



*Enoch Olinga, Hand of the Cause of God, 1957*



# ENOCH OLINGA

## HAND OF THE CAUSE OF GOD

The memorial article by  
Rúhiyyih Rabbání

With

The reminiscences of  
Rowshan Mustapha



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O my Lord! O my Lord! This is a lamp lighted by the fire of Thy love and ablaze with the flame which is ignited in the tree of Thy mercy. O my Lord! Increase his enkindlement, heat and flame, with the fire which is kindled in the Sinai of Thy Manifestation. Verily, Thou art the Confirmer, the Assister, the Powerful, the Generous, the Loving.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá



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## Introduction

"Of all the places in the world where the Bahá'í Faith exists and is spreading, the Guardian is definitely most pleased with Africa, and most proud of Uganda. He feels that the spirit shown by white and negro pioneers alike in that continent, presents a challenge to the Bahá'ís everywhere in the world, and that old and staid communities may well learn from, and emulate the example of, the believers of Africa, many of them scarcely a year old in the Cause of God!"<sup>1</sup>

At the centre of the great teaching success referred to in this remarkable statement made on Shoghi Effendi's behalf is the story (among others) that Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum tells us in the pages that follow. It is a story about a great teacher of the Bahá'í Faith—one who was not only a Hand of the Cause of God, a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, and a "Chief Steward of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Commonwealth", but whom Shoghi Effendi named, uniquely in this present cycle of human existence, Abu'l-Futúḥ: "Father of Victories", because of his selfless service and singular achievements in the field of teaching. This was Enoch Olinga. He was a young man whose life was transformed when he heard of the Faith in

1952 in Uganda; and who went on to drink the sweet elixir of pioneering, to kindle the faith of unnumbered souls and, in the hearts of these new believers, to "plant the seed of the tree of the love for the Covenant."<sup>2</sup> We are further privileged that this important and inspiring article, which Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum had, at one time, expressed the desire to have circulated among the African friends in their languages, is now being disseminated in this present accessible form, not only in Africa, but throughout the world. A number of the African believers will, no doubt, tend to its translation into their native tongues, as will believers in many lands.

Following this article are Rowshan Mustapha's memories of Mr. Olinga. These immortal remembrances give us further details of Enoch Olinga's life before being appointed Hand of the Cause of God and reveal, in many ways, the spiritual potentials Shoghi Effendi saw in him. They include his work on the National Spiritual Assembly of Northwest Africa and the early teaching committee for West Africa. There are also fascinating excerpts from letters he wrote before and after becoming a Hand of the Cause. These letters give us insights into his deep knowledge and great faith, as well as a glimpse of the stirring poetry of his language. There are stories of his perseverance and his marvellous sense of humour.

In this book, we come to know one of the "divinely appointed, tried, and victorious souls", a Hand of the Cause of God who with others of



his station "brought the Cause safely to victory in the name of Shoghi Effendi".<sup>3</sup> We learn, as well, about the spiritual life. The tests and trials Enoch Olinga passed through so victoriously, which both parts of the book indicate, his detachment, and his success in making "the Faith come first" are great lessons for all of us. So too are his intrepid and swift advances along the path of teaching, which, please God, will encourage each of us to "invite people of every sort and every gift to the banquet table of the Lord of Hosts".<sup>4</sup>

There is doubtless a wisdom in the production of this book at a time the Universal House of Justice has signaled is "one of the most critical times in the life of the planet."<sup>5</sup> And about one, whose conversion to the Faith came as a precious raindrop just before that cloud-burst of teaching, and whose subsequent services impelled still further that first flood of new believers, described by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum as "the first blast on the trumpet of 'entry by troops' predicted and so much hoped for by 'Abdu'l-Bahá."<sup>6</sup>

Felicity Enayat  
1999



## PART I

### ENOCK OLINGA

24 June 1926—16 September 1979\*

By Rúhíyyih Rabbaní

Enoch Olinga came from a family of devout Christian converts taught by the Church Missionary Society, now the Native Anglican Church of Uganda. His people lived in the Teso north-eastern part of the country and belonged to the Atesot tribe, of the clan of Aatekok or Iraraka. His father, Samusan Okadakina, of the village of Tilling in Ngora County, volunteered in 1920 to take Christianity to Soroti County where he became a catechist in the church, and where, in 1921, he married, according to church ritual, Eseza Iyamitai, who gave birth on 24 June 1926, in the village of Abaango, to her second son, Enoch. In 1927 Enoch's father returned to his permanent home in Tilling—a name which

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will forever be associated not only with Africa's only native Hand of the Cause, but with the first substantial conversion of the African people to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, an event which was a source of immense joy and pride to the heart of the beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi.

Enoch's stature must be seen against a unique period in Bahá'í history, for he accepted this new Faith of God shortly after its introduction into black Africa through a vast planned drive to carry Bahá'u'lláh's message to its people. During the last thirty years of Bahá'u'lláh's ministry a few of His followers living in Egypt and the Sudan were the recipients of His praise and encouragement; during 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ministry the Faith had reached Tunis, and for the first time some of its occidental supporters, greatly encouraged by the Master, were spreading its message in southern Africa; it remained, however, for the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, at the time of the British National Spiritual Assembly's two-year interim plan in 1950-1952, to truly inaugurate the spiritual conquest of Africa through the strong support and guidance he gave to Persian, British and American believers to pioneer there. This initial step he followed up on a grand scale through the provisions of his World Crusade, inaugurated in 1953—a Ten Year Plan which, among other objectives, was to open to the Faith 131 virgin territories in the five continents of the globe; many of its objectives concerned the work in Africa, whose pioneers were responsible for the phenomenally rapid spread of the Teachings

amongst a race whom Bahá'u'lláh Himself had compared to "the black pupil of the eye" through which "the light of the spirit shineth forth"—a statement fraught with profound implications, for the sight of the eye is in the pupil.

The current of Enoch Olinga's destiny carried him towards a fixed point; for the ten years after his father returned to Tilling in 1927, Enoch received his schooling locally and at Ngora, a small town not far from his home; later he went to high school in Mbale; during World War II, in 1941, he joined the British Army Education Corps and went to Nairobi in Kenya, later serving in the East African King's Rifles Corps in South East Asia, visiting Burma, East Pakistan, Ceylon and India. By 1946 he had returned to Uganda, a young man of twenty, and joined the Government Department of Public Relations and Welfare. For a time he was stationed in Soroti and Mbale, producing two books in his own language, Ateso, which were of assistance to the Government Education Department in the Teso district; later he moved to Kampala, the capital of Uganda.

By the time Enoch came in contact with the Faith in 1951 his personal life had assumed an entirely new aspect; he was now married and had his first children; he was a gifted translator working for the government, but also a somewhat disillusioned man who had become a very heavy drinker, a fact of which the government service that employed him had become aware and which led to his dismissal, in spite of his

marked capacity and relatively long record of service. Unfortunately the reports on this serious impairment to the discharge of his duties had already gone through when Enoch accepted the Faith and upon his enrolment gave up all alcohol immediately.

Enoch was the third Ugandan to accept Bahá'u'lláh, but the first of the Teso tribe; he heard about the Faith from a friend who introduced him to 'Alí Nakhjavání, the son-in-law of Mr. and Mrs. Banání who had left Persia to pioneer, in response to the wishes of Shoghi Effendi, had proceeded to Africa and settled in Uganda with their daughter Violette, her husband 'Alí, and their daughter, aged three, arriving there in 1951; Mr. Banání purchased a home in the heart of Kampala, at 3 Kitante Road; events were to take place there, of both joy and grief, which are inextricably interwoven with the unfoldment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan in that continent.

Once Enoch had met 'Alí a friendship began to unfold and Enoch attended the regular evening meetings held for enquirers in the Banání home, where the warmth of this Persian Bahá'í household greatly attracted him. In February 1952 Mr. and Mrs. Banání left on their pilgrimage to the World Centre, and it was agreed that during this time the pioneers in Kampala would hold a special meeting for all the Africans who were interested in the Faith and that this would coincide with the time in Haifa when the Guardian usually visited the Shrines; Mr. Banání would inform him of this and ask for special prayers.

Shoghi Effendi was happy to comply with this request, and he and Mr. Banání visited the Shrines together at that hour. Enoch attended that meeting in Kampala—but nothing happened! The three pioneers—the Nakhjavánís and Philip Hainsworth—felt very discouraged. Later that night, however, he returned, posed many questions and ended up by asking "How does one become a Bahá'í?" Early the following morning he appeared with a letter requesting to be accepted as a believer; from the very beginning Enoch had avidly read every Bahá'í book he could get, and this laid the foundation for his deep knowledge of the Teachings. Mrs. Olinga, making no secret of the fact that it was the remarkable transformation in her husband's conduct since he had become a Bahá'í that influenced her decision, also embraced the Faith. Gradually others swelled its numbers in Kampala so that by 21 April 1952, the first, historic Local Spiritual Assembly of Uganda, of which Enoch was a member, could be elected in that city. Some months later Enoch returned to his Teso home in Tilling to spread the glad tidings of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings and aroused such interest that he returned to Kampala and persuaded 'Alí to visit Tilling, as the people there wanted to see with their own eyes the white man who had converted Enoch to this new doctrine. 'Alí, first with Enoch as interpreter, later with Enos Epyeru, one of the first Teso believers, travelled and taught in the Teso district for several weeks, where regular enrolment now

began, one of the first being Enoch's own father, who became a very staunch Bahá'í.

In the beginning of January 1953—eight months after the Local Assembly of Kampala was formed—the Guardian cabled the Bahá'í world: SHARE BAHAI COMMUNITIES EAST WEST THRILLING REPORTS FEATS ACHIEVED HEROIC BAND PIONEERS LABOURING DIVERS WIDELY SCATTERED AFRICAN TERRITORIES PARTICULARLY UGANDA, and went on to liken these feats to episodes related in the Book of Acts in the Bible and to the rapid and dramatic propagation of our own Faith by the Dawn-Breakers of its Heroic Age. He stated that what was happening in Africa eclipsed even the marvellous accomplishments in Latin America and surpassed the exploits which immortalized the European Crusade. Shoghi Effendi attached great importance to the identity of people; the believers were never an amorphous mass who accepted Bahá'u'lláh; they were individuals, interesting, like the coloured pieces that make up a beautiful mosaic picture. It was at this moment that the spotlight went to Uganda and was held there till the end of Shoghi Effendi's life. In that same cable he went on to say: NUMBER AFRICANS CONVERTED CAUSE LAST FIFTEEN MONTHS RESIDING KAMPALA OUTLYING DISTRICTS PROTESTANT CATHOLIC PAGAN BACKGROUNDS LETTERED UNLETTERED BOTH SEXES REPRESENTATIVE NO LESS SIXTEEN TRIBES PASSED TWO HUNDRED. This was the first blast on the trumpet of "entry by troops" predicted and so much hoped for by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. In that same cable the Guardian announced that no less than nine localities would



be qualified in Ridván to form their Local Assemblies; still more significant, however, was his announcement that he would send to the first of the four Intercontinental Conferences to be held in 1953—which was the African one held in Kampala—a copy of the portrait of the Báb, the showing of which he was confident would bring the new African believers CLOSER SPIRIT MARTYR-PROPHET FAITH AND BESTOW EVERLASTING BENEDICTION ALL GATHERED MEMORABLE SESSIONS EPOCH-MAKING CONFERENCE. It was Enoch, the new Bahá'í, who found himself on the Kampala Local Assembly, caught up with veteran believers in making plans for this unique and historic gathering. When Enoch had been disheartened over losing his job, Mr. Banání in a flight of prophecy, had rallied his spirit, assuring him he would get an even better job—which he later did. The Conference was to be held from February 12th to 18th and the Guardian himself had placed a sum of money in charge of Mr. Banání to be used exclusively to bring some of the new Bahá'ís as his guests. As the "mass conversion" was taking place in Teso, this meant that about 200 people would be brought down by bus from this northeastern province, which was a trip of over 200 miles. 'Alí Nakhjavání went to escort the friends and invite them to be Shoghi Effendi's guests. When the men got on the buses many of the women wept and wailed because they were afraid their men were being taken off to be slaves!

In his greeting and message to this "epoch-making" Conference, which the Guardian hailed

with "joyous heart", he said "welcome with open arms the unexpectedly large number of the representatives of the pure-hearted and spiritually receptive Negro race" and pointed out that their continent had retained its primitive simplicity and "remained uncontaminated" by what he characterized in scathing terms as the evils of "a gross, a rampant and cancerous materialism undermining the fabric of human society alike in the East and in the West" and "threatening to engulf in one common catastrophic convulsion the generality of mankind". Weighty words containing a weightier warning. In this message Shoghi Effendi outlines the vast amount of work lying ahead for the six sponsoring National Assemblies, the indigenous believers themselves, and their pioneer helpers. No less than thirty-three virgin territories are to be opened to the Faith and three giant National—really regional in nature—Assemblies are to be formed, embracing the continent: Central and East Africa with its seat in Kampala, South and West Africa with its seat in Johannesburg, and North-West Africa with its seat in Tunis. Amongst other additional objectives, the Hand of the Cause for Africa, Mr. Banání, is to nominate during the following Ridván, 1954, an Auxiliary Board of nine members to assist in the tasks that lie ahead.

Every one of these points touches on Enoch's own life: it was his people, the Tesos, numbering many tens of thousands, who formed the vast majority of Bahá'ís in Uganda before the civil war; he responded to the appeal for pio-

neers to open the thirty-three territories and himself become a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh; he was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of North-West Africa; he was appointed a Hand of the Cause in the last contingent of eight elevated to that rank by Shoghi Effendi just before he passed away. Enoch thus became the colleague of Músá Banání, in whose home he had accepted the Faith. There can be no doubt, as we look back on his life as a Bahá'í, that the experience of Enoch, when he saw the portrait of the Martyr-Prophet of his Faith, did indeed bestow an "everlasting benediction" upon him.

Enoch was now established in his new job and his reformed way of life—but a strong wind was blowing, the wind of God calling the souls of the receptive Bahá'ís to arise and hear the call of their Lord and carry His Message to far places. As Enoch's father had once arisen to carry the Christian Faith to another territory, so now Enoch and two other new Ugandan believers arose to leave family, home, job and country to carry the glad tidings of Bahá'u'lláh across the continent to West Africa, to some of those waiting, unopened countries. Mr. Banání, the Spiritual Conqueror of Africa, as Shoghi Effendi called him, had recently bought a small Peugeot station-wagon which he placed at their disposal. Originally the trip had been planned to take Violette to visit a Bahá'í family in the Congo, but now its character entirely changed when the ever-faithful and ever-enthusiastic 'Alí volunteered to drive the three would-be pioneers across the continent in his capacity of

spiritual pilot and physical chauffeur. The five set off, on 27 August 1953, with not too much money and almost no information about the route that lay ahead, on probably the most abominable roads in the world, in a passenger car certainly not equipped to cope with them. Their consolation then, and throughout the entire journey, was a cable received from their beloved Guardian on the eve of their departure: LOVING, FERVENT PRAYERS ACCOMPANYING YOU.

About a week later Samson Mungono was dropped off in Kamina, in what was then the Belgian Congo (now Zaïre), which already had two non-African believers living in different parts of the country; by 26 September Max Kenyerezi, the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for French Equatorial Africa (now Congo Republic), had been established in Brazzaville. The longest and hardest part of the journey, however, still lay ahead through the deep tropical jungles of Gabon; passing through a disease-decimated area, plagued by insects, constantly getting stuck in the mud, 'Alí or Enoch had to walk many miles to get help from villagers to lift their car out of the bog; so difficult was the road that in one day, during sixteen hours, they progressed only 100 kilometres. On the next day they made only 25 kilometres in fourteen hours; finally the car really broke down; Enoch volunteered to walk ahead 50 miles, with a villager as a guide, to get help from a town that reputedly had a garage; separating from Enoch distressed the Nakhjavánís even more than their own plight; 'Alí—no mechanic—at last succeeded in repair-

ing the car's clutch sufficiently to limp along on Enoch's trail, constantly breaking down, but eventually managing to overtake him the following day after Enoch had walked 35 miles; he was exhausted from bad dysentery, in pain and very worried over them; on reaching the town 'Alí, who had been badly bitten by tsetse flies—the dread carrier of sleeping sickness—and Violette, who had also been bitten by them, went to the hospital for tests and treatment, but Enoch was so ill he was hospitalized for two days and could not travel for a week. When they had overtaken Enoch he told them that the night before, when he was alone with only strange Africans around him with whom he could not talk, afraid for his safety and the money he was carrying, full of misgivings and doubt, asking himself why he had left home and family on such a mad undertaking, he dreamed of Shoghi Effendi, who took him in his arms and held him close, and into him had poured comfort and reassurance; this dream restored his strength and affected him so profoundly he cried out in his heart to the Guardian that he was willing to go through such hardships for him every day of his life!

Finally, on 10 October, the little party crossed into French Cameroons, but Enoch's objective was British Cameroons, a goal which he was to fill on behalf of the British National Spiritual Assembly. The main bridge between the two countries was down; by a long and agonizing detour the party at last drove into Mamfe—rushing for the post office there to cable the

Guardian that British Cameroons was now opened by Enoch's arrival. It was 4 p.m. and the postmaster was closing up, but 'Alí begged him to re-open so that this important cable could get off before the Holy Year ended on that very night of 15 October. On the 16th they arrived in Victoria, on the coast, where Enoch was to live for the coming ten years before returning permanently to his homeland in East Africa.

