

The Baha'i Fireside Notebook

Reginald L Priestley

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FOREWORD

This is my late father, Reginald Priestley's personal Fireside notebook. References to public identities suggest this version was compiled from 1992 onwards and included events up until 2007.

Reg first encountered the Baha'i Faith in 1958 and remained one until his passing on August 22, 2012. Located conspicuously amongst his working Baha'i references, he obviously attempted to distil key points of the Baha'i Faith – as he understood them - and he obviously shared these insights with prospective and existing Baha'is.

What is great about these notes is the clarity of his line of thought. He makes a very logical and compelling argument for becoming a Baha'i. I believe he followed a firm Baha'i tradition of sharing the 'proofs' for Baha'u'llah as a legitimate Manifestation of God.

His notebook is not cited but the Baha'i references are easily located using web search engines.

Bear in mind that there is a context to this work that needs to be understood.

Reg was a disillusioned Christian. He served as a Palestine Policeman in Palestine from 1942 to 1948. Unlike many religious writers who refer to Holy sites in Israel, Reg knew them first hand. For example, he knew Jerusalem like the back of his hand. He patrolled the supposed site of Christ's Temptation, Bethlehem and Armageddon. He also spoke fluent Arabic. He had unrestricted access to the Muslim holy site, Al Sharif. He witnessed bloody Christians against Christian riots to gain first entrance to the Holy Sepulchre at Easter time and it is probably no surprise that he converted to Islam in 1948. He knew the history of the Holy Land intimately.

He was also a Mason and did many esoteric Masonic studies but he renounced both Islam and the Masons when he became a Baha'i.

And he totally embraced the Baha'i faith on the basis of its universal oneness of mankind.

He was a Baha'i pioneer in Australia, knew or met the Hands of the Cause and was responsible for leading many people to the Baha'i Faith.

He was well read and scholarly and his reasoning is purely grounded in the factual basis of the religion. Much of his reading was about cross-referencing the Baha'i proofs that Baha'u'llah was the next prophesised Manifestation of God.

While it made logical sense to Reg, it also made spiritual sense to him as well. Personally, I feel these 'proofs' are based on a fervent belief that the Baha'i Faith was true. This work as such needs that scholarly input that is well beyond my knowledge, experience or interest.

Interestingly, Reg did most of his research the old way – one book at a time. For your reference, Reg stuck to the important Baha'i texts, Gleanings, Writings and Kitab-i-Iqan; only the King James version of the Christian Bible; and the Islamic Al Qu'ran. Reg was only just embracing web searches.

The big problem with web searches is you turn up a lot of compelling references that both support and contest the 'proofs'.

Research aside, most experienced Baha'is will easily recognize the line of argument that runs through this 'fireside' discourse. I believe that he used these notes to guide the discussion and so this is a book of key point markers only rather than a finished stand-alone booklet.

They appear as notes in a small palm sized A6 sized folder which he must have used only as a discussion prompter.

I am guessing but he must have started by sharing the Baha'i symbol and its meaning.

He probably would have opened the discussion by reading the prayer by Abdul Baha, then gone into the seven point discussion that concludes with a challenge to become a Baha'i; and then a final prayer.

It is not indicated whether he did these as one fireside with seven parts or over seven separate firesides. I am guessing that he may have done it as one presentation for prospective Baha'is; and as a series of *Deepenings* for existing Baha'is.

One of the Geelong Baha'is said that one day a man went into his travel agency and asked about the Baha'i Faith. Reg apparently shut the shop, put the kettle on and spent the next three hours conducting this fireside that resulted in the man becoming a Baha'i. The local Baha'is said that this was the norm for Reg.

Bearing in mind that it was intended for his personal use, the work is compelling and still fresh and will be of great interest to Baha'is.

Finally, you should know that I am not a Baha'i but a Christian. I am relying on what I can recall from discussions with Reg about the Baha'i Faith. The accompanying notes are mine and include observations and recollections only.

I include both standard Baha'i references and web references in the Notes section. I also suggest next steps in the Notes section for further reading.

Finally, Reg always urged us to make up our own minds. He urges you to investigate for yourself. There is obviously a point where no amount of 'proofs' is needed to support a deeper faith.

Andrew Priestley 2012

The BAHAI SYMBOL



"... the symbol of the greatest Name represents an invocation which can be translated as 'O Glory of Glories' or O Glory of the All- Glorious'. The word glory used in this connection is a translation of the Arabic term Baha, the name of Baha'u'llah."

From a letter from Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is of the United States and Canada, April 28, 1935.

Effendi, S. (1933) Directives from the Guardian

PRAYER

REVEALED TO THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE WESTERN STATES

The following commune is to be read ... every day:

O my God! This is the broken-winged bird and his flight is very slow. Assist him that he may fly towards the apex of prosperity and salvation and wind his way with the utmost joy and happiness thought-out the illimitable space. Raise his melody in Thy Supreme Name in all regions. Exhilarate the ears with this call and brighten the eyes by beholding the signs of guidance.

