



## Committee for International Pioneering & Travel Teaching

### Forwarded from the Continental Pioneer Committee for Africa

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Dear Bahá'í Friends,

In order to establish the foundation of stronger Bahá'í communities in Africa, the International Teaching Centre has been considering various approaches to increasing the number of educated Bahá'ís in that continent. In that regard the Continental Pioneer Committee for Africa has been asked (letter from the International Teaching Centre dated 26 November 2000) to encourage the Bahá'í youth from different continents to consider undertaking undergraduate, graduate and post graduate studies at universities in Africa, particularly in South Africa, where there are several universities. It is hoped that this will provide opportunities to introduce the Faith to these universities.

We are also directed to encourage professional Bahá'ís from around the world to travel-teach to Africa, giving talks in institutions of higher learning which in turn may create further opportunities to present the Faith to university students and staff.

In consultation with a number of counsellors and Bahá'í academics, it has emerged that to work towards the above objective it is helpful to consider the following:

1 – It is necessary to gather information regarding educational opportunities at universities in Africa to assist prospective Bahá'í students in securing enrolment. We are in the process of completing this task and we welcome any enquiry in this regard. As a starting point, there is a website (<http://studysa.co.za>) which provides detailed information regarding all the 21 universities and 15 technikons in South Africa.

2 – Although the educational standards among the institutions of higher learning in Africa vary widely, there are indeed universities in this continent that offer internationally recognized programmes comparable with the very best in the world. The misconception that an undergraduate degree from universities in Africa might disadvantage an individual from further studies or in one's professional life should be alleviated by the many examples of success that prove otherwise. The widespread use of email and internet has given the universities in this continent similar access to information and learning facilities as most universities in the world.

3 – There are many offers of Youth Period of Service for Africa; such offers may be combined with a study period at an educational institution where the Bahá'í volunteer could play an active role in setting up of a Bahá'í Association among the students and staff. There are several examples of successful projects such as the University of Botswana Bahá'í Association which in collaboration with the Association for Bahá'í Studies in Southern Africa have arranged for several seminars on Bahá'í themes at universities in southern Africa. The Continental Pioneer Committee for Africa can channel offers to the countries and universities where the offers may be utilized most effectively.

4 – There are many university programmes worldwide that allow part of the programme to be taken elsewhere. Bahá'í students from all continents may be encouraged to choose a university in Africa for such supplementary courses.

5 – Bahá'í professionals could look for professional and academic conferences in their fields which are held in Africa and make arrangements to spend some time giving talks in institutions of higher learning. Alternatively, or in addition to such programmes, travel teaching trips for such professionals may be arranged by the Continental Pioneer Committee for Africa with the help of the relevant National Spiritual Assemblies.

The Continental Pioneer Committee for Africa appeals to you for co-operation and any suggestions to fulfil the wishes of the International Teaching Centre in spreading the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh among the

**Committee for International Pioneering and Travel Teaching**

Thelma Batchelor

university students and staff in this blessed continent. A continent so close to the heart of our beloved Guardian, whose people Bahá'u'lláh referred to as the "pupil of the eye".

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With loving Bahá'í greetings, Farhad Aghdasi, for Continental Pioneer Committee for Africa.

If you are interested in pioneering or travel-teaching to Africa, please inform the CIPTT of your interest.

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### ***Latvia: Urgent Request for Pioneers***

Pioneers are required in Jelgava, the fourth biggest town in Latvia (pop. 76,000). Jelgava is 45 minutes away from Riga, the capital of Latvia. It is a student city as it hosts the department of agriculture of the University of Latvia.

There is high unemployment in this area so any would-be pioneer would have to be able to sustain themselves financially. There is a Bahá'í Centre in Jelgava, which could be also used as a home for a potential pioneer. There are opportunities for volunteer work, e.g. in the orphanage or in some NGO capacity.

A Caretaker (or couple) is required for the National Bahá'í Centre in the capital, Riga. The caretaker would be required to become involved in, and also to help stimulate, the life of the local Bahá'í community. Accommodation is available. For further information concerning a pioneering move to Latvia, please contact [secretariat@bahai.lv](mailto:secretariat@bahai.lv) and please let the ciptt know of your interest. [batchelor@clara.net](mailto:batchelor@clara.net)

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### ***Study Circle Group in Samoa***

The photograph below shows a Study Circle group in Samoa. It's called "Unity in Diversity" because the members are diverse in cultures and ages, but unified in belief.

Back Row: (left to right) Ripatu, a local youth due to go to Haifa for the opening of the Terraces; Steve Percival, member of the NSA of Samoa, who is half Samoan and half Tongan; Wendy, his wife from America; Helene, from Australia, who is married to a Samoan; Rhonda, who is half German and Samoan; Tom Sier, son of Maureen and Nick from Scotland; Wesley Baker, visiting musician from America, but now living in Uganda. Wesley is spending a year singing in all the Temples and is also on his way to Haifa.

Front Row: (left to right) Rita Green, UK pioneer; Winnie, a newly declared Bahá'í at 65, previously a Catholic nun for 40 years, who is part American Indian from the Dakota tribe; Joe, son of Steve and Wendy and the youngest member of the Study Circle; Greta, mother of Steve and Rhonda and of German origin.

