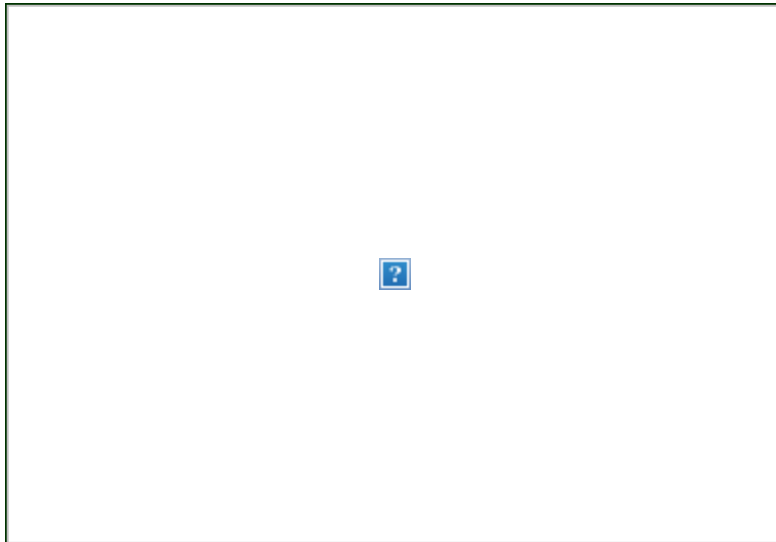


Jubilee Celebration in Cameroon

Jan Mughrabi and her family were pioneers to Cameroon from 1964 to 1969, and were invited to attend the Jubilee Celebration in August 2003.



A group of guests participating at the Golden Jubilee Conference, Yaounde, Cameroon. Mr and Mrs Nakhjavani with Dr Mehdi Samandari, with Mr George Olinga standing immediately behind (centre) and Mr and Mrs Lincoln (right) are seen in the front row.

DURING THE weekend of August 22-24, 2003, over 600 Bahá'ís and their friends gathered at the impressive Palais de Congress in Yaounde, the capital of Cameroon. Many of the participants were Bahá'ís who had played a role in the development of the Faith in Cameroon from the first year of the Guardian's Ten Year Crusade in 1953. A number of Bahá'í-friends and some former pioneers travelled from beyond the shores of Africa, – from Europe, North America, even from

Australia – to enjoy the celebrations.

Among the special guests of honour were Mr and Mrs Ali and Violette Nakhjavani, and Mr and Mrs Albert and Joany Lincoln, from the Bahá'í World Centre, all of whom addressed sessions of the Conference. Mr and Mrs Lincoln and their children were themselves pioneers to Cameroon during the 1980s; Mrs Lincoln represented the International Teaching Centre at these Jubilee Celebrations.

In 1953 it was Mr and Mrs Nakhjavani who drove by car with two youthful African pioneers from Uganda to open new countries to the Faith during that first year of the Ten Year Crusade. The first was Max Kinyerezi who was delivered to what was then French Equatorial Africa, and then Enoch Olinga to the British Cameroons. During the Conference, Mrs Violette Nakhjavani recounted the details of that intrepid, very difficult, – and at times truly life threatening, – journey overland across the vast continent. Both of these Ugandan pioneers became Knights of Bahá'u'lláh. Several devoted Cameroonians also arose to become more Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, pioneering to other countries in West Africa. Their descendants were some of those present at the Conference.

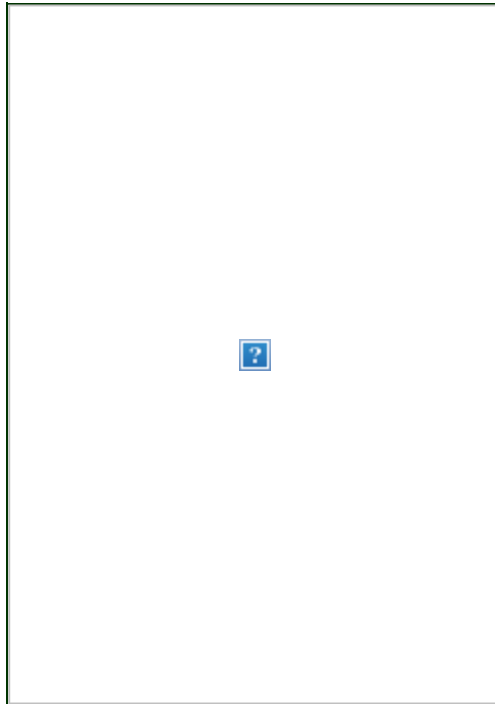
Among the special guests of honour was Mr George Olinga, son of Mr Enoch Olinga who was later appointed a Hand of the Cause of God. Mr George Olinga shared precious memories of his father, and about his own life while still a young boy in Victoria, (now Limbe) West Cameroon. Yet another special guest was Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Italian Somaliland, Dr Mihdi Samandari, who is still pioneering and has been serving the Cause of God in Cameroon since 1969. Sadly his dear wife and British pioneer, Mrs Ursula Samandari passed on to the Abhá Kingdom earlier this year

During the Jubilee celebrations the many Bahá'ís participating from all around Cameroon and neighbouring countries joyfully represented their communities with Bahá'í songs and dances between the main sessions of the programme. Throughout the celebration a most wonderful spirit of love and fellowship prevailed as old friends were reunited and historic experiences of the past fifty years were recalled.

The United Kingdom has had close links with Cameroon since those early days, and a message of warm greetings and congratulations from the National Spiritual Assembly was read to the assembled participants.

Since the establishment of the first National Spiritual Assembly of Cameroon in 1967, several Bahá'ís from the United Kingdom have served there as pioneers. Among the earliest was Mrs Mehrangiz Munsiff, yet another Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for French Cameroons, who pioneered to Douala in 1954. An exhibition of photographs arranged in the foyer of the Palais de Congress recorded some of the efforts, devoted service and sacrifice of many early believers.

A new project recently given to Cameroon has been to move the seat of the National Spiritual Assembly from Limbe, in the west, to the central capital, Yaounde, together with the responsibility to acquire a new National Hazratu'l-Quds which the Bahá'í community of the United Kingdom has been asked to share. It was my own special bounty, joy and privilege to be among those



Jan Mughrabi (from the UK) with Bahá'í friends, Mary Tanyi (left) and her friend Vivienne (right).

able to attend this Jubilee Celebration.

Jan Mughrabi

