

ETHIOPIA -- May 16-19, 1973

Two days were spent in the company of the youthful and enthusiastic Baha'i community in Asmara, a lovely town on the edge of the plateau in northern Ethiopia. The Niederreiters, long time pioneers there whose devotion and example are in many ways the foundation and genesis of the spirit of the community, were my kind and generous hosts. An evening meeting was arranged in their ~~xxxxx~~ Baha'i Center at which about 60 attended, a lovely mixture of African and European (the town is heavily settled with Italians). Plans are under way for further stimulation of the promising youth activities, and I hope a youth conference can be planned for Asmara to provide encouragement, impetus, and a focus for concerted planning and action.

A further day was spent in Addis Ababa, the capital, where there are a number of young, highly capable, energetic and dedicated Baha'is in the community, and my brief stay was well utilized. Approaches were made to the radio station and the English-language paper, both government owned, and although the reception at the paper was curt and most discourteous, the radio people were very friendly and a six or eight minute interview was recorded. This was a good lesson that Baha'is must always persevere and patiently try every possibility, while remaining contented with the Will of God. An evening meeting was also arranged at the new Baha'i National Centre with about 20 attending. Again I was impressed with the quality and potential of the community, as evinced in the Baha'is attending, and in the Center itself, which is easily the most pleasing, nicely designed, and practical center I have seen anywhere.

Although I did not have time to go with the Addis Baha'is to their "mass teaching area" among the villages, it was quite apparent that their weekend trips and other work in this area, where thousands have become Baha'i, is largely responsible for the beautiful spirit one sees among them. It is always heartwarming to see a community where a balance has been maintained between city and country teaching, such that the spirit of the community and its health are maintained by the teaching work in the country, while there are resources in funds and skilled manpower available from the city.

For travellers on a low budget the Pensione Lombardia is recommended in Addis. It is clean and a private room is about US \$3.50.

KENYA -- May 19-24, 1973

In Kenya I found that nothing had been planned in advance for my visit, and no hospitality was available, so I took the opportunity of getting a rest in one of the fine old British hotels in Nairobi, and worked on visas and other errands. Unfortunately I never had opportunity to meet any of the NSA members, but my impression from phone conversations and the general state of things was that there is something of a vacuum of central leadership in Kenya. Unfortunately Counsellor Yazdi was not there during my visit.

However, there are among the young Baha'is in Nairobi some spirited and dedicated teachers, both pioneers and Kenyans, and I was most happy to take a trip with them by bus to Kikuyu and Gatimu, two village areas near Nairobi where teaching is progressing. This work requires patience since people are hard to find and often shy, but by the same token they are receptive and many are both literate and serious students of the Faith. Kenya has between 40,000 and 50,000 Baha'is, according to Counsellor Oloro Epyeru.

KENYA, Continued.

In the new rented Nairobi Baha'i Center, a room downtown, a meeting was arranged one evening for Counsellor Samandari and myself to tell about the International Convention. About 15 attended.

One day was spent in Mombasa, on the coast, with two young Iranian pioneers who are in school there, Bozorg Tavanger and Soha Rouhani. Their spirit of persistence and Faith is remarkable, the more so since they have very little assistance, no resources, and few opportunities for teaching. Surely the heroism of young Baha'is such as these is a great example for Baha'is everywhere.

TANZANIA -- May 24-30, 1973

In Tanzania my visit was confined to the Dar-es-Salaam area since it was the time of the Convention and many of the friends were gathering there. The spirit among these friends is most refreshing, with much spontaneous singing of their famous Swahili songs, and renditions of new songs recently composed. Much progress was made in mature discussion of the teaching needs during the coming year, and especially of the importance of the Fund, which has been little understood to date. After the discussion contributions were received from those present (most of them villagers) equalling two-thirds of the whole previous year's contributions. From a small base the Faith is leaping ahead in Africa because of the great capacity of the people, and much effort must now be expended to take advantage of the opportunities while the doors are still open.

Plans are afoot in Tanzania, though not finalized, for a mobile youth teaching team equipped with slide projector and teaching aids. Such teams are desperately needed all over Africa to give a tremendous push, and added substance, to the teaching and consolidation.

Mention should be made of the work of the Iranian pioneers in Tanzania, both those established for many years, and the half dozen youth, who display a degree of dedication, commitment, and love for their Baha'i work which is undoubtedly contributing more than anything else to the firm foundation and spiritual strength of the Cause in that country.

cc: The Universal House of Justice
U.S. IGC
CPC Africa

Travel Teacher Report
Gregory C. Dahl

South Africa
28 June 1973

Malawi -- May 30 - June 3, 1973

Malawi is a delightful mountainous country of clean, friendly people and magnificent countryside. Although the Baha'i community there is not large by African standards, the spirit seems to be quite healthy and important strides are being made.

