

TAHITI -- November 16-19, 1972

I was met at the airport, thanks to the efficient working of the Continental Pioneer Committee and the NSA of SP Pacific, by Terii Pae, oldest native believer in Tahiti, and his wife. Terii became Baha'i in 1954, he says, through Jean Sevin. There are some 16 believers on Tahiti, according to the Sallhae's, but not all of them are seen. Only two are foreigners--a young French couple named Solange, with the French Army. The Sallhaes, pioneers from France, moved six months ago to Moorea, ten miles distant, to form a group there. Bernard Sallhae has a job there as a cook and they are much happier than in Papeete. The third Baha'i on Moorea is a young Chinese, Gilon Tahan Lo, the only mechanic on the island and a very sincere, very busy young man. On Tahiti, with the pioneers absent, the new Assembly is only now beginning to function on its own. The Feast just after I left was the first they had organized without prodding from the Sallhaes. I'm sorry to say they still don't think in terms of teaching, and I had great difficulty conveying anything of this nature due to language problems. Terii's English is limited to a few words as is my French, and many of the Baha'is don't even understand French (so even the tapes I had in French were of some but limited usefulness). French speaking travel teachers, preferably not French by nationality, are needed, especially with organizing ability. They will find warm hospitality awaiting them, and much deepening as well as teaching to be done!

Terii Pae is a good contact for travellers. His address: Lot 32, Heiri, Box 888, Tahiti (near airport). Some of the Baha'is have phones, I believe.

WESTERN SAMOA -- November 19-20, 1972

Probably the most beautiful island I shall see, American Samoa also has one of the most beautiful Baha'i communities. The spirit and music are not easily forgotten, and the friends (especially the pioneers) are well enough organized that even with a brief stop the traveller can be treated, as I was, to a lovely village meeting. Unfortunately, judging from talks with pioneer Dorothy Laramie (U.S.) and with William Ala'i, the spirit has yet to be adequately channeled into teaching. The "news teaching" team from the North Carolina seem to have left some mixed feelings behind about their approach, and the spark of teaching has not yet ignited the seemingly ready fuel. The Samoans will have to work out their own approaches since their very strong traditional culture dictates certain forms in approaching village people, and these are undoubtedly the most fertile areas for the Faith. It was evident in passing, too, that other church groups ~~groups~~ are very active, and there were even several street singing groups out on Sunday reminiscent of some of the Baha'i teaching in the U.S. South. Tough competition!

WESTERN SAMOA -- November 20-22, 1972

Western Samoa as a nation~~is~~ impressed me as being the healthiest, most natural, and most spiritually together of the several I have seen in the South Pacific. Culturally and socially they are advanced and they seem to be standing on their own feet pretty well, free of the deep-seated struggles with ~~a~~ foreigners and foreign influence one senses in other islands, independent and colonial alike. Nevertheless the rather large Baha'i pioneer community there seems to generate its own activities with insufficient participation of locals. I was impressed, however, with the efforts of some of the pioneer youth in teaching and deepening in the villages--especially Phil Beattie, who spends full time in this work. There is relatively

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no lack of physical facilities in Western Samoa, nor of talent among the Baha'is, but I felt their enthusiasm, spunk, and spirit as Baha'is could well be increased. More music, to equal the American Samoans, as well as more energetic young pioneers would give them a big boost.

During my brief visit the friends organized an informal meeting for me with the Baha'is, at which I was able to show slides and sing songs; a public meeting attended by some 20 or 30 non-Baha'is, in Apia; an interview with the Director of the Dept. of Economic Development, Hans Kruse, which proved very cordial and productive; and a visit to Baha'is in villages on the main island.

TONGA — November 23-25, 1972

Tonga is an isolated country with many similarities to the Gilberts, discussed below. There were three foreigners there during my stay: Garville Kirton, an intellectual Australian (?) and Secretary of the NSA, made cynical and somewhat negative by several years of lonely struggle there; Bob Dutton, pioneer from the U.S. of only three weeks, an amiable, optimistic type who seems to be adjusting well (though it is a tremendous adjustment!); and Ian Greenwood, pioneer from Canada on route to the Cook Islands, a quiet and seemingly strong anchor-man type pioneer. In Fiji I met a young American leaving for Tonga in the Peace Corps, Jeff Hogland, whom I had known in Virginia and who likewise has enough American amiability and optimism to survive Tongan isolation, I think. My host in Tonga was Aux. Bd. member Moses Hakafoa, with whom I was very much impressed, and who seems to be universally loved wherever he has travelled. He understands well the problems of immaturity in the islands and in Tonga seems to be something of a moderator and stabilizing force.

