning, value, and purpose in their own experiences. As Deborah Meier, founder and principal of excellent small schools in Harlem, has noted, adults have "important things to teach children, not just a mission to get out of their way." 21 Feuerstein observes that for children at risk "a vicious cycle of rejection, disturbed behavior and further rejection continues unabated unless adults, and environments constructed by adults, can intervene to break this compulsive repetition." 22

Far from remaining neutral to the topic at hand, Feuerstein encourages teachers to make every effort to focus the students' attention and engage their volition by building bonds of affection, providing clear structure, and clearly articulating the purpose of educational activities. He observes that "children have a need to discover meaning in stimuli and are often left unsatisfied Meaning ... is the needle that carries the thread through the cloth." 23 In the words of educational theorist Shulamit Reinharz, "meaning

20 Howard Sharron, *Changing Children's Minds* (London: Souvenir Press, 1987), p. 267.

21 Deborah Meier, *The Power of Their Ideas* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), p. 21.

22 Reuven Feuerstein, quoted in Sharron, p. 269.

23 Reuven Feuerstein, quoted in Sharron, pp. 41-42.

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is created in between action and reflection." 24 And according to cognitive psychologist Jerome Bruner, "It is when the child fails

to grasp the structure of events that he adopts an egocentric framework. " 25

This perspective gains further support from educational theorists such as LS. Vygotsky, a cognitive scientist who demonstrates that children are able to address more complex issues "under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" than when left to their own devices. 26 Learning, then, becomes an interactive process. Inspired by Vygotsky's work, Ann Brown and Roberta Ferrara draw the following conclusions from their own observations of interactions between children and teachers:

Via the intervention of a supportive, knowledgeable other, the child is led to the limits of her own understanding. The tutor did not, however, tell the child what to do; she entered into an interaction where the child and the tutor were mutually responsible for getting the task done. As the child adopts more of the essential skills initially undertaken by the adult, the adult relinquished control. Transference of power is gradually and mutually agreed upon. 27

'Abdu'l-Baha writes, "Know ye the value of these children, for they are all my children," 28 thereby reminding teachers of the great importance of children and of the attitude of teachers toward them. The attitudes and skills of effective teachers in the spiritual education process cannot simply be learned once and for all. They become part of teachers' ongoing process of spiritual development. The

24 Shulamit Reinharz, *On Becoming a Social Scientist* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1984), p. 355.

25 Jerome Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 68.

26 LS. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 85-86.

27 Ann Brown and Roberta Ferrara, "Diagnosing Zones of Proximal Development" in *Culture, Communication, and Cognition*, ed. J. Wertsch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 300-01.

28 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 54.

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Baha'i writings speak clearly to the importance of one's personal transformation. Baha'u'llah writes: "Whoso ariseth among you to teach the Cause of his Lord, let him, before all else, teach his own self, that his speech may attract the hearts of them that hear him." 29 Discussing the responsibilities of a teacher, 'Abdu'l-Baha says: "If one should, in the right way, teach and train the children, he will be performing a service than which none is greater at the sacred Threshold You must, however, struggle unceasingly to perfect yourself and win ever higher achievements." 30 And further:

"The teacher should not see in himself any superiority; he should speak with the utmost kindness, lowliness, and humility, for such speech exerteth influence and educateth the souls." 31

The Baha'i writings also assist teachers to recognize the power of love in the spiritual education process. 'Abdu'l-Baha urged one individual to become "a teacher of love, in a school of unity" 32 and in another letter explained that "love is the cause of unfoldment to a searching mind." 33 When teachers believe that love is "the most wonderful, the greatest of all living powers," 34 they may strive to cultivate its growth in their own hearts. And through the power of their example, they may encourage children and youth to "bring those who have been excluded into the circle of intimate friends." 35 The genuine efforts of a teacher to create a loving environment do not go unrewarded. Students describe a teacher as 'caring' when the teacher makes special efforts to make class interesting, talks with students and listens attentively to their responses, takes an interest in the lives of students outside the classroom, provides

29 Bahi'u'llih, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahd'u'lldh* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1994), p. 277.

30 'Abdu'l-Bahi, cited in "Baha'i Education," no. 608, p. 272.

31 'Abdu'l-Bahi, *Selections*, p. 30.

32 'Abdu'l-Bahi, cited in "Baha'i Education," no. 612, p. 273.

33 'Abdu'l-Bahi, *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahd* (Chicago: Baha'i Publishing Society, 1916), vol. 3, p. 526.

34 'Abdu'l-Bahi, *Paris Talks: Addresses given by 'Abdu'l-Bahd in Paris in 1911-1912* (London: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1995), p. 179.

35 'Abdu'l-Bahi, cited in "Extracts Relating to the Subject of Youth," *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 2, no. 2234, p. 415.

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help as needed, and sets a tone of encouragement in the classroom. 36 Teachers show that they care through such simple means as greeting the students as they arrive, saying farewell when they depart; learning to correctly say, spell, and use the students' names; learning and caring about the students' families and friends; and teaching the students what they came to learn. A caring teacher demonstrates courtesy, respect, and reason in making requests and does not tolerate mistreatment of others or of the learning environment. Whatever meets and then exceeds the requirements of teaching conveys love to the learners.

While a loving environment enhances learning in any educational setting, it is crucial for the success of programs for spiritual education. Participation in spiritual education programs is most often entirely voluntary, a choice made by the students themselves or their families.

They are attracted through invitation, love, engaging and maintaining their interest, and by assisting them to discover a venue for offering their contributions to the world around them. 'Abdu'l-Baha explains that "man reacheth perfection through good deeds, voluntarily performed, not through good deeds the doing of which was forced upon him." 37 One purpose of the spiritual education process is to engage the volition of the students, assist them to develop a plan for their own spiritual development, and teach them strategies to become successful in a lifelong process of learning.

Baha'u'llah explains that when the heart of a teacher is illumined with the light of the love of God, this love becomes "the key" that unlocks "the hearts of men." 38 Similarly, He explains that the Word of God, the divine scriptures, functions as "the master key" for unlocking the human heart. 39 As teachers strive to develop in themselves the love of God, share that love with children, engage

36 See Kathryn Wentzel, "Student Motivation in Middle School: The Role of Perceived Pedagogical Caring," *Journal of Educational Psychology*, vol. 89, no. 3, (1997), pp. 411-19; also Dick Corbett and Bruce Wilson, "What Urban Students Say about Good Teaching," *Educational Leadership* (September 2002), pp. 18-22.

37 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections*, p. 115.

38 Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings*, p. 205.

39 Baha'u'llah, *Tablets*, p. 173.

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them in dialogue about their own experiences, and assist them to understand their experiences in light of the Word of God, teachers become a powerful and positive influence in the lives of the children they serve.

Spiritual education is not a simple process. 'Abdu'l-Baha states that it is "very difficult to undertake this service, even harder to succeed in it." 40 Like those engaged in other avenues of service within the Baha'i Faith, teachers would be well served to remember: "Look ye not upon the seed, look ye upon the tree." 41

Learning in Groups

The writings of Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha variously describe the human family as "waves of one sea" and "stars of one heaven"; "drops of one ocean"; "flowers of one garden" and "rays of one sun"; and "trees of one orchard." 42 'Abdu'l-Baha further explains that in an orchard of fruit trees, it is the diversity and variety that constitutes its charm; each flower, each tree, each fruit, beside being beautiful in itself, brings out by contrast the qualities of the others, and shows to advantage the special loveliness of each and all. 43

Consciousness of the oneness and wholeness of the entire human

race and recognition of the value of diversity carry profound implications for the spiritual and practical education of children.

The Universal House of Justice has written:

Acceptance of the oneness of mankind is the first fundamental prerequisite for reorganization and administration of the world as one country, the home of humankind. Universal acceptance of this spiritual principle is essential to any successful attempt to establish world peace. It should therefore be universally proclaimed, taught in schools, and constantly asserted in every

40 'Abdu'l-Baha, Selections, p. 133.

41 'Abdu'l-Baha, Selections, p. 82.

42 See, for example, 'Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks, p. 181; Bah a' u'llah, Tablets

of Bahd'u'LLdh, p. 27; 'Abdu'l-Baha, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, pp. 24 and 116; and 'Abdu'l-Baha, Selections, p. 88.

43 'Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks, p. 52.

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nation as preparation for the organic change in the structure of society which it implies. 44

As diversity in learning groups around the world continually increases as a result of the movement of peoples in this age of global crisis and opportunity, teachers can take advantage of these diverse backgrounds, experiences, talents, and capacities to enhance the learning of the group as a whole. The vital interplay between individual diversity and group unity is affirmed by peace educator Elise Boulding, who writes that "each of us comes into the world as a unique individual with unique perceptions, needs, and interests" 45 and by critical theorist Maxine Greene, who observes in *The Dialectic of Freedom* that "[h]uman consciousness ... is always situated; and the situated person, inevitably engaged with others, reaches out and grasps the phenomena surrounding him/her from a particular vantage point and against a particular background consciousness." 46 The particularity of our perceptions is not at all a handicap, for, as the Baha'i writings state, "Man is not intended to see through the eyes of another, hear through another's ears nor comprehend with another's brain. Each human creature has individual endowment, power, and responsibility in the creative plan of God." 47 Students with diverse talents and varied backgrounds have much to offer each other. Sociologist Robert Bellah observes, "We find ourselves not independently of other people and institutions but through them. We never get to the bottom of ourselves on our own. We discover who we are face to face and side by side with others in work, love, and learning. " 48 As children learn to ask each other "What are you going through? What is your experience? What makes sense to you?" they learn about the reality that connects

44 The Universal House of Justice, Messages 1963- 1986 (Wilmette: Baha'i

Publishing Trust, 1996), p. 690.

45 Elise Boulding, *Building a Global Civic Culture* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1988), p. 140.

46 Maxine Greene, *The Dialectic of Freedom* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1988), p. 20 .

47 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 293.

48 Robert Bellah, et. al., *Habits of the Heart* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), p. 84.

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all human beings. In Paulo Friere's words, "dialogue seals the relationship." 49 And in this context, too, the Baha'i writings state: "The injury of one shall be considered the injury of all; the comfort of each, the comfort of all; the honor of one, the honor of all." 50 'Abdu'l-Baha describes the importance of dialogue among students in the following passage. He writes:

Most ideas must be taught them through speech, not by book learning. One child must question the other concerning these things, and the other child must give the answer. In this way, they will make great progress Even so in Godlike affairs. Oral questions must be asked and the answers must be given orally. They must discuss with each other in this manner. 5 1 The dynamism inherent in any attempt to learn from varied points of view requires the development of a hearing ear that recognizes differences and honors diversity, while always returning to the whole. The unity of the group is critical, within which the friendships of students become a powerful forum for spiritual education. A well-established body of literature affirms the power of group learning for increased academic progress, cooperative behavior, self-esteem, friendships among learners from diverse social groups, and moral development. 52

Teachers and parents observing the steadfastness, dedication, and perseverance that children display in nurturing friendships cannot doubt the power of these friendships for the spiritual and moral development of children. Negotiations over games, expectations, and who does what are sincerely conducted,

49 Paulo Friere in Ira Shor and Paulo Freire, *A Pedagogy for Liberation* (South Hadley: Bergin and Garvey, 1987), p. 99.

50 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 168.

51 'Abdu'l-Baha, cited in "Baha'i Education," no. 696, p. 310.

52 Many authors have discussed strategies for effective use of cooperative learning groups, including David and Roger Johnson, "Motivational Processes in Cooperative, Competitive, and Individualistic Learning Situations" in *Research on Motivation in Education*, ed. Carole and Russell

Ames (Orlando: Academic Press, 1985); Jeanne Gibbs, Tribes (Santa Rosa, California: Center Source Publications, 1987); Robert Slavin, Cooperative Learning (New York: Longman, 1983); Carl Rogers, Freedom to Learn (Columbus: Merrill Publishing Co., 1983).

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emotionally intense, and sustained over time. According to William Damon in *The Moral Child*, these friendships are "highly effective in large part because children engage so eagerly in them and because the emotional stakes are so high. Children care about their friendships and take seriously the norms and standards expected in the relationship." 53 Likewise, from his study of cooperative learning, Robert Slavin concludes:

Succeeding in a group activity is one of the most exhilarating experiences in life. Working with others to attain an important goal is so rewarding because not only do we experience success ourselves, but we help others to do so. As a result, groupmates respect and value one another. 54

The spiritual education process draws extensively on the positive power of learning groups, for 'Abdu'l-Baha expresses the hope that children will be "tended by one who traineth them to love." 55 Perhaps the most frequently used pattern for Baha'i classes is that of an individual adult or youth working with a small group of children on a regular basis to study together the Word of God, share moral stories or stories from the history of the Faith, and explore together how to apply these teachings in their own lives. In addition to these simple structural arrangements, the curricula utilized by many of these classes provide explicit practice in the skills of unity building and group consultation.

Some programs report more specialized training for a global vision, consultation, and conflict resolution. These include Landegg University's Education for Peace project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, junior youth programs of the Ruhi Institute in Colombia, the Santitham School in Thailand, the Maxwell International Baha'i School in Canada, and for older students, the Multi-Racial Unity Living Experience in residence halls at Michigan State University in the United States. The City Montessori School in Lucknow, India, the world's largest school with some 25,000 students, promotes the vision of globalism so that, upon graduation, students

53 William Damon, *The Moral Child* (New York: The Free Press, Macmillan, 1988), p. 77.

54 Robert Slavin, *Cooperative Learning*, p. 5.

55 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections*, p. 134.

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will be equipped and empowered to take up positions where they can change the world. 56

Teacher Support for Learning Groups

'Abdu'l-Baha explains that "the first condition" for effective consultation is "absolute love and harmony." 57 And love and harmony in a learning group require an environment of fairness, decorum, courtesy, and mutual respect. Perhaps for these reasons, the Baha'i writings say that "the children's school must be a place of utmost discipline and order." 58

One effective strategy for establishing order and discipline, fairness, courtesy, and respect is to provide the students with the Baha'f writings that define these standards, such as the following: "Schools must first train the children in the principles of religion, so that the Promise and the Threat recorded in the Books of God may prevent them from the things forbidden," 59 and "The child must not be oppressed or censured because it is undeveloped; it must be patiently trained." 60

In light of the natural responsiveness of the human heart to the Word of God and the authentic experiences of learners within the group, the group itself can become highly effective in outlining these standards and helping to maintain them. 61 When the teacher

56 One Country, the quarterly newsletter of the Baha'i International Community, features many stories about Baha'i educational projects. For more on Landegg's Education for Peace Project, for example, see One Country, vol. 13, no. 2 (July-October 2001); for more on the Montessori School in Lucknow, see One Country, vol. 13, no. 3 (October-December 2001) and vol. 14, no. 1 (April-June 2002); for more on the Santitham School, see One Country, vol. 10, no. 1 (April-June 1998) . These and other stories are also available on the One Country Web site, at <www.onecountry.org>.

57 'Abdu'l-Baha, Selections, p. 87.

58 'Abdu' l-Baha, Selections, p. 137.

59 Baha'u'llah, Tablets, p. 68.

60 'Abdu'l-Baha, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 181.

61 See such authors as Deborah Meier, *The Power of Their Ideas* (Boston:

Beacon Press, 1996), Thomas Likona, *Education for Character* (New York: Bantam Books, 1991), Alfred Alschuler, *School Discipline* (cont'd)

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provides access to sacred scriptures on this topic, poses questions honestly, listens with attention and care, and contributes her own views to the conversation, a group of children or junior youth can be counted on to describe the sort of environment necessary for learning and to evolve mutually agreed-upon standards and strategies for discipline. At the same time, the teacher must accept responsibility for initiating the discussion and providing the conceptual framework to assure its success, and must accept the

trust placed in her by the students to enforce these standards when necessary. Far from being arbitrary or imposing her will, in those instances the teacher is actually serving the group, because without standards, the group will cease to exist. It is a role distinction, not a valuation of character. Where consultation does not lead to an outcome satisfactory to all, the teacher has the responsibility of upholding the mutually agreed-upon standards with appropriate reward and punishment. The Baha'i writings provide the basis for such action, stating:

Whensoever a mother seeth that her child hath done well, let her praise and applaud him and cheer his heart; and if the slightest undesirable trait should manifest itself, let her counsel the child and punish him, and use means based on reason, even a slight verbal chastisement should this be necessary. It is not, however, permissible to strike a child, or vilify him, for the child's character will be totally perverted if he be subjected to blows or verbal abuse. 62

If disciplinary questions are not resolved through consultation and firm but gentle direction, the teacher may consider involving the parents or sponsoring institution, exploring the broader community or family context for the misbehavior, and seeking the advice of other collaborators, including professionals in the field. Baha'is regard spiritual learning as too important to allow the disruptive forces of a society in transition to rob this generation of children of its benefits. In its letter to the Baha'is of the world

(New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980), and William Glasser, *Choice Theory* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1998) for more information about these strategies.

62 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections*, pp. 124-25 .

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at Riqvan (April) 2000, the Universal House of Justice calls the entire community to its responsibilities on behalf of the world's children:

Children are the most precious treasure a community can possess, for in them are the promise and guarantee of the future. They bear the seeds of the character of future society which is largely shaped by what the adults constituting the community do or fail to do with respect to children. They are a trust no community can neglect with impunity. An all-embracing love of children, the manner of treating them, the quality of the attention shown them, the spirit of adult behavior toward them-these are all among the vital aspects of the requisite attitude. Love demands discipline, the courage to accustom children to hardship, not to indulge their whims or leave them entirely to their own devices. An atmosphere needs to be maintained in which children feel that they belong to the community and share in its purpose.

They must lovingly but insistently be guided to live up to Baha'i standards, to study and teach the Cause in ways that are suited to their circumstances. 63

When Baha'is are able to establish such a loving and disciplined environment for children in their homes, spiritual education classes, and Baha'i community life, these children will surely learn habits that will increase their ability to contribute their talents to society as a whole.

Spiritual Learning through Arts, Sciences, and Crafts

The effort to acquire human perfections is linked in the Baha'i writings not only to loving support and encouragement, a disciplined environment, and direct study of the Word of God, but also to engagement in the arts and sciences, hard work, the capacity to overcome hardships, and the development of the capacity to serve others. 'Abdu'l-Baha writes:

Give them [the children] the advantage of every useful kind of knowledge. Let them share in every new and rare and wondrous craft and art. Bring them up to work and strive, and accustom

63 The Universal House of Justice, message to the Baha'fs of the world, Ri4van 157 BE.

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them to hardship. Teach them to dedicate their lives to matters of great import, and inspire them to undertake studies that will benefit mankind. 64

The Baha'i writings encourage students to learn "beneficial arts and skills, various languages, speech, and contemporary technology." 65 These writings suggest the full range of teaching and learning strategies, including direct study of the sacred writings, independent investigation of the truth, peer questioning, and consultation, as well as learning through such means as memorization, recitation, meditation, reflection, storytelling, music, drama, creativity and the arts, science, technology, nature, travel, and play. 66 Shoghi Effendi affirms that "every child, without exception," must learn "according to his own tastes and inclinations and the degree of his capacity and powers." 67

In studies of optimal experiences, students report that they are happiest when their activities are simultaneously like work and like play and are experienced both as very challenging and as doable. 68 As cognitive psychologists Mihaly and Isabella Csikszentmihalyi have noted, "When a person's skill is just right to cope with the demands of a situation-and when compared to the entirety of everyday life the demands are above average-the quality of experience improves noticeably." 69 In direct contrast to the self-preoccupation that "prevents people from recognizing opportunities and using skills," 70 Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and

his collaborators write, this condition of peak performance, deep enjoyment, and harmony of self with environment is attained

64 'Abdu'l-Baha, Selections, p. 129.

65 Shoghi Effendi, cited in "Baha'i Education," no. 656, p. 296.

66 The National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'ls of the United States,

Foundations for a Spiritual Education (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1995), pp. 152-67.

67 Shoghi Effendi, cited in "Baha'i Education," no. 656, p. 296.

68 Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Barbara Schneider, *Becoming Adult* (New

York: Basic Books, 2000), pp. 75-77 .

69 Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Isabella Csikszentmihalyi, *Optimal Experience:*

Psychological Studies of Flow in Consciousness (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 32.

70Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi, p. 371.

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"simply by the gradual focusing of attention on the opportunities for action in one's environment." 71 This view is also expressed by 'Abdu'l-Baha, who observes, "So long as the thoughts of an individual are scattered he will achieve no results, but if his thinking be concentrated on a single point wonderful will be the fruits thereof "72 Skill development in the arts, sciences, technology, or a sport requires students to focus intensely on the activity itself, not on themselves or on the rules. Vigorous training and real-life, factual feedback assist them to achieve their goals. 'Abdu'l-Baha explains that the training process occurs gradually, through the mastery of increasingly difficult tasks over a long period of time: "For by exercise the spirit grows stronger, more capable of withstanding, just as the muscle of the outer body increases its fiber through continual action. "73

Baha'i-sponsored performing arts workshops provide one widely utilized venue for junior youth and youth to undertake the serious work of perfecting their art in service to the community at large. All over the world, from Los Angeles to the Andes, from Australia to India, these workshops combine intensive study of the sacred writings with long hours of practice to prepare public performances that showcase the application of spiritual principles to social issues. In the United States, for example, where racial issues challenge every aspect of community life, youth workshops utilize drama, music, and dance to illustrate the harmful effects of racism and the positive power of individual action for race unity. Baha' { schools and institutes also cultivate the arts in their programs, as the Universal House of Justice has called for increased use of "the graphic and performing arts and literature," observing that "at the level of folk art, this possibility can be pursued in every part

of the world, whether it be in villages, towns or cities." 74

A few examples serve to illustrate diverse applications of the arts to the spiritual education process. In 1994, *The Happy Hippo Show* premiered as a live weekly television program in Kazan, Russia.

71 Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi, p. 382.

72 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections*, p. 110.

73 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Star of the West*, vol. 4, no. 6, pp. 104-05.

