



*Hand of the Cause of God
Dorothy Baker*

Dorothy Baker

When Dorothy Beecher was 13 years old, her grandmother took her to New York to see the Master 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Dorothy was terrified. Normally a happy child, she was also psychic; events of extreme emotion caused her to tremble. Her parents were not Bahá'ís, and young Dorothy knew little of her grandmother's faith, yet she sensed that something of a tremendous nature was about to occur. As she and her grandmother entered the room, 'Abdu'l-Bahá greeted Mother Beecher but made no overture to Dorothy other than to motion for her to sit on a footstool at His feet, facing the audience. As 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke Dorothy turned slightly on her stool, peering at Him from the corners of her eyes. The longer He spoke, the more she turned until, toward the end of the talk, she was gazing at Him in adoration. There was, however, no verbal communication between them.

Several days later Dorothy told her grandmother, "I want to write to 'Abdu'l-Bahá." "Well, I think you should," Mother Beecher replied. Shortly afterward a note arrived. In tiny handwriting it said, *"Oh, dearest child. I will pray that your great desire may be fulfilled and that you serve this Cause."* Mother Beecher became ill a day or two later, but received word that 'Abdu'l-Bahá wished to see her. Hurrying from her sick-bed, she asked, "What have I done?" *"I called you,"* the Master said, *"to tell you that your granddaughter is my own daughter. You must train her for me."*

Mother Beecher's life was dedicated to the Bahá'í Faith and to her granddaughter; she was conscientious in training the girl in the teachings, especially during the summers at Green Acre School in Maine. On or about her 15th birthday, Dorothy declared her acceptance of the Word of Bahá'u'lláh.

Dorothy was educated at the Montclair Normal College in New Jersey and graduated in 1918. She accepted a position in the Newark public school system. In September 1920, she met Frank Baker, a very nice middle-aged man, Dorothy thought, with two children. On June 21, 1921, they were married at Budd Lake, New Jersey. Dorothy not only had a husband, she was now the mother of two young children, Conrad and Sally. Discipline was difficult: "You're not our mother," they would complain. Before long it would be, "Oh, mother, I love you so." Their own daughter, Winifred Louise, was born on May 24, 1922 and the family settled in Buffalo, New York, where William King Baker was born on November 26, 1923. In 1926 Dorothy was elected to serve on the Spiritual Assembly of Buffalo. The family moved to Lima, Ohio in 1927. The next year, Dorothy went to the Convention in Wilmette. She sat in the front row of Foundation Hall listening to the reports of the past year's Bahá'í activities. She felt ill and more than a little upset. Leaving the hall, she walked out to the cornerstone, the limestone rock that 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself had placed in the ground some 17 years before. Dorothy never forgot those moments at the cornerstone. It was then that she laid her heart at the feet of her Beloved.

Back in Lima, Dorothy immersed herself in learning more about the teachings, studying the words of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá with Mother Beecher for an hour or more each day. In 1932, Mother Beecher passed away. The Bakers began holding informal meetings in their home about a month after Mother Beecher's passing in August 1932, meetings at which Dorothy gave one-hour talks that were followed by question-and answer sessions with as many as 40 people seeking to learn more about this Faith. Her life was now dedicated to teaching, including three years of summer schools at Louhelen, and trips to Columbia and Venezuela, and Europe.

On December 24, 1951, a cablegram came from Shoghi Effendi naming Dorothy Baker a Hand of the Cause of God. Dorothy lost her voice. For three days she had laryngitis. Her duties as a Hand took her all over the world, Africa and India.

On January 10, 1954, Dorothy was en route home from India. Over the Mediterranean island of Elba the plane exploded. There were no survivors; only a Bahá'í pamphlet floated on the water. A friend reported that Dorothy had appeared to him in a dream, saying, "It's all right. I'm with my Lord. Don't worry. I wasn't on that plane at all. I was with Bahá'u'lláh the whole time." Dorothy Beecher Baker's worldly mission had ended at age 55.



*Hand of the Cause of God
Horace Holley*

Horace Hotchkiss Holley

When Horace Holley left Williams College in 1909 he went to Europe where he traveled, studied and worked until war broke out in 1914. On that voyage...he met a young artist, Bertha Herbert, who lent him a book to read...*Abbas Effendi, His Life and Teachings* by Myron H. Phelps. Compared with the literature now available in English it was inaccurate and inadequate, but it opened a new world to the mind of the twenty-two-year-old man who read it...

From that day he never turned back. His seeking mind and strong spirit had not only found personal answers to the problems of life but also the arena in which he was to express himself, to labour, to be tested, to suffer and win his victories for over half-a-century. His own attitude to the metamorphosis which took place in him over the years, he expressed in 1956: "At first it seemed possible to encompass the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh by reducing it to a formula or confining it within a well-turned phrase. Gradually my ventures proved to me that I myself was to be encompassed, re-oriented, re-moulded in all the realms of my being. For religion in its purity reveals God, and only God can reveal man to himself"...

During the years in Paris...it is clear that in spite of a mind preoccupied with the social and economic problems of the world, the arts were the predominating influence during these early years...Horace enjoyed the entrée to many interesting circles of artists and intellectuals...

Returning to the United States in 1914, Horace moved in New York in very much the same circles as he had in Europe...These were the years when Horace changed. It is hard to define in words. A race horse has to give up racing and learn to pull a load; an artist, full of creative impulses, inherits a farm, needs a means of support, goes and farms and in the endless round of pressing chores all his practical, inherited farmer-ancestry comes out in him. Every now and then the dreamer inside turns over restlessly in his sleep. Such is what happened to Horace. But at the end of his life the dreaming Horace awoke again and the two men became one, a much greater person than either could have been alone...

His preoccupation with serving the Bahá'í Cause was steadily growing. In 1922 the first American National Spiritual Assembly was elected. In 1923 Horace became a member of that body, on which he remained until 1959, serving as its secretary for thirty-four of those thirty-six history-making years...In 1925 Horace gave up earning his living in various companies to devote his entire life to Bahá'í activity. It must never be thought that this was an easy step for a man of his character to take...It was only Horace's passionate conviction of the rightness of Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings that persuaded him to give up all thought of a personal, independent career and become the full-time servant of an administration in which all too often his fellow believers criticized him for doing so...

