

# Namibia (South West Africa)

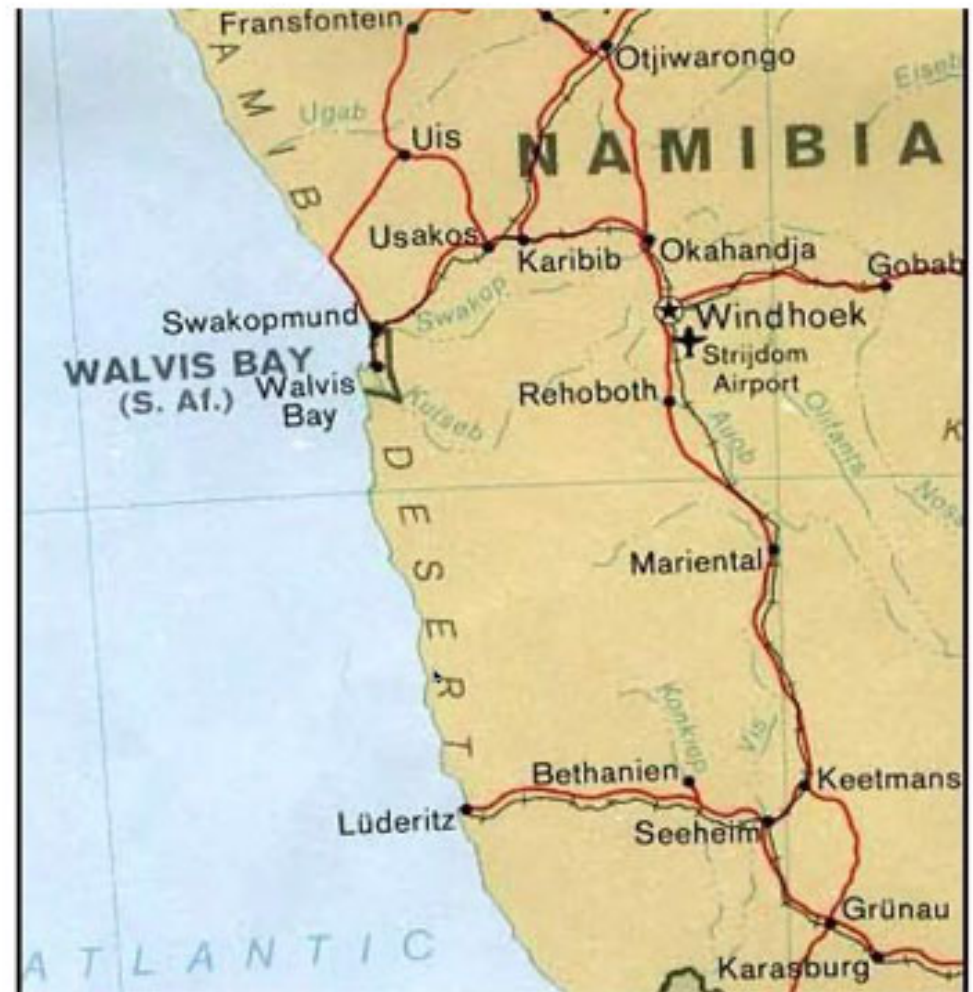
## Southern Africa

Teaching the Bahá'í Faith

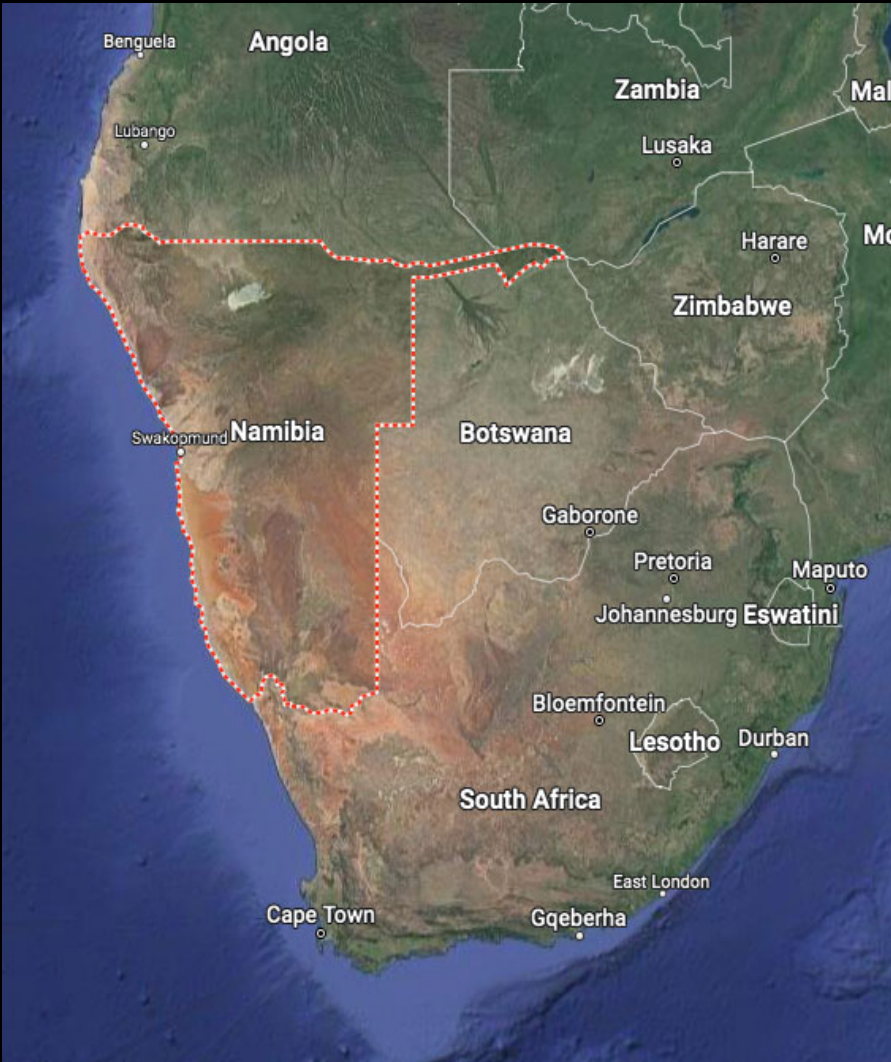
Bahá'í Geography - Namibia

# Namibia

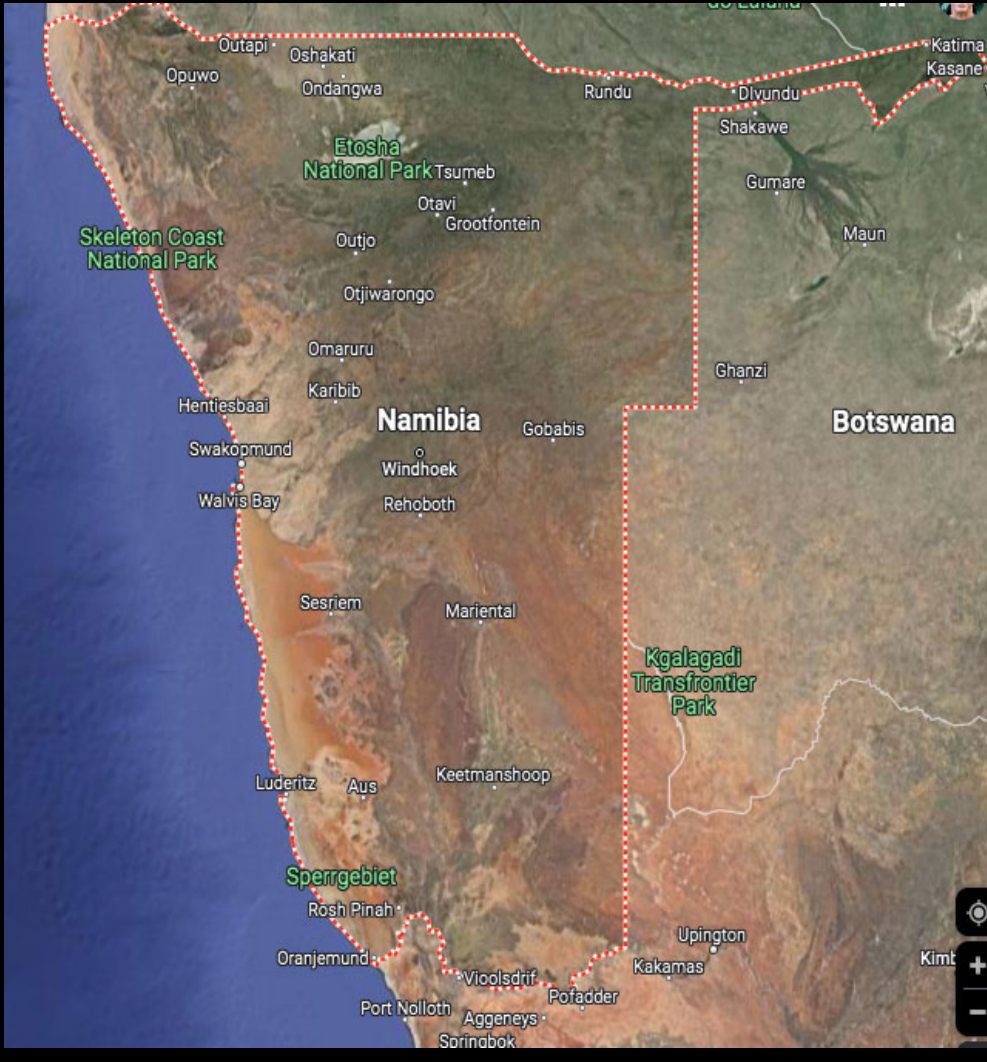
The Republic of Namibia on the Atlantic coast of southern Africa, with Angola and Zambia to the north, Botswana to the east, and South Africa to the east and south. Windhoek is its capital and