The Africa of those days was still under colonial administration; reluctantly the Nakhjavánís and Enoch agreed that their association might place in jeopardy the object of so much effort and sacrifice because Victoria was only a small town and two white orientals and a black Ugandan were far too conspicuous a combination. The first problem was where to find lodging for Enoch; tribalism, even today, makes one group very suspicious of any other; no one wanted to take in a man from another people 3,000 kilometres away, the other side of Africa. Finally, through the familiar odd series of circumstances which seem so often to open doors for Bahá'í pioneers, a young man working in the local library got into conversation with Violette, found she was worrying over how to find accommodation for a "young Ugandan we know", and asked to meet Enoch. The upshot was Enoch became a lodger in the home of David Tanyi, who not only accepted the Faith through him, becoming the first believer in the entire Cameroons, but later became the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for French Togoland. The Nakh-

javánís removed to nearby Douala, in the French Cameroons, where they could still be close to Enoch without arousing the suspicions of the local authorities in Victoria because they wanted to be sure he would get his residence visa and was safely settled in his pioneering post before they returned to Uganda. Enoch himself discreetly but eagerly began to teach new friends.

The period of the Guardian's World Crusade was indeed a time of flame. A holy enthusiasm to teach the Cause of God to humanity spread far and wide. Shoghi Effendi, greatly encouraged by the remarkable trek across Africa which had already led to the opening of two new countries, now encouraged Enoch to do the seemingly impossible and raise up, from among his new converts, pioneers to go forth and open other virgin territories. When one realizes that Enoch himself was a new Bahá'í and a recent pioneer, his success was almost miraculous. In a letter addressed to Leroy Ioas dated 15 April 1954—exactly six months after his arrival in the British Cameroons—Enoch wrote: "Praised be to God that our Beloved Guardian's admonition to assign and get pioneers settled in the five virgin territories has through Beloved's Boundless Grace been fulfilled. We prayerfully raise up our suppliant hands and voices of praise to Bahá'u'lláh for His guidance and confirmations, and I believe very firmly that He will assuredly assist and guide these new and young soldiers in His triumphant Army, and render them victorious for, according to my little un-

derstanding and belief, they have in them such a rare spirit of love and devotion to His Best Beloved Cause."

At first, he wrote, it looked almost impossible to get any of the new believers to leave their homes and move to foreign lands: "...but I knew very well that the Beloved Guardian, who is actually watching the world and all the believers, could not have asked for the impossible. As soon as the news reached their attentive and sensitive ears the believers reacted in such a manner that a spectator could take them for drunkards...they really became intoxicated with the choice wine of His love and of submissiveness and obedience to the call of their Best Beloved. Pioneering offers poured in like locusts and clear signs of obedience to move the next minute were made manifest, forgetting their property and loving relatives and families." Indeed, so many offers to pioneer were made that in the end they had to draw lots to see which five would be chosen to go.

'Alí flew back to Victoria to help make the arrangements for visas and transportation—in those days a much more complicated matter than today in independent Africa. "When 'Alí arrived," Enoch wrote, "not a single moment was wasted. Off they flew like very mighty eagles in the heavenly sky. Such are the soldiers of Bahá'u'lláh. O! How I wish I accompanied them! May Bahá'u'lláh sustain them and guide their footsteps along the glorious path of spiritual understanding and selfless sacrifice so that they may grow into trees whose fruits will be



the food for the hungry ones. My constant prayer is that they may find means of settlement. I know the Beloved Guardian's fervent prayers are with them."

Enoch also reports that the letter of Shoghi Effendi to David Tanyi, received on the eve of his departure to pioneer, was indeed a remarkable coincidence and that David had said he was going to frame it. At the airport, while relatives dissolved in tears, the pioneers cheerfully marched to the plane, a contrast which to Enoch crowned "the pioneering of these gallant and stalwart soldiers of the Ancient Beauty".

In answer to his letter Enoch was assured that the Guardian "was deeply moved by the reports which you sent and the manner in which the friends received his call to pioneer in the virgin areas. He feels this is truly historic, because it means that people who have been Bahá'ís for only a short period, have arisen to carry the Glad Tidings to peoples of new lands. The manner in which the Faith has spread in Africa is truly remarkable, and overshadows the manner it has spread in other parts of the world. It indicates how glorious will be the future of the Faith in that great continent."

The names of these precious and distinguished spiritual children of Enoch, who received each the title, like himself, of Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, are as follows: David Tanyi, French Togoland; Edward Tabe, British Togoland; Samuel Njiki, French Cameroons; Benedict Eballa, Ashanti

Protectorate; Martin Manga, Northern Territories Protectorate.

Two months later, on 14 June 1954, Enoch wrote his first letter to Shoghi Effendi; as far as records go it seems this was his only one, hence I will quote it in full as it well reflects his love, his respect, his obedience to the Head of his Faith and the one who had become the focal point of his life:

My Well-Beloved Guardian,

I must first thank my Well-Beloved Guardian for continually praying for my spiritual welfare as well as of those who are now serving the Ancient Beauty, and for the Beloved Guardian's guidance, without which the present spiritual achievements of our beloved Faith would not have been possible.

Furthermore, I very humbly beg to assure my dearly loved Guardian of my unreserved loving devotion to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, and my submissiveness to every one of the Guardian's admonitions in the way of promoting the fundamental interests of our Faith, which is now overshadowing the entire world. May I also be permitted to express the joy and delight which the letters received by the individual Bahá'ís from the Beloved Guardian have brought to the hearts of all the believers of this nascent community. These letters, like the fervent prayers of the Beloved Guardian, do wonders here. Our daily prayer and hope is that God, the All-Compelling, the All-Protecting may prolong the days of our Beloved

Guardian's unbroken service to His Cause and mankind.

As my Beloved Guardian may be aware, an Assembly was elected here last Riḍván, and through Beloved's Grace the coming Riḍván may bring a number of local Assemblies. I have just returned from a two weeks' teaching trip which took me right inside the country where I had quite thrilling and exciting experiences; especially when I had to live among the villagers who believe in witchcraft and potency of "Juju" (fetish, I think) practices. Quite terrifying it was to hear very frightful stories told by "Juju" adherents, but with much confidence in Bahá'u'lláh I was never deterred. Fortunately enough a few of them were enabled to see the Truth of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh—may my life, soul and spirit be a sacrifice unto the lowliest of His servants!

It may please my Beloved Guardian to know that ten new centres have been opened to the Faith, making a total of twelve centres in British Cameroons. We want to develop all the eleven towards Assembly status before the next Riḍván. We really need our Well-Beloved Guardian's special prayers for success in this somewhat ambitious project.

We receive very encouraging letters from all our five pioneers who have gone to open virgin territories. They all seem very happy there and are waiting for the doors of success to be opened for them. We all hope and pray that in time they will find jobs they can do. This is

not only because they will thereby be able to support themselves, but also because they will feel so much more happy and settled when they have jobs of work to do. They will take root and feel they belong. We always encourage them to remain there as much as we can when we write to them.

My Well-Beloved Guardian may be interested to know that the number of believers is increasing very rapidly in British Cameroons. The present situation is: accepted believers, up to 30; declarations, up to 40; centres now opened to the Faith, 12.

Please, my Beloved Guardian, I know how much busy you are, therefore I shall not dwell on inconsequentialities.

I very reverently beg to send my loving greetings and best wishes to my Beloved Guardian and all members of family.

With warmest Bahá'í Love from Victoria believers,

I beg to remain,  
my Beloved Guardian,  
Your devoted servant,  
Enoch Olinga

It was not the custom of the Guardian to keep copies of his wide correspondence; we do know, however, that this letter was answered by him on 9 August but, unfortunately, the original has not been found.

In those days the Bahá'ís throughout Africa were few and far between but part of the great Ten Year Plan of Shoghi Effendi was to create not only Local Spiritual Assemblies but bodies

to fulfil the functions of National Spiritual Assemblies; he solved the problem of too few believers in any one country to justify an independent National Assembly by constituting, in 1956, a number of giant administrative units so that Bahá'ís could learn to think and function in an administrative manner. The biggest group—united under the umbrella of the National Spiritual Assembly of North-West Africa, with its secretarial seat in Tunis, Tunisia—comprised no less than 25 territories, namely, Algeria, Ashanti Protectorate, British Cameroons, British Togoland, Canary Islands, Cape Verde Islands, French Cameroons, French Morocco, French Togoland, French West Africa, the Gambia, Gold Coast, Liberia, Madeira, Morocco (International Zone), Nigeria, Northern Territories Protectorate, Portuguese Guinea, Rio de Oro, St. Thomas Island, Sierra Leone, Spanish Guinea, Spanish Morocco, Spanish Sahara and Tunisia. In spite of this impressive list there were only about 1,000 Bahá'ís in this vast area and the National Body rested on 38 Local Assemblies; thanks to Shoghi Effendi, however, Tunis had its own National Bahá'í Headquarters, and Bomi Hills, in Liberia, was the proud possessor of the only endowment; Enoch Olinga was elected chairman of this new Body.\* It seems unbelievable that in the brief

\*Enoch Olinga was elected member of this Body. The chairman of the Regional Spiritual Assembly was Miss Elsie Austin.

space of three years, of the thirty-three virgin territories throughout Africa to be opened to the Faith, twenty-nine had already received pioneers.

In the heart of Enoch burned the great desire to make the pilgrimage to the World Centre and meet his beloved Guardian in person. Permission was finally asked and granted by Shoghi Effendi who, as was his custom, set a date by week, in other words Enoch was informed he would be welcome as a pilgrim in the first week of February 1957. Dr. Ugo Giachery, Hand of the Cause and member-at-large of the International Bahá'í Council at Haifa, was residing in Rome; he has given us this endearing image of Enoch: he arrived from Tunis the morning of 1 February 1957, "he was young, lean, lovable at first sight and believing that this Hand of the Cause could perform miracles. He had an old English passport that had expired some years before, and practically not a penny (of any currency) in his pocket. I took him to the British...Consulate. The wax-moustached Consul, for a solid twenty minutes, denied the possibility to renew the passport. I had told Enoch not to say anything but recite the Remover of Difficulties... When I said that Mr. Olinga had been called by the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, to Haifa, the Consul opened a drawer of his desk, took a voluminous dossier with blue pages, leafed them with great attention and then said: 'I think I can do it.' With the valid passport in hand we rushed to the Israeli Embassy for the visa, which was granted immediately.

Then I thought that Enoch could be hungry and asked him if he was. 'Yes', he said; he had not eaten from the night before...Dear, dear Enoch, he had stolen our hearts!"

Enoch, in his wide travels all over the world, often had recourse to the "Remover of Difficulties". I remember once his telling me that at the end of a long trip, as he went to embark for Uganda, the air company employee who was weighing him in said he was overweight and must pay so and so much excess baggage; Enoch said he was on his way home after a long trip and just did not have the money; she said he must either pay or leave his luggage behind. Whereupon, standing there in the airline queue, he drew out his prayer book and began to read a prayer to himself. The girl said, "What are you doing!" Enoch said: "I am praying, what else can I do?" She was so non-plussed by this she waved him and his baggage on with no extra payment.

On 3 February Enoch arrived in Haifa and left on the 13th; he stayed in the Oriental Pilgrim House near the Shrines on Mount Carmel, which meant Shoghi Effendi was going to treat him as an oriental pilgrim; the men who stayed there had the privilege of not only taking walks in the gardens with the Guardian but the great blessing of always visiting the Shrines with him and hearing him chant the Tablets of Visitation in his wonderfully melodious voice; to add to this privilege Enoch was most of the time alone; naturally Shoghi Effendi spoke to him in English. Sometimes Enoch would recall his first

impressions, how anxiously he waited to be called to the presence of his Guardian, how he could not imagine what Shoghi Effendi would be like or how he would look but then discovered with what majesty he spoke and that when he saw him walking "he walked like a king" and one knew it was his to command, that he held the authority. Enoch told his children Shoghi Effendi was like a lion, but at the same time very gentle; he reported an experience common to a great many pilgrims, that he found before he had a chance to ask his questions, Shoghi Effendi had answered them. Unlike most pilgrims, however, when the Guardian said goodbye to him he kissed him on both cheeks.

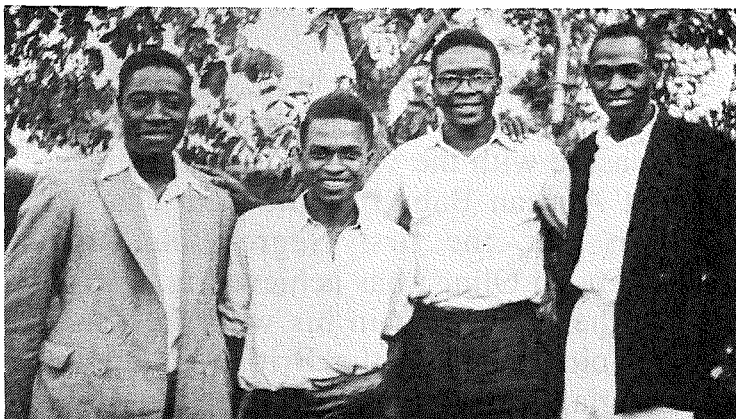
Few pilgrims, indeed, left the Holy Land without their visits to the Shrines and their meetings with the Guardian beginning to work a change in them; Enoch was no exception; the love showered upon him by Shoghi Effendi, the illuminating quality of his conversation, profoundly affected Enoch's whole life; whereas before he was a needle jumping about in the direction of north, he now became like an adjusted compass oriented firmly to the Centre of his Faith, his Guardian, his true king. He went back to West Africa enkindled, reassured, more mature. Excerpts from two of Enoch's letters to me, written in 1956 and 1957, vividly reflect the depths of his attachment to Shoghi Effendi: "Please, will you remember me to the beloved Guardian and tell him how much we all love him"; "Having visited and prayed in the Blessed Shrines, gazed on the holy face of our Guardian



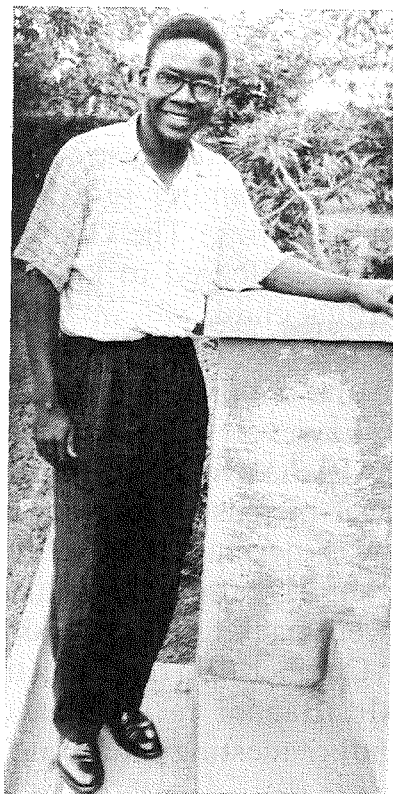
and heard his melodious voice, I am sure a new day has dawned upon me!"

A letter written on 15 February 1957, on behalf of the Guardian to Músá Banání, expressed "his pleasure with the visit on his pilgrimage of the first African Bahá'í of the Ten Year Crusade—in fact, the first Negro Bahá'í from Africa. Enoch Olinga has achieved many victories for the Faith; first in his work in Uganda; then by pioneering in the British Cameroons, becoming a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh there. Five of his spiritual children went from the Cameroons, to virgin areas of the Ten Year Crusade, thus becoming themselves, Knights of Bahá'u'lláh. He himself has confirmed 300 souls, with five Assemblies. The Guardian considers this unique in the history of the Crusade, in both the East and West; and he has blessed the one who so selflessly served, and won these victories for the Cause of God, by naming him 'Abu'l-Futúḥ', the 'Father of Victories'. The Guardian felt you and Ali would be pleased to know this, as he was Ali's spiritual child."

For various reasons, economic and otherwise, Enoch's wife and children had remained in East Africa; now, however, with his election to the North-West African National Spiritual Assembly and his ever-increasing teaching activities, it seemed he was permanently settled in West Africa, and shortly after his return from pilgrimage he went back to Uganda to fetch them. It was on 2 October 1957, at the time of this visit, that Mr. Banání received a cable from Shoghi Effendi requesting him to inform Enoch



*First four native Bahá'ís of Uganda, 1952.  
 From left to right, Chrispian Kajubi (Muganda by tribe),  
 Enoch Olinga (Etesot by tribe),  
 Fred Bigabwa (Mutooro by tribe), Peter Musoke (Muganda by tribe)*



*Enoch Olinga as a young Bahá'í*



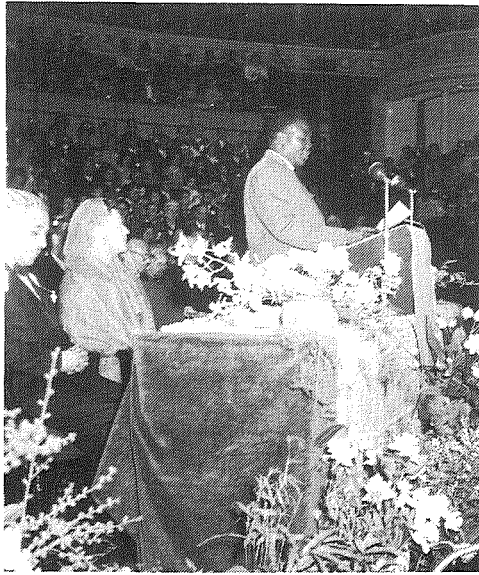
*Enoch and Eunice Olinga with their baby Florence,  
the first child to be born after they became Bahá'ís*



*The first Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Kampala, 1952. From left to right, standing, Philip Hainsworth, Chrispian Kajubi, Enoch Olinga, Ali Nakhjavani, Fredrick Bigabwa, Peter Musoke; seated, Mrs. Samihih Banani, Hand of the Cause of God Musa Banani, Mrs. Violette Nakhjavani*



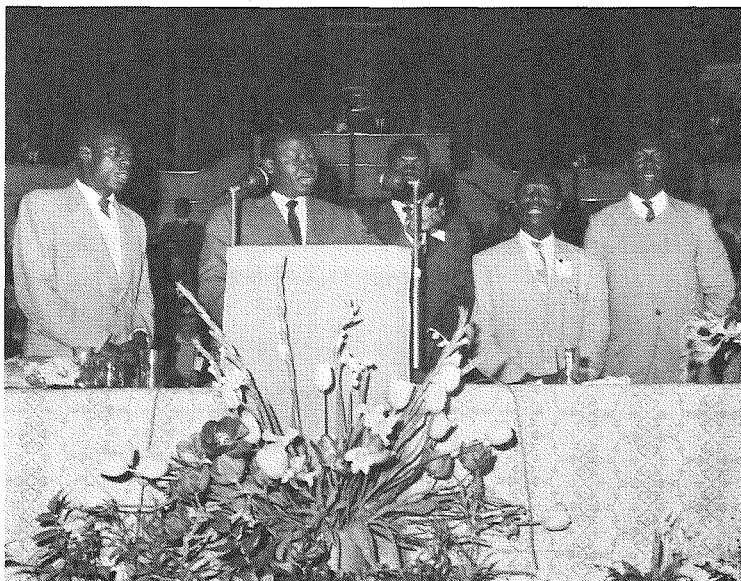
*The first Bahá'ís of the British Cameroons with pioneer Enoch Olinga, 1954, taken on Naw-Rúz*



*Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga speaking at the  
Bahá'í World Congress, London, 1963*



*Hand of the Cause of God Olinga speaking at the  
Bahá'í World Congress, London, 1963,  
with view of fellow Hands and audience*



*Bahá'í World Congress, London, 1963:  
Group of African Bahá'ís, including Hand of the Cause of God  
Enoch Olinga, presenting a selection of songs with Bahá'í themes  
composed by the Bahá'ís of Africa*

Olinga, as well as two pioneers serving in Africa—John Robarts and William Sears—of their ELEVATION RANK HAND CAUSE, adding FEEL CONFIDENT HIGH DISTINCTION WILL ENABLE THEM ENRICH RECORD THEIR MERITORIOUS SERVICES. Enoch was summoned to that same home where he had accepted the Faith and the Guardian's cable placed in his hands; he read it and then prostrated himself flat on the floor, a mark in Africa of deep submission to one's Liege.

