"INDEFATIGABLE, FEARLESS DEFENDER OF THE FAITH... Hand of the Cause, Zahrullah Khadem. His sterling services to the Cause, his total consecration to the tasks assigned to him by the Beloved Guardian... His valuable, 2001—Uplifting stimulation imparted to the Body of Believers in North America, particularly the United States Bahá’í Community... His untiring endeavours through his talks and writings in safeguarding the Covenant and in instilling appreciation and love for Shoghi Effendi... Left undying lustre over the period of his admirable stewardship of the Cause of God."

The Universal House of Justice
REJOICE ANNOUNCE COMMENCEMENT GEOLOGICAL SURVEY ESSENTIAL PRELIMINARY STEP IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS MOUNT CARMEL. THIS STEP SHARPENS NEED SPEEDY ACCUMULATION FIFTY MILLION DOLLAR RESERVE CALLED FOR PERMIT INITIATION MAJOR WORKS, OF WHICH ONE-THIRD SO FAR CONTRIBUTED. URGE SHARE INFORMATION FRIENDS.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
APRIL 28, 1989

On the cover: On May 21 a memorial service in honor of the Hand of the Cause of God Zikru’Iláh Khádem was held at Memorial Park in Skokie, Illinois. The gathering, sponsored by the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly in cooperation with Mr. Khádem's family, was held to mark the occasion of the placement of a monument over the grave of the Hand of the Cause of God who died in November 1986. Special remembrances of Mr. Khádem were offered by Counsellor Wilma Ellis; two members of the National Spiritual Assembly, Robert Henderson and Firuz Kazemzadeh; and Mr. Khádem's widow, Auxiliary Board member Javidukht Khádem. The service was followed by a reception at the Khádem's home in nearby Winnetka.
In January 1988 I enrolled in Chemeketa Community College in Salem, Oregon, with the idea of obtaining a few more credits toward a Human Services degree. On the first day of class, one of the instructors mentioned that a course on peace studies was being introduced on a trial basis, and although it was a Humanities course, it would count as an elective for the Human Services program.

After class I presented him with a copy of "The Promise of World Peace." As he leafed through it, he commented that he had the greatest respect for the Baha'is whom he had met through his involvement in the Beyond War organization. He then suggested that the peace studies course might be of interest to me. I subsequently enrolled in the course, seeing in it a possible chance to teach the Faith.

As it turned out, the response to the course was overwhelming. After limiting the class to 50 students, many others had to be turned away, an unusual situation in that this is a very conservative area of the country. Several weeks into the course it became obvious that the slant was more toward the elimination of nuclear weapons rather than a study of the underlying causes of war. At the same time, we were given a chance to choose a special project for extra credit. The project that I selected was an essay entitled "The Establishment of World Peace: A Bahá'í Perspective."

After submitting the essay I was approached by the teaching staff and asked if they might reproduce it as a handout to the class for home study, and also if I would address the class and offer some background information on Bahá'u'lláh and the Bahá'í Faith.

On the second to last evening of the course, each student and seven faculty members was given a copy of the essay and a copy of "The Promise of World Peace," and I was given an opportunity to present a discourse on the Cause. The following week, which was the final session of the class, I had the opportunity to further discuss the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, the response to which was spontaneous applause from students and faculty alike, for the wisdom and hope that Bahá'u'lláh offers the world. Following that class I was approached by Joel Martin, one of the faculty members who had worked to establish the course. He smiled as he held up his copy of "The Promise of World Peace" and said, "This will help serve as an outline for this course next year!"

As I gathered my books and papers to leave I was approached by a number of students and faculty members with questions about the Faith and expressions of appreciation for a sense of renewed hope for the future of humanity. Walking out of the building that evening, I couldn't help thinking of the change in receptivity toward the Faith that I had experienced—and the words of the Universal House of Justice to the effect that "now is the time to teach!"

The Establishment of World Peace: A Bahá'í Perspective

The establishment of world peace, as those of the Bahá'í Faith envision it, goes far beyond the elimination of nuclear or chemical weapons. It goes even beyond the cessation of open hostilities played out on battlefields and in war rooms across the face of our planet.

These considerations, however important and necessary, are but a cosmetic approach in the treatment of superficial symptoms of the underlying problems afflicting the human race.

In the words of the Universal House of Justice, the world administrative body of the Bahá'í Faith, in its open letter to the peoples of the world entitled "The Promise of World Peace": "Banning of nuclear weapons, prohibiting the use of poison gases, or outlawing germ warfare will not remove the root causes of war. However important such practical measures obviously are as elements of the peace process, they are in themselves too superficial to exert enduring influence. People are ingenious enough to invent yet other forms of warfare, and to use food, raw materials, finance, industrial power, ideology, and terrorism to subvert one another in an endless quest for supremacy and dominion. Nor can the present massive dislocation in the affairs of humanity be resolved through the settlement of specific conflicts or disagreements among nations. A genuine universal framework must be
adopted.

The Bahá’í Faith, which was founded in early 19th century Persia (Iran), is the youngest of the major religions of the world and has its own laws, institutions, calendar and scriptures, and is the first religion with the primary goal of promoting the establishment of world peace and understanding, harmony and justice among the varied religions and political and social philosophies and the re-education of mankind with the purpose of the permanent elimination of the barriers of discrimination based on race, nationality, gender, social and economic differentiation as well as religious misunderstanding and intolerance that have historically been the cause of suffering and death to vast portions of humanity.

Among the basic tenets of the Bahá’í Faith are:

The essential harmony of science and religion

Science and religion must be seen as two facets of the same reality, as the two wings that carry forward an ever-advancing civilization. If either wing should be allowed to weaken, civilization will falter. In the words of Bahá’u’lláh, the Founder of the Bahá’í Faith:

“...knowledge is incumbent on all, but of those sciences which may profit the people of the earth...”

“The possessors of sciences and arts have a great right among the people of the world.” “...Indeed, the real treasury of man is his knowledge...”

This concept is further explained by His son, 'Abdu’l-Bahá, in the following passages: "...the religion of God is the promoter of truth, the founder of science and knowledge; it is full of goodwill for learned men; it is the civilizer of mankind, the discoverer of the secrets of nature, and the enlightener of the horizons of the world...." "...knowledge is the most glorious gift of man and the most noble of human perfections. To oppose knowledge is ignorant; he who detests knowledge and science is not a man, but rather an animal without intelligence. For knowledge is light, life, felicity, perfection, beauty and the means for approaching the Threshold of Unity. It is the honor and glory of the world of humanity, the greatest bounty of God. Knowledge is identical with guidance, and ignorance is real error.”

