

Mr Chairman and Friends:

After that introduction I should like to say "Good Night" and go home.

I want to speak to you, very much, quite simply about what the Baha'is are planning to do during the next ten years. But before I get down to that subject, I thought perhaps I could give you a little history of where this decade that is coming fits in our eyes into the historical picture. We feel that there are two great tensions: one great tension to end the history of this world - one is Almighty God and the other is the creature God, whom, we believe, is impossible to know under any circumstances. I would like to read to you just a word from one of the prayers of Baha'u'llah in which He emphasizes this. He says: "God testifieth to the unity of His Godhead and to the singleness of His own being. On the throne of eternity from the inaccessible heights of His Station, that there is none other God but Him." We feel, we are convinced that we can never by our very nature as human beings know God personally.

Why do we believe that God has created us? Baha'u'llah says, speaking with the voice of God, so to speak, that "veiled in My immemorial being and in the ancient eternity of Myself I felt My love for thee; therefore, I created thee". We are the creation of the love of God. Why has He loved us and why has He brought us into being? I often ask myself when I see the way we behave on this planet; but, we do believe His love brought us into being. What, in turn, does He expect of us. Again Baha'u'llah says: "Love Me that I may name Thy name and fill thy soul with the spirit of life." In other words God loves us but that is not enough. The return of that is that we must love God. When we love Him we will draw Him to us. We will carry on and He will carry us onward.

What is the actual practical purpose from the Baha'i standpoint of man on this earth? We are told we should love our Creator and learn to feel His nearness to us. But why are we here on this earth as a mass of human beings, in order, the teachings say, "that all men are created to carry forward an ever advancing civilization." In other words evolution socially among people on this planet is growing to greater perfection, striving higher and higher. That is the purpose of humanity while in the world and living in this human life.

There are two aspects to this process. There is the aspect of individual salvation. Every man comes into being in this world with his own soul and he is answerable for that soul. He must seek his own salvation. To save the soul of men, to draw them from the animal plane and closer to the spiritual realm has been the purpose of all the Prophets of God. That is the true meaning of religion: to carry us closer to God, "to save our souls" to use a good old preacher's expression. But there is another aspect of this and that is, society should be saved. That, not only each individual should find his relationship to the creator and evolve and become more spiritually perfected and pass away and go to a better realm, and go to a more noble state on his own, so to speak, but that the whole human race should be saved. When the world is saved I think we could say that that would be the "Kingdom of Heaven on earth" promised by Jesus Christ. That Kingdom was not in the past because the world was not united physically. When you have people living in pockets here and there all over the planet and no free intercourse between them, most of them do not know of each other's existence. You could not work the world system out before and so save a whole world at one time, and bring the Kingdom of God on earth but now we believe you can. Because through modern science, the world has become a modern unit. Unfortunately we are dangerously close to each other now days and unless we become one world spiritually we risk perishing. Religion is the road, so to speak, down which man travels.

I was very struck by something that the Guardian of our Faith said this year. It came home very forcibly to me. I never thought of it before in that light. I had always thought that Christ was greater than Christianity and that Muhammad was greater than Islam and that our own Prophet was greater than the Baha'i Faith, and other prophets in a similar relationship to what they taught. Shoghi Effendi said this is not so. That the religion of God is greater than the Messenger of God; that the education that God has given mankind down through the ages is greater through all the prophets. In other words, we Baha'is believe God is greater than anything else in this world; it is one broad highway that has stretched down the ages and the paths to human advancement on that highway have been the prophets of God. Once Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, Zoroaster and Baha'u'llah. So you can see a little of the perspective today and what we find ourselves faced with at this present hour.

Baha'u'llah, as Dr. Wesley so beautifully pointed out in his speech, has come with one great emphasis to give to all of His teachings the Oneness of all mankind. He said to the only Western observer whom we have any record of meeting with Him, Professor Browne; "We desire the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bond of faith and unity should be strengthened, the diversity of religion should cease and differences of race be annulled. What harm is there in this? Yet so shall it be. These fruitless strifes, and these ruinous wars shall cease. That he who loves his country loves his kind. To promote the oneness of mankind." And one might say the object of existence of every single Baha'i is to that purpose we are dedicated. How are we going to do it. We believe that unless we can carry the teachings of Baha'u'llah and the laws of Baha'u'llah, which are very convenient and which are very suited to the present state of evolution, to all men there will not be an improvement of a situation in the world.

You have not come here to hear a Baha'i lecture. So, I presume you want to know just what we do believe; what we do teach and what is our stand. We believe that today we must now follow another guide down into another portion of this road that we call religion or the Cause of God; and that guide is Baha'u'llah; that His teachings, great principles and His great laws are the remedy for the situation the world finds itself at present. Unless we go out and carry this message to peoples of all the world there is no way they will hear about it naturally. I do not know whether you realize that all Baha'i work is entirely voluntary. We have no priest, we have no missionaries, we have no paid teachers, we have pioneers as we like to call them. People who want to go out and share what they believe is true with their fellow men as a free gift. Usually they support themselves, if they are not able to their fellow Baha'is help them. It is these people that have carried the Baha'i Faith so far to 128 countries. It is the Baha'is laboring with some of their friends, and small groups naturally, of professional translators that have taken our literature into the knowledge of people who speak over 88 languages. It is the Baha'is who have been able to build up their voluntary system of giving, their services, with all their hearts and give freely to their faith; who have been able so far to establish 12 National Baha'i Assemblies through the world. Those 12 Assemblies represent about 37 nations.

