

X. COMMITTEES

Compiled from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, Abdu'l

Original English



X. COMMITTEES

A. Appointing Committees

1. Freedom to Appoint Any Bahá'í Qualified for the Work

"In going over the minutes of your recent N.S.A. meeting he noticed that you had decided to try as far as possible to eliminate National Spiritual Assembly members from the National Committees. Although he fully realizes your reasons for taking this decision, he feels it infringes on one of the fundamental principles of our administrative order which is freedom of choice — freedom of electors to elect anyone they please to Local or National bodies, and freedom of the members of these bodies to appoint any Bahá'í, who seems best qualified for the work, to function on Committees."

"The first consideration must always be the person best qualified for a job, and National Assembly members should in such matters not be either discriminated against, or in favour of, because of the position they occupy on the National body."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, June 16, 1947: Bahá'í News, No. 198, August 1947, p. 3)

1. Continuity of Committee Personnel

"Although National Assemblies and Local Assemblies may provide for continuity of Committee personnel by re-appointment of members each year, Assemblies should not appoint members of Committees for a term of more than one year."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, December 20, 1966)

1. Preferable Some Qualified Native Believers Serve on Committee

"There is no objection to a National Spiritual Assembly member serving on the National Teaching Committee, but if National Spiritual Assembly members were to predominate on the Committee the purpose of appointing it, which is to relieve the National Assembly of the details of the work, would be defeated. It is also preferable for some qualified native believers to serve on the National Teaching Committee so that they may thus be trained to carry on with the work."



ORIGINAL

"...the beloved Guardian paid great attention to the administrative arrangements for teaching and was highly in favour of one central National Teaching Committee with Regional Committees responsible to it. He once pointed out that absorption of the petty details of Bahá'í administration by the personnel of the National Spiritual Assembly is manifestly injurious to efficiency and an expert discharge of Bahá'í duties."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil, June 23, 1971) [pg 165]

1. Desirability of Easy Meeting of National Teaching Committee — If Possible, Not to be Burdened with Other Duties

"...we ... suggest that for future consideration you should bear in mind the desirability of easy meetings of this important committee which would, of course, be facilitated by members being in the same vicinity. It is also desirable that the members of this vital right arm of the National Spiritual Assembly should, as far as possible, not be burdened with other duties. It has been found that the most effective arrangement is to have a strong, centrally located Teaching Committee — although not necessarily at the National Headquarters — with its members free to devote all their efforts and energies to the work of that committee. The Regional Teaching Committees are in a sense the executive agents of the National Teaching Committee and while there is no harm in members of the Regional Committees being also on the National Teaching Committee it is generally better for them to concentrate on the work in their own particular areas."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Colombia, June 23, 1971)

1. Committees Can Be Constituted with Eye for Improvement and Change

"...He feels that it would be good to infuse more new life — by using different believers of capacity — into National Committees. ...more young people and more people who are capable professional or business people in their private lives are now in the Faith than ever before, and such material should be tapped and exploited so that all Committees possess a certain amount of new blood and get an infusion of fresh ideas. As elections are by secret ballot only the education of the electorate can bring about changes on Assemblies which often stagnate from lack of fresh blood — but Committees appointed as they are by Spiritual Assemblies — can be constituted with an eye for improvement and change."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, March 31, 1945)

1. Assembly Should Use Discretion When Appointing Committee Members — Incompatible Personalities on Committees

"We are asked by the Universal House of Justice to acknowledge your letter ... in which you ask for guidelines on the following questions:

"a. What attitude should a National Spiritual Assembly take when believers accept appointment to a committee but do not attend its meetings because of what you term incompatible personalities or lack of unity with other members of the committee, and yet they do not resign from the committee?"

"As you are already aware, in your choice of members for committees, you must use careful judgement and discretion, with the aim of appointing a membership, which, from the outset, has good prospects of operating with full force. If, despite your efforts to do this, there is disharmony among the committee members, the following extract from a letter of 13 May 1945 written on behalf of the beloved Guardian may be helpful to you."