Our history books demonstrate clearly how, when science and reason are abdicated in favor of religious doctrine, we become sunk in an abyss of superstition and ignorance, as evidenced by the period referred to as “the Dark Ages of Europe,” and the world of today is more than sufficient to demonstrate what can happen when knowledge and science become uncoupled from the morality and ethics born of religious belief. True science and true religion complement each other. The inspiration for both is received from the same Source. We are taught, however, that should religious understanding and science conflict, religion should defer to science and reason, and religious understanding will eventually become manifest.

To exemplify how science can bring about unity and understanding among peoples, we have only to point out how the science of genetics has proved conclusively in this century, through unraveling the genetic code, that humanity is indeed one species, that every human being on the planet is quite literally related to every other.

It will be, in part, through the recognition of the validity of the sciences by the followers of various religious communities that the beginnings of understanding, and therefore unity, will be established.

A spiritual solution to the economic problem

We have seen in this century how communications technology has enabled mankind to view the entire planet; how, instantaneously, the billionaire can, with but a flick of a finger, turn on a television set from the comfort of his boardroom, luxury penthouse or mansion, and see the face and hear the cries of a dying African child—before that child's tears have had time to roll down his face into the dust. Conversely, the electronic miracle of television allows millions of people in famine-wrecked countries to stare into appliance-store windows and watch in quiet desperation as peoples of other nations consume seemingly unlimited quantities of goods, food, and natural resources in an orgy of self-satisfaction, without considering for a moment how their demand on the limited resources of a finite planet drives prices farther and farther from the reach of whole populations, thus destroying, in many instances, the limited chances for their continued survival.

That entire generations have been raised to view this disparity as acceptable is a commentary on the moral and ethical shortcomings of the combined political and spiritual leadership of our world. That the practice of self-advancement over consideration for the needs of others has been variously condemned by the founders of all of the world’s religions is beyond question.

“The inordinate disparity between rich and poor, a source of acute suffering, keeps the world in a state of instability, virtually on the brink of war. Few societies have dealt effectively with this situation. The solution calls for the combined application of spiritual, moral and practical approaches. A fresh look at the problem is required, entailing consultation with experts from a wide spectrum of disciplines, devoid of economic and ideological polemics, and involving the people directly affected in the decisions that must urgently be made. It is an issue that is bound up not only with the necessity for eliminating the extremes of wealth and poverty but also with those spiritual verities the understanding of which can produce a new universal attitude. Fostering such an attitude is itself a major part of the solution.”

(The Universal House of Justice, October 1985)

Equality of rights and privileges between men and women

“Since the Bahá’í Faith, whose teachings, principles and laws guide the Bahá’í International Community, is the first religion to proclaim unequivocally the principle of the equality of rights, privileges and responsibilities for men and women, worldwide Bahá’í programs are always concerned, within their own community and in society at large, with the advancement of women.” (Bahá’í International Community, 1975)

The establishment of the equality of rights and privileges between men and women will be, Bahá’ís believe, another major part of the foundation of a just and lasting peace on earth. Women must be recognized as the primary educators of the human race, as it is at the knee of the mother that humanity...
receives its first instruction. It is there, also, that the barriers between peoples are either constructed or destroyed. It is in part because of this—the greatest of all human responsibilities—that woman should receive the fullest education and instruction available. It is also because without her complete interaction in the construction of society, and the full influence of her moderating effect on the affairs of humanity, neither harmony among nations nor true justice will ever prevail.

"Improvement in the status of women in the Bahá'í world community rests securely on several interrelated concepts which lend it added strength and support. In the Bahá'í view, the good of any one part of society is essential to the happiness and well-being of the whole. The role of women in society must, therefore, always be seen in the light of the organic oneness of humanity. All principles and actions which strengthen the bonds uniting members of the human race will in turn advance the position of women. For this reason, Bahá'í communities strive to attain unity in diversity—not uniformity—through the abolition of all forms of discrimination, whether of sex, race, creed, nationality or class. The advancement of women among Bahá'í springs, therefore, not only from the motivation which their Faith inspires, but also from an assumption of responsibility for action on the part of every person in his individual life, and in his family and community relationships." (Bahá'í International Community, report to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women)

"Inasmuch as human society consists of two factors, the male and female, each the complement of the other, the happiness and stability of humanity cannot be assured unless both are perfected. Therefore the standard and status of man and woman must become equalized." (From the Bahá'í scriptures)

A universal auxiliary language

The necessity for the establishment of a universal means of communication for all peoples is another prerequisite established by Bahá'u'lláh for the promotion of understanding and the elimination of suspicions generated by the inability of peoples to directly communicate with one another. In His own words:

"... The day is approaching when all the peoples of the world will have adopted one universal language and one common script. When this is achieved, to whatsoever city a man may journey, it shall be as if he were entering his own home. These things are obligatory and absolutely essential."

Bahá'u'lláh's son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, stated the following:

"... a universal language would make intercourse possible with every nation. Thus it would be needful to know two languages only, the mother tongue and the universal speech. The latter would enable a man to communicate with any and every man in the world!"

A world monetary system

Another consideration for the establishment of world peace will be the establishment of a world monetary system to enhance the stability of a global economy and further the concept that the economic well-being of all nations is in the best interest of every individual nation on earth. In the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

"... it is apparent that whenever the ties between nations become strengthened and the exchange of commodities accelerated, and any economic principle is established in one country, it will ultimately affect the other countries and universal benefits will result."

It is also obvious that the more interdependent the various economies become, the more that nations invest in the internal industries of other nations, the less likely are the chances that nations will purposely attempt to rise up and try to harm or destroy one another, for to do so would be to harm themselves.

Universal education

The need for universal education was recognized by Bahá'u'lláh as a requirement for the establishment of a peaceful world, in that He recognized that the more informed people become, the more they are able to recognize the validity, history and beauty of the diverse cultures of our species. The more informed humanity becomes in the sciences, the more able we will be to respect our planet and our universe. True education is more conducive to balance and harmony, understanding and enlightenment of the heart and mind of man. In the words of Bahá'u'lláh:

"... the Pen of Glory counseleth everyone regarding the education and instruction of children..."