We intend during the coming ten years to carry out some very ambitious program and I would like to give you the highlights of that so that you can see why we are met, at present, here in Chicago in holding this great Intercontinental Teaching Conference and what we hope and plan to do in the next ten years. We are going to carry the Faith of Baha'u'llah to no less than 41 countries of the Asiatic

Continent. We are going to take it to 33 countries in Africa; to 30 more countries in Europe; to 27 countries in the American continent. We are going to publish literature in 49 Asiatic languages; in 31 African languages; 10 European languages and 10 tongues spoken throughout the Western Hemisphere.

You know we have a House of Worship here which was dedicated yesterday. We are planning to build two more: one in Asia and one in Europe. When you realize that we cannot and will not accept a single penny from any one who is not a Baha'i no matter how much a well-wisher they may be--this gives you an idea of what we are planning to sacrifice, and we hope to find during the coming ten years. Two more Baha'i Houses of Worship. We are also going to do preliminary measures to purchase the site of 12 more Temples and, if possible, even begin work on them. We will have to see how far along we get as time goes by. There will be three more in the American Continent, three in the African Continent, two in the Asiatic Continent, two in Europe and one in Australasia Continent. We hope throughout the Islamic East to establish 6 National Baha'i Courts. Those would be religious courts empowered with matters of personal status. We will have one in Persia; we hope one in Cairo, one in Baghdad, one in New Delhi, one in Karachi, India. If any of you are familiar with life in the east and the unfortunate intense fanaticism in those countries, you will realize how extremely ambitious this program is. But we are confident that we will achieve our goal.

It will be a very big step forward when you realize that the present moment we have only 12 NSA's throughout the world. We will also frame National Constitutions for these bodies and enable them to purchase and keep up their National Institutions and their own National Headquarters. We are going to have six National Baha'i Publishing Trusts in different parts of the world to print Baha'i literature and carry out its distribution. We hope, God willing, that during this ten year period Baha'is will be able to carry the teachings of Baha'u'llah to 11 Republics comprized within the Soviet Union and two to European Soviet controlled states.

We used to have Baha'is in Russia perhaps they are still there. And I am sure that the peoples of all the world are craving for what we teach. We would find Baha'i hearts there just the way we would find them everywhere else and we hope that the way will open for us to send teachers to these countries during the coming years. At the end of this ten year period we face, we are going to have a vast congress. And that is perhaps even more ambitious than anything else because we want to hold it in Bagdad in 1963. It will be the hundredeth anniversary of the declaration of Baha'u'llah. By that, I mean it will be one hundred years since He said that He was the guide for humanity in this age, and that His teachings held the remedy to the terrible ills afflicting us. That will be a very great day in Baha'i history. We feel we must work hard to accomplish all of our aims and be able to celebrate this with Baha'is from all over the world, this great occasion. So you can get an idea of what we are aiming for. I would like to say just a word in connection with which Dr. Wesley said. It is very true what he said that there are more people of colored skin in this world than there are white people. It is very unfortunate that we white people don't realize that more often. In fact, it is just foolish of us just not to analyze. We throw overboard in a ridiculous attitude of superiority the feelings we have toward our fellow men. I am afraid that we all are white, black, brown, and yellow. We are going to suffer a great deal more before we are finished of hatred, submission and division which we find in the world today. We are going, during the next ten years, to take the Baha'i Faith to the strong holds of the darker skinned people as you can see. We are going to carry out a very ambitious program in Africa. Also, throughout the

Pacific Island and throughout Asia.

In Uganda recently we had the first of our Intercontinental Conferences. This is the second one. We had a very wonderful and unique experience there because for the first time in the history of the Baha'i Faith real primitive peoples were with us as our fellow Baha'is. Many people who went there, colored friends from the U. S., Persian friends from Iran, Americans, Britishers, were absolutely astonished to find these so called primitive people had intelligence and a capacity that they called their own. It was only their living conditions that were different; their education that was different; their customs that were different; but the innate things in a human being that makes them a man, makes them upright, makes them reflect God was just as strong if not stronger in those primitive people s than in many of the other people they contacted. It was a revelation to all of us. It was a very great pleasant surprise to all of us.

One of those new colored friends, from the village way out in the Teso District of Uganda said something which I think is very beautiful: (You know the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith is a Persian, he is a Caucasian) "Of course, we know Shoghi Effendi is white, but from now on, as far as we are concerned, he is colored." That was reported to the Guardian. He was silent for a moment then, he said: "I am neither black nor white. I am half and half." He said it with very deep feeling. It touched me very much. It was as in that moment he completely gave himself to everybody whose skin was different from his own. It was not an idle remark at all. It was a reality. It was like a division of portion and it being portion among human beings. But when we feel that way among our fellow men, we feel that part of them is in us and part of us is in them. I think that the Baha'is, I am sure that the Baha'is are going to succeed during the next ten years because they each are afire with sincerity. They know what they want to do. They see how they must do it. They are ready to do it, and, they are eager to do it. That, I think, is a very important thing. And I think that it must make other people happy to know that there is a nucleus of people here in America, and all over the world, who are so intensely men of good will. We are very simple people, we Baha'is. We are just ordinary people most of us, just like everybody else. You would not know us from the ordinary man on the street; yet, we have something that other people do not have. We have this tremendouss sense of unity, a common method to achieve. The Baha'is work with everyone with love and harmony. They welcome everyone in their midst with love; and they hope that many people will become their friends. If they do not wish to join us in this great crusade, then at least wish us well and in spirit be with us.