

So What's this Jr. Youth Animator's Series I've Been Hearing About?

by Lua Jamison

Youth animators is the fourth core activity along with children's classes, devotions, and study circles. I've been told that the clearest explanation of what the Jr. Youth Animator's Series is that it's Ruhi for jr. youth. Although true, Animators is so much more than that. To understand the importance of the Series, it's vital to acknowledge the importance of jr. youth, including their contributions and the life stages they are going through. From a psychological stand point, significant changes take place between the ages of 10 and 15. Right before the age of maturity, jr. youth go through a stage of exploring who they are, what spirituality is, and how their relationship to it. It is also a time of relying on peers, with whom they seek acceptance and support. The old world order sees this as a time of rebellion, but the Baha'i perspective is different. If channeled correctly, this curiosity and questioning can be a powerful tool. The Animator's Series is designed to guide and direct jr. youth to seek confirmation in God, draw on the power of His word, and walk the straight path in life.

Each of the three books in the series is designed to last for a whole year. Needless to say, the whole experience does not consist of just reading the book and answering questions. This certainly is part of it, but there are many more components to an animator class. It is designed to support jr. youth in their coming of age, train them to be teachers of the Cause, build friendships, provide opportunities for community service, promote the arts, and support the curriculum of schools the jr. youth attend. The goal of the animator, then, is to create the spiritual space where this can occur. It also is designed so one or two Baha'i jr. youth can invite their peers from school or the neighborhood, and, with the help of an animator, start a jr. youth group.

Youth Animator continues page 3

Baha'i Faith in Egypt

In a land full of bounties, history, ancient civilization and friendly people, the Baha'is, followers of an emerging global religion, struggle every day just to co-exist peacefully with all others and to serve their society. Here is their story....

Sunday, March 04, 2007

Egypt & U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) published a statement for immediate release on 19 December 2006, three days after the verdict—denying the Egyptian Baha'is their civil and human rights in their homeland—was handed down by Egypt's Supreme Administrative Court.

The USCIRF describes itself as follows: "The US Commission on International Religious Freedom was created by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to monitor the status of freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief abroad, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related international instruments, and to give independent policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and the Congress."

The following is the text of its press release:

Egypt: USCIRF Regrets Court Ruling Upholding Discriminatory National Identity Card Policy

December 19, 2006

WASHINGTON-The U.S.

Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), an independent, bipartisan federal agency, deeply regrets the decision by the Supreme Administrative Court of Egypt on Saturday to uphold the Egyptian government's discriminatory policy of prohibiting Baha'is from obtaining a national identity card. A lower court decision in April had allowed members of the Baha'i faith in Egypt to obtain a national identity card and to list their religious affiliation, but the Egyptian government ap-

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GOLDEN TILE FROM BAHÁ'Í SHRINE GOES ON DISPLAY IN MUSEUM



ALEM, Netherlands, 20 March 2007 (BWNS) -- The Bahá'í community of the Netherlands has given a golden tile from one of its sacred shrines to a museum that specializes in roof tiles.

In a ceremony last month, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Netherlands gave the tile on permanent loan to the Dutch Roof Tile Museum in Alem, a small riverside village in the heart of Holland.

Museum owner Huub Mombers said the tile - from the Shrine of the Báb in Haifa, Israel - is the only one among the 3,000 tiles in his collection that is gilded - covered with a glaze made with real gold.

"I have never seen one like this before," Mr. Mombers said, explaining that most "gold" tiles are simply painted a gold color.

The tile given to the museum was actually created more than 50 years ago, one of more than 12,000 golden tiles custom-made to cover the dome of the Bahá'í shrine on Mount Carmel overlooking the Mediterranean Sea.

Mr. Mombers opened the museum two years ago to showcase a collection of tiles from around the world that he had amassed over 20 years.

"We are familiar with gold roof tiles," he said, "but they are all paint. With this tile, it is pure gold. ... I have seen a factory in Germany that has made gold roof tiles for rich people in Saudi Arabia, but they are all paint."