'Regarding the matter of ... and the inharmony that seems to exist among certain of the friends...: When Bahá'ís permit the dark forces of the world to enter into their own relationships within the Faith they gravely jeopardize its progress; it is the paramount duty of the believers, the Local Assemblies, [pg 166] and particularly the N.S.A. to foster harmony, understanding and love amongst the friends. All should be ready and willing to set aside every personal sense of grievance — justified or unjustified — for the good of the Cause, because the people will never embrace it until they see in its community life mirrored what is so conspicuously lacking in the world: love and unity.'

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Bolivia, August 19, 1985)

1. National Committees Ordinarily Appointed by and Responsible to the National Spiritual Assembly

"National Committees are ordinarily appointed by and responsible to the National Spiritual Assembly, but within the limits of wise discretion the National Spiritual Assembly may authorize a particular Committee to appoint a sub-committee or to ask individuals to assist it in carrying out its assigned functions.

"In calling these principles to the attention of the believers, however, care must be exercised not to dampen the enthusiasm or initiative of the friends."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the North West Pacific Ocean, September 5, 1974)

1. Non-Members of Assemblies Should Be Given the Opportunity to Develop Administrative Skills

"In the list of national committees for 1983-84, it was noted that eight members of the National Assembly had been appointed to serve. Indeed, your treasurer will be on three committees, and your secretary on two. While it is understandable that those elected to a National Spiritual Assembly generally have great capacity to assume manifold duties, the House of Justice points out that the opportunity for non-members of Assemblies to develop administrative skills is lost when members of a National Assembly serve on a large number of national committees."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, December 28, 1983)

1. Not Necessary that Committee Appointments Expire at Ridvan

"As regards the appointment of committees on a yearly basis, we refer to the Guardian's instructions on pg 141 of Bahá'í Administration that '...the renewal, the membership, and functions ... should be reconsidered separately each year by the incoming National Assembly....' Individuals appointed to committees should identify themselves with functions and objectives which normally extend beyond the term of their appointment. Just as members of the National Assembly relate themselves to goals of the Nine Year Plan, members of Local Assemblies and committees should do likewise, so that a single dynamic spirit may animate the important work for which each Assembly or committee is responsible."

"It is not necessary, however, that the term of committee appointments expire at Ridvan. It may be advisable, in order to provide continuity, to begin the committee year in June or July. Furthermore, the fact that, generally speaking, there are few radical changes in committee personnel should also make for continuity of thought and action."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, January 23, 1967) [pg 167]



B. Election of Committee Officers

1. All Committee Members Must be Given Opportunity to Cast Ballot — Election of Officers by Majority, Not Plurality1****

"Concerning the question of the election of committee officers, the House of Justice has instructed us to explain that provided all members of the committee have been given the opportunity to be present at the meeting or to send their ballots by mail, the election of the committee's officers is valid, even if a member does not avail himself of the opportunity to vote. Of course, as you are no doubt aware, election of officers must be by majority vote, not plurality. The House of Justice also points out that it is preferable to have an odd number of members appointed to a committee. This would lessen the chance of a tie vote result."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Mexico, September 2, 1981)

1. If Member Has a Good Reason, He is Free to Suggest He Should Not Be Elected to Office

1. Any Officer Elected Must Have Received at least Five Votes)

"...With regard to your question whether members of an Assembly and/or a committee may excuse themselves from being elected to serve as an officer:"

"On several occasions the beloved Guardian pointed out that before the election of officers, if any member had a good reason in his own opinion why he should not be elected to one of the offices of the Assembly, he was free to suggest that he should not be so elected. The House of Justice also feels that as the work of the Faith expands and the duties of officers, particularly on National Spiritual Assemblies, acquire more importance, it is permissible and at times advisable to discuss the duties incumbent upon and required of each officer before ballots are cast."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Bolivia, August 18, 1985)



C. Structure and Function of National Committees

1. An Efficient Teaching Structure Must Be Adopted by the National Spiritual Assembly

"The teaching committee structure that each National Assembly may adopt to ensure best results in the extension of its teaching work is a matter left entirely to its discretion, but an efficient teaching structure there must be, so that the tasks are carried out with dispatch and in accordance with the administrative principles of our Faith. From among the believers native to each country, competent travelling teachers must be selected and teaching projects worked out. In the words of our beloved Guardian, commenting upon the teaching work in Latin America: 'strong and sustained support should be given to the vitally needed and meritorious activities started by the native ... travelling teachers, ... who, as the mighty task progresses, must increasingly bear the brunt of responsibility for the propagation of the Faith in their homelands.'"