main city. Its population today of 2.8 million on 825,615 km<sup>2</sup>, mostly desert, makes it one of the world's least populated countries. The economy is based on agriculture, tourism and mining.



Namibia



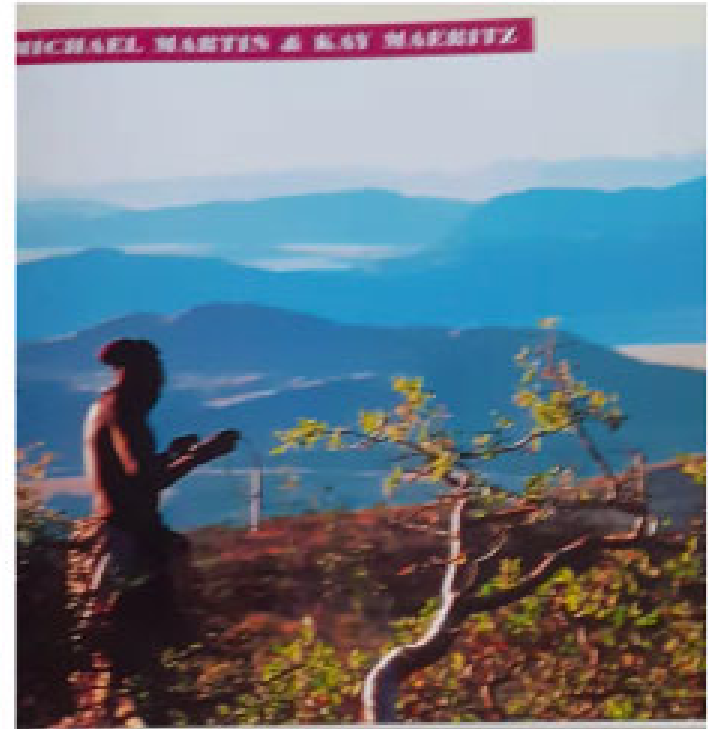
# Namibia



# South-West Africa (Namibia)

Originally called South-West Africa, it was a German colony from 1884 until 1915. The Germans tried to exterminate the African tribes in 1904-1907, killing 75,000 in the first genocide of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After World War I it was ruled by South Africa under a League of Nations mandate, and after WWII under a United Nations mandate, although it tried to annex the territory, enforcing apartheid (racial separation). Its occupation was declared illegal in 1968, but it took a war of independence to finally become a nation in 1990.