True gilded tiles are so unusual that the Bahá'ís had trouble finding a factory that would fill their order, wrote Ugo Giachery, a prominent Bahá'í from Rome who in 1948 was given the task of locating such a company. He had already been turned away from factories in several European countries when he decided to try the Netherlands, known worldwide for its ceramics.

"Our inquiries were either received with incredulity or were declined for technical reasons," wrote Dr. Giachery in his book titled

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The Order of Ruhi Classes and You

Until further notice, people can take Ruhi 1, 2 and then 7 and become tutors of Ruhi 1 and 2

Completion of Ruhi 7 makes a person eligible to tutor any book he/she has already taken except Ruhi 7.

To become a tutor of Ruhi 7 the person must have tutored at least four Study Circles and have co-facilitated Ruhi 7 with a more experienced tutor.

After Books 1 and 2, the remaining books (3, 4, 6 and 7) can be taken out-of-order, but there is an advantage to following the sequence.

Book 5 is for Junior Youth Animators and is not considered part of the sequence, but anyone who wishes may take this book as well.

Ridván

His departure to Constantinople had been delivered into His hands, on a Wednesday afternoon (April 22, 1863), thirty-one days after Naw-Ruz, on the third of Dhi'l-Qa'dih, 1279 A.H., He set forth on the first stage of His four months' journey to the capital of the Ottoman Empire. That historic day, forever after designated as the first day of the Ridvan Festival, the culmination of innumerable farewell visits which friends and acquaintances of every class and denomination, had been paying him, was one the like of which the inhabitants of Baghdad had rarely beheld. A concourse of people of both sexes and of every age, comprising friends and strangers Arabs, Kurds and Persians, notables and clerics, officials and merchants, as well as many of the lower classes, the poor, the orphaned, the outcast, some surprised, others heartbroken, many tearful and apprehensive, a few impelled by curiosity or secret satisfaction, thronged the approaches of His house, eager to catch a final glimpse of One Who, for a decade,

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pealed that ruling to the Supreme Administrative Court.

"The court's ruling denies Egyptian Baha'is their rights as citizens of Egypt and would subject them to particular hardship in obtaining education, employment, and social services," said Commission Chair Felice D. Gaer. Baha'is are put to the choice of claiming adherence to a religion other than their own or foregoing an identity card and other official documents.

Last month, the Commission issued a statement noting that Egypt's policy requires all citizens to carry a national identity card that lists one's religion, permitting only Islam, Christianity, and Judaism as choices for that listing. This policy:

- runs contrary to Article 40 of the Egyptian Constitution which states that: "All citizens are equal before the law. They have equal public rights and duties without discrimination between them due to race, ethnic origin, language, religion or creed;"
- violates Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Egypt is a party. The UN Human Rights Committee has stated that no one can be "compelled to reveal [his or her] adherence to a religion or belief." Furthermore, in a 2004 report, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief stated that mention of religion on government identity cards is at "variance with the freedom of religion or belief that is internationally recognized and protected" and that Egypt's policy of excluding "any mention of religions other than Islam, Christianity or Judaism would appear to be a violation of international law;" and
- is inconsistent with the practice of many other countries in the region where Islam is the state religion and/or a source of legislation. Countries in the region that either do not require religious affiliation or do not list it at all on national identity cards include Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Mauritania, Oman, Qatar, Sudan, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates.

WESTSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD

RUHI BOOK ONE - Started March 24th. This study circle will meet every Saturday and end with a planned potluck each Saturday. It's not too late to join in.

WHEN: Saturday Mornings 10 am- Noon, followed by lunch

WHERE: Brayton-Hall's, 611 Skyline Avenue, Colorado Springs.

Please call if you intend to join the circle - Melissa Brayton, ph # 661-8807

WESTSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD

DEVOTIONS - Every Tuesday from 7 pm - 7:30 pm. Call if you have a specific request for the devotions topic - Melissa Brayton, ph# 661-8807

Bahá'í Connection

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Submissions

If you wish to have the Bahá'í Connection run an article or advertise for your event please submit as soon as possible. The Bahá'í Connection is finished on the 21st of each month that means that regular type is received up to the 20th. If you want a special design connected with an event please send it so that it is received by the 14th.