"... bend your minds and wills to the education of the peoples and kindreds of the earth..." And from the pen of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "... the primary, the most urgent requirement is the promotion of education. It is inconceivable that any nation should achieve prosperity and success unless this paramount, this fundamental concern is carried forward..." "... the education and training of children is among the most meritorious acts of humankind and draweth down the grace and favor of the All-Merciful, for education is the indispensable foundation of all human excellence..."

The recognition of the unity of religion

No discussion of the topic of world peace can be complete without touching on the theme of religion, for it is religion through the ages that has been both the guiding light of civilization and, through intolerance and misunderstanding, has caused the greatest strife and sorrow in the world of humanity.

Bahá'ís see hatred and strife among conflicting religious ideologies as a concept that is at best hypocritical and at worst blasphemous and destructive to the spirit of man. Any unbiased consideration of the social and spiritual teachings of all of the major religions, when stripped of the ages-old accumulation of doctrine and dogma introduced by man, cannot help but reveal that an ancient and consistent thread of commonality runs through them all.

As a unifying force, the inspiration of religion has brought about a universality of ethical, moral and spiritual belief as well as social vision and, therefore, comprehension and motivation to
peoples of previously diverse standards and concepts.

As a destructive force, we can easily see how, when humanity has allowed pride of religious conviction rather than aspiration to understanding to become the focus, arrogance, self-aggrandizement, and an assumed exclusivity of righteousness have turned the creative, dynamic and unifying force of religion into a source of hatred and disunity among the various peoples, leading more to anarchy than to harmony. It is toward the purpose of eliminating such misunderstanding and conflict that we believe all true religion is directed.

Referring to the different beliefs of mankind, Bahá'u'lláh says this:

"That the diverse communions of the earth, and the manifold systems of religious belief, should never be allowed to foster the feelings of animosity among men, is, in this Day, of the essence of the Faith of God and His religion. These principles and laws, these firmly-established and mighty systems, have proceeded from one Source, and are the rays of One Light. That they differ one from another is to be attributed to the varying requirements of the ages in which they were promulgated. The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light is these words: Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship. He Who is the Day Star of Truth beareth witness! So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth."

"Know thou assuredly that the essence of all the Prophets of God is one and the same. Their unity is absolute."

In another reference to these Divine Educators of mankind, He says: "We recognize in the manifestation of each one of them, whether outwardly or inwardly, the manifestation of none but God Himself, if ye be of those that comprehend. Every one of them is a mirror of God, reflecting naught but His Self, His Beauty, His Might and Glory, if ye will understand." "These Mirrors will everlastingly succeed each other and will continue to reflect the light of the Ancient of Days."

The establishment of a world assemblage

That the nations have evolved to a point where the need to establish a world consultative body to attend the affairs of all mankind is another concept laid down more than a century ago by Bahá'u'lláh, as evidenced in the following passage:

"The time must come when the imperative necessity for the holding of a vast, all-embracing assemblage of men will be universally realized. The rulers and kings of the earth must needs attend it, and, participating in its deliberations, must consider such ways and means as will lay the foundations of the world's Great Peace amongst men."

In a further reference to the need for this supreme body, 'Abdu'l-Bahá continues:

"They must make the Cause of Peace the object of general consultation, and seek by every means in their power to establish a Union of the nations of the world. They must conclude a binding treaty and establish a covenant, the provisions of which shall be sound, inviolable and definite. They must proclaim it to all the world and obtain for it the sanction of all the human race. This supreme and noble undertaking—the real source of the peace and well-being of all the world—should be regarded as sacred by all that dwell on earth. All the forces of humanity must be mobilized to insure the stability and permanence of this Most Great Covenant. In this all-embracing Pact the limits and frontiers of each and every nation should be clearly fixed, the principles underlying the relations of governments toward one another definitely laid down, and all international agreements and obligations ascertained. In like manner, the size of the armaments of every government should be strictly limited, for if preparations for war and the military forces of any nation should be allowed to increase, they will arouse the suspicion of others. The fundamental principle underlying this solemn Pact should be so fixed that if any government later violate any 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 re-

main eternally safe and secure."

Peace—the promise

Together with the social and spiritual guidance that religion has provided, there is an ancient promise that has transcended time—and the barriers of continents and seas. It is a promise that has permeated our history as a race on this planet—a promise that is shared by all major religions and countless tribal traditions from all continents. It is a promise that is at once so ancient that its first whisperings are shrouded in the mists of pre-history, and so new as to encompass all of our tomorrows. That promise is of the day when, in the words of the prophet Isaiah:

"They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

It is the day foretold in the Eskimo tradition of the story of creation:

"... The reason for our existence is the dawning of that Great Day, and the Light that will fill the world. ...

The promise of that day was reiterated in the prayer and prophecy of Jesus Christ when He uttered the words:

"... Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ..."

It is a day also foreseen by poets as witnessed by the following lines from the pen of Walt Whitman (1819-92): "Lo, Soul! Seest not God's purpose from the first

The earth to be spanned, connected by network,
The people to become brothers and sisters,
The races, neighbors, to marry and to be given in marriage
The oceans to be cross'd, the distant brought near
The lands to be welded together."

And again from the pen of Alfred Lord Tennyson (1802-92): "For I dip into the future, far as human eye could see, saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be; Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails, Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales; Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew
from the nations’ airy navies grappling in the central blue;
Far along the world-wide whisper of the southwind rushing warm,
with the standards of the peoples plunging thro’ the thunder-storm;
Till the war-drum throb’d no longer, and the battle-flags were furl’d
In the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the world.
There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
and the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.

The world-wide community of the Baha’i Faith believes that that day has,
at long last, arrived. Humanity has progressed through its childhood and is
now emerging from its turbulent youth into adulthood.

Humanity, in our view, stands at the threshold of an era that is staggering in
its portent, all-pervasive in its range, and unlimited in its scope. We are, we
believe, witness to the dawn of an age in which the full potential of the reality
of man will be revealed.

