

# Shoghi Effendi and the Baha'is of Australia and New Zealand, 1922–1937

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## Abstract

*Shoghi Effendi's letters were a major inspiration for the early Baha'is of Australia and New Zealand. The present paper summarizes the main themes and concerns of these letters during the period from 1922 through to 1937.*

## Keywords

Baha'is of Australia  
 and New Zealand  
 Shoghi Effendi's  
 letters

## Chronology

- c.1912 Margaret Stevenson becomes the first New Zealand Baha'i.
- 1920 The Dunns arrive in Australia (Sydney).
- 1922 First Australian Baha'is. First Baha'i activity in New Zealand.
- 1923–25 Initial establishment of local assemblies in Australia.
- 1924 Martha Root's first visit.
- 1925 First pilgrimage by Baha'is from Australia and New Zealand to the Baha'i World Centre. *Herald of the South* started.
- 1926 Auckland local assembly established.
- 1931 Keith Ransom-Kehler's visit.
- 1934 National Spiritual Assembly established.
- 1936 *Bahá'í Quarterly* established. Siegfried Schopflocher's visit.
- 1937 Yerrinbool property opened as future summer school site.

## 1. Prologue

As yet there have been few studies of Shoghi Effendi's early letters to the Baha'i world although they have obvious value in understanding the developments within the Baha'i world during the interwar period. The present paper is intended as one of a series of studies of these letters.<sup>1</sup>

There are a total of 150 letters for the 1922–1937 period from Shoghi Effendi or one of his secretaries in the compilation *Messages to the Antipodes*.<sup>2</sup> From an academic standpoint, this is the most useful of the compilations of his messages so far assembled in that it both clearly differentiates the passages originally penned by Shoghi Effendi and by his secretaries, and identifies the name of the secretary responsible for each of the letters. It is also excellently footnoted. Unfortunately, as with all the presently available compilations, we do not have copies or summaries of the letters received from the Australian and New Zealand Baha'is to which these letters are largely replies. This obscures one element of context, but in most cases, it does not seem to prevent us from understanding the concerns that Shoghi Effendi wanted to convey, nor the context in Australia and New Zealand as he perceived it.

It will be noted that with the exception of a few letters written entirely by Shoghi Effendi, most of the letters take the form of a reply to a received letter by the secretary followed by a brief postscript from Shoghi Effendi, adding to, amplifying or emphasizing certain points in the secretary's letter. There are only a few letters without such a postscript. The secretaries commonly state that Shoghi Effendi had 'instructed' or 'directed' them to say such-and-such, and it seems obvious that Shoghi Effendi had almost always read and approved the secretary's reply as well as the received letter or letters. There is only one instance of a letter dealing with a substantive issue in which it seems possible that a secretary may have given his own answer rather than that of Shoghi Effendi (See section 7, below).<sup>3</sup> To avoid confusion, I have generally indicated which passages come from secretaries rather than directly from Shoghi Effendi.

The paper is divided into the following sections: The beginnings of Baha'i activities in Australia and New Zealand and the early growth of local Baha'i communities (section 2); the formation of the National Spiritual Assembly (3); the Dunns (4); the *Herald of the South* (5); indigenes (6); and racial prejudice (7).

## 2. Beginnings

2.1. **The first Baha'is.** Australia and New Zealand developed as British settler colonies during the nineteenth century, achieving the status of semi-independent British Dominions in 1901 and 1907 respectively. There was a lone Baha'i in New Zealand as early as c.1912 (Miss Margaret Stevenson (1865–1941) in Auckland), but systematic Baha'i activities only began with the arrival of pioneer Baha'i teachers in Australia – John Henry Hyde Dunn (1855–1941) and his wife Clara (1869–1960) – in April 1920. Of British origins, the Dunns (see section 4 below) had become Baha'is in the United States, deciding to move to Australia in response to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's call for international missionary expansion of the Baha'i Movement in *The Tablets of the Divine Plan* (1916–17). Already in his sixties, Hyde worked as a travelling salesman, using his mobility as a means of presenting the Faith throughout Australia (by July 1923 he had visited 225 towns). With Hyde speaking to groups such as the Theosophists and New Thought movement, and weekly meetings at the Dunns' home, a widespread circle of seekers became interested in the Baha'i teachings.

The first Australians to become Baha'is – both late in 1922 – were Oswald Whitaker, a Sydney optometrist, and Effie Baker, a Melbourne photographer and model maker. There were soon sufficient Baha'is to form spiritual assemblies in four of the state capitals, Melbourne, Victoria (December 1923); Perth, Western Australia (July 1924); Adelaide, South Australia (December 1924); and Sydney, New South Wales (April 1925). A Baha'i group was also established in Brisbane (Queensland) and there was a lone Baha'i in Hobart (Tasmania) for a while. The Dunns also visited New Zealand in December 1922 – January 1923, making contact with Margaret Stevenson, and helping to establish a Baha'i group in Auckland (an assembly was formed in 1926).<sup>4</sup> Clara Dunn maintained 'a continuous stream of correspondence' to encourage and nurture the new Baha'is, a crucial contribution given the fewness of their numbers and their widespread geographical dispersal.

2.2. **Early letters.** Shoghi Effendi appears to have first established communications with the Baha'is in Australia on 19 December 1922, cabling the Dunns that he was 'Awaiting lovingly glad tidings of the Australian Friends', and the next day writing to thank the Australian Baha'is for their news (presumably a cabled response to his enquiry), expressing his joy that the 'Voice of God' had been raised in 'that far-away continent', and had attracted 'such a promising number of ardent and faithful lovers of Bahá'u'lláh'.

He offered them – 'My dearest co-workers in that distant land' – his 'heartfelt love and sympathy'; the assurance of his 'unfailing assistance' in 'the great work of service to mankind' which was now 'so gloriously unfolding itself' to their eyes; and his prayers that 'the seeds of faith and loving fellowship' that they were now casting in 'the soil of hearts' might germinate 'and swell the ever increasing number of the valiant hosts of Bahá'.

He eagerly awaited news of the extension of their activities, the widening of their correspondence 'with the various spiritual centres throughout the world', the plans they contemplated for the spreading of the Movement, and the means they would use to speedily execute their plans. Australia, he noted, was 'remote from the turmoil and restlessness of a weary world' (AUS 1).

In subsequent letters to the Baha'is of Australia and New Zealand in the early months of 1923, he exalted that such a 'deep and widespread interest' in 'the truths of this glorious Revelation' had been awakened in their land, and urged them to do all they could to establish a number of Baha'i centres in that distant and 'promising continent'. They should 'scatter over that vast continent', 'establish themselves in various localities', and then travel in the vicinity of each of these centres to endeavour to attract 'the most able' and 'enlightened' of people to the Faith. Whenever possible, they should also travel to the Islands of the 'South Seas' to attract many souls. He prayed that their energy would never slacken, their faith and courage never fade, and that they would advance 'steadily and peacefully' to attain their hearts' desire (AUS 14–16).

The expansion of the Faith in Australia and New Zealand pleased Shoghi Effendi greatly. Writing to the Dunns on Shoghi's behalf in April 1925, J. E. Esslemont reported that few things had contributed more to Shoghi Effendi's happiness over the past couple of years than the progress of the Faith in Australasia. 'We' (presumably Shoghi, Esslemont, and the Haifa Baha'is) anticipated even better progress in the future as the new Baha'is whom the Dunns had been training and teaching themselves became active workers for the Cause (AUS 24–25).

Again, in a letter of December 1925, Shoghi himself referred to his 'dearly-beloved and self-sacrificing brothers and sisters' in a land which held 'so great a promise for the future'. He had followed the progress of their activities 'with keen interest', 'ever-increasing confidence', and 'a deep sense of pride and gratitude' (AUS 35). Again, in 1926, Shoghi referred to his 'brightest hopes for the future awakening of promising New Zealand' (AUS 42), and to Australia's future as 'one of the most important centres in the Baha'i world', for it was both materially and spiritually 'rich with many & varied possibilities' (AUS 48). Writing on his behalf, Ruhi Afnan referred to the New Zealanders' 'breadth of mind and lack of traditional drawbacks',

which showed better prospects than many other places (AUS 46), and to the newness of the country making the Australians more receptive to new ideas – such that the Cause could spread very rapidly there if it was properly presented (AUS 48), whilst in a 1927 letter to New Zealand written on Shoghi's behalf, Ethel Rosenberg referred to minds being more open in newer countries, and the people 'more ready and willing to receive this great message' (AUS 49).

2.3. **A definite quickening of pace occurred in 1924–25**, with Martha Root's<sup>5</sup> first visit to Australia and New Zealand (late June-mid November 1924); the first pilgrimage from the Antipodes to the Baha'i World Centre (a group of five: Margaret Stevenson, Sarah Blundell and her children, Ethel and Hugh, from New Zealand, together with Effie Baker from Australia for three weeks in the Spring of 1925); and the publication of a new Baha'i magazine, *Herald of the South*, by Bertram Dewing in New Zealand from September 1925 (see below).

Root's visit was marked by her customary dynamism. Often giving two lectures a day – five on one day in Wellington and a total of some 95 during her whole visit – she contacted a great variety of groups (including the inevitable Spiritualists, Theosophists, and Esperantists). She also gave her first ever radio broadcasts (in Perth and Melbourne), and in Auckland had extensive contact with socialist groups.<sup>6</sup> As in her talks in other parts of the world, she sometime spoke about the Baha'i teachings and sometimes directly about the Faith, as well as speaking on more general issues. Writing early in 1924, in anticipation of her arrival, Shoghi Effendi expressed the hope that meeting and collaborating with Root would stimulate and advance the work of the Baha'is, fortify their spirit, and reinforce their endeavours to penetrate new fields that had not yet been explored, wherein they might achieve 'signal victories' (AUS 20), a prescient comment given Root's successful use of radio during her visit.