Articles are edited for size, clarity and relative value to the readers. Photographs and artwork are encouraged, however it is best to avoid having us return the images.

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Youth Animator from page 1

I leave you with words from the International Teaching Center. "These years of early youth (10-16), in today's world in particular, is very difficult, but at the same time we see from the Sacred Writings that the capacity to grasp fundamental moral and spiritual principles by which the light of good character is made evident, is deposited within these children. This suggests that if thousands upon thousands were invited into the Cause, and assisted to become deepened teachers of the Faith, they could in turn rescue their peers. In this decadent phase of human history spiritual battles will be won on the street corners of village and city, and in the school hallways and in places of recreation. We are hoping that these youth can be seen... not simply as children for whom activity must be arranged, or as adjuncts to their parents, or as awaiting some future time when they take on adult responsibility, but as a living creation of God necessary at this very moment for the purpose of God in a civilizing process which is now being called into existence" (1988).

Gold Tile from page 1

"Shoghi Effendi: Recollections."

But when he reached the last Dutch company on his list, he struck gold. It was a small factory called Westraven,



near Utrecht. The tile business had been founded by two brothers named Ravesteyn in 1844 (although the firm's predecessor had roots in tile-making as far back as 1661).

"At the time, Westraven was in a unique position," said Marcel Hermens, author of a history of the company. "They had a man in the factory who had been experimenting with glazes, especially golden glaze. They also had a manager who searched constantly for new markets and challenges."

The manager, Robert de Brauw, was a chemical engineer by profession and was struggling to make a success of the factory. Mr. de Brauw told Dr. Giachery the factory had only made flat gilded tiles for vertical suspension, never curved tiles for a dome. "But we are willing to try," he said.

Thus began months of research to determine the exact materials for the tiles and the glaze, as well as the optimum procedure for firing in the kiln.

"Not only did the tiles and their golden coating have to be able to withstand all

weather conditions, their shape and size also posed a problem," said Jelle de Vries, who researched the history of the Bahá'í Faith in the Netherlands for his doctoral thesis.

"Since it is not possible to saw glazed tiles once they have come out of the kiln, one has to calculate in advance what changes will occur during the firing process. And this had to be done not once, but 50 times since so many different shapes and sizes were needed to cover the surface of the dome."

Dr. de Vries is the one who discovered the coincidence that Holland was home to both the factory that made the Bahá'í tiles, and a museum that exhibits roof tiles. Thus it was arranged to bring a spare golden tile that had been in storage in Haifa to give to the museum, which is located in an old church in Alem.

Mr. Momers said his new exhibit, which includes a photo of the Bahá'í shrine along with the tile, is displayed prominently in the center of the museum.

"This tile is very special," he said. "I have seen gold on pottery but never on tiles. With pottery, you have a couple of pieces. With these tiles you had to do it with 13,000."

The Westraven factory was rare, Mr. Momers said, because even companies that might have had the technical know-how to make the tiles would have declined because the job was too risky financially.

"Everyone was afraid to do this because it was gold," he said. "No one was willing to guarantee it. You can imagine that if you don't get the job right, working with gold you can be financially ruined."

Mr. Momers' tile collection includes specimens from many countries and regions - Europe, China, Nepal, Africa and more. But not one of his other tiles is gilded.

The Westraven factory

Encountering Robert de Brauw, director of Westraven Faience and Tile Making, was like "finding a ray of light on a dark sea of uncertainty," wrote Dr. Giachery, the Bahá'í representative who had been searching for a tile maker.

"From the very beginning of our conversation he won my confidence and trust, and relieved me of all my anxiety," Dr. Giachery wrote.

"He was a chemical engineer by profession, a member of the nobility, and had taken on the management of this modest factory at the end of the war, and he was struggling to make it successful," Dr. Giachery stated.

