

The Universal House of Justice

Department of the Secretariat

20 August 1987

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

Your letter of 22 July 1987 has been received by the Universal House of Justice, which has asked us to respond as follows.

The provisions set out in the letter of 17 July 1978 written to your National Spiritual Assembly on behalf of the House of Justice remain applicable, including the principle that it is improper for Bahá'ís to solicit funds from non-Bahá'ís in the name of the Faith for any purpose.

The following passage from the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh: "It would be impossible to conceive any act more contemptible than soliciting, in the name of the one true God, the riches which men possess" clearly indicates what the attitude of the Bahá'ís should be.

There is, however, a wide range of fund-raising activities in which Bahá'ís may engage. For example, Bahá'í institutions are free to approach governments or institutions which hold themselves out as wishing to fund charitable activities, to apply for grants to assist in specific humanitarian projects. A Bahá'í school which has both Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í pupils is free to raise funds for its own development by such activities as concerts, etc., or by appeals to parents; in this instance, a humanitarian institution is clearly identified, and the funds are being collected in its name rather than in the name of the Faith. Another example is that of a Bahá'í who wishes to sell an item he owns to the general public for a fair market price; he is free to use the proceeds for any purpose he wishes, including contributing them all, or in part, to the Bahá'í Fund, provided he does not represent to the public that the sale is being conducted for the benefit of the Faith.

There would be no objection to the Bahá'í community's joining with others to give a concert or undertake some other similar activity to raise funds for a deserving charity. Such activities or even the making of donations to humanitarian work should be, and should be seen to be, acts of sincere assistance and cooperation. In choosing to engage in such fund-raising, a Bahá'í community would need to ensure that assisting the charity would not have partisan political implications or support purposes contrary to the interests of the Faith. It would need to watch carefully that its involvement in such activities does not divert its energies from the vital work of teaching the Faith and consolidating its Institutions.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat