



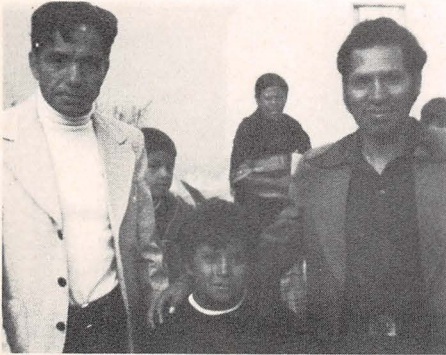
Child's play

In Ecuador, a poster contest
makes many friends for Faith

Bahá'í News

Bahá'í Year 136

No. 586



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Cover

To help commemorate the International Year of the Child, the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador sponsored a drawing contest for 6- to 12-year-old children in that country. The contest, centered around three Bahá'í themes, drew more than 2,000 entries, and prize winners were honored at an awards ceremony in Quito. The story behind the contest, along with a look at some of the prize-winning drawings, begins on Page 6.

Corrections

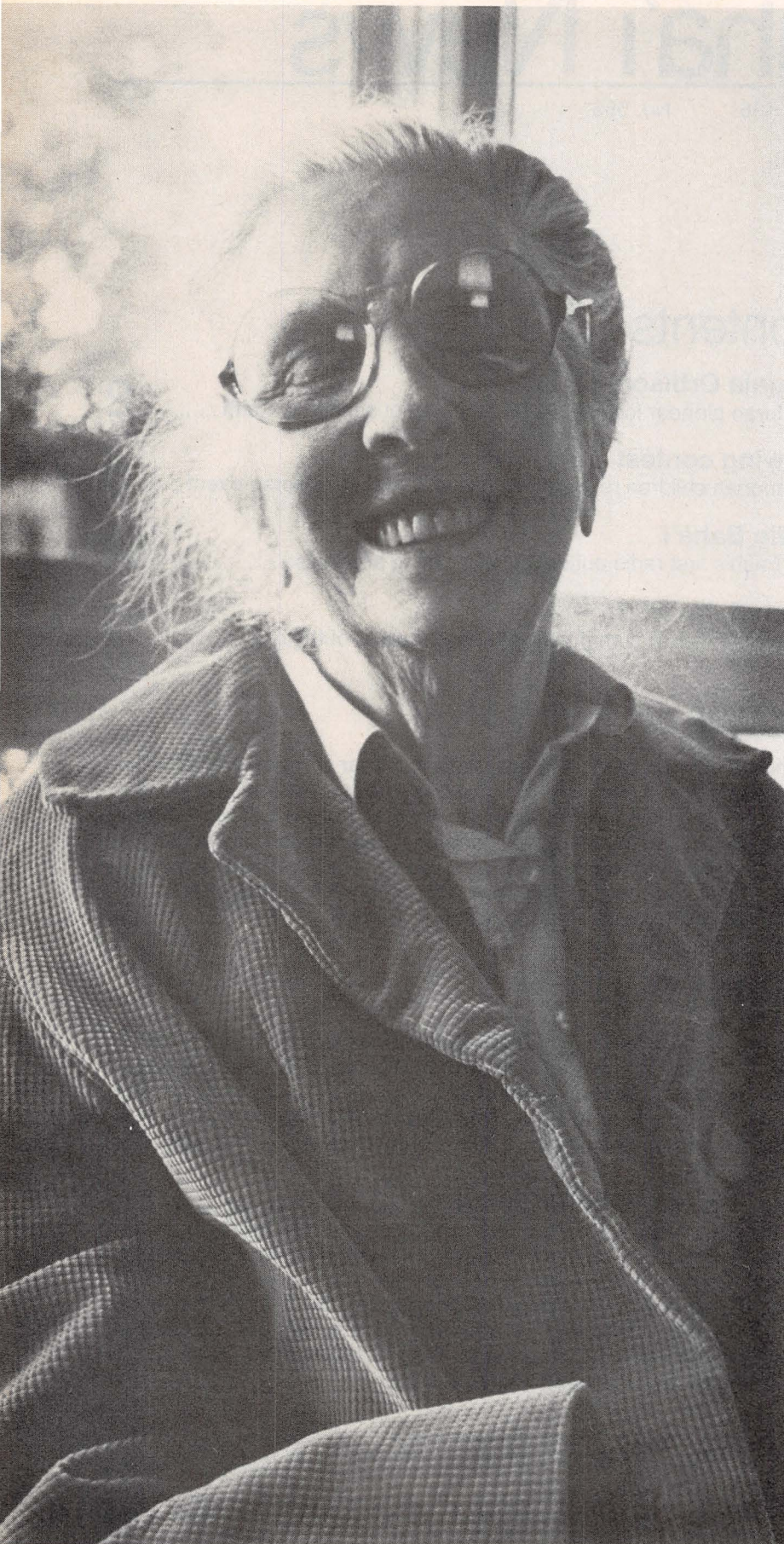
In the June 1979 issue of Bahá'í News, Page 2, the paragraph that begins: "A Bahá'í, through his faith in this 'conscious knowledge' of the reality of divine Revelation" should read as follows: "A Bahá'í, through this faith in, this 'conscious knowledge' of, the reality of divine Revelation . . ." We regret the error and offer our apology for it.

In the November 1979 issue, Page 13, the statement appears that "75 new believers were enrolled" during the annual Bahá'í Summer School in Belgium. That is incorrect. As received from Belgium, the statement read: "In attendance at the school was Mr. Louis Henuzet, member of the Board of Counsellors for Europe. Seventy-five in all were enrolled." It referred to the number of Bahá'ís attending the school, not to the number of new believers enrolled. We are sorry for the misunderstanding.

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Bahá'í News is published monthly for circulation among Bahá'ís only by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, as a news organ reporting current activities of the Bahá'í world community. Manuscripts submitted should be typewritten and double spaced throughout; any footnotes should appear at the end. The contributor should keep a carbon copy. Send materials to: Bahá'í News Editorial Office, 112 Linden Avenue, Wilmette, IL 60091, U.S.A.

(ISSN 0195-9212)
(USPS 040-140)



Virginia Orbison

**A Bahá'í pioneer
recalls 40 years
of service to Faith**



'When we went pioneering, we didn't know what we were going to do, hadn't the vaguest idea.'

(Virginia Orbison, who has been a Bahá'í pioneer for nearly 40 years to South America, Spain, Portugal and Luxembourg, recently suffered a detached retina in one eye and returned to the United States for surgery. Her eyesight fully restored, she convalesced at the Bahá'í Home in Wilmette, Illinois, where this interview took place. She plans soon to return to her home in Marbalia, on the southern coast of Spain.—Ed.)