[With] a man of Horace's caliber devoting his entire time and energy to its work, Shoghi Effendi found that he could set the forces of Bahá'í Administration in motion. Halfway across the world there was a collaborator who grasped the import of his instructions and interpretations of the Teachings and who, as the "indefatigable and distinguished" secretary of that Assembly [America]...not only saw they were implemented, but expounded and classified them. This partnership was of an importance impossible to overestimate. That it worked so well, bore such fruit and survived the acid test of time, is a great compliment to the two people involved...The evolution of the Administrative Order and the part Horace played in its enfoldment is a vast subject, but the messages sent to him by Shoghi Effendi testify how great a role he played...

"Assure you my ever deepening admiration your unrivaled services love abiding gratitude..." "Be assured and persevere in your historic services..." "Moved convey glad tidings your election rank Hand Cause...May sacred function enable you enrich record services already rendered for Bahá'u'lláh."



Hand of the Cause of God
Martha Root

Martha Root

To Martha Root, that archetype of Bahá'í itinerant teachers and the foremost Hand raised by Bahá'u'lláh since 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, must be awarded, if her manifold services and the supreme act of her life are to be correctly appraised, the title of leading ambassadress of the Faith and Pride of Bahá'í teachers, whether men or women, in both the East and the West.

The first to arise, in the very year the *Tablets of the Divine Plan* were unveiled in the United States of America, in response to the epoch-making summons voiced in them by 'Abdu'l-Bahá; embarking, with unswerving resolve and a spirit of sublime detachment, on her world journeys, covering an almost uninterrupted period of 20 years and carrying her four times round the globe, in the course of which she traveled four times to China and Japan and three times to India, visited every important city in South America, transmitted the message of the new Day to kings, queens, princes and princesses, presidents of republics, ministers and statesmen, publicists, professors, clergy men and poets, as well as a vast number of people in various walks of life, and contacted, both officially and informally, religious congresses, peace societies, Esperanto associations, socialist congresses, Theosophical societies, women's clubs and other kindred organizations, this indomitable soul has by virtue of the character of her exertions and the quality of the victories she has won, established a record that constitutes the nearest approach to the example set by 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself to His disciples in the course of His journeys throughout the West.

Her eight successive audiences with Queen Marie of Rumania stand out, by reason of the profound influence exerted by the visitor on her royal hostess, as witnessed by the successive encomiums from the Queen's own pen, as the most outstanding feature of those memorable journeys.

The three invitations which that indefatigable champion of the Faith received to call on Prince Paul and Princess Olga of Yugoslavia at the Royal Palace in Belgrade; the lectures which she delivered in over 400 universities and colleges in both the East and the West; her twice repeated visits to all German universities with the exception of two, as well as to nearly a hundred universities, colleges and schools in China; the innumerable articles which she published in newspapers and magazines in practically every country she visited; the numerous broadcasts which she delivered and the unnumbered books she placed in private and state libraries; her personal meetings with the statesmen of more than 50 countries, during her three-months stay in Geneva, in 1932, at the time of the Disarmament conference; the painstaking efforts she exerted, while on her arduous journeys, in supervising the translation and production of a large number of versions of Dr. Esslemont's *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*; the correspondence exchanged with, and the presentation of Bahá'í books to, men of eminence and learning... a service which, in many of its aspects, is without parallel in the entire history of the first Bahá'í century.

No less impressive is the list of the names of those whom she interviewed in the course of the execution of her mission, including, in addition to those already mentioned, such royal personages and distinguished figures as King Haakon of Norway; King Feisal of Iraq; King Zog of Albania and members of his family; Princess Marina of Greece (now the Duchess of Kent); Princess Elizabeth of Greece.... Neither age nor ill-health, neither the paucity of literature which hampered her early efforts, nor the meagre resources which imposed an added burden on her labours, neither the extremities of the climates to which she was exposed, nor the political disturbances which she encountered in the course of her journeys, could damp the zeal or deflect the purpose of this spiritually dynamic and saintly woman. Single-handed and, on more than one occasion, in extremely perilous circumstances, she continued to call, in clarion tones, men of diverse creeds, colours and classes to the Message of Bahá'u'lláh until, while in spite of a deadly and painful disease, the onslaught of which she endured with heroic fortitude, she hastened homeward to help in the recently launched Seven Year Plan.

She was stricken down on the way, in far off Honolulu and died, on September 28, 1939.



Hand of the Cause of God
Louis Gregory

Louis G. Gregory

Louis G. Gregory was born in Charleston, South Carolina, June 6, 1874. He attended Fisk University with some financial help from his stepfather during his freshman year. After that, he worked to complete his undergraduate work at Fisk. He then taught at Avery University while working on his law degree at Howard University. He received his L.L.B. degree March 26, 1902. After his death on July 30, 1951, James A. Cobb, an attorney, previous law partner, and Judge of the District Court, wrote of Gregory:

“It was my privilege to have known Mr. Gregory intimately from 1895 until a short time before his passing. I knew him as a student, teacher, practicing lawyer, lecturer and friend, and in each capacity he was strong and outstanding. In other words he was a fine student, a lovely character and a person with a great mind which he devoted to the betterment of mankind. Those of us who knew him well cannot but mourn his loss, but there should be some comfort in the fact that he lived long and well, and those with whom he came in contact were and are better for their association with him. In fact, he was one of those who enriched the life of America.”

Louis first heard about the Bahá'í Faith in 1908. He always spoke with great love and appreciation of the cultivated, southern white gentleman, a co-worker in the same department, who first brought it to his attention, saying: "I think that this is something that will interest you. I am too old to investigate it. You are young and I would like you to do so." Although this gentleman did not accept the Faith, he was the means of putting Louis in contact with Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hannen, Bahá'ís of Washington, D.C., who taught him and exemplified in their lives the beauty of the Teachings, thereby attracting his heart.

After Louis wrote to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, telling Him of his acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith, he received the following Tablet in response:

"O Thou Wooer of Truth! ...I hope that thou mayest become the means whereby the white and colored peoples shall close their eyes to racial differences and behold the reality of humanity, and that is the universal unity which is the oneness of the kingdom of the human race, the basic harmony of the world and the appearance of the Bounty of the Almighty..."

For more than thirty-five years Louis Gregory was the mainspring behind the work for Race Amity and a tireless promoter of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. Whether as chairman of the Bahá'í National Committee for Race Unity or as a member, and as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, he was tireless in his activities in promoting unity.