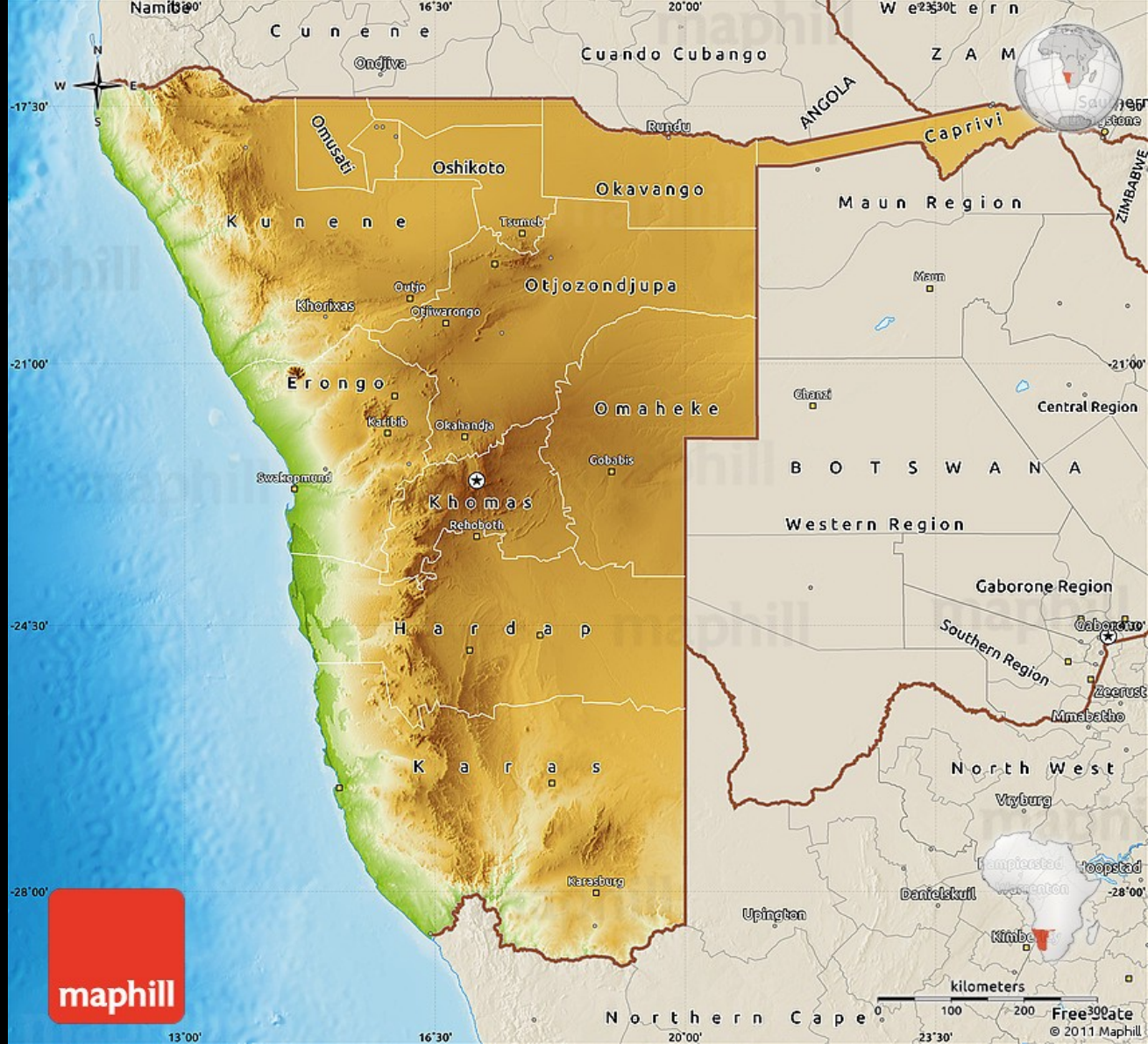
South-West Africa

# Namibia

Between the Namib desert along the coast and the Kalahari desert to the east is the Great Escarpment or central plateau reaching up to 2,600 metres. The soils are generally poor and rainfall scarce (350mm per annum) in the arid climate.



