

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

23 May 2011

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

Our message dated 28 December 2010 to the Conference of the Continental Boards of Counsellors briefly described the process of growth which begins to unfold in a cluster, frequently as the result of a single homefront pioneer entering into meaningful conversation with local residents. We also indicated that more advanced clusters, in which the pattern of action associated with an intensive programme of growth has been firmly established, will often serve as reservoirs of pioneers who can be dispatched to other clusters, especially on the home front—in some to initiate a systematic approach to sharing Bahá'u'lláh's teachings and in others to strengthen the processes of expansion and consolidation that have already been established. There is no doubt that the movement of pioneers remains an indispensable feature of the spiritual enterprise in which the community of the Most Great Name is engaged.

During the Five Year Plan recently concluded, over 3,500 international pioneers entered the arena of service to reinforce the work of the Faith in myriad ways across the globe. At the same time, we were most pleased to see a surge in the movement of homefront pioneers, their numbers matching those who arose to serve in the international field and their sacrificial efforts making a distinctive contribution to the early attainment of the goal of the Plan. In the next five years, the successful prosecution of the Plan will require the services of several thousand consecrated souls who, spurred on by their love for the Blessed Beauty, will forsake their homes to settle in villages, towns and cities in order to raise to 5,000 the number of clusters with programmes of growth.

National Spiritual Assemblies, in close collaboration with Continental Counsellors and Continental Pioneering Committees, will continue to play a crucial role in expanding the awareness of the believers about the critical needs of the Cause and in assisting with the settlement of pioneers in designated clusters. They will not, however, be asked to establish numerical goals at the outset, as was the practice in the past, for those to be dispatched beyond their borders during the coming five years. Rather, we will regularly call the attention of selected National Assemblies in different parts of the world to specific urgent pioneer needs, identified by the International Teaching Centre in the course of its ongoing endeavours to follow the progress of the Faith around the globe. It is hoped that National Assemblies will then be able to quickly send pioneers who respond to that particular appeal. In this regard, a promising pattern is developing in certain regions whereby believers arise to serve in a neighbouring country or in one that is further afield but within the same continent. This development brings with it the advantage of a more intimate familiarity with the culture and language of the country in which they settle, thereby increasing their effectiveness and the efficiency with which their services can be utilized.

Beyond responding to the specific appeals for homefront and international pioneers that are issued from time to time by the institutions, the friends are of course welcome to arise at any time and from any place to settle in any area where they feel they can best contribute to the advancement of the Cause. Even so, their endeavours would yield greater effect if, drawing on the advice of institutions, they were to direct their efforts to clusters—indeed, villages and neighbourhoods within clusters—that are the focus of systematic attention. It is our ardent hope that the believers will arise rank upon rank, with a clarity of vision born of experience and with complete reliance on the confirmations of God, to offer His life-giving Message to every eager soul, to every receptive population. Our prayers at the Sacred Threshold will accompany them as they strive to seize the abundant opportunities now opening before them.

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