In reference to the conflicts which have wracked this century, Baha’u’llah
stated a century and a half ago:

“I swear by God! The promised day is come, the day when tormenting trials
will have surged above your heads, and beneath your feet, saying: ‘Taste ye
what your hands have wrought!’ ”

“The day is approaching when its (civilization’s) flame will devour the cities,
when the Tongue of Grandeur will proclaim: ‘The Kingdom is God’s the
Almighty, the All-Praised!’ ” However, He went on to state: “The purpose
underlying all creation is the revelation of this most sublime, this most holy
Day, the Day known as the Day of God in His books and scriptures—the Day
which all the Prophets, and the Chosen Ones, and the holy ones, have wished
to witness.” “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 hath been
infused into all created things.” “Great, immeasurably great is this
Cause! Mighty, inconceivably mighty is this Day!”

The conflicting ideologies that have been raised up in this century—indeed,
the very weapons that we fear most—serve only, in our view, as temporary
catalysts aimed by a higher Power at forcing humanity to come to terms
with itself. We see the conflicts that have convulsed humanity throughout
this century as the birth-pangs of a new world order.

We are told, as Bahá’ís, that as this century draws to a close, peace will be
established. In the words of Baha’u’llah, this is “the Century of Light.”
This message was repeated by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during His visit to New York in
1912: “... This is the century of New and Universal Brotherhood....”
“... the century of Universal Peace....” “... the Century of Radiance. . . .”

Might we visualize for a moment the eventual and inevitable establishment
of world peace. Consider how the freeing of national treasuries from the need
for arms-making could, almost overnight, enable the nations of the world
to feed, clothe, shelter and educate every man, woman and child on this
planet!

Imagine the scientists and engineers of the world who now work independently from, and in hostile competition with one another, uniting in a vast con-
course of the greatest minds of our species, to work collectively toward the
solution of problems and the curing of diseases which have plagued humanity
from the beginning of time. Imagine the possibilities for new, as yet un-
dreamed-of sciences that must be born of such an endeavor. How fast our
progress might be under conditions of such a concerted effort is a matter that
can scarcely be comprehended from our perspective in history.

As humanity embarks on its journey into tomorrow, it is our hope that we
all may become more aware of the unseen Hand which has guided the destiny of mankind and lifted us toward this day.

Somewhere in our distant past, someone stood alone on an ancient
savannah and looked toward the heavens, and for the first time was inspired
to ask, “Who am I, and why am I here?” As Bahá’ís, we can’t help but
feel that in the years that lie ahead the answer will become abundantly clear.

—Ken Francisco
Far East

A most rewarding visit

The photographs on these two pages were taken during a tour of five Far Eastern countries undertaken in November 1987 by a group of 36 Bahá'ís from the United States. The friends visited Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Thailand and China, teaching and proclaiming the Faith in each country.
through their example of love and unity. In Taipei, Taiwan, their first stop, they were told that more than 900 people had recently embraced the Cause in that country, about 70 percent of whom were youth. Since then even those numbers have grown significantly. In Bangkok, Thailand, they were greeted by about 30 Bahá'ís with a banner welcoming them (see photo on page 6). As these photos show, the friends were able to mix freely with residents of each country, eating, dancing and praying with them while cementing the bonds of universal brotherhood. Everywhere they went, the Bahá'ís were told of the great need for more traveling teachers to help consolidate the recent gains in enrollment. Most members of the group are shown in the photograph at the bottom of this page.
The arts

In its message describing the Six Year Plan, the Universal House of Justice lists drama and singing as tools that should receive greater use by the Bahá’í community in the teaching and deepening work. This appears at first glance to leave out poets and the poetry they create. But in looking further into the nature of drama and the source of songs, one finds that both stem from foundations in poetry. What is drama but poetry given physical form? And what are songs but poetry set to music? Thus the House of Justice is calling on the arts.

This appears at first glance to leave out poets and the poetry that should receive greater use by the Bahá’í community to stimulate the development of all these forms of the arts.

Why should poetry be so fundamental to these other arts? ‘Abdu’l-Bahá once told Shanaz Waite, one of the earliest poets in the American Bahá’í community, to “endeavor your utmost to compose beautiful poems to be chanted with heavenly music; thus may their beauty affect the minds and impress the hearts of those who listen.” It is this effect that will attract the hearts of mankind to the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh. Hearts will be attracted through beautiful poetry; without developing and using the arts, we cripple our teaching efforts.

Not only will people be drawn to the Revelation, but even those who are not will be changed in ways that are beneficial. “If the writer has done a valid job,” Roger White said about the role of poets in society, “the act of writing a poem has changed the writer, and we in reading it are put in touch with a power that transforms us—if only by reminding us that transformation is possible.” It is the power of transformation that lies in poetry. And

transformation is the goal of the religion of God—to transform this world into another world. We are to transform our lives, and those whom we teach; and poetry, by its very nature, can be a powerful assistant.

How can poetry effect this transformation? Part of the answer lies in the nature of the poet and his/her art. “The poet is individual and subjective, but he is mankind’s conscience,” said Geoffrey Nash. “Mystically initiated to the divine order of things, he registers man’s departure from his nobler nature and his higher ideals.” It is in this sphere, of the spiritually inclined individual, that transformation can take place as the poet elucidates the spiritual experience. Poetry is especially effective at describing spiritual realities because the poet deals with emotions: the non-physical, spiritual side of life. But how is this possible?

In His second letter to George Townshend, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá touched on the receptivity of spiritual individuals, saying, “these heavenly susceptibilities of thine form a magnet which attracts the confirmations of the Kingdom of God; and so the doors of realities and meanings will be open unto thee, and the confirmation of the Kingdom of God will envelop thee.” It is through this process that spiritual progress occurs in human society. The poet receives intimations from the spiritual world and translates them into words that can be understood by others. This inspiration can stimulate others to a higher resolve and nobler aims, thus changing themselves and society.

Reflecting on this process, the author of an article on the presence of the arts in the Bahá’í community wondered, “Is it not possible, then, that the arts can serve at this time a twofold purpose: to help bring about a change in mankind and to help tell mankind that a change is happening?” It is this twofold awareness that the poet can bring about. If poets and other artists do not raise the consciousness of humanity, who will? It is part of the poet’s responsibility to speak, and to speak clearly.

This does not mean that poetic devices such as similes and metaphors should not be employed, for they can often be used to convey truth in a clearer form, and in this we have the example of the Prophets to guide us, but the work should be understandable to the audience for whom it is intended. Sometimes this purpose is missed by those with a poetic calling. “His (the poet’s) aim should be to speak with the tongue that whispers in the bones and arteries of his audience, in such a way that the isolated and speechless elements in the community find their voices in his harmony.”

