

The Spread of the Bahá'í Faith around the World

Ministry of Shoghi Effendi

Bahá'í Geography 6
Teaching the Bahá'í Faith

Ministry of Shoghi Effendi Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith (1921-1957)

In the early years of his Ministry, Shoghi Effendi emphasized the building of the administrative order and the institutions of Local and National Spiritual Assemblies, while Bahá'ís continued gradually to spread and teach the Faith.



Shoghi
Effendi



Teaching

Smallness of numbers, lack of skilled teachers, and modesty of means should not discourage or deter them. They must remember the glorious history of the Cause, which ... was established by dedicated souls who, for the most part, were neither rich, famous, nor well educated, but whose devotion, zeal and self-sacrifice overcame every obstacle and won miraculous victories for the Faith of God.... Let them dedicate themselves—young and old, men and women alike—and go forth and settle in new districts, travel, and teach in spite of lack of experience, and be assured that Bahá'u'lláh has promised to aid all those who arise in His Name. His strength will sustain them; their own weakness is unimportant.

(From a letter dated 29 June 1941 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma)

Teaching Plans

Then in the 1930s he began giving more systematic teaching plans to national communities, with goals to reach all the North American states and provinces, and then a US seven-year plan to open all the countries of Central and South America where teaching was possible despite the war in Europe and Asia. By 1953, Bahá'í communities had been established in 93 additional countries.

Teaching

That is perhaps what is most glorious about our present activities all over the world, that we, a band not large in numbers, not possessing financial backing or the prestige of great names, should, in the name of our beloved Faith, be forging ahead at such a pace, and demonstrating to future and present generations that it is the God-given qualities of our religion that are raising it up and not the transient support of worldly fame and power. All that will come later, when it has been made clear beyond the shadow of a doubt that what raised aloft the banner of Bahá'u'lláh was the love, sacrifice, and devotion of His humble followers and the change that His teachings wrought in their hearts and lives.

(From a letter dated 20 June 1942 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles)

Countries opened 1921-1953

Abyssinia (now Ethiopia)

Aden Protectorate (now part of Republic of Yemen)

Afghanistan

Ahsa (part of Saudi Arabia)

Alaska

Algeria

Angola

Argentina

Australian New Guinea (now Papua New Guinea)

Bahrain Island

Baluchistan (part of Pakistan)

Belgian Congo (now Democratic Republic of Congo)

Belgium

Bermuda

Bismark Archipelago (now part of Papua New Guinea)

Bolivia

Borneo

British Somaliland (now part of Somalia)

Bulgaria

Ceylon (now Sri Lanka)

Chile

Colombia

Corsica (part of France)

Costa Rica

Cuba

Czechoslovakia (now Czech Republic and Slovakia)

Denmark

Dominican Republic

Ecuador

Eire (now Ireland)

El Salvador

Eritrea

Fiji

Finland

Formosa (now Taiwan)

French Morocco (now Morocco)

Gold Coast (now Ghana)

Greenland

Guatemala

Haiti

Honduras

Hong Kong

Iceland

Indo-China (now Vietnam)

Indonesia

Jamaica

Kenya

Korea

Countries opened 1921-1953

Kuweit

Liberia

Libya

Luxembourg

**Mackenzie (part of
Canada)**

Madagascar

Malaya (now Malaysia)

**Manchuria (part of
China)**

Martinique

Mexico

Mozambique

Nepal

New Caledonia

**Newfoundland (part of
Canada)**

New Zealand

Nicaragua

Nigeria

**Northern Rhodesia (now
Zambia)**

Norway

Nyasaland (now Malawi)

Oman

Panama

Paraguay

Peru

Philippine Islands

Poland

Portugal

Puerto Rico

Qatar

**Sarawak (part of
Malaysia)**

Saudi Arabia

Siam (now Thailand)

Sierra Leone

Spain

Sweden

**Tanganyika (now part of
United Republic of
Tanzania)**

**Tasmania (part of
Australia)**

**Trucial Sheikhs (now
United Arab Emirates)**

Uganda

Uruguay

Venezuela

Yemen

**Yugoslavia (now Serbia,
Croatia, Slovenia,
Montenegro, Kosovo,
Bosnia and
Herzegovina, North
Macedonia)**

**Zanzibar (part of United
Republic of Tanzania)**

**Zululand (now part of
South Africa)**

Teaching

We can truly say that this Cause is a cause that enables people to achieve the impossible! For the Bahá'ís, everywhere, for the most part, are people with no great distinguishments of either wealth or fame, and yet once they make the effort and go forth in the name of Bahá'u'lláh to spread His Faith, they become, each one, as efficacious as a host!... It is the quality of devotion and self-sacrifice that brings rewards in the service of this Faith rather than means, ability or financial backing.

(From a letter dated 11 May 1948 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand)

Ten Year Crusade 1953-1963

By 1953 there were still many places mentioned by 'Abdu'l-Bahá that had not yet been opened to the Faith. The Guardian therefore prepared a global plan, a Ten Year Crusade, to ensure that the Faith would reach every corner of the world, even the most remote islands, in fulfillment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan.

Teaching

Nor should any of the pioneers, at this early stage in the upbuilding of Bahá'í national communities, overlook the fundamental prerequisite for any successful teaching enterprise, which is to adapt the presentation of the fundamental principles of their Faith to the cultural and religious backgrounds, the ideologies, and the temperament of the divers races and nations whom they are called upon to enlighten and attract. The susceptibilities of these races and nations, ... differing widely in their customs and standards of living, should at all times be carefully considered, and under no circumstances neglected.

(From a letter dated 5 June 1947 written by Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'ís of the West)

Teaching

It is a great mistake to believe that because people are illiterate or live primitive lives, they are lacking in either intelligence or sensibility. On the contrary, they may well look on us, with the evils of our civilization, with its moral corruption, its ruinous wars, its hypocrisy and conceit, as people who merit watching with both suspicion and contempt. We should meet them as equals, well-wishers, people who admire and respect their ancient descent, and who feel that they will be interested, as we are, in a living religion and not in the dead forms of present-day churches.

(From a letter dated 21 September 1951 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Comité Nacional de Enseñanza Bahá'í para los Indígenas)

Shoghi Effendi
Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith



Teaching

...rest ye not, seek ye no composure, attach not yourselves to the luxuries of this ephemeral world, free yourselves from every attachment, and strive with heart and soul to become fully established in the Kingdom of God. Gain ye the heavenly treasures. Day by day become ye more illumined. Draw ye nearer and nearer unto the threshold of oneness. Become ye the manifestors of spiritual favours and the dawning-places of infinite lights!...