74 *The Universal House of Justice, message to the Baha'fs of the world, Ri~van 153 BE.*

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It featured dramatic presentations on contemporary moral issues, followed by audience consultation that was seeded by trained hosts and hostesses. In the years since, the format of the program has been adapted to a wide variety of programs and situations, notably in southeastern Europe, where it has been used to help train educators and media representatives seeking to overcome ethnic conflict. To date, more than 1,000 people in 40 countries have participated in training sessions to assure sustainability of this creative approach to moral education. 75 In Ontario, Canada, the Nancy Campbell Collegiate Institute, a Baha'i-inspired school, believes that integrating character education with the performing arts and academic studies provides students with the best kind of preparation for life—an approach borne out by the school's being awarded first place ranking for academic excellence in Ontario in 2001. In the United States, teachers trained in the Baha'i community's core curriculum have championed the integration of arts and sciences into the spiritual education process with increasing success since 1992. And in New York City, the highly diverse Children's Theater Company has been so well received for promoting racial unity and virtues through the arts that its members have performed for the United Nations and on television on *Sesame Street* and *The Oprah Winfrey Show*.

The Teacher as Coach

It is obvious that just as children's interests and talents vary, it is also the case, as stated in the Baha'i writings, that "children of the same age, the same country, the same race, indeed of the same family, and trained by the same individual, still are different as to the degree of their comprehension and intelligence." 76 For this reason, "the teacher must . . . arrange the children in groups, and instruct each group according to its capacity." 77

75 For more on this project, see *The Bahd'i World 1996-97*, pp. 229-33; *The Bahd'i World 1998-99*, pp. 145-50; and *One Country*, vol. 10, no. 3 (October-December 1998).

76 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections*, p. 131.

77 'Abdu'l-Baha, cited in "Baha'i Education," no. 627, p. 280.

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Because of this natural variation in capacity, capability, and interests, educators have found that students achieve a higher level of mastery through "group instruction supplemented by frequent feedback and individualized help." 78 When the teacher structures varied activities for the full range of interests and abilities of the students, "students can pursue interests in depth and with a minimum of time limitations Learners can function as teachers, researchers, apprentices, resident experts, or as learning managers." 79 In this educational model, the teacher circulates among the students, providing direct instruction, assistance, and encouragement as needed.

As a practical example of this model, a teacher may assist learners to prepare a community-wide devotional program by organizing a variety of activities so that some children read aloud to each other as they select inspirational quotations for the program; a few students work together to prepare answers to the questions they anticipate from their guests; several others create decorations and arrange the environment; still others prepare written invitations to the program and create a plan for building participation from the community at large; and the rest of the class works directly with the teacher to practice telling the stories they plan to share. Later, all the students might practice singing together and then rehearse the entire program from beginning to end.

Baha' is certainly recognize that no single pedagogical model assures success. A wide variety of approaches to classroom organization, methods of instruction, and modes of discipline can all be successful in a variety of circumstances. Whether teaching individuals about the Baha'i Faith or fostering the spiritual education of children, the Baha'i writings explain that "it is the sign of an able teacher to know how to best adapt his methods to various types of people." 80

78 Benjamin Bloom, *Alf Our Children Learning* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981), p. 140.

79 Barbara Clark, *Optimizing Learning* (Columbus: Merrill, 1986), p. 48.

80 Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, cited in "Guidelines for Teaching" in *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 2, no. 1941, p. 308.

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Service: The Fruit of Spiritual Education

Baha'u'llah writes: "Man is like unto a tree The fruits of the human tree are exquisite, highly desired and dearly cherished. Among them are upright character, virtuous deeds and a goodly utterance." 81 In one passage, He offers the following admonishment:

Strain every nerve to acquire both inner and outer perfections, for the fruit of the human tree hath ever been and will ever be perfections both within and without. It is not desirable that a man be left without knowledge or skills, for he is then but a barren tree. Then, so much as capacity and capability allow, ye needs must deck the tree of being with fruits such as knowledge, wisdom, spiritual perception, and eloquent speech. 82

Baha'is believe that just as the tree's fulfillment lies in its production of fruit, so the individual's fulfillment lies in contributing to society. The Baha'i writings state that there is "no greater bliss, no more complete delight" than for the individual to see that he has "become the cause of peace and well-being, of happiness and advantage to his fellow men." 83

The vision and capabilities to make such contributions can be learned from the earliest age, whether at home, at school, or in the community. Since cooperative behavior is seeded within the human spirit, a proper beginning sets the pattern for a lifetime of bearing fruit. As educational theorist Alfie Kohn notes,

This tendency to cooperate, to work actively with rather than against others, has been found among toddlers and even infants. So-called "prosocial behaviors"-cooperating, helping, sharing, comforting, and so on-occur in almost every child, even though research in this area has been practically nonexistent until very recently. Regular examples of children under three years of age giving their toys to playmates, spontaneously taking turns in

81 Baha'u'llah, Tablets, p. 257.

82 Baha'u'llah, cited in "Baha'i Education," no. 560, p. 247.

83 'Abdu'l-Baha, The Secret of Divine Civilization (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1994), p. 3.

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games, and so on must give pause to any one who assumes competitiveness is the natural state of the human. 84

The Baha'i writings suggest that teachers promote 'pro-social behaviors' through encouraging direct study of the Word of God; establishing a warm and nurturing environment with reasonable rules and order; training children to develop their talents and capacities; and learning to serve others. Such an approach is borne out by William Damon, who writes, "Only through real service can children learn what it means to have others rely on them, to be entrusted with an important function, and to bear the credit or blame for a job well or poorly done." 85 Beginning with the care of plants, animals, and the classroom environment, for example, young children can move naturally into caring for each other both individually and in small groups. From there it is a series of small

steps until children can offer service to groups in other classrooms, the school as a whole, the larger community, and gradually find ways to connect with and offer some small service to the whole of humanity.

In light of the fundamental purpose of spiritual education to benefit humanity, virtually all Baha'i efforts for the spiritual education of children are intended to result in service. Whether a weekly Baha'i class, a Baha'i academic school, or a more general spiritual education program based on the varied scriptures of all religions, service is the result, for "the students must show the results of their study in their deportment and deeds; otherwise they have wasted their lives." 86

It is this element of service that mobilizes Baha'is' efforts in the wider community. In the "Clean Water, Live Dam" campaign in Evora, Portugal, for example, Baha'is were able to organize a project to clean the dam that provides drinking water to the city by collaborating with local schools and government agencies. In Zambia, where the Baha'i community has operated a long-standing volunteer community health worker training project, a public health

84 Alfie Kohn, *No Contest* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986), p. 19.

85 William Damon, *The Moral Child*, p. 130.

86 'Abdu'l-Baha, cited in "Deepening," in *The Compilation of Compilations*,

vol. I, no. 424, p. 203.

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nurse for the Ministry of Health observed that, in her experience, health workers "willingly volunteer to get trained, but they are not wholeheartedly prepared to serve. They need something to sustain their zeal. They don't seem to know who they are really serving." In contrast, "the Baha'i-trained health educators know that they are serving." The difference, she said, is "the spiritual stand."

Students with a deep understanding of the principle of the oneness of humanity, who are practicing the art of consultation and developing their God-given talents and capacities in service to others, become ready to undertake lines of action beyond their own small learning group. And when students begin to consult with members of the community at large and to explore with them simple actions to improve their communities, those students become powerful agents for positive change.

Robert Coles, who has recorded his more than 30 years of careful observations of children in a wide variety of settings, writes, "A major consequence of community service for many, young and old alike, is an inclination to think about those words 'community' and 'service,' to seek in them a larger vision " 87 An illustration of this point is seen in Chicago, when community leaders initiated

a citywide process of appreciative inquiry to discover the best of that city's strengths and build on them. Children played an important role in that process, and to the team's surprise, "the very best interviews-the most inspiring stories, the most passion filled data, the most textured and well illustrated examples, the most daring images of possibility-were all conducted by children of Chicago." 88 As the children's questions inspired profound thought and generated excitement in adults, the children and adults together began to plan and carry out small but important improvements in their city.

87 Robert Coles, *The Call of Service* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993), p. 280.

88 David Cooperrider, "The Child as Agent of Inquiry," *OD Practitioner*

On-line, <connection.cwru.edu/ai/uploads/Child_As_Agent.pdf>, p. 3.

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The Teacher as Collaborator

When students initiate service and collaborate with others in it, they learn, in the words of community development psychologists Lynne Bond, Mary Belenky, and Jacqueline Weinstock, that "knowledge is best constructed in collaborative action projects where people work together to experiment, test, elaborate, and articulate goals, values and ideas." 89 And as community activist Dorothy Day observes, they "get to know each other, to learn of each other, to be part of a community over a meal, to serve and be served." 90 While teacher and learner are engaged in service, as with so many other aspects of spiritual education, their roles eventually merge, for, as Shoghi Effendi has written, "the keynote of the Cause of God is not dictatorial authority but humble fellowship, not arbitrary power, but the spirit of frank and loving consultation." 91

When a learning group is walking a path of service to the community over an extended period of time, its consultation becomes "group action-reflection; ... exploration of reality, experimentation, deliberation on concrete directions of activity as well as the principles and concepts that must guide it; it is raising the level of awareness, community self-diagnosis and self-education." 92 As a result, "people begin to move forward together with renewed clarity and vigor." 93

Teachers striving to participate in this process of community growth and development, and to foster the engagement of children as active participants in it, cannot simply study the Baha'i writings on spiritual education, consult with others, and move forward in service to the community. The process of action and reflection must become continuous both for the group and for individuals

89 Mary Belenky, Lynne Bond, and Jacqueline Weinstock, *The Tradition that Has No Name* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), p. 17.

90 Dorothy Day, quoted in Robert Coles, *The Call of Service*, p. 283.

91 Shoghi Effendi, *Bahd 'i Administration: Selected Messages 1922-1932* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1995), p. 63.

92 Farzam Arbab, "The Process of Social Transformation," *The Bahd'i Faith and Marxism* (Ottawa: Baha'i Studies Publications, 1987), p. 16.

93 Mary Belenky, et. al, *Womens Wtzys ofKnowing* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), p. 8.

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within it. For Baha'is, this process includes regular study of the Baha'i writings as a source of spiritual insight and as a standard by which to evaluate the results of these actions, and then to modify their plans as necessary.

Children in a Learning Community

Baha'u'llah describes humanity as "a mine rich in gems of inestimable value" and notes that "education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom." 94 Hence the process of spiritual education must actively search out the special excellence, the "gems" of talent and capacity in children, and assist them to contribute their talents to the well-being of the whole.

Baha'u'llah further explains: "The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men." 95 In this global age, Baha'ls believe that spiritual education must include direct instruction about the principle of the oneness of humanity, "a spiritual truth which all the human sciences confirm," because "world order can be founded only on an unshakeable consciousness of the oneness of mankind." 96

Children are thus encouraged to cultivate a world-embracing vision, while educators are advised: "Of all the arts and sciences, set the children to studying those which will result in advantage to man, will ensure his progress and elevate his rank." 97 When children are cared for and educated spiritually, they can play their part in this viral process, "so that once they come of age, they will cast their beams like brilliant candles on the world." 98

94 Baha'u'llah, *Tablets*, p. 162.

95 Baha' u'llah, *Tablets*, p. 168.

96 *The Universal House of Justice, The Promise o/World Peace* (Haifa: Baha'i World Centre, 1985), p. 13.

Tablets, p. 168.

97 Baha' u'llah,

98 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections*, p. 136.

The Universal House of Justice has noted that when "children feel that they belong to the community and share in its purpose," 99 when they contribute their acts of service, recite their prayers, and share their talents in community gatherings, they bring joy to their parents, create "a true sense of belonging ... in the hearts of those present," 100 and provide a clear focus for the community's vision of a better future. Reports submitted to the Baha'i World Centre give evidence of an increasing vitality of community life in many countries around the world. Through participation in community activities, children are surrounded by the love of the community and, as part of that community, contribute to it. Spiritual education and community involvement are not limited to Baha'is, and Baha'u'llah's message was "never intended to reach or to benefit one land or one people only." 101 In the Five Year Plan, in which the Baha'i community is currently engaged, the Universal House of Justice continues to provide guidance for the direction and process of Baha'i spiritual education. In 2002, the Universal House of Justice noted progress along lines of action related to spiritual education and training: "The culture now emerging is one in which groups of Baha'u'llah's followers explore together the truths in His Teachings, freely open their study circles, devotional gatherings, and children's classes to their friends and neighbors, and invest their efforts confidently in plans of action " 102

The clear focus on three core activities in the Five Year Plan—study circles, devotional meetings, and children's classes—is already generating new levels of action. More than 100 national Baha'i communities have given careful consideration to the selection of a spiritual education curriculum, many of them adopting one of the curricula already described in this essay, with the plan to gradually adapt it as necessary to serve the needs of that area. Other countries,

99 The Universal House of Justice, message to the Baha'fs of the world, Ridvan 157 BE.

100 The Universal House of Justice, Messages 1963-1986, p. 310.

101 Baha'u'llah, Tablets, p. 89.

102 The Universal House of Justice, message to an individual believer,

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such as Niger, continue a vigorous curriculum development process. The series of books created by Hand of the Cause of God 'AH-Akbar Furutan has been translated into English and made widely available. New educational materials have been prepared in Albania, Brazil, Italy, and Romania. In the United States, nine new lesson

planning guides, the first three volumes of an illustrated storybook series for children, and a clearly articulated curriculum scope and sequence enhance the effectiveness with which the core curriculum can be implemented in that country and elsewhere.

Similarly, training institute programs for teachers and parents continue to increase the numbers of classes available for children.

In many parts of the world "the regular holding of Baha'i children's classes ... is the first activity in a process of community building which, if pursued vigorously, gives rise to the other developments." 103

In due time, as community after community around the world arises to promote the spiritual education of children, as experience is gained among the "increasing number of educators working in varied cultural and ecological settings throughout the world," 104 as these educators share the results of their diverse activities with each other and Baha'i institutions, and as they engage in this process with educators from the community at large, the Baha'i community shall gradually learn and become effective in a wholly new and truly universal spiritual educational process.

103 Message of the Universal House of Justice to the Conference of Continental Boards of Counsellors, 26 December 1995.

104 Statement approved by the Universal House of Justice, "Baha'i Social and Economic Development: Prospects for the Future," 16 September 1993.

World Watch

Ann Boyles looks at various aspects of corruption and what the Bahd '{ community can contribute to bolster current efforts to address this rampant social epidemic.

Headlines trumpet the misdeeds of high-profile figures and organizations in the business world, politics, religion, entertainment, and the media. Apparent misbehavior even of entire governments has been exposed. Viewed through the lens of these numerous stories, corruption would appear to be one of the most rampant social epidemics of our time. But while rampant, is it inevitable-or is there perhaps hope for a cure?

Certainly, corruption is widespread. The arenas in which it is practiced are as wide and varied as humanity's social and economic institutions. They range from government and public office to business to religion to cultural and academic life to social and economic development.

"Next to tyranny, corruption is the great disease of government," states Judge John T. Noonan, Jr., in his 1984 classic study, *Bribes*. 1 And while corruption (particularly corruption in public life) may be more generally associated in the public mind with poor and

transitional societies, it is certainly not particular to them. "It occurs in democracies and military dictatorships and at all levels

1 John T. Noonan, Jr., *Bribes: The Intellectual History of a Moral Idea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 700.

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of development and in all types of economic systems, from open capitalist economies such as that of the United States to centrally planned economies such as the former Soviet Union's,"² economist Kimberly Ann Elliott points out.

Corruption "is a symptom that something has gone wrong in the management of the state," says political scientist Susan Rose-Ackerman. "Institutions designed to govern the interrelationships between the citizen and the state are used instead for personal enrichment and the provision of benefits to the corrupt."³ The result is that the legitimacy and effectiveness of government are undermined. At the highest levels of public office around the world, "grand corruption" involves major government initiatives, in which governments award certain private firms with concessions and contracts in repayment for bribes, which are generally split between private investors and the corrupt officials. Studies reveal that the process of privatization of public services is a particularly vulnerable time for corrupt insider deals, as investors and officials quietly stake out their "rent-seeking" territory.⁴ Hence, countries "in transition" from socialist to capitalist forms of government are perhaps at the greatest risk from corruption, as evidenced by the rise of organized crime in former Soviet bloc countries, for example. In countries where corruption is widely practiced in the public sector, certain characteristics are common: public investment is preferred to private investment; capital-intensive public projects are plentiful; projects that do not promote economic development but that bring in large amounts of foreign money are popular; and the infrastructure is of a lower quality, because less is spent on operations and maintenance.⁵ The effects of such policies on education and health structures can be particularly acute. While construction projects such as bridges, roads, and large buildings are lucrative sources for bribes, teachers', doctors', and nurses' salaries are not, and so less

2 Kimberly Ann Elliott, introduction to *Corruption and the Global Economy*, ed. Kimberly Ann Elliott (Washington, D.C.: Institute for International Economics, 1997), p. 1.

3 Susan Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences, and Reform* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 9.

4 Rose-Ackerman, p. 27.

money is likely to be assigned to health and education. Corruption in the public sector has many other ripple effects, too. One writer points out that it "bypasses due process and weakens civil rights, blocking off legitimate channels of political access and accountability while opening up (and concealing) illicit new ones." 6

When foreign governments and international aid agencies enter into agreements with such corrupt regimes to deliver social and economic development projects, their aid-presumably aimed at bettering conditions in the target country-often perpetuates the problem by fuelling corrupt practices. According to a 1998 World Bank study, for example, Tanzania received \$2 billion in Western aid over 30 years to maintain its roads, but during that time the condition of its roads actually deteriorated. 7 Clearly, the money was somehow misdirected. In fact, it is believed that corruption claims at least 10 percent of global aid, although some would put the figure much higher. 8

Over the past decade or so, a spate of books on the topic of corruption in the social and economic development field have detailed how aid organizations have perpetuated corrupt system governments by bribing officials in order to operate within countries; how donor agencies have turned a blind eye to human rights abuses in order to continue their operations; how the common practice of "tied aid" ensures that contracts for aid relief enrich the donor country; how many of the projects are irrelevant to the real needs and concerns of those in recipient countries; and how international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund often do more damage than good in their aid efforts. 9 In the face of such evidence, "it is no longer possible to maintain the belief that the approach to social and

6 Michael Johnston, "Public Officials, Private Interests, and Sustainable Democracy: When Politics and Corruption Meet," in Elliot, *Corruption and the Global Economy*, p. 63.

7 Gregg Easterbrook, "The Case for Foreign Aid: Safe Deposit," *The New Republic* (29 July 2002), pp. 16-17.

8 Easterbrook, p. 17.

9 See, for example, Graham Hancock, *Lords of Poverty: The Power, Prestige, and Corruption of the International Aid Business* (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1989).

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economic development to which the materialistic conception of life has given rise is capable of meeting humanity's needs." 10 Lest developed nations mistakenly think that corruption is a

feature of the developing world, however, recent newspaper headlines have served to disturb such complacency. Revelations of less-than-honest practices in the highest echelons of corporate power in the Western world have become almost daily fare, and even institutions and corporations previously perceived as the quintessence of respectability or as the darlings of the stock markets have been tainted. A small sampling of cases will suffice to illustrate the point. One recalls the exposure of the Lockheed Corporation in the 1970s for having paid \$25 million in bribes to Japanese officials to ensure the sale of its Tristar L-1011 aircraft. For over a decade the Swiss National Bank has been dealing with revelations that it laundered the equivalent of some \$4 billion of Nazi gold, about a sixth of it from Jews destined for the death camps and most of the remainder looted from banks in occupied countries.

Furthermore, Swiss banks have been exposed as deliberately withholding, for more than 50 years, the contents of "dormant" accounts of Holocaust victims and their families. 11 Germany's GM subsidiary Adam Opel saw 65 of its executives investigated for bribe-taking in the mid-1990s. Around that same time a Canadian company, Bre-X-which claimed to have discovered the world's largest gold deposit in Indonesia-perpetrated a fraud that saw stock values escalate rapidly and then plunge scarcely two or three years later when tests from the site revealed that it held little or no gold. Investors' stocks that had traded at more than \$200 per share became worthless almost overnight.

But these examples of fraud and corruption are dwarfed by those contained in the names Enron, WorldCom, Tyco, Adelphia, Vivendi, and ImClone, which have become household words over the past year or so and which represent the latest-and most spectacular-in a long string of corporate scandals. They seem

10 The Baha'i International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind* (London: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1995), p. 3.

11 See, for example, Amos Elon, "Switzerland's Lasting Demon," *The New York Times Magazine* (12 April 1998), pp. 40-44.

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most notable for the massive scale of the corruption practiced. Astonishingly, Enron was able to overstate its earnings by some \$600 billion between 1997 and 2001, hiding huge debts through "off balance sheet partnerships," while WorldCom has the dubious distinction of having suffered the world's largest corporate bankruptcy after the revelation that it moved costs from operating to capital accounts to keep investors from discovering the corporation's increasing expenses and falling profits. In most of these scandals top executives themselves directed the corrupt practices.

In an insightful editorial in the International Herald Tribune, William Pfaff characterizes Enron not only as a scandal but also as "the product of a pathological mutation in capitalism," in which "owners' capitalism" has been replaced by "managers' capitalism." Disregarding the long-term interests of their companies and their stockholders, these managers pursued short-term gains with disastrous results for everyone but themselves, as share values plummeted and employee pension funds-tied to company investments through stock options-became worthless. 12 Pfaff concludes, "Owners' capitalism failed in practice because the markets have so diffused corporate ownership that no responsible owner exists. Managers exploited that void to turn corporations into mechanisms for their personal enrichment. This is morally unacceptable, but it is also a corruption of capitalism itself, and of the society in which it functions." Reform, he asserts, "is useless when the system itself has failed."

Nor do the realms of religion and science escape accusations of serious corruption. If headlines in Western media are not occupied with the likes of Enron and WorldCom, they may well be broadcasting the sexual abuse of children by priests in the Roman Catholic Church and seeming efforts by bishops to cover it up

12 William Pfaff, "A Pathological Mutation in Capitalism," International Herald

Tribune (9 September 2002). Harper's index provides some hard figures that make Pfaff's point eloquently. It states that the maximum amount each of Enron's 4,500 laid-off employees would receive as part of a proposed settlement is \$13,500, while the company paid its 140 top executives an average of \$5,300,000 last year (Harper's Index, November 2002).

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and protect the perpetrators. And in the supposedly objective field of scientific research, some study results have been found to be skewed in favor of the corporations funding the studies. Large pharmaceutical companies, for example, have been implicated, as they race to get new drugs approved and out into the marketplace before their competitors.