O Lord I am single, alone and lowly. For me there is no support save Thee. Confirm me in Thy service, assist me with the cohorts of Thy angels, make me victorious in the promotion of Thy word and suffer me to speak out Thy wisdom among Thy creatures. Verily Thou art the custodian of the poor and defender of the little ones. Verily Thou art the Powerful, the Mighty, the Unconstrained.

Abdu'l Baha

Tablet to the Baha'is of the Western States

FIRESIDE LECTURES

1. Progressive Revelation
2. Twelve Principles
3. Time of the end
4. History and Administration
5. Equality of Men and Women
6. In what day? In what age?
7. The Covenant

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION

The natural and continuing connection of Scripture and prophecy. Prophecy must be SEEN TO BE FULFILLED otherwise the writings are of no value.

THE MANIFESTATIONS

Idris (Enoch?)	Pre 4000 BC	Sabeian	1 st Personal
Krishna	Approx 3000 BC	Hindu	Family unity
Moses	1350 BC	Jewish	Tribal unity
Zarathustra	1000 BC	Zoroastrian	2 nd Personal
Buddha	600 BCE	Buddhist	Individual
Yeshua (Jesus)	1 CE	Christian	Community
Muhammad	610 CE	Islam	National
The Bab	1844 CE	Babi	Pre-Baha'i
Baha'u'llah	1863	Baha'i	International

ANALOGY OF SCHOOL

TEACHINGS ALWAYS DEMONSTRATED THE LIGHT NOT THE LAMP

COVENANTS

God – Manifestation

God – Man

Manifestation – Man

Is Baha'u'llah supported by SCRIPTURE? (Proofs)

Biblical

Old Testament (OT) – Moses, Isaiah, Micah, Ezekiel, Joel, Jeremiah, Daniel, etc.

New Testament (NT) – Synoptic Gospels, Peter, Paul, John

Other

Al Qur'an; Tripitaka; Zend-Avesta; Gita.

Does Baha'u'llah confirm Scripture?

Kitab-i-Iqan, GMB etc. Like Islam, a great reverence for ALL Manifestations.

Demonstration by Progression of the same source same standard of Truth etc of ALL Scripture. Interlinked/ supportive.

ONENESS of GOD, MAN and RELIGION.

THE DISPENSATIONS

GOD

FAITH	FOUNDER/DATE
Sabaeen	Probably Enoch 4500 BC
Hindu	Krishna 3000 BC
Judaic	Moses (Moishe) 1350 BC
Zoroastrian	Zarathustra 1000 BC
Buddhist	Gautama Buddha 560 BC
Christian	Jesus (Yeshu'a) 1 AD
Muslim	Muhammad 610 AD
Babi/Baha'i	Bab/Baha'u'llah 1844 AD

NB: Possibly refers to book by Shoghi Effendi.

THE TWELVE PRINCIPLES

MOSES	Ten Commandments
BUDDHA	Eight fold path to right living. Four Golden Truths
JESUS	Sermon on the Mount; Parables
MUHAMMAD	Al Qur'an; Hadith (Traditions) See Chap 21/22 Revelation of St John

12 Principles of Baha'u'llah, 1) Raise the standards 2) meet the needs of THIS age

1	ONENESS of GOD
2	ONENESS of RELIGION
3	ONENESS of HUMANITY
4	Religion cause of UNITY. (int'l Tribunal)
5	RELIGION/SCIENCE in agreement
6	EQUALITY of Men/Women (Equal Opportunity)
7	PREJUDICE to be abolished
8	SPRITUAL solution to Economic problems
9	UNIVERSAL education
10	UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE
11	Universal Peace
12	UNFETTERED INVESTIGATION of TRUTH Get agreement on the value and truth of these Principles then invite them to become Baha'i

BY THEIR FRUITS SHALL THEY BE KNOWN. Matthew 7.16

The WILL and TESTAMENT of ABDU'L BAHA in three sections.

Prime objective appoint Guardian.
Spells out FUNCTIONS of Guardian.
Spells out METHOD of selecting sub Guardians.
Choice confirmed by 9 Hands of Cause.

<Insert reference>

HANDS of CAUSE of GOD

Spells out their functions/ responsibilities. Life appoint Guardian empowered appoint. (Now no Guardian, no Hands Cause).

<Insert reference>

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE (UHJ)

Spells out function/responsibilities. Method of election. Term of office.
Relationship to Guardian.

<Insert reference>

Inculcates TEACHING. LIVING BAHA'I LIFE.

The Guardian left no will. And no issue. Unable to appoint further Guardians.
Hands Cause completed 10-year teaching programme then called election UHJ.
First elected 1963. Pyramid of administration complete.

ELECTED local, National Spiritual Assemblies annually. UHJ every fifth year from '63.

<Insert reference>

APPOINTED ARM

Counselors to support them eventually replace Hands of Cause (but not all their functions). Auxiliary boards and ABM's assistants (Protect/Propagate).

UHJ now responsible control/direct affairs worldwide communities. Empowered to initiate 'such laws as are not specifically written in Kitab-I-Aqdas. Such may also be abrogated. Not able to add/change/negate written laws of Baha'u'llah. That is prerogative NEXT MANIFESTATION of GOD ... NOT BEFORE 1000 YEARS ... so 2844 AD at earliest. (See also Johns Revelation).