Without communication there can be no transformation. This is one special function of the poet in helping to transform society. Thoughts unspoken cannot be acted upon; ideals unarticulated cannot be realized. Poets give expression to those thoughts and feelings that have not yet been realized by the mass of humanity. Poets can help their community of fellow humans by speaking the unspoken thoughts, forming the unformed hopes. This unity of poet and au-

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This article, “The Place for the Poet,” was written by Duane L. Herrmann of Berryton, Kansas.
ence, linked by the Kingdom of God, creates and releases power to achieve those goals toward which we are striving.

The possibilities of this transformation are limitless. The transformation will take us into the future. Dr. Glen Eyford, until recently a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, expressed the process this way: "The poet will lead mankind into the future by giving expression to hopes and visions that are often poorly articulated and little understood by most men. Poets serve as interpreters and prophets by giving definite shape to feeling, to thoughts only dimly perceived by others. They provide the images by which man moves into the future." 7 Without some stepping stones, the path to the future will take longer and be more circuitous. We need all the help we can get.

But where in our community life does the poet fit? Are poems to be reserved for infrequent and special "poetry readings"? Or is there a particular place in our regular activities where poetry can fit, or is presently missing and we are unaware of its loss? The Guardian was asked a similar question years ago. His answer then applies to this question as well:

"With regard to your question concerning the use of music in the Nineteen Day Feasts, he wishes to assure all the friends that not only does he approve of such a practice, but thinks it even advisable that the believers should make use, in their meetings, of hymns composed by Bahá'ís themselves, and also of such hymns, poems and chants as are based on the Holy Words." 8

Hymns, poems and chants based on the Words of God and composed by the believers themselves; these we are to use in our Feasts and other meetings. Here is a place to begin. How often do we see this in practice? Why not start now? They will undoubtedly add a new dimension to our Feasts. They could serve as a bridge from the spiritual opening to the consultation, or as an opening to the social part of the Feast. Or they might even be a prelude to the devotions, to help everyone clear his heart and mind prior to the Feast.

In the loving acceptance of our communities the fledgling poets, children and youth included, could practice and refine their craft. Eventually there would be a reservoir of scripture-based devotional literature that could be used in presenting the Faith to the public.

Shoghi Effendi expressly stated through his secretary, "(I) is through such (dramatic) presentations that we can arouse the interest of the greatest number of people in the spirit of the Cause. That day will the Cause spread like wildfire when its spirit and teachings are presented on the stage or in art and literature as a whole. Art can better awaken such noble sentiments than cold rationalizing, especially among the masses of the people." 9

The sooner we begin to allow our poets and other artists a place in our community events, the sooner will that day come. The House of Justice is calling on us to work toward that day now. Can we sit silent, or will we let our poets sing?

"O thou dear one! Impoverish thyself, that thou mayest enter the high court of riches; and humble thy body, that thou mayest drink from the river of glory, and attain to the full meaning of the poems whereof thou hast asked."—Bahá'u'lláh, from the Valley of Unity

NOTES
A convention on children's rights

On the 10th anniversary of the International Year of the Child—and the 30th anniversary of the UN General Assembly's Declaration of the Rights of the Child—the United Nations is heading toward completion of a convention on children's rights.

The convention will redefine as children's rights the rights and freedoms proclaimed for "the entire human family," but the General Assembly is also seeking to lend strength to its 1959 declaration that children require "special safeguards and care" because of their "physical and mental immaturity."

To do so, a Working Group has pulled together from various human rights documents all the obligations that have already been assigned to parents and states on behalf of children—spelling them out and establishing the international machinery for overseeing their implementation. A final draft document is expected to be adopted during the General Assembly's 44th Session next fall and will then be opened for government ratification.

Many of the present draft's 54 articles set out various rights (to life, to a name and nationality, to participate in one's own culture and religion, to health and parental care, to family unification, to an adequate standard of living, to leisure and recreation) and freedoms (of opinion, information, conscience, association, privacy).

Two relatively long articles dealing with education and its aims are intended to reinforce these rights and freedoms; "the child," says the document's preamble, "should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society, and brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity."

Still other articles affirm the necessity for measures that protect children (from physical or mental violence, economic and sexual exploitation, drug abuse) and measures that promote the care of refugee children, children in need of rehabilitation, and children deprived of family, temporarily or permanently. The drafters have included a separate article dealing with adoption per se—one that, The New York Times noted as the General Assembly began debating a first draft in November, "breaks new ground" by "extending international legal protection to the process of adoption."

A single article—on armed conflict—has garnered most of the publicity the convention has received in the U.S. daily press. This was occasioned by the U.S. objection to a provision that discourages a combat role for those under 18.

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"Proponents of the higher age limit," reports the Times, "say that such an international standard is needed to oppose the widespread use of children in some conflicts, like the Iran-Iraq war." Debate will continue at the next meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva in February and March.

Receiving only passing notice—but likewise running afoul of U.S. practice—is a provision outlawing the execution (or lifetime imprisonment without the possibility of release) of those who have committed a punishable crime before their 18th birthday. The statutes of some of our 50 states currently permit the execution of children for capital crimes; the U.S. is one of the few countries in which such executions may take place.

Two articles deal explicitly with penal law. Article 40, on juvenile justice, attempts to provide the heralded "special care and assistance" by promoting "specific laws, procedures, authorities and institutions" for children within each state's justice system, as well as providing the obligatory guarantees of prompt trial, competent counsel, and the like.

Article 37, on capital punishment, is also concerned with such extrajudicial matters as torture and arbitrary detention—still common practice in many countries. Indeed, according to a recent Amnesty International report, "in at least a third of the world's nations, men, women and even children are tortured."

In both Article 40 and in an article on rehabilitative care, governments are asked to take measures that foster the health, self-respect and dignity of the
child for the purpose of reintegrating him in society after incarceration.

The final articles first direct “states parties” to publicize the convention among adults and children alike, and go on to establish the machinery for overseeing the convention’s implementation and set the rules for amendment.

A 10-member Committee on the Rights of the Child (“experts of high moral standing and recognized competence in the field covered by this Convention (who) shall serve in their personal capacity, consideration being given to equitable geographical distribution as well as to the principal legal systems”) will examine the progress made “in achieving the realization of the obligations undertaken” by states that ratify the convention, reporting to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) every two years.