Although the letter about my arrival had been received in good time, it had unfortunately not been read (pending a forthcoming NSA meeting) and so I was not expected nor had any arrangements been made. So I had a chance to relax in the lovely National Center, where accommodations are available for travelling Baha'i teachers, and enjoy the company of the Baha'is and ~~pioneers~~ pioneers of Blantyre. An evening meeting was held there for showing slides.

During my stay the first NSA meeting of the new year was held with several new members attending. After their election of officers I was ~~asked~~ asked to join them and conduct a study class on the spirit and functions of the National Spiritual Assembly, using for source material an outline prepared by the Counsellors for the region, in addition to other materials. The course was highly productive, lasting an afternoon and evening and involving all members. I was especially impressed with the new African members of the Assembly who, although not experienced in Baha'i administration, evinced a desire to learn quickly and participate fully, and who apparently bring a new element of diversity to that body. The spirit of dignity and courtesy that seems to be a natural quality with these people is obviously a tremendous asset on such a diverse assembly as well.

Recordings were also made of the Baha'is of Blantyre singing some of their songs about the Faith, and photographs were taken of various Baha'i properties for the Universal House of Justice.

RHODESIA -- June 3 - 7, 1973

On my arrival in Salisbury a large crowd of Baha'i pioneers was at the airport to meet me, including Counsellor Shidan Fat'he-Aazam, who was my host. Activities during my four days there included a large party at the Fat'he-Aazam's, highlighted by slides and singing; an evening meeting at the National Baha'i Center attended by about 30 Baha'is; a teaching trip to an African school on a farm near Salisbury, where about two hours were spent with teachers of the school and several became Baha'is; and a visit to an elementary school for Africans run as a free service by one of the pioneers. I was also invited to a local Feast in Salisbury, and here especially, as well as in the other Baha'i activities I ~~saw~~ saw in Rhodesia, I was much impressed with the interracial character of the community, the easy association between the races and the harmonious spirit.

Encouragement of greater and continuing youth activities in Rhodesia will undoubtedly lead to an ever more vital community, and perhaps from there or in coordination with Malawi and Swaziland, a youth team could be formed for a teaching project. Surely the results would be very great.

LESOTHO -- June 9 - 13, 1973

After Rhodesia I was honored to be invited to accompany Counsellor Shidan Fat'he-Aazam in his car to Lesotho, where he had a complicated mission involving the protection of the Faith and preparation for their National Convention. While assisting him there I was deeply impressed by the functioning of the Institution of the Counsellors, who provide essential and firm guidance when the administration goes astray, often implementing or overseeing the implementation of decisions of the Universal House of Justice, while constantly developing and nurturing a spirit of harmony and confidence so essential to Baha'i administration and so much needed in times of difficulty. The firm and loving spirit of Counsellors Fat'he-Aazam and Winckler, together with their remarkable energy and unflagging persistence, will long remain a shining example to me of the heights to which service to the Cause can rise.

In addition to my activities with Shidan in Lesotho, two meetings were held in Baha'i homes at which I showed slides and sang songs, with good attendance from both Baha'is and non-Baha'is.

Lesotho reminded me very strongly of Arizona both in topography and winter climate. Life there is generally hardy, and dynamic and dedicated pioneers are needed who enjoy the outdoors life and self-sufficient country living.

One or more youth teams travelling by Land Rover and composed of dedicated and experienced youth of hardy constitution, both African and European, and equipped with music and slides, could lend a tremendous impetus and bring a new spirit to every African country I have visited so far (except S. Africa for legal reasons). With an African drum and a guitar, and singing primarily African Baha'i songs, together with an assortment of slide programs powered from their car battery, they could both teach and deepen with great effectiveness. Perhaps the International Teaching Center could organize and inspire such groups, not only in Africa but in Asia and Latin America as well, since international coordination is otherwise lacking for such a venture.

Swaziland -- June 15 - 18, 1973

In Swaziland the National Assembly was quite well organized and a full schedule had been prepared for me. After two days and nights of train travel from Lesotho, the first event was a public meeting--the first ever I was told--at the University. Close to 100 attended, mostly students, and the questions following showed both the sharpness of mind of the students, their freedom from dogmatic prejudices (represented by a clergyman in the audience), and their openness and responsiveness to the Baha'i teachings. Several stayed to a late hour, eager to learn more. God willing this activity will be followed up with more events at the college.

Swaziland, continued.