Attempts to overthrow Abdu'l Baha and Beloved Guardian failed due content/context Covenant. More recent attempts also total failure. Baha'i Faith without splits/sects.

CONSTITUTES LICENSE TO BE BAHAI.

<Insert reference>

THE COVENANT

Examine previous Dispensations; and the early destruction of Unity of the Faith.

Viz Jesus – Peter and Paul
Muhammad – Ali- Khalifas

<Insert reference>

Objective of the Baha'i Faith is the UNITY OF MANKIND. IF ... this objective is to be achieved it becomes obvious that it cannot be achieved by a Faith WHICH IS IN ANY WAY DIVIDED. It was therefore vital to protect the Baha'i Faith from division.

HOW?

Two documents from what we refer to as THE COVENANT

1. The Kitab-I-Ahd of Baha'u'llah
2. The Will and Testament of Abdu'l Baha.

Both legal signed/sealed documents circumstance has tested; they have not been found wanting. Faith has no sects. Kitab-I Ahd. Baha'u'llah's will. He names appoints His eldest son Abbas known as Abdu'l Baha as the CENTRE of COVENANT; its INTERPRETOR and its EXEMPLAR.

He commands the friends to turn to Abdu'l Baha; leaves NO DOUBT about the person who has to be FIRST PROTETCOR. ONLY INTEPRETOR AND FIRST EXEMPLAR of the Baha'i Faith.

Attempts made question/upset arrangement came to grief on the LEGALITY of the WILL. He inculcates forms obedience, respect and actions, govern life of the Baha'is exalts Holy Family to place of respect but NOT to be worshipped.

WILL AND TESTMEMENT of Abdu'l Baha is longer document.

He APPOINTS eldest grandson SHOGI as FIRST GUARDIAN of CAUSE of GOD. Its second and final Interpreter. NO MAN may claim to INTERPRETING the Writings, of Baha'u'llah. B+test claim he has is that. What he says is in accordance his (or her) understanding of.

THAT YARDSTICK APPLIES TO THIS DISCUSSION. What I understand of these documents - UP TO YOU TO INVESTIGATE for YOURSELF.

<Insert reference>

THE TIME OF THE END

1. Check if PRACTICE or NOMINAL Christians.
* Accept JC as 'Way, Truth, Life'
Accept Bible as 'Word of God' as released and written by very special prophets, seers, sages.
If YES, take positive approach; or question their Christianity.
2. 'TIME of the END' Purpose of God.
Baha'is believe time has come. BAHU'LLAH Manifestation of God for THIS Age.
 - a) When
 - b) Where
 - c) Promises of JC
 - d) NEW NAME
 - e) Other considerations

There are 40 books in OT with CLEAR refs in 84 Chaps in 21 of them. There are 27 books in NT with clear refs in 86 chaps in 20 of them.

NB: Hindu prophecies.

WHEN?

Daniels refs '2300 days' and to 'Seven times' 'passing over him'.

FORMULA to Genesis and Numbers of 'one day equals one year (one month-30 days, one year = 360 days).

From issue decree 'rebuild the `Temple' until Messiah 'cut off' (crucified) is 70 weeks ... 490 days (years).

Edict dated 457BC plus 490 yrs = 33AD

Using same formula 2300 years = 1844AD.

Cross ref Ottomans take Constantinople and Jerusalem 1453AD.

Prophecy says 'an hour, a day, a month and a year'

= 391 years 1453 + 391 = 1844AD.

In Rev St John repeats 7 times (in various combinations)

1260 years as the span of Islam.

Year 1260n AH = 1844 AD.

Also 1000 years after last Imam.

They ended in 260 AH +1000 AH = 1260- AH + 1844AD.

<Insert reference>

WHERE?

ALL seven previous Faiths revealed in ASIA. (None in any other Continent). WHICH clearly promised FIRST coming.

“But thou, O Bethlehem, out of Thee shall come forth Her that is to be ruler in Israel” (Viz Jesus)

<Insert reference>

Did Micah pinpoint SECOND coming? He did “In that day He shall come even Thee from Assyria.”

<Insert reference>

MICAH (& DANIEL) both lived in Assyria.

<Insert reference>

EZEKIEL living in Holy Land refers to that coming ‘by way of the East’.

<Insert reference>

JESUS refers to the ‘Lightning coming out of the East ... so shall be the coming of the Son of Man.’

<Insert reference>

ASSYRIA? Iran/Persia. The ‘Elan’ of the OT Daniel quotes Elan as ‘a place of vision in the last days.’

<Insert reference>

HINDU scripture indicates ‘beneath the Sunset’ viz. to the West (of India). SUN is the emblem of Persia.

<Insert reference>

WHEN?

Jesus three promises:

- 1) When GOSPEL PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD'. Church authorities agree that this was done by 1844 AD by then. PLUS spread of Gospel via Islam.
- 2) When man shall 'SEE THE ABONIMATIONS' spoke of by Daniel. By 1844 East at its lowest ebb. West torn by wars. Age of Revolutions (US, French, Industrial etc)
- 3) When 'TIME OF THE GENTILES' is fulfilled. Edict of Toleration, March 1844 ended Gentile occupation Jerusalem and Holy Sites allow Jesus to return to Holy Land after 1260 years banishment. Culminated in establishment of Mine House' Israel.