Within two years of the convention’s entry into force, and every five years thereafter, ratifying states will report to the committee on the measures they have taken to realize their obligations.

To encourage this process, the drafters have made a place for the UN’s Specialized Agencies with particular competence in one or more of the areas covered by the convention, naming the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) specifically. The committee can contemplate inviting such bodies to provide advice and to submit reports on implementation, and it can call on them to render technical advice or assistance to countries that request it.

Children’s rights advocates, while acknowledging that such conventions are intended merely to set minimum standards, have commented that the present articles leave something to be desired. Some point to a lack of provisions for educating the officials who will be involved with juvenile detention and criminal proceedings. Some go on to note that children are excellent candidates for rehabilitation and that they—and society—would benefit if experts in childhood development were cited as integral to the rehabilitation process. (According to an officer of one non-governmental organization privy to the deliberations, such a provision was discarded because it was considered a stumbling block to passage—requiring “the need to agree on what ‘experts’ would be needed as well as on a definition of ‘expert.’”)

Still others call attention to the phrases that now temper some of the convention’s declarations: “Every child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child’s best interest not to do so”; and (in the convention’s definition of its own constituents), “a child means every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.” Nearly all agree, however, that the convention constitutes a significant step forward, and that it is a fitting gift to the world’s children in this anniversary year.
Dignitaries visit the Temple in India

During February, dignitaries from Bhutan, Canada, China, Colombia, Haiti, Hungary, Malaysia, Poland, Sikkim, Sweden, the USSR and Vietnam were among the many visitors to the Bahá’í House of Worship in India. Among them was the Russian Ambassador to India, Victor K. Isakov, who was accompanied by his wife and daughter.

Also visiting was a delegation of professors of medicine headed by the vice-rector of the First Moscow Medical Institute in the USSR; Madame Malgorzata Niepokulezycka, a member of the Parliament of Poland and president of the Polish Consumer Federation; Madame Grazyna Rokicka, secretary of the Polish National Council; the premier of Saskatchewan, Canada, Madame Chantal Divine; and a group of officials from the Malaysian High Commission.

In addition, the Temple was visited by a delegation of Chinese, a group of 20 Brazilians, and 36 young people from Germany, Japan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and the United States who came together through “Religious Youth Service,” an interfaith organization whose purpose is “... to serve the ideal of a God-centered world culture, a culture that is nurtured by different races, nationalities and religious traditions.”

Thirty-two Bahá’í tutorial schools from three districts in Uttar Pradesh, India, recently held their seventh annual fair, involving almost 600 students and 53 teachers in the two-day event.

Among the special guests were Counsellor Farzam Arbáb from the International Teaching Centre in Haifa; his wife, Laurie Arbáb; Counsellor Zena Sorabjee, and members of the National Spiritual Assembly of India.

The program included music and dance, gymnastics displays, drama, a written test (in which all students excelled far beyond expectations), and a prize-giving ceremony.

A report from the State Bahá’í Council recounted some of the changes taking place in villages in the region as a result of the introduction of the Faith and its tutorial schools. Whereas formerly the main source of income in one village was illegal, the report says, these activities have been discontinued.

The completion of an 18-day teaching campaign whose members toured the lower Punjab in India found 95 persons enrolled in the Faith and 12 new localities opened.

A new campaign has been launched in a district of Muslim villages near Multan. To date (February), 22 new believers have embraced the Faith there.

The campaign was organized by Counsellor Rouhollah Momtazi with help from an Auxiliary Board member and two youth from Sind.

Iceland

Fourteen people have embraced the Faith in Iceland since last Ridván, almost twice the number of declarations for the previous year.

Considering Iceland’s population of about 247,000, the growth rate is, according to a report from the Auxiliary Board, “approaching entry by troops. “Firesides are held every night,” the report continues, “and the receptiveness of the Icelandic people is at a level not reached since the early '70s.”
Turkey

The enrollment of four new believers was among the highlights of Turkey's first Winter School, held February 2-5 in Iskenderun.

An enthusiastic group of 125 including one newspaper reporter took part in the school, and several other reporters asked for information about the event.

Bangladesh

Medical camps operating through the devoted efforts of Bahá'í physicians and traveling teachers in Bangladesh have resulted in a large number of enrolments in addition to carrying out a valuable public service.

Last November 19, the Ruhi Camp, named after a recent martyr in Iran, treated 150 patients, 54 of whom embraced the Cause.

Four days later, the Faizi Camp treated more than 100 patients and enrolled 35 of them.

The Farhang Medical Camps, initiated early last year, are still functioning; the most recent was reportedly held last November 21.

Also in November the Haqiqi Medical Project, also named after a recent martyr in Iran, treated more than 200 patients and enrolled 110 new believers including the residents of one entire village.

As of the end of November 1988, three special teaching plans in Bangladesh had resulted in the enrollment of more than 2,500 new believers in that country and helped establish 40 new local Spiritual Assemblies.

The formation of the first local Spiritual Assembly among members of the Khashia tribe was one of the exciting results of a recent teaching campaign in the Sylhet district of Bangladesh.

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the signing of a human rights document, as this is the traditional site for consultation between the indigenous inhabitants of the Mariana Islands, the Chamorro people.

The program began with classical music and welcoming remarks by a Bahá'í representative, Annette Donner, after which Governor Joseph Ada gave the keynote address.

Representatives of various religions read passages from their holy writings and, to the music of bagpipes, candles and torches were lit and distributed for the closing of the event.

The ceremony was covered by local cable television and two major newspapers.

Germany

About 220 Bahá'ís from Germany and neighboring countries gathered February 25 at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Langenhain for a memorial service for Edna M. True and H. Borrah Kavelin, both of whom died last December.

The service was held at the closing of a National Teaching Conference.

During a meeting at the National Bahá'í Center which followed the service, Counsellor Hartmut Grossmann spoke of the lives and services of Miss True and Mr. Kavelin and extolled their example of dedication and service to the Cause.

In January, the music duo "Parrish and Toppano" from the United States released their second album, "The Shores of This Great Ocean," in Germany.

The album, which sold 24,000 copies in its first 10 days, includes two songs based on the Bahá'í Writings.