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies engaged in Mass Teaching Work, February 2, 1966) [pg 168]

1. Function of the National Teaching Committee

"The function of a National Teaching Committee is to take charge, under the direction of the National Spiritual Assembly, of the entire teaching program of the country. It should be given its terms of reference which will specifically define the general objectives and methods of the teaching on the homefront; it should be provided with a budget and be required to submit to the National Spiritual Assembly an overall plan for the accomplishment of its tasks. Once this plan has been approved, the Committee should be allowed to carry out its work, although of course you should receive regular reports of its progress and of its financial position."

"One of the great benefits deriving from such an arrangement is that the National Spiritual Assembly is freed from the day-to-day details of the teaching work and while retaining supervision of this most important method in its own hand, has an executive arm in its National

Teaching Committee, which should be given the full confidence and support of the National Spiritual Assembly."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Trinidad and Tobago, November 12, 1971)

1. National Committees Constituted to Serve Needs of Local Assemblies

"He feels that the Local Assemblies should be encouraged to realize that National Committees are constituted to serve their needs, not to dictate arbitrarily to them and to unify the work of the Cause... The Committees in question should be very tactful in dealing with a young Assembly which is beginning to 'feel its oats' as this spirit of independence, if properly handled, can lead it to be strong and independent rather than weak and always relying on other bodies to carry it forward. Assemblies, however, should certainly cooperate with National Committees and not refuse their assistance."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles, November 5, 1948: The National Spiritual Assembly, p. 48)

1. National Assembly Should Issue Instructions to National Teaching Committee to Avoid Confusion

"To avoid confusion and follow the proper procedure the National Spiritual Assembly should issue its instructions to the National Teaching Committee who would then transmit them to the Regional Committee. Regional Committees, though appointed by the N.S.A., are the auxiliaries of the National Teaching Committee. The Guardian does not feel he should go into the details of this matter, as they should be arranged by the National Spiritual Assembly itself. He merely lays down the principle to be adhered to."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, March 28, 1943)

1. Some Committees Need Larger Membership

"The Universal House of Justice has noted in the minutes of your meeting of 1st May 1985 that ... you have adopted a pattern of restricting the membership of each committee to three."

"While the House of Justice appreciates that some committees dealing with technical matters, such as the National Haziratu'l-Quds Committee, could very well have only three members, nevertheless there are some very important [pg 169] committees, such as the National Teaching and Deepening Committee, the Youth Committee and the Committee for Women and Education of Children, and so on, to which are assigned responsibility for significant aspects of Bahá'í community life, which should have a larger membership to enable consultation to take place more effectively."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Senegal, August 26, 1985)

D. Special Committees (Administrative, Ad Hoc, Emergency — National and Regional Teaching Committees)

1. Administrative Committees Have Authority Only as Given Them by National Spiritual Assembly

"Your letter of 24 May, 1985 to the Universal House of Justice has been received and we are asked to convey its response to your question concerning the role of administrative committees in dealing with personal problems."

"Your caution in clarifying the functions of appointed administrative committees is commendable, for such committees have authority and responsibilities only through the authority and duties given them by the National Assembly appointment. Personal problems arising in communities under activation by such committees should be referred, as you have suggested, to your Assembly for consultation and advice. Should you, knowing its membership, see fit to request a committee to assist in resolving a specific problem, it may do so with your authority; similarly you are free to authorize consultation on a personal problem by an individual having the expertise needed."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Leeward Islands, July 7, 1985)

1. Ad Hoc Committees Can Be Appointed to Deal with Personal Problems

"Regarding your letter of 19 September, 1984 addressed to the Universal House of Justice, we have been directed to convey the following with reference to the three points that you make."