In short, if we didn't realize it already, such a catalogue clearly reveals that no area of human life is immune from the temptations of corruption. In response, cynics shrug their shoulders and cite the oft-quoted statement by the British historian John Emerich Edward Dahlberg, Lord Acton, that "power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" and that "great men are almost always bad men." Indeed, the perception that corruption is part of human nature and therefore must remain an inevitable part of life is very commonly held throughout the contemporary world. But is it necessarily true?

The problem, in essence, is not political or economic.

Corruption is, as defined by Webster's dictionary, the "impairment of integrity, virtue, or moral principle," and when the term is applied to those holding positions of responsibility and trust, it refers specifically to "inducing a violation of duty by means of pecuniary considerations." To dismiss corruption merely as "human nature" is to remove it from the realm in which it properly belongs: that of free will and moral choice.

The distinction between these two perceptions is one of great importance, since the consequences of corruption are so injurious to both society and the individual. As John T. Noonan, Jr., writes, " ... the common good of any society consists not only in its material possessions but in its shared ideals. When these ideals are betrayed, as they are betrayed when bribery is practiced, the common good, intangible though it be, suffers injury," while at the same time, "[h]uman beings do not engage in such acts without affecting their characters, their view of themselves, their integrity." ¹³ An individual clearly must possess some degree of power in order to be presented with opportunities to engage in corrupt practices, but the absence of clearly articulated, widely enforced

¹³ Noonan, p. 700.

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ethical standards is also an important factor, as it establishes a climate for such behavior. This has proven to be the case in both developing and developed countries, as the influence of traditional values and religion have declined.

In many cases, the moral basis of human relationships has been superseded by an economic one, in which people are regarded as either suppliers or consumers. Greed is fuelled by this prevailing materialistic view of existence, which gauges "worth" solely according to material criteria such as wealth, prestige, property, and influence. Corruption proliferates as perpetrators seek advantage over others with no clear ethical foundations to hold them in check.

The result? Corruption's costs are felt everywhere:

In poor countries, corruption may lower economic growth, impede economic development, and undermine political legitimacy, consequences that in turn exacerbate poverty and political instability. In developed countries, the economic effects may be less severe; however, even in rich countries diverted resources will not be available for improving living standards. Corruption also tends to exacerbate income inequalities by increasing the power of those willing and able to pay bribes to the detriment of those who cannot, and this issue is of increasing concern in many developed and developing countries today. Finally, corruption can undermine political legitimacy in industrialized democracies as well as in developing ones by

alienating the citizenry from its political leadership and making effective government more difficult. Corruption may have the most deleterious effects in countries in transition, such as Russia, where, left unchecked, it could undermine support for democracy and a market economy. 14

Given such consequences, assessing and addressing corruption are of the utmost importance. While some have argued that assessing what is a bribe depends on cultural particularities, such factors are losing ground in the face of economic liberalization, democratic reforms, and increasing global integration, which, as Kimberly Ann Elliott notes, "are combining to expose corruption and raise awareness of [corruption's] costs" and have "sparked an

14 Elliott, pp. 1-2.

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anticorruption backlash that is spreading around the world." 15 It seems clear, then, that what constitutes corrupt behavior is more generally understood across societies than ever before.

With regard to addressing that behavior, two general approaches can be taken. The first treats the problem in a more mechanical way, dealing with existing incidents of corruption by exposing them, devising and enacting legislation that discourages corrupt practices, or promoting structures within organizations that eliminate opportunities for corruption.

Exposure, by organizations of civil society such as Transparency International, has begun to have some effect. TI, formed in 1993 and modeled after Amnesty International, seeks to deter corrupt governments and agencies by exposing them to the public gaze. While the organization operated in obscurity for the first few years, now major media pay attention to its annual Global Corruption Report, its Corruption Perception Index, and its Bribe Payers Indexes. The Corruption Perception Index ranks the world's most corrupt countries according to a set of verifiable criteria drawn from polls and surveys conducted by independent institutions. Its object is to publicize how much public sphere corruption is perceived to exist in countries for which TI can gather adequate data, drawing on surveys conducted by independent institutions among business people, country analysts, and local and expatriate residents. The Bribe Payers Index reports on bribery in multinational corporations, identifies those business sectors where bribery is most widely practiced, investigates awareness of and compliance with the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, and looks at other unfair practices used by businesses in their efforts to secure contracts. Transparency International's experience seems to indicate that exposure is an effective deterrent. Indeed, the German public reacted with dismay to TI's 1995 report, which rated that country as more

corrupt than the UK or Switzerland-although less so than the US-and the issue quickly became a leading issue of public concern. 16

15 Elliott, p. 1.

16 See Patrick Glynn, Stephen J. Kobrin, and Moises Nafm, "The Globalization of Corruption," in Elliott, *Corruption and the Global Economy*, p. 23.

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Legislation, penalties, and other punishments can also serve to deter corruption. The 1977 US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) aims to curtail transnational bribery by American businesses abroad. Unfortunately, however, American corporations have complained bitterly about the disadvantages of being "the lonely boy scout" among foreign competitors who do not operate under such regulations. At the level of domestic corruption, judges and prosecutors in Italy launched a "Clean Hands" campaign in the early 1990s, which has been effective in netting corrupt politicians and those who sponsor them. Worry exists, however, that the country's new government is not committed to continuing the campaign. And that is one of the chief difficulties with legislation, penalties, and other similar punishments: they require vigilant monitoring, and many anticorruption laws look good on paper but are not enforced.

International and transnational organizations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have begun to play an important role in developing and enforcing wider-reaching standards. In 1997 OECD members signed a convention outlawing bribery by officials of multinational companies living abroad. The Anti-Bribery Convention came into effect in 1999, with 35 signatory countries, and Transparency International has hailed it as "a landmark measure." One direct positive result is that signatory states can no longer treat bribes as legitimate tax-deductible business expenses. On the other hand, however, the Convention is not yet taken seriously because no convictions have resulted from it, and it is still largely unheard-of in countries where corruption is most widely practiced. Other international organizations such as the Organization of American States, the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of West African States, and the European Union have also put corruption on their agendas. And the European Union has insisted that countries seeking to join the EU-largely those from the central and southern parts of the continent-clean up their acts before they can be admitted. (Cynics may argue that some of the current member states, such as Italy, rank among the most corrupt on the planet, but nevertheless, one must applaud the EU for attempting to set some standards.)

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Codes of conduct-whether in the public or the private sector, in professions, or in organizations of civil society-have proven to be another useful tool in combating corruption. As Transparency International notes, they "play an important part in the development of national integrity systems. " In the public sector, such codes which may outline specific rules or may simply provide basic ethical guidelines-can cover the public service sector at all levels from ministers and parliamentarians to specific departments and agencies, or even certain professions within the public service. In the private sector, such codes establish standards both for employees and third parties, so they know what is to be expected from the company. And finally, codes help ensure that organizations of civil society apply the same standards to their own functioning that they demand from those serving in public life. 17

Another mechanical deterrent to corruption is the restructuring of organizations and even governmental agencies in order to make them more accountable. Often this involves changing the hierarchical structure of the organization so that influence is not vested only in people occupying key positions. Privatization of publicly owned companies can also eliminate opportunities for bribery. Political, economic, and bureaucratic reforms all play a part in this process. Writing on the latter, James E. Rauch proposes the development of a bureaucratic "virtuous circle" through promotions of those deputies who show themselves to be more interested in exercising power than in acquiring wealth through low-level corruption. As department heads, those promoted "spend more time supervising their deputies and are thus more likely to weed out corrupt ones, leaving only those who restrain their corruption available for promotion." 18

17 See <www.transparency.org/building_coalitions/conducrt.htm. For a discussion on the development of codes of conduct in organizations of civil society, see Martha Schweitz and Bill Barnes, "Dimensions of Unity in an Emerging Global Order" in *The Baha'i World 1998-99* (Haifa: World Centre Publications, 2000), pp. 198-211.

18 James E. Rauch, "Comments," in Elliot, *Corruption and the Global Economy*, pp. 115- 16.

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While all of these actions-restructuring, exposing corruption, enacting and enforcing legislation, and formulating codes of conduct-are necessary and beneficial, they focus on relieving the symptoms rather than addressing the root causes of the disease. For that reason, efforts to address corruption need to be bolstered through more long-term, vision-based strategies. Addressing the issue of corruption in public life, the Baha'i International Community has described the challenge of overcoming it as

"multidimensional in nature." It writes:

The adoption of administrative procedures and legal safeguards, however important such measures may be, will not bring about enduring changes in individual and institutional behavior. For governance, in essence, is a moral and spiritual practice whose compass is found within the human heart. Thus, only as the inner lives of human beings are transformed will the vision of a "genuine civilization of character" be realized. 19

The basis of such a 'civilization of character' is what Stephen L. Carter would call integrity, which he defines as requiring three steps: "(1) discerning what is right and what is wrong; (2) acting on what you have discerned, even at personal cost; and (3) saying openly that you are acting on your understanding of right from wrong." 20 Corruption (which Carter terms "unintegrity") can always be practiced by those ingenious enough to circumvent regulations, but if society can nurture integrity in its citizens from an early age, then it stands a better chance of inhibiting corruption because they will recognize that such behavior is morally repugnant and injurious to the whole of society.

This perspective sees human beings as essentially noble in nature. It asserts the need for the systematic development of the moral capacity of individuals, communities, and social institutions through training in all aspects of life, whether the educational sector, public life, business, or development. A strategy for rewarding good as

19 The Baha'i International Community, "Overcoming Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity in Public Institutions: A Baha'i Perspective." See pp. 263-71 for the text of this statement.

20 Stephen L. Carter, *Integrity* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), p. 7.

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well as punishing bad behavior would also assist in strengthening a "civilization of character." Meaningful recognition of those pursuing honest and trustworthy practices could become as powerful a tool of encouragement as penalties are a deterrent. In this way, a culture of encouragement could emerge. Indeed, with members from highly diverse backgrounds and institutions functioning in all parts of the planet, the Baha'i community can be viewed as a kind of "global workshop" in this area of human advancement. In the area of governance, the Baha'i administrative order derives its structure and mode of functioning directly from the Faith's Founder, Whom Baha'is believe was divinely inspired. It was elaborated and implemented by His appointed successors, 'Abdu'l-Baha and Shoghi Effendi. For this reason, Baha'is have confidence in the integrity of their system of governance. The relationship between individuals serving as administrators and the community is one of trusteeship, which encompasses ideals of trustworthiness, service, and selflessness. Baha'i governing councils are called "Houses of

Justice," although at the local and national levels they go by the "temporary appellation" of Spiritual Assemblies. 21 Referring to members of these councils, Baha'u'llah's Book of Laws admonishes: "It behoveth them to be the trusted ones of the Merciful among men and to regard themselves as the guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth." When they consult, they are admonished "to have regard for the interests of the servants of God, for His sake, even as they regard their own interests, and to choose that which is meet and seemly. " 22

Writing in 1926 to the Baha'is of the East, Shoghi Effendi reminded them of the responsibilities of their Local Spiritual Assemblies, including the following: "to aim to enhance the efficient management of their affairs, and observe purity and refinement in all circumstances; to show their commitment to truthfulness and honesty, and their ability to conduct themselves with frankness, courage and resolution"; and "to adhere in all dealings to a standard

21 Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahd 'u'lfdh: Selected Letters*, 2d rev. ed. (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 6.

22 Baha'u'llah, *The Kitab-i-Aqdas* (Haifa: Baha'i World Centre, 1993), para. 30, p. 29.

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of scrupulous integrity." The letter points out how the Baha'i sacred writings emphasize "the virtue of trustworthiness and godliness, of purity of motive, kindness of heart, and detachment from the fetters of this material world," and how they call upon Baha'is "so to sanctify themselves that they will rise above the corrupt and evil influences that exercise so powerful a sway over the Western world," "to concentrate their attention on serving the general interests of the people," and "to refrain from entering into the tangled affairs of political parties and to have neither concern for, nor involvement in, the controversies of politicians, the wranglings of theologians or any of the ailing social theories current amongst men." Such behavior and actions, the letter concludes, are "the basic, the binding, the inescapable responsibilities of the trustees of the Merciful, the representatives of the Baha'i communities, the members of the Spiritual Assemblies." 23

To ensure that their elected institutions rise to such a level of service, Baha'i electors play their part by voting only for those who "can best combine the necessary qualities of unquestioned loyalty, of selfless devotion, of a well-trained mind, of recognized ability and mature experience." 24 Cautioning the Baha'is to "exercise the utmost vigilance" to carry out their elections "freely, universally and by secret ballot," Shoghi Effendi states emphatically, "Any form of intrigue, deception, collusion and compulsion must be stopped and is forbidden." 25

23 Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi on 30 January 1926 to the Spiritual Assemblies throughout the East, translated from the Persian, published in "Trustworthiness: A Cardinal Baha'i Virtue," in The Compilation of Compilations, vol. 2 (IngleSide: Baha'i Publications Australia, 1991), no. 2079, pp. 347-49 .

24 Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Convention of the Baha'ls of the United States and Canada, 3 June 1925, published in Shoghi Effendi, Bahd'i Administration: Selected Messages 1922-1932 (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1998) , p. 88.

25 Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi on 8 March 1932 to a Local Spiritual Assembly, translated from the Persian, published in "The Sanctity and Nature of Baha'i Elections," in The Compilation of Compilations, vol. 3 (IngleSide: Baha'i Publications Australia, 2000), no. 253, p. 147.

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The advantages of such a system are numerous. A letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi details how Baha'i electoral procedures help members to develop a spirit of responsibility. Since individuals are free to vote for whomever they choose, they must become active and well-informed community members, for how otherwise can they make wise choices during the election? In this way, "true social consciousness" can develop. In fact, "Baha'l community life thus makes it a duty for every loyal and faithful believer to become an intelligent, well-informed and responsible elector, and also gives him the opportunity of raising himself to such a station." The importance of preserving the integrity of the system and of the individual's freedom of choice is also stressed. For this reason, "since the practice of nomination hinders the development of such qualities in the believer, and in addition leads to corruption and partisanship, it has to be entirely discarded in all Baha'i elections." 26 There is a marked difference between the attitude of Baha'i community members towards their institutions and attitudes found in the wider society towards those in positions of authority and power. With regard to the attitude of the institution members themselves, the Universal House of Justice has written:

There needs to be a recognition on their part of the Assembly's spiritual character and a feeling in their hearts of respect for the institution based upon a perception of it as something beyond or apart from themselves, as a sacred entity whose powers they have the privilege to engage and canalize by coming together in harmony and acting in accordance with divinely revealed principles. With such a perspective the members will be able better to acquire an appropriate posture in relation to the Assembly itself, to appreciate their role as Trustees of the Merciful and to counteract any impression that they have assumed ownership and control of the institution in the manner of major

stockholders of a business enterprise. 27

26 Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, 4 February 1935, published in Shoghi Effendi, *The Light of Divine Guidance* (Hofheim-Langenheim: Baha'i Verlag, 1982), p. 68.

27 The Universal House of Justice, letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'fs of the United States, 19 May 1994.

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For their part, community members must carefully examine their attitudes towards the exercise of authority. The House of Justice writes, "People generally tend to be suspicious of those in authority. The reason is not difficult to understand, since human history is replete with examples of the disastrous misuse of authority and power. A reversal of this tendency is not easily achievable, but the Baha'i friends must be freed of suspicion toward their institutions if the wheels of progress are to turn with uninterrupted speed." 28

Since the principles of unity and justice lie at the heart of administrative activity, it is imperative for community members to free themselves from suspicion and a sense of alienation from their institutions. Shoghi Effendi cautioned both electors and those elected:

To repudiate the validity of the assemblies of the elected ministers of the Faith of Baha'u'llah would be to reject those countless Tablets of Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha wherein They have extolled the station of the "trustees of the Merciful," enumerated their privileges and duties, emphasized the glory of their mission, revealed the immensity of their task, and warned them of the attacks they must needs expect from the unwisdom of their friends as well as from the malice of their enemies. It is surely for those to whose hands so priceless a heritage has been committed to prayerfully watch lest the tool should supersede the Faith itself, lest undue concern for the minute details arising from the administration of the Cause obscure the vision of its promoters, lest partiality, ambition, and worldliness tend in the course of time to becloud the radiance, stain the purity, and impair the effectiveness of the Faith of Baha'u'llah. 29

What safeguards exist, then, against corruption in Baha'i administration? Are there mechanisms by which corrupt individuals can be removed and the interests of the community protected?

At the international level, the seminal document is the constitution of the Universal House of Justice, which outlines the

28 Universal House of Justice, letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'fs of the United States, 19 May 1994.

29 Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahd'u'lldh*, p. 10.

responsibilities of that body. Among these are "to safeguard and enforce that rectitude of conduct which the Law of God enjoins," "to be responsible for ensuring that no body or institution within the Cause abuse its privileges or decline in the exercise of its rights and prerogatives," and "to provide for the receipt, disposition, administration and safeguarding of the funds, endowments and other properties that are entrusted to its care." 30 The Universal House of Justice, then, is required by its constitution to safeguard the integrity of Bahá'í institutions at all levels as well as the community's material assets, and to enforce laws relating to behavior. Furthermore, the constitution includes a provision allowing the removal of any of its own members from the Universal House of Justice for the commission of "a sin injurious to the common weal." 31 This stress upon the "common weal" is present at all levels of Bahá'í administration. As Shoghi Effendi writes: "The members of these Assemblies, on their part, must disregard utterly their own likes and dislikes, their personal interests and inclinations, and concentrate their minds upon those measures that will conduce to the welfare and happiness of the Bahá'í Community and promote the common weal." 32 Local and National Spiritual Assemblies possess similar kinds of legislative power and authority at the local and national levels, but there are some important differences between these institutions and the Universal House of Justice. First, as a matter of faith, Bahá'ís believe that the decisions of the Universal House of Justice are indisputable, since Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá affirmed that that institution is divinely protected from error; 33

30 The Universal House of Justice, *Constitution of the Universal House of Justice* (Haifa: World Centre Publications, 1972), p. 5.

31 The Universal House of Justice, *Constitution*, p. 12.

32 Shoghi Effendi, letter to the Bahá'ís of America, Australasia, the British Isles, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Switzerland, dated 12 March 1923, published in Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration*, p. 41.

33 Referring to the Universal House of Justice, Bahá'u'lláh writes in the eighth *Ishraq* of the *Tablet of Ishraqat*, "They that, for the sake of God, arise to serve His Cause, are the recipients of divine inspiration from the unseen Kingdom. It is incumbent upon all to be obedient unto them." Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 91. 'Abdu'l-Bahá states, "Whatsoever they decide is of God." 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 11.

Local and National Assemblies are not. Second, the Universal House of Justice has the authority both to enact and to repeal laws on "matters that are not expressly recorded in the Book." 'Abdu'l-Bahá states, "Whatsoever they decide has the same effect as the

Text itself." 34 Local and National Assemblies, on the other hand, have no such power. Nevertheless, it is crucial to note that the Universal House of Justice does not possess the authority to abrogate or change any law revealed by Baha'u'llah. To do so would be to corrupt the sacred texts of the Faith.

Since it is entrusted with the authority to uphold Baha'u'llah's laws, the Universal House of Justice can be regarded as a court of final appeal for Baha'is who disagree with decisions made by their local or national institutions. Once the Universal House of Justice rules on a matter, however, its decision must be obeyed.

To uphold those laws that promote the common weal and to deal with behavior that is "injurious" to it, Baha'i institutions are empowered to apply sanctions. In response to violations of Baha'i law and standards of conduct, Baha'i institutions-including National Spiritual Assemblies-are empowered to apply administrative sanctions such as the suspension of an individual's membership rights. In such cases the individual remains a Baha'i in belief but may not have the privilege, for example, of donating to the Baha'i funds or participating in the election of-or being elected to-Baha'i institutions until the cause of the removal of his or her rights is rectified. At that point, the individual becomes a fully participating member of the community once again. 35 Baha'is believe that the administrative order of their Faith is perfect in its form, but not perfect in all its acts, in recognition that individuals are not flawless. Sanctions exist to provide corrective measures to those imperfections while safeguarding the integrity

34 'Abdu'l-Baha, *The Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Baha*, p. 20.

35 The application of sanctions by Baha'i administrative institutions is handled

on a case by case basis, usually following repeated attempts to counsel the individual. Behavior for which sanctions may be applied includes, for example, the knowing violation of Baha'i marriage or divorce laws, blatant immoral behavior, and conduct that damages the reputation or causes disunity in the Baha'i community.

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of the system. But while the principles practiced in the Baha'i community may be workable within its confines to safeguard it from corruption, what applicability does the Baha'i experience have in the wider community, which does not necessarily share its values?

Building moral capacity in individuals, beginning with the education of children, is one important way in which Baha'is can contribute to the wider society in which they live. Such initiatives "draw upon both scientific and religious resources in cultivating the concepts, values, attitudes, and skills necessary for creating an ethos of rectitude and integrity," the Baha'i International Community has

written, noting that "[t]he formulation of pedagogical approaches and methods that systematically promote moral development has been a particular focus of Baha'i efforts." 36 Collaboration between Baha'i and governmental or public agencies in a number of countries has been fruitful. In Bolivia, Nur University's Just Governance Program offers moral leadership training to government and other public officials as well as members of grassroots organizations to strengthen the capacities of public sector workers; in Brazil, the Justice in Education project of the Human Plenitude Program is working with the country's Ministry of Education and the National Association of Judges and Prosecutors to implement training for legal professionals, focusing on ethical issues surrounding the protection of children and youth involved in the justice system; in southeastern Europe, under the umbrella of the European Union's Stability Pact, Stop and Act (formerly The Happy Hippo Show) has used interactive drama to train educators, media representatives, journalists, and organizations of civil society in finding positive ways of overcoming prejudice and dealing with ethnic conflict; the European Baha'i Business Forum has conducted seminars on business ethics in eastern Europe and has collaborated with the International Labour Organization in an effort to train workers in "Socially Responsible

36 Baha'i International Community, "Overcoming Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity in Public Institutions: A Baha'i Perspective," see pp. 263-71.

