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National Committees and Departments

Office of External Affairs

Inter-faith discussion at Lambeth Palace

ON BEHALF of the National Spiritual Assembly and the Bahá'í community of the UK, Dr Kishan Manocha attended an inter-faith discussion at Lambeth Palace hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The theme of the meeting, which was attended by leading members of the major faith traditions in the UK, was "Setting Things Right: Religious Responses to the Human Predicament".

Leading members of faith communities who met with the Archbishop of Canterbury

Dr Manocha presented a written paper which was circulated to all participants and was also asked to make a spoken presentation by the Archbishop himself. The wide-ranging discussion was conducted in a very positive and open spirit, and some of the participants afterwards commented on the refreshing and stimulating insights offered by the Bahá'í Faith.

Committee for International Pioneering and Travel Teaching

AS THIS IS BEING WRITTEN, the members of the committee are still on a high after the National Conference in Scarborough. It was a wonderful conference with everything done on a very professional basis, from the highly impressive multi-media presentations, to the patient, good natured reception and ushering services. There is a relatively small but growing band of totally dedicated very modest Bahá'ís who, behind the scenes, make all this work so that the rest of us benefit.

What has this got to do with pioneering and travel teaching I hear you ask? Within the Bahá'í community there is also a relatively small, but growing band of such Bahá'ís who voluntarily dedicate a part of their lives to travel far and near out of the security of their familiar, comfortable day to day existence on the great adventure of international pioneering and travel teaching.

It is an enormous privilege to try to help these friends in achieving their heart's desire. Currently they range in age from teens to eighties, so there is no age barrier to this field of service. They are truly at the cutting edge of response to the call of the Universal House of Justice in May 2001 that:

“... it is the duty of the Bahá'í community to support and encourage these friends in their service to the world.”

...the time has come when each human being on earth must learn to accept responsibility for the welfare of the entire human family.”

Is it not amazing that we few, a drop in the ocean of a troubled and sorely tried humanity, have been given the gift and the capacity to water this spiritual desert so that it may blossom as the rose? The world of pioneering and travel teaching opportunities is so extensive that all can find their particular comfort zone in the garden of God or seek out their pain threshold if so minded!

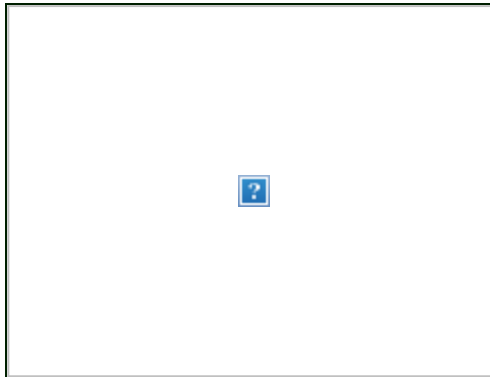
From the gentle islands of the Mediterranean, the Caribbean and the Pacific to the harsh deserts and fertile plains of Africa, from the storm tossed islands of the South Atlantic to the ravaged economies of Europe, from the rainforests of South and Central America to the ancient Asian civilisations; humanity is waiting, impatiently waiting for the gentle warriors of Bahá'u'lláh to release them from their bonds.

Please, please get in touch with yourselves and with us.
Contact the CIPTT secretary, Peymane Adab.
Email: peyman@onetel.net.uk

Year of Service Desk

Karen Jamshidi and Lucie Hanrahan in the Mariana Islands

TO COME FROM a relatively inactive Bahá'í way of life to a fruitful active Year of Service is pretty astounding. Lucie Haranhan from the South of Ireland and I have been in the Mariana Islands for three months. We both work as teachers' aids in the Brilliant Star Montessori school. Our day begins at 6:30 am (when we get up) until 4:00 pm, when we leave the school.



Karen and Lucie in their back yard

We mould the spiritual, intellectual and physical growth of children who range from the age of 16 months to 6 years old. We help prepare and clean the classrooms, all in the knowledge that we are serving Bahá'u'lláh. The skills and understanding we have gained in such a short time will aid us with the bringing up of our own children and general care of these wonderful little souls.

