

# E d u c a t i o n

## R a c e U n i t y

By PATRICIA CAMPUZANO

Because little is known about the Bahai Faith, I will begin with some background before getting on to the topic of Racial Unity, which is one of its ordinances. The Baha'i Faith teaches us that all Messengers of God have had an important role in human evolution. They have all given us what was appropriate at the time. But the process is a continuous one, humans are forever getting closer to achieving spiritual maturity and closeness to God. In 1817, another Messenger was born, with a message appropriate for this age. His name is Baha'u'llah. His son 'Abdu'l-Baha (1844-1921), consolidated the Faith and interpreted His writings. More recently, 'Abdu'l-Baha's grandson Shoghi Effendi (1897-1957) translated these writings into English and wrote some books of his own.

In the "The Advent of Divine Justice", written in 1938, Shoghi Effendi addresses the American community, giving guidelines to practitioners of the Faith: "To discriminate against any race, on the grounds of its being (perceived as) socially backward, politically immature, and (its being) numerically in a minority, is a flagrant violation of the spirit that animates the Faith

of Baha'u'llah...any division is alien to its very purpose...every differentiation of class, creed or color must be automatically obliterated and never, under any pretext and however great the pressure of events or public opinion, be allowed to reassert itself". This is very clear and precise advice. It exhorts us to remember that Baha'u'llah compared the different races of man to the different kinds of flowers in a garden, the variety is necessary to bring about the potential beauty of the whole. All the flowers, as the races, have their very own beauty and their own indispensable contribution to make.

And this exhortation applies to both, the individual who has to fight the prejudices polluting his or her heart, and the community who must protect its members: "Unlike the nations who either ignore, trample upon, or extirpate the racial, religious, or political minorities within their jurisdiction, every community under the banner of Baha'u'llah should feel it to be its first and inescapable obligation to nurture, encourage, and safeguard every minority belonging to any faith, race, class, or nation within it." We cannot deny that these words have relevance today, given the recent and unfortunate violent acts committed by some of our contemporary nations against their citi-

zens. Shoghi Effendi goes on to address specifically the black and white races of this country: "A tremendous effort is required of both races...casting away once and for all the fallacious doctrine of racial superiority, with all its attendant evils, confusion and miseries..."

**-Let the white** make a supreme effort to correct the tendency toward a patronizing attitude...

**-Let the white** persuade the black through their intimate, spontaneous and informal association with them of the genuineness of their friendship and the sincerity of their intention...

**-Let the white** master their impatience of any lack of responsiveness on the part of a people who have received, for so long a period, such grievous and slow-healing wounds.

**-Let the black**, through corresponding effort on their part, show by every means within their power the warmth of their response...

**-Let the black** show by every means within their power, their readiness to forget the past...

**-Let the black** show by every means within their power, their ability to wipe out every trace of suspicion that may still linger in their heart and minds.

...Let neither think that anything short of genuine love, extreme pa-

tience, true humility, consummate tact, sound initiative, mature wisdom, and deliberate, persistent and prayerful effort, can succeed in blotting out the stain which this patent evil (of division) has left on the name of their common country".

Further on, in an invitation to a place we have not seen, a future we must create, he goes on to list the benefits of such changes: "...be firmly convinced that on their mutual understanding, their amity, and their sustained cooperation, must depend, more than on any other operating force..., the deflection of a dangerous course... and the materialization of the hopes He (Baha'u'llah) cherished for their joint contribution to the fulfillment of this country's glorious destiny... I wish to impress upon you not only the urgency of this holy task but the limitless possibilities which it possesses of raising to such exalted level not only the life of your community, but the motives and standards that govern the relationships among (all) people (belonging) to these times, so fraught with peril, so full of corruption, and yet so pregnant with the promise of a future so bright that no previous age in the annals of mankind can rival its glory".

## Meyer Memorial Trust Grants \$1.5 Million for PSU Urban Center Project

The Meyer Memorial Trust has granted \$1.5 million toward the completion of Portland State University's Urban Center project, which begins construction this summer.

The gift is one of the largest ever given by the Portland based charitable organization, and brings the total amount of charitable gifts raised toward the Urban Center project to just over \$3.2 million.

It is also the largest gift ever

received by the PSU Foundation.

"The Urban Center is a wonderfully appropriate way of extending Portland State's orientation to the city while showcasing its nationally known College of Urban and Public Affairs," said John Thompson, a member of the Meyer Memorial Trust's Board of Trustees, and CEO of Norm Thompson. "This is an exciting project that should stimulate development of a part of downtown that's been too long overlooked."



If you want to know more about Racial Unity Or about The Baha'i Faith

Send us a self-addressed envelope at:  
The Baha'is of Portland  
P.O. Box 83297  
Portland, OR 97283  
or visit our web site:  
www.pdx-bahai.org

## Event to Help Hispanic, Latino Students Prepare for College

Oregon State University student, faculty and administrative leaders will host a special event in Salem on Thursday, May 21, to help Hispanic-Latino students in area high schools begin preparing for college.

The event, "Si, Se Puede," is aimed at students in grades 9-12. It will run from

6-9 pm at the Oregon State Fair and Expo Center's Cascade Hall, 2330 17th St. NE in Salem. "We are inviting Hispanic-Latino students, their parents and community leaders to learn more about what it takes to begin preparing for a four year university, regardless of which university that may be," said Louan Johnson,

marketing assistant at OSU.

Scheduled speakers include Clara Padilla Andrews, publisher of El Hispanic News; Orclia Zuniga-Forbes, vice president for university advancement at OSU; Erlinda Gonzales-Berry, chair of OSU's Department of Ethnic Studies; Larry Griggs, director of the

Educational Opportunities Program (EOP) at the university; Oscar Montemayor, counselor and academic advisor for EOP and the College Assistance Education Office.

For more information, contact Luis Juarez, 541-737-0484, or Rudy Flores at 541-737-9031.



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5:30PM - SOCIAL 6:45PM - DINNER

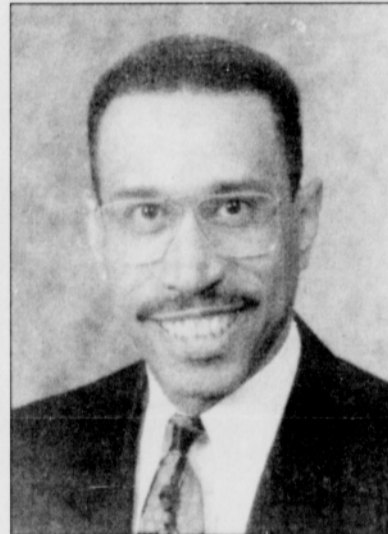
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