As to the pilgrims, Shoghi wrote in March 1925 that they had arrived safely in Haifa, and would, he trusted, return to 'their respective fields of labour' with 'fresh enthusiasm and renewed vigour, determined to do their utmost for the spread and ultimate triumph' of the Cause (AUS 23; see also AUS 25, 26). Apart from inspiring its participants, the pilgrimage visit had one unexpected consequence: Effie Baker decided to return to Haifa after a visit to Britain, thereafter working as custodian of the newly established Western Pilgrim House until 1936, and acting as a conduit of news and advice from Shoghi Effendi to her homeland.

The enthusiasm of this period apparently encouraged the Dunns to think that it might be possible to establish a national spiritual assembly for Australia and New Zealand. This was not yet to be. The new Baha'is were for the most part middle-aged women drawn from the 'cultic milieu' of the 'metaphysical movements' (alternative new age movements), who drifted in and out of various groups, and were suspicious of 'dogma and ritual', as well as of strict definitions of Baha'i membership: thus of some 149 individuals who became sufficiently involved in the Faith to be considered Baha'is up to 1934, only half (74) were still members in that year (see Table 1). In this context, it was difficult to create stable organizational structures, and all of the early Australian local assemblies subsequently lapsed, to be

Community	1934 membership (approx.)	Aggregate nos. to date (approx.)
<b>Australia</b>		
Adelaide	19	49
Brisbane	3	3
Hobart	3	3
Melbourne	5	26
Sydney	28	35
Perth	4	13
<b>New Zealand</b>		
Auckland	12	20
<b>Totals</b>	74	149

*Table 1: Antipodean Baha'i numbers up to 1934. Source: Hassall, 'Baha'i Faith in Australia', p.6. Note: In the absence of definite criteria of membership prior to 1934, the figures are approximate, and include those who were 'closely associated' with the Baha'i Movement as well as definite members. They are calculated from individual and assembly correspondence.*

reformed later when the Baha'is had developed a greater understanding of Baha'i administrative concepts: Adelaide in 1929, Sydney in 1932, Perth in 1936, and Melbourne effectively not until 1948.<sup>7</sup>

2.4. **General encouragement and guidance.** Shoghi Effendi clearly wanted to build carefully on the foundation that had been established. Writing in March 1925, he encouraged each of the newly elected local spiritual assemblies to initiate a 'well-conceived' campaign of teaching within its own province, and to do their utmost 'to protect the interests and extend the sphere of the Cause'. It was now of paramount importance to advance the teaching work, by whatever means was available, so that the number of dedicated Baha'is, who would 'give their unreserved allegiance to the Cause' and 'consecrate their lives' in service to Bahá'u'lláh, would increase. The Baha'is should also consult as to whether it was 'feasible and practicable' to elect a joint national assembly for the two countries. If it was, the election should take place during the Riḍván period. He enclosed a copy of his general letter on administration to assist them in the running of their assemblies (AUS 23). He hoped that it would also be possible to establish assemblies in the other state capitals. If it was possible, the Dunns should revisit all the centres where they had already taught 'in order to water the seedlings that have taken root and to sow fresh good seed in the prepared ground'. They should also visit Brisbane (AUS 24–25, on Shoghi's behalf).

Writing in June 1925, Shoghi Effendi was delighted to learn of the continuing intention to form a national assembly in 1926 (AUS 35), but seems to have expressed no regrets when the assembly was not formed (with only a small number of Baha'is scattered across a vast continent, and the Baha'is

themselves new in the Faith, the formation of an assembly at so early a date would have been a quite remarkable achievement). Instead, he offered his encouragement, expressing the hope (in 1928) that the Dunns would be able to continue to give the established local assemblies their parental care and guidance, ‘for they surely still need it’. Then, with new local assemblies formed; an increase in the understanding and study of the teachings and mission of the Faith among the individual Baha’is; and ‘with the fruits of sober enthusiasm and mature thought’, he hoped that the Dunns would be strengthened and spared to help establish the national assembly (AUS 53, on Shoghi’s behalf). He wished that ‘promising and progressive Baha’i centres’ would be established in all the large towns and cities of Australia, and the country become ‘a leading torch-bearer for the spiritual regeneration of man and for the establishment of universal brotherhood in the world’ (AUS 54, on Shoghi’s behalf). Pending the formation of the national assembly, the Australasian Baha’is should keep in close contact with the Dunns, seeking their advice and opinion, as they were the ‘loving parents’ and ‘guiding star’ of the community (AUS 52 [1927]).

2.5. A definite impetus towards a more structured Baha’i community was **Keith Ransom-Kehler’s visit to Australia and New Zealand in 1931**.<sup>8</sup> This had a double impact: the conversion of a number of very active new Baha’is, and an enormous deepening of the Baha’is’ knowledge of the ‘Administrative Order’.<sup>9</sup> In New Zealand, she also made effective contact with some groups of Maoris (see below). Amongst those who became Baha’is as a result of her visit were Stanley and Mariette Bolton in Sydney, and Hilda Brooks in Adelaide. (the future first secretary of the national spiritual assembly when it was formed in 1934).

After Ransom-Kehler’s visit, Shoghi Effendi wrote to Hyde Dunn that the Australian Baha’is had needed someone to come and stimulate them a little. This she had surely done, and it was now very necessary not to let that enthusiasm subside and cool down. As their father, Hyde should see that the lamp she had kindled was kept burning (AUS 68). To another Baha’i he voiced his prayer that ‘the scope’ of their activities might be widened, and the foundations of Baha’i institutions ‘in that remote corner of the world’ consolidated (AUS 69). To the Sydney Baha’is he expressed his hope that the Australian Baha’is would now ‘unitedly strive to spread the Message’, would not let any obstacle hinder ‘their onward march’, and continue to be animated by the devotion and sincerity which had hitherto animated their activities (AUS 70, on Shoghi’s behalf). He hoped that their numbers would ‘daily increase’, and that they would become ‘the source of inspiration and hope and guidance to all the people of that continent’ (AUS 72, on Shoghi’s behalf).

### 3. The formation of the National Spiritual Assembly

3.1. **Shoghi Effendi provides general guidance.** By November 1932, the idea of forming a joint national assembly for the two countries was again under active consideration. Shoghi Effendi entrusted the task of coordinating the preparatory work to the Adelaide local assembly (BW5: 128), and expressed his delight at the possibility that the national assembly would at last be formed: the time had come, he believed, for the Baha’is to organize them-

selves into a ‘solidly-united administrative body’, and so increase the efficiency and success of their teaching work. He hoped that it would soon be possible to form the assembly, and thus coordinate the efforts of the various local assemblies. The local assemblies needed to consult together about the practical issues involved first, however. Most particularly, they had to consider whether it would be possible to ensure the successful functioning of a national assembly, making sure that its members would be able to meet regularly; direct the national committees as well as the local assemblies and groups under their jurisdiction effectively; establish a national Baha’i fund; hold annual conventions; and coordinate the various branches of Baha’i activity ‘with efficiency, harmony & vigour’ (AUS 78–79).

He was confident that great results would be achieved through their ‘perseverance, enthusiasm and devotion’, but they should not be in a hurry. It was not an easy matter to form a national spiritual assembly – ‘incalculable difficulties’ were involved. The Australian Baha’is should therefore proceed ‘slowly and carefully’, and act ‘with great caution and wisdom’, so that they did not jeopardise the best interests of the Cause. They should follow the example set by the American Baha’is as closely as possible in their attempt to ‘widen and consolidate the nascent institutions of the Faith in their land’, asking the advice of the American national assembly, and keeping in ‘close and constant touch with its members’, most of whom were highly experienced in matters related to the ‘actual functioning’ of Baha’i administrative institutions. They should also study *Bahá’í Administration*, the compilation of Shoghi Effendi’s early letters to the American Baha’is, many of which dealt with administrative matters, as this was ‘an indispensable book for a thorough understanding of the spirit as well as the form’ of Baha’i administration, and ‘upon its study much of our understanding of the Cause depends’. Both their local and national administration should follow the principles embodied in the assembly by-laws and declarations of trust adopted by the Americans (AUS 85–86).<sup>10</sup>

Writing to the Sydney local assembly in June 1933, he asked them to concentrate their efforts during the year on the essential means for the establishment of the national assembly. The assembly would become one of the ‘national pillars’ of the supreme, universal, and ‘world-embracing’ Universal House of Justice promised in the Baha’i writings. Its formation would give new impetus to the development of the Cause in their land (AUS 86–87). Again, in December, his secretary wrote to the Adelaide assembly expressing Shoghi’s ‘inexpressible joy’ at learning of the steadfastness, loyalty, devotion, and sacrifice with which the Australian Baha’is were working to establish their national assembly. When formed, it would coordinate and unite the teaching as well as the administrative activities of the Baha’is (AUS 90).

**3.2. Preparations.** Preparation was evidently not easy, the Adelaide assembly writing to Shoghi Effendi early in February 1934 concerning the various difficulties that the Baha’is were experiencing. In reply, Shoghi stated that they should not consider establishment of the assembly as an ‘impending obligation’. It was an important step, and should be taken only when circumstances were favourable. They should not take any definite action unless they saw that their plan could be carried out. He was ‘fully conscious’ of

the obstacles that impeded the attainment of their goal, and prayed that [‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s] spirit would enable them to overcome them. As to practicalities, as the number of Baha’is in Australia and New Zealand was relatively few, the number of delegates should be small (9 or 19 rather than 95). These should be elected to represent the localities in which local assemblies were currently established on a basis of proportional representation (AUS 92).