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Enterprise Restructuring." 37 Other efforts are ongoing around the world. Local Baha'i communities' efforts to develop and implement programs for the spiritual education of children, whether in public school systems or in Baha'i classes, are offered in the hope of creating future citizens in whom corruption will not be able to take deep root. 38

In their approach to social and economic development work, Baha'is strive to use skills such as consultation and to apply the same spiritual principles that uphold their Faith's administrative structure. Instead of promoting large-scale projects whose genesis comes from outside the local community, Baha'is believe that the impetus for development work should come from "natural stirrings at the grassroots of the community." 39 Grassroots activities may evolve organically into more complex sustained projects and possibly even full-fledged development organizations, but no matter what the level, "it is the right of every people to trace its own path of development and direct its own affairs"-a right protected by the Faith's global administrative structure. 40

In the context of developing skills that contribute to healthy patterns of community functioning, Baha'i consultation is of interest.

This discipline, which can be learned and applied in a variety of settings, aims to build consensus in a manner that unites various constituencies instead of dividing them, and encourages diversity of opinion while acting to control the struggle for power that is so common in traditional decision-making systems.

37 The statement "Overcoming Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity in Public Institutions: A Baha'i Perspective" provides further information on efforts to develop moral capacity around the world. See also pp. 149-54 for an article on the European Baha'i Business Forum. An article about Nur University's moral leadership training program appeared on pp. 249-54 of *The Baha'i World* 1998-99.

38 An essay on pp. 189-220 looks at the wide variety of Baha'i efforts to foster the spiritual and moral education of children.

39 *The Baha'i International Community, ...for the Betterment of the World:*

The Worldwide Bahá'í Community's Approach to Social and Economic Development (New York: Baha'i International Community, 2002), p. 6.

40 *The Baha'i International Community, ...for the Betterment of the World,* p. 6.

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Certain principles are central to the art of consultation. First, the group should seek information on the topic from a wide range of courses and points of view, including those of specialists where helpful. Second, those participating in the consultation are enjoined to be candid in presenting their own views but also courteous and attentive to the views of others. Personal attacks, ultimatums, and prejudicial statements are not permitted. Third, once advanced, an idea no longer belongs to the individual who voiced it but becomes the property of the entire group. Thus, no subgroups or constituencies exist within the consultative group. Fourth, while the group strives to achieve unanimity in its decision-making, a majority can carry the decision. Nevertheless, all group members are required to support that decision, whether they voted for or against it. By upholding this principle, community members will know with certainty that if problems arise, they must lie in the decision itself and not in a lack of support or active opposition from any group member. 41 Such assurance gives participants confidence in the integrity of their decision-making process. Training children, youth, and adults to become social actors whose behavior springs from an ethical basis is a contribution that the Baha'i community can make to decreasing corruption in today's and tomorrow's world. In the conviction that all behavior is moral in its basis, Baha'is are emphasizing that aspect of leadership in the programs they offer to those who work in the public and corporate sectors and in the moral education programs they provide

to children. In this way, the Baha'i community is systematically promoting the evolution of a culture in which corrupt practices substantially diminish. In describing the differences between prevailing current conditions and the future "divine" civilization, 'Abdu'l-Baha writes:

... material civilization, through the power of punitive and retaliatory laws, restraineth the people from criminal acts; and

41 For more on the topic of consultation, see William S. Hatcher and J. Douglas Marrin, *The Bahá'í Faith: The Emerging Global Religion*, rev. ed. (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1998), pp. 165-67, and <www.bahai.org>, the official Web site of the Baha'i International Community.

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notwithstanding this, while laws to retaliate against and punish a man are continually proliferating, as ye can see, no laws exist to reward him

Divine civilization, however, so craineth every member of society that no one, with the exception of a negligible few, will undertake to commit a crime. There is thus a great difference between the prevention of crime through measures that are violent and retaliatory, and so training the people, and enlightening them, and spiritualizing them, that without any fear of punishment or vengeance to come, they will shun all criminal acts. They will, indeed, look upon the very commission of a crime as a great disgrace and in itself the harshest of punishments. They will become enamored of human perfections, and will consecrate their lives to whatever will bring light to the world and will further those qualities which are acceptable at the Holy Threshold of God. 4 2

Baha'fs, wherever they live, are bending their energies earnestly and energetically towards the realization of such a world.

42 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahd* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1997), sec. 105, pp. 132-33.

PROFILE:

Bayan Association

What are the most effective means by which a community can be assisted to develop? How can a development organization remain flexible enough to grow and modify its work as the needs of the community it is serving change? And how can it effectively increase its resources to carry out the work that needs to be done?

These are some of the questions that Asociacion Bayan, a small Baha'i-inspired development organization in Honduras, has been

challenged to answer throughout the course of its existence over the past 18 years. Its experience highlights the process through which rural community development can be assisted and offers an example of how development organizations can best promote that objective.

Bayan's beginnings go back to 1985, when two Baha'i families established a small rural hospital in the village of Palacios in the Department of Gracias a Dios. This Department is situated in the northern coastal region of Honduras, which lies in the middle of the Mesoamerican ecological corridor at the edge of the Rio Platano Biosphere. Most of the 12,000 inhabitants in the 20-odd villages served by Bayan are predominantly Miskitos (indigenous Indians), Garifunas (of Black Carib descent), and Mestizos who

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Volunteer doctors
from the Irish army
treat a child in the
operating room of
Hospital Bayan.

earn their living by subsistence fishing and farming. Because the area is quite isolated, with access only by boat or airplane until very recently, most of the development agencies that work in this remote region are based outside. However, Bayan is different, as its base of operations is located within the zone itself. No medical services were available locally before the hospital was established, so it met an urgent need.

The vision of Bayan's founders, however, was always that the scope of the organization's activities would expand beyond provision of medical aid to the fostering of grassroots development in the region. The goal was that the hospital would move from being strictly a service provider to a testing ground for development. In this way, Bayan followed the same path as other Baha'i development efforts that have begun as sustained projects focused on a single track and have gradually evolved into development organizations with relatively complex programmatic structures and larger spheres of influence. Over time, these organizations learn how to systematically train human resources and manage a number of lines of action, taking a coordinated, interdisciplinary approach to problems of local communities and regions.

The concept of development embraced by Bayan seeks to promote both the material and the spiritual well-being of the individual and the community. Consultation, collaboration, and reciprocity are seen as the basis for the establishment of social justice. Towards this end, local institutions are strengthened and universal participation in community activities is encouraged.

Because mutual cooperation is central to the process, decisions are made through a process of consultation. The central role of the farmer in the economic life of the zone and in the conservation of the environment is given serious attention, as are the principles of unity and trustworthiness in all development efforts.

On this foundation, Bayan's initial efforts were built. An early milestone in the project occurred in 1987, when the government of Honduras legally recognized Bayan as a nonprofit organization, *Asociacion de Desarrollo Socio-Economico Indigena - Bayan* (Bayan Association of Indigenous Social and Economic Development).

Hospital Bayan

Hospital Bayan began offering services with formal Ministry of Health approval in 1986 and was finally completed in 1988. A small facility containing two inpatient rooms, a pediatric bed, an examination room, surgical facilities, a small pharmacy, an x-ray room, and a laboratory, it was nevertheless able to offer 24-hour emergency service to the people of the area.

Through the years, the project experimented with different means to increase access to health services- including a community health worker training program, a mobile clinic, and a community water, sanitation, and health education program. Some of these were successful and others were not, but all contributed to Bayan's process of learning.

In the hospital's early days, volunteers from the USA collected used medical equipment that was donated to the hospital, and the National Guard coordinated the shipping of the equipment to the zone. More recently, in December 2000 and January 2001, the army of the Republic of Ireland transported and supported the installation of surgery, dentistry, and laboratory equipment at the hospital.

The Irish army also supplied a shipment of medicine and a medical brigade for more than three weeks.

Medical specialists, both Baha'is and members of other faiths, have made five- to ten-day visits to the hospital to conduct clinics, allowing Bayan to offer services in a variety of medical specializations which, in turn, have enhanced the hospital's reputation in the area. Some of the specialization clinics offered have been in dental
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care, general surgery, cardiology, ophthalmology, obstetrics and gynecology, and pediatrics.

In 1993 the Honduran Ministry of Health entered into an agreement with Bayan to support 20 community health volunteers, training them as outreach primary care providers throughout the region, and the hospital was requested to serve as an agency for the unsupervised distribution of food on behalf of CARE

International in Honduras. Bayan assisted in the establishment of a volunteer council to work with CARE, which involved a number of organizations (including local churches), to conduct health surveys, education programs, and to distribute food. Unfortunately, after the surveys were completed and the need established, it was discovered that there were no funds or donors to support the cost of shipping the food to the region for distribution.

The hospital was a much-needed and well-used facility, but it regularly lost money on its patients, who were used to a paternalistic development agency model and originally did not understand that the hospital could not continue to function indefinitely if it did

Students learn to prepare tortillas as part of the community training program.

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not become sustainable. When the shortfall between fees and expenses grew to the point that closure became a real possibility, however, the local residents made unprecedented efforts to secure additional funding and thus ensure the continuation of the hospital, signalling that it was truly their own.

In 1998, Bayan entered into an agreement with the Honduran Ministry of Health, two municipalities, and the local community council of Palacios for the joint management of the hospital.

Recently the Minister of Health recognized the Bayan Hospital as a model of community participation.

Structure and Programs Evolve in Response to Community Needs

As Bayan's activities were growing in scope and complexity, a more formal organizational structure evolved. In 1994 Project Bayan evolved into Asociación Bayan, and that same year it undertook a process of community evaluation to assess the region's specific challenges and needs. The results provided a basis on which possible future initiatives could be formulated.

Bayan's own experience and the 1994 community evaluation painted the following picture: The population suffered from severe malnourishment and poverty, which was worsened by underdeveloped agriculture and a lack of knowledge concerning appropriate agricultural techniques. Poor sanitation and the infestation of water supplies by parasites from human and animal waste were causing high rates of disease, which, in turn, resulted in a high infant mortality rate. Increasing environmental degradation was threatening the region and the adjacent biosphere reserve. A significant number of women were subordinated and prevented from acquiring education by their men, which was retarding the region's development. Men commonly behaved irresponsibly towards their families and communities—for example, spending income on drugs

and alcohol-which increased the level and conditions of poverty. The final observation from the evaluation was that appropriate education, organizational skills, and leadership were lacking in the communities, preventing members from addressing problems on their own in a systematic, effective manner.

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Given these challenges, Bayan decided that the most effective starting point would be to provide appropriate education that would allow the region's population to chart its own course forward.

Bayan had taken action in the field of education from its earliest years in the region. In 1987 it began conducting an annual training course for primary and secondary teachers in the zone on themes such as moral education, the environment, health, and the teacher's role in community development. It also collaborated with other nongovernmental organizations and departmental officials of the Ministry of Education in these courses and assisted the Palacios Community Council in working with the Ministry of Education to establish a secondary school in the region.

Following the community evaluation, however, efforts were increased. The Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial (SAT) program was launched in 1996, with the legal authorization of the Ministry of Education (allowed formally in 1997) and the understanding that it would serve as a prototype for other rural areas of the country.

SAT: An Appropriate Educational Program for Rural Communities

SAT was originally developed by the nongovernmental organization Fundacion para la Aplicacion y Enseñanza de las Ciencias or FUNDAEC (Foundation for the Teaching and Application of the Sciences) in Cali, Colombia. There, the program was approved by the Ministry of Education in 1982 and has been so successful that in some 10 regions (departments) of the country it has been jointly adopted by state institutions and private, nongovernmental organizations, with partial funding from local and regional governments.

In contrast to most secondary education curricula in Latin America, SAT was designed specifically for rural communities. Traditional education trains young people for an urban lifestyle rather than addressing the needs of rural and indigenous peoples, and as a result, poor rural youth have little incentive to stay in school. When faced with economic pressures from the family, most rural youth leave school and engage in subsistence farming or work in fishing or other local industries-and many join the flood of urban migration. In the SAT program, particular emphasis is placed

Students prepare the land for cultivation as part of Asociacion Bayan's agricultural program.

on the inclusion of women. Girls, who are undervalued and lack self-esteem, are particularly disadvantaged in rural communities. Often denied schooling, they cannot gain even basic literacy and math skills or knowledge of basic nutrition or health care or sanitation. In this way, conditions are ripe for the perpetuation of generational poverty through uneducated mothers.

In contrast to the traditional model, FUNDAEC's curriculum is designed to train rural and indigenous people to address their own problems, find solutions to them, and build sustainable communities. Thus, it provides a pragmatic alternative to the traditional secondary education system. The curriculum is rural-focused and trains students in practical skills that they can apply immediately to the problems around them: production, health, environmental degradation, and community organization. Rather than relegating rural and indigenous lifestyles to secondary importance, the curriculum incorporates the region's history, culture, needs, and aspirations. It also provides practical knowledge that will equip students to make their rural communities both sustainable and progressive. The program focuses on education and rural development, including themes such as attitudinal change, self-sustainability, heightened respect and value of local culture, critical

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thinking, teamwork, problem resolution, and skills training. It includes a rigorous academic program as well as community service and a strong, practical agricultural production component. The curriculum integrates five basic subject areas: math, sciences, language and communication, agricultural technology, and service. The SAT program is not just a presence in the community: it is integrated into the community through a participatory methodology. The full secondary curriculum is six years in duration. No sophisticated infrastructure is required, as classes can meet in open areas or community centers. Schedules are flexible, to allow students to continue productive activities at the same time that they are acquiring their education. Both youth and young adults who do not have secondary education are invited to participate. And while students do study from texts, courses also involve interaction with other students, the community, and local resources. Local community members who serve as tutors work with each SAT group to facilitate the process of learning, to explain concepts where needed, and to organize training activities, but their role is quite different from that of the traditional classroom teacher.

Workbooks cover mathematics, sciences, health, literacy, agriculture, farming, social studies, and reading, with all subjects integrated. Training activities focus on small-scale animal tending and demonstration plots that allow students to apply appropriate technology to agricultural pursuits. Educational resources supplied

by the program include dictionaries, world atlases, and a small laboratory.

Students study SAT
rural education
materials.

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In SAT, education is viewed as preparation for useful work and service to the community. Leadership, personal growth, the equal participation and education of women, and values that include responsibility and unity within the community are all emphasized. Bayan's adoption of the FUNDAEC curriculum has been very successful. By April 2002, more than 1,000 students were enrolled in SAT with 49 groups from more than 100 communities. SAT has gained approval from the Honduran government through an agreement of mutual cooperation and financial coparticipation between Bayan and education directors in three departments in the northern part of Honduras. Evaluation of the quality of the program and its curriculum carried out by the Ministry of Education has been very positive, and as a result SAT was authorized not only to continue to operate existing programs but also to expand to other regions of the country. Recognition of each grade in the SAT program as equivalent to those of the official system was also granted. Early in 2002 meetings between Bayan and the Ministry of Education led to the development of a proposal for the further expansion of SAT to other areas where there is a high index of poverty-with the proviso that in order to be self-sustaining the program should reach out from strong central points to outlying communities, growing and developing local human resources in an organic fashion.

Bayan is increasingly catching the attention of donors. A recent organizational profile developed by the InterAmerican Development Bank noted that Bayan is a "reputable" NGO with "well-known transparency in handling project financing," and its "institutional interest is local development and poverty alleviation." As a notfor-profit organization, Bayan has received funding and in-kind donations through the years from a number of different donors and agencies, including the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, the Canadian International Development Agency, the British Embassy, Health for Humanity, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the Kellogg Foundation, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United Kingdom, Fundacion Vida of Honduras, Partners of the Americas, the World Development Foundation, International Health Services, Agency for Personnel Services Overseas, Madame
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The Minister and Vice-Minister of Education of Honduras (first and second from left, respectively), stand with staff members from the Ministry and Asociación Bayan.

Ru};!yyih Rabbani, the Local Spiritual Assemblies of Hutchinson, Kansas, and Wrangell, Alaska, and the Office of Social and Economic Development at the Baha'i World Centre.

Funding for SAT in Honduras was secured from sources such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Kellogg Foundation, and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, as well as the Honduran Ministry of Education. The Canadian International Baha'i Development Services (CBIDS) and the Baha'i Agency for Social and Economic Development in the United Kingdom (BASED-UK) have served as partners of Bayan in their relationships with governmental agencies. While the devastation wreaked by Hurricane Mitch in 1998 saw the reallocation of some funds to relief efforts, nevertheless Bayan managed to sustain its activities while assisting with aid distribution for some time after the storm.

Other Responses to the Needs Assessment

The 1994 community evaluation indicated a concern and need for the protection of the aquatic life of the Bacalar Lagoon and inland waterway because of their importance to the lifestyle, health, and economy of the region. Fundaci6n Vida of Honduras is financing a three-year biological study of the fauna and aquatic life of the lagoon with educational and social components. The findings will serve for the development of a SAT text and for the future management and protection of this water resource by a newly created community-based organization. This activity required the

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approval of the Ministry of Natural Resources, the third Honduran Ministry with which Bayan has established formal agreements.

Future Plans

The Bayan Association does not plan to rest on its laurels. Future plans, in addition to SAT expansion, include training courses for public school teachers, the eventual establishment of a Rural University, and the carrying out of demographic, social, and economic research related to the Miskito communities. The research findings will be shared with local agencies to help them improve

their services. These studies also help Bayan and the educational authorities to refine the SAT materials by improving their focus on regional concerns.

To facilitate the concept of learning as the organization itself grows and develops, Bayan has begun to hold annual "reflection meetings," bringing together the directors and coordinators of different projects, members of the organization's board of directors, and the founders of Bayan to discuss the functioning and progress of their work over the past year and to formulate future plans.

Bayan's experience and flexibility will no doubt enable it to adapt further to meet new challenges as they arise.

Belief and Tolerance

LIGHTS AMIDST THE DARKNESS

This statement of the Baha'i International Community was presented to the International Consultative Conference on School Education in relation with Freedom of Religion and Belief, Tolerance, and Non-Discrimination, held in Madrid, Spain, 23-25 November 2001.

The human spirit must be free to know. Apprehending who we are, for what purpose we exist, and how we should live our lives, is a basic impulse of human consciousness. This quest for self-understanding and meaning is the essence of life itself. The innate and fundamental aspiration to investigate reality is thus a right and an obligation of every human being. It is for this reason that the Baha'i teachings affirm that the "conscience of man is sacred and to be respected." ¹

To search for truth—to see with one's "own eyes and not through the eyes of others"²—is to undertake a process of spiritual discovery with a keen sense of justice and openness. It is by its very nature a process that is creative and transformative; if pursued with sincerity and fairness, it can bestow upon the seeker of knowledge "a new eye, a new ear, a new heart, and a new mind." ³ The rational soul

¹ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *A Traveller's Narrative* (Wilmette: Baha'f Publishing Trust, 1980), p. 91.

² Baha'u'llah, *The Hidden Words of Bahd'u'LLdh* (Wilmette: Baha'f Publishing Trust, 1985), Arabic no. 2, p. 4.

³ Baha'u'llah, *The Kicib-i-fqan* (Wilmette: Baha'f Publishing Trust, 1983), p. 196.

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is thereby awakened to the capacities of kindness, forbearance, and compassion that lie within it. Clearly, the human yearning for truth is a power that cannot be shackled, for without the freedom to know, human nature remains the prisoner of instinct, ignorance,

and desire.

In the midst of an age convulsed by moral crisis and social disintegration, the need for understanding about who we are as human beings is vital to the achievement of lasting peace and well-being. Historically, such insight about human existence and behavior has been provided by religion. Its indispensable function in addressing the universal inclination towards transcendence and its essential role in civilizing human character throughout the ages have been central to defining human identity as well as promoting social order. Through its cultivation of humanity's spiritual nature, religion has ennobled the lives of peoples everywhere and has engendered cohesion and unity of purpose within and across societies. Religion, in a very real sense, provides the warp and woof of the social fabric—the shared beliefs and moral vision that unite people into communities and that give tangible direction and meaning to individual and collective life. The right to exercise freedom of conscience in the matters of religion and belief is therefore not only crucial to satisfying the spiritual promptings of the aspiring soul, but to the enterprise of building harmonious and equitable patterns of living.

Coercion in matters of faith vitiates the very principles of religion. For commitment can only be born of belief that is freely chosen. The right to freedom of thought, conscience, and belief now codified in international human rights instruments directly finds its roots in the scriptures of the world's religions. This fact should assure each of us that truth need not be feared, as it has many facets and shelters all of our diverse expressions of faith. If, after all, people of religious faith believe that the Creator is eternal and the center of all existence, then they must also believe that the unfettered and genuine search for truth will lead to truth.

The elimination of all barriers to the free exploration, acceptance, and expression of religious belief is critical to the objective of creating a universal culture of human rights.

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However, to clear the way for a constructive dialogue about the role of religion in establishing social justice, an historical accounting must be taken. That religion has been responsible for immense suffering cannot be denied. Much darkness and confusion can be attributed to those who have appropriated the symbols and instruments of religion for their own selfish purposes. Fanaticism and conflict poison the wells of tolerance and represent corrupt expressions of true religious values. Consequently, vigilance is necessary in safeguarding the transformative power of religion from the forces of extreme orthodoxy on one hand, and irresponsible freedom on the other.

"The purpose of religion," Baha'u'llah states" ... is to establish

unity and concord amongst the peoples of the world; make it not the cause of dissension and strife." 4 In unity-a unity that embraces and honors the full diversity of humankind- all problems can be solved. When applied on a universal basis, the teaching that we should treat others as we ourselves wish to be treated, an ethic variously repeated in all the great religions, will undoubtedly reveal the salutary power of unity. The building of a global society based on cooperation, reciprocity, and genuine concern for others is the ultimate expression of unified action. In short, the core spiritual values held in common by the world's religions contain within them the principal means for the reconciliation and advancement of the earth's peoples. Through these values and the commitment they inspire, "Minds, hearts and all human forces are reformed, perfections are quickened, sciences, discoveries and investigations are stimulated afresh, and everything appertaining to the virtues of the human world is revitalized." 5

In order to play its part in overcoming the prejudices and suspicions now afflicting the world's faith communities, religious leadership must devote attention to these commonly shared spiritual precepts rather than doctrinal differences or claims of exclusivity.

4 Baha'u'llah, *Tablets of Bahd'u'llah revealed after the Kitdb-i-Aqdas* (Wilmette: Baha' I Publishing Trust, 1988), p. 129.