"That Mr. de Brauw had been trained as a chemist was a great asset to our project, because three of the four problems in the production of the Shrine's tiles were of a

chemical nature: namely, the composition of the tiles, the golden coating, and the glazing. The fourth issue consisted of several material aspects which physics and engineering were to solve and in which Mr. de Brauw was also very proficient," Dr. Giachery wrote.

Calculating the size and shape of each tile was a monumental task. The dome is a partial sphere -- with both horizontal and vertical curve - but it straightens to a drum toward the bottom. The size and shape of each tile depended on its position on the dome.

Westraven had to come up with 71 different sizes and shapes to properly cover the top, and then virtually double the number because tiles had to be made specifically for a left or right position on each roof segment.

The calculations had to take into account that tiles change slightly when fired -- and the beige clay tiles were baked three times, first with a clear glaze, then with the prime orange glaze and finally with a 15 percent gold solution.

"It took months of experimentation and testing," said Mr. Hermens, the Westraven company historian. The contract for the work was signed in Utrecht in September 1952.

Mr. de Brauw was willing to take on the project partly because he had a works manager named Karel Bazuine who had been experimenting with a golden glaze for use on outdoor surfaces, the historian said.

When preparations were complete, the tiles were hand-formed out of clay, likely out of different plaster casts for the different sizes, Mr. Hermens said. They were "biscuit baked" in a big stone peat oven, and glazed in a special enameling oven.

The tiles were shipped to Haifa in early 1953, and the first ceremonial tiles laid in April of that year. By August, the shrine was finished, complete with golden dome.

More facts:

-- The tiles do not overlap when laid. Each tile is tapered from a thickness of 20 millimeters at one end to 6 millimeters at the other.

-- Records say that Westraven made more than 12,000 tiles for the Shrine of the Báb. About 10,500 full tiles were actually laid on the dome, along with a number of partial tiles. Extras are still in storage.

-- On each of the 18 segments of the dome, there are approximately 600 tiles in 70 rows.

-- The tiles at the bottom of the dome are 188 by 176 millimeters, the ones at the top 188 by 70 millimeters.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's First Public Talk in America

Ninety-five years ago on 14 April 1912 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave his first public talk in America at the Church of the Ascension on Fifth Avenue and Tenth Street, New York. This church is only a few blocks from where Kacey Stamats is attending college at NYU so availing us of her talents as a photographer she has provided the images of the same church today.

There is an amazing message delivered in this talk that rings even more true today and worth another look and many thoughts.

Notes by Ahmad Sohráb and Howard MacNutt

The Address

In his scriptural lesson this morning the revered doctor read a verse from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face."

The light of truth has heretofore been seen dimly through variegated glasses, but now the splendors of Divinity shall be visible through the translucent mirrors of pure hearts and spirits. The light of truth is the divine teaching, heavenly instruction, merciful principles and spiritual civilization. Since my arrival in this country I find that material civilization has progressed greatly, that commerce has attained the utmost degree of expansion; arts, agriculture and all details of material civilization have reached the highest stage of perfection, but spiritual civilization has been left behind. Material civilization is like unto the lamp, while spiritual civilization is the light in that lamp. If the material and spiritual civilization become united, then we will have the light and the lamp together, and the outcome will be perfect. For material civilization is like unto a beautiful body, and spiritual civilization is like unto the spirit of life. If that wondrous spirit of life enters this beautiful body, the body will become a channel for the distribution and development of the perfections of humanity.

Jesus Christ came to teach the people of the world this heavenly civilization and not material civilization. He breathed the breath of the Holy Spirit into the body of the world and established an illumined civilization. Among the principles of divine civilization He came to proclaim is



the Most Great Peace of mankind.

Among His principles of spiritual civilization is the oneness of the kingdom of humanity. Among the principles of heavenly civilization He brought is the virtue of the human world. Among the principles of celestial civilization He announced is the improvement and betterment of human morals.