Virginia Orbison was five years old when she first heard about the Bahá'í Faith. She recalls now that she hadn't thought much of it then.

If she had known she would spend 40 years or more of her life spreading the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to South America and Europe, she might have paid closer attention while Claudia Coles was explaining to her somewhat skeptical mother about 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Years later, in Geyserville, California, Miss Orbison heard Helen Bishop speak about the Faith. Suddenly, she recalls, "I said to myself, 'This is the Cause of God,'" and a light went on in her heart. It has been shining brightly ever since.

Miss Orbison carried that light to South America in 1942.

"The Guardian had begun asking for pioneers in 1937," she says. "His first cable said, 'They must know the language.' Well, I didn't know Spanish, and didn't feel qualified to pioneer."

Somewhat later, however, when the appeals for pioneers became more urgent, Miss Orbison decided that the time had come for her to make the move.

In September 1942 she arrived in Santiago, Chile, to carry on the teaching work begun by Marcia Atwater, who had been forced by ill health to abandon her pioneer post.

Miss Orbison remembers many of the early pioneers in South America: Louise Caswell and Cora Oliver in Panama; Gayle Woolson in Costa Rica; John Stearns, who opened Ecuador to the Faith and later died of cancer in Lima, Peru.

"You see," she says, "the Guardian asked simply that those countries be opened, that there be just a few Bahá'ís. He didn't specify numbers."

However, she points out, not only was every goal opened, but Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed in every country. What she terms "a miracle" was accomplished by a handful of pioneers, most of them women.

"When I look back on it," she says, "I don't see how it was possible. But Bahá'u'lláh opens doors, and you simply do it."

"I'd never heard of 'culture shock' or anything like that. I was at a pioneer training institute the other day, and I think they are fabulous. When we went pioneering, we didn't know what we were going to do, hadn't the vaguest idea. And remember, I had been a Bahá'í for nine years before I went pioneering."

Having studied French at a boarding school in Paris, Miss Orbison was able to learn Spanish relatively quickly. To support herself, she took photographs and sold them to movie studios. Before pioneering, she had worked for nine years as a research librarian at Paramount Pictures, so she knew what sort of photos would most interest the studios.

The teaching work was slow and tedious. "I thought to myself," she says, "'I will never live to see indigenous Indian Bahá'ís.' And now look! There are thousands and thousands of them."

After spending 3 1/2 years in South America, Miss Orbison became ill and had to return to the U.S. Following her recovery she returned to South America, this time to Brazil, where she met Leonora Holsapple Armstrong, who had pioneered to Brazil in 1921 when 'Abdu'l-Bahá first raised the call for pioneers. Mrs. Armstrong arranged for the first translation into Spanish of *Bahá'u'lláh* and *the New Era*. The translation was made by a Spanish nun.

"Unfortunately," says Miss Orbison, "the translation was not a very good one, and is no longer used."

Mrs. Armstrong, who was designated "Mother of the Bahá'ís of Brazil" by the Guardian, is still serving the Faith there and is a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors.

After World War II, while much of Europe still lay in ruins, the Guardian issued a call for pioneers to European countries, and again Miss Orbison responded. In January 1947, carrying a letter



As Miss Orbison opened the door, she was greeted with the words, 'La policia.'

of credentials from Horace Holley, then secretary of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly, she flew from Rio de Janeiro to Lisbon, Portugal, on one of the first commercial flights across the Atlantic after the war, then settled in Madrid, Spain.

Of the political climate in Spain following the war, she says, "You had to be careful, very careful. You had to know someone well before you'd dare mention the Faith."

"Liberal" ideas simply weren't welcomed at that time. "You can't imagine," she says, "the things that were forbidden"—things such as Theosophy and Esperantism.

A young bank employee who was interested in Esperanto, the international language developed in the 19th century by Prof. Zamenhof, happened to correspond with a friend of Miss Orbison's in California who asked him to look her up in Madrid.

The young man did call on Miss Orbison, and during the course of their conversation she mentioned that a universal auxiliary language (such as Esperanto) is among the principles of the Bahá'í Faith.

"He came back the following day," she says, "and brought another man with him. They both became Bahá'ís almost immediately." They were the second and third Bahá'ís in Spain at that time.

Others were attracted to the Faith, but were afraid to become identified with it. Miss Orbison still remembers her disappointment when, in April of that year, there weren't enough Bahá'ís in Madrid to form a Local Spiritual Assembly. The following year, however, brought more declarations, and at Ridván 1948 the first Spiritual Assembly in Spain was formed in Madrid.

Shortly afterward, Marion Little spent eight months in Spain. She, Miss Orbison and a Spanish Bahá'í traveled to Barcelona where, in 1949, Spain's second Local Spiritual Assembly was formed.

Five years later, as the Ten Year Crusade got under way, Miss Orbison returned to Barcelona for a regional teaching conference following a teaching trip to the Balearic Islands and was surprised to see 40 chairs in the apartment that served as the Bahá'í National Center.

"Have you gone crazy?" she asked, knowing that large meetings were forbidden by the government.

"No pasa nada (nothing will happen)," she was told.

The meeting was held without interruption. But at 3 o'clock the next morning, someone knocked loudly on the door of the apartment in which Miss Orbison was staying with the secretary of the Local Spiritual Assembly and a maid.

"Who's there?" Miss Orbison asked.

"Telegramma," said the voice behind the door.

As Miss Orbison opened the door, she was greeted with the words, "La policia." A plain clothes member of the "Social Brigade" entered the apartment. "Are there any men here?" he asked.

"No," he was told. "You may look around if you like."

The apartment was searched, after which Miss Orbison and the other women were driven to the local jail. They remembered chilling stories of people having been taken away by the police and simply disappearing.

But Miss Orbison feared for more than her life. In her purse was a list of all the Bahá'ís in Spain.

At the police station, they were taken to a cell three floors underground. Miss Orbison thought of the Síyyah-Chal (Black Pit) in Tíhran in which Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned for several months in 1852.

Uniformed policemen stood guard outside the filthy cells. One by one, the Bahá'ís of Barcelona were brought from their homes until all of them, five men and five women, were gathered together in the jail. Forbidden to speak to one another, they wrapped themselves in blankets, prayed and finally slept.

During the night they were taken upstairs, two at a time, for questioning. The first to be questioned were Miss Orbison and a man named Louis, a former Communist.

Outside the office sat a young man who had recently been enrolled in the Faith. "Aren't you coming in too?" Miss Orbison asked. "No," he replied. "I'm staying out." She suspected that the man was a spy for the police. In any event, she never saw him again.



'... one must have faith that, when he or she is on a mission for Bahá'u'lláh, it is bound to turn out right, it must be successful ...'

Under questioning, Miss Orbison soon realized that the police suspected the Bahá'ís of being Communists or connected to some other so-called subversive cause.