It must be remembered that for Enoch and the seven other Hands of the Cause appointed by Shoghi Effendi at the same time, his death, one month later, coming as it did so swiftly upon the already stunning news of being raised to the rank of a Hand, was a tremendous shock; before they could do more than acknowledge this new station conferred upon them, their guide and "true brother" was gone! Enoch cabled Shoghi Effendi on 4 October, BELOVED'S HOLY MESSAGE JUST RECEIVED BENUMBED MY FACULTIES. WITH MUCH SUBMISSIVENESS AND HUMBLENESS I ACCEPT DIVINE FAVOUR FEEL DEEPLY GRATEFUL BELOVED'S SACRED WISHES FOR OUR PROGRESS BESEECH HIS PRAYERS FOR CONFIRMATION GUIDANCE AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT. DEVOTEDLY ENOCH OLINGA.

Returning to live in Victoria with his family, Enoch's teaching activities throughout West Africa continued on an ever-wider scale; all the British territories in that region were controlled and administered from Nigeria and many new converts were brought into the Faith by him in that country, which he frequently visited, as

well as in the Cameroons. His oldest son, George, recalls that during those West African years his father was often absent on very long teaching trips outside the country; Enoch himself mentions Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Gambia "to mention", he says "but a few", where he was "instrumental in guiding many souls to the Cause of God." The vivid stories he told his family when he returned stimulated the children's interest in the Faith; sometimes, if he was only on a week-end trip in the Cameroons, he took George with him. Not only was his service to the Faith a special thing for Enoch but in his home there was always a special place for his treasured photographs of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi and places with sacred associations. All this implanted in the hearts of his children a similar love and respect; all of them grew to be staunch Bahá'ís.

Although the formalities required to attend the beloved Guardian's funeral in London prevented Enoch from being present, he was able to join his fellow Hands at their first Conclave held immediately after Shoghi Effendi's passing in Bahjí, on 18 November 1957, and to be present at all the others. In spite of the fact that Enoch had the gift of words and was a brilliant public speaker, he was remarkably silent, I remember, during our meetings, following carefully the long hours and days of discussion in two languages, English and Persian, keeping his own counsel deep in his heart, making up his own mind. When one remembers he was a new Bahá'í of only four



years' experience, that he was a young man only thirty-one years old—our baby Hand—one must realize that these were years of great stress for him; they were terrible years of stress for his much older peers, many of whom were born Bahá'ís!

One of Enoch's most endearing qualities was his laugh, a great, joyous, consuming and contagious laugh. His fellow Hands were not slow to appreciate this and went so far as to save up funny stories the whole year so they could tell them to Enoch at the next Conclave; God knows our hearts and minds were weighted down enough with our responsibilities and problems so the laughter at our dining table was a welcome relief for often sad and exhausted minds, but sometimes they made Enoch laugh so much that I scolded them, saying they would make him ill; of course others laughed too—but not like Enoch, who would begin by chuckling and end up convulsed.

Ever since his pilgrimage Enoch and I had become very close; some of the Hands slept in Bahjí while others returned for the night to Haifa; Enoch and I were among those who always remained in Bahjí during the entire Conclave; I remember once, when we had a regular plague of snails devouring the gardens, I insisted that the Hands come out and pick snails, giving them buckets and bowls to put them in: in the bright moonlight about eight of us started down the borders in front of the Shrine; eventually when I turned around I found everyone

had sneaked off, only faithful Enoch and I were still gathering snails!

Those years from 1957 until 1963—when Enoch returned to live in East Africa—were in many ways very difficult for him; his relations with Eunice, his first wife, were going from bad to worse; finally, after about three years, she returned to East Africa, but the children remained with him; a divorce was obtained in 1961 and in 1963 Enoch went to Nairobi with his second wife, Elizabeth, by whom he had two children, Lennie and Tahirih.

While still resident in West Africa Enoch returned to Kampala to attend the historic occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of the Mother Temple of Africa on 14 January 1958; he took part in the African Teaching Conference held concurrently with that event, he and I sharing the platform of the public meeting; a week later the impressive Bahá'í African Inter-continental Conference, called by the Guardian, was held in Kampala—one of five similar conferences marking the midway point of his World Crusade; Enoch was chairman of one of its sessions and speaker at another, his theme: "The Vital Process of Individual Conversion."

All these events and pressures on Enoch's life were—as should be the case for each of us—shaping his character, helping him to grow spiritually into his own potentialities, maturing him into a truly great man, but not without suffering, anxiety and descending into the valleys as well as scaling the mountains. In a letter to me on 13 October 1963 Enoch wrote from

Nigeria: "I am now on my way to Nairobi where I intend to make my home", and where he says he will have "to overcome many difficulties which are bound to come my way"; he asks for prayers for his "weak, frail and helpless self...the pain I experience these days is big...pray for me that I may rise above the present mental and soul-destroying condition in which I sadly find myself..." He always supplicated the beloved Blessed Perfection, "I know He will help me to disintegrate the wall which surrounds my entire being and which I am struggling to break." Dark years of upheaval for Enoch.

He finally returned to live in his native village of Tilling in Teso, Uganda, and build a house there for his family. Gradually, through the loving guidance of the Universal House of Justice, he once again began to travel widely for the Faith. Like other Hands of the Cause, he often represented the House of Justice at International Conferences and inaugural Conventions of new National Spiritual Assemblies all over the world. His travels to these, as well as many long tours undertaken in all the continents of the globe, were a source of happiness to both Enoch and the thousands of believers who met him; he grew steadily into his maturity. He was a very intelligent man, a very eloquent, self-possessed speaker; he was both dignified and urbane in his handling of officials and the media. Enoch had presence; it is hard to describe because there was something very African about it, the "presence" of a big chief,

who is both a father-figure and rules. He was sincerely kind, loving and interested in other people and they felt this—high and low alike—and responded. That big, spontaneous laugh was also there, to carry others on with it in a great relaxing wave of sheer mirth.

The Hands of the Faith chose Enoch to be chairman of the opening session of the beloved Guardian's Bahá'í World Congress, held from 28 April to 2 May 1963, commemorating the end of his great Ten Year Plan, his World Crusade. About 7,000 Bahá'ís were present, from most of the territories and major islands of the world, gathered in the beautiful Albert Hall of London. The big, black Enoch was a befitting figure to stand before such a motley crowd on such an historic occasion!

Enoch met many heads of state as he visited different countries; one of the most interesting interviews he ever had was with the Dalai Lama in October 1968, in his retreat at Dharamsala in India; the party were first thoroughly searched by the Lama's security people, and after some delays, received by His Holiness, the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people and to them the reincarnation of Buddha. He was surprised and interested to see these guests who included a black African, his wife and daughter, an Englishman and two Indians. Although he spoke through a translator, it was evident that he understood English; he commented that they were all different people, to which Enoch replied, "Yes, but we are all of the same family", and went on to elaborate this theme and also to give

an account of Bahá'u'lláh's exiles, imprisonment and sufferings, which struck a deep chord of sympathy in his host. Their visit lasted over an hour—which was unusual—and His Holiness showed them excessive courtesy; there was no doubt of the impression Enoch had made on him as he set forth many of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.

The common sense and wisdom of Enoch are nowhere better exemplified than in the conversations his Persian daughter-in-law Forough Ehsani, a pioneer to Uganda, has recorded having with her much-loved father-in-law in connection with her marriage to his son George. In Tilling Enoch had a special office of his own, his "prayer room", in which were his pictures of the Master and the Guardian and things that were dear to him; there he often spoke with her. It was in this room one day that he asked her if she was sure she wanted to marry George: "Do you like to marry him...marriage is not easy. You have to be careful. Have you thought of the future and how the difficulties will be? You are different, from different homes and country, do you in your heart accept that? Do you really like that?' Many times he asked and I said, 'Yes, I do.' So he hugged and kissed me and said, 'The rest is with Bahá'u'lláh, He will solve the problems.'" A day came when a crisis arose; after her child was born, during the first year of her marriage, a serious misunderstanding between her and a member of the family took place; she was so distressed she took up the child and left the house. "Enoch", she said, "sent one of his sons after me with this message: 'Tell

Forough to come and leave the child in this house, and whenever she wants to go, she can go." When she confronted Enoch she said: "But this child is mine!" Enoch replied, "No, this child belongs to this family; if you have a misunderstanding you solve it with the members of the family. You cannot mix up the child with your problem and somebody else's problem. Leave the child and then we can solve it all together. Don't mix up the child with this problem." She remembers that: "When he said that I felt my knees shaking! I put the child down and said, 'But how can I go without my first child?', and then he told me, 'When your anger has dropped, you come to my office. I want to see you, not with George, you only.'" George remained quiet throughout, praying inwardly that all would resolve itself. She went to Enoch's office, in what must have been a terrible upheaval for all of them; he reminded her how, before her marriage, he had warned her there would be problems; earnestly, looking into her eyes he said: "Forough my dear, your behaving as you did, taking the child out and not solving the problem, does not help you, does not help me, and especially does not help the Faith. You know that whatever you are doing from today should help the Faith, the name of the Faith. And you know the slightest problem between you and George, how it can damage the Faith. Will you please think this way and forget the rest!" Forough recalls: "He completely changed me. He said a prayer, he hugged me, and he cried. He cried and I felt the wetness of his

crying, and he said, 'Please, please help the Faith!'" She rejoined the family, was completely reconciled, and from then on harmony prevailed. Enoch had impressed on her the greatest lesson of all—the Faith comes first.

There followed many years of active service; Enoch, often accompanied by his wife Elizabeth—herself a devoted and active believer—travelled widely, visiting and stimulating the Bahá'ís, meeting high officials, bringing the Faith before the public and the media. His children grew up, two daughters married Bahá'í pioneers, George and Forough had two more children. Although the Olinga home was in Teso, after the death of Mr. Banání, Enoch purchased the historic house in which the Banání-Nakhjavání family had lived for so many years in Kampala, the home in which he himself had accepted the Faith and learned of his elevation to the rank of Hand of the Cause.

To enumerate in detail his services and travels from 1958 until his death in 1979 is impossible; long and authoritative biographies are required to recount the exploits of Hands of the Cause appointed by Shoghi Effendi; only a glance at Enoch's major activities during those years is included here. He attended three of the 1958 mid-way point of the World Crusade continental conferences called for by Shoghi Effendi, namely, that of Africa, held in Kampala; Europe, held in Frankfurt; and Asia, held in Singapore. After the latter he made a tour of Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Samoa and Pakistan, it being the policy of the Hands to

make as wide and economic use as possible of the visit of a fellow Hand to attend conferences or conventions by visiting, going and coming, as many centres as possible throughout the area. In 1960 Enoch visited many places in West and North Africa, Sicily and Italy; in 1961, after representing the Hands of the Cause at the inaugural Bahá'í Conventions in Jamaica, Dominican Republic and Cuba, he toured the Greater Antilles and Central America for four months; in 1962 he travelled extensively in East Africa, the Sudan, Ethiopia and the Congo (now Zaire); in 1964 he represented the Universal House of Justice at the inaugural Conventions of the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Indian Ocean, in Mauritius, and South Central Africa, in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe); in 1967 he represented the Universal House of Justice at the inaugural Convention of the National Spiritual Assembly of Swaziland, Lesotho and Mozambique; in 1968 Enoch attended the large Mediterranean Bahá'í Conference held in Palermo, Sicily, and—like most of his fellow Hands—was present at the glorious celebration in Bahjí of the one hundredth anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's arrival in 'Akká as a prisoner; also in 1968 when Enoch was received by the Dalai Lama at his headquarters in India he visited many Bahá'í centres in that vast sub-continent; in 1969 Enoch represented the Universal House of Justice at the election of the first National Spiritual Assembly of Burundi and Rwanda; in 1970 he represented the Universal House of Justice at the formation of the first National



Spiritual Assembly of Upper West Africa, making later that same year an extensive tour of South America, Central America and the Antilles, passing through the United States and visiting many centres there; he then proceeded to the Pacific where he visited the Solomon Islands and Japan, attending in January 1971, as representative of the Universal House of Justice, the South China Seas Oceanic Conference in Singapore, and later that same year fulfilling the same function at the inaugural Convention of the National Spiritual Assembly of Chad; in 1971 Enoch represented the Universal House of Justice at the first Convention of the National Spiritual Assembly of Iceland and afterwards exhaustively toured the Bahá'í communities in Scandinavia, Britain and Italy, visiting Persia with Elizabeth in July to pay his homage to the House of the Báb in Shíráz and other Bahá'í historic sites. Enoch was becoming increasingly preoccupied with Africa as the problems of that continent steadily augmented: in 1973-1974 he went on a five-month teaching trip to twelve countries of West Africa; 1975 saw him back in the area to attend, as the representative of the Universal House of Justice, three inaugural Conventions during the Ridván period—not an unheard of event as other Hands on occasion duplicated such efforts—for the election of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, and Upper West Africa; during this same year Enoch again toured twelve West African countries, assisting them to win their goals, and, returning to Uganda, spent

the remainder of that year as well as the opening months of 1976 intensively working amongst the Bahá'í communities there. During the summer of that year Enoch also revisited eight countries of West Africa before representing the Universal House of Justice, in January 1977, at the International Teaching Conference held in Brazil and later attending a similar conference in Mérida, Mexico, visiting some other countries in the western hemisphere, and returning from the New World to Africa in time to represent the Universal House of Justice at the inaugural Convention of the National Spiritual Assembly of Upper Volta. Having revisited various neighbouring countries, Enoch returned to Uganda to devote the remaining two years of his life to protecting, comforting, stimulating and preserving the endangered Bahá'í community of his native land, in the bitter throes of a terrible civil war, the aftermath of which eventually led to his own death.

News of the banning of the Faith in September 1977—the official dissolution of all its administrative bodies and activities—reached Enoch in Kampala; he is reported to have said: "No! No one can ban the Faith of God..." For the Bahá'ís it was a shocking and heartbreaking experience, the more so because the first Temple of Africa stood on Kikaya Hill, on the outskirts of Kampala, and the Ugandan believers had always been a distinguished and thriving community. Enoch drafted a letter to the President, which he and the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly delivered to the President's office, calling his

attention to the nature and status of the Faith and the respect it had always enjoyed in Uganda. This and other petitions had no effect whatsoever.

Enoch's deep study of the Teachings and wide experience made him an ideal shield for the Cause of God during that crucial period; realizing the hopelessness of protest and petition, he set himself to do three things: to ensure that the believers obeyed the government implicitly; to encourage them and keep alive their faith; to protect the Bahá'í properties and remove to a safe place its sacred and irreplaceable archive materials, which he stored in Tilling. Immediately following the edict Enoch and Mr. Isimai, the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, had closed the National Headquarters at the Temple site, refusing even to sell Bahá'í books. There can be little doubt that this complete obedience to the government decree, conforming as it did with the explicit instructions of Bahá'u'lláh Himself that Bahá'ís must obey their governments, was the best possible way of protecting the precious Temple, which was never confiscated, occupied or damaged, but left in the custody of the Bahá'ís.

Following upon the banning of the Faith, the Universal House of Justice made the Hand of the Cause and the two Counsellors, Oloro Epyeru and Kolonario Oule, responsible for the guidance and protection of the Ugandan community, a duty they discharged with great devotion until the Universal House of Justice was able to re-establish an administrative body in August 1979.

As the months went by Uganda sank ever deeper into bitter civil war, terrorism and chaos, in the tide of which Enoch and his family were eventually so tragically engulfed. It should be remembered that Enoch was not only a famous Bahá'í—the first African Hand of the Cause and one of the only two Negro Hands, the other being Louis Gregory of the United States—but also a well-known, capable, prosperous business man, with relatives and friends in high positions. As a consequence of this prominence he was a target for subversive elements. His son George recalls his father's telling him, even before the war broke out, that he had discovered his name was on a list due for "elimination" in Teso. During those crucial times Enoch often said he would never leave Uganda, never run away.