<Insert reference>

Prophecies also refer to 'ingathering' ALL these prophecies fulfilled.

If you study Middle East history you will see the completion of literal prophecies of OT and NT. Deeper search will uncover allegorical prophecies and those which are a combination of both. Especially study St John's 'Book of Rev'.

<Insert reference>

THE NEW NAME

Christ spelled out what the name would NOT be! 'If any man say unto you "Lo here is Christ or there ... BELIEVE HIM NOT.'

<Insert reference>

He spoke 'as one having AUTHORITY and NOT as the Scribes and Pharisees.

<Insert reference>

NOTE: Isaiah, Ezekiel and John each consistently refer to the 'Glory of God' or 'Glory of the Lord' or Lord of Hosts etc.

<Insert reference>

The name Baha'u'llah means GLORY of GOD. As CHRISTOS means the Anointed One or MUHAMMAD means 'He who shall be praised.'

<Insert reference>

We have a:

DATE - 1844

PLACE – PERSIA

PROMISE ... fulfilled and

A NEW NAME ... Baha'u'llah

<Insert reference>

ARE THERE OTHER EVIDENCES?

There are other crosscheck statements.

MICAH 7 refers to the JOURNEYS of Baha'u'llah.

<Insert reference>

From FORTIFIED CITIES (Baghdad, Constantinople, Acre)

'Mountain to mountain' (Elzburg, Sul'yeh, Carmel)

'Sea to sea' (Black, Caspian, Med).

<Insert reference>

'And I shall give thee ACHOR (Akko) for a door of hope.' It was from Acre that the LAW first went out: later and now from Carmel.

<Insert reference>

Cross check with Hindu, Buddhist, Zoroastrian and Muslim Scripture for PROMISES and TRADITIONS concerning the GREAT TEACHER of the 'Timer of the end'.

<Insert reference>

Also American Indian traditions.

<Insert reference>

Can we take the words of Jesus as Gospel Truth?

We must or deny our Christianity. Note again his AUTHORITY.

NOTE also the fact that Muhammad/'Baha'u'llah are prophesied in OT/NT and INVESTS THEM WITH THE SAME AUTHORITY or 'They would not be so promised.'

<Insert reference>

CROSS CHECK EVIDENCES

DO WE HAVE A DATE?

YES. 1844

(Note Hindu prophecy stated DATE as well as the year).

DO WE HAVE A PLACE?

YES. PERSIA.

HAVE THE 3 conditions (promises) of Christ been yet?

YES.

DO WE HAVE A NEW NAME?

YES. BAHA'U'LLAH the GLORY of GOD.

While they are not GOSPEL we can also consider the various TRADITIONS (viz HADITH) of various sources.

DOES JESUS HIMSELF FULFILL THE PROPHECY? NO!

DOES MUHAMMAD FULFILL THE PROPHECY?

NO!

DOES BAHA'U'LLAH FULFILL THE PROPHECY?

Baha'is believe He does fully.

NOW GO INVESTIGATE AND CHECK FOR YOURSELF. DON'T BELIEVE A WORD I HAVE SAID.

<Insert reference>

HISTORY AND ADMINISTRATION

23 May 1844	Shiraz Iran Declaration of Sayyid Ali. Muhammad (The Bab) with proofs to Mulla Husseyn. B 20/10/1819.
8 July 1850 Tabriz.	The Bab executed by firing squad. His body is preserved and hidden in several secret locations and eventually brought to HOLY LAND and now rests in the Shrine on Mt Carmel Haifa.
1852	BAHA'U'LLAH jailed in Siyah Chal Tehran. 'He Whom God will make Manifest'. 12/11/1817 d29/5/1892 Bahji, Palestine.
1853	Exiled to Iraq, 2 years in Sullaymaniyyeh.
1892	1892 died in Bahji. Buried. Succeeded by Abdu'l Baha b 23/5/1844 d 28/11/1921, Haifa. Buried in Shrine on Mt Carmel.
	Succeeded by SHOGI Effendi Rabbani. Ist Guardian. B 1/3/1897 d 4/11/1957 London. Buried.
1963	20 April 1963 first election Universal House of Justice located on Mt Carmel.

<Insert reference>

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

Elected Local Assemblies, National Assemblies (UHJ)

Appointed Hands of Cause, Continental Board of Councilors, Auxiliary Boards and Assistants.

Each elected body composed of 8 adult Baha'is either gender (except UHJ) local, National Assemblies elected annually UHJ every 5th year.

Hands of Cause cannot be extended. No way to appoint further members.

<Insert reference>

PRAYER

O MY GOD! O MY GOD!

Unite the hearts of Thy servants and reveal to them Thy great purpose. May they follow Thy commandments and abide in Thy Law. Help them O God in their endeavor and grant them strength to serve Thee. O God leave them not to themselves but guide their steps by the light of Thy knowledge and cheer their hearts by Thy love.

Verily Thou art their helper and their Lord.

Baha'u'llah

<Insert reference>

EQUALITY OF MEN AND WOMEN

Prologue re TV/Press reports on the ordination of women in the churches. Synod debates pros and cons. The 'Masculinity of God' Lady holding Doctorate in Theology told 'no place for women in churches.'

Subsequent resolutions of problem but with danger splits etc. (This is how sects start).

WHAT IS BAHAI POINT OF VIEW?

Principle of the Baha'i Faith is the equality of Men and Women.

Voting rights to women granted in Australia before they were in UK.

Premiers like Bandaranaike, Gandhi, Meir, Thatcher.

Now Governor of Queensland is lady. (Hon. Leneen Forde, 1992)

Need for Equal Opportunities Board and Anti-Discrimination Board sad indictment of society.

Muhammad taught equality 1400 years ago. Is enshrined in Al Qur'an.

Baha'u'llah states clearly/unequivocally the equality of sexes.

Equal spirituality/mentally (maybe not physically)

Education requires same standards.

Mothers first teachers of the race.

If choice needed educate girls first women will stop war.

M and F two wings of bird of humanity needs to use BOTH wings or not reach apex of potential.

Affront to 50% of the world's population. Women suffrage. Arts. Politics. Professions.

Clinton appoints woman as Attorney General of USA first time (Condalisa Rice, 2005-2009)

Khomeini's treatment of women (Chadur).

Baha'u'llah states that 'As long as women are prevented from attaining their highest potential so long will man be unable to reach his.'

Yesterday's world ruled by force, arms, ideologies. Aggressive qualities of male in both body and mind.

Balance shifting Men becoming f=more gentle, women becoming more positive (Gay lobby).

Greater balance now appearing but pendulum of change still swinging wildly

Institution of marriage a basis for both Family/community. Look at changes in home scene today.

Unity/equality is grounded in rights/responsibilities of EVERY PERSON before GOD. Its first aspect is in the family. Children learn by observation/participation.

Here that values and attitudes are learned for the development of INDIVIDUAL – FAMILY – COMMUNITY – NATION.

Educate according to rules of sanctity, virtue, chastity, love, honor. Honor of ONE is HONOUR of ALL.

Baha'u'llah promises that entry of women will be in ALL departments of life and is 'irrefutable and uncontrovertibly.'

'No soul can RETARD or PREVENT it.'

'In no movement will women be left behind,'

'When women participate fully in the affairs of the world, war will cease.'

'This must be your aim and contribution to the new world order.'

'War has scarred the world. Women's influence against war is the next step forward to abolishing war.'

'It is not a matter of man stepping aside but one of stepping side by side.'

Baha'u'llah adds 'Women must be positive make great effort, seek development. Attaining greater perfection to equal and surpass, men in every respect so that man shall be compelled to acknowledge that equality, capacity attainment'

This does not make a man less of a man. It does make women more womanly. His response should not be in rudeness, lack of breeding, ill manners or arrogance.

Baha'i Communities are NOT PERFECT but they do have the new rules of THIS AGE. And they do have the mental and spiritual capacity to understand the new rules. And to follow the demonstration of the Exemplar and apply them one by one towards that new level of perfection.

The world needs the capacity of women their know how to make the new laws of the age work for society.

The world needs the understanding of men to support and get that other wing working to achieve the balance.

IN WHAT WAY DO BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITIES DO THIS?

All communities strive towards an ever-growing measure of EQUALITY and SERVICE.

The ELECTORAL system at both local and national levels is by secret ballot open to ALL members over 21 years or age. WITHOUT electioneering. It offers equality of opportunity to serve to allow BOTH SEXES to participate in the administrative processes.

Internationally the boards of CONSELLORS and the Auxiliary Boards are open to both sexes. There is no priesthood so no need to ordain women to be involved in spiritual matters.

Both male and female Baha'is are involved in building a New World Order in over 350 countries and territories.

Baha'is believe that all pervading spiritual power and capacity released by the Manifestations of God has erased all previous limitations and set a new direction in this Age of mankind maturity.

Baha'u'llah says ' This is the century of Light and it is evident that the Sun of Reality has revealed itself to ALL humanity.' (Not just half of it).

Women are the untapped and untried potential for new capacity and capability in this Dispensation inaugurated by Baha'u'llah.

<Insert reference>

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

To know and worship God – two parts – to KNOW and WORSHIP.

CAN WE STIFLE DEVELOPMENT? Yes by CLOSING our MINDS, by REFUSING to INVESTIGATE; by CLOSING OUR EYES AND EARS, O SON OF MAN!

Love me that I love thee; if thou lovest Me not, My love can in, in no wise, reach Thee. This is the day in which you are alive!

Proof of God?

Every aspect of creation from sunsets to snakes from mammals to microbes from light to Proof of manifestations? 'His own person' defeats opposition, delivers men and new message, injects fresh impetus of spirituality.

Miracles only valid for those who see, or think they see them.

<Insert reference>

DO YOU KNOW IN WHAT DAY YOU ARE LIVING?