# Namibia topography





Namibia – Walvis Bay, main port

Namibia  
Windhoek



Namibia



Namibia

Himba  
woman



Namibia  
San  
bushman



© Jiyeon Juno Kim



Namibia

Namibia







Namibia - bushveld

Namibia  
Fish River  
Canyon



Namibia

Namib  
Desert



Namibia



Namibia  
desert



Namibia  
coast



Namibia  
Rundu

Okavango  
River  
Angola



Namibia





# Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

Edward (Ted) Cardell (1918-1999) from England joined the Bahá'í Faith in 1949 in Canada. He offered to pioneer in Britain's Africa Plan in 1950, but had little money and needed a job as a photographer. He got a return ticket to Nairobi, went to local photographic firms and a newspaper, and failed to get a job, ending up without money in a hotel room far from home.

(Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 106-109)

# Ted Cardell

“So, now I thought this is about the time to start praying. What else could you do? So, I prayed for a bit then fell asleep. And when I woke up, I got the idea to go down to the newspaper office again, which I did and they gave me a a job instantly at double the salary I had been getting in London. They suddenly realized the Queen was coming out to Kenya and they didn’t have a full-time photographer.”

(Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 106-109)



Aziz Yazdi, Claire Gung, Ted Cardell

# Ted Cardell

Three months after Ted arrived, Aziz Yazdi joined him, and for six months they tried to teach the Bahá'í Faith with no results, until a few people finally accepted. Ted went on pilgrimage in 1952, and the Guardian inspired him. At the beginning of the Ten Year Crusade, Shoghi Effendi sent a map to the Bahá'ís in Kenya, where there were nine pioneers and nine native Bahá'ís.

(Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 106-109)



