

Topics covered in Rúhíyyih Khánúm's meeting with pioneers, Haiti, 15 May 1981

Informal notes by Greg Dahl

1. Beating children as a form of discipline. Reward and punishment. Freedom and liberty.
Spiritual parenthood, eternal bond, relationship of teaching and protection, like the Hands and the Counsellors.
2. Haiti is heart-breaking, with lovely people, but the country's poverty and problems such as erosion are heart-breaking.
Mass teaching. Can inform people of the 4 basic points mentioned by Shoghi Effendi in 10 minutes, and if they are touched you have to accept them. If there are 9, they have to form a Spiritual Assembly. It will work out. We have to have faith, do our part.
3. Deepening in villages means "go back", not to enroll and then abandon people. Pioneers often settle in the capital city where they can find work, need to go out.
4. Once pioneers settle in capital cities, it is often very hard to get them to move out to provincial towns. Often there are opportunities everywhere as English teachers. In Haiti, but avoid letting the Faith become a front again for active communists. Very damaging to the Faith. Need to use good sense, be vigilant.
5. Literacy isn't essential for teaching.
Deputization. Stories from Sikkim, India and Malawi.
6. Pioneers doing the work versus training local believers to do it.
Violette: need for pioneers to adjust to local ways, listen to the teaching methods of local teachers, for example stories they might tell to illustrate teachings.
Why aren't the Haitian believers arising to teach?
7. The hold of Voodoo over the people. Teaching experiences.
8. Voodoo versus black magic.
9. People should feel free to take whatever they want of the Bahá'í teachings.
Regarding Voodoo and black magic, how do we free the people from their fears?
10. Voodoo, continued. Good to get the village elders on our side.
11. Voodoo, continued. Not promising schools or material things when teaching in villages.
12. Building local centers with support from the National Spiritual Assembly, not working in Haiti. Voodoo is power struggle, no ethics.
13. Justice and love. [needs gain control]
14. Role of pioneers; begging versus sharing
15. Continued. Song.
16. Avoiding being like Christian revivalist sects; songs and rituals. RK likes few songs, but speaks warmly of "Queen of Carmel". Age of the worship of the child.
17. Ritualistic atmosphere in Bahá'í meetings. Music in meetings. Haitian culture.