Baha'u'llah, Founder of the Baha'i Faith is (we believe) the Manifestation of God for THIS age.

He claims that this Dispensation will see the Unification of ALL humanity and end to War.

'Soon will the old order be rolled up and a new order spread out in its stead.'

These are no mean claims; are they possible and are they achievable;

- World Turmoil
- Financial Upheavals
- Social problems
- Political Sterility

Both communities/individuals undergoing extreme and rapid changes.

World peace, League of Nations, United Nations, Gulf War was first concerted demonstration of the recommendation of Baha'u'llah re dealing with aggression.

<Insert reference>

WHAT is it that TRANSFORMS society?

Turns base metal into gold? Refines gross material? The LAW of GOD for the Age as given through the MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD

WHAT is the standard and composition of MAN?

'O son of being! With hands of power I made Thee; with fingers of strength I created Thee; within Thee I have placed the essence of My Light. Be thou content with it and seek naught else for My work is perfect and My command is binding. Question it not, not doubt thereof.

O son of spirit! Noble have I created Thee ye thou hast abased thyself; rinse then unto that for who thou has been created.

The spiritual power of the manifestation has ALWAYS transformed society and advanced civilization. Examine history.

Its highest expression is 'servitude to God AND Mankind. How far are YOU prepared to travel on such an exciting road?

'Work performed in the SPIRIT OF SERVICE to humanity is a prayer rising to God' via Work is worship.

<Insert reference>

<Insert signature scan JPEG>

Reg Priestley

NOTES

The Baha'i Symbol

1. Effendi, S. (1933) Directives from the Guardian.
2. 86: GREATEST NAME (Translation of Symbol of)
"He also wishes me to inform you that the symbol of the Greatest Name represents an invocation which can be translated either as 'O Glory of Glories' or 'O Glory of the All-Glorious'. The word **Glory** used in this connection is a translation of the Arabic term 'Baha, the name of Baha'u'llah." ... Shoghi Effendi, Directives from the Guardian, p.33
<http://reference.bahai.org/search?max=10&lang=en&first=1&query=O+Glory+of+Glories>
3. Entire Directives from the Guardian PDF download from
www.munseys.com/diskfive/digu.pdf
4. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shoghi_Effendi
5. Reg Priestley made a wood carving of the Baha'i emblem which is in the possession of Nancy Millway of the Moreton LSA, Australia.

Prayer Abdu'l Baha

1. Tablets of the Divine Plan, Pages 85-89: gr12
12: TABLET TO THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE WESTERN STATES
Revealed on February 15, 1917, in Bahá'u'lláh's room at the house of Abbúd in 'Akká, and addressed to the Bahá'ís of the eleven Western States of the United States: New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, California, Wyoming, Utah, Montana, Idaho, Oregon and Washington.
<http://reference.bahai.org/en/t/ab/TDP/tdp-12.html.utf8?query=broken-winged|bird&action=highlight#gr12>
2. Reg often referred to the broken-winged bird prayer. He later refers to this prayer with regard to the 'two-winged bird' Baha'i principles of equality later in this booklet.

Fireside Lectures

1. When 'Abdu'l-Bahá came to America in 1912 he spoke before congress, met with high-ranking officials and visited followers of all religions. He spoke at churches, groups and societies almost every day of his eight-and-a-half month journey. After these daily meetings, 'Abdu'l-Bahá would gather with interested parties at one of the believers homes and sit around the fireplace. In this informal atmosphere 'Abdu'l-Bahá would answer questions and deepen them in the spiritual teachings of the Bahá'í Faith. Since that time, these "firesides" have developed into a series of classes which offer the seeker a priceless education in religion and the proofs for the Bahá'í Faith – "the waters of life free of price".
These firesides are now made available here at bahaifireside.org on video. This particular series is presented by Neal Chase, great-grandson of 'Abdu'l-Baha and current president of the Universal House of Justice seated upon the Throne of David which is to last forever. These firesides were presented to a group of seekers who traveled from all over the United States to hear this message.
There is no professional clergy in the Bahá'í Faith. All the people are enjoined to teach firesides in their own homes. These teachings are offered to all without charge, and the seeker is encouraged to ask questions and know the truth with their own intellect rather than rely upon others, such as clergy, to think for them. <http://www.bahaifireside.org>

Progressive Revelation

1. Progressive revelation (Bahá'í), a core teaching of the Bahá'í Faith, that suggests that religious truth is revealed by God progressively and cyclically over time
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Progressive_revelation
2. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Progressive_revelation_\(Bahá'í_Faith\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Progressive_revelation_(Bahá'í_Faith))
3. Reg often talked about the Manifestations of God and the progressive revelations. He used the school metaphor (in the next section) suggesting that in Yr 1 you learn the basics and by Year 12 you are learning more complex and sophisticated 'lessons'. This premise

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was used to help people of other faiths better accept the Baha'i Faith. Apparently, this premise appears in the Baha'i writings but the actual references remained uncited in this booklet. This might be a project for a Baha'i scholar.