In March 1979, when the war of liberation was gaining momentum day by day, he decided to motor from Tilling to Kampala, a distance of some 300 kilometres; his uncle came to remonstrate with him, pointing out the dangers, and urging him not to go, but Enoch was not dissuaded and said: "What do I have to fear? Did the Báb run away? Did Bahá'u'lláh run away? Did 'Abdu'l-Bahá run away?", and described how wonderful it was to die a true believer, that if the veil were lifted between this world and the next we would yearn to die.

On the way to Kampala he met with a terrible automobile accident when an army lorry struck his car, knocking it off the road into a gorge, where it rolled over and over; he was also

robbed of a large sum of money. This occurred on the 25th; that night, as Enoch and his family prayed together in their Kampala home, he assured them that were it not for Bahá'u'lláh, he would most certainly have died from such an accident. As if this were not enough shock for the family to bear, two days later Enoch's son Badi vanished without a trace; a week later, however, he returned unscathed; it seemed soldiers had hijacked him and his pick-up for a job out of town, later releasing him. After Badi disappeared, as the situation in the city became increasingly dangerous, the Olingas went up to the Temple property, about 10 kilometres away, a long and exhausting walk for Enoch, who was still in great pain after his accident. By 6 April he decided to send his youngest child, Tahirih, with her mother back to Tilling—which they were fortunate to reach alive as the train was strafed by bullets many times on the way. Miraculously Badi returned safely at this time and Enoch promptly sent him and his brother Patrick after them. He himself was too weak as a result of the accident to make the arduous trip back to Tilling.

Enoch now returned alone to his home on Kitante Road. By 10 April thousands of people were in flight from Kampala, which was being heavily bombarded; once again Enoch was persuaded to seek refuge on the Temple property and made his painful way there, on foot, struggling against the frightened crowds of people leaving the city. All that night a fierce artillery battle raged around Kikaya Hill; he

spent the night praying and wondering what was happening to the House of Worship and if he would ever see the dawn. The next day, however, the Temple still stood unscathed and the longed-for news was broadcast that Amin's government had been defeated. Enoch and another believer hastened to the Mother Temple of Africa, opened all the nine doors and offered prayers of thanksgiving to Bahá'u'lláh. How appropriate, how mysterious, that dear Enoch, who had been present at the cornerstone-laying of the Temple in 1958, should with his own hands throw open those doors!

The following day Enoch went to Kampala, anxious for the safety of his house, as both the soldiers and the local population were extensively looting the city; he arrived to see it being stripped bare and narrowly escaped being shot as he was accused of being one of Amin's men—an accusation which fortunately he successfully refuted! There being nothing he could do, he returned to the Temple where his protection was essential during those wholly lawless days of transition. Elizabeth and his children were eager to rejoin him, so he decided to restore and refurnish his home.

Although the ban on the Faith was not officially lifted for some months, the situation had entirely changed and the Universal House of Justice decided to appoint an interim administrative body to gradually reorganize Bahá'í activities and take charge of Bahá'í properties in preparation for the time when the National Spiritual Assembly could be re-elected. The

first meeting of this Uganda Administrative Committee would take place on 25-26 August in the National Headquarters; the derelict state of this and other buildings at the Temple site distressed Enoch very much and with few to help him, he set about preparing the Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds, cleaning it up, arranging the offices and files, even going so far as to himself assist in washing the floors. For Enoch service always meant doing what needed to be done. He was radiantly happy over this event; when the Committee members gathered, each was presented with the gift of a new prayer book, with passages marked to be read, for Enoch had a "well-worked-out and soul-stirring devotional programme"; the group then proceeded to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár for the solemn inauguration of their historic function, and afterwards visited the grave of the Hand of the Cause Músá Banání, who is buried in its vicinity. Enoch was invited to chair the first meeting and read the letter of the Universal House of Justice appointing the Committee and outlining its functions; he then observed that they were now "an arm of the Universal House of Justice stretched over Uganda" and called upon them at all times to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to assist them. On the second day Enoch again was invited to act as chairman; he outlined their duties, stressing the crying needs of the Bahá'í community throughout the country and the serious condition of the Temple property, which had perforce been neglected and suffered depredations—telephone connections, water

supply, lawn mowers, office equipment, all required urgent attention.

Enoch's son George, recalling his father's last days, says he spent most of his time on Kikaya Hill; he was happy, the formation of the new Ugandan Administrative Committee had lifted a great burden; after all the years of frustration and anxiety, at last the administrative edifice of the Faith was again raised and he told some of the friends that this was such a relief, he was ready to die. He loved serving the Temple, cleaning and sweeping it out on Saturdays so it would be ready for the Sunday morning public service; many times he himself would slash away at the overgrown lawns surrounding it with the heavy panga knife, working to the point of exhaustion. When he heard the lawn mowers had at last been procured in Nairobi for this work he was delighted as now the much-neglected, beautiful gardens could be gradually restored.

The strain and horror of the months of violent war had particularly affected the health and spirits of Enoch's youngest child, Tahirih, who was approaching her fifteenth birthday. It was the family custom of the Olingas to gather together on holidays and special occasions, and Elizabeth and Enoch decided a reunion should take place around the week-end of Sunday, 16 September, which they hoped, in addition to all being together again, would cheer Tahirih up. Forough was in her late pregnancy and had been badly beaten and kicked when soldiers broke into her home in Fort Portal; she did not know



if the baby still lived, and after this attack she and George and the children went to Enoch's home in Kampala, where Forough saw a doctor; Elizabeth, however, was not satisfied and insisted that George must take her to a Bahá'í doctor in Mombasa, Kenya, for examination and treatment, and gave her some money to purchase while there a skirt and blouse for Tahirih as there was nothing to be obtained in Uganda. Enoch told them he would be expecting them back for the family reunion; all of this took place about three weeks before his death.

Enoch did not attend the second meeting of the Uganda Administrative Committee, which was held on 15 September in the Ḥazíratu'l-Quds, the Counsellor, Mr. Kolonario Oule having specially come from Teso to discuss certain matters with them. In the Kitante Road house only Tahirih, Lennie and Badi were there with their parents that weekend; George and his family were still in Kenya, Patrick was delayed on a job in Teso and Godwin was also late in getting home. The arrival of these three sons of Enoch was delayed, seemingly by trivial circumstances, yet thus their lives were saved, for had they returned earlier they would surely have been murdered with the rest. It was the custom of the family in those disturbed times to always leave someone inside the home to protect it, in addition to the houseboy who also acted as gardener and lived next to the house in a separate building. On that Sunday, however, 16 September, Forough reports, Enoch insisted

they should take a picnic lunch and all of them go to Kikaya Hill for the day.

Mrs. Catherine Kabali, an Auxiliary Board member, was an eyewitness to the events of those days. The friends were going to the Temple grounds earlier than usual because the Hand of the Cause was going to brief them on the situation of the persecuted Bahá'ís in Írán. She describes Enoch, in his white suit, with his "brilliant and dignified face", joyfully joining the singing in the Temple service of a Swahili offering, "Be happy, be happy, because it is the day of oneness today!" Some Bahá'í young people had come down from Teso with Mr. Oule to help clean up the Temple property and later in the day they provided music; Enoch and Elizabeth joined in the dancing; when Tahirih hung back shyly her parents swept her into the dance too and all danced and danced. Mrs. Kabali writes: "I remember Elizabeth dancing, waving her hands, not knowing yet she will leave this world tonight. She waved and waved, saying goodbye."

When the family returned home, neighbours later mentioned, Mr. Olinga had seemed in a very good mood, walking about his garden, waving to them and saying, "hello". After the terrible events of that night the Counsellor, Mr. Peter Vuyiya arrived in Kampala from Nairobi a few days later. His report conveys an accurate observation of the situation in the city at that time, the background against which the terrible drama of Enoch's murder took place: "Staying in the middle of the town, I had the full effect

of the state of anarchy in Kampala at night...it was impossible to tell the police Kombis from any other that might have been responsible for murders in the city and its environs. Every night, however, brought with it the murder of yet another family." He wisely adds: "With so much speculation regarding what might have been the motive of the murders, I have thought it more safe to steer clear of the questions why, when and how the murders took place." With surety we will never know—as with all evil deeds, unwitnessed, in nights of terror and chaos throughout history.

From many first-hand accounts, however, the following events of that terrible crime seem clear: the family had its evening meal together—the houseboy had seen them about to serve it; the dishes were neatly stacked in the kitchen sink as usual, where they were found the next day; the houseboy stated that he was in his room when, about 8:30, he heard someone shaking the gate to the compound and, looking through the window, saw five armed men walking towards the back door leading to the kitchen (it is believed a sixth man was left to guard the gate). They shouted "Open" and banged on the door. Lennie opened the door and there was a sound of shots; the houseboy fled over the fence to hide in the neighbour's bushes and remained there in terror all night, seeing nothing but hearing shooting and other sounds going on for about two hours; at dawn he ventured out of hiding, went to the house, seeing the body of Enoch lying in the courtyard and inside, all in

an inner bedroom, the bodies of Elizabeth, Tahirih, Lennie and Badi, heaped on the floor where they had fallen when shot to death. People were beginning to gather outside and they told him he should inform the police, which he did, and then, with singular loyalty to Enoch and his family, went to Kikaya Hill to give the news. Mr. Oule from Teso, who was sleeping on the Temple property, was informed of the unbelievable tragedy which had taken place; it was only because he wished to go at dawn to the Temple for prayers—not having been in Kampala for some time—that he was not killed also for he invariably stayed in Enoch's home. Mr. Oule, the Board member Catherine Kabali, and her sister Edith Senoga—who both lived on Kikaya Hill—then rushed to the home of Enoch. Their horror and grief at what they found was indescribable. It is greatly to the credit of the African friends in Kampala that, crushed and overwhelmed as they were by this truly staggering tragedy—a tragedy which shocked the Bahá'í world to its furthest corners—they went into action immediately and efficiently in spite of their personal, heart-rending grief.

The oldest pioneer, Claire Gung, frail and in her seventies, was at once informed and was able to telephone Nairobi and give the news. George and his family had motored up on the 16th from Mombasa to Nairobi and at the National Headquarters found a telegram from Enoch giving a list of spare parts for his car he wished them to bring in addition to a number of other things he had ordered. Planning to buy

these things and then proceed to Kampala—an eight-hour drive—George and Forough went shopping in the city. It was while they were absent the news came from Kampala; the Counsellor, Peter Vuyiya was there and was able to telephone the Universal House of Justice, which was in session at the time, and speak to Enoch's spiritual father, 'Alí Nakhjavání. If anything could be considered fortunate during so much calamity it was this, that the House of Justice was in a position to immediately instruct the friends that the Counsellor Kolonario Oule, together with the Uganda Administrative Committee, whose members were already gathered in Kampala, should take charge of the situation, make all necessary arrangements and ensure that a befitting funeral for the Hand of the Cause and his family would take place.

The problem facing the Bahá'ís in Nairobi was how to break the news to George and Forough. To blurt it out was beyond the capacity of these loving friends, so the National secretary wrote a short, most tender letter of condolence, explaining what had occurred and it was handed to George and Forough when they came back to the Centre. George's one desire was to reach his father and do everything necessary. In spite of remonstrances, the family left for Kisumu that same afternoon and that night George, to his great comfort, was able to talk to 'Alí Nakhjavání in Haifa. The next morning, well knowing nothing was available in Uganda, they bought the material for the five shrouds and left for Kampala. In the midst of lamentation and

shock, the surviving sons, Patrick and Godwin, joined George; Enoch's two older daughters, Grace and Florence, married and living abroad, hastened to Kampala with their husbands, as did Forough's brother; already friends and relatives had arrived from Teso on the night of the 17th, including the Counsellor, Oloro Epyeru, who had been prevented by illness from coming to Kampala for the meetings of the Uganda Administrative Committee; everyone shared the grief of the children, everyone came to be present at the funeral; the harassed family, for over a week, fed from eighty to one hundred and fifty people a day in the Kitante Road home. The bodies of the slain Olingas had been removed to a hospital pending arrangements for the burial. During the hours of curfew every night the city was still racked with gunfire and acts of terrorism, including the murder of many other entire families. Indeed, during that week Enoch's home was subjected one night to heavy gunfire, everyone in the house lying on the floor for protection; fortunately no one was injured and the police put a guard on the building. To make all the suitable arrangements, procure suitable coffins, dig five graves on Kikaya Hill, get the authorities to provide police escort for the funeral cortège, find transportation for the coffins, the family and the large throng of mourners—it all required truly herculean efforts.

In the world press the murder of Enoch received wide notice: "A world leader of the Bahá'í religious sect, his wife and three children

were murdered in the Ugandan capital Kampala on Sunday", it spread like wildfire; the Ugandan radio, on 17 September, broadcast the news in six vernacular languages so the Bahá'ís throughout the country might be informed of the fate of the "Father of Victories".

On the morning of 24 September—which coincided with Tahirih's birthday—the five coffins were removed from the mortuary of the hospital and taken to Enoch's home where, flower-draped, they were placed in the sitting-room; prayers were read, and many people came to pay their last respects; by 12:15 the funeral procession was ready to leave for Kikaya Hill, two motorcycle policemen preceding it, then a car carrying the Counsellors, followed by the car carrying the coffin of the Hand of the Cause which was followed by another one carrying Elizabeth's coffin and a third carrying the three coffins of the children. It was only through the cooperation of many non-Bahá'í friends that this transport had been procured. Followed by cars bearing the family, the cortège went slowly along Gayaza Road towards the Temple; hundreds of people lined the streets, some wept while some were heard to cry: "Look at the bodies! Eh, eh, another one! Oh, another one!" A wave of public sympathy swept the crowd. With great respect the five coffins were placed in a row in the hall of the National Headquarters, flowers laid upon them, and a beautiful and uplifting funeral service held; a number of prominent Ugandan officials, friends of Enoch and admirers of the Faith,

attended it. In a burial plot not far from the Temple on Kikaya Hill Enoch Olinga was laid to rest next to Músá Banání, his fellow Hand; the one designated the "Spiritual Conqueror of Africa" was joined in death by the "Father of Victories". Nearby Elizabeth and Tahirih, Badi and Lennie were placed in their graves.

To the Bahá'ís of the world the Universal House of Justice announced Enoch's passing:

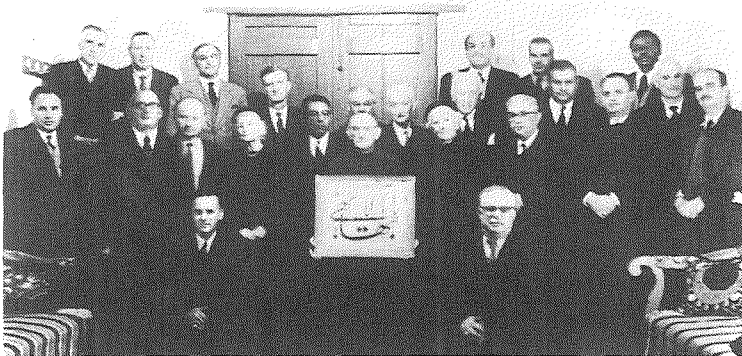
WITH GRIEF-STRICKEN HEARTS ANNOUNCE  
TRAGIC NEWS BRUTAL MURDER DEARLY  
LOVED GREATLY ADMIRER HAND CAUSE GOD  
ENOCH OLINGA BY UNKNOWN GUNMEN  
COURTYARD HIS KAMPALA HOME. HIS WIFE  
ELIZABETH AND THREE OF HIS CHILDREN  
BADI, LENNIE AND TAHIRIH HAVE ALSO  
FALLEN INNOCENT VICTIMS THIS CRUEL ACT.  
MOTIVE ATTACK NOT YET ASCERTAINED. HIS  
RADIANT SPIRIT HIS UNWAVERING FAITH HIS  
ALL-EMBRACING LOVE HIS LEONINE AUDA-  
CITY IN THE TEACHING FIELD HIS TITLES  
KNIGHT BAHÁ'U'LLAH FATHER VICTORIES  
CONFERRED BELOVED GUARDIAN ALL  
COMBINE DISTINGUISH HIM AS PREEMINENT  
MEMBER HIS RACE IN ANNALS FAITH AFRICAN  
CONTINENT. URGE FRIENDS EVERYWHERE  
HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS BEFITTING  
TRIBUTE HIS IMPERISHABLE MEMORY.  
FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES



PROGRESS HIS NOBLE SOUL AND SOULS FOUR  
MEMBERS HIS PRECIOUS FAMILY.

Enoch had an example he used to give to the Bahá'ís: he said all of us are like guitars; when a guitar hears of a great Divine Musician he hopes to be played upon by this Musician. He offers himself to the Supreme Musician. The Musician accepts him, takes the guitar close to Himself, plays upon it. But soon He finds the strings are out of tune. The Musician starts tuning one, winding the string tighter. The pressure is painful to the guitar, it resists the winding. Then instead of yielding, the string breaks. As it is the wish of the guitar to give forth the divine melody, the great Musician plays upon the strings that remain. But the tune is still wrong. So the Musician starts tuning another string. It resists and finally breaks. Still the guitar wishes to be played upon. The Musician plays upon these fewer strings. Again and again a string needs tuning. Again and again the guitar refuses to yield to the winding, the pressure. At last only one string is left and to be faithful to the offer of the guitar the Divine Musician says, "I will play on this one string." But that too is out of tune. Again the winding, the terrible pressure, and this one string also breaks. Then the Musician has no choice but to lay the guitar aside. Thus are tests given by God to perfect us, not to destroy us. The destruction comes only from our resistance to the tuning. The purpose is not punishment but the intention to fulfil the desire of the guitar to be played upon.

