

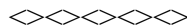
The Bahá'í Faith

In just over 100 years, the Bahá'í Faith has grown from an obscure movement in the Middle East to become the second-most widespread of the independent world religions. Embracing people from more than 2,100 ethnic, racial and tribal groups, it is likely the most diverse organized body of people on the planet. ***The unity it has achieved within this great diversity challenges prevailing theories about human nature and the prospects for our common future.*** It challenges the uncritical assent given to the proposition that human beings are incorrigibly selfish and aggressive and thus incapable of erecting a social system at once progressive and peaceful, dynamic and harmonious, a system giving free play to individual creativity and initiative but based on co-operation and reciprocity.

The mission of the Bahá'í Faith is the achievement of the organic and spiritual unity of the whole body of nations, which will involve the emergence of a world-community, the consciousness of world-citizenship and the founding of a world civilization and culture. It promotes the recognition of the oneness of God, the oneness of religion and the oneness of humanity. Interfaith dialogue and understanding are considered essential to world peace.

Far from aiming at the overthrow of the spiritual foundation of the world's religious systems, its avowed, its unalterable purpose is to widen their basis, to restate their fundamentals, to reconcile their aims, to reinvigorate their life, to demonstrate their oneness, to restore the pristine purity of their teachings, to coordinate their functions and to assist in the realization of their highest aspirations. These divinely-revealed religions, as a close observer has graphically expressed it, "are doomed not to die, but to be reborn... `Does not the child succumb in the youth and the youth in the man; yet neither child nor youth perishes?'"

The aim of Baha'u'llah, the Prophet of this new and great age which humanity has entered upon -- He Whose advent fulfills the prophecies of the Old and New Testament as well as those of the Qur'an and other religious traditions regarding the coming of the Promised One in the end of time, on the Day of Judgement -- is not to destroy but to fulfill the Revelations of the past, to reconcile rather than to accentuate the divergences of the conflicting creeds which disrupt present-day society.



*"A new life is, in this age, stirring within all the peoples of the earth;
and yet none hath discovered its cause or perceived its motive....
"... the people are wrapped in a strange sleep!"*

*"Justice is, in this day, bewailing its plight, and Equity groaneth beneath the yoke of oppression.
The thick clouds of tyranny have darkened the face of the earth, and enveloped its peoples.
Through the movement of Our Pen of glory We have, at the bidding of the omnipotent Ordainer,
breathed a new life into every human frame, and instilled into every word a fresh potency. All
created things proclaim the evidences of this world-wide regeneration. This is the most great, the
most joyful tidings imparted by the Pen of this wronged One to mankind . . ."*

*". . . The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity
is firmly established. This unity can never be achieved so long as the counsels which the Pen of
the Most High hath revealed are suffered to pass unheeded."*

-- Bahá'u'lláh (circa 1863)

For more information: Tel: 1-800-22-UNITE or Boston Bahá'í Center: 617-695-3500
www.bostonbahai.org/communities/Boston/ (Greater Boston Bahá'í community)
www.bahai.org (web site of the U.S. national Bahá'í community)
www.bahai.org/article-1-7-2-1.html (Peace Statement – “To the Peoples of the World”)

<http://reference.bahai.org/en/t/bic/SB/> (Statement on Bahá'u'lláh)
www.bahai-library.com/published.uhj/statement.bahauallah/ (Statement on Bahá'u'lláh)
www.bahai.org/article-1-7-3-1.html (“Who is Writing the Future?”)
<http://bahai-library.com/asia-pacific/whoswritingthefuture.htm> (summary of above document)
www.bahai.org/article-1-3-0-2.html (Bahá'u'lláh: The Manifestation of God)

www.onecountry.org/e141/e14101as_UHJ_Letter.htm (Universal House of Justice's letter to world's religious leaders)
www.bahai.org/article-1-7-0-6.html (“Advancing the status of Women”)
www.bahai.org/article-1-9-1-9.html (“Two Wings of a Bird: The Equality of Women and Men”)
www.bahai.org/article-1-7-0-5.html (“Turning Point” – a United Nations “reform” document)
www.bahai.org/article-1-7-4-1.html (“The Prosperity of Humankind” – provides a new vision of the role of science in society. It describes the two basic knowledge systems, science and religion, which have been most effective when, each in its own sphere, they have been able to work in concert. Also found at <http://reference.bahai.org/en/t/bic/PRH/>)

www.us.bahai.org/ourvision/vision.htm (“The Vision of Race Unity” – America's Most Challenging Issue)
www.bic-un.bahai.org/pdf/01-0831.pdf (“One Same Substance – Consciously Creating a Global Cultural of Unity”)
www.bahai.org/article-1-7-0-1.html (A New Vision of Humanity's Future)
www.bcca.org/ief/conf3prg.htm (Conference papers on the global environment)
<http://bahai-library.com/published.uhj/century.light/> (Century of Light / outline, full text, and review) and <http://reference.bahai.org/en/t/uhj/COL/>
<http://bahaifaith.homestead.com/BahaiPositionStatements.htm> (Links to specific documents)
www.bahai.org/article-1-9-2-12.html (Human settlements)
www.tour-haifa.co.il/Eng/BahaiShrine/indexEng.phtml (Israeli tourist board's tribute to the “8th Wonder of the World”)

www.bic-un.bahai.org/ (Bahá'í Statement library on world issues – Contains more "position statements" on the environment, race unity, advancement of women, economics, etc. presented at world conferences, etc. – Others found at <http://www.bahai.org/article-1-9-0-1.html>)

The Bahá'í Faith is recognized at the United Nations and around the world as one of the leading NGOs in the work for social and economic development for all peoples. In this connection, the principal representative of the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations served as Co-Chair of the NGO Millennium Summit (2000). In his capacity as Co-Chair of the Millennium Forum, Mr. Ahderom was the only Summit speaker who represented civil society at large. The Summit drew more than 150 world leaders, making it the largest gathering of heads of state and government ever held. His talk can be read at the following web URL:

http://www.onecountry.org/e121/BWNS_AddresstoMillenniumSummit.htm

There is no clergy in the Bahá'í Faith. Decision-making assemblies are elected to represent the communities. Hence, no single individuals have any authority unless delegated by these bodies.