"The first concerns cases of a personal nature which apparently have been on the increase and are consuming a great deal of the time of your Assembly during its meetings. In a letter addressed to your Assembly, dated 30th August 1971, advice was given by the House of Justice to you on this same point. However, for ease of reference, that portion is quoted:

'Personal problems are often best dealt with by the Local Spiritual Assembly or Assemblies concerned. There is no objection to the National Assembly's appointing a committee or committees to deal with such problems as come before it, provided that the final decision remains in the hands of the Assembly itself.'

"In addition to the foregoing, we have been instructed to quote the following passage from a letter addressed to another National Assembly:

'In reply to your letter of February 4th asking whether you may assign personal problems which a Local Spiritual Assembly is unable to deal with [pg 170] to a nearby Local Spiritual Assembly, we feel that in such cases it would be better for your National Spiritual Assembly to appoint an ad hoc committee for each case, the membership of which could be drawn from one or two nearby communities as well as the community where the particular problem exists.'

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of El Salvador, October 22, 1984)

1. When an Assembly Lapses, Administrative Committee Can Be Named from Adult Believers of Community

"Your Assembly is empowered to name an administrative committee for the ... community. Such a committee should be viewed as being a temporary expedient for maintaining the life and vigour of the community until such time as the Local Assembly can be re-formed; it is not a replacement for the divine institution of the Local Spiritual Assembly."

"With reference to your specific questions, the Administrative Committee for ... can be named from among the adult believers of the community, without regard for their election or non-election to the now-lapsed Local Assembly. The single active youth can be called upon by the Committee for whatever duties he may be able to undertake. The Committee can continue the Local Bahá'í Fund and also will maintain the incorporation of the Local Assembly."

"The National Spiritual Assembly has the authority to call for a by-election for a Local Assembly in the absence of a quorum of local believers."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, November 8, 1983)

1. Scope of the Functions of the Emergency Committee

"It is entirely appropriate to appoint an emergency committee and to authorize it to take action between National Spiritual Assembly meetings. Your Assembly can also authorize such a committee to deal with routine matters in the interim between your Assembly meetings. In both cases full reports of such committee meetings should be made to all members of the Assembly and all decisions arrived at should be confirmed, or otherwise, at the next meeting of the National Assembly."

"You may decide on the number of the members of the National Assembly to compose such a committee. However, valid meetings of this committee can take place only when all its appointed members are duly notified. The House of Justice feels that giving notice by public service announcements on radio is not a satisfactory means of ensuring that all members have been notified. Finally, you are advised to have regular meetings of your National Assembly and not to allow the arrangement for routine and/or emergency actions to take the place of such meetings."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Liberia and Guinea, June 15, 1977)

1. Latitude of Actions that May Be Taken by an Emergency Committee

"The latitude of actions that may be taken by an emergency committee of your National Assembly in any matter it deals with must be within the framework of guidance and authority given to it by your body." [pg 171]

"This same principle would apply to the actions in which two members of an emergency committee of three feel they have the right to take upon any matter before it."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador, December 2, 1982)

1. National Assembly Defines Limits Placed on Emergency Committee — Decisions of Committee Are Subject to Subsequent Approval of Assembly as a Whole

"...it is for your Assembly to define the limits placed upon an emergency committee appointed by you from among your own membership to take action when absolutely necessary on emergencies which arise between meetings. Decisions of the committee of course always are subject to the subsequent approval of the National Assembly as a whole and you should assure yourselves that you are adequately informed of all its actions taken in your name."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Barbados and Windward Islands, July 2, 1971)

1. Quorum of Emergency Committee Members

"With regard to the question as to whether a quorum of the Emergency Committee members may act, there are no standard rulings and conditions for Emergency Committees. Every National Spiritual Assembly must work out its own procedures in these matters. It may also provide procedures governing the attendance of members of the National Spiritual Assembly who are not also members of the Emergency Committee."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Jamaica, October 24, 1971)

1. Special Committee Can Be Named to Assume Responsibility for Consolidation

"If a National Spiritual Assembly finds that its National Teaching Committee cannot devote sufficient attention to the work of consolidation, it should not hesitate to appoint, in addition, special committees whose tasks would be the conduct of the various activities which are essential for consolidation. Activities falling within this category include the organization of circuits of travelling teachers skilled in consolidation work; the holding of summer and winter schools, weekend institutes and conferences; the initiation and operation of tutorial schools; the dissemination of Bahá'í literature and the encouragement of its study by the friends; and the organization of special courses and institutes for Local Spiritual Assembly members."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, April 17, 1981)