"This man," she said to her interrogator, referring to Louis, "was an atheist, and now he is a Bahá'í."

"You mean he was a Communist," said the interrogator.

"All right, a Communist," she replied. "But now he is a Bahá'í and believes in God. That's an example of what the Bahá'í Faith can do." She tried to explain the Bahá'í principle of obedience to government.

Her purse was taken. She feared that the list of Bahá'ís would be found, but nothing was ever said of it.

Finally, she says, the police were convinced that the Bahá'ís posed no threat to the government, and all were released the following day. They had been treated politely, and no one was harmed.

"We thought at first that this was a calamity," she says, "but it was quite the opposite. It made the Faith known to the government in a favorable way."

Today, says Miss Orbison, the Bahá'ís in Spain are free to proclaim the Faith publicly, and are generally busy putting up signs, holding parades, writing articles for the news media, or speaking on radio or television.

The one thing Miss Orbison says she has learned during 40 years of pioneering is that "one must have faith that, if he or she is on a mission for Bahá'u'lláh, it is bound to turn out right, it must be successful," even if it doesn't appear to be at any given moment.

And like any veteran pioneer, she has a dramatic story to illustrate the point.

While living in Lima, Peru, Miss Orbison visited the U.S. Consulate to speak with George Valiant, a former curator of the Philadelphia Museum who was director of an English-language education project.

Mr. Valiant asked her what would happen if a Bahá'í were forced to choose between the Faith and his job.

"If he was truly a Bahá'í," she said, "he would leave his job."

Shortly afterward, Mr. Valiant confronted a teacher on his project, who had recently become a Bahá'í, with that very choice. The teacher left the Faith. After that, Mr. Valiant ridiculed the Faith at every opportunity.

The following year, while waiting for a job interview in Brazil, Miss Orbison picked up a newspaper and was stunned by a headline: "George Valiant Commits Suicide."

Mr. Valiant, she says, had been named U.S. Ambassador to Spain, but before leaving for the post, he went into his garden and shot himself.

"No one knows why," she says. "But before he died, he mumbled something about solutions to the world's problems. He had made fun of a solution to the world's problems when I'd told him the Bahá'ís had it."

Why, she wonders, had she happened across that paper? Why at that particular time and place? She had no idea she soon would be pioneering to Spain, or that she would be presenting herself to the American ambassador there.

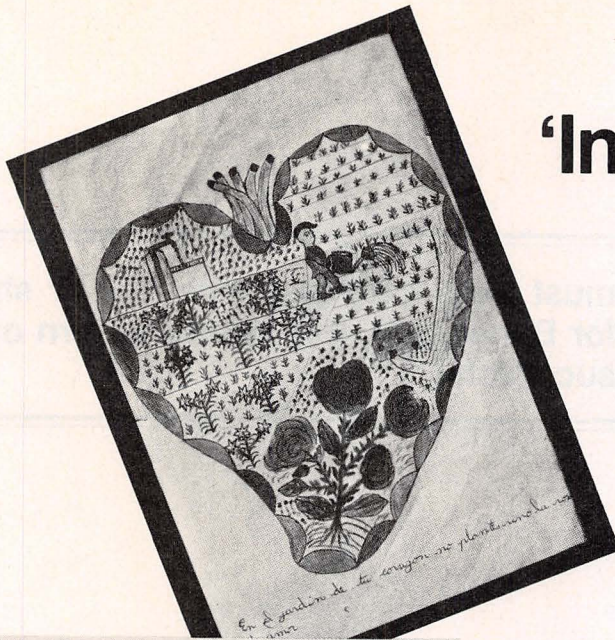
"Suppose George Valiant were the ambassador," she says. "After all, he was supposed to be. He'd have put me out right away. I'd never have gotten anywhere. Instead, here was this perfectly marvelous man, Phillip Bonsole, a Quaker. He even offered to bring Bahá'í books into Spain through the Embassy for me."

Miss Orbison recalls her tests with humor and understanding, and her achievements with humility. She looks to the future with confidence, wishing only for enough time to do what must be done for the Faith.

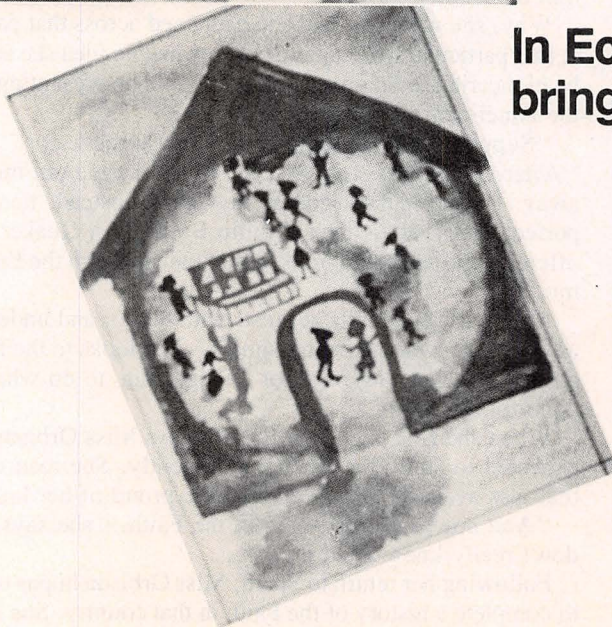
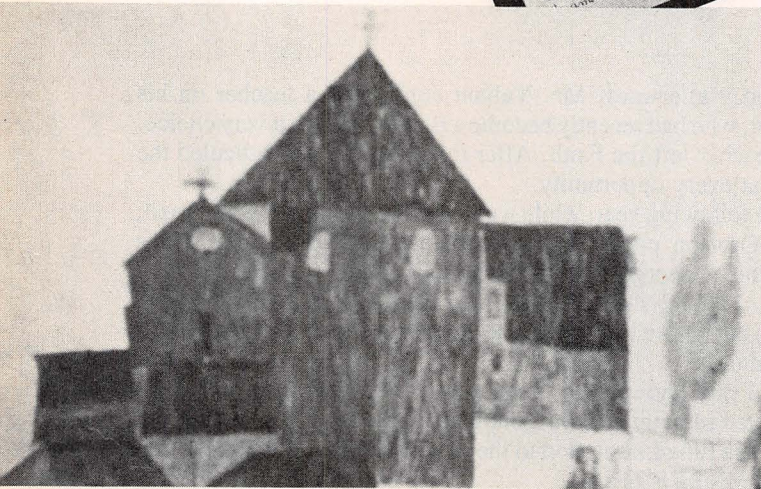
When she first became a Bahá'í, says Miss Orbison, she was expected to study the Writings diligently. She read everything that was available and became quite proud of her knowledge.

"And now, after 40 years in the Faith," she says, "I feel I don't really know anything."