The next day I accompanied Malaysian youth pioneer Ravichandran some hours over dirt roads to the small towns of Hlatikulu and Nhlanguano (both pronounced with a version of the "click" sound for which the Zulu language is famous). In Nhlanguano we visited pioneer David Garcia, and spent a delightful and exciting afternoon exchanging and recording songs. The Swazi Baha'is are justly famous for their singing, and great potential exists there among the youth for forming an organized group for teaching with music, drama, etc.

An evening meeting was also held in Hlatikulu at which slides were shown and songs shared.

The next morning, back in Manzini, a two hour meeting was held at a government high school. Students came and went, making continuity impossible, and a number were hostile and filled with dogmatic Christian arguments. However, it seems from a few I talked with afterwards that there were some quiet souls there who were responsive. This meeting particularly reminded me of the great power of team and group teaching in overcoming negative forces in a meeting, and being on my own I missed that strength that comes from a demonstration of Baha'i unity. Surely more and more we must develop techniques of team teaching, especially in reaching youth.

An afternoon meeting was held the same day at the National Baha'i Center in Mbabane, with about twenty Baha'is and five students attending. I spoke about unity in our communities, and showed slides. The spirit seemed not unusually enthusiastic. The center itself is a pleasant complex of buildings adequate for summer schools and live-in institutes, though it seems not much used for these purposes at present.

My last morning, before my departure by overnight train to Johannesburg, a tentative radio interview had been arranged, ~~but~~ as well as possible interviews with government ministers, but I was too exhausted to take advantage of these opportunities, and rested instead. Hospitality was provided in the Allen home, despite their absence.

SOUTH AFRICA -- June 19 - 21, 1973

Time in South Africa was primarily spent taking care of travel arrangements and other errands. One meeting was held in the National Baha'i Center, principally as a farewell party for a departing pioneer, but also for viewing my slides. Activities for white Baha'is are severely restricted in S. Africa.

Hospitality during my three visits in transit ~~th~~rough Johannesburg was graciously provided by the Randalls, who are on the very efficient welcoming committee of the NSA. Travellers can be assured of their assistance if informed in advance.

BOTSWANA -- June 21 - 25, 1973

On arrival in Gaborone I was met at the airport by American pioneer Robert Sarracino, at present the owner of the only Baha'i car in the city, and my constant companion while there. Since he is still awaiting news of a new job he was free to drive me about and arrange for Baha'i institutes.

Three trips ^{over dirt roads} were made during my stay to Molepolole, where there ~~x~~ is a Baha'i group in a government high school. Stops were also made in a number of villages over a wide area to the south. Botswana is a sparsely populated, dry, and generally undeveloped country where communication is effectively non-existent. Thus to arrange for meetings and a forthcoming institute (to be held in the Baha'i institute building in Thamaga) it was necessary to visit every Baha'i center within a reasonable range, try to find Baha'is, and leave a message and invitation. Much time and energy and a sturdy car are thus essential to Baha'i activity in such a country.

In addition to visiting individual Baha'is, a meeting was held one evening at the high school in Molepolole, attended by about 70 of the noisiest students I have ever heard. The spirit of the meeting was partly a carry-over from the soccer game that had concluded in a tie that afternoon. Nevertheless many of the students listened attentively, and the program of slides and songs was at least enjoyed enough that the Baha'i chairman had to plead with the students to retire to their dormitories so that school would begin on time the next morning.

During my stay the first meeting of the National Youth Committee was also held and seemed to portend well for the effective organization and utilization of the energies of the newly-enrolled Baha'i youth in Botswana.

Hospitality was provided by Robert Sarracino and Bogatsu Pheto in the National Baha'i Center in Gaborone.

ZAMBIA -- June 25 - 29, 1973

Even before clearing immigration in Lusaka I was greeted with a cheery "Allah-u-Abha" by a member of the welcoming committee, who is a traffic controller in the airport. Several pioneer families were also there to meet me. Hospitality was graciously offered by Manouchehr Agahi, chief maintenance engineer for Zambia TV in Lusaka.

My first day a 20 minute recorded radio interview and a 6 minute live evening interview on the TV were arranged by my host. Both stressed the Faith and were highly successful, including singing. Two informal evenings were spent with the pioneers taking about the progress of the Faith around the world, and an evening meeting was held in the National Baha'i Center.

Like other African countries, Zambia seems to lack sufficient initiative on the part of its National Assembly. Much greater

Zambia, continued.

activity ~~x~~ in teaching and in use of their institute building is possible with better deployment of resources, along with new pioneers not confined to the city because of work. One example of their problems is the complaint of one pioneer that letters and messages from the Universal House of Justice are not available in Zambia. Apparently the originals have been lost by previous national secretaries, and at the moment there is not even a copy of Wellspring of Guidance in the country. Since such problems also exist elsewhere, it might be fruitful for the Counsellors, when consulting with NSAs, to insure that they have a complete file of correspondence and messages from the House, and that the general messages and compilations be made available to the extent practicable ~~with~~ the friends.