1. Not Necessary for National Committees to be Centred at National Headquarters²

"It is not necessary, of course, that the National Teaching Committee be centred at National Headquarters and it need not be a large committee. It is essential, however, that the members appointed be so situated that they can meet frequently during the year and that they be dedicated, active, knowledgeable, creative and reliable. As the National Teaching Committee has high priority in your [pg 172] administrative responsibilities, you should consider, if necessary, the possibility of relieving its members of other committee responsibilities, in order that they may devote their fullest possible time and energy to the work of the Teaching Committee. Preferably at least one of the members should have secretarial skills and be capable of carrying the heavy burden of correspondence which results when plans are being implemented."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Trinidad and Tobago, November 12, 1971)

1. Regional Committees — Sub-Committees of National Teaching Committee

"...the Guardian has ... re-emphasized the necessity of avoiding overcentralization in the conduct of the affairs of the Cause, thereby relieving your Assembly of an unmanageable amount of detail and routine work, which would interfere with its clear and paramount duty of maintaining a thorough and vigilant supervision over the work of the Cause as a whole. Excessive decentralization, on the other hand, would tend to nullify the principle which places ultimate authority and responsibility in the hands of the National Spiritual Assembly. His recent instruction regarding the relationship of the Regional Teaching Committees to the National Teaching Committee safeguards this principle which lies at the very basis of the Administrative Order. The Regional Committees, although appointed by the N.S.A., should, unlike all other Committees, be viewed as special adjuncts created specifically for the purpose of helping directly the National Teaching Committee in its all-important task of stimulating the teaching activities of the Faith.... In a sense they are sub-Committees of the National Teaching Committee, to whom their reports and all details of National Teaching activity should be constantly and directly referred."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, May 25, 1941)

1. Too Many Committees Confuse Rather Than Clarify the Work

"A National Teaching Committee, with the regional ones under it, will, he believes, run the work much better. Too many committees, like too many circulars, confuse rather than clarify the work."

2. (See also: No. 546 Desirability of Easy Meetings of National Teaching Committee)

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, June 30, 1952)

1. Relationship of National Teaching Committee to Regional Teaching Committees

"Regarding the question of the relationship of the National Teaching Committee to the Regional Teaching Committees which you had raised in your last two letters: The Guardian has carefully noted your views on the subject, and while he feels that, as a matter of principle, the appointment of the Regional Committees should be entrusted to the N.S.A., their immediate supervision and control, he believes, directly concern the National Teaching Committee, which body is solely responsible for the organization and conduct of the teaching [pg 173] campaign throughout the U.S.A. and Canada. The N.S.A. has certainly ultimate jurisdiction over all these Committees, whether national or regional, but should, in view of the ever-expanding teaching activities of the Cause ..., leave to the N.T.C. the task of supervising and coordinating the teaching work of the Regional Committees. The immediate responsibility of these Committees is thus to the N.T.C., which in turn is directly and solely responsible to the N.S.A."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, January 28, 1941)

1. Auxiliary Board Member Can Serve on Certain Special Committees

"The House of Justice feels that committees such as the administrative committee of the Bahá'í International Health Agency, or committees responsible for aspects of social and economic development, which require professional expertise in their members, fall in a different category from other Bahá'í committees. Believers who have the necessary professional skills are often in short supply, and therefore the House of Justice has no objection to Auxiliary Board members' serving on such committees at the present time — indeed it is often highly desirable that they do so — provided, of course, that such service does not so occupy their time and energies that they are unable to carry out their highly important services for the Auxiliary Board."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, September 9, 1984)

1. Collaboration Between Auxiliary Board Members and National and Regional Teaching Committees

"It has become apparent that in some areas the progress of the teaching work requires closer collaboration between Auxiliary Board members and National or Regional Teaching Committees than heretofore. Following consultation with the International Teaching Centre on the matter, we have concluded that the possibilities provided by the present policy are adequate and that where a lack of collaboration has been felt it has arisen from an insufficiently full and frequent exchange of information between the institutions."