5 'Abdu'l-Baha, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-*

Bahd during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912, rev. ed. (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1995), p. 278.

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Let each religion demonstrate its capacity to guide the world's inhabitants to peaceful coexistence, moral rectitude, and mutual understanding, rather than spreading enmity, fear, and intolerance. The recent trend towards interfaith dialogue around the globe offers a positive example of how disparate communities can work together to broaden vision and shape public discourse in a unifying way. Religious leaders are uniquely placed to draw attention to the potentialities and promise of the present moment in human affairs, and challenge all key societal players to action. Increasing interchange among spiritual leaders and their followers, especially children, will no doubt lead to new understandings of what is possible for human beings and how peaceful patterns of collective life can be nurtured. "Shut your eyes to estrangement, then fix your gaze upon unity," is Baha'u'llah's counsel. "Cleave tenaciously unto that which will lead to the well-being and tranquillity of all mankind. This span of earth is but one homeland and one habitation." 6

For the global Baha'i community, the protection of human

freedoms is part of a larger spiritual undertaking of fostering a set of attitudes and practices that truly release human potential. Genuine social progress, it believes, can only flow from spiritual awareness and the inculcation of virtue. From this perspective, the task of creating a universal ethos of tolerance is intimately bound up with a process of moral and spiritual development.

Education, then, emerges as an indispensable tool—a tool of active moral learning. To accomplish the broad objectives of ensuring the "full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity" and promoting "understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations, racial, ethnic, or religious groups," education must strive to develop an integrated set of human capabilities—intellectual, artistic, social, moral, and spiritual.⁷ There is no other way to raise up positive social actors who are builders of amity and agents of service and probity. "Regard man as a mine rich in

⁶ Bahi'u'llih, *Tablets*, p. 67.

⁷ Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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gems of inestimable value," Bahfu'llah urges, "Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom."⁸ These "treasures" must be consciously developed because even though nobility, goodness, and beauty are innate aspects of our nature, human beings can fall prey to inclinations that corrupt the inner self and quench the light of love.

Educational curricula cannot therefore be solely concerned with the knowledge of physical and social phenomena, but must also be directed towards the goal of moral and spiritual empowerment. As a consequence of the deep connection between individual and social well-being, programs of education need to instill in every child a two-fold moral purpose. The first relates to the process of personal transformation—of intellectual, material, and spiritual growth. The second concerns the complex challenge of transforming the structures and processes of society itself. To pursue this dual purpose of individual and collective transformation, specific moral capabilities must be developed. The capabilities of a moral person encompass the concepts, values, attitudes, and skills that enable the person to make appropriate moral choices and to promote creative and cooperative patterns of human interaction.⁹ Underpinning all such capabilities is a commitment to discover and apply truth in every domain of human endeavor. Since moral behavior is a concrete expression of humanity's spiritual nature, moral education efforts should draw in a systematic way on both the methods of science and the insights of religion.

An integral feature of any educational initiative having a moral and spiritual focus must be the notion of the oneness and

interdependence of the human race. Oneness and diversity are complementary and inseparable. That human consciousness necessarily operates through an infinite diversity of individual minds and motivations detracts in no way from its essential unity. Indeed, it is precisely an inhering diversity that distinguishes unity from

8 Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahd'u'lldh* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1983), p. 260.

9 The educational philosophy of Nur University, the second largest private institution of higher learning in Bolivia and Baha'i-inspired, is largely based on this idea of moral capabilities.

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homogeneity or uniformity. Hence, acceptance of the concept of unity in diversity implies the development of a global consciousness, a sense of world citizenship, and a love for all of humanity. It induces every individual to realize that, since the body of humankind is one and indivisible, each member of the human race is born into the world as a trust of the whole and has a responsibility to the whole. It further suggests that if a peaceful international community is to emerge, then the complex and varied cultural expressions of humanity must be allowed to develop and flourish, as well as to interact with one another in ever-changing patterns of civilization. "The diversity in the human family," the Baha'i writings emphasize, "should be the cause of love and harmony, as it is in music where many different notes blend together in the making of a perfect chord." 10

The rich religious heritage of humankind can also be viewed through the lens of unity. Baha'u'llah states: "There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God." 11 The world's religions can thus be seen to be one in their nature and purpose with each being a wellspring of knowledge, energy, and inspiration. They each have served to unlock a wider range of capacities within human consciousness and society—a process that has impelled the human race towards moral and spiritual maturity. Accordingly, curricula exploring the history and teachings of religion may wish to highlight the complementary aims and functions of the world's faith systems as well as the theological and moral threads that link them. In this regard, the right to investigate religion and the spiritual roots of human motivation can be understood to be a vital element of an integrating framework of collaboration and conciliation.

The promotion of tolerance and mutual understanding among the diverse segments of the human family cannot be a passive or rhetorical exercise. All forms of provincialism, all insularities and prejudices must be directly confronted. It is unfortunately the

10 'Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks: Addresses given by 'Abdu'l-Bahd in Paris in 1911-1912 (London: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1995), p. 53.

11 Baha' u'llah, Gleanings, p. 217.

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case that religious prejudice is a particularly virulent influence that continues to block human progress. Overcoming its corrosive effects will require deliberate and sustained effort. Towards this end, innovative and substantive programs of education are essential. But so too is an attitude of true humility among all those who believe in a loving and almighty Creator.

Let us be assured, and let it be communicated to the world's children, that it is possible to both tread the path of religious faith and to be tolerant. Civilization's future course depends on it. In the words of Baha'u'llah, "observe tolerance and righteousness, which are two lights amidst the darkness of the world and two educators for the edification of mankind." 12

12 Baha'u'llah, Tablets, p. 36.

Overcoming Corruption
and Safeguarding Integrity
in Public Institutions
A BAHAI PERSPECTIVE

Prepared by the Bahd 'i International
Community and presented at the
Intergovernmental Global Forum on Fighting
Corruption in The Hague, the Netherlands,
28-31 May 2001.

humanity emerges from a century of upheaval and startling change, its need for moral and spiritual renewal becomes ever more apparent. That the twentieth century was a century of both darkness and light-revealing the capacity for human depravity as well as human achievement-underlies the confusion that pervades our times. A deepening moral disorientation threatens social institutions and the fundamental bonds that define human relations. In the Baha'i view, the displacement of a transcendent understanding of life by an ascendant materialism is responsible for the skepticism, alienation, and anomie that characterize contemporary existence.

Over a century ago, Baha'u'llah, Founder of the Baha'i Faith, warned against the inevitable spiritual and moral aridity that would emerge from the marginalization of religion. "In truth," He wrote, "religion is a radiant light and an impregnable stronghold for the protection and welfare of the peoples of the world Should the lamp of religion be obscured, chaos and confusion will ensue,

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and the lights of fairness and justice, of tranquility and peace cease to shine." 1

Social advancement, we know, arises from the ideals and shared beliefs that weld society together. Meaningful social change results as much from the development of qualities and attitudes that foster constructive patterns of human interaction as from the acquisition of technical capacities. True prosperity- a well-being founded on peace, cooperation, altruism, dignity, rectitude of conduct, and justice-flows from the light of spiritual awareness and virtue as well as from material discovery and progress.

To distinguish the vital characteristics of religion from the distortions that falsely pose in its name is challenging. Yet, religion is an indispensable source of knowledge and motivation- a wellspring of values, insights, and energy without which social cohesion and collective action are difficult if not impossible to achieve. Through the teachings and moral guidance of religion, great segments of humanity have learned to discipline their baser propensities and to develop qualities that conduce to social order and cultural advancement. Such qualities as trustworthiness, compassion, forbearance, fidelity, generosity, humility, courage, and willingness to sacrifice for the common good have constituted the invisible yet essential foundations of progressive community life. Religion provides the bricks and mortar of society-the ethical precepts and vision that unite people into communities and that give tangible direction and meaning to individual and collective existence.

Clearly, the set of capacities necessary for building up the social, economic, and moral fabric of society depends upon the resources of both mind and spirit. The civilizing virtues of honesty, duty, and loyalty so central to human progress are cultivated by the language of the heart and the voice of conscience. Legal imperatives and penalties, while essential, are limited in their efficacy. To draw upon the spiritual roots of motivation that lie at the heart of human identity and purpose is to tap the one impulse that can ensure genuine social transformation. From the Baha'i perspective, then,

1 Baha'u'llah, Tablets of Bahd'u'lldh revealed after the Kitdb-i-Aqdas (Wilmette:

Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1988), p. 125.

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the emergence of public institutions that engender public trust and that are devoid of corruption is intimately bound up with a process of moral and spiritual development. As Baha'u'llah confirms: "So long as one's nature yieldeth unto evil passions, crime and transgression will prevail. "2

Baha'ls see the entire enterprise of civilization as a spiritual process involving the progressive awakening of humanity's moral

and creative capacities. The creation of a "corruption-free" public milieu consequently depends on the building up of moral capacity within individuals, communities, and social institutions.

How is it possible to build moral capacity? What are the practical strategies societies can adopt that will raise up from within their populations positive social actors who choose to lead lives of service and probity? Education is an indispensable tool. The fact that the world community is pluralist in character should not deter governments and international agencies from giving serious attention to the question of moral development. The growing collaboration among religious communities, nongovernmental organizations, and public institutions in addressing major social challenges provides evidence of the possibility for effective action.

The Baha'i community has undertaken a number of initiatives, although modest in scope, in the area of ethical leadership and moral education. These programs draw upon both scientific and religious resources in cultivating the concepts, values, attitudes, and skills necessary for creating an ethos of rectitude and integrity. The formulation of pedagogical approaches and methods that systematically promote moral development has been a particular focus of Baha'i efforts. Nur University, the second largest private institution of higher learning in Bolivia, integrates academic knowledge with both practical experience and ethical training, giving particular emphasis to community service, social justice, and a respect for human diversity. Nur was founded, in large part, to help develop leaders who understand the linkage between individual and social transformation. Its educational philosophy is based on concepts and principles drawn from the Baha'i teachings. Nur's moral leadership program teaches participants that they have

2 Baha' u'llah, Tablets, p. 70.

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the obligation to search for, adopt, and live by moral precepts. Leadership is shown to be a responsibility that is exercised by all members of society and requires the development of specific moral capabilities. Underpinning such capabilities is a commitment to pursue and apply truth in all areas of human endeavor. This program has reached some 400 rural communities in Bolivia and more than a dozen Latin American countries.

Through its Just Governance Program, Nur is providing training to public officials, government technical staff, and members of community-based organizations. It seeks to promote good governance by exploring the different dimensions of moral leadership, strengthening administrative and decision-making capacities in the public sector, and by promoting dialogue concerning the future development of Bolivian society. Many regional government departments and local municipalities have taken part

in the program. A related initiative involves some 5,000 public high school students in promoting youth leadership. The program works to limit youth involvement in crime, violence, and alcohol and drug consumption by preparing young people for active community service. Nur has also worked to train school teachers as community development agents. To date, more than 2,000 teachers from Bolivia, Argentina, and Ecuador have participated in the program, which has received much positive feedback from its participants. One student wrote:

The study of this course has helped me, above all, to understand the importance of guiding my life according to principles. I now try to serve those in need without expecting recognition, to forgive those who may have offended me without holding grudges, and to share with others what I have learned, and thereby contribute to my own happiness and theirs.

The Justice in Education project being carried out by the Human Plenitude Program in Brazil is another Baha'i effort that focuses on promoting ethical leadership in government. The Brazilian Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the National Association of Judges and Prosecutors, has approved a training program developed by Human Plenitude staff that targets approximately 6,000 legal professionals who are working directly

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with youth and junior youth who have become involved in Brazil's court system. The initial module of this training initiative is comprised of materials that address ethics and values relating to the protection of children and youth.

Under the auspices of the Royaumont Process [now known as the Stability Pact] of the European Union, the Baha'i International Community has undertaken a multiyear moral education initiative aimed at promoting ethnic harmony and social cohesion in several countries in southeastern Europe. Through the adaptation of The Happy Hippo Show [now known as Stop and Act], a unique dramabased interactive television and radio program designed to explore moral and ethical issues, the Baha'i International Community has conducted training seminars for educators, media representatives, journalists, and nongovernmental organizations. The program has become quite popular with both the public and government officials in providing examples on how to approach life problems by finding positive solutions. Developing constructive ways of overcoming intergroup conflict and prejudice has been a principal theme of the initiative. The success of training seminars in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, and Slovenia has led to several follow-up projects. Radio and television programs in Croatia and Bulgaria, as well as primary education curricula in Romania, are now using the techniques of

the show to demonstrate how morality is central to the question of social stability and prosperity. Recently, the UN Administrator and Special Representative to the Secretary-General for Kosovo expressed the wish that a Happy Hippo Show project be started in Kosovo. The Happy Hippo format has also been adapted for use in values education programs in Finland, Italy, Russia, Sweden, Moldova, Norway, and Malaysia.

In collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the European Baha'i Business Forum, a voluntary association of Baha'i business professionals, recently produced a joint working paper entitled "Socially Responsible Enterprise Restructuring." The report has served as a basis for several training sessions organized by the ILO and has been disseminated to governments, employers associations, and workers' organizations throughout the world.

The European Baha'i Business Forum has also conducted a series
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of seminars on business ethics in eastern Europe and has formed an educational partnership with AIESEC, one of the largest organizations of business students in the world.

As a practical step in contributing to a dialogue about development and social transformation that explicitly takes account of spiritual values and perspectives, some 100 influential development organizations, international and government agencies, religious representatives, and academics recently gathered in New Delhi to participate in a colloquium on the theme of Science, Religion, and Development. The primary goal of the event was to explore how a unified interaction between scientific methods and religious insights can promote the building of human capacity, particularly in the areas of governance, education, technology, and economic activity. The event was organized by the Baha'f community of India and the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity, a research agency of the Baha'f International Community. At the global level, Baha'fs have also been involved in the very constructive World Faiths Development Dialogue between the World Bank and major religions.

Although it strictly abstains from involvement in partisan politics, the Baha'i community does seek to contribute to public discourse about what it considers to be fundamental issues of principle. Over the past few years, for example, the Baha' f community, through its 182 elected national governing councils, has sought to encourage governments around the globe to adopt comprehensive programs of human rights education. In some cases, Baha' f national councils have made specific recommendations for promoting human rights curricula in schools and, in others, have tried to create awareness on the part of government officials about the crucial role of human rights education in fostering a culture

of justice in their societies. Once such a culture begins to evolve, practical issues such as training in the administration and enforcement of justice, equitable distribution of community resources, and the upliftment of persons and groups historically excluded from the benefits and opportunities offered by society can be effectively addressed.

Ultimately, Baha'is believe, the emergence of a peaceful and just social order animated by moral principle is contingent upon
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a fundamental redefinition of all human relationships- among individuals themselves, between human society and the natural world, between the individual and the community, and between individual citizens and their governing institutions. In particular, outmoded notions of power and authority need to be recast. A basic reconceptualization of social reality is thus envisioned, a reality that in spirit and practice reflects the principle of the oneness of humankind. To accept that "the body of humankind is one and indivisible" is to recognize that every human being is "born into the world as a trust of the whole." ³

Governance is referred to in the Baha'i writings as an expression of trusteeship, as the administering of a trust. Baha'u'llah speaks of the governors and administrators of society as "trustees" or the "trusted ones" of God. He also warns leaders that the vulnerable and the poor "are the trust of God in your midst." ⁴ The concept of trusteeship implies, in some sense, a covenant between those who are in positions of authority and the members of the social polity that they are obligated to protect and serve. Consequently, trustworthiness is a vital characteristic of governance; it is the source of true accountability. Baha'u'llah describes trustworthiness as the "greatest portal leading unto the tranquility and security of the people" and "the supreme instrument for the prosperity of the world." ⁵ "All the domains of power," He avers, " ... are illumined by its light." ⁶

While governance is often equated with government, it in fact involves much more. Governance occurs at all levels and encompasses the ways that formal government, nongovernmental groups, community organizations, and the private sector manage resources and affairs. Three factors that largely determine the efficacy of any system of governance are the quality of leadership, the characteristics of the governed, and the nature of the structures and processes employed to exercise authority and meet human

³The Baha'i International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995.

⁴ Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahd'u'llah* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1983), p. 251.

⁵ Baha'u'llah, *Tablets*, pp. 37-38.

⁶ Baha'u'llah, *Tablets*, p. 37.

needs. In this regard, the Baha'i community offers its own administrative system as a model for study. Baha' is attach great importance to cooperative decision-making and assign organizational responsibility for community affairs to freely elected governing councils at the local, national, and international levels. This hierarchy devolves decision-making to the lowest practicable level- thereby instituting a unique vehicle for grassroots participation in governance- while at the same time providing a level of coordination and authority that makes possible collaboration on a global scale. A unique feature of the Baha'i electoral process is the maximum freedom of choice given to the electorate through the prohibition of nominations, candidature, and solicitation. Election to Baha'i administrative bodies is based not on personal ambition but rather on recognized ability, mature experience, and a commitment to service. Because the Baha'i system does not allow the imposition of the arbitrary will or leadership of individuals, it cannot be used as a pathway to power. Decision-making authority rests with corporate bodies. All members of the Baha'i community, no matter what position they may temporarily occupy in the administrative structure, are expected to regard themselves as involved in a learning process, as they strive to understand and implement the laws and principles of their Faith. Significantly, in many parts of the world, the first exercises in democratic activity have occurred within the Baha'i community.

The capacity of any institution to effect and manage change, and to respond creatively to challenges that lie before it, emails the development of a number of critical skills. These include the ability to maintain a clear perception of social reality and of the forces operating in it; to properly assess the resources of the community; to consult freely and harmoniously as a body and with one's constituency; to realize that every decision has both a material and spiritual dimension; to arrive at decisions in a manner that preserves and promotes institutional unity; to win the confidence, respect, and genuine support of those affected by these decisions; to effectively use the energies and diverse talents of the members of the community it serves; to integrate the diversity of initiatives of individuals and groups into one forward movement that benefits all; to uphold standards of fairness and equity; and to implement

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decisions with an openness and flexibility that avoid all traces of dictatorial behavior. This constellation of skills must obviously draw on both intellectual and moral resources.

In the Baha'i writings, those individuals who are engaged in government service are exhorted to "approach their duties with entire detachment, integrity, and independence of spirit, and with

complete consecration and sanctity of purpose." 7 Their personal fulfillment comes not from material reward but from "the devising of methods to insure the progress of the people," from experiencing the "delights of dispensing justice," and drinking from "the springs of a clear conscience and a sincere intent." 8 In the end, the "happiness and greatness, the rank and station, the pleasure and peace" of the public servant does not consist in "his personal wealth, but rather in his excellent character, his high resolve, the breadth of his learning, and his ability to solve difficult problems." 9

The challenge of overcoming corruption in public life is multidimensional in nature. The adoption of administrative procedures and legal safeguards, however important such measures may be, will not bring about enduring changes in individual and institutional behavior. For governance, in essence, is a moral and spiritual practice whose compass is found within the human heart. Thus, only as the inner lives of human beings are transformed will the vision of a "genuine civilization of character" be realized. 10

7 'Abdu'l-Baha, cited in *Trustworthiness: A Cardinal Bahd'i Virtue*, compiled by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice, January 1987.

8 'Abdu'l-Baha, *The Secret of Divine Civilization* (Wilmette: Baha' f Publishing Trust, 1970), pp. 19, 21.

9 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Secret of Divine Civilization*, pp. 23-24.

10 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Secret of Divine Civilization*, p. 62.

One Same Substance

CONSCIOUSLY CREATING

A GLOBAL CULTURE OF UNITY

This written statement was submitted by the Baha'i International Community to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance in Durban, South Africa, from 31 August to 7 September 2001.

cism originates not in the skin but in the human mind. Remedies to racial prejudice, xenophobia, and intolerance must accordingly address first and foremost those mental illusions that have for so many thousands of years given rise to false concepts of superiority and inferiority among human populations. At the root of all forms of discrimination and intolerance is the erroneous idea that humankind is somehow composed of separate and distinct races, peoples, or castes, and that those subgroups innately possess varying intellectual, moral, and/ or physical capacities, which in turn justify different forms of treatment. The reality is that there is only the one human race. We are a

single people, inhabiting the planet Earth, one human family bound together in a common destiny, a single entity created from one same substance, obligated to "be even as one soul."

Recognition of this reality is the antidote to racism, xenophobia, and intolerance in all its forms. It should, accordingly, be the guiding principle behind the discussions, deliberations, and ultimate output of the World Conference against Racism.

A proper understanding of this fact of existence has the capacity to carry humanity not merely past racism, racial and ethnic prejudice, and xenophobia but also beyond intermediate notions of tolerance or multiculturalism—concepts that are important stepping-stones to humanity's long-sought goal of building a peaceful, just, and unified world but insufficient for the eradication of such deeply rooted afflictions as racism and its companions.

The principle of human oneness strikes a chord in the deepest reaches of the human spirit. It is not yet another way of talking about the ideal of brotherhood or solidarity. Nor is it some vague hope or slogan. It reflects, rather, an eternal spiritual, moral, and physical reality that has been brought into focus by humanity's collective coming of age in the twentieth century. Its emergence is more visible now because, for the first time in history, it has become possible for all of the peoples of the world to perceive their interdependence and to become conscious of their wholeness.

The reality of human oneness is fully endorsed by science.

Anthropology, physiology, psychology, sociology, and, most recently, genetics, in its decoding of the human genome, demonstrate that there is only one human species, albeit infinitely varied in the secondary aspects of life. The world's great religions likewise uphold the principle, even if their followers have, at times, clung to fallacious notions of superiority. The Founders of the world's great religions have all promised that one day peace and justice would prevail and all humanity would be united.

The contemporary realization of humanity's collective oneness comes after a historic process in which individuals were fused into ever greater units. Moving from clans, to tribes, to city-states, to nations, the next inevitable step for humanity is nothing less than the creation of a global civilization. In this new global civilization, all people and peoples are component parts of a single great organism—an organism that is human civilization itself. As stated by Baha'u'llah more than 100 years ago, "The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens."

1 Baha'u'llah, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Wilmette:

Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1997), p. 167.