By later in the same month, however, the Baha’is appear to have overcome their misgivings, Shoghi writing enthusiastically to Clara Dunn of his joy that the ‘historic decision’ had been made. It marked a ‘turning point’ for that ‘far-away continent’. His gratitude for ‘this latest expression’ of the spirit of determination, courage, and ‘whole-hearted loyalty’ which so powerfully animated the Australasian Baha’is, and which would, in the years to come, enable them to forge ahead in their efforts to establish and expand the administrative order in their continent. It was a new and momentous step which they had been inspired to take. It would surely bring them into closer and deeper contact with the Baha’is in the rest of the world by providing them with the opportunity to discharge more powerfully and effectively their manifold and sacred responsibilities for the international promotion and safeguarding of the Faith. The formation of every new national assembly was a step forward in the evolution of the Baha’i administration, and not until the formation of a sufficient number of national assemblies could there be any hope for the future expansion of the Cause. The entire Baha’i world welcomed the decision of the Australasian Baha’is, and were deeply grateful for the spirit that had prompted it. He prayed that the blessings of Bahá’u’lláh would assist the deliberations of their first convention, and advised that in the conduct of their convention and other administrative matters, they should follow the American pattern subject to due consideration of local differences (AUS 93).

**3.3. The new National Spiritual Assembly.** The first convention of the Baha’is of Australia and New Zealand was accordingly held during 15–18 May 1934 in Sydney, and their first national spiritual assembly elected (BW6: 23). Only three local assemblies existed at this point (Adelaide and Sydney in Australia, and Auckland in New Zealand), and the nine delegates were equally apportioned amongst these, as follows: Miss Hilda Brooks, Mr. Robert Brown, and Mrs. Silver Jackman from Adelaide; Mr. Hyde Dunn, Mrs. Jane Routh, and Mr. A. Oswald Whitaker from Sydney; and Mrs. Emily Axford, Miss Ethel Blundell, and Miss Margaret Stevenson from Auckland. Seven of the delegates were elected onto the national assembly, the newly-elected assembly members being:

Mr. Percy (Perce) Almond (Adelaide, treasurer)  
 Miss Ethel Blundell (Auckland)\*  
 Miss Hilda Brooks (Adelaide, secretary)\*  
 Mr. Robert Brown (Adelaide, chairman)\*  
 Mr. Hyde Dunn (Sydney)\*  
 Mrs. Silver Jackman (Adelaide)\*  
 Mrs. Charlotte Moffitt (Sydney)  
 Miss Margaret Stevenson (Auckland)\*  
 Mr. A. Oswald Whitaker (Sydney, vice-chairman)\*

\*Delegates

Shoghi Effendi cabled that he was ‘inexpressibly gladdened’ at the holding of the convention, and assured the delegates of his ‘abounding gratitude’ as well as his prayers and love (AUS 95). To the Adelaide assembly he wrote of his joy to learn of this ‘momentous step’. The Australasian Baha’is would surely be ‘reinforced by the hosts of the Kingdom’, and deserved ‘the praise and admiration’ of their fellow Baha’is throughout the world. The foundations of the Universal House of Justice were now being laid in their country through their devoted efforts, and constancy, cooperation, unity, and ‘steadfast adherence to the spiritual and administrative principles of the Faith’ were essential (AUS 95).

**3.4. Initial guidance.** In July, Shoghi wrote his first letter to the secretary (Hilda Brooks) of the newly-formed national spiritual assembly, expressing his joy and gratitude at reading her letter, and his ‘grateful appreciation’ at the efforts that had gone into making the convention such a successful and promising meeting. The formation of the assembly was a triumph which would inevitably bring about ‘a renewed and deeper spiritual consciousness’ among all the Australasian Baha’is. He hoped and prayed that the assembly would soon be able to extend and further consolidate its national and international activities. He wished to be sent copies of the minutes of their meetings, and urged them to keep in close touch with their sister national assemblies around the world (AUS 96).

He wrote separately to the Dunns, describing the formation of the assembly as the fruition and crown of their efforts, and asking to be sent three copies each of the photographs of the convention delegates and the members of the newly elected national assembly for display in the mansion of Bahjí, as evidence of the tremendous and unsurpassed progress achieved by the Faith in ‘those far-off lands’. He reminded them – and through them the members of the national assembly – that the convention should be held during the Ridván period, and not 15 May as had been the case with their first convention. He prayed continuously that they, together with the assembly members who were their collaborators would gain through God’s unfailing guidance and love a fresh and ‘ever-increasing stimulus’ to their ‘collective endeavours’ (AUS 97).

Writing to the national assembly again in October 1934, Shoghi assured them of his constant prayers for the extension of their activities so that the ‘splendid era’ they had inaugurated might redound to the glory and honour of the Most Great Name [Bahá’u’lláh]. He was proud of the manner in which the Baha’is of Australia and New Zealand had arisen to discharge ‘their sacred and pressing responsibilities’. Surely, great triumphs were in store for them if they persevered in their ‘mighty task’. He hoped that through divine confirmations the work of the assembly would serve to give an increasing impetus to the progress of the faith in Australasia (AUS 99).

Again, in January 1935, he wrote to the national assembly expressing his joy and admiration at the efforts of the Baha’is to spread the Cause and consolidate its administrative institutions. He urged them to persevere, remain united, not relax their determination, and ‘strive with all their might to extend the scope of their meritorious activities’ (AUS 102). In April, he expressed his pleasure at how the assembly was functioning, almost a year after its first formation. It was making steady progress, and

was wisely and effectively adjusting itself to ‘the general conditions and specific requirements’ of the region. Problems which had seemed like insurmountable obstacles a year previously had now been partly or completely resolved. The assembly had vindicated its ability and power to function as a well-organized and united body, this despite facing ‘manifold difficulties’ (unstated in the letter) which only ‘the all-conquering spirit of the Faith’ could overcome – difficulties, indeed, which had threatened to undermine the very foundations of the assembly. He fully approved the decisions the assembly had made regarding specific matters (again unstated), and urged the assembly to take the necessary steps to achieve legal incorporation as soon as it had adopted its own Declaration of Trust and bylaws (AUS 103–4). In May, he wrote how he was deeply touched by the evident devotion, incessant activity, and ‘undeviating loyalty’ of the Australasian Baha’is. Through their ‘high endeavours’, they had laid the foundations of the Baha’i Administrative Order in their continent, and were seeking to rear the institutions of Bahá’u’lláh’s ‘World Order’ on that basis. He prayed that Bahá’u’lláh would ‘increasingly sustain’, guide, and bless their ‘meritorious’ and ‘historic’ activities (AUS 106).

**3.5. Into the Assembly’s second year.** Writing to the newly-elected national assembly in June 1935, Shoghi congratulated its members on the success of the community’s second convention, and prayed that the assembly would increasingly grow in unity and strength over the years, and would demonstrate its capacity to cope with the ‘manifold problems and difficulties’ which it would inevitably have to confront as it forged ahead in its ‘slow but steady progress towards the firmer establishment of Bahá’u’lláh’s World Order’ throughout the Antipodes. He was grateful and indebted to the Australasian Baha’is for their ‘splendid achievements’ in Baha’i teaching and administration (AUS 106–7).

In September, he wrote of his pleasure at receiving the assembly’s detailed report, and learning of the good order, efficiency, and, above all, ‘perfect spirit of unity and fellowship’ with which the assembly’s meetings were conducted. The few other obstacles they faced would disappear in time: the foundation had been firmly laid down, and the work was henceforth bound to develop and expand. ‘The Beloved’ [presumably ‘Abdu’l-Bahá] was surely watching over and blessing their accomplishments, plans, methods, efforts and services. Shoghi would continue to pray for the ‘consolidation and uninterrupted expansion’ of their activities. They should never relax or despair. They had raised and nurtured a ‘tender plant’, and ultimately it would gather beneath its shadow ‘the whole of that far-off and promising continent’. He approved the decision to appoint special correspondents to keep records of Baha’i activities in Australia and New Zealand for the *Bahá’i World* volumes: it was a vitally important task, and needed to be performed with ‘thoroughness, efficiency and vigour’. Their assembly was ‘the furthest pillar of the Universal House of Justice’ (AUS 107–8). Writing to Clara Dunn in March 1936, he expressed his delight at the assembly’s ‘steady progress’ (AUS 111, on Shoghi’s behalf).

**3.6. Activities.** A gradual extension of the assembly’s activities is discernible over the next few years. Following its establishment, the assembly had

taken charge of publication of *The Herald of the South* magazine (see 4, below), the importance of which Shoghi Effendi continued to emphasize. In April 1935, the assembly sent its first contribution to Shoghi Effendi for the Baha'i international fund (see below). In April 1936, Shoghi directed the attention of the assembly to the importance of teaching – 'the cornerstone of its activities', and 'the sole basis on which the administrative structure can flourish' – and called for a 'strenuous, systematic and continuous' teaching effort to be now made at both the individual and collective level. He also asked the assembly to begin sending him detailed reports of the activities of its local assemblies (AUS 112).

Meanwhile, he wrote to Hyde Dunn of the paramount importance of the teaching work, and the need for it to be systematically, constantly, and energetically conducted by both individual Baha'is and their assemblies (AUS 114). In June he reminded the assembly of the necessity of taking the preparatory steps to secure legal incorporation as this would give it more stability, as well as an added influence, particularly in the eyes of the general public. The local assemblies should also seek official recognition (AUS 116).

Also in 1936, the national assembly determined to issue a regular newsletter every three months. Shoghi Effendi was delighted with this proposal, stating that it could render 'a unique and much needed help' to the national assembly's efforts to establish the Baha'i administrative system and make its institutions function more effectively. It would keep the Baha'is well-informed about Baha'i events and developments, and would help to consolidate their 'organic unity' by bringing them within the 'full orbit' of the assembly's jurisdiction. The bulletin should also be used to consolidate the foundations of the local assemblies (AUS 117). After receiving the first issue of the newsletter (the *Bahá'í Quarterly*, dated October 1936), Shoghi expressed his satisfaction. It was a new step for the further consolidation of the administration in their countries. He hoped that it would 'fully serve its purpose' by intensifying 'the spirit of cooperation between the national assembly and all the local assemblies, groups, and isolated Baha'is. If properly utilized, it could be of 'inestimable value' by further enhancing the Baha'is' knowledge and understanding of both the principles and actual functioning of the administration of the Faith, and by maintaining – or better, intensifying – their desire to promote and safeguard the interests of the Faith. He appealed to every Australasian Baha'i to make full and continued use of the newsletter, and to consider it as 'a most effective means' to their closer fellowship and deeper understanding of their duties and responsibilities as builders of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order (AUS 121. On Shoghi's behalf).