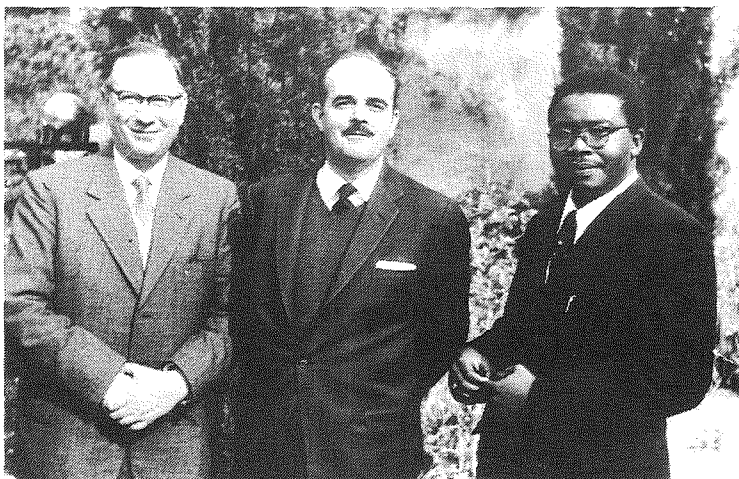
How many tests Enoch surmounted, submitting in the Hands of his beloved Bahá'u'lláh, to the tuning of the Divine Musician, until finally the guitar was laid aside for good—but the music remains.



*Akka, Israel, 1957, the historic gathering of Hands of the Cause of God at Bahji shortly after the passing of the Guardian*



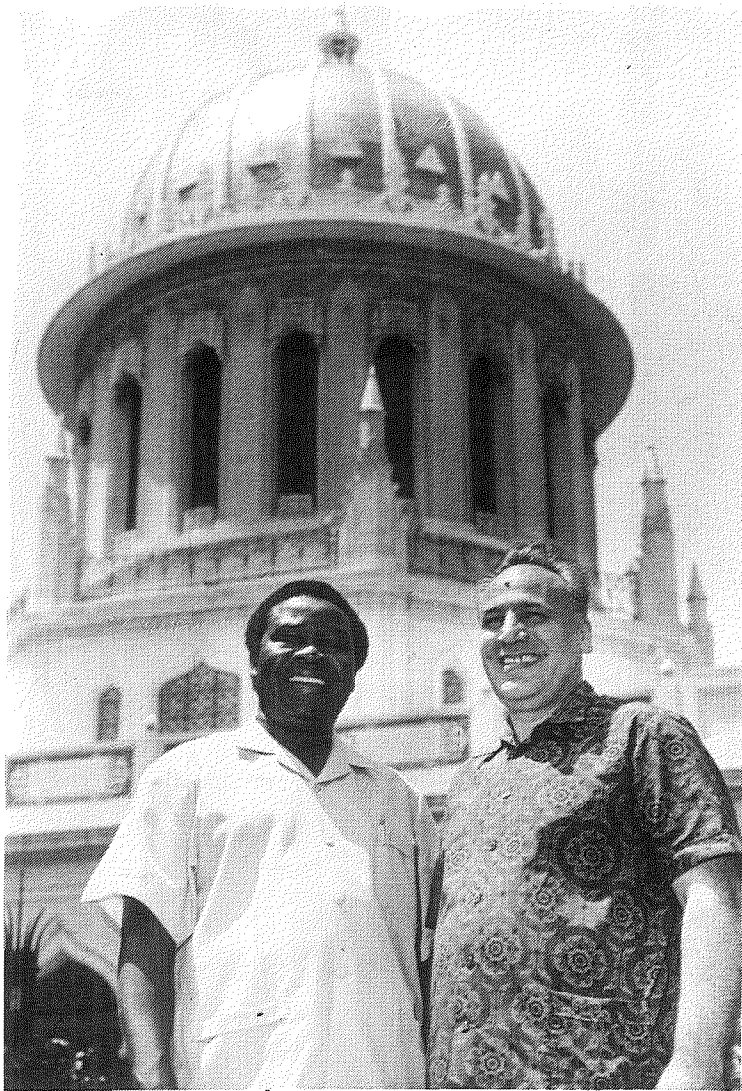
*Akka, Israel, 1961, Hands of the Cause of God at Bahji,  
Tarazu'llah Samandari, Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiyyih Khanum,  
Abu'l-Qasim Fa'izi, Enoch Olinga*



*Akka, Israel, 1957, Hands of the Cause of God at Bahji,  
Hermann Grossmann, William Sears, Enoch Olinga*



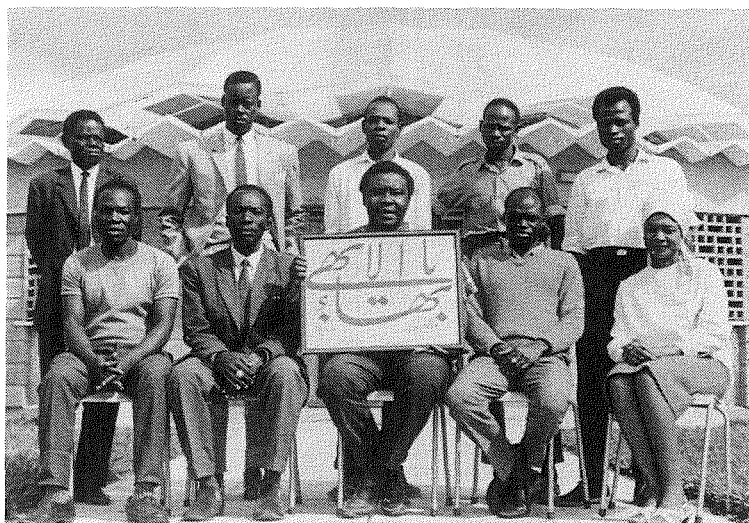
*Germany, 1972, Hands of the Cause of God at the Plon Conference,  
Enoch Olinga, Abu'l-Qasim Faizi, Dr. Adelbert Muhlschlegel*



*Haifa, Israel, 1973, Hands of the Cause of God  
Enoch Olinga and Dr. Rahmatu'llah Muhajir at the Shrine of  
the Báb*



*Merida, Mexico, 3 February 1977, Hands of the Cause of God  
Paul Haney and Enoch Olinga inviting the Governor to the  
Merida Conference*



*Kampala, Uganda, Ridvan 1969, Hand of the Cause of God  
Enoch Olinga with the National Spiritual Assembly  
of Uganda and Central Africa*



*Zambia, 1967, Hand of the Cause of God  
Enoch Olinga with the National Spiritual Assembly of the  
Bahá'ís of Zambia*





*Freetown, Sierra Leone, 19-20 April 1975.  
First National Convention of the Bahá'ís of Sierra Leone, with  
Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga*



*Singapore. 1-3 January 1971, Oceanic Conference,  
Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga with a blind  
Malaysian believer, Luke Lee, who volunteered to pioneer*





*Singapore, 1-3 January 1971, Oceanic Conference,  
Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga greeting Mrs. George Lee,  
member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Malaysia  
and one of Singapore's earliest believers*



*Tejeria, Department of Cochabamba, Bolivia,  
June 1970, Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga with the  
Indian Bahá'is of the community of Tejeria*



*Nashville, Tennessee, United States, October 1970,  
Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga with Bahá'í friends*



*Bangui, Central African Republic, November 1974,  
Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga at the Nineteen Day Feast*



*Solomon Islands, December 1970,  
Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga holding baby  
(Courtesy of Ron Batchelor)*



*Shiraoi, Hokkaido, Japan, December 1970,  
Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga holding Japanese  
Bahá'í child*



*Indonesia, 1971,  
Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga with Bahá'í children*



*Bogota, Colombia, July 1970,  
Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga with Bahá'í children*



*Turangawaewae, New Zealand, 18 October 1958,  
Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga  
addressing Maori gathering at the meeting house*





*Saskatchewan, Canada, 1970, Hand of the Cause of God  
 Enoch Olinga in native headdress with Indian Bahá'is taking  
 part in teaching and proclamation project.  
 Left to right, standing, Bill Asham (Cree by tribe),  
 Shirley Lindstrom (Yukon Tlingit by tribe), Enoch Olinga,  
 Louise Cardinal (Cree by tribe), Hazel Johns (Yukon Tlingit by tribe);  
 sitting, Alec Poorman (Cree by tribe),  
 Cal Lindstrom (Yukon Tlingit by tribe)  
 (Courtesy Joanie Anderson)*



*Badjiran Village, The Gambia, June 1976,  
 local Bahá'is in front of the new centre with  
 Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga*



*Hokkaido, Japan, December 1970, Bahá'í friends in the centre  
at Shiraoi with Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga*



*Fiji, 1971, Bahá'í friends of Fiji with Hand of the Cause of God  
Enoch Olinga*





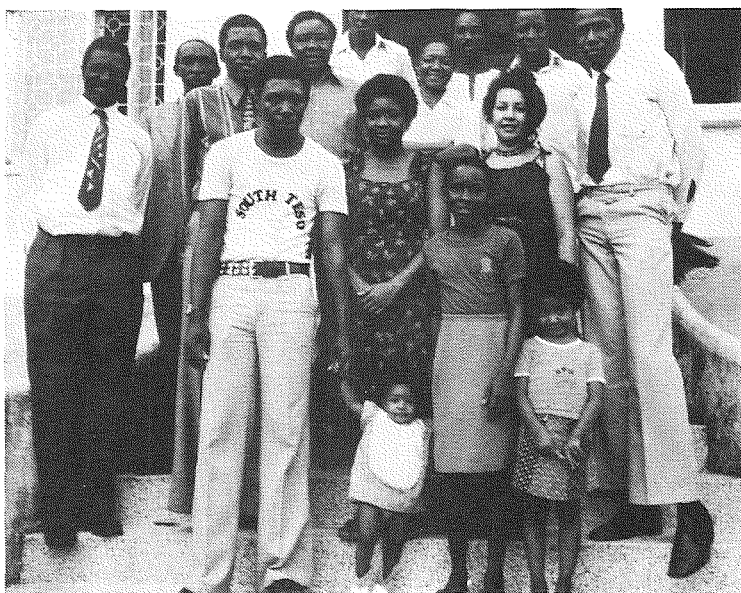
*Singapore, January 1971.  
Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga at the Oceanic Conference*



*Stavanger, Norway, 1972 Bahá'í friends with  
Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga and Mrs. Elizabeth Olinga*



*Bahá'í, Salvador, January 1977, Hand of the Cause of God  
Enoch Olinga and his wife Elizabeth at the Hazíratu 'I-Quds*



*Kampala, Uganda, September 1979, Olinga family and friends,  
last photograph taken of the Hand of the Cause before his murder  
(two weeks later)*

## PART II

### ENOCH OLINGA

#### REMINISCENCES OF MOMENTS WITH HIM

##### Forward

When I first set my reminiscences of Enoch Olinga down on paper, I decided to send a copy to Mr. 'Alí Nakhjavání in the Holy Land and ask him for his comments. His answer dated December 30, 1992 was very encouraging. He wrote, "I read your 'Reminiscences' of our dear Olinga with much joy, and I truly envied you for writing this appreciation of a Hand of the Cause who is much loved throughout the world, and is specially cherished by the friends on the African Continent."

This answer encouraged me very much, and I thought that I should seek the opinion of one of the Counsellors in Africa. On November 25, 1993, Counsellor Gila Bahta wrote from Ethiopia,

I never forget your paper about Hand of the Cause of God Enoch Olinga but due to pressure of work... Now I decided to study it care-

fully and found out that the topic or the subject Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga was timely and it was dealt with excellently. The narration is coherent, alluring and compel[s one] to read it without interruption. It took me few hours to read it through. I was very happy that you succeeded to write about the Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga in such excellent presentation which he deserves.

I did not try to go in[to] detail to study the construction of the phrases and the language because I was attracted by your narration.

When I read Mr. Gila's statement about his not trying to go into "detail to study the construction of the phrases and the language," I felt very lucky. I then decided to write to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Uganda and the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Cameroon for their review of the manuscript.

In a letter dated 19th August 1994 the National Spiritual Assembly of Uganda wrote back:

We thank you very much for your letter of 14 February 1994 in which you had enclosed a copy of 'Enoch Olinga: Reminiscences of Moments with him' for our review and comments.

The following are some of our observations:

- 1- On page (3) the fourth language is Luganda.<sup>1</sup>
- 2- On page (5) the last paragraph reading the Ugandan name Olinga. This refers to the Etesot tribe in Eastern Uganda who would chant it and not all Ugandans.

We would be grateful if you could share with us copies of the letters you have mentioned.

We highly recommend you for the work you have done and assure you of our prayers in the Mother Temple of Africa for guidance and protection.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,  
National Spiritual Assembly  
of the Bahá'ís of Uganda.  
(Signed) George Olinga,  
Secretary.

It was most significant to me that George Olinga, the son of Mr. Olinga, had signed the National Spiritual Assembly's letter concerning this book about his cherished father.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Cameroon informed me in a letter dated 28 September 1994 that they had asked Mrs. Ursula Samandari to carry out the review I had requested. She responded that she had read the manuscript "With deep appreciation", and provided a useful correction to my account of one of Enoch Olinga's conversations with the beloved Guardian which she, being on pilgrimage at the same time as he, had heard directly from him at the time. An excerpt from her letter on this subject is included in a footnote.

I hope, dear Reader, you will enjoy reading these accounts of the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, the Hand of the Cause of God, the Father of Victories, Enoch Olinga. And when you have finished reading them I hope you will tell the story of

this wonderful Black Rose, which was prematurely cut from its life-stalk by an unfathomable Divine Wisdom, but which wafted its sweet fragrances far and wide around the world in such a short period of bloom.

Rowshan Mustapha  
1996

## PART II

### ENOCH OLINGA

#### REMINISCENCES OF MOMENTS WITH HIM\*

by Rowshan Mustapha

The place was Tunis International Airport. The year was 1956. It was Riḍván, and on that beautiful Mediterranean day a flock of Bahá'ís from Tunis were there to meet the delegates from the sub-Saharan territories to the first Convention of the Regional Spiritual Assembly of Northwest Africa. Tunis, the capital of Tunisia, was to be the seat of that National Spiritual Assembly for the next eight years. A lot of preparation had been undertaken in Tunis to arrange for the success of the Convention and, while we had the names of the delegates, we had not met them before.

Mr. Músá Banání, Hand of the Cause of God for Africa, came to the Convention. Mr. 'Alí Nakhjavání also came with the delegates. I had had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Banání and Mr. Nakhjavání in 1951 in Cairo when they were on their way to Uganda. In 1956 the Tunis Airport was small, and visitors were able to watch the

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arriving passengers queue through the formalities. As the passengers went through police and customs, we recognized Mr. Nakhjavání, who was helping fill in the disembarkation cards. At one moment he called for Enoch, and Enoch came towards him out of the group of delegates in the queue. This is how I came to see Mr. Enoch Olinga for the first time. He was above average height, well built, and had a beautiful face.

To obtain their visas to Tunisia, the delegates had applied for a visa "to attend a Bahá'í Convention in Tunis," and gave Mr. Mustapha Boushousha as their reference there. This was sufficient for the French delegations, who took care of the affairs of Tunisia at the time, to approve the visas. Mustapha Boushousha was esteemed in Tunisia and widely known to be Bahá'í. When the delegates came out after all the controls were completed, they were greeted by everyone with those warm, world-embracing, Persian-style hugs that seem to have become a characteristic of our spiritual family all over the globe.

We had very little time to associate with the delegates during the Convention period, but Ulfet (Mr. Boushousha's eldest daughter) and I arranged to take them in twos and threes for tours of Tunis in our small Peugeot 203. (Ulfet and I alone called it a car; most of the friends differed with us on this point.) In the evenings we would take them to Bab-Souika, where Ramadan festivities went on all night into the early morning hours. Ramadan, the month of Muslim



fasting, had coincided with the period of Ridván that year.

The Convention proceeded and Enoch Olinga was elected its secretary. Although not a delegate myself, I was admitted to the Convention as member of the Committee that had prepared for it, and was therefore able to follow the proceedings. I do not remember Mr. Olinga participating in the consultation. That is, he did not speak. He was there listening, and writing down notes for his report. At the end of the Convention, when he read the report, the chairman Miss Elsie Austin praised it.

Enoch Olinga was elected member of the Regional Spiritual Assembly of Northwest Africa, which at its emergence in 1956 and until 1964 represented the vastest area ever for a National Spiritual Assembly. There were twenty-five territories, starting with Tunisia in the north, covering all territories going westward, and extending southward until the Cameroons and Spanish Guinea.

Following an Assembly meeting in Tunis in the autumn of 1956, Mr. Olinga requested permission for pilgrimage. The Guardian gave him permission for February 1957. To go back to the Cameroons and return to the Holy Land within ten weeks or a little more was deemed costly, and so Olinga waited in Tunis, to the joy of the friends here. Ulfet and I had the lion's share of his company because he stayed with us for two months or more. He also stayed with the Sábiráns for a couple of weeks.

At the time our home was small; it had only a bedroom, a sitting room, and a small hall or entryway, that served as a dining room and living room. My sister Laila, who was a pioneer from Egypt, lived with us too. With Mr. Olinga at home, the friends came to our house often to visit him, so our little home was filled with life.

A few weeks after Ulfet and I married (our marriage had taken place some six weeks after the Convention), I was fired from my job with the Ministry of Agriculture; after a month of unemployment I got a new job. This meant I had to spend much time at my new job to make sure I did everything possible to avoid being fired again. To be newly married and jobless was a situation I really did not want. Ulfet had to work too, in spite of the fact that it was not customary at all at the time for a Tunisian young lady to work. My sister also had to work hard. This meant that all of us had to stay up late at night to do the secretarial work of the newly elected Regional Spiritual Assembly. Ulfet, Laila, Mr. Sábírán and ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd Khemírí, the first Tunisian Bahá’í, who had accepted the Faith in 1921, all helped with this work. The activity in our little home was prodigious, starting early in the morning and continuing till midnight. This was the environment in which Mr. Olinga was patiently living while he was with us in Tunis.

