

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

19 May 1983

To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the World

Dearly loved Friends,

For ten years the International Teaching Centre has rendered invaluable services at the World Center of the Faith, and it is with great joy that we now announce a number of major steps in the evolution of this vital institution of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

Since the tragic death of Mr. Paul Haney there have been only two Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land. We have therefore decided to call upon Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá and Mr. Collis Featherstone to participate in the discharge of the special duties of the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land when the occasion requires, as for example, in dealing with matters of Covenant-breaking. They will be able to perform these functions either by correspondence or by periodic sojourns at the World Center.

We have decided to raise the number of resident members of the International Teaching Centre to nine. For reasons of health Mrs. Florence Mayberry is leaving the World Center, bringing to an end her highly valued services on this institution. Four new Counselor members have therefore been appointed: Dr. Magdalene Carney, Mr. Mas'úd Khamsí, Dr. Peter Khan and Mrs. Isobel Sabri, whom we now call upon to transfer their residences to the Holy Land, where they will join the Hands of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum and 'Alí-Akbar Furútan and Counselors Anneliese Bopp, Hooper Dunbar and 'Azíz Yazdí.

We have further decided, as foreshadowed in previous announcements, to institute a five-year term for the Counselor members of the International Teaching Centre. Each term will start on 23 May immediately following the International Bahá'í Convention, and the current term will end on 23 May 1988. Should circumstances prevent the Universal House of Justice from making new appointments at the end of any five-year term, the Counselors will remain in office until such time as new appointments can be made.

With the rapid growth of the Faith, its emergence from obscurity, and the diversification of the activities that the believers in many lands must undertake in such fields as education, rural development, radio and public relations—matters which must increasingly occupy the attention of the Universal House of Justice—we have decided that the time is ripe to devolve increased responsibility upon the International Teaching Centre in the fields of protection and propagation of the Faith. The duties of the International Teaching Centre, including those announced previously and those now being assigned to it, are as follows:

- To assume full responsibility for coordinating, stimulating and directing the Continental Boards of Counselors, acting also 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, from this knowledge, to make reports and recommendations to the Universal House of Justice and give advice to the Continental Boards of Counselors.
- To watch over the security and ensure the protection of the Faith of God.
- To be alert to possibilities for the extension of the teaching work and the development of economic and social life both within and without the Bahá'í community, 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.
- To direct the work of the Continental Pioneer Committees.
- To administer the expenditure of the International Deputization Fund.
- To administer an annual budget that will be provided from the Bahá'í International Fund, allocating therefrom to the Continental Boards of Counselors monies for special teaching projects and literature subvention, and, when necessary, contributions to the Continental Funds.

The transfer of functions and responsibilities in implementation of the above decisions will be made gradually as the new members are able to settle in the Holy Land. National Spiritual Assemblies and Continental Pioneer Committees will be notified, as necessary, of any changes in procedure that will be required; in the meantime they should continue to operate as before.

In the near future the International Teaching Centre will be moving into its new offices near the House of the Master, in the building which served for several decades as the Western Pilgrim House, later as the seat of the International Bahá'í Council and, for the past twenty years as that of the Universal House of Justice. Now, most befittingly, it will serve as the office of the International Teaching Centre until the permanent building for that mighty institution can be raised on Mount Carmel in close proximity to the Universal House of Justice.

It is our ardent prayer that the decisions now taken will be blessed by Bahá'u'lláh and will enable the World Center of the Faith to coordinate and direct with ever greater effectiveness the self-sacrificing and assiduous labors of the friends of God in every part of the world during the challenging years which lie before us.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]