

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

May 1971

To the Friends of God gathered in the Caribbean Conference

Warmest greetings!

How propitious that on its mountaintop between the two greatest oceans and the two American continents the Mother Temple of Latin America is rising now in Panama, a land blessed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's prophecy that "in the future it will gain most great importance." How splendid that the vision projected in the Divine Plan for the Americas has sprung into such vibrant life in this Caribbean basin, in country after country upon its verdant shores, in island after island across its expanse, all named by the Master in His Tablets. What shall we not witness ere long in these places so charged with destiny through the Master's utterances!

The Nine Year Plan, the current stage in the unfoldment of the Divine Plan of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, is approaching its triumphant end. This Conference is an occasion to sum up what has been won, to determine to achieve the remaining goals for expansion in these blessed lands, and to consolidate the old and new communities of the Most Great Name. Indeed, the winning of our grand Bahá'í objectives began just yesterday when, in the early years of the Formative Age, a few travelers crossed the Caribbean. Yet it was not until the successive Plans of the beloved Guardian, culminating in the Ten Year Crusade, when 27 Knights of Bahá'u'lláh settled throughout this vast area, that the Cause took firm root. By 1963 the countries and islands of the Caribbean claimed less than 400 localities and only 147 Local Spiritual Assemblies. Now Bahá'ís are to be found in over 2500 localities, more than 500 Local Assemblies and 16 National Spiritual Assemblies have been formed, and there have been hundreds of concrete achievements which have brought about our recognition as an independent Faith.

The Americas have been a melting pot and a meeting place for the races of men, and the need is acute for the fulfillment of God's promises of the realization of the oneness of mankind. Particularly do the Master and the Guardian point to the Afro-Americans and the Amerindians, two great ethnic groups whose spiritual powers will be released through their response to the Creative Word. But our Teachings must touch all, must include all peoples. And, in this hour of your tireless activity, what special rewards shall come to those who will arise, summoned by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Words: "Now is the time for you to divest yourselves of the garment of attachment to this world that perisheth, to be wholly severed from the physical world, become heavenly angels, and travel to these countries."

The time is short, the needs many. No effort can be foregone, no opportunity wasted. Praised be God that you have gathered in this Conference to consult upon the vital requirements of this highly significant moment. Our prayers ascend at the Holy Threshold that every session of this historic meeting will attract Divine Blessings, and that each soul, armed with the love of God and imbued with His purpose for a struggling mankind, will arise to activate, beyond all present hopes, the vast spiritual potentialities of the Americas.

To each of you we send our deepest love.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]