Following her return to Spain, Miss Orbison hopes to find time to complete a history of the Faith in that country. She is 77 years old.



'In the garden of thy heart . . .'



In Ecuador, a Bahá'í drawing contest brings the Faith closer to the people

The first prize winner, 10-year old Segundo Efraim Ushco from the Julio Enrique Parades school in Ambato, with two of his teachers. His prize-winning drawing appears at the top of Page 6.



The Bahá'í community of Ecuador gained nationwide publicity and made many friends for the Faith this year while honoring young Ecuadorian artists in a poster drawing contest, based on Bahá'í themes, that commemorated the International Year of the Child.

The contest, for primary school children, was supported enthusiastically by the government's Ministry of Education and Cultural Matters which even contributed 4,000 *suces* (about \$140 U.S.) to help pay for it. In addition, 92 books were donated to be given as prizes to the top three winners and those earning honorable mention.

More than 2,000 entries were received from a cross-section of schools in the Sierra and eastern parts of the country (schools in the coastal area were closed for vacation, and a second contest for students in that area was begun shortly after the first was completed).

The contestants, who were from 6 to 12 years old, were asked to render drawings based on one of these themes from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh:

- "So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth."
- "The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens."
- "In the garden of thy heart plant naught but the rose of love."

The first prize was 1,000 *suces* (about \$35 U.S.). The second prize was 800 *suces*, the third prize 600 *suces*.

Judges for the contest were Sr. Germán Pavón, the well known Ecuadorian painter who did the original painting for the inauguration of Radio Bahá'í; Lcdo. Jorge W. Terán A., the representative of the Ministry of Education; Sra. Germana de Breilh, a niece of the former President of Ecuador and representative of the Executive Commission for the International Year of the Child; Donald Stewart, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador;

and Srta. María Perugachi, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Through the courtesy of municipal officials, the awards ceremony was held in the auditorium of the municipal library in Quito. An adjoining salon was used to display the prize-winning drawings as well as photos from the United Nations relating to the development of the child, accompanied by appropriate quotations from the Bahá'í Writings.

Nearly 400 people attended the awards ceremony, while thousands more viewed the exhibition during the following week.

The first prize winner was 10-year-old Segundo Efraim Ushco who attends the Julio Enrique Paredes school in Ambato. His theme was "In the garden of thy heart plant naught but the rose of love."

Winner of the second prize was 12-year-old Marina Guerrero from the Victor Manuel Arregui school of Guaranda in the province of Bolívar.

The third prize was awarded to 11-year-old Alvaro Correa Martínez of Cuenca, who was urged by his mother to enter the contest, as his school did not participate.

The idea for the drawing contest was born late in 1978 as a group of Bahá'í women was returning to Quito from a teaching trip to help complete the goals of the Five Year Plan.

Inspired by a drawing contest sponsored by the Bahá'ís of Chile, these women decided to make a similar proposal to the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador. They met on December 20, 1978, to draw up plans for the contest.

Their plans were enthusiastically endorsed by the National Spiritual Assembly which named a commission composed of these same women to develop specific details of the "National Contest of Infantile Drawings." The women who undertook this task on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly are Mrs. Tarsieh Werle-Vahdat, Carmen de Stewart, and Gretchen Mansuri.

The National Spiritual Assembly invited Auxiliary Board member Isabel de Calderón and Dr. Aída de Davila to work with the commission, as two of the three women could work only sparingly due to poor health.

The National Spiritual Assembly wrote Sr. General Fernando Dobronsky, the Minister of Education and Cultural Matters, to seek permission to hold the contest at the primary school level on a nationwide scale. The letter explained the relationship of the Bahá'í community to the United Nations, and that Bahá'ís were invited to sponsor events to honor children during the International Year of the Child.

On January 30, 1979, following several visits to the Ministry by members of the Bahá'í commission charged with planning the contest, the Ministry of Education and Cultural Matters sent a circular letter to all primary school directors and supervisors in the country, private and public, informing them of the government's authorization and support for the drawing contest to be sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador, "a consequential event in connection with the International Year of the Child." The letter further stated:

"The Ministry of Education, through its Department of Cultural Matters, welcomed with great satisfaction the proposal of the (Bahá'ís). We think that this will provide a magnificent opportunity to interest the child in the study and investigation of this cultural activity . . .

"With this information, I officially convoke all the schools in the country to participate in the aforementioned contest under the established rules."

In addition to money and supplies given by the Ministry of Education, school materials were donated by the mayor of Quito as well as by various banks, social clubs and of course, by many Local Spiritual Assemblies.

Radio Bahá'í played an important role in promoting the contest along with other radio and television stations and newspapers. Bahá'ís appeared on television seven times in connection with the contest. The Bahá'í children's chorus, directed by Srta. Ann Miller, a pioneer from the United States, sang Bahá'í songs on TV and also performed at the awards ceremony.

After the first prize winner was chosen, two members of the



Many of the drawings by participants in the nationwide contest sponsored by the Bahá'í community of Ecuador were displayed for a week at the national *Ḥaṣiratu'l-Quds* in Quito (above). Winner of the second prize in the contest (below) was 12-year-old Marina Guerrero (seated in center) from the Victor Manuel Arregui school in Guaranda. Her prize-winning entry is the middle one on Page 6.



Bahá'í commission visited the Provincial Office in Ambato to notify officials that Segundo Ushco had won the contest.

They were taken to the home of the school's principal, who expressed his happiness for the honor bestowed on his school by such an award. The school has been in existence for only a year and a half, has no facilities of its own, and must borrow space from a school for girls during off hours. It is in a very poor neighborhood of mostly laborers and working mothers.

Returning to the Provincial Office with the principal, the Bahá'ís were told that a meeting of parents, teachers and children would be called to congratulate the winner and promote the use of his poster for the annual Ambato Fruit and Flower Festival.

The following week, however, when Sra. Calderón and Sra. Werle-Vahdat returned to Ambato for the meeting, they were told by the superintendent of the Provincial Office that, after having read some Bahá'í pamphlets, he and his staff would not participate in such a meeting because there could be no proselytizing in



Students and teachers at the Julio Enrique Parades school in Ambato gather to hear the news that one of the school's students, Segundo Efraim Ushco, has won first prize in the nationwide drawing contest sponsored by the Bahá'í community of Ecuador.



Edgar Mayorga (left) and Manuel Romero, students at the Eschela Especial (School for Retarded Children) in Riobamba, Ecuador, with Mrs. Tarsieh Werle-Vahdat, a representative of the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador. These children's drawings were so expressive that the judges chose them for honorable mention without knowing that they are deaf and dumb. Their teachers were so proud of them that they all attended the awards ceremony in Quito with the two children.

the school system. He would not change his mind even when shown the letter from the Ministry of Education approving the contest and asking for the support and collaboration of Provincial Offices.