Notice of Gregory's talents was not limited to Bahá'í circles. Twice, at the invitation of the great Negro educator, Booker T. Washington, Louis Gregory visited Tuskegee Institute and was called upon to address the students on the Bahá'í Faith. Their response to the Bahá'í ideals and principles was most enthusiastic. Here he made the acquaintance of that outstanding Negro genius and man of God, Dr. George Washington Carver, who showed the utmost appreciation of the Faith. This was the beginning of an increasingly rich friendship. Whenever Mr. Gregory went to Tuskegee, and he visited there many times, he had understanding and sympathetic talks with Dr. Carver in his famous laboratory or in his room.

After he passed away, Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, sent the following cablegram: "Profoundly deplore grievous loss dearly beloved, noble-minded, golden-hearted Louis Gregory, pride example Negro adherents Faith, keenly feel loss one so loved, admired trusted 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Deserves rank first Hand Cause his race..."



*Hand of the Cause of God
Enoch Olinga*

Enoch Olinga

“...the important thing is to strive to teach and confirm a few native people, who will not only themselves become quickened with its spirit, but who will in turn, like Enoch Olinga from Uganda, quickly ignite the flame of the Faith in the hearts of others of their countrymen.” – From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, August 2, 1955; *Lights of Guidance*, 578

Eseza Iyamitai gave birth on 24 June 1926, in the village of Abaango, to her second son, Enoch. The current of his destiny carried him towards a fixed point: for ten years he received schooling locally in a small town not far from his home; later he went to high school in Mbale; during World War II, in 1941, he joined the British Army Education Corps and went to Kenya, later serving in the East African King's Rifles Corps in South East Asia...By 1946 he had returned to Uganda, a young man of twenty, and joined the Government Department of Public Relations and Welfare...

By the time Enoch came in contact with the Faith in 1951 his personal life had assumed an entirely new aspect; he was now married and had his first children; he was a gifted translator working for the government, but also a somewhat disillusioned man who had become a very heavy drinker, a fact of which the government service that employed him had become aware and which led to his dismissal...Unfortunately the reports on this serious impairment to the discharge of his duties had already gone through when Enoch accepted the Faith and upon his enrollment gave up all alcohol immediately...From the very beginning Enoch avidly read every Bahá'í book he could get, and this laid the foundation for his deep knowledge of the Teachings. Mrs. Olinga, making no secret of the fact that it was the remarkable transformation in her husband's conduct since he became a Bahá'í that influenced her decision, also embraced the Faith...

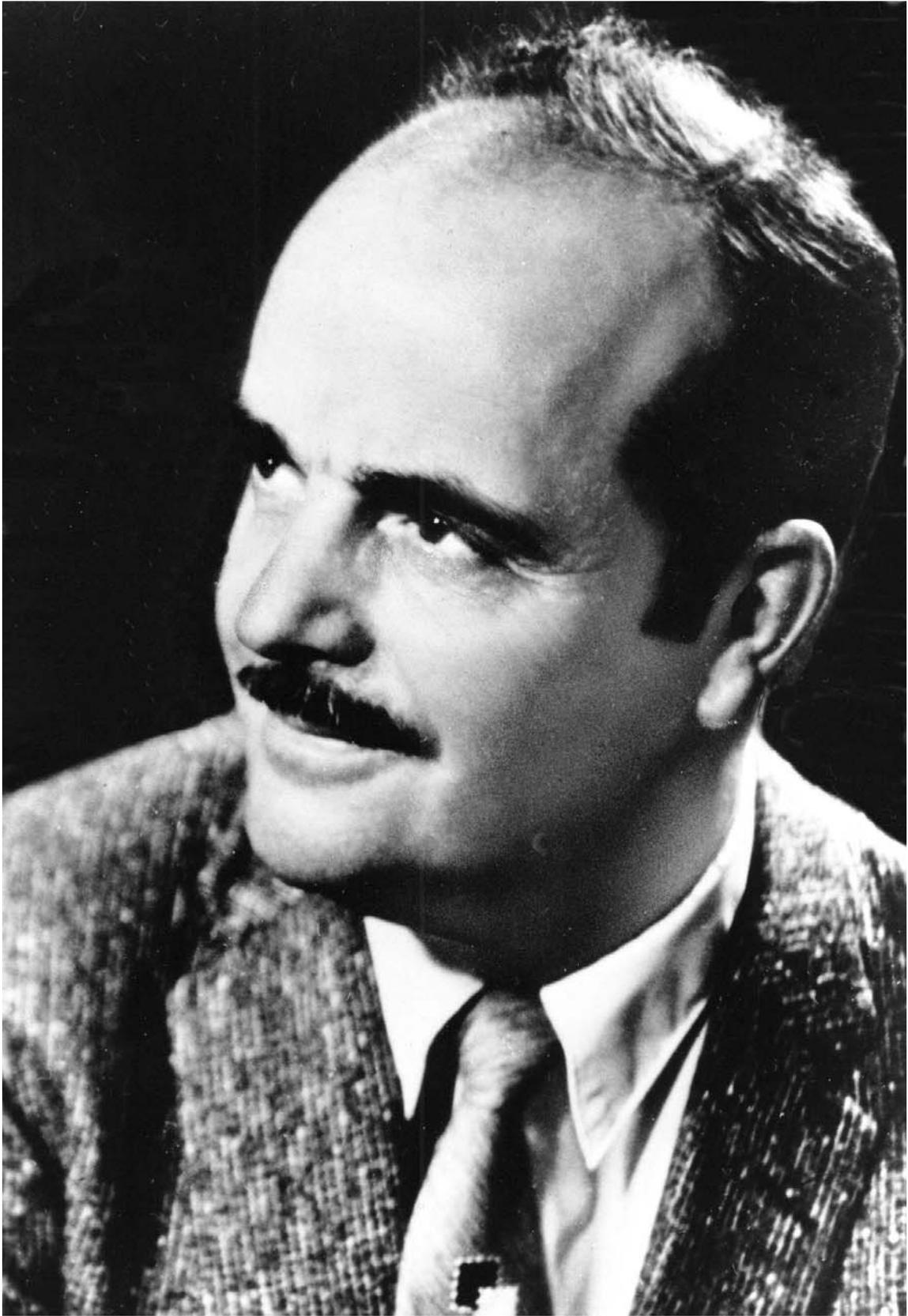
Enoch responded to the Guardian's appeal for pioneers and himself became a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh; he was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of North-West Africa; he was appointed a Hand of the Cause in the last contingent of eight elevated to that rank by Shoghi Effendi just before he passed away...