3.7. **Siegfried Schopflocher's visit (1936).**<sup>11</sup> Again in 1936, the veteran Canadian Baha'i, Siegfried Schopflocher visited New Zealand and Australia as part of a tour which also took him to India and the Near East. Shoghi described Schopflocher as one of the most distinguished of the Western Baha'is, and had asked the national assembly to arrange for him to visit all of the Baha'i communities (including those in New Zealand if possible), making every effort to ensure that his visit was as productive as possible. It was a splendid opportunity for them to enrich their experiences in the Faith (AUS 118–19).

The visit was productive, with Schopflocher addressing public meetings as well as talking with the Baha'is about aspects of Baha'i administration

and the importance of Baha'i community life (BW7: 41–42). Writing to Baha'is in New Zealand and Australia in December, Shoghi expressed his pleasure at the reports he had received of the warm welcome which had been given to Schopflocher, this being evidence of the 'strong ties of fellowship' which united the Baha'is throughout the world. He hoped that the visit would serve to 'stimulate afresh' their energies (AUS 122, 123. On Shoghi's behalf). To the national assembly, he later wrote that he hoped that the spirit released by the visit would long sustain the Baha'is in their 'heavy task' of expanding the foundations of the Baha'i administrative order throughout the continent (AUS 125). To the Dunns, he wrote that Schopflocher's own report indicated that 'wonderful progress' had been achieved in Australasia, an achievement to which they had contributed a 'unique & exemplary' share (AUS 124).

3.8. Another development in 1936 was the initial planning of what was to become a **Baha'i Summer School at the village of Yerrinbool**, south of Sydney. This was the brainchild of Stanley and Mariette Bolton, who wished to use their property there for this purpose, and who raised the possibility with Shoghi Effendi. Replying in December 1936, Shoghi expressed his delight at the suggestion. Their intention was splendid and 'highly praiseworthy'. It was a 'magnificent plan' and an 'historic work'. They should submit the plan to the national assembly for its consideration and approval before making a definite start, however (AUS 123).

The national assembly evidently approved, and in May 1937, an official ceremony was held to 'open' the property. Writing to Hyde Dunn, Shoghi expressed his particular joy at this development. It was 'clear evidence' that the community was alive and progressing satisfactorily. He wished the Baha'is to help in whatever way they could to further this institution, which, if maintained and developed, could be of invaluable help in teaching the Cause (AUS 129). To Stanley Bolton, he expressed his joy at an initial meeting held at the school, and offered his 'hearty congratulations' to all those involved in establishing and running it, particularly the members of the Summer School Committee. This was a new national institution for them – a 'notable and historic step'. He hoped and prayed that the Baha'is would continue to support it, so that it would 'develop and flourish', and become a centre for 'intense and nation-wide teaching activity'. They should realize that it was their responsibility to maintain it and assist in its development. Future generations would 'befittingly extol' the work they had 'so nobly and splendidly initiated' (AUS 130).

3.9. **Expansion.** Baha'i expansion in Australasia at this time was painfully slow, with only a few new believers each year. The fewness of the number of Baha'is, however, meant that even such small gains were significant, as in March 1937, when Shoghi Effendi wrote to the national assembly of his pleasure at learning of two newly-enrolled Baha'is in Sydney (AUS 127), or other messages in which he welcomed the news of the enrolment of a single Baha'i, or the interest of a particular individual in the Faith. Nevertheless, there was a gradual extension in the number of localities in which Baha'is resided, rising to fourteen (10 in Australia, 4 in New Zealand) by 1937 (Table 2). The Perth Baha'is also formed a new local spiritual assembly in

Year	Australia	New Zealand	Total
1925 (BYB1 <sup>12</sup> )	5	1	6
1928 (BW2)	6	1	7
1930 (BW3)	6	2	8
1931 (BW4)	6	2	8
1933 (BW5)	7	3	10
1935 (BW6)	7	4	11
1937 (BW7)	10	4	14

Sources: BYB1: 102–103; BW2: 182–3; 3: 217–18, 222; 4: 271, 273; 5: 426, 430; 6: 507, 510; 7: 556. Note: The list of localities supposedly possessing local assemblies seems inaccurate and is not included here.

Table 2: Growth in the number of Baha'i localities in Australasia.

1936, raising the number of local assemblies to four. Of the Australian localities in 1937, 2 were in New South Wales, 4 in South Australia, 3 in Victoria, and 1 in Western Australia. The Baha'is who had formerly lived in Queensland and Tasmania were no longer listed as being there, and as yet there were no Baha'is in the remote and sparsely populated Northern Territory.

3.10. **The problem of distance.** One continuing problem for the Australasian Baha'is was the difficulty and expense of travel. Australia is a large land mass (7,692,300 sq km / 2,969,228 sq ml, including Tasmania), and most of its population lived (as they live now) in a series of small coastal pockets surrounding the major cities. Thus in the southeast, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane are each about 500 miles distant from the next, and in the 1930s, this entailed train journeys of a day and a half to travel from one state capital to the next. Perth in the far west was 1,350 miles from Adelaide by sea, and its Baha'is thus largely isolated from the rest. To travel from New Zealand to Sydney was a four-day journey across the Tasman Sea (BW7: 26, 159).

These realities of distance had a major impact on the newly-developing national community and administration. Baha'is in the various local communities were not able to visit other Baha'is easily, and it was not until the late 1930s, for example, that members of the national assembly travelled from other centres to Melbourne and Brisbane to give public talks – the first in those cities since the early visits of the Dunns (AUS 78n). In these circumstances, correspondence and the circulation of *The Herald of the South* and the *Bahá'í Quarterly* had a particular importance in developing a broader sense of 'national' Baha'i identity. Similarly, the national assembly initially held only one week-long meeting each year, and for the rest of the time worked mainly by correspondence between its members. Again, after the first national convention in 1934, the inability of Baha'is to afford delegate's travelling expenses meant that the next national convention was not held until 1937, annual elections for the national assembly in the interim being conducted by post. Both the 1934 and 1937 conventions were held in Sydney as this was the easiest Australian city for the New Zealand delegates to travel to (BW7: 159).

The impact of distance was particularly severe for the Baha'is of Perth, who elected delegates for the national convention between 1937 and 1942, but had insufficient funds for travel expenses.<sup>13</sup> Shoghi Effendi addressed this issue directly in November 1936: the fact that an assembly or community was financially unable to defray the expenses of its delegate or delegates was not a sufficient reason to deprive it of its 'sacred right of participation' in the national election and other convention activities. Every assembly had this right, no matter how poor it was. There could be no compromise with this principle. It was absolutely essential that the Baha'is understand and faithfully apply this principle, and it was the duty of the national assembly to ensure that it was carried out (AUS 120, on Shoghi's behalf). To the Perth Baha'is themselves, he later wrote of his 'keen appreciation and abiding gratitude for their self-sacrificial labours for the Cause'. He prayed that the obstacles they faced in sending a representative to the convention would be removed, and in particular that the financial position of the local Baha'is would gradually improve, enabling them to participate in this important national gathering (AUS 126. On Shoghi's behalf). In the event, it was not possible for them to attend, and in March 1937, Shoghi expressed his regret that full attendance at the convention would not be possible due to the long distances between the various centres (AUS 127).

3.11. **Identity.** As in other Western communities, the early Australasian Baha'is often inclined towards an 'inclusivistic' rather than 'exclusivistic' understanding of their religion<sup>14</sup>. Indeed, with much of the initial focus of the Dunns' teaching activities being directed towards members of the various 'new age' movements, such attitudes were particularly well established. Thus, many of the early Baha'is had ambiguous religious identities or multiple religious memberships, and there was a resistance by some both to stricter definition of Baha'i membership and a more organized form of community life. By the 1930s, Adelaide had become the most 'administration-minded' of the local assemblies, and proposed the adoption of an application form for Baha'i membership: the Auckland assembly initially objecting that this would only mark the beginning of 'dogma and ritual'.<sup>15</sup> In the event, Shoghi Effendi approved the proposed form (AUS 85), but the question clearly remained controversial amongst the Australasian Baha'is, Shoghi subsequently advising that the issue be left for the national assembly to decide when it was elected (AUS 92). 'Inclusivism' was particularly well entrenched in the Melbourne Baha'i group – initially one of the largest – Ransom-Kehler complaining after a visit in October 1931 that some of those serving on the 'so-called' local assembly were not Baha'is at all, one leading Baha'i thinking that orthodox Christians working in their churches were of just as much value as the Baha'is in establishing the Kingdom of God, a view she clearly found incompatible with being a 'real' Baha'i. The next year, one of the local Baha'is reporting that only 'two or three' were left, the others having disassociated themselves because they felt that 'they could not give an assurance of love and loyalty in all things to the Guardian'.<sup>16</sup> After the national assembly was formed a strict 'enrolments' procedure was instituted, would-be Baha'is having to associate with the community for a full year before the local assembly met with them to determine whether they

were sufficiently well-versed in the teachings and laws to be admitted as a voting member.<sup>17</sup>

3.12. **Donations.** Shoghi Effendi often praised the Australasian Baha'is for their financial contributions to the international fund in Haifa. Several of the local assemblies had early established the habit of sending off contributions to Haifa for various projects (e.g. the completion of the Western Pilgrim House; help for the Baha'is in Iran), and the national assembly continued this tradition. Thus in May 1935, Shoghi acknowledged a contribution of twenty pounds sterling, writing to Silver Jackman (the then national treasurer) of his loving appreciation of the spirit that had led them to make this donation. He prayed that God would abundantly reward them for their self-sacrifices in this connection (AUS 105). In May 1936, he acknowledged the receipt of another twenty pounds, writing that he well realized what sacrifices had been made in order to send it: The Australian and New Zealand Baha'is were few in numbers, and they were now bearing many expenses to maintain the Dunns (the assembly also faced financial difficulties with the *Herald of the South*). Their spirit of heroism and self-giving was wonderful. It would stand as landmarks in the history of the Faith in their countries, and attract the blessings and confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh like a magnet (AUS 114–15).