Another incidental observation was that the National Haziratu'l-Quds, though recently extended ~~in~~ and in basically good condition, is badly in need of attention. Trash and junk litters the property and it is both unsightly and unrepresentable. Surely steps will be taken soon by the National Assembly to correct the situation.

I might mention also that highly enthusiastic remarks were heard in a number of countries about the visit of travel teacher May Hofman from England. Youthful teachers of her calibre are evidently of great benefit and most welcome in Africa.

cc: The Universal House of Justice
Counsellors (c/o Shidan Fat'he-Aazam)
U.S. IGC
CPC (to be sent ~~later~~ later)

ZAIRE -- July 1-3, 1973

Because of an involuntary rerouting through Rome on the flights from Lusaka to Kinshasa, I was two days ~~late~~ late in arriving, and the airlines had failed to notify the Baha'is. Being Sunday I had to check in at the most expensive hotel in order to pay the taxi, since no other place would change money. Having only the NSA post box and no other way of finding the Baha'is, I slipped a note in the box and fortunately Mr. Laperches picked up the mail the next morning, found the note and came to fetch me. Thus I was able to see four pioneers during the day I was with them, but nothing else could be arranged. Because of being unable to find the Baha'is I had missed the one weekly meeting held in the Kinshasa area, each Sunday morning at the Center.

Hospitality was provided ~~by~~ second evening at the National Center in Kinshasa, where American youth pioneer David Salter is now living and assisting with office work.

The four pioneers I spoke with in Kinshasa (the Laperches, Paul Hanbury and David Salter) all were in good spirits and happy to be in Zaire. From their remarks it sounded as though the Faith is making remarkable strides especially in the Eastern region of the country.

Travellers to Zaire should be warned that it is an extremely expensive country and one must know French to get by there. The cheapest lunch I could get at the hotel was US \$6.70. The government has a regulation that visitors must spend US \$40 per day while in Zaire, although visitors are not informed of the rule until departure. However, it seems only intermittently enforced, depending I suppose on who you are and the mood of the inspector.

Future visitors might find it of use to know that the National Center in Kinshasa is on Ave. Kabinda 115, zone Kinshasa, coin de Ave. Kasa-Vubu. Dr. Jazab, NSA member, has a telephone 59671 ext. 123, and Mr. Otto Jung, NTC member, also has a phone, thought I don't know the number.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA (Fernando Po)

My intention was to visit Fernando Po and perhaps Bata, flying from Douala. However, on arriving there I found a visa must be obtained, and can only be given in Yaounde. In Yaounde the embassy said they had to write to Fernando Po, which would have taken several days, and my schedule did not permit. Other travellers should be aware of these visa requirements and that Americans may have difficulty. The friends in Cameroun should be consulted before going to Fernando Po since the situation there is difficult and volatile.

CAMEROUN -- July 3-9, 1973

Despite an arrival delay of 13 hours, putting me in Douala after midnight, I was most happy to find two pioneers at the airport to meet me--indicative of the energetic spirit of the Cameroun Baha'i community. Hospitality was provided in the home of the Bhaskarans in Douala, a newly-arrived and most attractive pioneer family from Malaysia. Travellers in general are welcome there.

After consulting with Counsellor Samandari on his return from Fernando Po, I proceeded by Peugeot to Yaounde to get a visa. Travel to Yaounde is either by air or at least six hours by car (over mostly unpaved road). Samuel Akale, a beautiful and capable young Baha'i professor of English in the university there, offered hospitality my first evening, and pioneer Iraj Yaganeh the second. Both are NTC members. A radio interview was arranged, about 15 minutes in length, on the English-language program of Paul Kode, who has interviewed a number of Baha'is previously including Ruhyyih Khanum. Informal times were spent with some of the friends, as well.

In Cameroun I was deeply impressed, as I was in Kenya and Tanzania, with the spirit and effectiveness of the young Iranian pioneers. In Yaounde two Iranian pioneer girls, Homa Sobhani and Parvin Behi, were departing with Samuel Akale on a month-long teaching mission to the north of Cameroun and perhaps into Tchad. The dedication, detachment and vigor of these girls, like their counterparts in other countries, sets an example for the equally dedicated African teachers who accompany them and calls forth a spirit which immeasurably enriches the Baha'i community. God willing the spirit of these Iranian youth will be an example not only to the Africans, but to potential youthful pioneers in many countries who have as yet to match the record of service of the Persians.

cc: The Universal House of Justice
CPC Africa
International Goals Committee U.S.