The two women excused themselves and proceeded to the school where the presentation was made to a classroom filled with parents, teachers and children, but without anyone from the Provincial Office to congratulate or encourage the winner.

All of the teachers at that school, along with the parents of the winner, attended the formal awards ceremony in Quito at which young Segundo spoke with dignity and confidence of his appreciation for the Teachings of the Faith.

The second prize winner, Marina Guerrero, was visited by Sra. de Calderón and Cecilia Pavón who told the child of her good fortune. She is from a poor family with 10 brothers and sisters, and attends a small, unpretentious country school in Bolivar Province.

The Bahá'ís were accompanied to the school by Sra. María Tapia de Velasco of the Provincial Office, who also is an outstanding poetess and writer. Upon hearing the name of the school the prize winner attends, Sr. Velasco put aside everything else, saying, "This is the school where I began my education. I must go with them."

Enroute to the school, she was told something about the principles of the Faith, and after listening attentively, said, "If what you say about the Bahá'í Faith is true, then I am a Bahá'í too."

Returning later to Guarando, Sra. Calderón said to Sra. Velasco that she would like to visit the president of the Patronato Nacional de Niños (National Foundation for Children), who had offered to help Marina Guerrero with her education. "With pleasure," said Sra. Velasco. "She is my sister-in-law." The women went together to the home of the president of the Foundation, Sra. Nicola de Tapia, who agreed to help the child with a scholarship for secondary school.

At the awards ceremony, Marina Guerrero was accompanied by all the teachers at her school, the school's janitor, one of her sisters, and two provincial supervisors. They brought with them a plate inscribed in Spanish, "May the Bahá'í Faith unite all of the peoples of the earth," that was presented to the National Spiritual Assembly. In a brief presentation speech, the National Assembly was thanked for carrying the contest to the poorer and more distant communities that, they said, are almost always neglected or forgotten.

Bahá'ís visited many schools whose students had entered the contest, and were encouraged to continue holding this type of contest as an annual event sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly for children all over Ecuador.

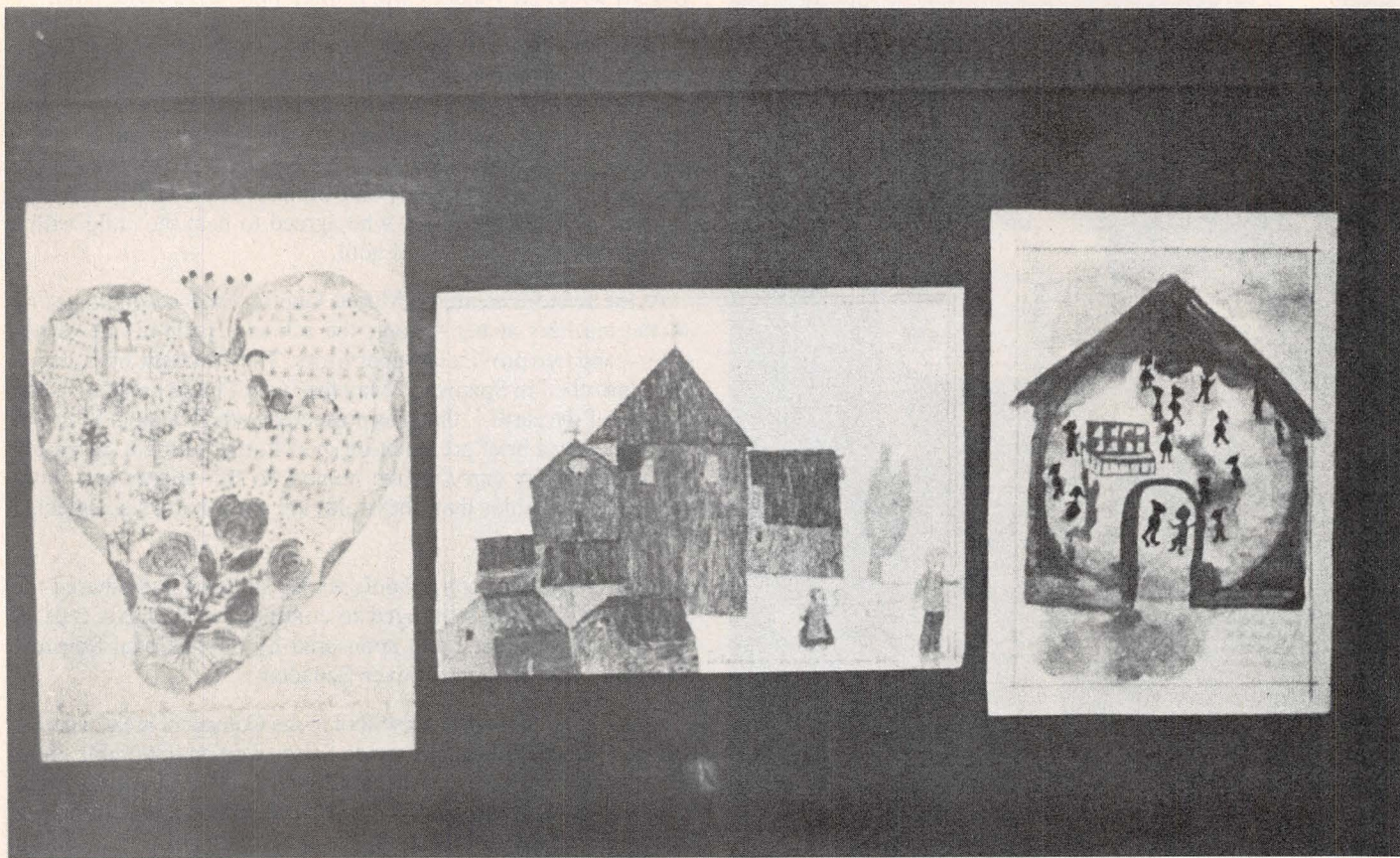
At one small government school in the Cotocachi area, where a student named Guillermo Estrada Saltos won an honorable mention, the Bahá'ís were told that the director and teachers wished to have the award presented at a formal ceremony and wanted a Bahá'í to be present on July 6, the anniversary of Cotocachi, to award the certificate and prize. The program was to be planned by the municipal council.

The ceremony was held in a packed theater whose audience included many of the principal civil and ecclesiastical leaders in Cotocachi as well as delegations from other civil areas.

Sra. Calderón was introduced as the representative of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís. She then asked the governor of the Province to present the award certificate, which



Contest judges review the drawings at the national Ḥaẓiratu'l-Quds in Quito with Donald Steward, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly.



he did while complimenting the National Spiritual Assembly for its initiative.