Enoch, often accompanied by his wife Elizabeth—herself a devoted and active believer—travelled widely, visiting and stimulating the Bahá'ís, meeting high officials, bringing the Faith before the public and the media. To enumerate in detail his service and travels from 1958 until his death in 1979 is impossible...In 1977 he returned to Uganda to spend the remaining two years of his life protecting, comforting, stimulating, and preserving the endangered Bahá'í community of his native land, now in the bitter throes of a terrible civil war.

News of the banning of the Faith [in Uganda] in September 1977—the official dissolution of all its administrative bodies and activities—reached Enoch in Kampala; he is reported to have said; ‘No! No one can ban the Faith of God...’ For the Bahá'ís it was a shocking and heartbreaking experience, the more so because the first Temple of Africa stood on the outskirts of Kampala, and the Ugandan believers had always been a distinguished and thriving community...

Enoch's deep study of the Teachings and wide experience made him an ideal shield for the Cause of God during that crucial period; realizing the hopelessness of protest and petition, he set himself to do three things: to ensure that the believers obeyed the government implicitly; to encourage them and keep alive their faith; to protect the Bahá'í properties and remove to a safe place its sacred and irreplaceable archive materials...'

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FAITH AFRICAN CONTINENT.



Hand of the Cause of God
William Sears

William Sears

William Bernard Patrick Michael Terrance Sears was born 28 March 1911 in Duluth, Minnesota, USA. He had an eventful childhood, full of fun, as his personality combined a creative imagination and a penchant for action. He was extremely talented, had a wonderful sense of humor, and a warm, generous and loving nature. He also believed that whatever you did, you should try to do it better than it had ever been done before, and with more originality.

He attended the University of Wisconsin in Madison during the Great Depression. However, finances became a serious problem so he left school and went to try his talents in the new medium of radio. He began at a small station in Wisconsin called WOMT. It was at this point in his life that he met Marguerite Reimer, a second generation Bahá'í. Despite some obvious obstacles, including his Irish Catholic upbringing, and his being a widower with two small sons, they were married in 1940. Not long after the marriage he became a Bahá'í, and for the next fifty years Bill and Marguerite served the Faith together with total dedication. For example, he used his experience in radio broadcasting to help write and produce the Bahá'í radio series "Meet Mr. Justice," which prompted *Variety* magazine to comment that "here at last is a Religion with a sense of humor." This series was later translated in Spanish and used in Latin America.

During the 1940s and 1950s, he became a well-known public personality while working for WPEN and the CBS affiliate WCAU in Philadelphia, first in radio and then in television. His sports program, "The Bill Sears Show," won an Emmy Award as the best sports series in 1951. He was also the announcer for the University of Pennsylvania, Villanova, and Philadelphia Eagles football games.

In addition to his success in sports broadcasting, he made two appearances on the "Ed Sullivan Show" with episodes of the very successful "In the Park," a television series in which he acted, and which he helped write and produce in Philadelphia for the fledgling Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS).

William Sears had reached a point in his professional life at which he had achieved everything that most men desire: financial success, awards, fame, both locally and nationally, and new contract offers and opportunities which, combined with the state of the television industry at that time, would have assured him of becoming one of its superstars. It was then that he made the decision to set this aside in order to serve the Faith in Africa.

In 1953, William and Marguerite Sears and their son Michael left the United States to live in South Africa. Mr. Sears suffered a heart attack soon after their arrival, but recovered. To support his family he returned to the radio business. His program, "That Man Sears," was very successful...His "Tot siens, goodnight, it's been a pleasure" was familiar to thousands all over the southern part of the continent...

The Bahá'í work in South Africa was unique and difficult, but supremely rewarding...The teaching success was due largely to the direct efforts of the newly enrolled and inspired native African believers, but the source of much of their inspiration was the love showered upon them by the pioneers, and in particular by William Sears. They could feel the warmth of his love, and the appreciation he felt for their services to the Faith.

[In] October 1957, in a message to the Bahá'í world, Shoghi Effendi announced the designation of another contingent of the Hands of the Cause of God. Among the eight whose elevation to this exalted rank was announced in that message was William Sears.



Hand of the Cause of God
Agnes Alexander

Agnes Alexander

Early in the nineteenth century Christian missionaries sailed from America to take Christianity to the Polynesians of the Pacific. Rev. William Patterson Alexander and his wife Mary Ann and the Rev. Dr. Dwight Baldwin and his wife Abigail Charlotte were among the very earliest missionaries who set sail from New Bedford, Massachusetts around South America to reach the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). Among the grandchildren of the Alexanders and the Baldwins appeared Agnes Baldwin Alexander, who, in 1900 became the first Baha'i of Hawaii and (perhaps) its first Esperantist. Agnes Baldwin Alexander was born at home in Honolulu, Hawaii on July 21st, 1875. She enjoyed a high social rank because she was a descendent of two of the earliest and most distinguished Christian missionary families. Her father William DeWitt Alexander was one of Hawaii's most famous men.

Ms. Alexander suffered from poor health in her youth. At age 20 she graduated from Oahu College in a class of seven students. She delivered her graduation essay on "Our Poor Relations," which urged everyone to show kindness to animals.

In 1900 Ms. Alexander joined a group of Island peers who were going on a trip to American and Europe. While she was in Rome visiting an aunt who had married an Italian gentleman she met Mrs. Charlotte Dixon, an American Bahá'í who was just returning from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, which is also the world headquarters of the Bahá'í Faith. Although Mrs. Dixon made no mention of the Bahá'í Faith by name she gave Agnes a prayer copied out in longhand. Agnes later wrote:

"The prayer seemed to answer all the longings of my heart. After that we met for three successive evenings. ... The third evening after meeting with Mrs. Dixon, when I retired to my room, sleep did not come. That night (Nov. 26, 1900) an overwhelming realization came to me, which was neither a dream nor vision, that Christ had come on the earth."