Today the world of humanity is in need of international unity and conciliation. To establish these great fundamental principles a propelling power is needed. It is self-evident that the unity of the human world and the Most Great Peace cannot be accomplished through material means. They cannot be established through political power, for the political interests of nations are various and the policies of peoples are divergent and conflicting. They cannot be founded through racial or patriotic power, for these are human powers, selfish and



weak. The very nature of racial differences and patriotic prejudices prevents the realization of this unity and agreement. Therefore, it is evidenced that the promotion of the oneness of the kingdom of humanity, which is the essence of the teachings of all the Manifestations of God, is impossible except through the divine power and breaths of the Holy Spirit. Other powers are too weak and are incapable of accomplishing this.

For man two wings are necessary. One wing is physical power and material civilization; the other is spiritual power and divine civilization. With one wing only, flight is impossible. Two wings are essential. Therefore, no matter how much material civilization advances, it cannot attain to perfection except through the uplift of spiritual civilization.

All the Prophets have come to promote divine bestowals, to found the spiritual civilization and teach the principles of morality. Therefore, we must strive with all our powers so that spiritual influences may gain the victory. For material forces have attacked mankind. The world of humanity is submerged in a sea

of materialism. The rays of the Sun of Reality are seen but dimly and darkly through opaque glasses. The penetrative power of the divine bounty is not fully manifest.

In Persia among the various religions and sects there were intense differences. Bahá'u'lláh appeared in that country and

founded the spiritual civilization. He established affiliation among the various peoples, promoted the oneness of the human world and unfurled the banner of the Most Great Peace. He wrote special Epistles covering these facts to all the kings and rulers of nations. Sixty years ago He conveyed His message to the leaders of the political world and to high dignitaries of the spiritual world. Therefore, spiritual civilization is progressing in the Orient, and oneness of humanity and peace among the nations is being accomplished step by step. Now I find a strong movement for universal peace emanating from America. It is my hope that this standard of the oneness of the world of humanity may be upraised with the utmost solidity so that the Orient and Occident may become perfectly reconciled and attain complete intercommunication, the hearts of the East and West become united and attracted, real union become unveiled, the light of guidance shine, divine effulgences be seen day by day so that the world of humanity may find complete tranquillity, the eternal



happiness of man become evident and the hearts of the people of the world be as mirrors in which the rays of the Sun of Reality may be reflected.

Consequently, it is my request that you should strive so that the light of reality may shine and the everlasting felicity of the world of man become apparent.

I will pray for you so you may attain this everlasting happiness. When I arrived in this city, I was made very happy, for I perceived that the people here have capacity for divine bestowals and have worthiness for the civilization of heaven. I pray that you may attain to all merciful bounties.

O Almighty! O God! O Thou compassionate One! This servant of Thine has hastened to the regions of the West from the uttermost parts of the East that, perchance, these nostrils may be perfumed by the fragrances of Thy bestowals; that the breeze of the rose garden of guidance may blow over these cities; that the people may attain to the capacity of receiving Thy favors; that the hearts may be rejoiced through Thy glad tidings; that the eyes may behold the light of reality; that the ears may hearken to the call of the Kingdom. O Almighty!

Illumine the hearts. O kind God! Make the souls the envy of the rose garden and the meadow. O incomparable Beloved! Waft the fragrance of Thy bounty. Radiate the lights of compassion so that the hearts may be cleansed and purified and that they may take a share and portion from Thy confirmations. Verily, this congregation is seeking Thy path, searching for Thy mystery, beholding Thy face and desiring to be characterized with Thine attributes.

O Almighty! Confer Thou infinite bounties. Bestow Thine inexhaustible treasury so that these impotent ones may become powerful.

Verily, Thou art the Kind. Thou art the Generous. Thou art the Omniscient, the Omnipotent.



Ridvan continued from page 2

had, through precept and example, exercised so potent an influence on so large a number of the heterogeneous inhabitants of their city.