DAHOMAY -- July 9-11, 1973

On arrival in Dahomey I was not met, since I was ahead of schedule, and had a little difficulty finding the Baha'is. (Florence Avis in Haifa had incorrectly given me five phone numbers in Dahomey beginning with HE 3518 for the National Office. It turns out there are no phones among the Baha'is in Dahomey.) Since street numbers in Cotonou are highly irregular, future visitors might like to know that the Baha'i Center (Carre 111/112) is in back of and only a few doors away from the Djonke taxi stand, where taxis leave for Togo.

A small meeting was held one evening in the Center attended mostly by restless children. I showed slides with a little battery-operated projector which made a barely visible image. (This is the gray plastic machine made in the U.S., which seemed most unsatisfactory.)

Hospitality was very graciously offered in the Baha'i Center by the Haitian pioneer family of many years, the Charles. There is only one other pioneer family in the country, Peter and Leslie Gottert from the U.S., who live near the Center.

Judging only from my brief stay of two days and discussions with the pioneers, the spirit and activity of the friends in Dahomey seems remarkably minimal. It appears all the more unfortunate since all the NSA members live in Dahomey although Niger and Togo are under the same NSA. This leaves the latter countries rather isolated from world Baha'i events, etc. The present pioneers in Dahomey make a good base, and one would hope that a new spirit could be brought there, perhaps through a new pioneer, to add vigor and enthusiasm to the community. Perhaps a French speaking West African youth conference would do the trick.

TOGO -- July 11-12, 1973

After an easy and very inexpensive two hour taxi ride from Cotonou, I found my way by map to the home of pioneer Dr. Khelghati. Although I was not expected there, he welcomed me in, and spent the afternoon trying to round up a meeting for the evening. Unfortunately no one could be found on such short notice, so I showed slides for the pioneers only, Dr. Khelghati and Gilda Navidi. Gilda is leaving soon for New York, leaving only three pioneers in the country, Dr. Khelghati, his wife, and George Allen.

George showed up the next day for visa renewal and I was able to talk with him briefly and meet a couple of Togo believers. The pioneers in Togo spend a great deal of time teaching esp. in the villages, and they seemed in good spirits, with some excellent fruits of their work among the Togo believers. Still they are few and isolated, and much more could be done there with more resources.

GHANA -- July 12-19, 1973

From Lome to Accra I again took a "Peugeot" or public taxi, which one obtains upon crossing the border in Lome. Cost is about \$2.00. After some difficulties I was able to locate Baha'is at the Center, ~~which is~~ behind the old Japan Motors in Asylum Down. A rather dull and overly formal study class was in session with about 10 attending.

Hospitality was very kindly offered during my stay by the Gordon Jacksons, pioneer family from the U.S. and both now NSA members. Accommodations are also available at the Center though no one is living there at present and a visitor would be alone there.

Two meetings were held during my stay in Accra, both at the Center. The first was a public meeting, advertized through the distribution of a considerable number of flyers in the downtown area. About 30 attended, including a few new faces, and the reception was quite warm. Slides of Baha'is around the world were shown. A second evening was arranged for the Baha'is with about 10 attending, and featuring slides of the World Centre.

Short visits were also arranged to the Temple Site and two Baha'i communities near Accra.

One day was spent at the University in Kumasi, where there is an active group of six faculty members (three families). Although it was summer session and most of the campus was closed, a meeting was held with about 40 students attending, followed by a penetrating question period. The Ghanaian university students struck me as being sharp and capable, but rather tradition-conscious. None of them have yet become Baha'is despite good attendance at a series of programs about the Faith.

In Accra much time was wasted applying for visas and changing airline reservations. Phones are not readily available there and distances are great within the city. In addition there are many petty harassments. Abidjan is a better city for conducting such business.

Judging from my short exposure to the Accra community, it seems that the Ghanaian Baha'is are not yet taking much of the load of Baha'i administration. The initiative ~~and~~ is being taken and most of the work conducted by the Jacksons, ^{while} The other pioneers in Accra are quite busy with their professional service. Thus the community as a whole reminded me of many U.S. communities where a couple of strong personalities often dominate. A youthful element is noticeably lacking. There is considerable talent and depth among the Baha'is of Ghana, however, both in Accra and in several other communities, and the potential exists for rapid growth and development.

IVORY COAST -- July 19-21, 1973

In Abidjan I was met at the airport by pioneers Esfahani (Egypt) and Fevrier (Mauritius), and hospitality was offered in Mr. Esfahani's apartment. Unfortunately, the Kazemic were away in the U.S. on vacation, and in their absence no Baha'i meetings or activities could be arranged for me during my two day stay other than meeting three pioneers (Esfahani, Eugene Fevrier and Denise Manfon) Eugene, previously a pioneer in Upper Volta, is now looking for work in Abidjan.