Unfortunately Tonga, like the Gilberts and Ellice, seems to have difficulty with proper Baha'i administration. To some extent this is cultural and to some extent stems from having a single foreigner on the NSA who doesn't speak the native language. Garville is embittered by a feeling of isolation and the recurrence of gossip and discussion of Assembly business outside of meetings, while on the other hand he is the only member to take initiatives and carry through on decisions. It seems to be a characteristic of many islanders, not only in Tonga, to talk much and do little; gossip is a constant problem. As Moses says, there are no native believers yet whose love for Baha'illah is great enough to motivate them to true sacrifice. Teachers and pioneers will not arise unless paid, and I was appalled to find a general consensus that the teachers are motivated more by the money offered than by their desire to teach. But because of the very slow transport between islands full time teachers must be found.

During my stay a teacher training institute was in progress at the National Center, with some 8 or 10 students sponsored financially by the NSA. Attendance seemed poor and the program rather dull and sparse, with little enthusiasm generated. Activities arranged for me were as follows: a public meeting attended by more than 50, mostly mostly Baha'is, chaired by the mayor of the capital city (Faka'alofo) and with translation by the principal of the largest high school (a very dignified meeting); an interview with the Secretary to the Government, the highest civil servant, which began coolly but ended cordially and was informative; and a unity feast attended by some forty Baha'is, with delightful Polynesian dancing, singing, sumptuous food, and an opportunity for me to show slides. An article with picture about my visit also appeared in the 8-page weekly newspaper.

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FIJI — November 25-28, 1972

After a late arrival in Fiji, hospitality was given me in the home of Australian pioneer in Suva, the Lucas'. It had been planned for me to join a teaching team in a village near Sigatoga, so most of my two full days in Fiji were spent on a dusty rural bus and I got little idea of the general condition of the Faith in this more frequently visited land. The teaching team consisted of twelve young Baha'is fresh from a week-long institute, and led by Australian youth pioneer Tom Vadrag, veteran of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. This team was based in the home of a chief in Volivoli Village, and were teaching in surrounding areas. After one week out of a planned three week campaign they counted 56 new Baha'is. Efforts were being made to bring the new believers to their base during the day for deepening. The spirit among them seemed good and at least a couple of the young Baha'i teachers are real jewels, dedicated and knowledgeable. The main challenge for Fiji seems to be to maintain their teaching momentum and the spirit that is being generated.

FUNAFUTI, ELLICE ISLANDS — November 28-December 2, 1972

Funafuti was devastated by a hurricane a month before my arrival, and it was only through the good offices of the Baha'i there, Dr. Tilinga, that I was allowed to stop. He afforded hospitality, and I was most impressed with his sincerity and his knowledge of the Faith, especially for a Baha'i of only about a year. He is the only doctor for the Ellice Islands, and is himself an Ellice Islander. With his wife and another couple, not as deepened in the Faith, they form the four believers there. The pioneers, Malailiva and Irene Tafaki, are in Tarawa, seemingly indefinitely.

Unfortunately Dr. Tilinga had to leave shortly after my arrival to visit a patient on another island, and I lost both my translator and my contact with the people. Teaching seems to be very difficult here, with suspicion of outsiders evident. The small population of about 800 has had foreign presence since the war, and the Congregational Church is very strong there. Even the Seventh Day Adventist missionary from Samoa is leaving, having won only about four converts. He was kind enough to lend me his steam-damaged slide projector.

Among the Ellice Islands, according to Tilinga, Nukunelae has 2 believers (one of whom I met, a Mr. Toe Saruolu, head of the cooperative store there); Nukufetai has about 3, and Naramoa has a community of about 15 from the time Tom Vadrag was there, now inactive for lack of visitors.

