

Baha'i Studies

Association for Baha'i Studies at UPEI

On 24 October, 1985, the Universal House of Justice, the supreme governing body of the Baha'i Faith, addressed a statement to the peoples of the world on the theme of peace. The statement on peace has been presented to the Secretary-General of the U.N. and many heads of state and governments throughout the world. Within this statement several themes are identified which are conducive in establishing world unity and peace. To give an adequate overview of this statement would demand much space as it is over 20 pages in length. An attempt, however inadequate, will be made to explain several ideas presented in the statement.

The statement opens by giving a Baha'i view of the age that we are now in and our choices. "The Great Peace towards which people of good will have inclined their hearts ... is now at long last within the reach of nations." "World peace is not only possible, but inevitable. It is the next stage in the evolution of this planet." Often this is thought of as too idealistic and that it can never happen. The statement addresses this thought as a "paralyzing contradiction" which has developed. "On the one hand, people of all nations proclaim not only their readiness but their longing for peace and harmony ... on the other uncritical assent is given to the proposition that human beings are incorrigibly selfish and aggressive and thus incapable of erecting a social system ... progressive and peaceful, dynamic and harmonious ..."

What this represents is a distortion of the human spirit and in our quest for peace a "reassessment of the assumptions upon which the commonly held view of mankind's historical predicament is based." demands attention. Once this point is satisfied, "constructive social forces which, because they are consistent with human nature, will encourage harmony and co-operation instead of war and conflict."

This course of action is not to deny humanity's past but to understand it. "The Baha'i Faith regards the current world confusion ... as a natural phase in an organic process ... the human race has passed through evolutionary stages analogous to the stages of infancy and childhood ... and is now in the culminating period of its turbulent adolescence approaching its long-awaited coming of age." Most people agree that

adolescence is a stressful period in one's life. However the human race is distinguished from other forms of life in what is known as the human spirit, with the mind as the essential quality. Humanity has prospered materially, built civilizations and can conquer whatever nature has to offer. The peace messages states, "But such accomplishments alone have never satisfied the human spirit, whose mysterious nature inclines it towards transcendence." Later is added that "no serious attempt to set human affairs aright, to achieve world peace, can ignore religion." Baha'u'llah (Founder of the Baha'i Faith) has referred to the eclipse or corruption of religion in the following manner, "Should the lamp of religion be obscured, chaos and confusion will ensue, and the lights of fairness, justice, of tranquillity and peace cease to shine." The golden rule of every religion, that we should treat others as we ourselves would wish to be treated is an ethic that is repeated in all the great religions sums up the normal attitude and signifies an aspect of unity which is their essential virtue "a virtue mankind in its disjointed view of history has failed to appreciate."

The Message explains how disarmament, although an element of the peace process, is too superficial to exert enduring influence. "Peoples are ingenious enough to invent yet other forms of warfare, and to use food, raw materials, finance, industrial power, ideology and terrorism to subvert one another ..." "A genuine universal framework must be adopted."

The statement outlines some hopeful signs of co-operation among nations (e.g. OAU, OAS) and notes the increasing attention being focused on some of the most deep-rooted problems of the planet by the United Nations. There are however, a few issues, because of their relevance to world peace that deserve comment. Racism, which "retards the unfolding of the boundless potentialities of its victims."; "The inordinate disparity between rich and poor, a source of acute suffering, keeps the world in a state of instability ..."; "Unbridled nationalism, as distinguished from a sane and legitimate patriotism must give way to a wider loyalty, to the love of humanity as a whole"; "Religious strife which is a major blight to progress. "How are the differences between them to be resolved, both in theory and practise?"; "The achievement of

full equality between the sexes, is one of the most important, though less acknowledged prerequisites of peace."

The foundation of world order is the recognition of the oneness of mankind. "Universal acceptance of this spiritual principle is essential to any successful attempt to establish world peace." Baha'i view this as "... no less than the reconstruction and demilitarization of the whole civilized world — a world organically unified in all the essential aspects of its life ..." To achieve such ends requires several stages in the

adjustment of national political attitudes. As this adjustment comes about earnest consideration must be given to the reality of man namely, his thought. In ordering human affairs Baha'u'llah has drawn attention to the indispensability of consultation, "Consultation bestows greater awareness and transmutes conjecture into certitude." For everything there is and will continue to be a station of perfection and maturity. The maturity of the gift of understanding is made manifest through consultation."

In conclusion, the statement on

peace mentions that, "World unity is the goal towards which a harassed humanity is striving," and that there are many proofs in the world that validate this view. "In the earnestness of our desire to impart to you the fervour of our hope and the depth of our confidence, we cite the emphatic promise of Baha'u'llah: "These fruitless strifes, these ruins wrought so pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."

If anyone is interested in obtaining a copy of this letter, contact Ritchie at 892-9970 or Nadim at 892-1880.




25% Discount on Return Fare

Special Limited Trips on Friday and Sunday

For Information Contact: 566-0625

U.P.E.I. Bookstore

NEW CHEVY-OLDS-CADILLAC SALES and LEASING



If you're in the market for a new Chev-Olds-Cadillac or a top quality pre-owned vehicle please feel free to contact me

**WALTER PICCOTT
CHEV-OLDS-CADILLAC
15 MT. EDWARD ROAD
BUS: 894-5021 RES: 886-2385**

Ask about our Graduate financing plan

- 1) available credit
- 2) a low down payment
- 3) attractive financing
- 4) no charge GM protection