Ivory Coast, cont.

An address for the National Haziratu'l-Quds (20 Boulevard Clozel) had been given me in Haifa. As it turns out, this building was torn down about a year ago to make room for new construction, and at present there is no Haziratu'l-Quds. The NSA has plans to purchase Mr. Esfahani's present apartment and convert it into a suitable center. The address there is 35 Rue des Goyaviers, Cocody, Abidjan. Eugene Fevrier (NSA member) and Mr. Esfahani were sources for this information.

Also both telephone numbers I was given are now non-functional. The Fakhrys have left, and the Baha'i Center number (32-43-79) was discontinued, I am told, when the Center was given up. The Kazemis would now be the best telephone contact for visitors.

LIBERIA -- July 21-24, 1973

Upon arriving in Liberia I was met by NSA member Mrs. Hill, and was taken to the hired room maintained by the NSA for travelling teachers and visitors. Two evening meetings were held at their national center with good attendance of both Baha'is and non-Baha'is, and a lovely spirit prevailed. A half hour radio interview was recorded ~~with~~ by the government radio for later broadcasting. Newspaper publicity was obtained in the government paper. And a television interview was arranged but could not be completed due to a change in my schedule.

A trip with a Liberian Baha'i youth to several Baha'i communities was also arranged for Sunday. U.S. youth pioneer Don Berkman was located at his post in Buchanan and returned with us to Monrovia for a visit.

Liberia appears to have excellent potential for a strong community, working from the good base they have of deepened and knowledgeable Baha'is and dedicated pioneers. I was especially impressed with the work of U.S. pioneer Georgia Sanchez, who has made innumerable friendly contacts with leaders in the country. Even walking down the street she is continually greeted by politicians, journalists, shop-keepers, Peace Corps, diplomats, and the like. Evidently she, and to some extent the other Baha'is, have created a wonderful air of goodwill and friendship towards the Faith which stands in vivid contrast to the precarious condition of the Faith in so many other countries.

Visitors to Liberia are strongly advised to land at Spriggs Payne airfield, on the outskirts of Monrovia. If other contacts fail, pioneers Major Dunne and Zara Dunne live in the airport environs (he is a bush pilot with a private firm there) and can be contacted. Roberts Field international airport is 40 miles distant from Monrovia and transportation is difficult.

cc: The Universal House of Justice
International Goals Committee U.S.
CPC Africa

*Visitors to Monrovia are also advised that an exit visa is required there before departure, independent of other visas or stamps. The exit visa must be obtained within seven days of departure from the immigration office in downtown Monrovia. One is not always informed of these requirements upon arrival or by the airlines, but the requirement nevertheless applies.

THE GAMBIA -- July 24-7, 1973

In Banjul (new name for Bathurst) I was met on arrival by the Malaysian pioneer and his American wife, Kanniyah and Louise Adaikkalam, and the young Iranian pioneer, Reza Haidari. Hospitality was provided with Reza in the home of the Al-Salihis, who are away vacationing in America. These five are the pioneers of The Gambia.

My first day a trip was arranged in Mr. Adaikkalam's car to visit a village where there are many Baha'is, some 70 miles distant from Banjul. The place is called Jongir, and we arrived after dark (when the people ~~have come~~ back from the fields). Dulloh Saneh, who lives on the Temple Site land and farms peanuts there (to keep the weeds away and keep himself occupied), was with us to translate. No lights are used at meetings in the villages for fear of attracting mosquitos, and so we could see only the dim figures of the Baha'is as they came slowly from their houses, greeting us with Allah-u-Abha.

After a vigorous and rousing round of song by the children, and waiting a considerable time for people to arrive, the meeting began with about 30 or 40 in attendance. The battery-operated Crusader projector (which worked quite well on this occasion) was arranged to project on a sheet over our car, and I showed slides of Baha'is around the world. A few songs were also sung, and the whole program seemed very warmly received (though one can never be completely sure about such things in total darkness). It's wonderful to think that all over the world, in villages very similar to Jongir, similar programs are being given in many languages by travel teachers as they help to cement yet more bricks in the great edifice of Baha'u'llah's world-encircling Order.

A second program was given in Banjul in the National Haziratu'l-Quds, with about 10 attending.