Analogy of School

Covenant

1. Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1983), XXVII, pp. 64-69.
2. <http://info.bahai.org/article-1-3-2-12.html>

Baha'u'llah and Biblical Scripture

This needs to be researched thoroughly because there are lots of references that support and contest the Baha'i assertion that Baha'u'llah was not just a prophet but the Messiah prophesied in the Christian Bible. For <http://www.contenderministries.org/bahai/beliefs.php> Against <http://www.iranian.com/main/blog/covenant/bahaulah-biblical-prophecy>

Subsequently Bahai's look for 'proofs' that support Baha'u'llah as a Manifestation of God.

I am not a Baha'i scholar so do your homework.

1. Reg spent many years researching the 'Baha'i proofs'. The 'proofs' suggest that Baha'u'llah was prophesied in the Christian Bible (i.e. The Revelation of St John) and the Al Qur'an. As an example, Reg spent many years researching The Revelation of St John. Cited elsewhere, they are not cited in this booklet. Again, an opportunity for a Baha'i scholar.
2. Reg was well read and did a major study of comparative religions.
3. He often referred to books such as The Golden Bough – Sir James George (1922) (ref http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Golden_Bough) to illustrate the mythology of other religions.
4. Reg was also a mason and had progressed through many of the Masonic Degrees and was well versed in esoteric Masonry i.e., numerology, symbols and he makes reference to this information in his Revelation of St John material.

The Dispensations

1. Reg was well read on all of this quick at-a-glance guide to the various faiths and he must have covered each of these in his discussion. He did not leave accompanying notes.

The Twelve Principles

1. _____
2. <http://www.bahai.com/Bahaulah/principles.htm>
3. I often heard him refer to the various 'teachers' and their teachings. He most likely spent a lot of time on the 12 principles of Baha'u'llah.

The Will and Testament of Abdu'l Baha

1. Abdu'l-Bahá (1992) [1901-08]. *The Will And Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*. Mona Vale, N.S.W, Australia: Bahá'í Publications Australia. ISBN 0-909991-47-2.
2. Reg met or knew most of the Hands of the Cause i.e., Collis Featherstone. Contact Kay.
3. This is a standard history of the faith with a focus on how it is administered today.

Pyramid of ... complete

1. Standard Baha'i administration.

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2. Standard key identities in the Baha'i Faith – Bab, Baha'u'llah, Abdu'l Baha etc.
3. Standard 'internal politics of the Baha'i Faith that concludes that there are no sects of the Baha'i faith and it remains a unified, intact religion.

The Covenant

1. Baha'is refer to the Dispensations of Buddha, Christ Muhammad etc; and how they quickly split into opposing sects.
2. Reg studied the Will and Testament of Abdul Baha. The primary concern here was the unity of the Baha'i Faith as an intact faith. Reg was critical of major faiths that have sects and conflicting divisions. One basis for this was Reg served as a Palestine Policeman in Jerusalem on riot duty at Christmas and Easter when competing Christian sects fought to enter Holy sites. These riots ended in injuries and deaths. Reg often pointed out this irony.
3. Reg pointed out that the Baha'i Faith is the only religion where the founder left a legal last Will and Testament.

The Dispensations

1. The seven Dispensations of the Bible <http://www.thebookwurm.com/dispchrt.htm>
2. Shoghi Effendi's The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh: A Theology of the Word http://bahai-library.com/mclean_dispensation_theology_word
3. Baha'l writings.

The Time of the End

1. <http://www.ufbahai.org/articles/new-cycle.html>
2. Reg does not say what 'the time of the end' means. The Pentacostal Church refers to the Second Coming of Christ as the End Times.
3. Reg most likely was referring to the arrival of a new Manifestation rather than an Armageddon event (Rev 16.16). Incidentally, Reg patrolled Mount Megiddo and the surrounding plains as a young policeman. He used to joke that the locals thought no one in their right mind would fight over that piece of real estate. Ref Priestley, R.L., (1999)
4. From Bahá'í literature a number of interpretations of the expectations surrounding the Battle of Armageddon may be inferred, three of them being associated with events surrounding the World Wars. The first interpretation deals with a series of tablets written by Bahá'u'lláh, founder of the Bahá'í Faith, to be sent to various kings and rulers. The second, and best-known one, relates to events near the end of World War I involving General Allenby and the Battle of Megiddo (1918) wherein World Powers are said to have drawn soldiers from many parts of the world to engage in battle at Megiddo. In winning this battle Allenby also prevented the Turks from killing 'Abdu'l-Baha, then head of the Baha'i Faith, whom they had intended to crucify. A third interpretation reviews the overall progress of the World Wars, and the situation in the world before and after. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armageddon>
5. Hindhu prophecies
<http://bci.org/prophecy-fulfilled/hindusa.htm>
<http://www.northill.demon.co.uk/hinduism/ch4.htm>

When?

1. There are hundreds of websites that deal with the calculations of the 2300 days from the Book of Daniel. Again for and against.
<http://www.gobible.org/study/411.php>
<http://www.pickle-publishing.com/papers/jeremiah-films/response-to-video-19.htm>
2. There is an esoteric study of the numerology of the Bible.

