

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

8 June 1973

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The centennial year of the revelation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas has already witnessed events of such capital significance in the annals of the Bahá'í Dispensation as to cause us to contemplate with awe the rapidity with which Divine Providence is advancing the Cause of the Most Great Name. The time is indeed propitious for the establishment of the International Teaching Centre, a development which, at one and the same time, brings to fruition the work of the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land and provides for its extension into the future, links the institution of the Boards of Counselors even more intimately with that of the Hands of the Cause of God, and powerfully reinforces the discharge of the rapidly growing responsibilities of the Universal House of Justice.

This International Teaching Centre now established will, in due course, operate from that building designated by the Guardian as the Seat for the Hands of the Cause, which must be raised on the arc on Mount Carmel in close proximity to the Seat of the Universal House of Justice.

The duties now assigned to this nascent institution are:

- To coordinate, stimulate and direct the activities of the Continental Boards of Counselors and to act as liaison between them and the Universal House of Justice.
- To be fully informed of the situation of the Cause in all parts of the world and to be able, from the background of this knowledge, to make reports and recommendations to the Universal House of Justice and give advice to the Continental Boards of Counselors.
- To be alert to possibilities, both within and without the Bahá'í community, for the extension of the teaching work into receptive or needy areas, and to draw the attention of the Universal House of Justice and the Continental Boards of Counselors to such possibilities, making recommendations for action.
- To determine and anticipate needs for literature, pioneers and traveling teachers and to work out teaching plans, both regional and global, for the approval of the Universal House of Justice.

All the Hands of the Cause of God will be members of the International Teaching Centre. Each Hand will be kept regularly informed of the activities of the Center through reports or copies of its minutes, and will be able, wherever he may be residing or traveling, to convey suggestions, recommendations and information to the Center and, whenever he is in the Holy Land, to take part in the consultations and other activities of the Center.

In addition, we now appoint Mr. Hooper Dunbar, Mrs. Florence Mayberry and Mr. 'Aziz Yazdí to membership of the International Teaching Centre, with the rank of Counselor. These believers, who have been serving with distinction on the Continental Boards of Counselors in South America, North America and Central and East Africa respectively, will henceforth reside in Haifa and will, together with the Hands present in the Holy Land, constitute the nucleus of the operations of the Center.

Authority for the expulsion and reinstatement of Covenant-breakers remains with the Hands of the Cause of God. All such matters will be investigated locally by the relative Continental Board of Counselors in consultation with any Hand or Hands who may be in the area. The

Continental Board of Counselors and the Hands concerned will then make their reports to the International Teaching Centre where they will be considered. The decision whether or not to expel or reinstate will be made by the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land who will, as at present, submit their decision to the Universal House of Justice for approval.

The following changes to the zones of the Continental Boards of Counselors are now made:

- The number of zones has been raised to twelve by the removal of India, Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Laccadive, Maldivian, Andaman and Nicobar Islands from Central Asia.
- The Philippines, Hong Kong and Macau are transferred from Northeastern Asia to Southeastern Asia.
- The Caroline Islands and all other Pacific islands lying north of the equator and between longitudes 140° east and 140° west, with the exception of the Gilbert Islands, will be transferred from the zone of Australasia to the zone of Northeastern Asia. Islands under the jurisdiction of the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska remain in the zone of North America.

The number of Counselors is now raised to fifty-seven by the appointment of Mr. Friday Ekpe and Mr. Zekrullah Kazemi in Northwestern Africa, Mr. Hushang Ahdieh and Mr. Peter Vuyiya in Central and East Africa, Dr. Sarah Pereira and Mrs. Velma Sherrill in North America, Mr. Rowland Estall and Mr. Paul Lucas in Central America, Mrs. Leonora Armstrong, Mr. Peter McLaren and Mr. Raúl Pavón in South America, Mr. Dipchand Khianra and Mrs. Zena Sorabjee in South Central Asia, Mr. Firaydún Mitháqíyán in Southeastern Asia, Mr. Richard Benson and Miss Elena Marsella in Northeastern Asia and Miss Violet Hoehnke in Australasia. Dr. William Maxwell who has been rendering distinguished service as a member of the Continental Board of Counselors in Northwestern Africa has been obliged to return to the United States.

Mrs. Zena Sorabjee is appointed Trustee of the new Continental Fund of South Central Asia, while Mr. Hushang Ahdieh and Mr. Mas'úd Khamsí are appointed the new Trustees of the Continental Funds of Central and East Africa and South America respectively.

Beyond these significant developments at the World Center of the Faith and on the continental level, it is becoming increasingly necessary in many parts of the world for the Auxiliary Boards to be reinforced. The nature of the work differs from zone to zone and the Universal House of Justice is now consulting the Boards of Counselors on this matter before making an announcement.

The decisions now announced are the outcome of deliberation extending over a number of years, reinforced by consultations with the Hands of the Cause of God, and especially with the Hands residing in the Holy Land who were requested in 1968 to assist the Universal House of Justice in the establishment of the International Teaching Centre, a task that now increases in magnitude as that Center begins its work.

It is our fervent prayer that the Blessed Beauty will abundantly confirm this latest unfoldment of His divinely-purposed Administrative Order.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

Zones of the Continental Boards of Counselors
As Revised by the Universal House of Justice in May 1973

1. Northwestern Africa

All the continent of Africa west of the eastern frontiers of Tunisia, Algeria, Niger and

Nigeria plus the Cape Verde Islands.

2. Central and East Africa

All the continent of Africa east of the western frontiers of Libya, Chad and the United Cameroon Republic and north of the southern frontiers of Zaïre and Tanzania plus the islands of Fernando Póo, Príncipe, São Tomé and Annobón in the Atlantic Ocean and Zanzibar, Pemba and Mafia Islands in the Indian Ocean.