According to the pioneers here, The Gambia has been a very difficult place to establish the Faith on a firm foundation. The people are not energetic by nature, and they expect financial help and other favors. In Banjul the friends can only be collected for a meeting if they are given rides or transport money, i.e. almost bodily carried to the meeting. And then, as I observed myself, they appear very sleepy and uninterested. In the villages the work is evidently also very slow. It has been ~~very~~ hard to find leaders among the Gambians able to take some initiative.

Adaikkalam, who was the NSA secretary for two years beginning four years ago, continues to do most of the secretarial work (typing, posting, over-seeing the Secretary's work) at the request of the NSA, and this even though the present secretary has been in his post two years and lives at the Haziratu'l-Quds.

One NSA member, Badara N'Jai, is presently a travel teacher in Senegal, and he impressed me as being quite capable and dedicated. More such Baha'is are needed in The Gambia. The three pioneers that I have met

The Gambia, cont.

here also impress me as being most capable and dedicated, and they are unified among themselves, which is indeed very good to see. With unity they are happy despite the difficulties of their post. Reza Haidari is at present having visa difficulties, since there is only one visa allocated for Baha'i pioneers (taken by Adaikkalam) and work is not available for him, so he may have to leave soon for another post. It is sad to see pioneers such as Reza--and there are quite a few others--who have qualifications such as agricultural engineer, but are now unable to get jobs virtually anywhere in Africa. Adaikkalam for his part is slowly setting up a commercial art business (sign painting and the like) which he hopes to expand into a printing business, in order to provide support for himself and family. Prospects seem fairly good for his business.

SENEGAL -- July 27-9, 1973

The NSA in The Gambia has been unable to provide addresses for Baha'is in Dakar in the absence of Counsellor Rouhani Ardekani (who is vacationing in Las Palmas), so I do not expect to be of use to the community there while I am in transit to Las Palmas.

cc: The Universal House of Justice
CPC Africa
IGC U.S.

Travel Teacher Report
Gregory C. Dahl

Europe
5 September 1973

CANARY ISLANDS -- July 29 - August 1, 1973

Unfortunately, two of my three days in Las Palmas were wasted trying to contact Baha'is, many of whom were away at that time on holidays. The National Assembly in Spain had written me in Africa with addresses in the Canaries, but the letter was not received on time. I did, however, have the phone number of George and Peggy True, American pioneers on Tenerife, and was able to talk with them about reaching Baha'is in Las Palmas. They are a good contact when others fail. The numbers are: home 229324 and office 222884. Two days were then spent phoning and visiting offices, with the rewarding result of being able to attend a feast in the home of U.S. pioneers Pat and Kay Sullivan. Counsellor Ardikani from Dakar was also present (on vacation), as well as Persian pioneer Mr. Taheri,^a Chilean German Baha'i named Schmöller, and Spanish youth pioneer Jesus Perez Caballero. They were most happy to receive a visitor, and it was only the more sad that I wasn't able to reach them earlier.

In addition to the telephone numbers already given for the Trues, future visitors might wish to be equipped with the following:

Don Kamal U Din Khadem, Secretario
c/. Alberto García Ibáñez, 11, 1^o (Buenavista)
Las Palmas de Gran Canaria
tel. 25.75.81
(address supplied later by Spanish NSA)

Mr. Pat Sullivan (U.S. pioneer)
c/o Menasintes International
Galicia, 32 1st floor
Las Palmas tel. 26.60.08 26.97.58 27.01.66

Mr. Schmöller (Baha'i Travel Agent)
Viajes A. Paukner, S.L.
C/. Viriato 1 (Esquina C/. Portugal)
Las Palmas tel. 26.39.70 26.40.86

Both Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Schmöller speak English, and Mr. Schmöller also speaks German. Both would be very happy to be of assistance to visiting Baha'i teachers.

Although only very briefly with the Baha'is in Las Palmas, I was impressed with their warm spirit and dedication to the Faith. The teaching work is by no means facile in the Canaries, combining as they do the materialism of tourist centers and the isolation of island peoples together with the basic problems of teaching Spanish Catholics. More visits from travel teachers could certainly be of great benefit.

PORTUGAL -- August 1-3, 1973

In Lisbon a day was also spent getting in touch with the Baha'is, because of the difficulty of reaching the national secretary, Mr. Mario Marques, at his work number (which is the Kodak office in Lisbon). This, however, remains the best number for visitors to use.

Portugal, continued.

As soon as I had reached Mr. Marques the National Teaching Committee was informed of my arrival and almost immediately two American youth pioneers, Carol Sherman and Mary Braga Shadravan, were at my hotel to greet me. We joined two Persian pioneers, Bijan Shadravan and Violet Modjani, and the four of them promptly set about arranging a fireside for the evening. I was tremendously impressed with the energy, enthusiasm and efficiency of these pioneers. As a result of their short-notice efforts a lovely fireside was held that evening in Cascais, near Lisbon, ~~was~~ with several non-Baha'is attending and one very talented young Portuguese declaring his Faith in Baha'u'llah.