Leaving for the last time, amidst weeping and lamentation, His "Most Holy Habitation," out of which had "gone forth the breath of the All-Glorious," and from which had poured forth, in "ceaseless strains," the "melody of the All-Merciful," and dispensing on His way with a lavish hand a last alms to the poor He had so faithfully befriended, and uttering words of comfort to the disconsolate who besought Him on every side, He, at length, reached the banks of the river, and was ferried across, accompanied by His sons and amanuensis, to the Najibiyyih Garden, situated on the opposite shore. "O My companions," He thus addressed the faithful band that surrounded Him before He embarked, "I entrust to your keeping this city of Baghdad, in the state ye now behold it, when from the eyes of friends and strangers alike, crowding its housetops, its streets and markets, tears like the rain of spring are flowing down, and I depart. With you it now rests to watch lest your deeds and conduct dim the flame of love that gloweth within the breasts of its inhabitants."

The muezzin had just raised the afternoon call to prayer when Bahá'u'lláh entered the Najibiyyih Garden, where He tarried twelve days before His final departure from the

What are Teaching Teams? & Why are they Important to Move Clusters Forward in the Five Year Plan?

Verily, God loveth those who are working in His path in groups, for they are a solid foundation... When the holy souls, through the angelic power, will arise... establishing a band of harmony, each of these souls shall be regarded as one thousand persons and the waves of this greatest ocean shall be considered as the army of the hosts of the Supreme Concourse.

- Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'i World Faith*, p. 401

Employing direct teaching methods would benefit from having a few such enthusiastic souls who can inspire a team to 'cast aside their fears and misgivings and their sense of inadequacy,' boldly engage with interested people, and lead them to embrace the Cause. -International Teaching Centre, November 28, 2004

The expansion phase [of Intensive Programs of Growth (IPG)], often a period of two weeks, demands the highest level of intensity. Its objective is to widen the circle of those interested in the Faith, to find receptive souls and to teach them. Although this phase might include some element of proclamation, it should not be seen as a time to hold a few events for this purpose or to undertake a set of activities that merely convey information. Experience suggests that the more closely teaching approaches and methods are aligned with the capacity acquired from the study of the institute courses the more rewarding the results... Plans being devised for this phase invariably involve the implementation of carefully designed teaching projects and campaigns of home visits and firesides, often through the mobilization of teaching teams. -The Universal House of Justice, December 27, 2005

The concept of teaching teams that has evolved over the past few years can more accurately be understood as a support group, a few friends who come together during an intensive program of growth for planning, consultation, inspiration, and systematic action. Their teaching work may go on individually, in pairs, or in larger groups, but they meet regularly to consult on the progress of their personal and collective plans... the members of the teaching teams receive encouragement and gain strength from one

Loving Our Way to Cluster A



CO13 Cluster Reflection Meeting Saturday, April 14th 2 to 5 pm

(followed by a potluck dinner)

Activities provided for children!

Come Celebrate the goals met and each other! Bring any pictures of Core Activities to share (we'll make a collage board to display).

another. They pray together, exchange experiences, assess their learning, practice the skills acquired in the institute courses, and thereby attract confirmations... The learning demonstrates that when teams stay together for two or three cycles of a growth program, they become more systematic and gradually reap greater results... Above all, the focus is not just on inviting people to activities but in learning how to elevate a conversation toward spiritual themes and in finding opportunities, daily, to share the Revelation of God for this day. - *Reflections on Growth*, Issue No. 13, Publication of the International Teaching Centre

Communist Vietnam legalises Baha'i Faith

Wed, Mar 21, 4:37 AM ET

HANOI (AFP) - Vietnam has legalised the Bahai faith, which authorities say has about 7,000 followers in the communist country, the state-controlled media reported Wednesday.

Nguyen Huu Oanh, vice chairman of the government's Religious Affairs Committee, "presented a certificate to ratify religious activities of the Vietnam Bahai religious community," said the Vietnam News Agency.