Sra. Calderón presented three Bahá'í books to the president of the municipal council, after which she explained the purpose of the contest and read some passages from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh.

At the Colegio del Doloroso in Pimampiro, where three children won honorable mention, the Franciscan nuns who administer the school were so delighted that this had happened to some of their children that they chartered a bus to bring the children and their parents to Quito for the awards ceremony. The three nuns who came appeared as happy or happier than the children and were extremely interested in the exhibition, carefully copying down all the quotations from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh.

Another far-reaching result of Bahá'í participation in the contest came about through the warm friendship established between two of its judges, Srta. Perugachi of the National Spiritual Assembly, and Sra. Breilh.

At Sra. Breilh's request, Srta. Perugachi was named as a delegate from the Bahá'í community of Ecuador to the Gran Encuentro Nacional de Patronato de la Niñez, organized by the Patronato Nacional del Niño (National Foundation for Children), the Ministry of Works and Social Welfare, and CENAIN (the National Executive Committee for the International Year of the Child).

Srta. Perugachi, accompanied by the Auxiliary Board member in Quito, attended the meetings as a representative of the national Bahá'í community of Ecuador, and the two of them made important contacts among the many parents and other participants from all over the country.—**Helen Hornby**

Radio Bahá'í

The Faith's first radio outlet makes rapid strides forward

(The following report of progress at Radio Bahá'í in Otavalo, Ecuador, dated October 15, 1979, was sent to the U.S. International Goals Committee by Cynthia Hubbard, a former staff member of that committee who pioneered to Ecuador in the spring of 1979.—Ed.)

Radio Bahá'í is making rapid progress at this time. The importance of its work cannot be overestimated. Since it is the first Bahá'í radio station in the world, similar projects in the future will no doubt look to Radio Bahá'í in Ecuador as an example of how to use radio as an instrument for the proclamation, expansion and consolidation of the Faith.

Presently transmitting is the AM station at Cajas, a 30-minute drive south of Otavalo. Radio Bahá'í now covers most of the province of Imbabura and parts of the province of Pichincha. The production of all programs is done in the studios at the Bahá'í Institute in Itavalo.

Ralph Dexter is chief engineer of Radio Bahá'í, and Michael Stokes is director of production. The programming, and basically everything that happens at Radio Bahá'í, is guided by the Radio Commission under the direction of Continental Counsellor Raul Pavón and the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador.

At present, the Radio Bahá'í staff is small, consisting of those who are producing programs in Spanish or Quechua, those who work at Cajas as announcers, and those who are technicians. The jobs are interchangeable, and often a person will be working as an announcer while he is also producing programs.

The aim, naturally, is to train the Ecuadorian believers to carry on most of the work at Radio Bahá'í, but people from other places who have the requisite skills in production or technical areas are needed to continue the rapid expansion that is taking place, while others are needed to help train the indigenous people to take a greater part in the work that is going on. The problem that exists now is that there is no money with which to pay individuals coming from other countries to work at Radio Bahá'í. They will need funds from other sources to meet their living expenses.

The present goals of programming for the AM station are:

Cultural/Educational

Recreation: Music and festivals sponsored by Radio Bahá'í.

Information: A community calendar of events, lost and found notices, and individual greetings (these notices and greetings from one individual to another are aired each afternoon from 4 to 6 o'clock).

Educational: Program "Rincon Hogareño" for women; programming is planned or under way for information on agriculture, health, and the indigenous arts.

Bahá'í Programming

Proclamation: Cuñas (spot announcements) proclaiming the coming of Bahá'u'lláh and the existence of His Faith, Bahá'í songs in Spanish and Quechua, and programs designed to inform the public of the existence of Bahá'u'lláh and His Teachings.

Expansion: Cuñas of quotes from the Writings on specific teachings of the Faith; a program, "Conozco la Fe," which is a pre-recorded fireside; recorded prayers and Bahá'í songs.

Consolidation: Programs on specific teachings of the Faith and recorded prayers.

Only a part of these goals are completed at present, but work is progressing on the remaining ones.

In about two months, the long-awaited short-wave station will begin transmitting from Cuicocha, which is a 30-minute drive north of Otavalo. Construction of the station is under way and program planning also has begun. It will broadcast to all parts of Ecuador, as well as to parts of Colombia, Peru, Venezuela and Panama. The government of Ecuador also has given permission for an FM station, which is a future project of the National Spiritual Assembly.

I cannot possibly convey in words the importance of these radio projects, as those of us who are working for Radio Bahá'í have only a glimpse of it ourselves.

In day-to-day terms, the station is changing the thinking and spirit of the people here, especially the indigenous people who are our primary listeners. Radio Bahá'í has an extremely large audience. For those who have not heard of Bahá'u'lláh, the station provides information about the coming of God's most recent Messenger and the Faith He brought. For those who already are familiar with Bahá'u'lláh, the station helps them to know and love His Teachings, and to identify themselves with His Faith. For those who have identified themselves with the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, the station provides a deeper knowledge of His Teachings and reminds them of their responsibilities as Bahá'ís, as well as of the bounties of enlisting under the Banner of His Cause.

On a social-cultural level, the listeners of Radio Bahá'í are coming to understand the importance of a good academic education for their children and spiritual education in the home. The station is helping to inform the people about the importance of good health and advances in agriculture, and encouraging participation and pride in their culture and arts; it provides community service through its calendar of events and listing of lost and found items, and provides recreation through its music programming.

We ask the prayers of the friends at the National Center and throughout the Bahá'í world for the continued rapid progress of this most vital project. Those who are interested in helping to further the aims of the station in any way may write to Radio Bahá'í at Apartado 14, Otavalo, Ecuador.

Around the World

Samoa



More than 40 Bahá'í youth attended one of a series of youth conferences sponsored by the National Youth Committee of Samoa last September 8-9 at the site of the proposed Bahá'í House of Worship near Apia, Western Samoa. Among those attending the conference were Afemata Moli Ching, chairman of the National

Spiritual Assembly of Samoa, and five pioneers to Samoa from Australia, Canada and Irán. The evening was devoted to singing and dancing the Samoan 'siva.' Neighbors were attracted by the singing, came to join in, and learned something about the Faith in the process.

United States

"Gateways to Victory" was the theme of a conference held last October 20-21 at Bosque Farms, New Mexico, to celebrate the opening of the Seven Year Plan.

The gathering, attended by more than 125 Bahá'ís from New Mexico and nearby states, was hosted by the 11-member Bahá'í community of Bosque Farms. Among the special guests were Auxiliary Board members Nancy Phillips of Phoenix, Arizona, and Ernest Bruss of Salt Lake City, Utah.