During the winter of 1913-1914 Agnes lived in Brooklyn, New York. It was there she received a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá directing her to take the Baha'i teachings to Japan. He said, *"if thou travelest toward Japan unquestionably Divine confirmations shall descend upon thee. . ."* During that same winter in Brooklyn she received her first instruction in Esperanto... When Agnes reached Tokyo she found the twenty-four year old Mr. Eroshenko. "He is the first fruits of my joining the Universal Esperanto Association." Eroshenko became the means by which Ms. Alexander was able to teach the Bahá'í Faith to both the blind and female Japanese. "It was he who helped me to learn English and Esperanto Braille, bringing me in close touch with the blind of Japan. It was through his effort that I had the joy of sharing the Baha'i Message with Tokujiro Torii and through him with the blind of Japan. It was he who introduced me to the writer, U. [Jaku] Akita, who was sympathetic to the Cause, and wrote magazine articles through which the first Japanese young woman accepted the Bahá'í Message."

God used this language, which came into the world through the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, to spread His Message in Japan. In the summer of 1918 Ms. Alexander was the invited guest of the Esperanto Association of North America which met at Green Acre in Maine. She spoke on the Esperantists of Japan. "This gave me a wonderful opportunity, not only in making a better understanding between the Esperantists of the two countries, but in bringing to their attention the Baha'i teachings and words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá concerning a universal language. When I quoted the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, they were received with great applause." Ms. Alexander was ever thankful to Esperanto as it was her connection to the Japanese people and the precious means for disseminating the Baha'i teachings.

On the first day of January, 1971 her spirit winged its flight to the world of never-fading splendour. She was 95. She was buried behind Hawaii's historic Kawaiahaeo Church with her missionary forebears with whom she was united by service both in life and in death.



Hand of the Cause of God
Leroy C. Ioas

Leroy C. Ioas

Leroy was the brightest luminary of a large and united family whose services to Bahá'u'lláh began shortly after the inception of His Faith in North America. Leroy was born in Wilmington, Illinois, in 1893. His father, Charles Ioas, accepted the Faith in 1898 and served it faithfully until his death in 1917. Leroy's mother, Maria, accepted Bahá'u'lláh with her husband. For her son, she was "one of the angels of the American Bahá'í Community"...

From boyhood Leroy was sensitive to the light of the Spirit. When, in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá came to Chicago, Leroy led his parents to Him in a crowded hotel lobby by the radiance which enveloped Him. Although only sixteen, he took the Master for his guide, and was aware of His guidance at several critical periods in his life. He was present when 'Abdu'l-Bahá laid the cornerstone of the Temple in Wilmette, and as a young man he taught classes on its grounds. Also at sixteen, after high school and some commercial training, he began work in the railway industry which he continued for forty years, rising from an insignificant post to become Passenger Traffic Manager in the Eastern United States. In 1919 he was married to Sylvia Kuhlman, and together they set out for San Francisco.

Almost his first act on reaching San Francisco was to address a letter to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, begging confirmation for all his family and his children unborn, and for his own severance, knowledge, and steadfastness "that this faltering one may be quickened through that Divine Power, and thereby render some service which may be conducive to the happiness of the heart of 'Abdu'l-Bahá."

In 1932, with his election to the National Spiritual Assembly—its youngest member—his activities became national and his labors truly herculean...In September 1935 he placed before Shoghi Effendi the National Teaching Committee's plan to introduce the Faith into the twelve states of the United States where there were as yet no Bahá'ís; the Guardian "fully and gladly" endorsed it, and galvanized the American Community in by heralding a "new hour" in the Faith...The following Convention received this astounding call: "...Would to God every State in American Republic and every Republic in American continent might ere termination of this glorious century embrace the light of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh and establish structural basis of His World Order." The First Seven Year Plan came to birth to fulfill this tremendous challenge.

And it did fulfill it, for it established Local Spiritual Assemblies in thirty-four states and provinces of the United States and Canada where none had existed in 1937, trebled the number of localities in North America where Bahá'ís lived, and achieved its Latin American goals. It was "the greatest collective undertaking in the annals of the first Bahá'í century..." No words could describe the debt which the American Community owes to Leroy as chairman and Charlotte Linfoot as secretary of the National Teaching Committee, in those years of incredible work, anxiety and strain, which were so joyously crowned with heart-thrilling victory...

Leroy's reputation outside Bahá'í circles was also steadily increasing. He was always a companionable man, with a ready sense of humor, and was warmly admired by people from all walks of life. "We believe in severance but *not separation* from the world!" he wrote in 1933, and proved it by the scope of his social and humanitarian activities...Thus, his sudden resignation from his high business connections, to assist the Faith at its World Center in Haifa, astonished colleagues throughout the United States, who yet respected a decision of such courage and principle...

Leroy found himself in the midst of enormous responsibilities, delegated by the Guardian, which he shared in lesser or greater degree with his fellow members of the International Bahá'í Council...he sought to consolidate the Council's relationship with the civil authorities of Israel; negotiated for the purchase of a number of properties on Mount Carmel and near the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh; established [means] to take title to these properties; and defended the Faith against virulent enemies...We are assured by the Universal House of Justice that the name of Leroy Ioas is immortal in the annals of the Faith.

SOURCE: *The Bahá'í World*, v. XIV, p. 291



Hand of the Cause of God
Zikrullah Khádem

Zikrullah Khádem

Zikrullah Khadem was born in 1904 Tihrán, Persia, the second of six children to devoted and hardworking parents...

As a child, Zikrullah's home was graced with the presence of two exceptionally courageous and outstanding grandmothers. One of these, whom he called 'Bibí Jan,' repeatedly accompanied another dedicated and fearless lady, Ábjí Susan, as they placed their lives in jeopardy in order to claim the precious bodies of martyrs for befitting burial. Clad in chadors, they would hasten to the site where the bodies had been thrown in disrespect. Crying, "My brother, my brother," they would rescue the remains, wash them with tender love, and bury them with due respect, in accordance with Bahá'í law.

The Khádem home was totally dedicated to the Cause and open to all...Love and hospitality so permeated the atmosphere of the Khádem home that it was well-known among the Bahá'ís and was a haven for traveling teachers. Great Bahá'í scholars passed through and left behind traces of their zeal and devotion...