Further, as explained in the Baha'i writings, the oneness of humanity implies an organic change in the structure of present-day society, a change such as the world has not yet experienced It calls for no less than the reconstruction and the demilitarization of the whole civilized world—a world organically unified in all the essential aspects of its life, its political machinery, its spiritual aspiration, its trade and finance, its script and language, and yet infinite in the diversity of the national characteristics of its federated units. 2

In considering the themes of the World Conference against Racism, a proper understanding of the reality of the oneness of humanity holds a number of implications.

It implies that any law, tradition, or mental construct that grants superior rights or privileges to one grouping of humanity over another is not only morally wrong but fundamentally at odds with the best interests of even those who consider themselves to be in some way superior.

It implies that nation-states, as the building blocks of a global civilization, must hold to common standards of rights and take active steps to purge from their laws, traditions, and practices any form of discrimination based on race, nationality, or ethnic origin.

It implies that justice must be the ruling principle of social organization, a corollary principle that calls for widespread measures on the part of governments, their agencies, and civil society to address economic injustice at all levels. The Baha'i writings call for both voluntary giving and government measures, such as the "equalization and apportionment" of excess wealth, so that the great disparities between the rich and the poor are eliminated.

The Baha'i writings also prescribe specific measures, such as profitsharing and the equation of work with worship, that promote general economic prosperity across all classes.

Issues of xenophobia before the Conference in relation to contemporary problems of minority diasporas, the uneven

2 Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Selected Letters*, 2d rev. ed. (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1993), p. 43.

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application of citizenship laws, and refugee resettlement can likewise best be addressed in the light of humanity's oneness and, as Baha'u'llah indicated, the concept of world citizenship.

Further, the principle of the oneness of humanity exposes any attempt to distinguish separate "races" or "peoples" in the contemporary world as artificial and misleading. While racial, national, and/or ethnic heritage can be considered as sources of pride and

even a backdrop for positive social development, such distinctions should nor become a basis for new forms of separation or superiority, however subtle.

Over the years, in statements to the United Nations, the Baha'i International Community has supported or called for specific actions in support of human oneness and the fight against racism, including:

- The widespread promotion of international educational campaigns that would teach the organic oneness of humankind, urging specifically that the United Nations itself facilitate such an effort, involving national and local governments, as well as nongovernmental organizations.
- The widespread ratification of-and adherence to - international instruments, which represent humankind's collective conscience, that might contribute to a comprehensive legal regime for combating racism and racial discrimination, especially the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.
- The worldwide promotion of human rights education, with the aim of creating a "culture of human rights."

The Baha'i International Community has also sponsored or participated extensively in activities aimed at the eradication of racism and racial discrimination. Working largely through its national affiliates, which currently number 182, the Community has, for example, sponsored numerous public meetings, conferences, educational programs, newspaper articles, radio programs, and exhibits that specifically seek to combat racism.

Further, drawing on the creative spirit of grassroots participation, Baha'is in a number of countries have established race unity committees, with multiracial membership, which have developed

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programs to combat racial prejudice and to create bonds of mutual respect among peoples of different races in their local communities. These committees have attempted to assist Baha'is to free themselves of their own racial prejudices and, beyond that, to contribute to the elimination of racial prejudice in society at large through extensive collaboration with leaders in government, education, and religion. More specifically, Baha'i communities around the world have sponsored numerous youth workshops that promote racial unity, held thousands of public "race unity day" observances, launched television and video campaigns to promote race harmony, sponsored neighborhood race unity dialogues, and participated in various national commissions to combat racism.

Those seeking to understand more fully how the oneness of humanity can be brought into practice might find it useful to examine the experience of the Baha'i International Community itself, which offers a continuously advancing model for how diverse

individuals can live together in harmony and unity. With a membership of more than five million, the worldwide Baha'i community is composed of individuals from virtually every background. More than 2, 100 different racial and tribal groups are represented, as are individuals from virtually every nationality, religious background, and social class.

Despite this great diversity, which is reflective of the world's population at large, the worldwide Baha'i community is among the most unified bodies of people on earth. This sense of unity goes beyond a shared theology. Individuals from many of these backgrounds have intermarried, for example, something which is promoted in the teachings of the Baha'i Faith, and/or they work together closely in local Baha'i communities, serving together on its local- and national-level governing institutions. A careful examination of the worldwide Baha'i community will reveal a surprisingly widespread and yet singularly committed body of people who are consciously creating a global culture, one that emphasizes peace, justice, and sustainable development, and puts no group in a position of superiority.

Baha'is believe that their own success at building a unified community stems solely from its inspiration by the spiritual teachings of Baha'u'llah, Who wrote extensively about the

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importance of unity, the reality of oneness, and the imperative need for creating a peaceful world civilization. More than 100 years ago, He wrote the following, which stands as a cornerstone of Baha' { belief:

O Children of Men! Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. 3

3 Bahi'u'llah, The Hidden Words of Bahd'u'lldh (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1994), Arabic no. 68, p. 20.

Sustainable Development

THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION

This statement by the Baha'i International Community was presented to the first session of the Preparatory Committee of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in New York City .from 30 April to 2 May 2001.

Some nine years ago, over the course of the Earth Summit

process, the governments of the world, with significant contributions from global civil society, crafted Agenda 21, a remarkably forward-looking strategy for the achievement of sustainable development worldwide.

Some nine years later, the work of determining the next steps in the evolution of Agenda 211 has been placed upon the shoulders of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The Summit has been called to "identify major constraints hindering the implementation of Agenda 21" and to "address new challenges and opportunities that have emerged since the United Nations

1 Conscious of the fact that more knowledge and experience would emerge as the world community sought to implement this strategy-and that a higher level of international cooperation was still possible-Agenda 21 was defined, in its preamble, as a "dynamic program" which "could evolve over time in the light of changing needs and circumstances." (Agenda 21, Chapter 1.6, Preamble).

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Conference on Environment and Development." 2 It is in identifying these major constraints, challenges, and opportunities that the Summit's Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) must necessarily come face to face with spiritual issues.

"No matter how far the material world advances," the Baha'i writings state, "it cannot establish the happiness of mankind. Only when material and spiritual civilization are linked and coordinated will happiness be assured. . . . for in material civilization good and evil advance together and maintain the same pace." 3

The Baha'i International Community is convinced that unless and until spiritual issues become central to the development process, the establishment of a sustainable global civilization will prove impossible. For the vast majority of the world's people the idea that human nature is fundamentally spiritual is an incontrovertible truth. Indeed, this perception of reality is the defining cultural experience for most of the world's people and is inseparable from how they perceive themselves and the world around them. 4 It is, therefore, only by bringing a focus on the spiritual dimension of human reality that development policies and programs can truly reflect the experiences, conditions, and aspirations of the planet's inhabitants and elicit their heartfelt support and active participation. On the one hand, the governments of the world have, collectively, begun to acknowledge a spiritual dimension to development. This can be seen in the global action plans that emerged from the great world conferences held in the 1990s by the United Nations. Agenda 21, for example, calls for "social,

2 Ten-year review of progress achieved in the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

(NRES/55/199, 15c-d, 20 December 2000).

3 'Abdu'l-Baha, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-*

Bahd during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912, rev. ed. (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1995), p. 109.

4 This perception of reality can be discovered in the earliest records of civilization and has been cultivated for several millennia by every one of the great religious traditions. Its enduring achievements in law, the fine arts, and the civilizing of human intercourse are what give substance and meaning to history. In one form or another its promptings are a daily influence in the lives of most people on earth.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

economic, and spiritual development," recognizing that "individuals should be allowed to develop their full potential, including healthy physical, mental, and spiritual development. " 5 Subsequent declarations and action plans have reinforced this call and gone further. For example, in the Copenhagen Declaration the governments of the world unambiguously affirm that "our societies must respond more effectively to the material and spiritual needs of individuals, their families , and the communities in which they live ... not only as a matter of urgency but also as a matter of sustained and unshakeable commitment through the years ahead. " 6 In the Beijing Platform for Action they agree that "[r]eligion, spirituality, and belief play a central role in the lives of millions of women and men, in the way they live and in the aspirations they have for the future. " 7 And in the Habitat Agenda, the world's governments commit to "achieving a world of greater stability and peace, built on ethical and spiritual vision. "8

On the other hand, beyond such general statements and commitments, these global agreements offer little understanding of what the terms "spirituality," "spiritual vision," and "spiritual development" mean in principle or in practice. If, indeed, spirituality is as crucial to sustainable development as these global action plans have avowed, then it is time to move beyond generalities, to explore, in depth, the spiritual principles at the heart of development and to consider fully their ramifications for all stages of the development process.

This exploration of spiritual principles is completely in line with the PrepCom's mandate to " identify major constraints hindering the implementation of Agenda 21" and to "address new challenges and opportunities that have emerged" since the Earth Summit. Any strategies for overcoming such constraints and challenges as war, poverty, social disintegration, extreme nationalism, greed, corruption, and apathy, which do not take into account

5 Agenda 21, chapters 6.3 and 6.23. Emphasis added.

6 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, no. 3. Emphasis added.

7 Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, chapter 2, no. 24. Emphasis added.

8 Habitat Agenda, chapter 1, no. 4, Preamble. Emphasis added.

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spiritual principles, will prove ephemeral, at best. In considering new opportunities for overcoming these constraints and challenges, the PrepCom should look to the remarkable development of interfaith relations and the expansion of interfaith initiatives.

Religious and spiritual traditions are increasingly coming together to foster friendliness, fellowship, and understanding among their diverse communities. They are also increasingly working together on policies, programs, and initiatives with secular bodies ranging from private enterprises and organizations of civil society to governments and international institutions. In such work, religious and spiritual value systems are viewed not as separate from "real world concerns," but as vital sources of knowledge and motivation, as wellsprings of values, insights, and energy without which social cohesion and collective action are difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. 9

This blossoming of interfaith work can be seen in such initiatives as the World Faiths Development Dialogue; 10 the World Conference on Religion and Peace; 11 the Alliance of Religions and Conservation; 12 the Parliament of the World's

9 Meaningful social transformation cannot come from political prescriptions or technical recipes alone. An approach to development that incorporates moral and spiritual imperatives will more likely lead to enduring changes in both individual and collective behavior than an approach that ignores these requirements. There is, therefore, much to be gained by seriously and systematically examining the role of religious resources and spiritual values in building human capacity.

10 The World Faiths Development Dialogue is a collaborative initiative at the national and international levels between the World Bank and several world religions. Its mission is to assist in combating poverty and to bring spiritual principles into development thinking and practice.

11 The World Conference on Religion and Peace is an international organization in which numerous world religions cooperate to promote peace and understanding. It is organized on an international, regional, and national basis.

12 The Alliance of Religions and Conservation brings together 11 world faiths for consultations on conservation issues. It also encourages collaborative efforts between the religions and environmental organizations.

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Religions; 13 and the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious

and Spiritual Leaders. 14 It can be read in the numerous joint declarations and agreements in which the religions have articulated a common vision of humanity's future based on such universal principles as love, justice, compassion, moderation, humility, sharing, service, peace, and the oneness of the human family. 15

In seeking to incorporate spiritual principles into its deliberations, the PrepCom should take advantage of this new stage in the relations among the world's religions. It might do so by making the topic "Sustainable Development: The Spiritual Dimension" one of the "main themes for the Summit." 16 It could

13 The 1999 Parliament of the World's Religions brought together over 7,000 people in Cape Town, South Africa. The goal of the Parliament was to create greater respect, understanding, cooperation, and harmony among the world's peoples and religions. Participants took part in a wide range of activities discussing, learning, sharing, and discovering. The seminal document, A Call to Our Guiding Institutions, was issued during the Parliament (see footnote #15).

14 Held in part in the UN General Assembly Hall, in August 2000, the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders brought together some 1,000 religious and spiritual leaders from around the world. The gathered leaders discussed pressing issues facing the world community, including the challenges of fostering peace and encouraging interreligious understanding and cooperation. A major theme of the Summit was how the religions could work with the United Nations in its mission for human rights, development, peace, and justice. At a historic plenary session, "Engaging Religious Leadership in the Work of the United Nations," members of the panel, composed of several high level UN officials, voiced their conviction that spirituality and the insights and vision of religion were greatly needed in the policies and programs of the United Nations.

15 These documents include the Final Statement by the Co-Chairs, Second Meeting of the World Faiths Development Dialogue (the World Faiths Development Dialogue) <WWW.worldbank.org/html/extdr/extme/ps111599a.htm>; A Call to Our Guiding Institutions (the 1999 Parliament of the World's Religions) <www.cpwr.org/calldoc.htm>; and the Commitment to Global Peace (the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders) <www.millenniumpeacesummit.org/aboutframe.htm>.

16 A/RES/55/199, 15g.

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then initiate a major review of international agreements, proclamations, and statements which focus on religious and spiritual values, particularly as they relate to and impact the development process. This review should begin with the global action plans of the world conferences of the 1990s, since it was here that the governments of the world publicly acknowledged the importance

of spiritual values in development. 17 It should then be expanded to include major interfaith declarations and agreements and other relevant initiatives. 18

While this review is being conducted, the PrepCom could facilitate a series of consultations involving both representatives and leaders of various religious and spiritual traditions. These consultations, which might be held before the next PrepCom, should focus on spiritual principles as they relate to Agenda 21 and sustainable development. A series of regional consultations followed by an international consultation might be held, or, if that is not feasible, then, at the very least, an international consultation should be organized. The results of these consultations and of the "documents review" should be issued as a UN document for use by the PrepCom in its deliberations.

Although these proposed efforts are modest, the world's governments would, by supporting them, be sending a clear message that they are serious about their previous commitments to incorporate spiritual considerations into the development process. More important, however, the "documents review" and the global consultations would undoubtedly produce innovative ideas and

17 In fact, the PrepCom is to "take into account, as appropriate, the outcomes relevant to sustainable development of other United Nations conferences and summits and their follow-up activities." A/RES/55/199, Preamble.

18 Two initiatives which might be considered in this review are: the October

1994 seminar on "Ethical and Spiritual Dimensions of Social Progress," organized by the UN Secretariat for the World Summit for Social Development (the document produced is entitled "Ethical and Spiritual Dimensions of Social Progress"); and the November 2000 "Colloquium on Science, Religion, and Development," organized by the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity of the Baha'i International Community (the document produced is entitled "Statement of Preliminary Findings of the Colloquium on Science, Religion, and Development").

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

approaches and might possibly generate a powerful vision based on spiritual principles-principles which, because they resonate with the human soul, have the power to motivate the sacrifices and changes that will be needed if humanity is to overcome the seemingly intractable problems it faces.

Ultimately, the creation of a peaceful and just global civilization, in which the diverse peoples of the world live in harmony with one another and with the natural world, will require a significant reorientation of individual and collective goals and a profound transformation in attitudes and behaviors. Such far-reaching changes will come about only by addressing the nonmaterial dimension of reality and drawing on humanity's vast spiritual resources.

HIV/AIDS and Gender Equality
TRANSFORMING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

This statement by the Bahd'i International Community was prepared for the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS, held in New York City 25-27 June 2001.

The relationship between the AIDS pandemic and gender inequality is gaining recognition globally. New HIV/AIDS infections are now increasing faster among women and girls than among males; therefore, last year half of all new cases occurred in females. At the recent 45th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, where HIV/AIDS was one of the main thematic issues, the complexity of the challenges in addressing the issue was underscored by the undeniable association of AIDS with such an intractable problem as sexism. There is no denying the importance of research, education, and cooperation among governments and civil society. However, awareness is growing that a profound change of attitude—personal, political, and social—will be necessary to stop the spread of the disease and ensure assistance to those already infected and affected. This statement will focus on two of the more significant populations who need to be represented in these global discussions: men, because of the control they have traditionally exercised over women's lives; and faith communities, because of the power they have to influence the hearts and minds of their adherents.

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In order to curtail the spread of HIV/AIDS among women, concrete changes need to occur in the sexual attitudes and behavior of both men and women, but especially men. Fallacious notions about the naturally voracious sexual appetites of men must be addressed. The real consequences to women—and men—of the practice of satisfying one's sexual desires outside of marriage must be fully understood. Educating women and girls is critically important, but the current power imbalance between men and women can prevent a woman from acting in her own interest. Indeed, experience has shown that educating women without educating the men in their lives may put the women at greater risk of violence. Efforts are needed, therefore, to educate both boys and girls to respect themselves and one another. A culture of mutual respect will improve not only the self-esteem of women and girls, but the self-esteem of men and boys as well, which will lead towards more responsible sexual behavior. The denial of equality to women not only promotes in men harmful attitudes and habits that affect their families, the workplace,

political decisions, and international relations; it also contributes substantially to the spread of HIV/AIDS and retards the progress of society. Notice how culturally accepted social inequalities conspire with economic vulnerability to leave women and girls with little or no power to reject unwanted or unsafe sex. Yet, once infected with HIV/AIDS, women are often stigmatized as the source of the disease and persecuted, sometimes violently. Meanwhile, the burden of caring for people living with HIV/AIDS and for children orphaned by the disease falls predominantly on women. Traditional gender roles that have gone unquestioned for generations must now be reexamined in the light of justice and compassion. Ultimately, nothing short of a spiritual transformation will move men- and women-to forego the behaviors that contribute to the spread of AIDS. Such a transformation is as important for men as it is for women, because "As long as women are prevented from attaining their highest possibilities, so long will men be unable to achieve the greatness which might be theirs."

1 'Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks: Addresses given by 'Abdu'l-Bahd in Paris in 1911-

1912 (London: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1995), p. 133.

AIDS AND GENDER EQUALITY

Because the cultivation of humanity's noble, spiritual core has always been the province of religion, religious communities can play an important role in bringing about the change of heart and the consequent change in behaviors that will make possible an effective response to the AIDS crisis.

The leaders of faith communities are especially equipped to address the moral dimension of the AIDS crisis both in terms of its prevention and its treatment. The spread of HIV/AIDS would be significantly reduced if individuals were taught to respect the sanctity of the family by practicing abstinence before marriage and fidelity to one's spouse while married, as underscored in most faith traditions.

Religious leaders and people of faith are also called to respond with love and compassion to the intense personal suffering of those either directly or indirectly affected by the AIDS crisis. However, a tendency on the part of society as a whole to judge and blame those afflicted has, since the onset of this disease, stifled compassion for its victims. The subsequent stigmatization of individuals thus afflicted with HIV/AIDS has fostered a profound reluctance on the part of infected individuals to seek treatment and of societies to change cultural attitudes and practices necessary for the prevention and treatment of the disease. Such judgments can be particularly pronounced in religious communities struggling to uphold a high standard of personal conduct. One of the seeming paradoxes of faith is the individual obligation of believers to adhere to a high

standard of personal conduct while loving and caring for those who fall short—for whatever reason—of that same standard. What is often forgotten is that "moral conduct" includes not only personal restraint but compassion and humility as well. Faith communities will need to strive continually to rid themselves of judgmental attitudes so that they can exert the kind of moral leadership that encourages personal responsibility, love for one another, and the courage to protect vulnerable groups in society.

We see signs of hope in increased interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Among faith communities there is a growing recognition that, as Baha'u'llah states, "the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God." It is, indeed, THE BAHAI WORLD 2001-2002

the transcendent nature of the human spirit, as it reaches towards that invisible, unknowable Essence called God, which galvanizes and refines mankind's capacity to achieve the spiritual progress that translates into social progress. As dialogue, cooperation, and respect among religious communities increase, cultural and religious practices and traditions that discriminate against women, no matter how entrenched, will gradually give way. This will be an essential step towards retarding the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Indeed, it is in the recognition of the oneness of the human family that hearts will soften, minds will open, and the attitudes of men and women will be transformed. It is out of that transformation that a coherent, compassionate, and rational response to the worldwide HIV/AIDS crisis will be made possible.

Baha'is in Iran

CURRENT SITUATION

This oral statement was presented by the Bahd'i International Community to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva in April 2002.

Although there have been some recent improvements, the Baha'i International Community must report to the Commission that the Baha'i community in Iran is still the object of clear and systematic human rights violations. These violations are both collective and individual, and they concern not only civil and political rights, but also a wide range of social, economic, and cultural rights.

Recent improvements have come in the situations of individual Baha'is who have been imprisoned. All death sentences have been commuted, and some prisoners have been released. At this time, however, five Baha'is are still in prison for their religious beliefs, two of them sentenced to life imprisonment for apostasy.

The extensive, persistent, systematic persecution of the Baha'i community has been documented over the years in the various reports issued by the Special Representatives on Iran. Iran's policy towards the Baha'is is a matter of public record. Back in 1993, Reynaldo Galindo Pohl, who was then Special Representative on Iran, uncovered a secret document that laid out specific procedures

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for Iranian officials to follow in dealing with the Baha'is. The goal of this policy, endorsed in writing by Mr. Khamenei himself, was the annihilation of a community of 300,000 people. Who could have imagined then that these guidelines would still be in force 10 years later?

When this policy document came to light, more than 200 Baha'is had already been executed and many more tortured, Baha'i holy places had been destroyed, and a large number of properties had been confiscated. This policy memo signaled, not a change in attitude toward the Baha'is, but a shift in strategy. The Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council's approach was to deal with "the Baha'i question" in more subtle ways, so that Baha'i "progress and development shall be blocked." It was, in fact, a carefully conceived blueprint for the slow strangulation of the community, a blueprint that guides the actions of government officials to this day.

The Baha'is pose no threat to the Iranian authorities. Baha'is as a principle of their faith—must obey the government of their country. The Baha'is in Iran seek no special privileges. They simply wish to live as ordinary citizens: to enjoy their civil rights, as well as their economic and social rights, and to be able to profess and practice their religion peacefully.

The Baha'is in Iran yearn to be free of the daily threat of arrest and arbitrary detention. Since 1998, the Iranian authorities have relied less on long-term imprisonment than on a widespread pattern of short-term detentions. Baha'is go through each day not knowing whether they or a loved one will be arrested and, if so, whether they will be imprisoned for a few days, weeks, or months. This practice wears them down with a constant feeling of insecurity and uncertainty.

The Baha'is in Iran would like to be able to work, to receive their pensions when they retire, to have access to higher education, to own property, and to meet freely as a community. They want their religious institutions to be reestablished, because it is around these institutions that their spiritual, communal, and social activities revolve.