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city. There His friends and companions, arriving in successive waves, attained His presence and bade Him, with feelings of profound sorrow, their last farewell. Outstanding among them was the renowned Alusi, the Mufti of Baghdad, who, with eyes dimmed with tears, execrated the name of Nasiri'd-Din Shah, whom he deemed to be primarily responsible for so unmerited a banishment. "I have ceased to regard him," he openly asserted, "as Nasiri'd-Din (the helper of the Faith), but consider him rather to be its wrecker." Another distinguished visitor was the governor himself, Namiq Pasha, who, after expressing in the most respectful terms his regret at the developments which had precipitated Bahá'u'lláh's departure, and assuring Him of his readiness to aid Him in any way he could, handed to the officer appointed to accompany Him a written order, commanding the governors of the provinces through which the exiles would be passing to extend to them the utmost consideration. "Whatever you require," he, after profuse apologies, informed Bahá'u'lláh, "you have but to command. We are ready to carry it out." "Extend thy consideration to Our loved ones," was the reply to his insistent and reiterated offers, "and deal with them with kindness"--a request to which he gave his warm and unhesitating assent.

Wise Words at this Point

Universal House of Justice member Mr. Paul Lample, offering clarification about the purpose of the institute, said,



“Teaching is what this process is all about. The institute process is not about less teaching, it is about more teaching. It is about building capacity to multiply competent teachers and to increase the amount of hours Bahá’ís spend in the teaching field.

Reinforcing this point, he said, “The purpose of going through the sequence of courses is to help Bahá’ís better understand the seeker’s spiritual journey—and to acquire the capacity to help remove the seeker’s obstacles in that journey. Training does not call for a halt to teaching. You should not stop teaching activities already in place. The acceleration of the teaching work goes side by side with the multiplication of the core activities. This is organic growth. It needs to be nurtured over time. Experience shows that it takes several years of implementing the activities associated with the two movements until a C stage cluster can advance to the point where an intensive program of growth can be established.”

The House of Justice member pointed out, “If we were already effective in our teaching efforts, more people would be becoming Bahá’ís. The institute process is helping the friends overcome their fears to learn and try new things to foster change and growth. “Study circles, children’s classes, devotional gatherings, home visits, teaching teams, reflection gatherings are not an end in themselves. They are the outer form of the two essential movements, but not the inner workings that foster change. We now have a sense of

pattern of action that works in advancing a cluster, and while we need to analyze and be systematic in tracking the data, ‘the friends need to remain ever conscious of the magnitude of the spiritual forces that are at their disposition.’ If the work of the process is merely administrative, it will not succeed.”

Teaching involves accompanying a soul. “Teaching the Faith is accompanying a soul on a spiritual journey,” Mr. Lample said. “But we must have the experience to effectively accompany the souls. The more hours spent in the teaching field, the more efficient the teacher becomes in not just teaching but in finding receptive souls.

“We should be looking and praying for receptive souls. Once we find them, what message do we convey to them? How do we accompany them on their journey? The tutors of the institute training courses accompany souls to build capacity as more effective teachers. This results in the advancement of the lines of action that creates the means to invite and accompany more souls to embrace Bahá’u’lláh. Building capacity results in creating an environment in the community in which everyone feels welcome. Any cluster wherever a Bahá’í resides can apply this process.

We need more courage.

Counsellor Aghdasi addressed the importance of the practices of the



study circles, the home visits and advancing the lines of action. He

said, “We need to be teaching in order to identify receptive populations—but it takes courage to teach. It takes courage to invite people to study circles. This is why the practices of the institute courses are so important. Through the practices we learn how to invite people to the core activities and to engage in home visits and in teaching teams. Through the practices we learn to cast aside our fears to be more effective teachers.”

We must learn to attract youth. A continuing message, which all the guest speakers brought to light at the conference, was the grave importance of attracting youth and engaging them in the process. Counsellor Aghdasi said, “This is our challenge. We need to identify, what kind of work can youth do? What are they willing to do? What activities must we offer to attract the youth? And how often? We need to be systematic about this. Engaging the youth is critical for sustainable growth.” Addressing the core groups, the Counsellor concluded, “Bahá’í service should be integrated into your daily lives. Everything you do—whether it concerns your family, work or leisure—Bahá’í service should not be considered a separate slice of your life, but it should be integrated into every aspect of it. Be flexible, have fun, and learn to utilize every teaching opportunity.”



Mankind's ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System—the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed.

—Bahá’u’lláh, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 85

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