TARAWA, GILBERT ISLANDS — December 2-7, 1972

In many ways Tarawa and the Baha'i community here is reminiscent of Tonga, except the atmosphere seems to be a ~~little~~ little more one of genial frustration. The native believers are beautiful, warm and hospitable, but singularly lacking in administrative initiative. There are some 2700 believers in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands together, according to the Secretary of the ISA, Mabel Arтира, pioneer of 15 years, and 51 LSAs. It would take two years for one person to visit all the islands, so travel teachers are necessary, and 12 are presently being sponsored. But they frequently must be recalled for immorality or other reasons. Just now there is such a case, one of these teachers having taken a second wife in his new post. And Mabel doubts that any of them would be serving were it not

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for the financial considerations.

Many of the cultural traits of the Tongans are evident here as well. The people are reticent to embarrass anyone, and so the truth is difficult to uncover in consultation. Much is spoken but little accomplished. Jealousy is common, and the attitude seems mostly to be "what can I get out of the Fasi" rather than "what can I do for the Faith". Of course there are some shining exceptions, but in general the friends are not yet arising to sacrifice for love of Baha'u'llah.

Beside Mabel, there are a number of pioneers. Joe Russell came in 1959 and is now married with a family; his fluent Gilbertese is a great asset. John Thurston, a surfer from Hawaii, is living in Betio and running a youth club (mostly a singing group) which has qualified him for visa extension. Kurt Munchmayer and Greg Wagner, from Hawaii and Canada respectively, are travelling on other islands and I have not had an opportunity to meet them. The Tafakis are here as well, with a new baby. (Irene is British.) Mabel speaks of returning to the States so new pioneers can use her house, which may be just as well for a change of personnel. She is currently both Secretary and Treasurer of the NSI, and sooner or later others must learn to take her place!

Activities arranged for me included meetings with Baha'is at the National Center in Likiepbeu, an informal meeting in Betio (about 75 attending, over half children), a 20 minute radio interview with songs, and an interview with the government economist. In addition I was able to leave a tape of songs for John Thurston, who will use them widely, and to provide some contact with the outside world and fresh encouragement for the pioneers in this infrequently visited country. I only wish I could stay longer to have a significant effect in this land where travel is so slow and learning so gradual.

A word to the wise concerning travel here. Air service through Nauru to Majuro is available weekly with a two day lay-over, but Nauru visas are required and Nauru is very slow. Even from here by cable it has taken me four days of conscientious effort and the visa only arrived in the last few remaining minutes. Visas should therefore be applied for well in advance directly to Immigration Office, Nauru. Sometime soon Air Pacific is expected to open service directly from the Marshalls to the Gilberts and this problem will be alleviated.

cc: Universal House of Justice  
Continental Pioneer Committee, Australia  
U.S. International Goals Committee

NAURU -- December 7 - 11, 1972

Nauru is a most unusual country by any standards. With native population (citizens) of perhaps four or five thousand, it is said to have the highest per capita income of any country in the world--exceeding Kuwait. Phosphate is mined by an imported population of 1633 Gilbertese and Illice, and about 500 Chinese, all living in crowded company housing. The Nauruans themselves are generally apathetic, prone to heavy drinking, materialistic thinking, laziness, and sloppy living, though many are educated in Australia and they have opportunities far exceeding those of Islanders elsewhere in the Pacific. Auto and motorcycle accidents are a major killer, and suicide is also a problem.

Unfortunately, the Faith is hardly established in Nauru as yet. There are several Gilbertese Baha'is working for the Nauru Phosphate Company, the most knowledgeable of whom is Metai Boboem, who works in the NPC Location Office, adjoining the company housing. Metai however, is not an aggressive or organizer type, and so cannot be relied upon too heavily. My host for most of my stay was another Gilbertese Baha'i, Areke Bakaua (75 #6, NPC Location, Nauru), a more outgoing and energetic person and a gracious host. Unfortunately both Metai and Areke have been on Nauru for over 5 years, which means both that they have been isolated from other Baha'is and that their 6-year term on Nauru will expire shortly, necessitating their return to the Gilberts. According to Metai there are perhaps two other Baha'is among the Gilbertese, but I did not meet them and judging from Areke's almost nonexistent knowledge of the Faith I would suppose they are not a strong center for a community.