Bahá'í teachers and pilgrims from the Holy Land also passed through...bringing the latest news of the victories of the Faith, and messages and Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Bahá'ís would excitedly assemble to peruse the divine Tablets by the light of a few candles or sit enthralled as they witnessed the transformation of a seeker upon accepting the proofs of the coming of the Promised One. This devoted group of lovers of Bahá'u'lláh was momentarily oblivious to the fanaticism and turmoil of the world beyond their sanctuary. Soon, however, they had to venture out into the labyrinthine passageways to return to their homes. En route, as they dodged the stones hurled at them, they would be subjected to the verbal hostility of street urchins shouting curses and invectives.

These were the forces which shaped Zikrullah Khádem's character...From his early childhood, Zikrullah Khádem demonstrated great spiritual potential...While still a young boy, Zikrullah was very alert to the needs of the Faith. Thus, when the Central Spiritual Assembly of Persia advised the friends to convey their loyalty to the beloved Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, Shoghi Effendi, he whole-heartedly followed this recommendation. With tears in his eyes he wrote a letter filled with great love and devotion, professing his loyalty...

While in his early 20s...he found work helping the government of 'Iráq to establish its Embassy in Persia. His skill in scholarly Arabic and Persian (from knowing the Writings), diplomatic French (which he studied in school), and English (which he diligently pursued in obedience to the Guardian) quickly distinguished him. It was in this key Embassy post that he was able to perform many historic services for the Faith, such as transmitting to the Holy Land the sword of Mullá Husayn and other historical treasures of the Faith.

While he was employed at the Embassy, Zikrullah Khádem married Jáviddukht Jávid... The marriage took place on 3 October 1933, and produced five children, all devoted servants of the Cause...

Zikrullah [received many] assignments from the beloved Guardian...visiting, on the Guardian's behalf, all of Persia and photographing Bahá'í sites in Persia; an assignment which resulted in his arrest and brief imprisonment in a fanatic locality...arranging for Persian Bahá'ís to obtain overt permission from the government to go on pilgrimage to the Bahá'í Holy Places... receiving mail from Shoghi Effendi for the institutions and individual Bahá'ís in the East ...

On 28 February 1952, he received a cable from the Guardian elevating him to the rank of Hand of the Cause of God. From that date his services extended to the Western world...



*Hand of the Cause of God
Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum
(Mary Maxwell)*

Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum (Mary Maxwell; Rúhiyyih Rabbani)

“During more than three decades Madame Rabbani was received by numerous heads of state, presidents and other world figures. As a world traveller, she was unique for the sheer magnitude as well as the manner of her trips. In 1975 she formed her own expedition to visit the native peoples of South America, travelling by boat up the Amazon River. An ardent ecologist, she was a benefactor of the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). Having given numerous keynote presentations at international conferences, Madame Rabbani devoted her time and energies to promote the cardinal principles of peace, ecumenism, and globalism of the worldwide Bahá'í Faith.” -- *Club of Budapest, an international association of globally influential and active individuals dedicated to the human future*

Madame Rúhíyyih Rabbani, born Mary Sutherland Maxwell, in 1910, was the daughter of a famous Canadian architect and May Ellis Bolles...Mrs. Maxwell, one of the earliest western disciples of the Bahá'í Faith, was the first Bahá'í on the European continent (1899) and later the first Bahá'í in Canada (1902).

It was against this background of art and culture on the one hand and a dynamic, active participation in the affairs of a steadily growing world religion on the other, that Madame Rabbani grew up in Montreal...

In 1937, on her third visit to the World Center of the Bahá'í Faith in Haifa, Mary Maxwell became the wife of its Guardian, Shoghi Effendi...Her husband gave her the Persian name Rúhíyyih, which means ‘spirit-like.’ Later he conferred on her the rank of Hand of the Cause of God. After his death in 1957 she and eight other Hands administered the world-wide affairs of the Faith until its Supreme Body, the Universal House of Justice, was duly elected in 1963. The formation of this institution enabled Madame Rabbani to devote her time to extensive travels...Madame Rabbani visited most of the countries and virtually every corner of the world.

In addition to poems, plays and articles, she was the author of numerous books, which have been published in a number of languages. Madame Rabbani herself spoke four languages: English, French, German, and Persian...In the course of her travels Madame Rabbani was received by many Presidents, Rulers, and Prime Ministers in widely scattered areas, including such renowned figures as Emperor Selassie, and 16 Heads of State in Africa...

Madame Rabbani, on the occasion of her fifth visit to Africa, accompanied only by a woman companion, drove her Land Rover over 36,000 miles through 34 countries. This mammoth journey—which lasted from 1969 to 1973—was twice interrupted when she went to Europe and South America to address various Bahá'í conferences. At the end of this period, she had visited 53 countries in less than four years.

She also undertook the Green Light Expedition, organized and directed by herself, for the purpose of making a documentary film of the Amazonian and Andean Indians of South America. This journey carried her and the members of her Expedition 32 days up the Orinoco and Ventuari Rivers of Venezuela, to the jungles in the interior of Surinam...and 18 days up the Peruvian Amazon...

Madame Rabbani attached great importance to the developing countries and to illiterate villagers, among whom she spent a great deal of time and for whom she cherished a deep admiration and affection, believing that the fundamental decency, spirituality and uprightness which should distinguish human beings is less evident among city people, living in the centers of our present devastating materialistic civilization, than among the villagers of the world. Her rapport with them was deep and sincere; she was given names meaning “Blessed Mother” and “Precious Lady” by the Blackfoot and Tlingit Indian tribes and had been adopted into other tribes.



*Hand of the Cause of God
Amelia Collins*

Amelia Collins

“O thou lady of the Kingdom! ...My hope is that thou mayest daily advance in the Kingdom, that thou mayest become a heavenly soul, confirmed by the breaths of the Holy Spirit, and may erect a structure that shall eternally remain firm and unshakable.” With these words ‘Abdu’l-Bahá addressed Amelia Engelder Collins in His Tablet to her, dated December 6, 1919.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá passed away in 1921. Amelia used to say that, “After the provisions of His Will became known, my whole heart and soul turned to that youthful Branch, appointed by Him to watch over and guide the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh. How I prayed that God would help me to make him happy!”

This became her guiding light, to serve the beloved Guardian and make him happy. She often said that to see the Guardian smile just once was worth a lifetime of suffering. To this end, then, she poured forth unstintingly her love, her strength, her means, throughout the remaining years of her life, often and increasingly, at the cost of great physical sacrifice...