The wishes of this peaceful community are endorsed by the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Abdelfattah

Amor, and can be found in the conclusions and recommendations of the report published on his visit to Iran in 1996. Year after year, Mr. Amor's recommendations have been endorsed by the Special Representative on Iran, Maurice Copithorne. Unfortunately, however, neither Mr. Amor nor Mr. Copithorne can report to us today that any of their recommendations have been fully implemented.

During the past few years, representatives of the Iranian government have referred to legislation, reportedly adopted in 1999, which grants all Iranian citizens equal rights. They indicated that this "right to citizenship" legislation could potentially be very significant to Bahá'ís. Although the Baha'i community is the largest religious minority in Iran, its members are not included with the Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians as religious minorities protected under the Iranian constitution. We have yet to see any evidence that the "right to citizenship" legislation is being implemented.

Bahá'ís remain "unprotected infidels" under Iranian law.

Today the only protection the Bahá'ís in Iran have is the attention of the international community. Until clear and documented steps to eliminate the persecution of the Bahá'ís have been taken by the Iranian Government and implemented by its officials, the human rights violations perpetrated against this beleaguered community must continue to be monitored by the international community.

The Destiny of America

AND THE PROMISE OF WORLD PEACE

This statement by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States was addressed to the citizens of that country as a response to the tragedies of 11 September 2001.

It first appeared in The New York Times on 23 December 2001.

More than a hundred years ago, Baha'u'llah, the founder of the Baha'i Faith, addressing heads of state, proclaimed that the age of maturity for the entire human race had come. The unity of humankind was now to be established as the foundation of the great peace that would mark the highest stage in humanity's spiritual and social evolution. Revolutionary and worldshaking changes were therefore inevitable.

The Baha'i writings state:

The world is moving on. Its events are unfolding ominously and with bewildering rapidity. The whirlwind of its passions is swift and alarmingly violent. The New World is insensibly drawn into its vortex Dangers, undreamt of and unpredictable, threaten it both from within and from without. Its governments and peoples are being gradually enmeshed in the coils of the world's recurrent crises and fierce controversies The world is contracting into a neighborhood. America, willingly or

unwillingly, must face and grapple with this new situation. For purposes of national security, let alone any humanitarian motive, she must assume the obligations imposed by this newly created

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neighborhood. Paradoxical as it may seem, her only hope of extricating herself from the perils gathering around her is to become entangled in that very web of international association which the Hand of an inscrutable Providence is weaving. ¹

The American nation, Baha'is believe, will evolve through tests and trials to become a land of spiritual distinction and leadership, a champion of justice and unity among all peoples and nations, and a powerful servant of the cause of everlasting peace. This is the peace promised by God in the sacred texts of the world's religions. Establishing peace is not simply a matter of signing treaties and protocols; it is a complex task requiring a new level of commitment to resolving issues not customarily associated with the pursuit of peace.

Universal acceptance of the spiritual principle of the oneness of humankind is essential to any successful attempt to establish world peace. Racism, one of the most baneful and persistent evils, is a major barrier to peace.

The emancipation of women, the achievement of full equality of the sexes, is one of the most important, though less acknowledged, prerequisites of peace.

The inordinate disparity between rich and poor keeps the world in a state of instability, preventing the achievement of peace.

Unbridled nationalism, as distinguished from a sane and legitimate patriotism, must give way to a wider loyalty, to the love of humanity as a whole.

Religious strife, the cause of innumerable wars and conflicts throughout history, is a major obstacle to progress. The challenge facing the world's religious leaders is to contemplate, with hearts filled with compassion and the desire for truth, the plight of humanity, and to ask themselves whether they cannot, in humility before their God, submerge their theological differences in a great spirit of mutual forbearance that will enable them to work together for the advancement of human understanding and peace.

Baha'is pray, "May this American Democracy be the first nation to establish the foundation of international agreement. May it be

¹ Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1990), p. 87.

the first nation to proclaim the unity of mankind. May it be the first to unfurl the standard of the Most Great Peace. " ²
During this hour of crisis, we affirm our abiding faith in the

destiny of America. We know that the road to its destiny is long, thorny, and tortuous, but we are confident that America will emerge from her trials undivided and undefeatable.

2 'Abdu'l-Baha, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahd during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912*, rev. ed. (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1995), p. 36.

INFORMATION
AND RESOURCES
Obituaries

DORIS BALLARD

On 2 May 2001, in Alexandria, Virginia, the United States. Doris Copeland was born 26 January 1914 in Vernon, Texas. She became a Baha'i in 1949 and from that time dedicated much of her energy to spreading the Baha'i teachings. Pursuing her desire to teach the Faith, she traveled to South Africa in 1954 and lived in various countries in southern Africa for 15 years. Her service on Baha'i institutions included membership on Local Spiritual Assemblies in South Africa and the United States, on administrative committees in the United Kingdom, and on the National Spiritual Assembly of Zambia. It was as a member of that Assembly that she served as a delegate to the International Baha'i Convention in Haifa in 1968. She returned to Haifa in 1974 to work at the Baha'i World Centre and remained there for five years. She married Irving Ballard in the 1940s, but the two later divorced.

Professionally, she worked for the US civil service in a number of different positions, including a period with the American consul general in Johannesburg. Later in her life she returned to the United States, where she stayed until her passing. After her death, the Universal House of Justice wrote of the "indelible traces" she left on the development of the Baha'i Faith through her teaching efforts.

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GIOVANNI BALLERIO

On 15 December 2001, in Geneva, Switzerland. Giovanni Ballerio, born in Asmara, Eritrea, on 15 February 1943, became a Baha'i in Eritrea in 1971 and began his Baha'i service on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Asmara. For the remainder of his life, he served the Baha'i Faith in many capacities, including as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Italy and as a representative of the Baha'i International Community's Office at the United Nations in Geneva from 1981 to 2001. He also undertook, in 1998, a four-month-long mission on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to meet with heads of state and prominent individuals throughout the Pacific islands. During his early years, he worked as a junior high school teacher but eventually retired from this to give his efforts fully to the Faith, first on the NSA of Italy, in 1979, and then for the BJC's United Nations Office. He also served on Local Spiritual Assemblies in Italy, where

he moved in 1978, and Switzerland, where he lived from 1981 until his death. His landmark work with the Baha'i International Community included developing a working relationship between the BIC and the World Health Organization, and establishing a permanent BIC representation to the United Nations in Geneva. Shortly after his passing, in March 2002, a plaque recognizing his achievements with the BIC was dedicated by the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, recognizing "his outstanding work to promote gender equality, for serving with devotion the Committee, and helping individual members without distinction and beyond the call of duty. " He is survived by his wife, Gail Madjzoub, and by three children from a previous marriage.

DONALD BARRETT

On 22 August 2001, in Edmund, Oklahoma, the United States. Donald Barrett was born in Berkeley, California, in 1927 and became a Baha'i in 1951. He married Barbara Jewkes in 1949 and the couple had two children. Along with his family, he was active in spreading the Baha'i teachings throughout many countries in South America and assisted in the formation of many Local and National Spiritual Assemblies while pioneering to Colombia, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela during the 1950s, and Ecuador in the 1970s. In 1978-79 he was appointed to the Auxiliary Board in the United States. Most notable of all his services, perhaps, was Mr. Barrett's work as the Secretary-General of the Baha'i International Community, which the Universal House of Justice described as "indefatigable service." His law degree and experience in practicing international law were particularly useful during that period, when he was called upon to negotiate the official status of the Baha'i World Centre with the Israeli government in 1987. After returning to the United States, he eventually

settled in Oklahoma, teaching English at the University of Oklahoma, volunteering his English-teaching skills to Iranian Baha'i immigrants in the community, and serving on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Edmund.

PALLE BISCHOFF

On 24 January 2002, in Hørsholm, Denmark. Palle Bischoff was born in Humlebæk, Denmark, on 16 April 1925. His contributions to the Baha'i Faith centered on his activities in his own and in other European countries and as a Deputy Trustee of the Baha'i Faith in Denmark. In 1951, four years after joining the Baha'i Faith, Mr. Bischoff moved to Greenland, where he became one of the first Baha'is to settle in that country. Despite having a degree in commercial science, he began his career in Greenland as a fisherman, later working as a manager in a fishing station, and then opening a ski school. Returning to Denmark in 1954, he worked for various companies before establishing his own consulting firm with the Agricultural Council of Denmark in 1989. He and his wife, Ingegerd Saxlund, whom he married in 1960, raised three children. The couple offered their mountain residence in Norway as a venue for Baha'i classes and summer schools. Mr. Bischoff

was a member of the first Local Spiritual Assembly in Copenhagen and the Regional Assembly of Scandinavia and Finland from 1957 until 1963, when he was elected to Denmark's first National Spiritual Assembly. He served either on that body or as an Auxiliary Board member from 1963 to 2000 and also, from 1964 to 1998, as a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Søllerød, Denmark. In its message after his passing, the Universal House of Justice recalled his "outstanding services" that "earned him an imperishable place in the annals of the Danish Baha'i community."

SHIRIN BOMAN

On 12 February 2002, in Indore, India. Shirin Irani was born 6 October 1911 in Mumbai, India, and became a Baha' I at a young age. Her more than six decades of service to the Baha'i community included membership on the National Spiritual Assembly of India from 1953 until her appointment to the Continental Board of Counsellors in Asia in 1968. She married Behram Boman Mehrbani in 1926 and the couple had six children. Her husband died in 1963. Mrs. Boman lived in many cities in India, serving as a homefront pioneer to Ujjain and Gwalior, and also undertook trips to other countries, including Bangladesh, Canada, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Uganda, and the United States, to spread the Baha'i teachings. Many people in India learned of the Faith through her efforts, and she initiated many large-scale teaching campaigns in the country. Her services to the Faith also included acting as a companion and interpreter to 'Amatu'l-Baha Ru-lyyih Khanum during the latter's travels in India, Nepal, and Sikkim

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in 1964. After Mrs. Boman's death, the Universal House of Justice wrote that her efforts to promote the Baha'i Faith were "inspiring" and that she had "enriched the annals of the Indian Baha'i community." It also requested that a memorial gathering be held in her honor at the House of Worship in New Delhi and in other parts of India.

GERTRUDE EISENBERG

On 8 September 2001, in Duarte, California, United States. Gertrude "Trudy" Eisenberg was born 13 June 1906 in Sag Harbor, New York. She learned of the Faith as an adult and was inspired to travel to share its teachings. In 1953, she was named a Knight of Baha'u'llah by Shoghi Effendi in recognition of her arrival as the first Baha' f in the Canary Islands.

Her other travels included trips to Brazil, Guatemala, Paraguay, and the Hawaiian Islands. In its message after her passing, the Universal House of Justice praised her "courage and steadfastness," which it said would "inspire generations to come."

RASHID GULOV

On 23 October 2001, in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Born in Tugarak, Vose Region, Tajikistan, in 1971, Rashid Gulov became a member of the Baha'i Faith in 1995. He served as a pioneer to Georgia in 1997- 98 and then as a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Dushanbe, the National Teaching

Committee, and the Training Institute in Tajikistan. Mr. Gulov was killed while returning home from work-the victim of an element in the country that sought to harm the Baha'is and the Baha'i community. Because of this, the Universal House of Justice deemed his death as martyrdom. He is survived by his wife, Parvina Murodova, whom he married in 1994. The murder of Mr. Gulov was followed only two months later by the death of another Baha'i in Dushanbe, which, in turn, came two years after the killing of 'Abdu'llah Mogharrabi in the same city. 1

PHILIP HAINSWORTH

On 16 December 2001, in Sevenoaks, Kent, England. Philip Hainsworth was born on 27 July 1919 in Bradford, Yorkshire. He became a Baha'i in 1938, when there were fewer than 100 Baha'fs in the UK, and from that time on dedicated his life to service of the Faith, first bringing the Faith to cities in England and Northern Ireland and assisting in the formation of many Local Spiritual Assemblies. Mr. Hainsworth served in the Royal Army Medical Corps of the British Army in World War II, fulfilling his

1 See the obituary of Afshin Shokoufeh Mosadegh on p. 308. Mr. Mogharrabi's obituary appears in *The Baha'i World 1999-2000*, pp. 306-07.

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duty to his country while abstaining from combat because of his Faith. Then in 1951, responding to the request of Shoghi Effendi that Baha'ls arise to teach the Faith, Mr. Hainsworth traveled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda in Africa. He was named as a Knight of Baha'u'llah by virtue of his being among the first group of Baha'fs to travel to Uganda, and Shoghi Effendi referred to him as "the spiritual Stanley of Africa." In 1956 he married Lois Houchin and the couple had three children. He was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Central and East Africa from 1956 to 1966 and served on the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles for a total of 32 years, both before and after his African trips. His other efforts included authoring several books about the Faith, including coauthoring *The Baha'i Faith*, which became a standard text in some schools, and editing the collection of Shoghi Effendi's letters to the Baha'fs of the UK, *Unfolding Destiny*. Shortly before his death he returned to Uganda for the 50th anniversary celebration of the Baha'i community there. 2 After his passing, the Universal House of Justice recalled his "staunch perseverance" and "indefatigable efforts" and asked that memorial gatherings be held throughout the United Kingdom and Uganda.

PHILIP HARVEY

On 13 April 2002, in Harare, Zimbabwe. Philip Desmond Harvey was born in London, England, on 4 August 1927. He served in the Royal Navy as an aircraft technician and later focused his career on avionics and electrical engineering. He learned of the Faith while in the military and became a Baha'i in 1952, after which he began to concentrate his energies on service to the Baha' I Faith. He met his wife-to-be, Pary Vahid-Tehrani,

in 1953 and the two married later that year—the first Anglo-Persian marriage in the British Baha'i community. The couple had one son. In 1966, the family moved to South Africa, and so began more than 36 years of pioneer service in South West Africa (later Namibia), Swaziland, and Rhodesia (later Zimbabwe). Mr. Harvey was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Swaziland, Lesotho, and Mozambique during his time in Swaziland and was also honored by King Sobhuza II for his work in assisting with the country's independence celebrations. The family moved to Rhodesia in 1971, where Mr. Harvey became the manager of the Air Zimbabwe Technical Training School and later served on the government's aviation regulatory body. After his death, the Universal House of Justice wrote that his "distinguished" services in Africa would be "long remembered."

2 For an account of Uganda's 50th anniversary and more about Mr. Hainsworth's efforts in that country, see pp. 117-22.

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ABBAS KATIRAI

On 3 May 2001, in Ashiya City, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan. Mr. Katirai was born on 5 May 1923 in Hamadan, Iran, to Baha'i parents. He married Rezvanieh Alizadeh in 1947, with whom he had three children, and in 1953 the family pioneered to Japan, seeking to assist in the development of the Baha'i community there. His services included membership on the National Spiritual Assembly of Japan from 1965 to 1988 and on the Continental Boards of Counsellors of Asia from 1990 to 2000. In 1958, he donated the land for the first Baha'i cemetery in Japan, in Ashiya, the place where he was finally laid to rest. After spending time between Iran and Japan, he moved with his family in 1990 to the Sakhalin Islands. There, he and his wife spent five years helping to establish the first Baha'i communities in that region, an act for which they were named Knights of Baha'u'llah. Among his numerous other services were representing the Universal House of Justice at the formation of the first National Spiritual Assembly of Armenia and helping to establish the first National Spiritual Assembly of Georgia. After his passing, the Universal House of Justice urged that memorial gatherings be held in his honor at the House of Worship in New Delhi, India, as well as in Armenia, Georgia, and Russia, in recognition of his contributions to the development of those national Baha'i communities.

CORNELIUS KHONOU

On 9 April 2002, in Ga Rankuwa, South Africa. Cornelius Christopher Khonou was born 27 October 1929 near Bleskop, Rustenberg, South Africa. He became a Baha'i in 1957 and that same year married Paulina Huma, with whom he had seven children. Elected as one of the founding members of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Luka, South Africa, he went on to serve as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of South and West Africa for five years, the National Spiritual Assembly of Bophuthatswana for 12 years, and the National Spiritual Assembly of South Africa for seven years.

Mr. Khonou worked in education, beginning as a primary school teacher and eventually becoming a principal before earning a post as Inspector of Adult Education. He traveled to many towns and villages within South Africa in his efforts to teach the Baha'i Faith and also served as the Deputy Trustee of f:Iuququ'llah of South Africa beginning in 2000.

PATRICIA LOCKE

On 20 October 2001 , in Phoenix, Arizona, United States. Patricia Ann McGillis was born on 21 January 1928 in Idaho, of Hunkpapa Lakota and White Earth Chippewa heritage. Her native name was Tawacin Waste Win, which means "she has a good consciousness, compassionate woman. "

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She worked in education for most of her life, teaching at all levels from elementary school to university, and was actively involved in promoting native practices and languages. In 1978, she was instrumental in lobbying for the American Indian Religious Freedom Act and soon after was appointed as cochair of a US government Task Force on Indian Education Policy. Ms. Locke also helped to organize 17 tribal colleges on native reservations in the United States, served on the National Indian Education Association and numerous other advisory boards for education, human rights, and environmental issues, and acted as chair of the Indigenous Woman's Caucus at the 1995 UN Women's Conference in Beijing. She was much in demand as a lecturer and is recognized as one of the most influential Native Americans of the twentieth century. She had two children from a 23-year marriage and became a Baha'i at age 63, taught by her son. Elected to the National Spiritual Assembly just two years later, she served on that body until her death. The Universal House of Justice praised her "outstanding endeavors as an educator and administrator" who championed the needs of America's native peoples.

ZYLPHA MAPP-ROBINSON

On 12 May 2001, in New York City, New York, United States. Zylpha O. Mapp was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on 25 August 1914 and was raised in a Baha'i family. The message from the Baha'i World Centre after her death recalled her "spirit of selfless devotion" in her service to the Baha'i Faith, which was notable in her extensive travels to teach the Faith. She lived for more than 20 years in Uganda, where she pioneered in 1970, having previously served on Baha'i institutions in both the United States and Canada. Elected as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Uganda in 1976, she also served on several Local Spiritual Assemblies and on various national Baha'i committees. Her professional training was as an educator, having earned a master's degree and Ph.D. in education. She applied her training to helping humanity, developing health and nutrition projects in India and Burkina Faso, authoring handbooks on development and education, and assisting in the creation of Baha'i training institute programs in Uganda. Another of her significant services in Uganda was as secretary to Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga. She undertook

trips to many countries in Africa to spread the Baha'i teachings and also traveled in Asia and the Caribbean region. Her husband, Robert Robinson, died in 1994. She is survived by one daughter. After her passing, a message from the Baha'i World Centre requested that a memorial gathering be held for her in the House of Worship in Uganda.

THE BAHAF WORLD 2001-2002

ELENA MARSELLA

On 13 March 2002, in Kailua, Hawaii, the United States. Elena Maria Marsella was born in August 1913 in Providence, Rhode Island. She became a Baha'i in 1939 and in 1945 began her travels to promote the Faith and its interests, going first to the Dominican Republic. She lived primarily in the Caribbean, Micronesia, and Polynesia, and in 1954 she and her husband, Roy Fernie, were named Knights of Baha'u'llah when they moved to the Gilbert and Ellice Islands (now known as Kiribati and Tuvalu), as they were the first Baha'ls in that region. She served on a variety of Baha'i institutions, including the National Spiritual Assembly for Central America and the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands. She later relocated to Asia and was appointed to the Continental Board of Counsellors for Northeastern Asia in 1973, a post she occupied until 1980. She pursued several careers in her life, working as a teacher, a member of the Foreign Service, and a pianist. After her passing the Universal House of Justice lauded her "enrichment of Baha'i literature through her scholarly endeavors," which included authoring the book *The Quest for Eden*, and praised her "ardent commitment to the promotion" of the Baha'i Faith.

AFSHIN SHOKOUFEH MOSADEGH

On 3 December 2001, in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Born in Rasht, Iran, on 23 September 1968, Afshin Shokoufeh Mosadegh was only 33 years old when he gave his life as a Baha'i martyr. He was shot outside his home in Dushanbe and died en route to the hospital. The government's inquiry into the murder determined that he was killed by a member of a fanatical element in the country that wished to harm the Baha'ls. A Baha'i for 10 years, Mr. Mosadegh was actively involved in advancing the Baha'i community in Tajikistan and served several terms as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly and the Local Spiritual Assembly of Dushanbe. He is survived by his wife, Soheilah Mehrabhani, whom he married in 1991, and two children. His tragic death followed the murder, under similar circumstances, of Rashid Gulov the previous October and the killing of 'Abdu'llah Mogharrabi in 1999, all in Dushanbe. 3

QUDRATU'LLAH RAWHANF

On 30 September 2001, in Gaborone, Botswana. Qudratu'llah Rawhfol was born in 1922 and was living in India when he arose in 1954 to pioneer to the Island of Mahe, in the Seychelle Islands, an act for which he was

The Baha'i

3 Seep. 304 of this volume for the obituary of Mr. Gulov and

World 1999-2000, pp. 306-07, for Mr. Mogharrabi's obituary.

OBITUARIES

named a Knight of Baha'u'llah by Shoghi Effendi. In 1993 he moved to Botswana to live with his daughter, who survives him, as does a son in Chile. After his passing, the Universal House of Justice wrote, "His services in the Indian subcontinent and in Africa are remembered with loving appreciation."

Statistics

GENERAL STATISTICS

Worldwide Baha'i' population	More than five million
Countries/dependent territories where the Baha'i' Faith is established	190 countries/46 territories
Continental Counsellors	81
Auxiliary Board members serving throughout the world	990
National/Regional Spiritual Assemblies	182
Local Spiritual Assemblies	11,746
Localities where Bahfi'.s reside	127,555
Indigenous tribes, races, and ethnic groups represented in the Baha'i' community	2,112
Languages into which Baha' u'llah's writings have been translated	802
Publishing Trusts	33

3II

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Geographic Distribution of
Local Spiritual Assemblies by Continent

Asia 2,957

Australasia 856

Africa 3,808

Growth in the Number of Localities

Where Baha' is Reside

140,000

120,000

100,000

80,000

60,000

40,000

interdisciplinary manner. Also included in this category are several institutions-especially large schools-which, although focusing only on one field, have the potential to make a significant impact. In this category there are currently 45 such organizations.