3.13. **Shoghi Effendi's continuing encouragement.** In May 1936, Shoghi again noted how much he appreciated the evidences of the Australasian Baha'is' devotion, steadfastness, and loyalty and his gratitude for their determination to persevere and overcome all the obstacles in their path (AUS 115). In June, he praised the national assembly members' 'incessant efforts' for the Faith, expressing his pride at what they were doing (AUS 117). In September, he again wrote of his pride in their achievements, particularly as he knew the circumstances under which they laboured. Their pioneering work was arduous and 'highly meritorious'. Their fidelity, diligence, and perseverance were dear to his heart (AUS 118). In November, he noted that the 'foundations' which the assembly was now laying 'with such assiduous care and exemplary loyalty' constituted a service that was 'truly historic' and 'highly meritorious in the sight of God. He felt deeply indebted to them for 'such splendid achievements' (AUS 120–21). In February 1937, he wrote congratulating the members of the assembly and its committees on the 'marvellous progress thus far achieved'. Also expressing his delight at the progress of the national assembly secretary's activities and her 'splendid achievements in both the teaching and administrative spheres of Baha'i service' (AUS 126). In April 1937, he cabled his 'heartfelt congratulations' and 'ardent loving prayers' to the participants, and a few days later his immense appreciation at the 'magnificent spirit' animating the convention (AUS 129).

Writing to Hyde Dunn in May 1937, Shoghi stated that he was 'most satisfied' with the condition of the Faith in Australasia, and cherished the 'highest hopes' for the future of its Baha'i community. It was true that their numbers were small and their material resources limited, but it was a cause for rejoicing that the Faith had at last been 'firmly and permanently established' there; that with the passing of every year (even every month) 'some definite progress' was achieved; and that, despite internal and external

opposition, the community was slowly but steadily ‘forging ahead’, confident in the divine confirmations and guidance of Bahá’u’lláh (AUS 129, on Shoghi’s behalf). In August, he wrote to the national assembly that he was delighted with ‘the manifold evidences’ of progress achieved by the Baha’is under its direction. He was proud of what the Australian and New Zealand Baha’is had accomplished, highly approved of their plans and projected enterprises, felt grateful for the spirit that animated them, and cherished bright hopes for the extension of their activities. They had achieved much, both in the teaching and administrative work. The assembly had provided ‘wise and effective leadership’, and had functioned with a remarkable loyalty and efficiency ever since its inception. The success of the most recent convention indicated the steady consolidation of the assembly and the loyalty and attachment it had awakened among the body of the Baha’is. He hoped that this confidence and the assembly members’ own sense of their heavy responsibilities for the extension and consolidation of the Baha’i work would be further deepened during the coming year (AUS 131).

#### 4. The Dunns

Hyde and Clara Dunn occupied a unique role in the Australian Baha’i community during its formative period as pioneer teachers and ‘spiritual parents’ of the Baha’is.<sup>18</sup> Their parental role – and their age – was explicitly recognized by the Baha’is’ habit of calling them ‘Father’ and ‘Mother Dunn’ (This was presumably derived from the Dunns themselves, who followed the old-fashioned English habit of referring to each other as ‘Father’ and ‘Mother’). In Western Baha’i history, this central role of particular individuals within a Baha’i community is unusual, the only ready comparison that comes to mind being the initial role of Ibrahim Kheiralla in the early American Baha’i community up until the time of his defection from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (i.e. 1894–1900).

Hyde had been born in London in perhaps 1855 (different dates are given). As a young man he worked as a salesman, and later migrated to the United States with his first wife, Fanny. He became a Baha’i in Seattle in about 1905, after hearing the pioneer Baha’i teacher Nat Ward Fitzgerald, and himself became a dedicated Baha’i teacher. Clara had also been born in London (1869), and had migrated to Canada with her family when she was still a baby. Married as a teenager, she was soon widowed. Entrusting her infant son to an elder brother to care for, she migrated to the state of Washington to work. She was first introduced to the Baha’i Faith by Hyde in 1907. The couple married in 1917, following the death of Hyde’s first wife, and in 1919, determined to follow ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s call to travel to teach the Faith. They arrived in Sydney on 10 April 1920, and after an initial period of ill-health and financial difficulty, Hyde was able to get work as a travelling salesman for a local milk company (shortly taken over by Nestlé). Outperforming the other salesmen, he was promoted to work at the interstate level, and thus travel much more widely.

The Dunns together attracted large numbers of people to become interested in the Faith, and were the primary teachers of those Australians who became Baha’is in the 1920s. Hyde finally retired in 1933, at the age of 77. He served on the newly-established national spiritual assembly during its first year of existence, but early in 1935 had a stroke, after which he had

to greatly curtail his Baha'i activities. He died in Sydney on 17 February 1941, aged 85, and was posthumously designated as a Hand of the Cause by Shoghi Effendi on 26 April 1952.<sup>19</sup> Clara resumed travelling to visit the Baha'is throughout Australia after Hyde's death, initiating what was effectively a 'second chapter' of her Baha'i activities. She was appointed a Hand of the Cause by Shoghi Effendi as one of the second contingent, announced on 29 February 1952.<sup>20</sup> She died on 18 November 1960, aged 91.

Shoghi Effendi was enormously impressed by this elderly couple who had embarked on such a challenging new path at an advanced age, and then pursued it with enormous dedication and significant success, and during Hyde's lifetime he repeatedly heaped praise on them both for what they were doing. Thus, writing of the Dunns in a general letter to the Baha'is of Australasia in March 1923, Shoghi praised their 'marvellous energy', 'unwavering determination' and 'devoted labours' to spread the Baha'i teachings (AUS 14), whilst in other letters of the period he stated that they were blessed and assisted by the power of the Holy Spirit (AUS 16), and 'faithful and untiring pioneers of the Cause of God' (AUS 20). They were the 'indefatigable spiritual parents' of the Australian and New Zealand Baha'is; they had displayed a 'magnificent spirit of fidelity and devotion' in the propagation and consolidation of the Faith 'in those remote corners of the earth'; their 'memorable services' were graven upon Shoghi's heart, and stood as 'a remarkable testimony of the undiminished potency of the creative power of Bahá'u'lláh' (AUS 22). It was always an 'indescribable joy' to receive their letters, and learn of the 'marvellous progress' of their work. Their 'cherished names' were graven upon his heart 'in letters of gold', and the memory of their 'unremitting and selfless labours' was an inspiration to him. Their 'exemplary devotion' and 'unrivalled services' were being abundantly rewarded by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and by 'He' [Bahá'u'lláh] who loved and guided them, who would surely bless them 'ever more richly than before'. He assured them of his 'profound affection', 'ardent prayers', and 'heartfelt gratitude and appreciation' (AUS 26). They were his 'most precious' and 'unforgettable' fellow-workers. The 'sweet savours' of a letter from them refreshed his soul and eased the burden that often weighed heavily upon him. They were always close to his heart, ever the object of his prayers, and his 'constant companions in spirit'. Their services, 'indefatigable efforts', and 'exemplary achievements' were graven upon his heart (AUS 35).

When Clara was severely ill (1925), Shoghi assured Hyde that he loved her dearly, and offered his fervent prayers for the recovery of one to whom he was 'eternally grateful'. He also offered continued prayers for Hyde's 'happiness, good health & success' (AUS 37). A year later, when Clara had recovered, he replied to a letter from her, expressing his joy at hearing from her after such a long silence. Her 'beautiful shining example' and 'restless tireless selfless efforts', together with 'the splendid activities' of her 'spiritual children' throughout Australasia were an inspiration for him. He prayed that she and Hyde might be kept happy and safe under 'His' ['Abdu'l-Bahá's?'] protection, and their 'magnificent career of exemplary Service' might be extended in scope and deepened in influence, and they might achieve their heart's desire (AUS 47). Again, in 1927, Shoghi wrote that he continued to pray from the bottom of his heart for their 'success,

welfare & spiritual advancement' – that 'health, strength & joy' be abundantly bestowed upon them so that they might continue their 'unsurpassed pioneer service' to the Cause. Their names, their services, and their 'high endeavours' were graven upon his heart. Their example was truly inspiring. Their collaboration lifted 'a considerable part' of Shoghi's burden from his shoulders. Their zeal and constancy hastened him in his work. They were 'tenderly remembered' by him when he visited the Baha'i Shrines, and the Haifa Baha'is hungered for the welcome news of their 'admirable achievements' (AUS 51).

In 1928, he wrote that their letters, with their joyful news, were a source of 'abiding joy, strength & consolation' for him in his work. He admired the spirit of faith and constancy that animated them in their endeavours. They would surely 'be abundantly and increasingly blessed' by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and their names remembered for ever with 'gratitude, admiration & pride'. The rising Baha'i generation would extol and magnify their achievements. They occupied an abiding place in the hearts of Bahiyyih Khánum and himself (AUS 53). Again, in 1929, Shoghi wrote of his admiration for the Dunns' 'unwavering constancy' and 'unflinching determination' to carry on the 'sacred work' entrusted to their charge. They were often in his thoughts, and he trusted that 'the Beloved' ['Abdu'l-Bahá] would graciously assist them to bring their 'unexcelled and historic mission' to a glorious and successful conclusion (AUS 54). Their services were steadfast and splendid, and were keenly appreciated by him. He prayed that they might be strengthened in their work, enabling them to render memorable services, and – in his secretary's words – 'live to see with human eyes' the fruits of their selfless endeavours, courage, self-sacrifice, and 'above all' their 'unflinching faith even at the darkest moments' (AUS 55). Similarly, in 1930, he wrote that a letter from them always imparted joy and strength to his heart. They were 'heroic and glorious pioneers' of the Baha'i Cause, and in the future, countless lips would utter their names with veneration and praise. Their memory was immortal. They should always be happy (AUS 57–58). He prayed for their good health, happiness, success, and spiritual advancement (AUS 59). Again, in 1931, he stated that their services had endeared them to the Baha'is of East and West as well as to himself. The record of their glorious work was imperishable. He prayed that 'Abdu'l-Bahá would protect, sustain, cheer and bless them (AUS 60). They were both so dear and near to him. The memory of their accomplishments, and 'above all' the consciousness of the spirit that animated them, was a source of inspiration to him (AUS 61).