Amelia Engelder Collins was born on June 7, 1873, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Her early married life was spent in Calumet, Michigan, and Bisbee, Arizona, in mining areas where her husband, Thomas H. Collins, had interests...

Milly (as she was known) was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States and Canada in 1924. Except for the years 1933-1938 she was a member of this body until she was called by Shoghi Effendi to serve at the Bahá’í World Center of the Faith...She visited most of the Bahá’í centers in the United States and Canada to assist in their consolidation, and most of those in Central and South America to promote the teaching work.

The Guardian’s appreciation of this work was expressed through his secretary: “It comforts him greatly to know that you are in a position to help watch over and safeguard the interests of the Cause and the believers. Your calm sanity, your great faith and devotion are assets of outstanding value to the Faith...”

The Guardian in 1937 sent through Milly a sacred gift to the American Bahá’í Community. The cablegram announcing this gift to the Annual Convention of 1938 said: “As token my gratitude to such a community entrusted beloved co-worker Mrs. Collins locks Bahá’u’lláh’s most precious hair arranged preserved by loving hands Greatest Holy Leaf to rest beneath the dome of Temple nobly raised by dearly beloved believers in American continent.” She presented to the Convention the Guardian’s gift, which she had had beautifully framed and placed in a special silver case. This was the first sacred relic sent by the Guardian to be retained in the American National Bahá’í Archives...

Milly was one of the first to do something about teaching the Indians in America, as urged by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His Tablets of the Divine Plan. Over a period of many years she deputized Bahá’ís to teach the Omaha Indians in Macy, Nebraska, often visiting the group herself. In 1948 the first Indian Bahá’í Assembly on the American continent was formed there.

Milly lived simply, allowing herself no luxuries, denying herself what many would consider necessities. She rarely spoke of the many generous contributions she made: the Guardian himself learned of some of them only through the National Spiritual Assembly minutes or reports of the National Treasurer. Many of her donations were in response to the Guardian’s mere mention of a needed development in the Faith. Frequently Milly’s was the first response to reach him...In 1939 he wrote: “Your very generous offerings enable me, in these days of stress and trial, to extend the range of the work of the Cause at its World Center, to reinforce the activities initiated at the various national centers...”

Many, many of Milly’s services are known only to God, the beloved Guardian and herself. Indeed, she herself could not remember them all...The beautiful “Collins Gate”—the main gate leading to the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh—was named in her honor by Shoghi Effendi himself.



*Hand of the Cause of God
'Abu'l-Qasim Faizi*

Abu'l-Qásim Faizi

HEARTS FILLED WITH SORROW PASSING INDEFATIGABLE SELF-SACRIFICING DEARLY LOVED HAND CAUSE OF GOD ABUL-QASIM FAIZI. ENTIRE BAHÁ'Í WORLD MOURNS HIS LOSS. HIS EARLY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS IN CRADLE FAITH THROUGH EDUCATION CHILDREN YOUTH STIMULATION FRIENDS PROMOTION TEACHING WORK PROMPTED BELOVED GUARDIAN DESCRIBE HIM AS LUMINOUS DISTINGUISHED ACTIVE YOUTH. HIS SUBSEQUENT PIONEERING WORK IN LANDS BORDERING IRAN WON HIM APPELLATION SPIRITUAL CONQUERER THOSE LANDS. FOLLOWING HIS APPOINTMENT HAND CAUSE HE PLAYED INVALUABLE PART WORK HANDS HOLY LAND TRAVELLED WIDELY PENNED HIS LITERARY WORKS CONTINUED HIS EXTENSIVE INSPIRING CORRESPONDENCE WITH HIGH AND LOW YOUNG AND OLD...[HOLD] SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE MEETINGS HIS NAME IN HOUSES OF WORSHIP ALL CONTINENTS...

-- Universal House of Justice, 20 November 1980

As the news spread, thousands of Faizi's lovers wept in every part of the world...Among the hundreds of messages of grief which reached the World Center of the Bahá'í Faith, there was one which expressed the feelings of all. It came from a fellow Hand who was closely associated with Faizi for many years, and it said..."A special sweetness has gone out of the world and out of my heart."...

Faizi, as he wished to be called, did not like the celebration of birthdays, except those of the Manifestations of God, and did not know the exact date of his own birth which was probably in 1906. Of his early days in the city of Qum he always spoke with a touch of sadness, for he was surrounded by fanatical people. One of the happy memories of his childhood was the local gymnasium—the *zúr-khánih*—a traditional Persian establishment which is not only for the purpose of physical training, but also for inculcating human virtues such as chivalry, modesty, and chastity in those who must bow in humility as they enter through its low door...

After a short period of rudimentary studies in Qum, Faizi moved with his parents to Tihrán. The atmosphere of his life completely changed, as though he had come out of a stifling room into fresh air. His father, who was a Bahá'í at heart, allowed him to go to the Tarbíyat School—one of many schools started by Bahá'ís throughout Íran. Here he excelled in studies and sports...

One Friday, not long after Faizi joined the Tarbíyat School, his Bahá'í classmates took him to their 'character training classes'...He began to attend these Friday classes regularly...Although Faizi had never known Bahá'ís before coming to Tihrán, he was attracted to his Bahá'í classmates and his acceptance of the Faith was quite natural as though he had been a believer all his life. When his mother realized her son was a Bahá'í...she encouraged him to observe the rules which his new beliefs prescribed. A devout Muslim herself, she would rise at dawn during the Bahá'í month of fasting to prepare his breakfast and make sure he woke up on time...This saintly lady became a firm Bahá'í many years later...

After completing the school Faizi spent some time at the American College in Tihrán before going to Beirut, in Lebanon, for higher studies in 1927...[Later] the Bahá'ís of the village of Najafábád, whose schools had been closed by the government, had asked for a volunteer to go to live among them and teach their children. To the great surprise and dismay of this friends, Faizi decided to give up his job and become a teacher in an obscure corner of the country. This was probably the greatest decision he was to make, for it set the course of his life away from the glitter of the world. When the Guardian read about it in a general report sent to him... he wrote in reply, "This spontaneous decision will attract divine confirmation and is a clear proof of the high endeavor, the pure motive, and the self-sacrifice of that favoured servant of the divine Threshold. I am extremely pleased and grateful to him and I pray from the depths of my heart for the success of that active, radiant youth..."