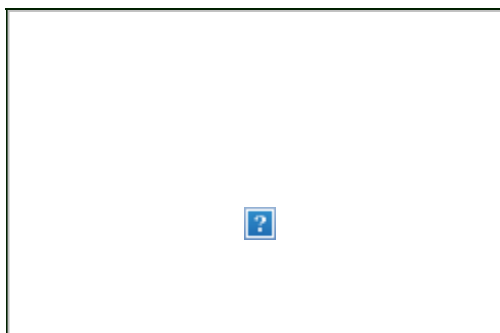
We have attended a summer school in Guam which was very inspiring and now we're working towards starting study circles and youth firesides. To never have heard of the Micronesian Islands and now to be working and serving in among these tropical waters, I feel a renewed sense of comfort that the earth is but one country and mankind its citizens.

We are welcomed by people that are both American and Persian, Persian and Korean, Japanese and Carolinian, Spanish and American, English and American, German and Persian and so many other mixes of races and cultures – it's such a beautiful sight.

Lucie and I both warmly encourage everyone to consider a Year of Service (especially in the Pacific islands!) and our experience has blessed us with memories and experiences that will stay with us for eternity.

Jason Maude in Lesotho

I AM TOURING with the Bahá'í performing arts group "Beyond Words". We are mainly based in South Africa, but for one month we are in Lesotho, also known as "The Kingdom in the Skies". Its name is well deserved. We sometimes have difficulty performing as the air up here is so thin. This especially applies to dances where we have to wear masks. During the drug dance for example we are all gasping for air the second we



get off stage.

The response to our dances here is excellent. Everyone we talk to is interested in the Faith. The audiences here are very different from audiences back in Britain. They will not hesitate to join in singing songs, even if they have only heard them once before.

The YOS desk at National Conference

The scenery here is amazing. It is totally different from everything I have ever experienced. I also apologise for the shortness of this article. Internet time is limited here. Hopefully, more articles will appear soon.

Year of Service Desk

Secretary: Sylvia Miley

Esmyr Koomen, email coordinator – E-mail: yosdesk@koomen.demon.co.uk

Jonneke Koomen, youth advisor – E-mail: jonneke@koomen.demon.co.uk

Finance Department

If it is meant to be, it will be

IT WAS IN MID OCTOBER that the National Assembly learned that Bridge House, home of the National Sub Office was being offered for sale. It has been the goal of the National Assembly to find a suitable building to house the Afnán Library and National Archives, and since the sale of Uckfield, to secure a permanent location for the National Sub Office which has been moved from place to place at considerable expense since 1994.



Bridge House offers the facilities to accommodate all of these needs and would cater for the future needs for office space for the Faith. Against all the odds and to our amazement, the National Assembly's offer of £1.51M (matching the highest bid despite the five other cash offers) was accepted, and we were given four weeks to complete the contract. A bank loan was secured, with the condition that the loan be reduced to £1M within the first six months and fully repaid in ten years.

What seemed impossible at the time, now looked more and more a reality. This brought to mind the phrase that was mentioned at the start of it all "if it is meant to be, it will be." And so it was. On the October 26 the contract on Bridge House was exchanged and subsequently completion took place on the November 8.

By the time of completion an earmarked donation for this project of £250,000 reduced the bank loan to £1.26M. It is anticipated that the Afnán Library, from the sale of their present building, should bring in £230,000 to £250,000 to reduce the bank loan closer to £1M as agreed. The property constructed in 1986 comprises an attractive modern unit on the ground floor and three upper floors. It is situated on a very prominent corner site on the busy high street overlooking Tonbridge Castle and the River Medway.

Beloved friends please contact the Finance Department (email finance@bahai.org.uk, Tel: 01732 373 760) if you would like more information about this project or if you would like to have a presentation made on this or the funds in general at your local community, or if you like to arrange a visit to Bridge House.

Children's Bahá'í Education Service

Dear Friends,

The Children's Bahá'í Education Service would like to inform the friends that as a result

The Children's Baha'i Education Service would like to inform the Members that as a result of changes in personal circumstances and membership, it has new officers as follows:

Dr. Clare Whitehead – Chair: Email: Clare@TheVenns.fsnet.co.uk

Mrs. Homa Saadat – Secretary: Email: homa@saadat.co.uk

Mrs. Karen O'Donoghue-Yazdi – Treasurer: Karen.odonoghue@yazdis.force9.co.uk

Mrs. Mitali Peckham: Email: mitali@mpeckham.freemove.co.uk

Mrs. Shiva Shirinzadeh-Finch: Email: sfcharm.finest@virgin.net

The CBES is currently in the process of allocating specific responsibilities to each of its 5 members in relation to the Five Year Plan – please watch this space for further information.