One day Olinga decided he would like to learn Arabic. Khemírí and Laila volunteered to teach him. He bought an exercise book and every evening he had Arabic lessons. But to get the

correct pronunciation of the difficult and unusual Arabic letters was a different problem. Thus, while Ulfet and I were working hard writing and tapping away on the typewriter in the living room, Olinga with Khemírí and Laila were working hard at these "vocal arrangements" in the sitting room. Fortunately none of our neighbours overheard the bizarre mixture of sounds that issued from those two rooms. By the time Olinga was to leave for Haifa, he had made some progress with his Arabic.

When he returned from pilgrimage in February 1957, he told us the following story about his conversation with the Guardian about the languages he spoke. I shall convey this story in the words that Ursula Samandari remembers hearing from Olinga, as she was with him during pilgrimage: "...the Guardian asked me how many languages I could speak. I answered that I spoke Swahili, Teso, English, etc. and I *thought* but did not say, 'and I am learning Arabic.' The Guardian stopped, turned round and said, 'But Persian is easier.'"<sup>1</sup> In reporting this story to us, Mr. Olinga concluded that this ended his pains to learn Arabic.

When the day came for Olinga to leave us for the Holy Land, a band of friends went to see him off at the airport. I was not able to go, but Ulfet went, and returned to tell me the following story: "We had seen Olinga go through police and customs, and we all went to see him go onto the plane. (At that time this was possible; it is not possible now.) The passengers had all embarked except Olinga, who was nowhere to be

seen. The loudspeakers came on and called Olinga to the embarkation gate. But he was still nowhere to be seen. We were frantic and did not know what to do, or what could have happened to him.

"The steps were taken back from the plane and the plane door was closing when Olinga appeared with his hand luggage dashing down the apron towards the plane. The steps went back, the door reopened and Olinga went in to our deep relief. An onlooker asked me, 'Is he a boxer?'"

During that year, I had a feeling that Mr. Olinga was going through the most distressing period of his life, and there was quite an effort made to extend his stay with us with a view to relieving some of his distress. I do not remember how long he stayed in the Holy Land, but we knew that he was to return to Tunis before going back to the Cameroons. We were waiting for a cablegram announcing his arrival.

No word came of his return. One afternoon I was at work, when Muḥyí'd-Dín M'rad, a Bahá'í, phoned from the Café de Paris on the main street in the centre of Tunis, and asked me to come over quickly because Mr. Olinga was there.

I ran down the three hundred yards or so separating the office where I was working from the café, and there was Mr. Olinga with Muḥyí'd-Dín. I soon found out what had happened. Muḥyí'd-Dín was at the café with some of his friends when he saw Mr. Olinga walking alone on the main street along the pavement in front

of the café. As he spoke no English, he simply gestured to Mr. Olinga to sit down with them and not to leave, and then went and phoned me.

I tried to find out why Mr. Olinga had not advised us of his return, and how he found his way from the airport to the main street, and above all, where he had intended to go. I could get no answer. I was grateful to Bahá'u'lláh that he was not lost, but was guided to be there where Muḥyí'd-Dín was able to see him. Mr. Olinga seemed very thoughtful during the rest of his stay with us.

One of the first things he asked me was, "What does Abu'l-Futúḥ mean?" I could not understand why he asked this question and simply explained this was an Arabic name. In fact we had a prominent Bahá'í in Egypt whose first name was Abu'l-Futúḥ and I told him that to my knowledge it meant "father of conquests." Then he told me that the beloved Guardian had given him that title. The National Assembly later received a letter on behalf of the Guardian in which the correct translation of Abu'l-Futúḥ was given: "Father of Victories".

Mr. Olinga was the sort of person whose calm and serene face hid entirely both thoughts and feelings. With the exception of a slight rise of his eyebrows, there was no sign of his inner reactions, except, Oh yes! except, when he laughed. Unfortunately we had no means at the time to record him on film or on tape laughing. Anybody who has seen and heard Mr. Olinga laugh will remember it for life.

Mr. Boushousha, who was Ulfet's father and one of the early Tunisian Bahá'ís, was a person whose company always brought deep happiness. He often came around after our working hours and sat with Mr. Olinga. Boushousha spoke no English, but he had many jokes, and every evening he would tell one or two, which were translated for Mr. Olinga. To make things even better, Boushousha mimed the different scenes of the joke. Normally laughter would come at the end of a joke, but Olinga usually started laughing earlier on and by the time the last scene was through, he was literally doubled up with laughter, and all of us with him, in spite of the fact that we had heard these jokes many times before. After a few such evenings there were no more new jokes. No more new jokes? No problem! All Boushousha had to do was mime the jokes he had already told. No words and no translation—nothing but mime—and Mr. Olinga was on the floor with laughter.

One evening Ulfet and I happened to come home together; as we came to the front door we heard Olinga's all out laughter. We ran up the flight of stairs to find him on the floor with laughter and crying out to the only other occupant of the house: "Mr. Boushousha, please stop!" Boushousha had never said a word. He spoke no English. All he did was mime. Olinga used to say, years after, that many times he had tried to recount the jokes he heard in Tunis to the friends in the Cameroons and elsewhere, but he would laugh so much immediately upon

starting the joke that he was never able to finish telling a single one of them.

One day while some of the Assembly members were resting between sessions, talking about subjects to pass time, Olinga told us a story about his childhood which I shall produce here as correctly as my memory allows. I remember Miss Elsie Austin and Miss Valerie Wilson were there, so were Bill Foster and Khemíri:

Mr. Olinga must have been seven or eight years old when one day he decided to go into the bush. He had not gone many yards when he suddenly saw an arm of a gorilla coming out of a side trail towards him. He ran back as fast as his legs would take him, and came to his father or uncle (I do not remember) frightened and terrified. He explained what he had seen. The father or uncle immediately called for help and went out with Enoch into the bush. When they got to the place where he had said he had seen the gorilla, there was no gorilla to be found. The party ventured further along the trail always looking for the gorilla. Some distance further down they suddenly came upon a big boa, which would have probably devoured young Enoch had he not been frightened back by what had seemed to him a gorilla. The villagers killed the boa, and continued to search for the gorilla, which they never found, neither on that day nor days later. The nearby villages did not find or meet with any such animal either.

In August 1957, some months after Mr. Olinga had left us, Ulfet gave birth to the first of our two sons. We both decided to call him Olinga.

There did not seem to be many Olingas in Uganda itself at the time, as far as we were able to understand, but to have a Tunisian child with the name Olinga was unique. We wondered whether the municipal authorities would accept to register our son with a name that was not Arabic. But we went ahead, and the authorities accepted. As the father was Egyptian, they probably attributed the name to some ancient Egyptian deity. To our non-Bahá'í friends and family we explained what we had heard from Mr. Olinga: that "Olinga" is a Ugandan name of a bird that brings the beneficial rainfall, a bird of paradise; and that when the rains delayed in the years of drought, the Ugandans (the Etesot tribe of Eastern Uganda) chanted the song of the Olinga for the rains to come. We would always conclude that we had a dear friend whose name was Olinga and that we named our son after him.

Ulfet's aunt, a lady of strong character, half Turkish and half Tunisian, never reconciled herself to the name. She called our son 'Oli, a derivative of the well known Arabic name 'Alí. Although this aunt never became a Bahá'í, towards the end of her life she said to Ulfet one evening, "You know, you (meaning the Bahá'ís) are really treading the true path."

Two months after our Olinga was born, the beloved Guardian announced the appointment of Enoch Olinga as Hand of the Cause of God. We were doubly thrilled.

From the moment our Olinga was born, Mr. Olinga always called Ulfet "Mummy." "...give



my Bahá'í love and greetings to my Mum and to Myself," he often ended his letters, meaning Ulfet and little Olinga.

The cherished days we spent together in Tunisia, to which I have been referring above, connect the devoted services Mr. Olinga rendered to the Faith before and after he was named a Hand of the Cause of God. The challenges he faced even before his appointment as Hand of the Cause were enormous. As a member of the Regional Spiritual Assembly for Northwest Africa and as secretary of the Teaching Committee for West Africa, he bore the responsibility of service on two major institutions of the Faith and was burdened with the weighty duties that these institutions alone had to carry out.

The region of Northwest Africa which, on the morn of the Ridván Festivities of the year 1956, became the lot of the nine members of the newly elected National Spiritual Assembly was vast. A glance at the map of the region as it was in 1956 suffices to show the complexities that existed at the time. All the territories except for Liberia were under colonial rule. In alphabetical order, these twenty-five territories that composed the region of Northwest Africa were: Algeria, Ashanti Protectorate, British Cameroons, British Togoland, Canary Islands, Cape Verde Islands, French Cameroons, French Morocco, French Togoland, French West Africa, the Gambia, Gold Coast, Liberia, Madeira Islands, Morocco International Zone (that is, Tangier), Nigeria, Northern Territories Protectorate, Portuguese Guinea, Rio de Oro,

St. Thomas Island, Sierra Leone, Spanish Guinea, Spanish Morocco, Spanish Sahara, and Tunisia.

Today the three Moroccos together with the Spanish Sahara and Rio de Oro have become one country. British and French Cameroons have become Cameroon. Ashanti, British Togoland, Gold Coast and the Northern Territories have become Ghana. And what was French West Africa has been divided into Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal.

All these territories started to obtain their independence with the establishment of the Regional Spiritual Assembly that was covering them administratively. Morocco obtained its independence in March 1956. Tunisia became independent one month after Ridván 1956, to be followed by the other territories over the next few years.

Turbulent conditions dominated the region. Transport within the individual territories was in some places impossible, and in many cases one had to go to Europe first in order to move from one territory to the other.

There were six main languages to cope with: Arabic, English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Persian, which was the tongue of those Iranian pioneers who had not yet learned the other languages.

The sub-Saharan territories led by the British Cameroons were receptive to the Word of Bahá'u'lláh, but were lacking in material means. These territories had only one pioneer from

outside the region: Enoch Olinga. The northern countries that lay along the Mediterranean coast were inimical to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Yet they had many pioneers from Persia, the United States and Egypt, besides having much better material possibilities.

With the seat of the administration of this region at its extreme northeastern tip in Tunis, telephone connections were non-existent with the sub-Saharan territories and rarely possible with Algeria or Morocco, its next door neighbours so to speak. Except for the three North African territories, mail between Tunis and the region usually went through Europe.

When the four Regional Spiritual Assemblies of Northwest Africa, Central and East Africa, South and West Africa, and Northeast Africa were established in Africa, the Bahá'í world was already three years into the mighty Ten Year Crusade of the beloved Guardian. Twelve National Spiritual Assemblies were the executives of the Crusade. Five of them: the United States, the British, the Egyptian, the Persian and the Indian National Spiritual Assemblies had responsibilities in what was to become the region of Northwest Africa. Within weeks of its formation, the newly elected National Assembly found itself responsible for all that the five participating National Spiritual Assemblies had shouldered till then.

When the Hand of the Cause Músá Banání was told at its first meeting following the Convention that the National Spiritual Assembly of Northwest Africa had planned only four meet-

ings for its first year, his comments were to the effect that the Assembly may wish to compare the cost of these meetings with the funds available. He was indeed farsighted, because the Assembly suffered terribly in its efforts to hold meetings in all of its eight years of existence. Lack of funds and the desire to spend funds only on vital matters prohibited spending for travel expenses.

There were also some very difficult territories where the Assembly had to encourage pioneers to settle but where they were refused permission to stay: Spanish Sahara, Rio de Oro, French Guinea, Spanish Guinea and the St. Thomas and Principe Islands. All of these places seemed "impossible territories". Yet the Guardian wanted them to be settled. The National Spiritual Assembly had no choice but to continually encourage the believers to try again. When we examine Mr. Olinga's role in this work, we will see how strong his belief was that these goals could be filled.

During its initial years, the membership of the newly established National Spiritual Assembly had only two members from the sub-Saharan territories: Enoch Olinga and Miss Valerie Wilson. The territory where Olinga resided—the British Cameroons—was the area where the teaching work was most progressive. Five Knights of Bahá'u'lláh who were Olinga's spiritual children laboured successfully in territories neighbouring the British Cameroons. Hence the real teaching successes came from the territories in the south of the region.

During this early period of the development of the Faith in West Africa, lack of adequate literature was a problem fraught with anguish. A book in English that could serve both for teaching as well as for deepening was badly needed. In response to this need, Mr. Olinga wrote a manuscript in four parts and sent it to the National Spiritual Assembly. Though he no doubt worked hard and many hours to prepare it, he later found there was no way to get it published. He must have suffered greatly that it remained unpublished while the need for literature grew ever more acute.

To suffer seemed to be Olinga's destiny. He suffered terribly, though he kept the pain within himself. This was his lot during the whole period he was on the National Spiritual Assembly of Northwest Africa. Whether he continued to suffer after that or not I am in no position to know. But during the period he was in the area of Northwest Africa, I know that he suffered. If suffering is a "must" for a Hand of the Cause, then in my humble opinion, dear Olinga had his fair share. There were many reasons for him to worry and be distressed, and I shall try here to mention some from amongst those I knew of.

He was most worried about the newly acquired Ḥaẓírat'ul-Quds of Victoria in West Cameroons. Some friends there thought they could live in this administrative seat and meeting centre for the Bahá'ís of that community, and there was no way for them to leave. Olinga had to take care of the Ḥaẓírat'ul-Quds personally. Most of the families that stayed there were needy. The

whole situation was heart-breaking. How many times he had given away from his most needed livelihood, no one can tell. How often he was obliged to wake up from his sleep at night in order to help a friend or a family in need, no one will ever know.

The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, who were his spiritual children and who were pioneers in the other territories of West Africa, met with many problems, and naturally they came to him for help. He was powerless, and so were the other members of the National Spiritual Assembly, at some two to three thousand miles away, to come to their rescue with help, literature and visitors.

A further reason he suffered so much was the fact that some of the believers around him completely misunderstood his station and distorted his actions and intentions. These believers were admittedly young, not only in age but in the Faith too. These excuses, however, cannot have attenuated much the sorrow generated in his loving heart.

Another cause of deep anxiety and indeed terrible suffering was the fact that his family was not with him. They had remained in Uganda.

Despite these and other tribulations, Mr. Olinga kept focused on the task at hand. He must still have been profoundly grieved by the passing of the Guardian when he attended the Frankfurt Intercontinental Conference in 1958. Hand of the Cause Amelia Collins was the representative of the Guardian. Hand of the Cause Ugo Giachery was also there, along with nine other Hands of the Cause. Ulfet and I, who also

had the privilege of attending, remember Mr. Olinga's brilliant role at that Conference. In his address he drew our attention to our duties in our Bahá'í communities, reminding us that at conferences such as the one we were attending we should fill up with spirituality in order to take it all back to the friends at home.

As early as March 1959, he was concerned with another vital goal, the universal education of children. He was at that time thinking of a school project, which he said he had had in mind for some time. He wrote to his fellow National Spiritual Assembly members,

I think the time has come when we shall show our interest in the education of the children who are not privileged to have a school. I think we should begin with "Infancy schools," the fundamental beginning of what we might call "grammar" school. One or two would be a great victory. If the NSA authorise me to investigate the possibilities of establishing such schools, and their cost per annum, I would be willing to undertake the survey (of course in Mamfe Division of the Southern Cameroons).

In the same letter, which he signs "In His Love, Enoch," he also emphasizes "the importance of having a place where a Summer school will hold every year." This, he writes, "would be conducive to the good of the Friends; their knowledge will increase and they will have a place to which they can go regularly for the study of the Faith and Its Administration."



*Akka, Israel, 1961,  
Hands of the Cause of God John Roberts, Tarazu'llah Samandari,  
Enoch Olinga*



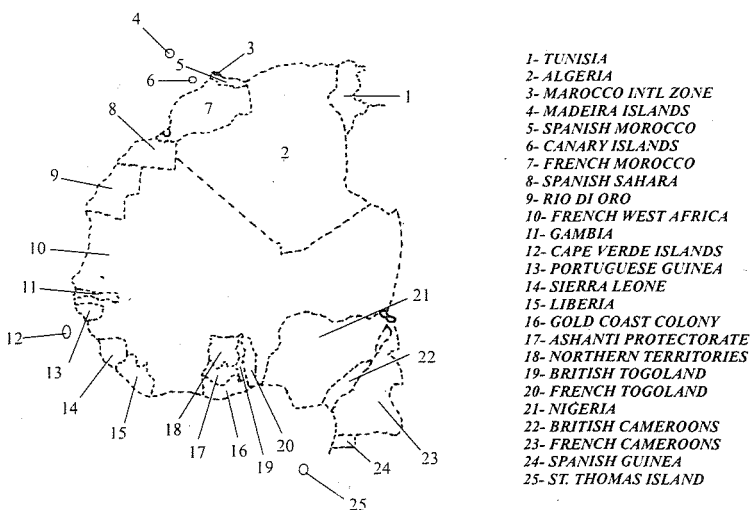
*The Hands of the Cause of God for Africa William Sears,  
Musa Banani, Enoch Olinga and John Roberts*





*Tunis, Tunisia, Ridvan 1956, First National Convention of the Bahá'is of Northwest Africa, with Hand of the Cause of God Musa Banani holding the Greatest Name.*

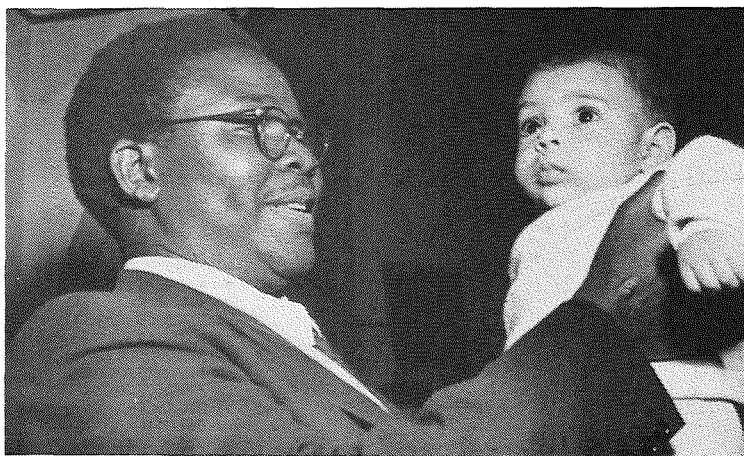
*Left to right, seated Lewella McKay, Enoch Olinga, Valerie Wilson, Musa Banani, Rafi'i Rafsanjani, Elsie Austin, Johana N'gompek*



*Region of Northwest Africa as it was in 1956 under the jurisdiction of the Regional Spiritual Assembly of Northwest Africa*



*Tunis, Tunisia, April 1956, the first National Spiritual Assembly of Northwest Africa*



*Tunis, Tunisia, circa January 1958, Hand of the Cause of God  
Enoch Olinga, holding baby Olinga,  
first Bahá'í child to be named after him*



*Tunis, Tunisia, early 1960, Hand of the Cause of God  
Enoch Olinga holding child Olinga Mustapha*

The responsibilities to be fulfilled in the Faith were manifold, and literature remained a top priority. Mr. Olinga therefore continued writing, despite his earlier disappointment. In a letter dated May 24, 1959 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles, the Regional Spiritual Assembly of Northwest Africa wrote, "When the Revered Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga was in Haifa in 1957 the Beloved Guardian expressed the hope that African believers write for the Faith. The same desire of the Beloved was expressed through Mr. 'Alí Nakhjavání. In answer to this desire, the Revered Hand of the Cause Mr. Olinga has provided our National Assembly with two manuscripts for publication. The first of these 'Briefs on the Bahá'í Faith' is now revised and ready for publication."