Discussions covered a wide range of topics including firmness in the Covenant, the present crisis in Irán, U.S. goals for the first two-year phase of the Seven Year Plan, proclamation in the media, teaching Native Americans in cities and on Reservations, Bahá'í consultation, the special needs and concerns of Bahá'í youth, and the necessity of supporting the Bahá'í funds.

The friends also heard a tape of the message to North America and Europe delivered earlier last year by H. Borrah Kavelin, a member of the Universal House of Justice.

An auction held during the conference raised \$745 for the International Fund, with another \$118 contributed to help to defray the cost of the conference. An immediate result of the gathering was a feature story about the Faith in the local newspaper.



Auxiliary Board members Nancy Phillips and Ernest Bruss (seated) discuss final plans for the 'Gateways to Victory' conference held last October 20-21 at Bosque Farms, New Mexico, with (left to right) Karen Patterson, Behin Turfler, and conference chairman David Bower.

New Hebrides

The second National Youth Conference of the Bahá'ís of New Hebrides was held last August 23-26 in the goal village of Eton, Efate, at a specially prepared campsite close to the beach.

Youth from as far away as Malaysia and New Caledonia joined young people from Vila, Erakor and Fila islands to hear Auxiliary Board members Alick Soalo and Hnaloane Palene and others cover a variety of topics.

During the conference, Bahá'ís visited the chief of Eton to ask if a public meeting might be held in the village. Permission was given, and on the Saturday evening of the conference more

than 60 people, mostly women and children, heard talks on Progressive Revelation, and why the Bahá'í youth were in Eton. Two slide shows also were presented.

Among the activities planned to follow the conference were a teaching-deepening weekend in September, and a display at the Vila Agricultural Show on September 1.

The youth also agreed to support deepenings and firesides on Vila, Erakor and Fila islands, and to form a Bahá'í Club at Malapoa College.

Finland



Finland's two Auxiliary Board members and seven members of its National Spiritual Assembly were among the more than 150 believers from seven countries who attended that country's annual Bahá'í Summer School last July 5-7.

In addition to Finland, believers from Canada, Germany, Iran, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States participated in the school.

A public meeting and concert were held during the school, while 17 children attended a program entitled "God's Creation."

Bahá'ís from Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, the United States and Iran attended the Bahá'í summer school at Jyväskylä, Finland, last July.

Nigeria



Dorothy Hansen (left rear), a Bahá'í and poet who currently lives in Ghana, and Dr. Jane Faily of Canada (right rear), a representative of the Bahá'í International Community for the International Year of the Child, traveled extensively in Western Africa during 1978-79, teaching the Faith and meeting with government and other officials. They are shown here during a visit with Ester Jonah (center), the first Bahá'í in Elele, River State, Nigeria.

George R. Ariyoshi, the governor of Hawaii, proclaimed September 16, 1979, 'World Peace Day' in Hawaii. A group of Bahá'í children from Oahu, clad in T-shirts bearing the Bahá'í theme for the International Year of the Child, 'Love That Child,' were present at the ceremony. From left to right are Richard Yasuda, Laurissa Brown, Candy Ford, Gov. Ariyoshi, Bill Troxel, Erin Quick, and Cori Troxel. The governor praised the Bahá'ís for their support of world peace, the United Nations, and the International Year of the Child.



When Maychong Sivongxay appeared at the National Bahá'í Office in Honolulu, Hawaii, in December 1978 with a letter requesting help for 27 Laotian Bahá'ís who had recently come to Hawaii from Thailand as refugees, the Spiritual Assembly of Honolulu swung quickly into action.

Volunteers visited the Sivongxay family and the other believers, and made arrangements for all of them to attend the next Nineteen Day Feast.

The critical circumstances of the Laotians were immediately apparent. None, except Mr. Sivongxay, could speak English. They were bewildered by government programs designed to teach them English, enroll the men in job training, and teach the refugees how to shop, ride a bus, etc.

Every Bahá'í community on Oahu offered assistance. Food, clothing, household items, toys, linen, even furniture were donated. Mr. Sivongxay supervised the sorting and distribution, prepared a list of the Laotian Bahá'ís with addresses, ages, and dates of arrival, and kept in close touch with everyone, notifying them of Bahá'í activities.

Meanwhile, the Local Spiritual Assembly

arranged for the Laotians to hold their own deepening classes at the Bahá'í Center. Classes for teaching the women and children English were organized, and transportation was arranged.

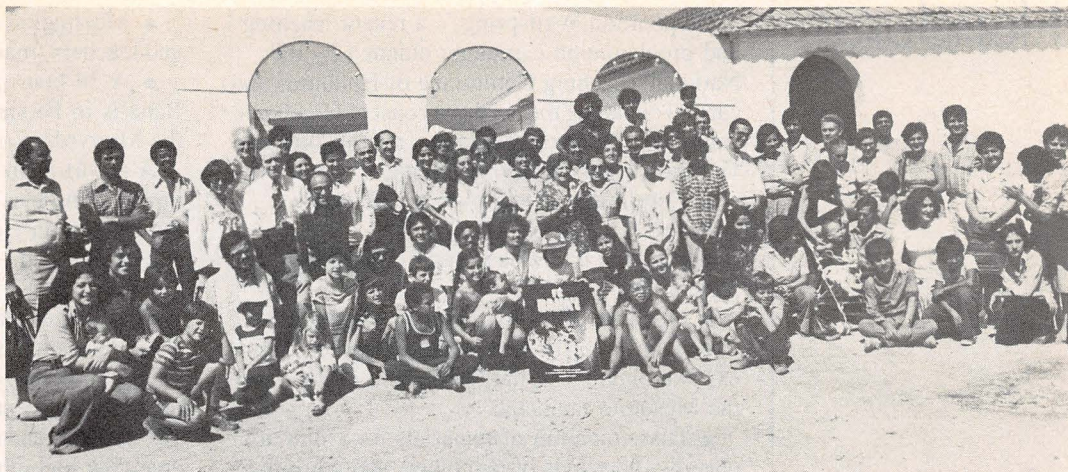
One of the Bahá'ís contacted a friend, Prof. John Fee, and asked him to help obtain workbooks and study materials for the refugees. Prof. Fee, who speaks Thai—which is similar to Laotian—offered to help teach the classes. Later, he helped translate for the Laotian believers during the Ridván elections.

Although informed that he could leave after the balloting if he wished, Prof. Fee wanted to stay to the end. He said he had never seen such a fair and just election.



Artist Georgine Moul (second from left), who designed the special stage backdrop and props used by the Bahá'í community of Honolulu in its World Unity Day observance at the Waikiki bandstand last June 2, stands by as the final touches are added. More than 200 people attended the event whose theme was 'One Planet, One People . . . Please.' The program featured a variety of entertainers and dance groups, both Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í.