3. Southern Africa

All the continent of Africa south of the northern frontiers of Angola, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique plus the Island of Madagascar and all islands in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans between longitudes 20l west and 80 east and south of the equator with the exception of the Islands of Annobón, Zanzibar, Pemba, and Mafia which are assigned to the zone of Central and East Africa.

4. North America

All the continent of America north of the southern frontier of the United States plus all offshore islands in the Pacific and Arctic Oceans including the Aleutian chain and all islands under the jurisdiction of the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska, also Greenland and all offshore islands politically belonging to Greenland, all islands in the Atlantic Ocean west of longitude 40a west and between latitude 60 north and the Tropic of Cancer plus those Bahama Islands lying south of the Tropic of Cancer.

5. Central America

All the continent of America south of the northern frontier of Mexico and north of the southern frontier of Panama plus the offshore islands in the Pacific Ocean belonging politically to countries of this zone plus Clipperton Island, all islands in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea south of the Tropic of Cancer except the Bahama Islands which are allocated to the zone of North America and islands belonging politically to Colombia and Venezuela, the islands of Curaçao, Bonaire, Aruba, Trinidad and Tobago which are all allocated to the zone of South America.

6. South America

All the continent of South America, the Galápagos Islands, Curaçao, Bonaire, Aruba, Trinidad and Tobago, all islands in the Caribbean and North Atlantic Oceans belonging politically to countries of this zone plus all islands in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans south of the equator and between longitude 120e west and longitude 20 west.

7. Western Asia

All the continent of Asia west of the eastern boundaries of Pakistan, Sinkiang, the Mongolian Republic, the Oblasts of Chita and Irkutsk and the Kray of Krasnoyarsk and east of the western boundaries of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, plus those parts of Turkey and Kazakhstan which lie in Europe and including the Transcaucasian S.S.R.s of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as all islands in the Persian Gulf and islands in the Arabian Sea belonging politically to countries of this zone.

8. South Central Asia

India, Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Laccadive, Maldiva, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

9. Southeastern Asia

China south of the northern boundaries of Yünnan, Szechwan, Hupeh, Anhwei and Kiangsu, as well as Burma, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, the Philippines, Hong Kong and Macau. Excluding Portuguese Timor.

10. **Northeastern Asia**

All the Soviet Union east of the western boundary of the Yakutsk A.S.S.R. and the Oblast of Amur, China east of Sinkiang and north of the southern boundaries of Tsinghai, Kansu, Shensi, Honan and Shantung; Korea, Japan, Taiwan and all islands belonging politically to those nations plus all islands in the Pacific Ocean north of the equator and between the longitudes of 140d east and 140 west with the exception of the Gilbert Islands and those islands under the jurisdiction of the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska, but including those Caroline Islands lying west of longitude 140e east.

11. **Australasia**

Australia and New Zealand plus all islands in the Indian and Pacific Oceans lying south of the equator and between the longitudes of 80 east and 120 west including Portuguese Timor and the Gilbert and Ellice Islands but excepting Indonesia.

12. **Europe**

The entire continent of Europe less those portions of Kazakhstan and Turkey which lie in Europe, plus Iceland and all islands in the Atlantic Ocean north of latitude 60s north which belong politically to nations of the European continent plus all islands in the Atlantic Ocean east of longitude 40 west and between latitude 60n north and the Tropic of Cancer plus all islands of the Mediterranean Sea including Cyprus but excluding islands belonging politically to nations of the African and Asiatic continents.

Membership of the Continental Boards of Counselors, According to the New Boundaries of May 1973.

(New appointments are indicated with an asterisk.)

Northwestern Africa

- Ḥusayn Ardikání (Trustee of Continental Fund)
- * Friday Ekpe
- * Zekrullah Kazemi
- Muḥammad Kibdani

Central and East Africa

- * Hushang Ahdieh (Trustee of Continental Fund)
- Oloro Epyeru
- Kolonario Oule
- Isobel Sabri
- Mihdí Samandarí
- * Peter Vuyiya

Southern Africa

- Seewoosumbur-Jeehoba Appa
- Shidan Fat'he-Aazam (Trustee of Continental Fund)

- Bahiyyih Winckler
- North America
- Lloyd Gardner
- * Sarah Pereira
- * Velma Sherrill
- Edna True (Trustee of Continental Fund)

Central America

- Carmen de Burafato
- * Rowland Estall
- Artemus Lamb
- * Paul Lucas
- Alfred Osborne (Trustee of Continental Fund)

South America

- * Leonora Armstrong
- Athos Costas
- Mas'úd Khamsí (Trustee of Continental Fund)
- * Peter McLaren
- * Raúl Pavón
- Donald Witzel

Western Asia

- Iraj Ayman
- Masíḥ Farhangí
- Hádí Raḥmání (Trustee of Continental Fund)
- Manúchihr Salmánpúr

South Central Asia

- Shirin Boman
- * Dipchand Khiarra
- * Zena Sorabjee (Trustee of Continental Fund)
- Sankaran-Nair Vasudevan

Southeastern Asia

- * Firaydún Mitháqíyán
- Khudaráhm Paymán (Trustee of Continental Fund)
- Vicente Samaniego
- Chellie Sundram
- Yan Kee Leong

Northeastern Asia

- * Richard Benson
- John McHenry III
- * Elena Marsella
- Rúḥu'lláh Mumtází (Trustee of Continental Fund)

Australasia

- Suhayl 'Alá'í
- * Violet Hoehnke
- Howard Harwood
- Thelma Perks (Trustee of Continental Fund)

Europe

- Erik Blumenthal
- Anneliese Bopp
- Dorothy Ferraby
- Louis Hénuzet (Trustee of Continental Fund)
- Betty Reed