The brightest immediate prospect for Nauru seems to be the Nauruans, since most of them can read English and therefore can deepen with books. I visited one Baha'i girl married to a Gilbertese, Rose Betty Lam, and on the third visit she was still very reticent. After two trips around the island on a motorcycle in the rain we were still unable to locate the other Nauruan Baha'i, Joanne Aubiat. But I was impressed with two contacts: a girl named Virginia Scotty (P.O. Box 128, Nauru) who heard of the Faith a month ago from Greg Wagner when he was in Nauru, and is now reading (I visited her in the hospital, where she is recovering from a severe burn on shoulder, neck and face); and a young man named Brendan I met in passing and whom I was not able to follow through with but who seemed very bright and receptive. It seems to me what Nauru needs is a travel teacher who can stay perhaps two weeks, to really find some of the open and waiting souls among the Nauruans, especially the youth, and give them a good initial deepening. Books are badly needed, and will be read.

While in Nauru I spoke with Tealipi Lauti, the Gilbertese Liaison Officer and a friend of the Baha'is. He can be contacted by arriving teachers, but he does not seem to be personally interested in the Faith. I also spoke with the father and wife of Rantag Harris, a radio announcer who has befriended Baha'is in the past. The family is still friendly but it seems that a traveller's time is better spent meeting new people. One effective way of doing so is to wander about asking directions or trying to find a Baha'i. Visitors are still somewhat unusual in Nauru and one is often asked the purpose of one's visit.

A few words about travel. There is a new and very pleasant hotel in Nauru with good food. Present price for one is \$15 Australian per day including ample breakfast (about US\$19). The Gilbertese Baha'is are happy to offer simple hospitality as long as they are there. Visas should be obtained directly from Nauru well in advance to avoid delays. (They are unreliable!) Air Nauru, at

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present the only line flying through Nauru, changes its schedule often. Continental Air Micronesia is expected to recommence service through Nauru from Majuro and Tarawa sometime soon. Air Pacific (Fiji Air) operates every second week from Tarawa.

cc: NSA of Gilbert and Ellice Islands  
U.S. International Goals Committee  
Continental Pioneer Committee, Australasia  
Universal House of Justice

PONAPE -- December 11,- 14, 1972

Because of delays in the scheduling of Air Nauru, I was unable to make the contemplated stop in Majuro, instead having to connect through immediately to Ponape. Because there are no phones in Majuro I was also unable to contact the Baha'is there during my three hour stop-over. The three day visit to Truk which was planned to follow the visit to Ponape also had to be dropped which turned out to be just as well since there was some doubt whether the Baha'is there could really utilize a short-term visitor.

In Ponape my immediate hostess was Auxiliary Board Member Virginia Breaks (P.O. Box 145, Ponape, Caroline Is. 96941 USA), and altogether my stay there was very fruitful considering the relaxed nature of organization in Micronesia. There were two firesides, at Miss Breaks' home in Kolonia and another home in Sokehs. A meeting was arranged at the high school with good attendance by the students, attracted by the music, and one very capable teacher there showed some interest. But to me the most fruitful activity was a trip with an impressive young Baha'i teacher named Suhs to the ~~village~~ village of Nan Uh opened to the Faith a year before at Christmas by Dr. Mahajir and the National Teaching Committee. There are 60 believers in this village but very few visits have been made for deepening since the original trip. A new road under construction has made it more accessible, however, and further trips should be possible.

The problems in Micronesia seem to be similar to those elsewhere-- need for full time dedicated teachers because of the distances and difficulty of travel, but few teachers available. The Harlan Lang family is returning to the States soon leaving Miss Breaks the only pioneer in all of Micronesia for the time being, according to members of the NSA in Guam. Further assistance is certainly needed, and the richness of culture and outstanding physical beauty of these islands will ~~surely~~ surely beckon prospective pioneers.

GUAM -- December 14 - 15, 1972

Due to the shortness of my stay in Guam I was unable to meet most of the friends there or form any reliable general impressions. A fireside was arranged for me the night of my arrival, and a newspaper interview the day of departure. Guam in appearance and culture is like a little America, travellers be forewarned!