The two musicians received considerable publicity during their promotional tour including an appearance on one of German National Television's most popular Saturday evening programs, which holds a 50 percent audience rating (20.1 million viewers), and radio interviews in which they were asked about the Faith.

They conducted a fireside for 60 people in Langenhain and established good relations with various prominent German recording artists.

Thirty-eight Bahá'ís from 19 countries met last December 25-28 for the Langenhain III Conference in Germany.

The friends were summoned to the meeting by the Universal House of Justice to consult on the formation of a Bahá'í International Community for European Affairs.

Such a body would contribute to the expansion and unified action of external affairs agencies and help mobilize the European communities for the further development of the Cause.

Brazil

"Prejudice—Throw Out This Weapon" is the theme of a major campaign begun last September by the Bahá'ís of Curitiba, Brazil. The campaign has reached thousands of people in the State of Parana with its message.

So far, more than 83 institutions, factories, associations, unions and government agencies have been contacted, and more than 10,000 pamphlets, 600 books, 2,000 posters, 1,000 stickers, and hundreds of buttons and T-shirts describing the message of the unity of mankind have been distributed to employees, businessmen and directors of those entities.

The campaign has been supported by three television stations, one radio station and the Media Association of Curitiba, which helped with the publication of ads introducing the campaign and the Bahá'í Faith in some 14 newspapers.

A teaching campaign launched in January in the State of Tocantins, Brazil, has led so far to 20 declarations, the first ever in that State.

Malawi

The Bahá'í women of Masiyaya, Malawi, are helping in their community by making regular visits to the sick, gathering every Friday evening to help children memorize prayers, tending a garden, and helping a widow in a nearby village.
Swaziland

A student at the Mbabane Bahá’í preschool in Swaziland receives her graduation certificate and a gift from Dr. Ben Dlamini, chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly, during the preschool’s recent graduation ceremony.

France

A celebration of the 75th anniversary of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit to Marseille, France, led to extensive proclamation of the Faith and opportunities for the Bahá’ís to strengthen relations with the general public.

After an official observance at the “Palais du Faro,” which was offered to the Bahá’ís by the mayor for use on this occasion, a public meeting was held at the Odeon Theatre. That event was announced on radio and television and in the local newspaper; in addition, about 11,000 posters were distributed throughout the city.

Some 160 people attended the celebration, enjoying a program based on the theme of peace that included a variety of music and a slide presentation.

A concert was given by pianist Mark Ochu, a Bahá’í from the United States, who accompanied his performance with comments about the Universal House of Justice’s peace statement.

A film about the Bahá’í Faith made by André Brugiroux, a Bahá’í from France, has drawn large audiences to recent showings and has resulted in many people being introduced to the Faith.

Last October, nearly 500 people saw the film at four showings in France.

In addition, several articles in the press have favorably reviewed the film.

During the past year the Bahá’ís of Toulouse, France, began receiving invitations to talk about the Faith on local radio programs. For each program, a topic is chosen and discussed, and questions are asked by the program host.

The most recent program was titled “Carmel, the Mountain of God.”

Mauritius

Several visitors from the Indian Ocean region, Madagascar, Réunion and the Seychelles traveled to Mauritius to help in a recent teaching campaign in which 205 people were enrolled in the Faith.

A consolidation program is under way, and the visiting teachers have left Mauritius eager to begin similar campaigns in their home communities.
Taiwan

The presence of more than 60 young people from all areas of Taiwan and Korea as well as from Japan, India, Sri Lanka and a number of other countries helped make the first Bahá’í National Youth Conference in Taiwan an overwhelming success. The majority of those taking part in the three-day event, held April 6-8, were Taiwanese youth who had enrolled during the past two years through the Muhdír Teaching Campaign.

Sri Lanka

World Religion Day observances in January in Jaffna and Vavuniya, Sri Lanka, drew large gatherings and brought together representatives of the country’s major religions in spite of the continuing unrest in that country.

The theme of both events was “The Role of Religion in Bringing About Unity.”

In Jaffna, more than 200 people including lecturers and students from the University of Jaffna, where the observance was held, attended the program with Chief Guest V. Sabanaygam, regional director of education, and Prof. A. Shanmugadas of the university, who served as chairman.

The commissioner for rehabilitation, S. Thillainadarasa, chaired the observance in Vavuniya, at which more than 300 were present including Honorary Guest T. Lankanesan, the government agent for Vavuniya, and Chief Guest U.P. Piyasena, assistant government agent.

Representatives of various religions spoke on the theme of the day, and each program ended with cultural presentations by the participating religious groups.

Of the 35 people who attended a recent public meeting in Vavuniya, in northern Sri Lanka, 16 have since embraced the Faith.

Zimbabwe

A recent teaching campaign in Zimbabwe’s Rusape area led to the enrollment of 300 new believers. Teaching is continuing in other areas as interest in the Faith grows.

Guinea Bissau

The government of the west African state of Guinea Bissau has officially recognized that country’s National Spiritual Assembly.

An official document of recognition has been signed by the government of the former Portuguese colony, which lies on the Atlantic coast of Africa between Senegal and Guinea.

Audio-visual programs proved to be an effective means of teaching during a recent four-month trip through Guinea Bissau by two Bahá’ís, Robert Miessler of Brazil and Tony Parker Danso of Ghana.

The visit resulted in a number of enrollments, the formation of new local Spiritual Assemblies in Mansoa and Nhaora, and extensive proclamation of the Faith to people in all strata of society.

The two main audio-visual programs were an adaptation of a program entitled “God Speaks Again” and another entitled “From War to Peace” based on the Universal House of Justice’s peace statement and produced in Brazil.

Mr. Danso has taken a year’s leave of absence from his position as an English teacher to serve the Faith full-time.

Uganda

Seven journalists and representatives of Radio Uganda and Uganda Television met last November 11 with a Bahá’í delegation at the House of Worship in Kampala.

The meeting, planned by the Bahá’í Public Relations Committee, was attended by Counsellors Oloro Epyeru and Edith Senoga and by members of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Among the results were an announcement regarding the anniversary of the Birth of Bahá’u’lláh, broadcast in all local languages on Radio Uganda, and an extensive newspaper article about the Faith with a photograph of the House of Worship in Financial Times for November 14.

Another article and photograph appeared November 11 in The New Vision.

Kenya

Seventy women representing most provinces of Kenya took part February 9-12 in the sixth annual National Bahá’í Women’s Conference at the Nakuru Bahá’í Centre.