In 1927, a plan was mooted for some of the Australasian Baha'is to finance a pilgrimage to Haifa for the Dunns. Asked by the Dunns to comment on the advisability of this plan, Shoghi stated that it was a matter entirely for the donors to decide after prayerful meditation and consultation. He welcomed and endorsed whatever decision they made (AUS 52). Finally, it was arranged that Clara only would make the pilgrimage in April 1932 (Hyde had not yet retired), Shoghi eagerly welcoming her projected visit, and regarding it as a well deserved bounty after 'such a splendid record of unstinting and exemplary service', but regretted the inability of Hyde to accompany her (AUS 61). He eagerly awaited the opportunity to meet her (AUS 63). After she had finally arrived in Haifa, Shoghi wrote to Hyde how

very much they missed him, and reiterated his loving invitation to Hyde to come ‘for we all long to meet you face to face & congratulate you in person upon the magnificent services you have rendered to the Cause. Again, he praised the Dunns’ ‘continued & self-sacrificing endeavours’. He also urged the necessity of Hyde taking good care of his ‘precious health’ in light of his ‘strenuous & high endeavours’ (AUS 68). Whatever the future might have in store for us, it was necessary to persevere ‘under all circumstances’, and never allow any form of depression to cloud ‘our vision of the future glory of the Cause of God’ (AUS 70).

In 1933, Shoghi again wrote of his ‘pleasure & satisfaction’ at receiving letters from Hyde. He deeply valued his services, and above all the spirit that animated them. He assured Clara of his ‘keen & abiding appreciation of her constant and self-sacrificing labours’. Hyde was ‘the father’ of the Australian Baha’i community, and deserved the credit for most of what had been achieved. Shoghi hoped that he would continue to render distinguished service to the Faith (AUS 79–80).

The culmination of the Dunns’ initial efforts was achieved in 1934 with the election of the national spiritual assembly. Shoghi wrote to Hyde that he fully shared his joy, gratitude, and deepest satisfaction at the ‘fruition’ of his ‘arduous’, ‘historic’, and ‘exemplary’ labours. His ‘magnificent work’ for the Cause had now been crowned. The ‘supreme concourse’ glorified and extolled the endeavours which he and Clara had ‘so devotedly and heroically exerted’.<sup>21</sup> Future generations would magnify their great and unforgettable achievements. Shoghi was deeply thankful and proud of all that they had done. He prayed that God would continue to light the path they were destined to follow (AUS 93–94).

Early in 1935, Hyde had a stroke, and was confined to bed, being nursed by his wife and by Stanley and Mariette Bolton. Shoghi expressed his distress at learning of the illness of such a ‘precious’, ‘dearly-beloved’, and ‘magnificent’ pioneer of the Faith. He offered prayers at the Shrines for his recovery, welfare, success, and happiness. Hyde had set ‘an unsurpassed example’ to future generations who would serve the Cause throughout the world. Shoghi’s gratitude to the Dunns knew no bounds, and his affection for them was beyond description. The concourse on high was proud of their ‘eminent and unforgettable accomplishments’. Clara should, of course, resign from the local assembly to have more time to take care of her husband, if that was necessary, but if possible she should remain on the assembly (AUS 104–5).

In September, Shoghi wrote to the national assembly that he was ‘grieved beyond words’ to learn that Hyde was growing so weak physically, and asked them to assure the Dunns of his prayers for Hyde’s recovery (AUS 108). By early 1936, Hyde’s condition had improved somewhat, Shoghi writing to Clara of his relief at the news concerning his ‘much-loved and illustrious friend’, and assured them both of his prayers. Hyde had tasted ‘the first fruits’ of his devoted labours and ‘historic services’. Future generations would reap the harvest and gather the ‘rich fruits’ which his pioneer work in the ‘Divine Vineyard’ would have produced (AUS 110–11). By April, Hyde was well enough to consider resuming his Baha’i activities. Shoghi was overjoyed, but counselled against the ambitious teaching plan which Hyde had proposed (AUS 113–14).

Shoghi's praises continued over Hyde's final years. In January 1937, he expressed his joy at receiving messages from the Dunns. They were often in his thoughts, and he prayed for them daily. His heart smiled with gladness and gratitude when he recalled their services, devotion, and perseverance, and their love for the Cause, which they were 'still serving with such exemplary faith & fidelity' (AUS 124–25). In May, he prayed that 'the Beloved' would bless Hyde's efforts, guide his steps, enable him to 'still further ennoble' the record of his 'unique' and 'superb' services, and aid him to realize his 'highest wishes' in the service of the Faith (AUS 130). In January 1939, he wrote to Clara that she and Hyde – his 'dearly-loved, distinguished & unforgettable co-worker and brother' – had together accomplished so much, and had worked 'devotedly and magnificently' for the promotion of the Faith (AUS 143). In March, he wrote to Hyde, again stating how his heart rejoiced whenever he heard from him: his heart was 'inexpressibly gladdened' when he read his letter. He felt proud and thankful when he thought of Hyde and what he had done. Future generations would appraise his accomplishments and extol the spirit that had prompted him in his 'historic labours'. Hyde should be happy and grateful to have lived to have seen the 'glorious harvest' which it had been his 'incomparable privilege' to gather and offer to the Faith after many years of 'tireless' and 'painstaking' effort on his part. Whilst his advanced age and its 'attendant ailments and disabilities' meant that he was no longer able to take as active a share in the work as he wished, his 'very presence' was in itself a 'valuable asset' for the Australian Baha'i community, and as such surely compensated for any lack in what he could do. He should therefore take 'the utmost care' of his 'dear self', preserve his health, and avoid any activity that would tire him. He should always be assured that he was in Shoghi's thoughts and prayers. Shoghi also prayed for those who were caring for Hyde (AUS 151–52).

Also in 1939, Shoghi forwarded to the Dunns a copy of his recently published book, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, in which he extolled the audacity, consecration, tenacity, self-renunciation and 'unstinted devotion' of those pioneers who had abandoned their homes and forsaken 'their all' to hoist the banner of Bahá'u'lláh in the uttermost corners of the globe.<sup>22</sup> As his secretary explained, Shoghi had sent them this gift as a token of 'abiding appreciation' of their 'long-standing' and 'historic' services, and as a recognition of and tribute to the 'unique' and 'magnificent' services they had rendered in teaching. The book would inspire and guide others to follow in their footsteps and emulate their noble example (AUS 152).

Shoghi's tributes following Hyde's death were fulsome. In February 1941, he cabled the Australian and New Zealand national spiritual assembly that he was 'Inexpressibly grieved' at the loss of this 'heroic pioneer', whose 'outstanding achievements' and 'exemplary spirit' shed an 'imperishable lustre' over the annals of the Formative Age of the Faith. The 'Concourse on High' extolled his virtues, magnified his accomplishments, and welcomed his admission into their ranks. The Baha'is should hold memorial gatherings for him. Shoghi also sent fifty pounds as his contribution for a tomb for Hyde (AUS 163–64).

Notifying the American Baha'is of Hyde's death, Shoghi reported that he both sorrowed in their loss, and participated in their rejoicing at the triumph Hyde had won. His 'magnificent career' as a 'veteran warrior' of

the Faith reflected ‘the purest lustre’ of the ‘world historic mission’ of the American Baha’is. He joined three other heroes from the American Baha’i community (Keith Ransom-Kehler, Martha Root, and May Maxwell) whose dust attested to ‘the first vital sparks’ of the American Baha’is’ spiritual dominion. They too should hold a memorial gathering (in the Wilmette temple) ‘befitting the rank of Australia’s spiritual conqueror’.<sup>23</sup>

To Clara, Shoghi expressed his ‘overwhelming sorrow’ at the loss of Hyde, whom he characterized as being ‘that great-hearted’, ‘high-minded’, and ‘exemplary’ disciple of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He also rejoiced, however, at Hyde’s elevation ‘to so exalted a seat among the immortals in the Abhá Kingdom’, and his reunion with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, whom he had served so lovingly, valiantly, effectively, and long. He was the ‘spiritual conqueror’ of Australasia, and by his spirit, example, and accomplishments would continue to inspire the rising generation not only in Australasia, but throughout the Baha’i world. The memory of his deeds would shed ‘imperishable lustre’ on the annals of the first Baha’i century. Hyde was a ‘noble and exemplary soul’ who had gone to reap his ‘everlasting reward’ in the presence of ‘our Lord Bahá’u’lláh’. Shoghi had loved, trusted, and admired Hyde greatly, and now deeply felt his loss. Hyde had left behind him a ‘wonderful harvest’, which was the fruit of his and Clara’s ‘united and untiring service’. She had every reason to rejoice that the two of them were so united in this life at such a time in history when they could dedicate their lives ‘to such a glorious Cause’ (AUS 165–66).

To one of the Australian Baha’is, Shoghi wrote of Hyde as a ‘great and immortal soul’, whose work would inspire the rising generation to arise and follow ‘his glorious example’ (AUS 165). Writing later to the national assembly, Shoghi described Hyde as having been a ‘great leader’ and a ‘stalwart upholder’ of Bahá’u’lláh’s new World Order in Australasia. His influence would continue to live, and the example he had set would inspire the rising generation ‘to perform deeds as great and brilliant’ as those which would ‘ever remain associated with his name’. From his ‘exalted station’, Hyde would intercede on their behalf. Future Baha’i historians would acclaim Hyde as Australia’s ‘spiritual Conqueror’, and the Baha’is should strive to emulate him (AUS 168). His services had been ‘truly remarkable’, and had added a ‘golden page’ to the history of the Formative Age of the Faith. Together with Clara, his whole-hearted response to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s call; their ‘quiet and unassuming sacrifices for the Cause; the wisdom and permanence’ with which he had laid the foundations of the work in Australasia; and the ‘faithful love’ with which they had tended ‘the growing institutions of the Faith’ had constituted a landmark in the victorious progress of the Cause (AUS 167, on Shoghi’s behalf). In *God Passes By* (1944), Shoghi referred to Hyde as ‘great-hearted and heroic’ (GPB 308).