This is how Mr. Olinga was the first African to write for the Faith. He did everything in his power to accomplish any and every thing the beloved Guardian expressed a desire for.

When Mr. Olinga was appointed Hand of the Cause of God in October 1957, he was a member of the Regional Spiritual Assembly of Northwest Africa. There were other Hands who had such dual responsibilities. But Mr. Olinga's case was so different and so much more over-taxing. It was one thing to be a Hand and member of the National Institution in the United States or in Irán or in the United Kingdom, but to be Hand of the Cause and member of the Regional Spiritual Assembly of Northwest Africa and the lone reference in a young community in

West Africa in 1957 was a different matter altogether. Looking back to those days and what Olinga and others like him must have gone through in their quest to bring happiness to the heart of their Beloved makes a shiver run down one's back. The path they trod was tight-rope narrow and as vexing as if it were strewn with broken stones and glass. Olinga's case was one that confirmed the proverb that "no prophet finds respect amongst his people." Hand of the Cause John Robarts, after hearing and seeing for himself how Olinga conducted his life while he lived in Victoria, confided to me that "he walked in the footsteps of 'Abdu'l-Bahá." This was in Victoria in the British Cameroons in May 1964.

When the first contingent of the Hands of the Cause of God was appointed in December 1951, I was a young Bahá'í, amongst so many others who had little understanding of the station of the Hands of the Cause. We knew that they were entitled to respect, but our young minds could not grasp the greatness of their spiritual station. At a time when those of us who were privileged to grow up in Bahá'í communities with Local Assemblies and a National Assembly were just beginning to realize the wonders of the unfolding administrative structure, these outstanding servants of the Faith loomed out like spiritual giants on the horizons of our youthful imaginations. In 1951 Mrs. Amelia Collins was sent by the beloved Guardian to visit the believers in Egypt. I was privileged to be in Cairo at the time, and recall what a deep impression she

made on me. A few months later we heard she was appointed Hand of the Cause of God. In 1952 Hand of the Cause Shu'á'u'lláh 'Alá'í visited Cairo, and for the first time I saw a "living" Hand of the Cause. As a boy I had known Judge 'Abdu'l-Galíl Sa'd and as a teenager Muḥammad Effendi Taqí Iṣfahání; but they were both appointed Hands of the Cause after their passing. The deep respect the chairman and members of the National Spiritual Assembly in Egypt had shown General 'Alá'í during his visit in Cairo had impressed me greatly.

Five years after my experience of seeing Hand of the Cause 'Alá'í, we have a member of the National Spiritual Assembly who is a Hand of the Cause! We knew from pilgrim's notes that the beloved Guardian considered the Hands of the Cause as far, far above the National Assemblies, and that "the Hands of the Cause are to be venerated." But how were we to conduct our administration in the area where the Hand of the Cause Olinga lived, not only as Hand of the Cause, but also as a National Assembly member? In some mysterious way the question of the relation between the Hands of the Cause and the administration seemed to find its own solution.

Looking back, it is clear that we were in some ways prepared for the new role in the Cause our spiritual brother was to assume. When Mr. Olinga went on pilgrimage in February 1957 the office of Mr. Leroy Ioas, Secretary General of the International Bahá'í Council, wrote on February 17, 1957 to the two National Spiritual

## Assemblies of Northwest Africa and Central and East Africa:

Dear Bahá'í Friends:

The Beloved Guardian has been greatly pleased with the visit of Mr. Enoch Olinga to the Holy Land. He is the first Negro Bahá'í to visit from Africa, and the first of the Negro Bahá'ís, who became Bahá'ís during the Ten Year Crusade. In addition he is a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, and four of his spiritual children are likewise Knights of Bahá'u'lláh. The Guardian has thus given him the title of "Abu'l-Futúḥ" which means, the Father of Victories....

The Guardian is greatly encouraged by the reports he receives of the progress of the teaching work in Africa. Under the direction of the newly established National Assemblies, the work is being further stimulated, which is excellent. The Guardian would caution that the NSA's do not become bogged down with Administrative work, but devote the major portion of their time to the teaching work, and the steady expansion of the Faith. This is the need of the hour—and the National and Local Assemblies should devote the major portion of their time and energies to this noble task.

When Mr. Olinga returned from Haifa, he sent to his fellow members "Excerpts from E. Olinga's Pilgrim Notes...hurriedly written in response to ...'s suggestion that I should share with you the Guardian's wishes concerning the

Fund, the teaching work and our convention." They included the following paragraph:

Concerning the Fund the Beloved Guardian said: the most important work is teaching. Money must be spent on this important work: posting pioneers, and purchasing local Haziras. It is not important that delegates should attend the Convention in person. They can consult and vote by correspondence. Also it is not necessary that all members of NSA come together. Any money available should be spent on the teaching work. This must be explained to the Friends.... Any money available should be spent on this important work—teaching. This is important. I have, in my recent communication to the NSA of Northwest Africa, given them this directive; being a member of NSA yourself you will be informed of this, he said.

By the time Mr. Olinga had returned from pilgrimage, the newly established National Spiritual Assembly of Northwest Africa had met in three sessions. The members were spread over a wide area, with Olinga the most far-flung compared to seven members concentrated in the north of the region. For the fourth session, which was scheduled after his pilgrimage, Olinga would not attend. Olinga confided to the writer that he would not spend any more money on travelling to Tunis, whether for a National Spiritual Assembly meeting or the annual convention. He was unable to forget the Beloved's advice to spend any available funds on the



teaching work. In a letter to the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Northwest Africa dated 26th March 1957 he wrote, "Concerning the Fund, I seem to see the blessed eyes of our Guardian as he tells me to tell the NSA to economize and to correspond instead of meeting in person."

Mr. Olinga consecrated his efforts to every directive of the Cause, among them the establishment of the Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds of Victoria —the first Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds in the Cameroons. In his excerpts from his pilgrim's notes, Olinga had cited what the Guardian had said to him regarding Ḥaẓírat'ul-Quds: "...Haziras should be purchased—one in each of the newly opened territories can do. For instance, one in Victoria. It should be a simple, modest building which can be sold any time. It need not be elaborate."

Not long after, in a circular from Hand of the Cause for Africa Músá Banání dated March 28, 1957, we read,

Exciting news has reached us! We are rejoicing at the tidings that the African believer, himself a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, has recently made the pilgrimage to the Holy Land and visited our Beloved Guardian. He is Enoch Olinga, Ugandan pioneer to British Cameroons. The Guardian was so pleased with Olinga's services that he gave him the title of "Abu'l Futúḥ" which means in English, "Father of Victories". The Beloved further cabled me as follows:

STATUS FAITH BRITISH CAMEROONS CONSEQUENCE OLINGA'S OUTSTANDING SER-

VICES MERITS ESTABLISHMENT HAZIRA  
VICTORIA.

Recent word from Olinga gives us the glad tidings that the Ḥazírat'ul-Quds has been purchased.

In other words, within forty-five days after leaving the presence of the Guardian, Mr. Olinga was guided to achieve one of his Beloved's most persistent desires and bring joy to his heart.

I mentioned earlier that Olinga had a most beautiful and serene countenance, but in reality serenity surrounded him; it seemed to emanate from his inner life and to affect us all. He was a source of appeasement for any situation that required it. In 1963 while in London for the World Congress, I happened to be in the hotel lounge with Olinga and many friends. A young Ugandan Bahá'í lady came over and started to talk to him, probably in Swahili. The lady spoke quickly and vehemently, and went on for a long time. Olinga listened with interest. Then he said something to her and smiled and then laughed. The lady laughed too and went along, in my opinion quite happy.

During the Convention for the establishment of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of West Central Africa, held in Victoria, West Cameroons, in May 1964, Hand of the Cause John Robarts represented the Universal House of Justice. Mr. Olinga had transferred his residence from the Cameroons many months before, but his role in the community that Mr. Robarts visited on behalf of the Universal House

of Justice made a connection between these two Hands. This was just one of many ties between the two Hands of the Cause. Mr. Robarts later told me a story about Mr. Olinga. While the story was told for its surprises and humour, it nevertheless illustrates Mr. Olinga's sincerity:

The first time Mr. Olinga arrived in Chicago, he immediately took a taxi and asked to be taken to the Bahá'í Temple in Wilmette. ([He] had always carried a picture of the Wilmette Temple with him and he showed it to many people, but he had never seen it, never seen the Temple himself.)<sup>2</sup> The taxi driver, noticing that the gentleman he was transporting was a foreigner and it being almost nighttime, expressed his doubts that Olinga would be able to see much of the beautiful Temple. Olinga still wanted to go there, and all the way to the Temple the taxi driver expressed his sorrow that Olinga would not be able to see much of the Temple. In the words of John Robarts, "On the way to Wilmette, the driver said to Enoch, 'You know, it's too bad you couldn't have come just an hour earlier, because you're going to get there at the wrong time. It will be dark, and you won't see that Temple. It's there all right, and there is a moon, and you'll have a glimpse of it, but it won't be anything like it would have been had you just been there in the daytime.'

"'Oh,' Enoch said, 'don't worry about that. I'll have a look at it. That's all I want. I just want to see it, so don't worry—I'll see it.'

"They drove on, and as they neared the Temple, the driver began lamenting this thing again.

He said, 'Oh, it's too bad you aren't going to get a good view of that beautiful Temple! It's such a lovely place.'

"Enoch said, 'Oh yes, I'll see it. I'll see it all right!'" The more Olinga insisted on going all the way to the Temple, the more the taxi driver expressed his sorrow that Olinga would not be able to see much of the beautiful building, and Olinga kept telling him not to worry.

When the taxi finally arrived at the Temple the whole place was in darkness. Olinga went out of the cab and onto the flight of steps leading up to the entrance of the Temple. At the steps he leaned down and put his forehead to the floor in prayer. Suddenly the Temple lights came on, the main entrance was opened, and the Guide in charge that evening came out towards him and asked him if he wished to visit the Temple. Olinga was grateful, and they both went in. The Guide asked him who he was. Olinga avoided answering. But as the Guide proceeded with his explanations and tour of the Temple, he asked again to know who the visitor was. The Guide insisted on knowing who he was so much that Olinga conceded to tell him on condition that the Guide would keep the information to himself. The Guide accepted, so Olinga told him who he was—Enoch Olinga! The Guide jumped up, hugged Olinga, and then dashed out and rang the bell at the American National Spiritual Assembly secretary's residence across the road from the Temple to announce the august visitor's name to Charles Wolcott.

The taxi driver must have been surprised. What exactly had happened? The Guide had just put out all the lights for the night and was leaving the Temple grounds when he saw a cab stop and someone come out and walk towards the Temple. That must be someone who has come from far, he said to himself; I should do something about it. This is why he went back in, put all the lights on, and asked Olinga to come in.

John Robarts explains that "Enoch had just completed a trip down through Central America and South America, and it had been a four-months trip. Now at the end of his long journey he was tired, he was all in. There had been meetings almost every night." Mr. Olinga did not plan any meeting in Chicago; whether this was because of his fatigue or because of the shortness of his stay and to avoid gathering the friends for such a short visit we cannot know. But what we do know is that after his visit to the Temple, he was surprised to find that the Wolcotts had gathered a large number of friends at the National Office. The meeting lasted until dawn, several hours before Mr. Olinga flew back to his home in Victoria, Cameroon. Mr. Robarts noted that when Mr. Olinga later told him this story he said that "that was really the best evening" he had during his whole trip.

It was not only detachment, generosity, sincerity and serenity that distinguished Enoch Olinga. The excerpts below from some of his reports and letters indicate many other attributes. As early as June 1956, he included the following in a report to the National Spiritual

Assembly from the Regional Teaching Committee for West Africa:

Any "spiritual venture" calls for Vision; Policy; Planning and Detail. The Beloved Guardian ever provides the Vision of the Cause; the administrative bodies provide the policy at their various levels; individuals and committees carry out the planning and detail work.

Yet it is essential that each body concerned with the progress of the Faith should combine all three in some measure. Without vision, policy would be narrow; without policy, details would not be effective or even bear relationship to each other.

In the same report under a section entitled "Policy," he stated the need "to consider at all times that we, the Committee, are required to give a lead, to initiate activity, to plan programmes, and not spend all our Committee time on dealing with only those things which 'come in.'"

Equally fascinating is his introductory statement under "Planning and Detail," which not only stressed that the Committee must "maintain and consolidate all existing Assemblies" and "prepare deepening programmes to guide the various communities along the path of local administration, the conduct of the Feasts and other Bahá'í anniversaries and meetings," but also emphasized two other significant duties: "to pay a great deal of attention to social progress

and problems. If feasible, to arrange for teaching exchanges between Assemblies and Groups to the mutual benefit of each..."

In July of that same year (1956) we read the following in a commentary by Enoch Olinga regarding the resettlement of St. Thomas Island, which the American Africa Teaching Committee felt would be "difficult to settle by sending an African pioneer":

St. Thomas: We read with prayerful and keen interest the passages in the American Teaching Committee's letter to you... regarding the delicate situation of resettling St. Thomas Island. We feel sure that these friends were correctly guided in their conviction; but we would very humbly and prayerfully comment that it may not be so "impossible to send an African pioneer" to this territory... On the contrary we feel that an African would be more suited to settle this territory than a white. It is true that knowledge of the essentials of the Faith must be the prerequisite of such a blest pioneer.

Most of the West African territories were settled by very (then) immature Bahá'ís and it is a fact that they were able to draw into the Faith such souls who arose to spread the blessed Name of the great Faith of God, within and without their territories. In most cases their sacrificial efforts met with a merited success. These "immature" pioneers earned for themselves the reward of confirmation by the Blessed Perfection, and their spirits have fled the fastnesses of immaturity and entered the

cities of maturity and of assurance. A condition which also applies to their "spiritual children." They pioneered to respond to the heavenly call of the Beloved Guardian. He prayed for their meritorious achievements and success that they may "win victories" in His Service. This they have achieved, and his divine promise fulfilled. May not the present situation of St. Thomas be associated with this one?...

The letter [from the American African Teaching Committee] contains a very animating, most inspiring and challenging line: "Africans go there (St. Thomas) under conditions of vital slavery...." Yes; without this then what is the sweetness of pioneering. Did He not reveal that "...the companions of all who adore Thee are the tears they shed, and the comforters of such who seek Thee are the groans they utter, and the food of them who haste to meet Thee is the fragments of their broken hearts.... Let me quaff in Thy Cause, O my God, whatsoever Thou didst desire, and send down upon me in Thy love all Thou didst ordain...."

Pioneering becomes sweet when it is accompanied by difficulties, tests and trials—the gifts from our Heavenly Ancient Beauty. In fact if all the pioneers in Africa (or elsewhere) were to tell the conditions under which they are helping the power of the Spirit of Bahá'u'lláh, no pen could record them, and no mouth could recount them. Yet, this is but not even a drop compared to the Oceans of the tribulations He sustained for our poor sakes!



Maybe the revered Committee will reconsider this matter very critically. There are "impossibilities", but the less we think of them the better, then shall we see our little faith moving mountains.

The writer would comment that every sentence of Mr. Olinga's above commentary gives us an insight into the dire experiences that that blessed soul had gone through and was still living. One perceives that he felt every word he wrote.

At that time—1956 and 1957—Mr. Olinga was always *planning*, that is, he was all the time making plans for the advancement of the Faith, discussing them with other members of the Teaching Committee for the region, and then working hard to get the plans achieved. In a letter dated 21st June 1957 he wrote, "If our plan is to succeed, as we earnestly do believe it will, the Faith of God will have taken a different but gigantic shape and form in this land. We do, really, visualise the ultimate victory and triumph of His great Cause. We seem to see visions concerning this and your assistance will help much."

Mr. Olinga also played major parts in carrying out the plans. In a letter dated 22nd May 1957, he made the following revelation: "Personally, the Guardian has asked me to go to Nigeria! He had asked me to select a territory and then inform Him. His cable to me approves my going to Nigeria. I shall soon consult with the NSA in detail."

towards the building of His Kingdom on earth. What more signs of His Grace could be sought by the sincere ones? Am I dreaming? Have I passed on to the spiritual world, or am I the very Olinga that walked the streets of Kampala?

