

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

15 December 2009

Transmitted by email:

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

Your email letter of 22 August 2009 addressed to the Research Department was received at the Bahá'í World Centre and forwarded to our Department for response. The spirit in which you shared your thoughtful comments is appreciated.

The term "small band" referred to in your letter was used by the Universal House of Justice in its message of 26 December 1995 to the Conference of the Continental Boards of Counsellors regarding the implementation of the Four Year Plan. In that letter, the House of Justice prefaced the call for the establishment of the training institute by stating that "a relatively small band of active supporters of the Cause...no matter how dedicated, no matter how willing to make sacrifices, cannot attend to the needs of hundreds, much less thousands, of fledgling local communities. Systematic attention has to be given by Bahá'í institutions to training a significant number of believers and assisting them in serving the Cause according to their God-given talents and capacities."

As you point out, in this age of maturity individuals must acquire new capacities and assume new responsibilities. By terminating the priesthood and making the services once rendered by the clergy the duty of every individual, the Bahá'í Revelation summons humanity to function in a new way. As you know, the current series of global teaching plans on which the Bahá'í world has embarked has created a change of culture within the community and has greatly increased the capacity of individuals, institutions, and communities to carry out an increasingly more complex set of activities that promote sustained growth and a greater involvement in the life of society. You will appreciate that a change of such magnitude will be achieved gradually and incrementally; indeed, the strides that have been made in so short a time bear out the efficacy of the framework for action with which the friends are working.

Be assured of the prayers of the House of Justice in the Holy Shrines that your efforts to advance the Cause may attract divine blessings and confirmations. Prayers will also be offered for the participants of the devotional meeting you have established using the Internet, as mentioned in your email letter dated 11 November 2009.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

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