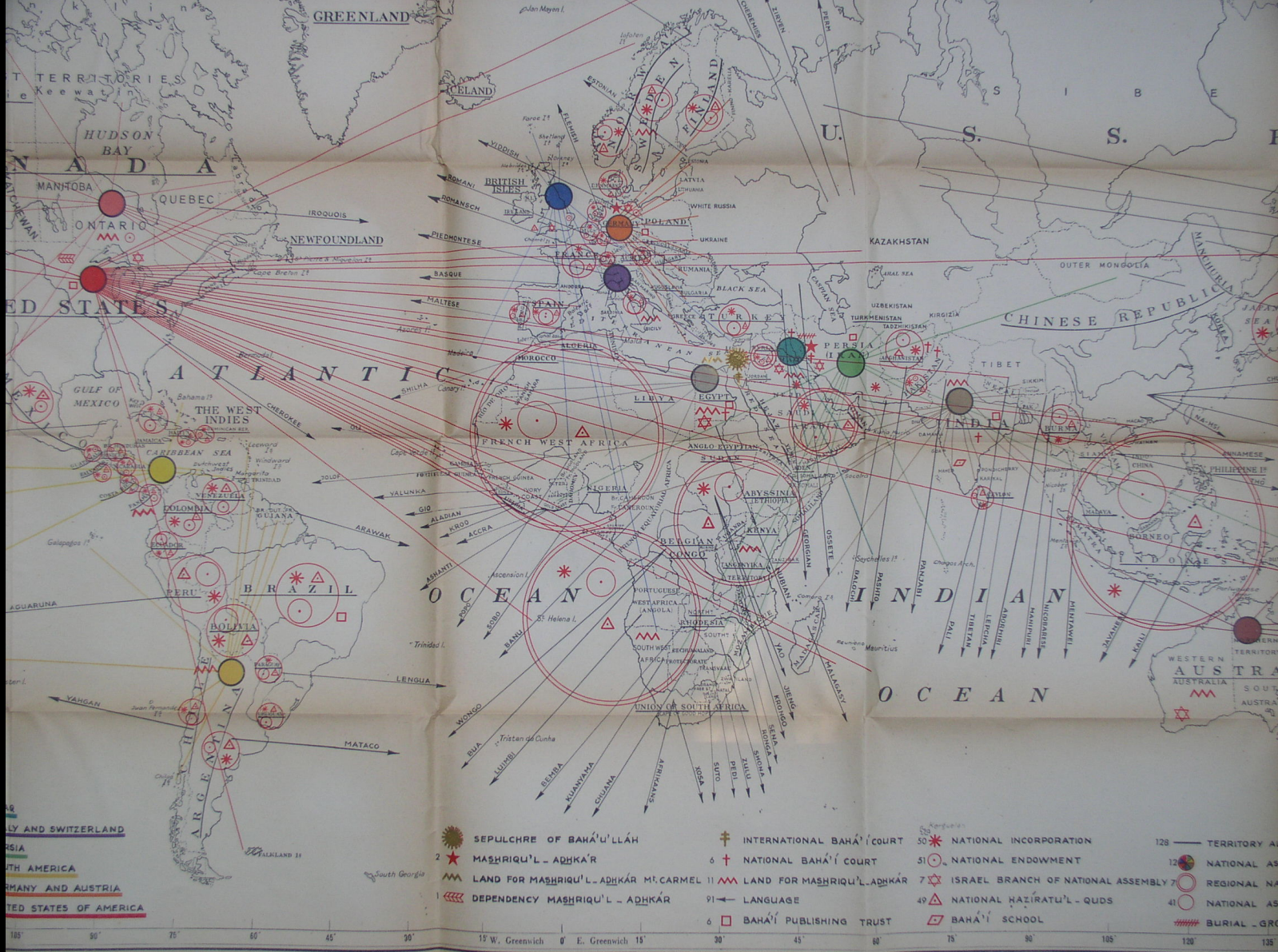
Bahá'ís in Nairobi, Kenya, 1953

# Ted Cardell

“We laid it out on the floor and started looking at it. There were only twelve national assemblies in those days. Each had a great big coloured dot with lines of that colour running to the territories to be conquered by that country. England only had about twelve lines overseas.... Where we would find people to conquer these countries, God only knew.”

(Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 106-109)

# Shoghi Effendi's map of Crusade goals 1953



- ☼ SEPULCHRE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

2 ★ MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR

🏠 LAND FOR MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR

🔗 DEPENDENCY MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR
- ⚡ INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COURT

⚡ NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COURT

11 🏠 LAND FOR MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR

91 ← LANGUAGE

6 🏠 BAHÁ'Í PUBLISHING TRUST
- 50 ★ NATIONAL INCORPORATION

51 ○ NATIONAL ENDOWMENT

11 🌟 ISRAEL BRANCH OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

49 ⚡ NATIONAL HAZIRATU'L-QUDS
- 128 — TERRITORY ACQUIRED

12 🌟 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

7 ○ REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

41 🌟 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

🏠 BAHÁ'Í SCHOOL

🏠 BURIAL - GROUNDS

# Ted Cardell

“Fred Schechter and Fred and Beth Laws had just arrived before the map came. They were joking with us, saying they had stopped off at Walvis Bay, a territory on the southwest coast of Africa, and it was desert for a thousand miles along the coast and 300 miles inland. And they said, ‘You know, some poor devil will one day have to go and pioneer that place.’ We were having a good old chuckle about it.”

(Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 106-109)



# Ted Cardell

“Well, the Guardian sent a message... that nine pioneers in Kenya was too many, so five of us walked and went to all parts in the Ten Year Plan. The Guardian had said to me, nobody deserves to make a pilgrimage, but you go there to get your batteries charged and your soul uplifted so you can go out and do extraordinary things.”

(Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 106-109)

# Ted Cardell

“So when we laid this map on the floor, Aziz Yazdi saw one blue line going from England down to Southwest Africa and he said, ‘Oh, look Ted!’ And I said, ‘I am not going!’ Well, of course I did, because what can you do when the Guardian says so. That was the way the Guardian had his effect on you. I was the only single Bahá’í who’d had Africa experience.”

(Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 106-109)



# Ted Cardell

Ted Cardell arrived in Windhoek, South West Africa, on 13 October 1953. He did not know German or any local languages and had only US\$400. His first two jobs, in a photography shop and as a packer in a warehouse, only lasted three weeks each. He treated everyone in the same friendly way and got a job as an insurance salesman that lasted two years before he was fired for being late. Then John Robarts, Knight of Bahá'u'lláh and future Hand of the Cause, got him another insurance job.

(Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 106-109)

# Ted Cardell

With the law prohibiting interactions between blacks and whites, teaching was difficult for two years. When Shoghi Effendi chose Kuanyama as the language of South West Africa, he went to the Methodist Church to get a Bible in Kuanyama and with his own English Bible tried to translate a one-page description of the Bahá'í Faith. Joseph, the gardener at the church, was Kuanyama, and said it was terrible, but he knew a translator who worked for the police. The Guardian had warned them to stay away from clergymen and the police at all costs.

(Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 106-109)

# Ted Cardell

“Anyway, the next night I went along and there was [his] friend, Hilifa, the police interpreter, destined to become the first Bahá’í. And he was such a sweet man and he was so understanding. He was a kind of go-between between the whites and the blacks. He was able to smooth many an upset between the blacks and the whites in the Government and that was splendid. He was a treasured man to both sides. And here is was – fell into my lap just like that. So, I showed him the translation and we had to start afresh.”

(Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 106-109)

# Ted Cardell

Ted and the translator, Hilifa Andreas Nekundi, worked on the pamphlet for several weeks, with clandestine meetings in the country at night. In translating the pamphlet, Hilifa became interested in the Faith. Ted and a friend hired a cottage in the seaside resort of Swakopmund to find the most isolated beaches where they studied *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* undetected.

(Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 106-109)

Swakopmund  
coastal resort





# Ted Cardell

Hilifa sat on the beach and wrote his letter of declaration to Shoghi Effendi, and Ted embraced him. Then Ted said they should go swimming. Hilifa did not know how to swim, and when a wave washed over them he disappeared. Ted was panicked, thinking he had just drowned the first local believer, but managed to pull him to safety.

(Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 106-109)

# First South-West African Bahá'í

Because of local censorship, Ted took Hilifa's letter to London to mail, and Hilifa sent another letter emphatically declaring himself a Bahá'í. Shoghi Effendi quickly responded, calling Hilifa the first South West African Bahá'í and hoping that he could become 'the means of teaching many of your people the Faith, and of helping Mr. Cardell to establish a Spiritual Assembly in Windhoek...' Hilifa fulfilled the Guardian's wish.

(Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 106-109)

# Ted Cardell

Ted left in March 1958 to find a wife, marrying Alicia Ward from the USA, and returning to Kenya for several years before finally moving to Britain, where Ted served on the National Spiritual Assembly.

(Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 106-109)

# Replacements – the Aiff family

Ted was replaced in 1959 by Gerda and Martin Aiff and their six young children. With the challenges of apartheid prohibiting the black and white Bahá'ís from meeting together, the white women would gather conspicuously in the front of the house while the men and the African seekers secretly met in the back. Martin Onesmus, an African Bahá'í employed by the Aiffs and living with them, acted as a courier between the black and white Bahá'ís. When the first Local Spiritual Assembly was elected in Windhoek in 1965, Mr Onesmus was one of its members.

(Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 106-109)



Aiff family in South-West Africa 1959

# Replacements – the Aiff family

Gerda Aiff, age 102, (far right) and five of her six children, Conny, Thomas, Jorgen, Michael, and Fariba, with Doris Katzenstein (upper left), whom they met on the ship to South-West Africa in 1959 and who became Auntie Doris to the children. Taken in December 2023 during an online reunion. The sixth, Wolfgang, was flying to South Africa and could not attend.



Aiff family 2023 with Doris Katzenstein