### 5. *The Herald of the South*

Bertram Dewing, a new Baha’i in Auckland, wrote to Shoghi Effendi in April 1925 with the news that he proposed to establish a Baha’i magazine for Australia and New Zealand. Shoghi offered encouragement, stating that he would follow its development ‘with keen interest’, and assuring him of his desire ‘to help and promote its interests to the fullest possible extent’. Dewing’s ‘charming letter’ had truly gladdened his heart. He assured him of his ‘love,

appreciation and fervent prayers', sent two photographs of the Shrine of the Báb and nearby gardens, and suggested the title of the magazine. Dewing would be able to get international news from the copy of the Haifa assembly circular letter which was already sent to the Dunns (AUS 31–32).

After the first issue of the new magazine appeared (dated September 1925), Shoghi expressed his joy at the news of 'this new and notable Baha'i enterprise', a service 'so lovingly and spontaneously rendered' by the Australasian Baha'is. He assured Dewing of his 'steadfast prayers for the speedy expansion and consolidation of this youngest of all Baha'i magazines', and of his 'earnest endeavour' to enable it to attain the 'high standard worthy of the bearer of such a noble message'. The author and publisher should include both matters that were 'strictly Baha'i in character' and topics of 'a humanitarian, ethical and religious nature'. Thus, the readers 'while witnessing to the liberal and broad-minded attitude of the Baha'i Cause', might also receive their full share of inspiration which 'only a clear and direct statement of the Divine Message' could impart. Although the new magazine's 'voice' was still feeble, it joined its sister Baha'i journals in raising the call of the new day of God. Perseverance was required, and the endeavour made to 'reach every circle and every home', so that the light it bore might, in the fullness of time, 'illuminate with its healing rays the uttermost corners' of Australasia (AUS 35–36).

In subsequent letters, Shoghi offered further encouragement, expressing the hope that *Herald of the South* would continually progress, and add to its importance in attracting the attention of people to the Faith – contributing 'its destined share to the progress and consolidation of the Cause of God'. Any difficulties that were encountered should be borne patiently – awaiting that 'the future should give us our reward' – because a good periodical that was fully representative of the Baha'i spirit and teachings was 'the greatest help' which the Movement could have in establishing itself in a country. Dewing should regularly send him a copy ([1926] AUS 45).

Shoghi Effendi had 'great hopes' for the magazine, and trusted that the editor would be 'guided and strengthened in his noble undertaking' (AUS 46). He prayed for its 'steady development and growing influence', that its voice would grow in strength and power, and its pages 'increasingly reflect the dynamic spirit of the Faith', and mirror forth the 'ever-expanding activities' of the Baha'is in Australasia and 'distant lands'. Those involved in its production should try from the outset to maintain a high standard for its articles. These should be 'broad in view, clear in style, and scholarly in their development of the different subjects'. The general public should be able to find it a paper 'fully worthwhile to read and meditate upon'. He hoped that its readership would increase, and urged the Baha'is to persevere in their efforts, not letting obstacles dampen their goal and determination. They should rest assured that 'the Power of God' which was reinforcing their efforts would, in the end, triumph and enable them to fulfil their cherished desire (AUS 46–47). He read the magazine with 'deep joy and thankfulness', and continually prayed that the 'invincible power of Bahá'u'lláh' would add to their present possibilities, 'extend the sphere' of the magazine, and enable them 'individually and collectively, to mirror forth the beauty and the power of this Divine Revelation' (AUS 49). Again, in September 1931, Shoghi wrote that the *Herald* was 'the most effective instrument as yet devised for the spread of the Cause in that land'. He cherished the brightest

hopes for it. The spirit of Bahá'u'lláh would assuredly 'inspire its promoters' and 'reinforce their efforts' (AUS 61–62).

As the magazine developed, a wider circle of Baha'is in Australia as well as New Zealand became involved in its production. When Dewing left New Zealand for a while (in the late 1920s), overall responsibility for the *Herald* was taken over by the Adelaide local assembly. At various times, there were difficulties in securing sufficient funding to produce the magazine, and in 1932, there was a suggestion to temporarily have it published in Canada in recognition of promised financial support from May Maxwell in Montreal. This idea was strongly rejected by Shoghi Effendi, who stressed the importance of continuing to have the *Herald* produced in Australasia, the continent to which it belonged. To move it elsewhere would be contrary to the interests of the Cause: those who wanted to support it would not be limited by geographical boundaries. There was also discussion as to whether it should be produced in Australia or New Zealand. In response, Shoghi stated that he wished the local Baha'is to make that decision, remembering that it was always with cooperation and consultation that the interests of the Cause were furthered. Whatever was decided, the Baha'is in both countries should participate in the work, and consider the magazine as representing all of them (AUS 68–69). An international Baha'i youth section was added after Dewing's return in 1932 (BW5: 128).

Following the establishment of a national spiritual assembly for Australia and New Zealand, the *Herald* came under its aegis, and was managed by a committee appointed by the assembly. In May 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote to the national treasurer that he was very pleased at the improvement in the standard of the magazine, and at how effectively it was being used by the Baha'is in their teaching work. He advised that the editors should try to make it as interesting and stimulating to non-Baha'is as possible. Specifically, more emphasis should be laid on the number and quality of articles, and that these should cover a wide range of social, religious, and humanitarian topics, and not just focus on specifically Baha'i subjects. The science section was doubtless important, and had a particular appeal to young people and newcomers. The Esperanto section was very useful, and added greatly to the international character of the magazine (AUS 105). Again, in April 1936, he informed the national assembly that he was encouraging all English-speaking Baha'is worldwide to contribute articles as often as possible, and was specifically asking the American Baha'is to respond (AUS 112). Apart from getting enough material of a high literary standard, the national assembly evidently also faced financial problems in continuing publication, Shoghi urging them to continue with the magazine despite these problems, and not to feel discouraged. He valued their self-sacrificial and sustained efforts in this regard (AUS 118).

The original series of the *Herald* was continued until July 1960 (volume 28). It then went out of production for a few years until about 1964, continuing then until 1970 (volume 34). An entirely new series was started in 1974.<sup>24</sup>

## 6. Indigenes

As far as is known there was no attempt by the Australian Baha'is to contact the Aboriginal population until the 1950s. By contrast, a number of contacts were made with the **Maoris** in New Zealand from the 1930s

onwards, Shoghi Effendi encouraging the Baha'is to teach them. Thus, to one of the New Zealand Baha'is, his secretary wrote how wonderful it would be if 'the Cause' could enter the ranks of the Maoris and give them 'a new life and spirit'. The Faith was not only for highly civilized people, but for 'backward races', who would thereby obtain 'true social and intellectual equality with those who are at present their rulers and superiors'. The benefits which 'civilized' people might obtain from being Baha'is could not be fully appreciated at this early stage in the Faith's development, but the benefits for people like the Maori would be much greater. It was difficult for them to gain genuine equality through legal enactments and secular education, but through the Baha'i teachings, members of the different races would consider themselves as 'true brethren and co-workers in the Faith of God' (BW5: 127).

The first contacts seem to have been made by Keith Ransom-Kehler, who during her visit in 1931, made a special point of visiting Maori villages (Whakarewarewa and Orakei) and speaking of the Baha'i teachings to groups who had gathered in her honour. To these she emphasized the Baha'i teachings of the unity of all humankind and the unity of religions. She also stated that the Baha'i ideal of unity did not entail the loss of Maori cultural distinctiveness. In a unified humanity, each people would achieve their own highest development (BW5: 133–34). Shoghi Effendi was delighted when he heard of these contacts, having already encouraged the New Zealand Baha'is to secure a translation of Esslemont's book into Maori, so as to enable 'some real work' (of Baha'i teaching) to be started among them. (AUS 64). In 1932, he instructed that a 'prompt translation' be made (AUS 66), but this proposal was rejected by the New Zealand Baha'is on the grounds that: (1) most of the Maori could read and speak English better than they could their own native language; (2) it might not be possible to convey the true meaning of the Baha'i writings in the Maori language; and (3) it was difficult to find a translator who would understand the spirit of and letter of the Baha'i teachings and was a good Maori-English scholar. Instead, they produced a pamphlet which was translated into Maori by G. G. Paul and others (BW5: 134). '*Te Whakatikenga Pahai*' ('The Baha'i Cause') was published in 1933,<sup>25</sup> Shoghi expressing his deep appreciation of the work (AUS 84, 101).

## 7. Racial prejudice

The unofficial immigration policy of the Australian government from the establishment of the country in 1901 until the late 1960s was to confine immigration to Caucasians and exclude non-whites. This was the 'White Australia Policy', and was designed to preserve the racial composition and way of life of the original British and Irish settlers. The policy excluded Pacific Islanders and Africans, but was most particularly directed at Asians, who were regarded as a potential threat, with large numbers of would-be migrants in nearby countries who, if admitted, could easily come to outnumber white Australians and take away jobs by accepting lower wages. For this latter reason, the policy was supported by the trade unions. The policy was progressively dismantled in the late 1960s. A 'Dictation Test' was employed from 1902 until 1958 to exclude unwanted would-be migrants. Based on a similar test in Natal (1897), it consisted of administering a test

in an unfamiliar European language to non-Europeans and those deemed political undesirables (e.g. Gaelic for the anti-fascist Egon Kisch in 1934).

