

ation of God for this modern age.

**ABUD'L-BAHÁ**

When Bahá'u'lláh died in 1892, 'Abud'l-Baha, the eldest son, became by Bahá'u'lláh's designation the leader and expounder of the newly born Bahá'í World Faith, the teachings of which reached North America for the first time in 1893 at the Conference of World Religions held at the World's Fair in Chicago. 'Abud'l-Bahá remained also a prisoner at 'Akka until 1908, when the Turkish Revolution freed him.

During this period of freedom, 'Abud'l-Bahá travelled in Europe, America, and Egypt, he lectured in universities, churches, and a variety of other organizations. In recognition of long service for international conciliation and public welfare, the British Government conferred knighthood on 'Abud'l-Bahá at Haifa in 1920. He passed away in the following year.

**UNITY IS THE THEME**

Bahá'is teach the fulfilment of the universal brotherhood of man, world peace, and the tenet that all religions are really different manifestations of one. They seek to end the national, racial, economic social and religious differences that divide the world.

Bahá'is believe that God has a divine plan for man's spiritual development. "When you study all the religions, you find they have the same basic truths," says one Bahá'í. They compare this with a straight line that can be said to run through history from man's creation. As man progressed in intellectual development, the Bahá'is believe, God has sent a series of human yet divinely inspired prophets, men the Bahá'is call "manifestations of God." The following are some of the principles laid down by Bahá'u'lláh one hundred years ago:

1. *The oneness of mankind.* Bahá'u'lláh says: The earth is one country and mankind its citizens.
2. *Independent investigation of the truth.* Each person must find the truth for himself, unfettered by the opinions of friends, relatives or ecclesiastics.
3. *The oneness of religion.* There is but one God, and therefore but one religion. The revelations of Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad are like chapters in a single Divine Book.
4. *The harmony of science and religion.* Religion which denies science ends up in superstition. Science which denies religion ends up in materialism.
5. *Equality of men and women.* Men and women are like the two wings of a bird. For balanced flight, both wings must be strong.
6. *Abolition of prejudice.* Prejudices of all types, religious, racial, national, and social, must be abandoned.
7. *Universal compulsory education.* All people, regardless of their economic standing, should be educated so that the talents they inherently

possess may be utilized for their own benefit and for the benefit of mankind.

8. *A spiritual solution of economic problems.* All laws legislated for the solution of economic problems will prove fruitless until man learns to love his neighbor more than himself. Word is raised to the rank of worship.
9. *A universal auxiliary language.* A universal language must either be invented, or chosen from among existing ones, and taught in all schools. Each person will then speak his own native tongue as well as the universal language.
10. *Universal peace.* Universal peace should be upheld by a world government, a world court, and a world police force.

**ADHERENTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD**

Bahá'is live in more than three hundred countries of the world. They are people who formerly had different religious backgrounds. They were Buddhists, Jews, Muslims, Zoroastrians, Hindus, Protestants, Catholics, or they had no religion at all. They live in about thirty thousand localities in the world and Bahá'í literature has been translated into four hundred languages. In Canada one may expect to find Bahá'í communities in the Far North and down to Windsor, Ontario. Presently, Bahá'is are aiming towards having fifty thousand localities throughout the world by 1973.

**ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES**

From an administrative standpoint, the religion consists of a series of local communities. Administrative control is centered in Local and National Spiritual Assemblies. Both national and local assemblies are composed of nine members elected for one-year terms. Local assemblies are, through democratic process, elected by the entire adult community. National Spiritual Assemblies are elected annually by delegates from each region. The international Bahá'í center, the Universal House of Justice, administers affairs of the faith from Haifa, Israel. Members of this body are elected to five-year terms by members of the National Spiritual Assemblies. This Bahá'í administrative order is precisely defined in the Bahá'í Sacred Writings which enables them to maintain unity of belief and action, with as goal — the unity and progress of mankind. The machinery of the administrative order has been so fashioned that the faith may, even as a living organism, "expand and adapt itself to the needs and requirements of an ever-changing society!"

**NO RITUALS OR CLERGY**

The Baha'í community has neither a priesthood nor rituals. At Baha'í religious ceremonies, there are no collections or sermons. Only Bahá'is may contribute to Bahá'í funds. The heart of the spiritual life of the community is the nineteen day feast which is held on the first day of every Bahá'í month. (The Bahá'í calendar has nineteen months consisting of nineteen days, each starting at sunset instead of midnight). The nineteen day feast is conducted simply and informally in three stages. The