"While the members of the Auxiliary Boards and their assistants should never attempt to direct the work of committees or become involved in the administrative work associated with the committees' functions, it is absolutely vital that they be kept fully informed of the committees' activities and plans and their hopes for the work in the area. Only then can the members of the

Auxiliary Boards be confident that the services to which they are exhorting the believers and the projects in which they are encouraging them are in harmony with the overall plans and objectives of the National Spiritual Assembly and its committees."

"The existing policy and the reasons for it were conveyed to the Continental Boards of Counsellors and all National Spiritual Assemblies in our letter of 1 October 1969, a copy of which is attached. It should be noted that under this policy it is permissible and highly desirable to have a direct and regular exchange of information between the committees and the Auxiliary Board members. Moreover, at the outset of the work of the year or at times during the year when new plans are being evolved, it is often helpful to arrange for consultations to be held between the Auxiliary Board members and the National or Regional Teaching Committees before such plans are finalized." [pg 174]

"We are confident that a greater awareness of the importance of close collaboration between the two arms of the Administrative Order and of the ways available to achieve this will lead to a much-needed intensification of the teaching work in every land."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, July 6, 1977)

1. National Youth Committee

"...if we say that no older person should take part in the organization of the youth it will be depriving them of the necessary experience needed to have a permanent and working institution."

"Shoghi Effendi believes that the best solution is to have some reasonable age limit for the actual membership of the body of the organization so that only the young people may take part in the different activities and have no older person usurp the floor or deprive them from their chances to train themselves, and express their ideas. At the same time the National Assembly could appoint on the National Committee that is to supervise their work some older and experienced persons who could co-operate with them and guide them in their activities. The National Committee should be composed of both people within the age limit and also older people."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, October 27, 1932)

1. Young Bahá'ís Under 21 May Serve on Committees

"The question of young Bahá'ís being permitted to serve on Committees other than the Youth Committee has been raised in a number of letters recently, and in considering the matter he felt that Bahá'í young people under 21 should not be denied the privilege of Committee work. Though they cannot be voting members of Bahá'í Communities (or exercise the electoral vote at all until they reach that age), and though they cannot, likewise, be elected to Assemblies, there is no reason why they should not serve the Cause on various Committees, as all Committees, National or Local, are subordinate to Assemblies, and their members are not elected but appointed, and appointed by Assemblies. We have many devoted and talented young believers

who can be of great assistance to the Cause even though not yet legally of age."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, February 28, 1945)

1. Local Committees

"...regarding local Bahá'í committees: These, though different in their functions enjoy equal rights, and are subject to responsibilities and obligations which, although varying in degree, are equally binding on them all."

"These local committees, being appointed by the Local Spiritual Assembly itself, are responsible to that body alone, and they can be dissolved, and their membership altered by it at any time. The local committees are the hands of the Spiritual Assembly that has appointed them ..., and as such are subject to its rulings."

"The Local Spiritual Assembly cannot delegate to any one of the local [pg 175] committees the authority to exercise any control or supervision over any other committee or body which it has itself appointed. All local committees are directly and solely responsible to the Local Assembly which alone can exercise the power of supervision over them."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 16, 1939)

1. Structure of National and Regional Teaching Committees

"...Whether it be the body of their elected national representatives, or its chief auxiliary institution, the National Teaching Committee, or its subsidiary organs, the regional teaching committees, or the local Spiritual Assemblies and their respective teaching committees, they who labor for the spread of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh should, through constant interchange of ideas, through letters, circulars, reports, bulletins and other means of communication with these established instruments designed for the propagation of the Faith, insure the smooth and speedy functioning of the teaching machinery of their Administrative Order. Confusion, delay, duplication of efforts, dissipation of energy will, thereby, be completely avoided, and the mighty flood of the grace of Bahá'u'lláh, flowing abundantly and without the least obstruction through these essential channels will so inundate the hearts and souls of men as to enable them to bring forth the harvest repeatedly predicted by Abdu'l-Bahá."

(Shoghi Effendi: The Advent of Divine Justice, pp. 52-53, 1984 ed.) [pg 176]

