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National Spiritual Assembly

National Spiritual Assembly Annual Report for 2002–2003

8th June, 2003

DEARLY LOVED FRIENDS,

The National Spiritual Assembly's Annual Report for 2002-2003 can now be viewed on the National Assembly's official website at www.bahai.org.uk (The report can be found in the Administrative Information and Guidance section using the usual username and password – those friends who do not know these details should request them from the National Office and are reminded that this information is not be shared with other friends).

As previously announced, electronic and hard copy versions of the Annual Report are also available. To obtain an electronic version please send an email to resources@bahai.org.uk. To obtain a hard copy version please contact the National Office. The National Assembly has decided to waive the cost of providing this service and will refund those friends who have already sent in a £5 cheque in this regard.

Finally, the National Spiritual Assembly is making available, as a separate item, its review of the second year of the Five Year Plan. This eleven page document, which forms part of the full Annual Report, can be obtained electronically from: resources@bahai.org.uk and in hard copy form by contacting the National Office.

Memorial service for David Hofman

June 9, 2003

DEARLY LOVED FRIENDS,

The National Spiritual Assembly is pleased to inform you that the national memorial service for David Hofman will take place on Saturday September 20, 2003 at the Assembly Hall, Baden-Powell House, 65-67 Queen's Gate, London SW7 5JS (nearest underground stations: Gloucester Road and South Kensington). The meeting will begin promptly at 4pm.

The Universal House of Justice has also advised that memorial gatherings in Mr Hofman's honour be arranged throughout the Bahá'í community and the National Assembly expects that local communities will organise such meetings in due course.

Message to National Convention from the Universal House of Justice

26th May, 2003

THE ENCOURAGING message from those gathered at your recent National Convention brought much joy. We were delighted to learn that the participants reflected on the key elements which, operating within the framework of clusters, will guarantee a systematic

pattern of growth. Without doubt, the friends will intensify their endeavours to multiply the three core activities of the Five Year Plan and increase the tempo in the teaching field. Be assured of our supplications at the Sacred Threshold that the consecrated and courageous efforts of the dear friends in the United Kingdom may be divinely reinforced and abundantly rewarded.

Office of Public Information

AS A NEW RESOURCE for the Friends pursuing the core activities of the Five-Year Plan we are offering simple template leaflets for inviting people to devotional meetings (leaflet DM-1) and to study circles (leaflet SC-1). Each is an A4 trifold flyer in Microsoft Publisher 98 format, ready to be edited on your own PC, and have local information inserted.

The final form of a leaflet and the use to which it is to be put are for local consultation – please treat the templates as a resource to be adapted as you see fit. If you make significant changes and like the result please share a copy with us (hard copy and file).

To obtain the file electronically please email opi@bahai.org.uk and ask for leaflet DM-1 and/or SC-1. You will need Microsoft Publisher to open and edit the files. However if you do not have this on your PC or just want a hard copy to see what they look like and perhaps draw on them please contact OPI at 27 Rutland Gate and they will be posted to you. We hope these resources are of use to you.

Appointment of new Auxiliary Board member

July 30, 2003

DEARLY LOVED FRIENDS,

The Continental Board of Counsellors in Europe has informed the National Spiritual Assembly of the appointment of Mr Barry Thorne as the new Auxiliary Board member for propagation in the United Kingdom replacing Dr Shirin Fozdar-Foroudi, who was recently appointed to membership of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe. Mr Thorne's appointment takes place with immediate effect and continues until the end of the current term of service of the Auxiliary Boards on November 26, 2006. Mr Thorne's contact details can be found below.

As Mr Thorne takes up his newly assigned responsibilities the National Spiritual Assembly is sure that the friends will join with it in prayer, beseeching Bahá'u'lláh to assist the Auxiliary Board members in the discharge of their sacred duties.

Mr Thorne can be contacted at barry@bpthorne.fsnet.co.uk

The Bahá'í Education of Children



18th June, 2003

DEARLY LOVED FRIENDS

The National Spiritual Assembly is pleased to share with you the following letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Argentina on the subject of the Bahá'í education of children.

The National Assembly is confident that the friends will find study of this important letter of immense assistance and value as they deepen their understanding of what is called for in this Plan in relation to the development of this vital core activity.

With loving Bahá'í greetings, *National Spiritual Assembly*

25th September, 2001

The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Argentina

DEAR BAHÁ'Í FRIENDS,

The Universal House of Justice received your email message dated 30 July 2001 seeking clarification regarding children's classes which include non-Bahá'í children. It is possible, of course, to create a programme for children which is inspired by the Bahá'í teachings and conveys such topics as moral education, comparative religion, peace, concern for the environment, service to humanity, or world citizenship. Such programmes might also convey practical subjects such as literacy, academic tutoring, or vocational training.

In its message dated 9 January 2001, however, the House of Justice refers specifically to Bahá'í children's classes as also being open to non-Bahá'í children. In the case of these classes, which are intended to address the complete spiritual education of Bahá'ís, it would not be possible to eliminate Bahá'í religious teachings, and topics such as Bahá'í history, Bahá'í laws, and the Covenant would be an integral part of these classes.

While Bahá'í religious teachings are part of the programme of child education in Bahá'í classes, the design of the programme, particularly the sequencing of content, may make it more attractive to non-Bahá'ís. For example, in the approach taken to child education in Ruhi Book Three, the emphasis is placed initially on character development, and only later are specific aspects related to the life of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb introduced. So too can we see the same principle at work in the main sequence of books in which many non-Bahá'í youth have participated. Book One addresses such broad topics as prayer and life and death (from a Bahá'í perspective, of course). It is in Book Four that history is presented in detail. Thus a non-Bahá'í can feel welcome to participate and is not overwhelmed by new, purely religious teachings. Then, if attracted by the principles and general spiritual teachings, the non-Bahá'ís would not hesitate to engage in the full programme; alternatively, they are free to withdraw or not participate in some segments.

Of course, Bahá'ís would always be clear about the nature of the curriculum when describing it to their friends and acquaintances. In some areas, many of the non-Bahá'í parents may be happy to have their children participate in a full programme of Bahá'í child education; in others, however, a national community may find it advantageous to complement its Bahá'í children's classes with a Bahá'í-inspired programme for children because it results in attracting larger numbers.

Clearly, one set of instructions about how to structure a programme, or an integrated combination of programmes, would not meet the needs of all communities. Your National Institute and/or Child Education Committee will need to consult on the specific conditions and interests in the general population and the Bahá'í community, select the most promising alternative, and then modify and improve the approach over time based on your practical experience.

With loving Bahá'í greetings, *Department of the Secretariat*