In 1925, one of the new Australian Baha'is evidently asked Shoghi Effendi to comment on the **White Australia policy**. Esslemont replied on Shoghi Effendi's behalf. The letter is unusual, in that it does not have any counter-signature from Shoghi himself (the letter is dated April 1925 when Shoghi appears to have been in Haifa).<sup>26</sup> It is a robust attack on racism, Esslemont emphasizing that Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá had taught the necessity of abolishing all racial and national prejudices, and of equal justice for people of all races. Thus, the White Australia policy of excluding Asian immigrants on grounds of race found no justification in the Baha'i teachings. To the contrary, it was clearly unjust for whites to annex a country previously exclusively inhabited by coloured people and then proceed to forbid the admission of coloured peoples, particularly so in a country like Australia, which was both so large, and in some areas so much better suited for coloured rather than white people. Undoubtedly it was true that a country with a relatively high standard of living and culture would suffer if it freely admitted people who were used to a lower standard and allowed them 'unrestricted rights of commercial and industrial competition', and this problem would continue even if all racial prejudice was abandoned.

The Baha'i solution was to educate people of both races in the Baha'i teachings. The whites had to cease to regard themselves as 'superior', and abandon the concept that skin colour provided any legitimate index of the superiority of one group of people over another (there were many good coloured people, and many bad whites). They had no innate right to exploit, take advantage of, or even exterminate others on the basis of 'the survival of the fittest'. They must adopt a policy of even-handed justice towards all. Both white and coloured races had an equal right to live and have access to suitable land on which to live. In practice, that land might vary, with different groups being given preference to the lands which were most suited climatically to their health and well-being (whites to cooler areas; coloured people to warmer areas). Again, 'backward' races had to be educated, their latent talents developed, and their standard of living and culture raised as much as possible. If this occurred, then their characteristics which others found objectionable would disappear. Nor were the 'advanced' races free from objectionable characteristics, such as 'commercial greed, love of domination, materialistic conceptions, [and] want of spirituality'. By true education and religion, these characteristics also had to be got rid of.

With such education of all races, then questions such as coloured immigration into Australia would be determined by an impartial and representative international tribunal which would decide what was best in the interests of humanity as a whole (considering population pressures and the suitability of particular areas for settlement), and not simply by those who had seized territory, and then dictated to the rest of the world who would be allowed admission to it.

All such questions could be satisfactorily solved only through the application of *all* Baha'i principles, in this case, this included: the abolition of racial and national prejudices; the necessity for universal education; the establishment of a universal league of nations that would have supranational authority; the replacement of international power politics by impartial

arbitration; the introduction of an international language to promote international understanding; and the replacement of materialism and selfish greed by true religion and mutual love. The ideas of the oneness of God, of religion, and of humanity had to be instilled in the minds of children throughout the world, such that when a generation grew up that was thoroughly imbued with these ideals, the solution of the economic and political problems which now caused so much misery, strife, and bloodshed would become easy. In the meantime, compromise was necessary to modify political and economic affairs so as to advance justice for all, and move away from the exclusive advantage of any one group. For Esslemont (he was here at pains to emphasize that his remarks were his own opinions), the solution of the world's vexatious problems lay in the growth of the Baha'i movement. The steady trend of public opinion worldwide towards acceptance of the Baha'i principles was also encouraging (and was one of the clearest proofs of Baha'u'llah's prophethood), the White Australia policy being but one of the 'backward eddies' in this forward current (AUS 27–29).

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### Endnotes

1. The first two papers in the series are of his letters to the Baha'is of India and Burma during the 1920s and 1930s. See Peter Smith, 'Shoghi Effendi's letters to the Baha'is of India and Burma during the 1920s'. *Baha'i Studies Review*, 13, 2005, pp. 15–40; and Peter Smith, 'Shoghi Effendi's letters to the Baha'is of India and Burma during the 1930s'. *Baha'i Studies Review*, 17, 2011, pp. 47–86. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1386/bsr.17.47-1>.
2. *Messages to the Antipodes: Communications from Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'í Communities of Australasia*, ed. Graham Hassall. Mona Vale: Bahá'í Publications Australia, 1997. All references to this volume in the text are abbreviated to 'AUS'. It replaced two earlier volumes: *Arohanui: Letters from Shoghi Effendi to New Zealand*. Suva: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1982, and *Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, 1923–1957*. Sydney, NSW: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Australia, 1970.
3. The letters by John Esslemont (April – May 1925 [AUS 23–34]) are far more 'personalistic' than the rest, and there is one letter by him – to Major Norman MacLeod, dated 19 April 1925 – which deals with a substantive issue (racial prejudice) but lacks a confirmatory postscript by Shoghi Effendi (AUS 26–29).

4. On the history of the Baha'i Faith in Australia and New Zealand see the successive volumes of *Bahá'í World* (here abbreviated to 'BW'): BW4: 83–85; 5: 123–34; 6: 23; 7: 26–27, 41–42, 71–73, 159–60 and the various articles by Graham Hassall on Australia: 'The Baha'i Faith in Australia, 1920–1963'. Paper presented to the Second Baha'i History Conference, Los Angeles, August–September 1984; 'Outpost of a world religion: The Bahá'í Faith in Australia, 1920–1947'. *Journal of Religious History* 16:3 (1991), pp. 315–38; and 'Outpost of a world religion: The Bahá'í Faith in Australia, 1920–1947'. In *Bahá'ís in the West*, ed. Peter Smith. Studies in the Bábí and Bahá'í Religions, Vol. 14. Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 2004, 201–226. For more recent developments see Hassall, 'The Baha'i Faith in Australia, 1947–1963'. *Journal of Religious History*, 36:4 (2012), pp. 563–576. Steve Cooney has kindly alerted me to a preliminary study of the New Zealand Baha'i by Joan Camrass, *Resolute Advance: A History of the Bahá'í Faith in New Zealand, 1912–2001*, Auckland: Viking Press 2001. See also David Brown-Carr, 'The Australian-New Zealand Bahá'í Connection : The First 75 Years' in *75 Years of the Bahá'í Faith in Australasia : Proceedings from the 1995 National Bahá'í Studies Conference*. N.S.W.) Bahá'í Studies Conference (1995 : Sydney. Roseberry, NSW, Association for Bahá'í Studies – Australia: 7–28).
5. Martha Root (1872-1939) was an American Baha'i who travelled widely to promote the Baha'i religion. See M. R. Garis. *Martha Root: Lioness at the Threshold*. Wilmette, Ill.: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1983, pp. 186-195; Barron Harper, *Lights of Fortitude: Glimpses into the Lives of the Hands of the Cause of God*, Oxford: George Ronald, 1977, pp. 112–22. There is a brief summary in Peter Smith. *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Bahá'í Faith*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2002, p. 298.
6. Unknown to the Baha'is, Root was under security surveillance in Australia during both her 1924 and 1939 visits. The details of the surveillance are unknown as the relevant file was later lost or discarded.
7. Hassall, 'Outpost' in *Baha'is in the West*, p. 207.
8. Keith Ransom-Kehler (1876–1833) was a prominent American Baha'i. See Harper, *Lights*, pp. 99–109; also Smith. *Concise Encyclopedia*, pp. 288–89. Ransom-Kehler was in Australia between September and November 1931 (Hassall, 'Outpost'). Her brief visit to New Zealand was probably made after this. By the end of December, she was back in Sydney ready to sail to India (AUS 64). I assume that the reference to her being in New Zealand in 1930 (BW5: 133) is erroneous. Certainly, there is no reference to her visit in the Auckland assembly report for the period (BW4: 85).
9. On the early Baha'i Administrative Order see Peter Smith. *The Babi and Baha'i Religions: From Messianic Shi'ism to a World Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 120–22.
10. Shoghi Effendi. *Baha'i Administration*. New York: Baha'i Publishing Committee, 1928.
11. On Siegfried Schopflocher (1877–1953) see Harper, *Lights*, pp. 384–90; also Smith, *Concise Encyclopedia*, p. 306.
12. What became *The Bahá'í World* was initially called the *Bahá'í Year Book*, v.1 (1925–1926). New York: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1926, acquiring and retaining its new title from volume 2 onwards.
13. Hassall, 'Outpost'.
14. Smith, *Babi and Baha'i Religions*, pp. 109–10, 112–13, 181–84.
15. Hassall, 'Baha'i Faith', p. 3.
16. Hassall, 'Hyde and Clara Dunn and the Victorian Baha'is'.
17. Hassall, 'Outpost'.
18. On Hyde Dunn see Graham Hassall, 'The Baha'i Faith in Australia, 1920–1934 : Some Notes on John and Clara Hyde-Dunn'. *Baha'i Studies Bulletin*, 1983, 2:1, pp. 8–31; BW9: 593–97; Harper, *Lights*, pp. 60–71. On Clara see BW13: 859–62; Harper, pp. 349–61.
19. AUS 321; Universal House of Justice, *The Ministry of the Custodians: An Account of the Stewardship of the Hands of the Cause*. Haifa: Baha'i World Centre, 1992, xxii.
20. Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to the Bahá'í World, 1950–1957*. 2nd ed. Wilmette IL: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1971, p. 21.
21. The 'Supreme Concourse' (*malá' al-a'lá*) is a term used by Baha'is for the gathering of holy souls in the angelic spiritual realm.

22. Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*. Rev. ed. Wilmette IL: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1963, p. 7.
23. Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to America: Selected Letters and Cablegrams Addressed to the Bahá'ís of North America, 1932–1946*. Wilmette IL: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1947, p. 45.
24. William P. Collins, *Bibliography of English-Language Works on the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths, 1844–1985*. Oxford: George Ronald, 1990, p. 174.
25. Anonymous (1933), *Te Whakatikenga Pahai Te Aonga Ake o Te Ra Hou* [The Bahai Cause, the Dawn of a New Day]. Auckland, N.Z., M. Smethurst.
26. Shoghi Effendi normally added a postscript to outgoing letters written on his behalf. I wonder whether in this case he may have wished to distance himself slightly from the answer on account of the necessarily political nature of the question: clearly racism is condemned in the Baha'i teachings, but this is a comment on the approved policy of an existing government.