"My hands are full up, and I have become breathless! This country, British Cameroons, has a big spiritual destiny. Without money, sufficient money, His name is being taken to distant centres. He, surely, doeth what He wil-leth! One of the very strong Bota Bahá'ís, junior in his former post, has been promoted to a higher office and transferred to M'bonge, a very important place near Lobe, 100 miles or so distant, thereby opening that town to the Faith. I had been pondering, indeed praying, that Bahá'u'lláh may assist in getting us one believer there, and during my first trip to Lobe I devoted much time to one of the local people without much success; but He knew what to do! He has posted a pioneer there. Bahá'u'lláh our Lord, has posted a pioneer there. Praised be Him, the Lord of all the Kingdoms!!

"Kumba, another very important place, has been opened by a pioneer. Formerly a member of the Mission and their worker, he has resigned his Mission job in order to settle in Kumba, and already Bahá'u'lláh has given him a nice job there. Should I tell you more than this? My father, should I tell you more than this? No, I know that you are well informed of the mysterious hidden power in this Cause.

'A power far, far away from the ken of men and angels,' that invisible power is really the cause of these outward activities. Do other people, too, realize it?

"We have appointed our extension teaching committee with the function to organize and supervise teaching in the British Cameroons outside Victoria and Bota. As you know, this is a very important committee indeed. It will do much in creating new circles, which will add more joy to the heart of our well-beloved Guardian."

"ADD MORE JOY TO THE HEART OF OUR WELL-BELOVED GUARDIAN," this was Enoch Olinga's heart's desire even at that time. He had not met the Guardian yet, but in his heart he had this invisible power of love for the Guardian.

In the November 1954 circular "To All Bahá'ís in Africa," Mr. Banání mentions the activities of two of four of Olinga's spiritual children who had opened new territories and had become Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, namely Benedict Eballa and Martin Manga.

We also read in the same bulletin, "The Victoria, British Cameroons, Assembly has a programme of extension work which includes villages in all parts of the Cameroons." Victoria is where Mr. Olinga was.

In the December 1954 bulletin, we find the British Cameroons, and the name of Enoch Olinga mentioned again: "In the British Cameroons, the Victoria Spiritual Assembly

has, through its Extension Teaching Committee, assumed responsibility for the growth and development of the Faith throughout that territory.... Among the most active have been John Bessong and, of course, pioneer Enoch Olinga."

And, "Since he last wrote in September, Enoch Olinga, pioneer to the British Cameroons, reports there are 40 new believers in that territory, bringing the total to 99 in the country."

In the January 1955 bulletin we read that one of Mr. Olinga's spiritual children and pioneer to British Togoland has visited the Gold Coast for Bahá'í teaching.

The May 1955 bulletin does not speak of Mr. Olinga, but its first page is so moving and inspiring that it is most worthwhile to be included here as it was circulated. It recounts Shoghi Effendi's illuminating evaluation of the spectacular deeds accomplished by the African pioneers.

Dearly beloved Friends.

As the sun set on April 21st 1955 on Africa seventy-five groups burst into Assemblies throughout the length and breadth of this Continent and its neighbouring islands. This historic feat was made possible through the selfless efforts of the dear friends and the blessings from on High focussed upon them through the Centre of God's Covenant. The beloved Guardian has been greatly pleased with this accomplishment and he has already expressed his joy and exultation in a supplementary message to the Conventions, as well as

in a message specially for Africa which has already been communicated to the friends in a former circular letter from here. I am once again quoting this latter message in these pages, in humble thankfulness to the love of our dearly-cherished Guardian:

"REJOICE GREATLY ADMIRE DEEPLY  
GRATEFUL MAGNIFICENT ACHIEVEMENTS  
VALIANT FRIENDS COLOURED WHITE PIO-  
NEERS TEACHERS ADMINISTRATORS FOUR  
AREAS AFRICAN CONTINENT. LOVING  
FERVENT PRAYERS SURROUNDING THEM.  
SHOGHI"

Our gratitude knows no bounds. Our joy is inexpressible. Our humble efforts have been accepted in the eyes of God's Beloved Sign on earth.

In a recent message from the Revered Hands of the Holy Land to me, the following beautiful thoughts are also expressed:

"We feel sure that you are well aware of how the work in Africa has rejoiced the heart of the beloved Guardian, particularly the extraordinary advancement in Uganda... It would now appear that a firm foundation has been laid through the formation of so many new Assemblies throughout the continent, for the election of the three new Regional Bodies in 1956, and the new Assembly which up to the present represented only Egypt and the Sudan. It would seem that, with this firm basis to build on, truly firmly grounded Regional Assemblies can be elected to carry on the work of the Cause in the near future...

"The Guardian would like you in your communication to the pioneers, particularly the African pioneers, who have left their homes and families and shown such an exemplary spirit, to assure them of how proud he is of their accomplishments, their victories, and above all, their spirit. He hopes that all over the world the believers will follow the wonderful example set in Africa, and particularly that the American Negro Bahá'ís will be inspired to carry on much more actively their own teaching work as a result of the example set in Africa."

To the pioneers labouring so valiantly in Africa and on its neighbouring islands I would like to address this word: The beloved Guardian, dear friends, is pleased with you. He says he is "proud" of you all. He has stated that he "greatly admires" and is "deeply grateful" for the work you have done and are doing. He has praised your efforts, and above all, your "spirit". He has set you as an example for all the Bahá'í world. Rejoice, then, in this unsurpassed blessing. Let its spiritual soothing fragrance galvanize your very beings, as to make you forget this world of dust and its petty worries, and enable you to scale even loftier heights of courage, devotion and sacrifice.

As to you, dear African pioneers who have arisen and have become the torch-bearers of God's Light on this Continent in this day, I wish to draw your particular attention to the Beloved's special comments about you. Our dear Guardian is extremely pleased with you

and your services. He has extolled your "exemplary spirit". You have become a true envy of the non-African pioneers in Africa. Those of you who have left your homes and your families in the love of Bahá'u'lláh, rest assured that your loving sacrifice is accepted by our dearly-cherished Guardian. He wants the American Negro Bahá'ís now to follow your example. The Faith of God came to you here in Africa after it had reached them in America, but our beloved Guardian is now asking them to be inspired by the example you are setting.

No doubt Enoch Olinga's sacrifices contributed to the elevated spiritual status the African pioneers attained in our beloved Guardian's extreme pleasure, as expressed in the commentary of Hand of the Cause Músá Banání!

In the August 1955 bulletin we read excerpts from a report by Board member Valerie Wilson and excerpts from a letter by Mr. Olinga to Hand of the Cause Músá Banání:

As we review the deeply valued achievements of the friends in Africa during the past year, we note that in some territories like Uganda, Kenya, Basutoland, British Cameroons and Gambia\* our Faith has had wider appeal, prompter response and a greater number of victories. I have asked therefore the relative Board Members to send me their comments

\*Emphasis as in original circular.

about the factors that have been responsible for such developments, so that we may benefit from each other's experiences. I will quote for you in this letter some of the comments of Valerie Wilson about British Cameroons:

"Bahá'u'lláh blessed this area with the arrival of pioneer Enoch Olinga. Because he radiates love and friendliness constantly he soon wins the confidence and respect of the people. He relies completely upon Bahá'u'lláh... His reward is finding other pure channels like himself, thus with divine confirmations he confirms souls who soon become strong supporters of the Faith in their area.

"Enoch had seen the Cause in action in Uganda prior to dispersing to British Cameroons. He was taught by well qualified pioneers; he served on committees that systematically organized plans to spread the teachings throughout Uganda. He developed a great appreciation of the divine institutions and the part that each plays in promoting the Cause. Not only does he teach the believers but he instills in them the desire to want to become pioneers themselves...

"Another factor is that there seems to be a close relationship with the NSA and the National Teaching Committee concerned, which gives the LSA and the Extension Teaching Committee the confidence and insight needed for extension work. The members of this committee devote themselves to the responsibilities of the committee. It is not just a



committee in name, it is a committee in action...

"No statistics or report will ever truly reveal what I saw and felt manifested in the believers and that was real love for the Guardian... With this love and prayers they are ready to render instant, exact and complete obedience for the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh."

I had also asked Enoch Olinga, himself, to send me his comments. He has sent me a most touching letter, which, owing to lack of space, I deeply regret I cannot quote in its entirety for you, but here are some of its extracts:

"The progress of the Faith of God in British Cameroons may be likened to the fire kindled in dry grass... The Word is the fire and the Cameroons populace, the dry grass..."

"The Covenant is the mystery. Teach the Faith of God without planting in the heavenly soil of the hearts of the new believers the seed of the tree of the love for the Covenant, i.e. the absolute love for, submission to the will of, and acceptance of, the Beloved Guardian, and the knowledge that without him the Faith of God would not have remained, and it will never remain perfect—it were better you never mentioned the Most Holy Name in that place! You will judge this from the offers to pioneer, and the signs of readiness and eagerness to teach, which these tender ones have shown, without which the Faith of God would not have arrested and subdued the hearts of men here under its domain and ascendancy. For it is true, and absolutely true, that the

Faith has spread through the selfless cooperation and devotion of most of the Cameroonian friends themselves, who through their constancy and self-abnegation have claimed the Ancient Beauty as their Own. And the Blessed Perfection has promised those who faithfully seek for His Countenance and who long to serve Him all the blessings He can bountifully rain upon them. He has promised this!

"Of course there are many factors which have contributed and will continue to contribute to the spread of the Faith of God, and its foundation to be permanently laid in British Cameroons. Very many indeed and most of them are hidden to our naked eyes! The method of approach and the ability to make and keep friends are among these.

"A lucky pilgrim one day reported the Beloved Guardian to have said: 'The test of teaching is the reaction of the African to us. If the reaction is good, our method is good. If they do not respond, our method is wrong.' Again he added: 'We must concentrate on the element which is the majority in each country. We want the people to testify that the Faith has touched the hearts of the element that is the majority.' In other words, in Tunisia, the natives must be taught the Faith of God; in the Gold Coast, the native Gold Coasters; in Liberia, the Liberians; in Cameroons the native Cameroonians. This may be another mystery of success.

"Finally, it is recorded in the Holy Books that God would give man in the days of the end a

big thirst, and the thirst would not be for water, but for the Word of God. Is this not true with the men of today? Are these not the days of the end? What we have to do is to offer freely these thirsty ones the water of the knowledge of God so that it may quench the thirst of their yearning for and longing to meet, God in His appointed Day."

In the April 1956 newsletter to all the Bahá'ís of Africa we read,

Nigeria: ...The two valiant Cameroonian pioneers, Joseph Enongene and John Besong [sic], have now settled in Sapele, where our beloved Faith is spreading rapidly, and a most recent report indicates there are now nine believers there, ready for a new Assembly....

British Cameroons: The teaching work is developing continuously here. Sixteen new declarations are reported. More believers have offered to pioneer.

How much Mr. Olinga contributed to the above efforts was never and will never be known by our mortal minds. The activities for the Faith traced above were all carried out in his pre-Hand of the Cause era and led up to his visit to the Holy Shrines and to the beloved Guardian which, as the February 17, 1957 letter of Mr. Leroy Ioas and the circular of Mr. Banání dated March 28, 1957 suggest, was the crowning event of this period of his life.

The excerpts I cite below from Mr. Olinga's letters after this event and written in his capacity as Hand of the Cause of God show a new confidence and an ever-growing consecration to the Faith and humanity.

In a letter to the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Northwest Africa dated February 17, 1959 he wrote, "I feel the time must come when the NSA will again take up the matter of schools in the Cameroons. There is a growing need for at least elementary schools for infants, particularly in places like Mamfe where you have so many believers. We should try to help these souls both spiritually and materially. The need for simple Haziras cannot be over estimated." This letter was signed simply "In His Love, Enoch."

A letter dated a day earlier addressed the National Spiritual Assembly:

Dear Bahá'í Friends:

I have just returned from a visit to all the Bahá'í centres in the Southern Cameroons, and I would be grateful if you will accept the love and greetings of all the dear ones I met during my visit.

The way and manner in which the Faith of God is spreading in these parts of the world is marvellous and remarkable, thanks to His divine assistance, confirmation and guidance!

Six local centres are under construction in Mamfe Division alone. If the NSA should consider helping these friends financially in their building projects, although it is not an

item in the Ten-Year Plan, I am sure it would enhance the prestige of the Faith and help the friends in their teaching efforts. Perhaps you will consider this matter very carefully?

Now there are over 1,200 believers in this territory, three-quarters of whom live in the Mamfe Division alone. The Christian missions are closing down in some places there due to the fact that the inhabitants of those places have accepted the Supreme Manifestation of God. The Friends need a close and keen interest and cooperation of the NSA at this stage of the development of the Cause of God in this country.

During my visit I did appeal to the friends to think of the Faith in terms of Its world implications, rather than local. Some of the friends, and very very good ones indeed, offered to pioneer to places like Spanish Guinea and St. Thomas....

I am now planning a visit to Ghana and Liberia and if you think there is any thing I can do for you during the trip, please be free to let me know it.

In the meantime please accept my love and greetings for you all.

Yours in the Service of the Beloved Guardian,

(Signed) E. Olinga  
for THE HANDS OF THE CAUSE IN  
AFRICA.

The subject of the Christian Missions in the Cameroons was at the time a very serious mat-

ter. They had been operating schools. When the families whom they were serving became Bahá'ís, they closed down their schools, leaving the people without the services they vitally needed. Our Regional Assembly had to act quickly and effectively, but it had neither the material means nor the human resources. Once more, beloved Olinga was alone to confront a heavy challenge. He took up the challenge, and though the missions left, the Bahá'ís remained steadfast, and the Faith flourished.

For Enoch Olinga as Hand of the Cause of God, all the problems that the National Spiritual Assembly of Northwest Africa had were also his problems. But these problems constituted only part of his worries. He had to share the work load of the whole of Africa with three other Hands—Mr. Músá Banání, Mr. William Sears, and Mr. John Robarts. He had to go forth onto the international scene of the Faith. Slowly but surely he weaned the communities around him into self-supporting assemblies and groups and took his flight to his worldwide work. He was on earth with us in Northwest Africa but soared into the new space of international service.

The events traced in the story I have just recounted indicate that in fact Olinga's spirit had already been in a different space for some time. His leap up to this new spiritual level makes me think of what I once heard our beloved Ruḥíyyih Khanúm explain and which is recorded in *The Priceless Pearl*:

There is a great mystery involved in the levels of service. Shoghi Effendi always advised the friends to pursue a moderate and wise course, but if they did not, and chose to rise to heights of heroism and self-sacrifice, he was immensely proud of them. After all, there is nothing either wise or moderate in being martyred—yet our crowning glory as a religion is that our first Prophet was martyred and twenty thousand people followed in His footsteps. I have tried to understand this mystery, moderation on one side and Bahá'u'lláh's words on the other: *"...then write with that crimson ink that hath been shed in My path. Sweeter indeed is this than all else,..."* and it seems to me that the best example is an aeroplane: when it trundles along on the ground on its wheels it is in the dimension of the ground, going along steadily on an earthly plane, but when it soars into the air and folds its wheels away and leaps forward at dazzling speeds, it is in a celestial realm and the values are different. When we are on the ground we get good sound earthly advice, but if we choose to spurn the soil and leap into the realms of higher service and sacrifice we do not get that kind of advice any more, we win immortal fame and become heroes and heroines of God's Cause.<sup>4</sup>

Enoch Olinga took to the "celestial realm" very quickly after he embraced the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Today, almost thirty years since I saw him for the last time at the World Congress of 1963, I still review in my heart every

moment I had the privilege of his company. Ulfet and I have never forgotten him, and if ever we do for a few moments, our Olinga, who is now thirty-five, married to a beautiful English Bahá'í and father of three children, never fails to remind us of the true Olinga, who left this world but who never leaves the hearts of all who met him.

For his children and grandchildren, for his relatives, for the peoples of Africa and for his great spiritual family—Bahá'ís all over the world, this servant records his lovē and hope that many will follow in his footsteps in the service of Mighty Cause of God.



## References and Notes

### INTRODUCTION

1. Letter dated 4 June 1954 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the British Africa Committee, as published in *Unfolding Destiny: The Messages from the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith to the Bahá'í Community of the British Isles* (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1981) p. 329.
2. Enoch Olinga, Letter to Hand of the Cause of God Músá Banání quoted in the August 1955 bulletin sent by Mr. Banání to all Bahá'ís in Africa.
3. The Universal House of Justice, Message of Ridván 121 (1964), Message to National Conventions, 1963, as published in *Wellspring of Guidance: Messages from the Universal House of Justice 1963-1968* (Wilmette, Illinois: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1969) pp. 26, 5.
4. The Universal House of Justice, Message of Ridván 152, To the Bahá'ís of the World.
5. Message of Ridván 153, To the Bahá'ís of the World.
6. See page 6.

### PART II

1. This refers to the fourth language Mr. Olinga spoke. The other languages were Teso, Swahili and English.

2. In her letter to me of April 24, 1994, she explained the circumstances of her hearing this story from Mr. Olinga: "I had the joy and privilege of making my pilgrimage at the same time as Olinga. For most of the time, he was the only pilgrim in the Eastern Pilgrim House and I was the only pilgrim in the Western. He told me about this conversation the very next day. That is why I feel that the account I give is more accurate than the one recorded in your delightful book."

3. The story about Mr. Olinga's visit to the Wilmette Temple was, according to Mr. Robart's daughter Nina Robarts Tinnian, her father's "favourite of all favourite stories." It was a story Mr. Olinga himself told to John Robarts. There was a great affinity between the two Hands, and they would save up humorous stories to share with each other whenever they met. Mrs. Robarts Tinnian was kind enough to share with me her transcript of a taperecording of the story as told by her father at his home in Rawdon, Quebec, in his later years. The one or two points from these records that I added to my own recollections of the story are those marked by parentheses and quotation marks.

4. *The Priceless Pearl*, (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1969) 127.

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