Hospitality my second evening was provided in the Baha'i Center in Lisbon. For visitors seeking a comfortable hotel I can highly recommend Hotel Albergaria Senhora do Monte, a tasteful little ~~an~~ place high on a mountain overlooking Lisbon and offering probably the most spectacular view available. Single rooms in this four star hotel are about ~~at~~ \$12. Meals must be sought elsewhere since there is no restaurant in the hotel.

SPAIN -- August 3 - 5, 1973

Most of the Baha'is of Madrid were away on vacations at the time of my arrival there, so I was advised by the National Secretary, Sr. Jiménez, to proceed to Guadalajara, not far away by train, where a youth team was stationed for about a week with an exhibition, proclaiming the Faith. Habib Rezvani, Auxiliary Board Member from Colombia, was also there. The happy spirit of fellowship among this team was most uplifting, with much song, dance, and general gaiety. During the days the team had been teaching in the plazas and streets, inviting people to the exhibition, while in the evenings there were meetings of an informal nature. Evidently they had had great success in other places, especially in Málaga, but in Guadalajara the response was very small. However, this did not seem to dampen their spirits much, which was good to see. I am always cheered to see Baha'is having fun together.

The exhibition itself was quite well put together using modern exhibit methods and materials, which impressed me. Spain certainly seems to have a valuable resource in their active youth, who are responsible for most of their growth.

Mr. Rezvani from Colombia also impressed me greatly. His great love for the Faith, his sense of humor, his constant energy, his dedication to teaching, and his experience with direct teaching methods, coupled with his fund of stories from the teaching work among the South American Indians and his gentle, sensitive manner cultivated with those Indians, all seemed just the perfect qualities for the Spanish youth to observe and experience. Such projects of international exchange are tremendously exciting to watch and participate in.

My slides, tapes and songs were, of course, enjoyed by this group, but they were just in the process of concluding their project, and so I proceeded a little earlier than expected to Switzerland.

SWITZERLAND -- August 5 - 10, 1973

The Swiss are highly organized, and my time there was fully scheduled but at the same time comfortable and even relaxing. My first host was Mahmud Samandari in Geneva, who took me to visit Spanish Baha'is in Nyon--a group that it has been hard

Switzerland, continued.

for the Swiss Baha'is to reach since none of them speaks Spanish. A small meeting was held there in the evening at which I showed my slides, followed by considerable discussion which was highly productive for deepening.

In the Zürich area one meeting was held in Arbon, two in Wolfhalden and one in Unterageri (near Zug), all highly successful and productive for both teaching and deepening. Average attendance was about 15. Daytimes were spent in fellowship with Baha'is in various communities. The Swiss Baha'is are a delight to work with, and I always immensely enjoy a teaching trip or visit to their country.

Unfortunately, many of the communities I was in last year have hardly grown since then, and although the progress at the end of the Plan was great relative to previous progress, it is still very slow as compared with other places. In part this is the result of the materialistic attitudes of most Swiss, and their precise and well-ordered way of looking at things which makes them slow to accept new ideas. But in part it is these same traits among the Baha'is, which seem to have led them to over-organize, thus depleting much of their very limited energy and manpower. I was told that they have 24 national committees, in a country with only 24 Local Spiritual Assemblies. Every active Baha'is is not only on an assembly, but on at least one and perhaps several national committees. Many plans are made, but with no one to carry them out. And jurisdictions of committees overlap and duplicate legitimate functions of the local assemblies, especially in the teaching area. Now the NSA is asking the Baha'is to organize their social activities in groups of five along the pattern recommended by the House of Justice for university students in India, thus formalizing yet another aspect of Baha'i life that should be spontaneous and free. Perhaps the young youth who entered the Faith last year in several communities in Switzerland will eventually be able to bring a more open spirit into their national community.

EASTERN EUROPE

After consultation with Roland Philipp of the Austrian NSA, by phone, I decided that in view of my limited time and resources it would be better not to attempt the visits to Yugoslavia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia originally planned.

ENGLAND -- August 22 - 26, 1973

During my stay in England I was able to assist with two meetings previously scheduled, by showing slides and singing songs. The first was a very crowded meeting in the London Baha'i Center (the national Haziratu'l-Quds), with standing room only; and the second a deepening meeting in Epsom, Surrey, with Fiona Dunn and Pam Poulter. Everywhere the spirit seemed good and the Faith making its usual steady progress.

cc: The Universal House of Justice
U.S. IGC
CPC Europe