Hand of the Cause of God
Keith Ransom-Kehler

Keith Ransom-Kehler

'Abdu'l-Bahá raised up Susan Moody to aid the Persian friends. Shoghi Effendi, during another bleak time for the Faith in Iran, sent Keith Ransom-Kehler to cheer and defend them. Keith had been part of Chicago's elite society world when she became a Bahá'í. She had also been a Christian minister, and was an excellent speaker. She taught all over the United States, Europe, India, and Australia, where she met the chief of the Maoris. Keith gave up her social station for the Cause, and she must have suffered. In 1923, probably in the early part of her life as a Bahá'í, she wrote to May Maxwell, "Pray for me, May, it is my only refuge.... Through this bitter storm of trial in which every attribute of light is obscure or withdrawn, you still stand, a dazzling presence on the further shore toward which I struggle, a gift and evidence lent me by the Master...."

The suffering of the Guardian deeply touched her. She was in Haifa in 1926, only five years after the passing of the blessed Master. She wrote about the Guardian to the 18th Annual United States Bahá'í Convention: "... this youth under thirty, laboring day and night for us, sacrificing every human desire and tendency to further our efforts ... with no more personal life than a graven image, no more thought of self than a breeze or a flower, just a hollow reed for the divine melody. Any one of us is ready to die for him, but can we conscientiously number ourselves among those who are willing to live for him?"

In 1932, Keith was again in Haifa, where the Guardian personally trained her. The Guardian's secretary informed the National Spiritual Assembly that "she rendered wonderful services in both Australia and India and Shoghi Effendi trusts that she will do the same in Persia." He asked her to obtain permission from the authorities to bring Bahá'í literature into Persia. The heartbreak of this task, which seemed a constant round of meetings with suave, pleasant, but hypocritical officials, was somewhat softened by her many meetings with the Persian Bahá'ís, who dearly loved her, and whom she was able to encourage and strengthen. For a year, she pursued her mission. "How strange the ways of God," she wrote, "that I, a poor, feeble old woman from the distant west, should be pleading for liberty and justice in the land of Bahá'u'lláh...."

Exhausted by her work, she died during a smallpox epidemic in October 1933. A month before her death, she had addressed a gathering in honor of the Anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb, pointing out that the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are the only solution to the world's problems. "Keith's precious life," cabled the Guardian, "offered up in sacrifice to beloved Cause in Bahá'u'lláh's native land." He named her a Hand of the Cause of God, and the first American martyr, and mourned his "earthly separation" from her, his "invaluable collaborator," "unfailing counselor," and "esteemed and faithful friend."

"...I have fallen," Keith wrote during that year of trial, "though I never faltered. Months of effort with nothing accomplished is the record that confronts me. If anyone in future should be interested in this thwarted adventure of mine, he alone can say whether near or far from the seemingly impregnable heights of complaisance and indifference my tired old body fell. The smoke and din of battle are today too dense for me to ascertain whether I moved forward or was slain in my tracks. Nothing in the world is meaningless, suffering least of all. Sacrifice with its attendant agony is a germ, an organism. Man cannot blight its fruition as he can the seeds of earth. Once sown it blooms. I think forever, in the sweet fields of eternity. Mine will be a very modest flower, perhaps like the single, tiny forget-me-not, watered by the blood of Quddús, that I plucked in the Sabzih-Maydán of Barfurúsh; should it ever catch the eye, may one who seems to be struggling in vain garner it in the name of Shoghi Effendi and cherish it for his dear remembrance."



*Hand of the Cause of God
Dr. Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir*

Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir

Rahmatulláh Muhájir was born in 1923 into a distinguished Bahá'í family. Three of his forebearers attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh and later were recipients of a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá bearing the salutation *Ay Muhájirá n*—'O Pioneers'—in which He exhorts them to thank God that they were able to meet the Blessed Beauty and prays for their success in rendering ever-increasing services to the Faith. The name Muhájir was adopted as their family name from that day...

Rahmat, his brothers and five sisters were brought up in a home that was a center for many Bahá'í meetings and firesides attended by great Bahá'í teachers. Rahmat participated in all these meetings from early childhood and brought many seekers to hear the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. If by chance there was no one to accompany him he would invite the corner shopkeepers, promising them a good Persian meal. He always remembered this period of his life as a very happy one during which he received a thorough Bahá'í training that had instilled in his heart the love of Bahá'u'lláh and devotion to His Faith. He chose the path of service early in his life and did not deviate from it...

His first experience of pioneering came following his graduation from high school when he postponed going to university and went to the province of *Ádhirbáyján* for two years. His remarkable planning skills were apparent even at that early age. He organized youth and children's activities, taught adults in the evenings and prepared lessons and taught Bahá'í classes...

After this period of pioneering he entered medical school. His friends recall that he sustained and even increased his Bahá'í activities...To the astonishment of all, a few months before graduation from medical school he suspended his studies and devoted three months to assisting in the accomplishment of the goals of the Forty-Five Month Plan of the National Spiritual Assembly of Irán...After the successful completion of the Plan he returned to his studies and graduated with honours from medical school...

...in October 1953 the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand announced that a physician was needed to fill their goal in the Mentawai Islands...Rahmat volunteered without hesitation. He resigned from his job and sold all his worldly belongings...Pioneering to Mentawai Islands...opened a vast and exciting field of service to Rahmat. Although coming from a very different background and culture he felt very much at home in his new environment...

Rahmat always believed that entire villages should be brought to the Faith as this prevented disunity and friction amongst the people and allowed them to progress much more in following the principles of the Faith. He put this idea into practice in Mentawai. He worked for the village as a whole and directed all aspects of the villagers' lives according to the teachings. Many of the children who sat at his feet on the damp ground learning Bahá'í prayers and the alphabet by the light of a small candle and sometimes the glow of the moon went on to live at the Bahá'í dormitory in Sumatra which Rahmat had initiated and some became doctors and engineers. They remember him with love and affection and say they owe all to this gentle and kind man who sat them on his knees and chanted prayers and songs in his melodious voice...

Rahmat...traveled to India many times, encouraging the friends to realize that the time had come for entry by troops in that vast subcontinent. His visit in 1961 was endowed with the blessing of the start of mass teaching...In 1961 there were 850 Bahá'ís and in 1963, 65,000.... He wore the spiritual mantle of a Hand of the Cause with dignity and humility...