Among the highlights were a presentation by Mandelo Wana Wake on income-generating projects, and a visit to a district hospital in Nakuru where Judith Soita presented a talk entitled “Spiritual Life, Immunization and Nutrition” to an audience that included the patients and staff of the hospital’s maternity wing.

An interview with a panel of Bahá’í women was recorded with highlights of the conference for later broadcast on the program “Women and Development” on Voice of Kenya Television.

Andaman/Nicobar Islands

A week-long teaching campaign begun January 7 in the Andaman/Nicobar Islands resulted in 43 enrollments and the re-formation of two local Spiritual Assemblies.
Sweden

Extensive teaching activities in the Eskil Ljungberg Teaching Campaign, based in Uppsala, Sweden, have led to a positive reception of the Faith by the public and generated within the Bahá’í community a new nationwide enthusiasm for teaching.

Two recent major events were a World Religion Day observance and a Cultural Evening, both of which received extensive newspaper coverage and much public support.

Relationships have been developed with various humanitarian associations and student groups at the University of Uppsala, while almost all high schools and junior high schools have welcomed visits by Bahá’ís.

Weekly meetings at a rented Bahá’í Center are drawing a steady flow of new seekers.

Australia

The United Nations International Women’s Day was celebrated March 5 by about 400 people at a special service at the Bahá’í House of Worship in Sydney.

The event helped strengthen friendships with the general public while reflecting the Bahá’í commitment to the principle of the equality of the sexes.

Among the readers at the service were Elizabeth Mattick, president of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF); Stella Cornelius, vice-president of the United Nations Association (UNA) of Australia; and the Hon. Helen Sham-Ho, a member of the Legislative Council of New South Wales and holder of the highest public office of any member of the Chinese community in Australia.

Following the service, special guest Thelma O’Con-Solorzano, director of the UN Information Centre, gave a brief address on the purpose of International Women’s Day. Sitarih Ala‘í, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia, responded on behalf of the Bahá’ís.

The Bahá’í community of Doncaster Templestowe in Victoria, Australia, has begun an “adopt a Vietnamese family” program with the help of the Bahá’í Vietnamese Teaching Committee.

From the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (ACSJJC) expressing its concern over the continuing persecution of Bahá’ís in Iran, conveying its support, and pledging prayers for the followers of Bahá’u’lláh in that country.

The ACJSC is a council of the Bishops of the Catholic Church in Australia.

Philippines

Three thousand, eight hundred forty-seven new believers and 46 new local Spiritual Assemblies are among the results of teaching campaigns in the Philippines from November 1988 to February 1989.

In Bauio and Dagupan, the Muhájir Teaching Campaign led to the enrollment of 166 new Bahá’ís.

Activities in those cities included presentations on the Faith in schools, at universities, businesses, and on radio; firesides, public meetings, deepenings and a peace symposium at one of the universities.

A recent visitor to the Bahá’ís of Samar-Leyte, who have been isolated for a number of years, reported finding the friends steadfast and active.

The renewed contact resulted in the enrollment of 161 new believers, regularly scheduled children’s classes, and the holding of dawn prayers.

The friends there have organized a local Teaching and Administrative Committee with the goal of re-establishing the lapsed local Assemblies.

Grenada

During the United Nations Year of the Homeless, the Bahá’ís of Grenada set a goal of financing the repair of the home of a person in need each year until the end of the Six Year Plan.

As a result of the devastation caused by Hurricane Gilbert, the Bahá’í community of Grenada sent its contribution for 1988 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Jamaica to help rebuild the home of one of the victims, who is a Bahá’í.

Each of the community’s participating families adopts a Vietnamese family to help its assimilation into the community by visiting, offering friendship, and inviting family members to social gatherings.

In December, the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia received a letter from the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (ACSJJC) expressing its concern over the continuing persecution of Bahá’ís in Iran, conveying its support, and pledging prayers for the followers of Bahá’u’lláh in that country.

The ACJSC is a council of the Bishops of the Catholic Church in Australia.

Members of the ‘Wildfire’ youth theatre group perform during one of their many successful recent shows in New South Wales, Australia. The group is composed of African, Australian, Peruvian and Samoan artists who presented song and dance routines in 11 large cities and drew coverage on radio and television and in newspapers.
Papua New Guinea

The Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum Teaching Campaign, which began last December in the Balimo district of the Western Province of Papua New Guinea, has achieved further success in two other provinces, East Sepik and West Sepik, with a total of 214 new believers and several new local Spiritual Assemblies in the three provinces as of the end of February.

Another bounty of the campaign has been the increased confidence and steadfastness of the older believers, a result of their perseverance in spite of opposition to the Faith.

The campaign is being extended to cover the remaining 16 provinces in Papua New Guinea during the remainder of this year.

One woman's dedication and determination led recently to the enrollment in the Faith of an entire village in Papua New Guinea along with many people from nearby areas.

Stirred by a dream in which she was encouraged by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to go and teach, and in spite of a well-advanced pregnancy, Veronica Ruh began her one-woman teaching campaign, asking and receiving permission from the Spiritual Assembly of Madang to travel up the Ramu River to the villages where her father had been raised.

Midway in her travels, after having taught in many villages, she gave birth to a son. Two months later she returned to those same villages, this time with members of her family and a small group of Bahá'ís.

At one point their motorized canoe ran out of fuel and they were forced to stop at a village called Mugil. As a result, everyone there learned about Bahá'u'lláh and the entire village embraced the Cause of God.

A health-care seminar held last January at Papua New Guinea's Rabaul International Primary School and hosted by the Bahá'í Women's Committee was tape-recorded and later broadcast by the local radio station.

About 40 people attended the seminar whose speakers included a medical sister from the Rabaul Town Clinic, a dentist, a nutritionist, and a medical doctor.

Fathers supervised the children so that mothers could attend the lectures.

The Bahá'í community of Papua New Guinea recently achieved representation on the country's National Council of Women, thus fulfilling one of its goals of the Six Year Plan.

The Bahá'ís collaborated with other women's groups in East New Britain in preparing for a Peace Music Festival that was held April 12, Women's Day in Papua New Guinea.

The Bahá'ís pictured here are traditional dancers from Kimama village in the western province of Papua New Guinea. They are working on a project named for Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, which is presently under way in various parts of that country.
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