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3. The same formula is used by the Seventh Day Adventists in their Book of Daniel study. They make the same 1844 conclusion but don't say who showed up in that year. Needs the citation and Biblical references. Lots of websites suggest the calculations were wrong. How do the Baha'is calculate and arrive at 1844? Again this is all the 'proofs'.
4. Revelation of St John needs the Biblical references.
5. Unsure of the reference to the last Imam. Possibly a Qur'an reference. Again, lots of contentious websites about which Imam?
<http://www.godcontention.org/index.php?qid=91>
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twelver>
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imamah_\(Ismaili_doctrine\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imamah_(Ismaili_doctrine))

Where?

1. The first coming of Christ was prophesized. Lots of references.
<http://www.biblestudysite.com/foretold.htm>
<http://pw2.netcom.com/~horse/prophecy.htm>
<http://christianity.about.com/od/biblefactsandlists/a/Prophecies-Jesus.htm>
2. Biblical references. NB: Reg was a stickler for the King James only version.
Micah 5:2
But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.
King James 2000 Bible (©2003)

Micah 7:12
In that day also they shall come even to you from Assyria, and from the fortified cities, and from the fortress even to the river, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain.
King James 2000 Bible (©2003)

Ezekiel 43.2
And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.
King James 2000 Bible (©2003)

Matthew 24.27
For as the lightning came out of the east, and shines even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.
King James 2000 Bible (©2003)
1. Book of Daniel "... a place of vision in the last days.' Needs citation. There are LOTS of 'last days' websites.
2. You should explore the Hindu 'beneath the sunset' reference. Start with Wikipedia.
3. There are lots of 'end times' and 'last day' prophecies and the perspectives on those prophecies. A Baha'i scholar should elaborate on what the Baha'i perspective on time of the end means.
4. Reg often suggested that the modern day translations of the Bible misquoted the Bible as saying *end of the world* but in fact it should read *end of an era*. A Bible scholar would need to confirm this.

When?

1. Needs the Biblical and historical citations.
2. Relies on the interpretation of numerological calculations of the Bible that signpost 1844 AD. Reg may have fallen foul of *confirmation bias* – making the evidence fit the conclusion. (Ref <http://psycnet.apa.org/?fa=main.doiLanding&doi=10.1037/1089-2680.2.2.175>). This is the work of a Baha'i scholar.

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3. It is presumed that the Baha'is either have a) a standard body of literature to support the premise that Baha'u'llah was prophesied or b) Reg concocted this evidence independently of Baha'i literature. Needs a Baha'i scholar and citations.
4. A Bible scholar needs to supply the citations for Jesus references to the end times. I believe it is in Luke but it needs to be checked.
5. Likewise: The time of the abominations in Book of Daniel and Time of the Gentiles.

The New Name

1. Needs the Biblical and Baha'i literature citations.
2. Reg may have fallen foul to confirmation bias. He urges us to investigate ourselves but this is a scholastic pursuit and these 'firesides' were intended to convert people to Baha'ism. Ultimately, people 'take it on faith' that the compelling argument was accurate.

Are There any Other Evidences?

1. Needs the citations.
2. Confirmation bias? Reg had a lot of time to study these various religious texts. What is needed now is independent studies and the references.

Cross Checks?

1. Reg's caveat or disclaimer is interesting. Do your own study.
2. Reg believed all of the above because he had studied it, and lived it. You must remember that he a) served in the Middle East as a young man aged 18-24 years old; b) spoke fluent Arabic; c) converted to Islam in 1948; d) was a Freemason and e) did numerous esoteric studies and f) met many influential and well versed Baha'i elders. The problem is that Reg did not record his references accurately in this notebook and so it is hard to draw the same conclusions as he did on this reference alone. However, I am presuming a Baha'i scholar might easily know which Baha'i and Biblical references Reg would have drawn on to reach these conclusions.

History and Administration

1. Standard Baha'i history and law.

Equality

1. Reg renounced Islam and Masonry because of his Baha'i beliefs on equality. You have to contemplate just how big a decision both of those were.
2. His notes referring to Hon. Leneen Forde, Governor of Queensland Australia 1992-1997, place his notebook around the 1992 mark at least.
3. Needs Baha'i references. Understand that Reg was actively evangelizing and converting Baha'is. The equality appeal was historically relevant and very strong in the 1960s and 1970s.
4. His reference to Condalisa Rice, USA Secretary of State 2005-2009 suggests he revised his notes somewhere around 2005.

Do you know what age you are living in?

1. Reg often talked about the writings of Baha'u'llah and cited how progressive and ahead of His time He was. Reg would suggest that most of Baha'u'llah's prophecies came to pass. A Baha'i scholar would be able to reference those prophecies and the factual basis in history.

What is it that transforms society?

1. Without a doubt Reg honoured this prayer. He received Rotary's highest accolade, the Paul Harris Award in 1998 for over 35 years of sustained service to the community.

YOUR INPUT

This notebook is by no means complete. It definitely needs the citations. If you can provide any references or citations for any of the above please do so. I would be most grateful for any assistance and the next edition will be fully referenced.

Submit to Reg's email address regpriestley@hotmail.com.au