Portugal



More than 80 Bahá'ís and their children attended Portugal's annual Bahá'í Summer School last August 25-September 1 in the village of Landeira. Classes were included on Bahá'í history and 'living a Bahá'í life.' A highlight of the school occurred when, following consultation on the status of the International Fund, the

friends decided unanimously to suggest to the National Spiritual Assembly that the Portuguese Bahá'í community become financially self-sufficient this year. This would achieve the long-standing goal in Portugal of ending its dependence on the International Fund for assistance.

Costa Rica

When a member of the National Indian Teaching Committee arrived unexpectedly in Mojoncito, in the Talamanca area of Costa Rica, local Bahá'ís quickly notified other believers in the region and organized a special institute on the goals of the Seven Year Plan.

About 30 Bahá'ís met at the local Bahá'í Center to discuss teaching goals in Mojoncito

About 40 Costa Rican Bahá'ís attended a teaching institute last June 10 at La Bomba, Costa Rica.

Sessions dealt with "Kingdoms of Creation," and with the spirit of faith that animates and

and its extension teaching goal, Gavilán Canta. Mojoncito has held regular Bahá'í children's classes for more than a year and is preparing to hold classes for youth. The community also is organizing special sessions for those who can't read or write, and donated three plots of land as endowments during the Five Year Plan.

strengthens the Bahá'í community.

The friends from various communities consulted on the teaching work and on strategies for winning the goals of the Seven Year Plan.

Germany

The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Bad Mergentheim, Germany, was formed last April 8, exactly 66 years after a visit to that town by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Members of the Assembly are (back row left to right) Gertrud Haug, Ihsan Halabi, Angelika Halabi, Christian Haug, and (front row left to right) Esfandiar Rastani, Tuba Sabet, Massih Sabet, Gertrud Kohler, Werner Hartwig.



Honduras

"Operation Wellspring," a recent teaching and proclamation campaign planned by the National Teaching Committee of Honduras and carried out along the northern coast of Honduras near its border with Nicaragua, resulted in these victories in less than one month:

- Enrollment of more than 1,000 new believers.
- Election of 19 new Local Spiritual Assemblies.
- Opening of 34 localities to the Faith.
- Translation of the Spanish pamphlet, "Que es la Fe Bahá'í" (What Is the Bahá'í Faith) into the Mesquito language.
- Dissemination of materials for children's classes, thousands of pamphlets and more than 100 Bahá'í books for personal deepening and/or study classes.
- A lengthy interview with the governor of the town of Gracias á Dios (in English, "Thanks to God").

- Meetings with numerous public officials and teachers, many of whom are now Bahá'ís.
- A 24-hour prayer vigil dedicated to the Bahá'ís in Persia on July 9, the anniversary of the Martyrdom of the Báb.

A report from Auxiliary Board member Bill Stover, who participated in the campaign, says the Bahá'ís in Honduras are engaged in mass conversion and "entry by troops."

"Right now," his report says, "we have whole villages that are either all Bahá'í or have a Bahá'í population well over 50 per cent . . .

"In short, we have mass conversion on our hands, and we need to develop new ideas and new projects and new programs to cope with our changing and expanding communities."

Singapore

The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Serangoon, Singapore, organized a symposium, 'Toward a Better Understanding of the Child,' last September 29 in cooperation with the Serangoon Gardens Residents' Association, a private organization functioning within the area of the Assembly. It marked the first time that a Spiritual Assembly in Singapore had cooperated with a non-Bahá'í organization to bring about such a project. While no Bahá'ís spoke at the symposium, many excellent contacts were made, and the symposium was given the personal blessing of Dr. Lau Teik Soon, the member of Parliament representing the Serangoon Gardens constituency, who recently visited the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh and Bahá'í gardens in Haifa, Israel. The Spiritual Assembly of Serangoon followed up the symposium in November with a food-stall at the Serangoon Gardens Community Center.



An invitation to a newspaper reporter to attend a Bahá'í fireside resulted in remarkable publicity for the Faith in Singapore.

Ilsa Sharp, a columnist for the influential English-language newspaper, *Straits Times*, came to the meeting and stayed for two hours. She asked many questions, interviewed several Bahá'ís, and requested Bahá'í books and other literature.

On April 24, 1979, the *Straits Times* printed a full-page article about the Bahá'í Faith including a photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

The *Straits Times*, with a circulation of 202,000, reaches almost all English-speaking homes and offices in Singapore, and is read by

an estimated 750,000 people each day.

The article on the Faith was comprehensive, fair and friendly. Included was an interview with Shirin Fozdar, one of Singapore's first Bahá'í pioneers who is well known and widely respected in that country. The article described her as one of Asia's "leading fighters" for women's rights.

Bermuda



Ten Bahá'ís from California donated their resources, time and talent last July to a benefit concert in Bermuda sponsored by the Bermudian government's National Coordinating Committee for the International Year of the Child (IYC).

The Bahá'ís who flew to Bermuda to participate in the event and spend time teaching and proclaiming the Faith on the island were singers Leslie and Kelly Bulkin; musicians Bob Gundry, Paul Blote, Don Reed, Gary Bulkin, and Ernest (Chip) Bruss; Joan Nemour, Bill Nemour, and Stacy Nemour.

Mr. Gundry wrote the song "Tomorrow Belongs to the Children," which was chosen by the United Nations as the official song for the International Year of the Child.

A feature article on the group's visit appeared in the "happenings" section of the *Mid-Ocean News*. An interview with the Honorable David Gibbons, premier of Bermuda, was televised, and the group did a half-hour radio interview.

Proceeds from the IYC concert were used to help build a Cultural Center in Bermuda.

Mrs. Georgia Sanchez-Stevens, a member of the Bermuda Teaching Committee, was invited

The Honorable David Gibbons, premier of Bermuda, received a delegation of Bahá'ís and officials of the Bermuda Committee for the International Year of the Child last July. Shown here (left to right) are Stacy Nemour, Joan Nemour, Paul Blote, Bill Nemour, Bob Gundry, Georgia Sanchez-Stevens, IYC officials Alfred Eve, Conchita Ming and Roger Tittenton, Premier Gibbons, Don Reed, Leslie Bulkin, Kelly Bulkin. The interview with the premier was carried on Bermuda television.

earlier last year to become a member of the National IYC Committee for Bermuda. The IYC Committee invited Dr. Victor de Araujo, the Bahá'í International Community's representative to the United Nations, to visit Bermuda in November as the keynote speaker at its International Year of the Child Conference at the South Hampton Princess Hotel.



A proclamation event at Fort Hamilton, Bermuda, last July featured entertainment by Bahá'ís (left to right) Bob Gundry (keyboards), Anna Basdon (Bermuda Bahá'í), singers Kelly and Leslie Bulkin, Gary Bulkin (congas), Chip Bruss (guitar), and Paul Blote (bass).