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3 15 West 70th Street
New York, NY 10023
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The Bab{ Question You Mentioned: The Origins of the Baha'i
Community of the Netherlands
Jelle de Vries. Herent, Belgium: Peeters, 2002. 362 pp.
Presents a detailed and illustrated history of the Baha'f Faith in the
Netherlands. Parr of the New Religious Identities in the Western World
series.

A Few Minutes a Day
Dicy Reaugh Hall. Illustrated by Brittany Virott. Oxford: George Ronald,
2002. 290 pp.
Designed to help parents of primary-school-age children educate their
children in the Baha'i Faith and contribute to their spiritual growth. For
each day, there is a short prayer or reading for children to learn, an activity
to undertake, and a subject for consultation.

Global Governance and the Lesser Peace
Foad Katirai. Oxford: George Ronald, 2001. 148 pp.
Explores issues involved in global governance and peace and elucidates
the means set out in the Baha'f teachings to establish the foundation of a
system of international governance.

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The Great African Safari: The Travels of 'Amatu'l-Baha Ru~lyyih Khanum in Africa

Violette Nakhjavdnf. Oxford: George Ronald, 2002. 608 pp.

An eyewitness account of 'Amatu'l-Baha Ru):iiyyih Khanum's historic threeyear journey across Africa, told from the diaries of the author, who accompanied Ru):iiyyih Khanum on these travels. Together they visited 34 African countries, driving a Land Rover over 36,000 miles through cities, towns, and remote villages, and meeting people in all walks of life, from emperors and kings to rural farmers.

Never Be Afraid to Dare: The Story of "General Jack," Marion Elizabeth Jack

Jan Teofil jasion. Oxford: George Ronald, 2001. 352 pp.

Recounts the life of Marion Jack, a Canadian artist and "immortal heroine" of the Baha'i Faith who traveled with the message of the Baha'i teachings to the Balkans and spent nearly 30 years in Bulgaria. The latest in the Baha'i Heritage series.

On the Front Lines: Baha'i Youth in Their Own Words

Edited by Aaron Emmel and Heather Brandon. Oxford: George Ronald, 2002. 181 pp.

Stories and interviews from the Baha'i youth magazine One, with articles and essays touching on concerns of youth throughout the world, such as relationships, careers, personal transformation , and the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Pathways to Transformation: The Baha'i Journey

Compiled by John Davidson. Ingleside: Baha'i Publications Australia, 2001. 335 pp.

Selections from the Baha'i writings on subjects related to personal, spiritual, and societal transformation, with sections on spiritual civilization, Baha'i administration, teaching the Baha'i Faith, and character development.

The Poetry of 'Filiirih

John S. Hatcher and Amrollah Hemmat. Oxford: George Ronald, 2002. 202 pp.

Gives a brief biographical account of an early heroine and martyr of the Baha'i Faith and provides the Persian originals and translations of some of her poems, along with notes and commentary.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

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Prayers of Ecstasy: Selections from the Baha'i Sacred Writings

Bahd 'u'ldh. Los Angeles: Kalimdt Press, 2001. 136 pp.

New Baha'i prayerbook emphasizing the mystical experience of prayer with sections on love, fire, rapture, ecstasy, sorrow, and joy.

Sacred Earth: Passages from the World's Scriptures regarding the Spiritual Nature of our Material World

Compilation by Sarah Clive, with photographs by Rob Weinberg. Rutland, United Kingdom: Bahd 'i Publishing Trust and Arts for Nature, 2001. 90 pp. Shows how nature has been used in sacred scriptures to illustrate spiritual realities. It contains extracts from the Baha'i Faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism, and Taoism.

The Summons of the Lord of Hosts

Bahd'u'llah. Haifa: Bahd'i World Centre, 2002. 272 pp.

Contains authoritative English translations of six major works written by Baha'u'llah in the latter half of the nineteenth century, which clearly enunciate

His claim to prophethood and offer a prescription for peaceful and just leadership in the modern world. The book collects the Suriy-i-Haykal, Suriy-i-Ra'ls, Law~-i-Ra' ls, Law~-i-Fu'ad, and Suriy-i-Muluk.

The Tablet of the Holy Mariner: An Illustrated Guide to Baha'u'llah's Mystical Writing

Michael Sours. Los Angeles: Kalimdt Press, 2002. 101 pp.

An illustrated guide to one of Baha'u'llah's most well-known mystical works. Drawing on the Sufi tradition, the Tablet describes each soul's spiritual journey to God as a voyage on the Ark of eternity, guided by a Holy Mariner.

Thornton Chase: First American Baha'i

Robert H. Stockman. Wilmette: Bahd'i Publishing Trust, 2002. 284 pp.

Biography of one of the most significant figures in early American Baha'i history. It examines his early years and spiritual search, his discovery of the Baha'i Faith, and his efforts to promote the Faith throughout his life.

To Be a Father

Compiled by Wendi Momen. Oxford: George Ronald, 2002. 209 pp.

Collection of scriptures, prayers, poems, aphorisms, and literary pieces from the Baha'i Faith and other religions about fatherhood. It contains passages on subjects such as childbirth, the importance of fathers, and fathers and their families. A companion volume to To Be a Mother.

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Visions of a New World Order: Paradise Created

Brenton Edwards, with text by Wendi Momen. Foreword by Peter]. Khan.

Oxford: George Ronald, 2001. 180 pp.

Photographs of places associated with the Baha'i Faith, primarily holy places in Israel, with accompanying text outlining the history of the Faith. The book is divided into sections related to the Bab, Baha'u'llah, 'Abdu'l-Baha, Shoghi Effendi, and the Baha'i administrative order.

Youth: Channels for Change

Various. Riviera Beach: Palabra Publications, 2001. 119 pp.

Compilation of extracts from the writings of the Bab, Baha'u'llah, 'Abdu'l-Baha, Shoghi Effendi, and the Universal House of Justice relating to youth.

ERRATUM: In Selected New Publications in The Bahd'f World 2000-2001,

the publishing information for Nader Saeidi's book *Logos and Civilization* should read: Bethesda, MD: University Press of Maryland, 2000.

A Basic Baha'i Reading List

The following list has been prepared to provide a sampling of works conveying the spiritual truths, social principles, and history of the Bahá'í Faith. It is by

no means exhaustive. For a more complete record of Bahá'í literature, see *Bibliography of English-language Works on the Bab! and Baha'i Faiths, 1844-1985*, compiled by William P Collins (Oxford: George Ronald, 1990).

Selected Writings of Baha'u'llih

The Kitab-i-Aqdas

The Most Holy Book, Baha' u'llah's charter for a new world civilization. Written in Arabic in 1873, the volume's first authorized English translation was released in 1993.

The Kitab-i-fqfo

The Book of Certitude was written prior to Baha'u'llah's declaration of His mission as an explanation of progressive revelation and a proof of the station of the Bab.

The Hidden Words

Written in the form of a compilation of moral aphorisms, these brief verses distill the spiritual guidance of all the divine Revelations of the past.

THE BAHÁ'í WORLD 2001-2002

Tablets of Baha'u'llah revealed after the Kitab-i-Aqdas

A compilation of Tablets revealed between 1873 and 1892 which enunciate important principles of Bahf u'llah's Revelation, reaffirm truths He previously proclaimed, elaborate on some of His laws, reveal further prophecies, and establish subsidiary ordinances to supplement the provisions of the Kitab-i-Aqdas.

Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah

A selection of Baha'u' llah's sacred writings translated and compiled by the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith to convey the spirit of Baha' u'llah's life and teachings.

Writings of the Bab

Selections from the Writings of the Bab

The first compilation of the Bab's writings to be translated into English.

Selected Writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha

Paris Talks: Addresses given by 'Abdu'l-Baha in Paris in 1911-1912

Addresses given by 'Abdu'l-Baha to a wide variety of audiences, in which He explains the basic principles of the Baha'i Faith.

The Secret of Divine Civilization

A message addressed to the rulers and people of Persia in 1875 illuminating the

causes of the fall and rise of civilization and elucidating the spiritual character of true civilization.

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha

A compilation of selected letters from 'Abdu'l-Bahfs extensive correspondence on a wide variety of topics, including the purpose of life, the nature of love, and the development of character.

Some Answered Questions

A translation of 'Abdu'l-Bahfs answers to a series of questions posed to Him during interviews with Laura Clifford Barney between 1904 and 1906. The topics covered include the influence of the Prophets on the evolution of humanity, the Baha'i perspective on Christian doctrine, and the powers and conditions of the Manifestations of God.

BAHA'I READING LIST

Selected Writings of Shoghi Effendi

God Passes By

A detailed history of the first 100 years of the Baha'i Faith.

The Promised Day Is Come

A commenrary on Baha' u'llah's letters to the kings and rulers of the world.

The World Order of Baha'u'llih: Selected Letters

An exposition on the relation between the Baha'i community and the entire process of social evolution under the dispensation of Baha'u'llah, in the form of a series of letters from the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith to the Baha' ls of the West between 1929 and 1936.

Introductory Works

Baha'u'llah

Baha'i International Community, Office of Public Information, 1991.

A brief statement detailing Baha'u'llah's life and work issued on the occasion of the centenary of His passing.

Baha'u'llih and the New Era

john Esslemont. 5th rev. paper ed. Wilmette: Baha 'i Publishing Trust, 1980.

The first comprehensive account of the Baha'i Faith, written in 1923 and updated for subsequent editions.

The Baha'i Faith: The Emerging Global Religion

William S. Hatcher and]. Douglas Martin. Rev. ed. Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1998.

Textbook providing an overview of Baha'i history, teachings, administrative structure, and community life.

All Things Made New

john Ferraby. 2d rev. ed. London: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1987.

A comprehensive outline of the Baha'i Faith.

Most of the books listed above have been published by various Baha'i Publishing

Trusts and are available in bookshops, libraries, or from the Trusts. Please see the Directory on pp. 317-19 for addresses.

Glossary

'Abdu'l-Baha: (1844-1921) Son of Baha' u'llah, designated His successor and authorized interpreter of His writings. Named 'Abbas after His grandfather, 'Abdu'l-Baha was known to the general public as 'Abbas Effendi. Baha'u'llah gave Him such titles as "the Mose Great Branch," "the Mystery of God," and "the Master." After Baha'u'llah's passing, He chose the name 'Abdu'l-Baha, meaning "Servant of Baha'u'llah."

Administrative Order: The system of administration as conceived by Baha'u'llah, formally established by 'Abdu'l-Baha, and realized during the Guardianship of Shoghi Effendi. It consists, on the one hand, of a series of elected councils, universal, national, and local, in which are invested legislative, executive, and judicial powers over the Baha'i community, and, on the other hand, of eminent and devoted Baha'fs appointed for the specific purposes of propagation and protection of the Faith under the guidance of the Head of the Faith, the Universal House of Justice.

'Amatu'l-Baha Rill:ilyiyh Khanum: (1910-2000) Mary Sutherland Maxwell, an eminent North American Baha'i who became the wife of Shoghi Effendi Rabbinf, Guardian of the Baha'i Faith, in 1937, after which she became known as Ru}:ifyiyh Khinum Rabbinf. ('Amacu'l-Baha is a title meaning "Handmaiden of Baha'u'llah.") She served as the Guardian's secretary during his lifetime and was appointed a Hand of the Cause of God in 1952. After Shoghi Effendi's passing in 1957, she traveled extensively to teach the Baha'i Faith, consolidate Baha'i communities, and serve as a representative of the Universal House of Justice at major events.

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Arc: An arc cut into Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel, along which the international administrative buildings of the Baha'i Faith have been built.

Auxiliary Boards: An institution created by Shoghi Effendi in 1954 to assist the Hands of the Cause of God. When the institution of the Continental Boards of Counsellors was established in 1968 by the Universal House of Justice, the Auxiliary Boards were placed under its direction.

Bab, the: The title, meaning "Gate," assumed by Siyyid 'Alf-MuJ:iammad, Who was the Prophet-Founder of the Bab! Faith and the Forerunner of Baha'u'llah. Born 20 October 1819, the Bab proclaimed Himself to be the Promised One of Islam and announced that His mission was to alert the people to the imminent advent of "Him Whom God shall make manifest," namely, Bah:i'u'llah. Because of these claims, the Bab was executed by order of Na~iri'd-Oln Shah on 9 July 1850.

Baha'i Era (BE): The period of the Baha'i calendar beginning with the Declaration of the Bab on 23 May 1844, and expected to last until the next appearance of a Manifestation (Prophet) of God after the expiration

of at least 1,000 years.

Baha'i International Community: A name used generally in reference to the worldwide Baha'i community and officially in that community's external relations. In the latter context, the Baha'i International Community is an association of the National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the world and functions as an international nongovernmental organization. Its offices include its Secretariat at the Baha'i World Centre, a United Nations Office in New York with a branch in Geneva, an Office of Public Information, an Office of the Environment, and an Office for the Advancement of Women.

Baha'i World Centre: The spiritual and administrative center of the Baha'i Faith, comprising the holy places in the Haifa-Acre area and the Arc of administrative buildings on Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel.

Baha' u'llah: Title, meaning "Glory of God," assumed by Mirza J.:Iusayn-'Alf, Founder of the Baha'i Faith. Born on 12 November 1817, He declared His mission as the Promised One of All Ages in April 1863 and passed away in Acre, Palestine, on 29 May 1892 after 40 years of imprisonment, banishment, and house arrest. Bah:i'u'llah's writings are considered by Bah:i'fs to be direct revelation from God.

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Bahji: Arabic for "delight." Located near Acre, it is a place of pilgrimage for Baha'is which comprises the Shrine of Baha'u'llah, the mansion which was His last residence, and the surrounding gardens that serve to beautify the site.

Calendar, Baha'i: Year consisting of 19 months of 19 days each, with the addition of certain "intercalary days" (four in ordinary and five in leap years) between the 18th and 19th months in order to adjust the calendar to the solar year. Naw-Ruz, the Baha'i new year, is astronomically fixed, commencing at the vernal equinox (21 March). The Baha'i era (BE) begins with the year of the Bab's declaration (1844 CE).

Consultation: A form of discussion between individuals and within groups which requires the subjugation of egotism so that all ideas can be shared and evaluated with frankness, courtesy, and openness of mind, and decisions arrived at can be wholeheartedly supported. Its guiding principles were elaborated by 'Abdu'l-Baha.

Continental Boards of Counsellors: An institution created in 1968 by the Universal House of Justice to extend into the future the work of the institution of the Hands of the Cause of God, particularly its appointed functions of protection and propagation. With the passing of Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith, there was no way for additional Hands of the Cause to be appointed. The duties of the Counsellors include directing the Auxiliary Boards in their respective areas, advising and collaborating

with National Spiritual Assemblies, and keeping the Universal House of Justice informed concerning the conditions of the Faith in their areas .
Counsellors are appointed for terms of five years.

Convention: A gathering called at a regional, national, or international level for consultation on matters affecting the welfare of the Baha'i community and for the purpose, respectively, of electing delegates to a National Convention, electing members of a National Spiritual Assembly, or electing members of the Universal House of Justice.

Hands of the Cause of God: Individuals appointed by Baha'u'llah, and later by Shoghi Effendi, who were charged with the specific duties of protecting and propagating the Faith. (Four individuals were recognized posthumously as Hands of the Cause by 'Abdu'l-Baha.) With the passing of Shoghi Effendi, there was no further possibility for appointing Hands of the Cause; hence, in order to extend into the future the important functions of propagation and protection, the Universal House of Justice

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in 1968 created Continental Boards of Counsellors and in 1973 established the International Teaching Centre, which coordinates their work.

Holy Days: Eleven days commemorating significant Baha'i anniversaries, on nine of which work is suspended.

I:luququ'llah: Arabic for "the Right of God." As instituted in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, payment to "the Authority in the Cause to whom all must turn" (at present, the Universal House of Justice) of 19 percent of what remains of one's personal income after one's essential expenses have been covered. Funds generated by the payment of I:luququ'llah are used for the promotion of the Faith and for the welfare of society.

International Teaching Centre: An institution established in 1973 by the Universal House of Justice to bring to fruition the work of the Hands of the Cause of God in the Holy Land and to provide for its extension into the future. The duties of the International Teaching Centre include coordinating, stimulating, and directing the activities of the Continental Boards of Counsellors and acting as liaison between them and the Universal House of Justice. The membership of the Teaching Centre comprises the surviving Hands of the Cause and also nine Counsellors appointed by the Universal House of Justice. The seat of the International Teaching Centre is located at the Baha'i World Centre in Haifa, Israel.

Knight of Baha' u'llah: Title initially given by Shoghi Effendi to those Baha'is who arose to open specified new territories to the Faith during the first year of the Ten Year Crusade (1953-1963) and subsequently applied to those who first reached the remaining unopened territories on the list at a later date.

Lesser Peace: A political peace to be established by the nations of the world

in order to bring about an end to war. Its establishment will prepare the way for the Most Great Peace, a condition of permanent peace and world unity to be founded on the spiritual principles and institutions of the World Order of Baha'u'llah and signaling humanity's coming of age.

Local Spiritual Assembly: The local administrative body in the Baha'i Faith, ordained in the *Kid.b-i-Aqdas*. The nine members are directly elected by secret ballot each year at Ri4van from among the adult believers in a community.

Monument Gardens: Beautifully landscaped gardens at the heart of the Arc on Mount Carmel where befitting monuments have been erected over

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the graves of the daughter and the wife of Baha' u'llah, His son who died in prison in Acre, and the wife of 'Abdu'l-Baha.

Mount Carmel: The mountain spoken of by Isaiah as the "mountain of the Lord." Site of the Baha'i World Centre including several Baha'i holy places, the most important of which are the Shrine of the Bab and the Monument Gardens.

National Spiritual Assembly: The national administrative body in the Bahi'f Faith, ordained in the Baha'i sacred writings, with authority over all activities and affairs of the Baha'i Faith throughout its area. Among its duties

are to stimulate, unify, and coordinate the manifold activities of Local Spiritual Assemblies and of individual Baha'ls within its jurisdiction. The members of National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the world constitute the electoral college for the Universal House of Justice. At Ri4van 2002, there were 182 National or Regional Spiritual Assemblies. See also Regional Spiritual Assembly.

Nineteen Day Feast: The principal gathering in each local Baha'i community, every Baha'i month, for the threefold purpose of worship , consultation, and fellowship.

Pioneer: Any Baha'i who arises and leaves his or her home to journey to another country for the purpose of teaching the Baha'f Faith. "Homefront pioneer" describes those who move to areas within their own country that have yet to be exposed to the Baha'i Faith or where the Baha'i community needs strengthening.

Regional Baha'i Council: An element of Baha'i administration between the local and national levels, established at the discretion of the Universal House of Justice in countries where the condition and size of the Baha'i community warrant. A means of decentralizing the work of the National Spiritual Assembly, a Regional Council may be formed either by election or by appointment, depending on local requirements and the condition of the Bahi'f community. It provides for a level of autonomous decision making on both teaching and administrative matters. In some countries, Stat~ Baha'i Councils perform

these tasks within specific civic jurisdictions.

Regional Spiritual Assembly: An institution identical in function to the National Spiritual Assembly but including a number of countries or regions in its jurisdiction, often established as a precursor to the formation of a National Spiritual Assembly in each of the countries it encompasses.

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Riḳvan: Arabic for "Paradise." Twelve-day festival (from 21 April through 2 May) commemorating Baha'u'llah's declaration of His mission to His companions in 1863 in the Garden of Riḳvan in Baghdad.

Shoghi Effendi Rabbaní: (1897-1957) The Guardian of the Baha'i Faith after the passing of 'Abdu'l-Baha in 1921, designated in His Will and Testament as His successor in interpreting the Baha'i writings and as Head of the Faith.

Shrine of Baha'u'llah: The resting place of Baha'u'llah's mortal remains, located near the city of Acre, Israel. The Shrine is the holiest spot on earth to Baha'is and a place of pilgrimage.

Shrine of the Bab: The resting place of the Bab's mortal remains, located on Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel, a sacred site to Baha'is, and a place of pilgrimage.

State Baha'i Council: See Regional Baha'i Council.

Tablet: Divinely revealed scripture. In Baha'í scripture, the term is used to denote writings revealed by Baha'u'llah, the Bab, and 'Abdu'l-Baha.

Ten Year Crusade: (1953-1963) Ten Year Plan initiated by Shoghi Effendi for reaching the Baha'i Faith, which culminated with the election of the Universal House of Justice during the centenary of the Declaration of Baha'u'llah. The objectives of the Crusade were the development of the institutions at the World Centre, the consolidation of the communities of the participating National Spiritual Assemblies, and the spread of the Faith to new regions. See also Knight of Bahd'u'llah.

Universal House of Justice: Head of the Baha'i Faith after the passing of Shoghi Effendi, and the supreme administrative body ordained by Baha'u'llah in the Kitab-i-Aqdas, His book of laws. The Universal House of Justice is elected every five years by the members of all National Spiritual Assemblies, who gather at an International Convention. The House of Justice was elected for the first time in 1963. It occupied its permanent seat on Mount Carmel in 1983.

Some entries adapted from A Basic Baha'í Dictionary, ed. Wendi Momen (Oxford: George Ronald, 1989).

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THE BAHAI WORLD

2001- 2002

158 OF THE BAHAI ERA

n just over one hundred years, the Baha'i Faith has grown from

I an obscure movement in the Middle East to the second-most widespread of the independent world religions. Embracing people from more than 2, 100 ethnic, racial, and tribal groups, it is quite likely the most diverse organized body of people on the planet today. Its unity challenges prevailing theory about human nature and the prospects for our common future.

The Faith's central message is that of unity. Its Founder, Baha'u'llah, teaches that there is only one God, that there is only one human race, and that all the world's religions have been stages in the revelation of God's purpose for humankind. Today, humanity has collectively come of age: "The earth is but one country," Baha'u'llah asserts, "and mankind its citizens."

The emergence of the Baha'i community offers persuasive evidence that the human race, in all its diversity, can learn to live and work as a single people in its planetary homeland.

The Bahd'i World is the principal public record of the community's growth and development. The volumes reproduce major documents and provide statistical data and other information on the Baha'i Faith's wideranging program of activities, which are illustrated by many photographs and charts. In-depth articles focus on major areas of Baha'i concern. For the serious researcher and the general student alike, the dramatic growth of the Baha'i Faith raises new and interesting questions about the role of religion in social development. The Bahd'i World is designed primarily to help answer these questions.

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