



# Herald of the Covenant

August 1985

The Herald of the Covenant is a publication of the Orthodox Bahá'í Faith. Its title is derived from the unique and peerless Covenant bequeathed to the Bahá'í world by the Author of the Bahá'í Revelation--a Covenant designed to shield His Cause from man made interpretations which in the history of all of the great religions of the past have been such a cause of schism and divisiveness.

The Editor of the Herald of the Covenant hopes that this publication will bring to both the Bahá'í and non Bahá'í reader a fuller comprehension and a deeper appreciation of the meaning, significance and implications of the mighty Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh and the divinely conceived System for the regulation of men's affairs on this earth to which It gave birth.

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### **FOREWORD TO OPEN LETTER OF 9 JULY 1960**

The letter that follows was addressed to the Bahá'í friends some two months subsequent to the issuance to the Bahá'í world of Mason Remey's Proclamation as the second Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. His Proclamation had been made two and one half years following the passing of Shoghi Effendi, the first beloved Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith.

Mason Remey's Proclamation had been sent to the Bahá'í National Convention of the United States convened at Wilmette, Illinois during the Ridván period 1960 and to the various Bahá'í National Spiritual Assemblies through out the world. By this time, the Bahá'í world had been conditioned by the Hands of the Cause and particularly by a body of these Hands who had set themselves up in Haifa, Israel after the passing of Shoghi Effendi as a sort of collegial Guardianship over the Bahá'í Faith to believe that the Guardianship had terminated. Mason Remey had certainly hoped that at least some of these bodies would accept his claim to the Guardianship. Such hopes as he may have had were dashed as the result of a cabled message from the Hands in Haifa to the National Spiritual Assemblies accusing Mason Remey of imposture and directing that his claim to the Guardianship of the Faith be rejected out of hand.

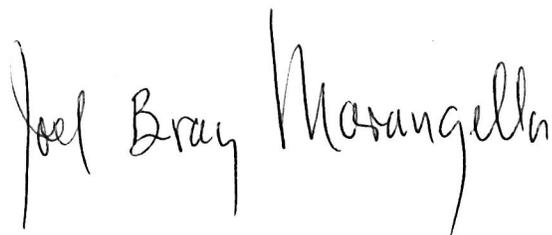
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All of the National Spiritual Assemblies with the exception of the National Assembly of France submitted to this edict and consequently did not reproduce the Proclamation, translate it where necessary and distribute it to the believers under their respective administrative jurisdictions thus keeping these believers in complete ignorance of the claim made by Mason Remey to the Guardianship, an ignorance which still persists to the present day.

Unlike the other Bahá'í National Spiritual Assemblies, the National Spiritual Assembly of France, of which the undersigned was then privileged to be a member, carefully and prayerfully studied the claims set forth in Mason Remey's Proclamation and perceived their complete validity. This body then duly voted its acceptance of Mason Remey as the second Guardian of the Faith.

From the foregoing brief account it may be seen how the vast majority of the Bahá'ís in the world were led blindly into the greatest violation of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh that the Faith has known in its history.

The open letter of which this statement is a foreword was but one small effort to reach some of the misled believers and expose the true facts concerning the continuity of the Guardianship. This letter, like others that were written at the time, by those who had rallied to the support of the second Guardian is considered not only of historical value but of continuing value to both present and future students of the Bahá'í Faith.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joel Bray Marangella". The signature is written in black ink and is centered on the page.

Joel Bray Marangella

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Orleans, France  
9 July, 1960

Dear Bahá' í friends,

By this time I am sure that most, if not all of you to whom this letter is addressed will have learned that I, as well as a number of the other believers in France, have accepted Mason Remey as the second Guardian of the Cause of God.

Not having the time to write all of you individual letters and desiring particularly to communicate with a large number of you whom I have known for many years, some since the days of my boyhood, I felt the only way to do so would be to write this general open letter which could be reproduced. My reasons for desiring to write you are twofold:

First; I would like to explain for the benefit of all those who have been wondering why I have made this decision (as they may have, for the time being at least, taken an opposing stand) the processes of my own thoughts and research on the question of the Guardianship following the passing of our beloved first Guardian and prior to receipt of the Proclamation of Mason Remey and the clear and undeniable realization which came to me following receipt of this momentous document.

Second; I feel with all the intensity of my being that the only salvation for the continued life of our beloved Faith lies in a close and studied examination of the Proclamation of Mason Remey in a prayerful attitude from an unprejudiced and unbiased viewpoint and in the light of our Sacred Writings and all that our beloved first Guardian wrote on the Institution of the Guardianship. Only in this way can we free ourselves from the influence and viewpoints of others (whatever their position or rank may be) and hope to arrive at the truth and an unfettered decision. Is this not the same process which we have been enjoined to follow in accepting the Faith itself? (i.e., through independent investigation of the truth).

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For those of us who have loved and served our first Guardian during his lifetime and have treasured and held dear his imperishable writings and instructions, our foremost desire since his passing has been, I am certain all will agree, to remain faithful and obedient to the instructions he has given us during his lifetime and left with us as an eternal bequest from his infallible pen. The present crisis which faces our beloved Cause, it seems to me, revolves solely around this point coupled with the doubt which many have permitted to creep into their own minds stemming from a lack of faith in the inviolability of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, "the all-mighty Covenant, the like of which the sacred Dispensations of the past have never witnessed," "one of the distinctive features of this most mighty cycle" and the "Ark of Salvation." (See p.239, "God Passes By.")

Following the passing of Shoghi Effendi and the disclosure that a traditional type testamentary document was not found in his papers, we all heard the following speculations which are not acceptable in the light of the provisions of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and all that our beloved first Guardian has written:

- That the plan of God had been changed and there would never be another Guardian.
- That the Faith does not need a Guardian any longer.

As for myself, I perhaps found it easier to embrace the second Guardian than most of my fellow Bahá'ís because, following the passing of Shoghi Effendi, I had been unable to shove the all-important question of successorship to the back of my mind and forget about it but rather I felt impelled to intensify my studies and review again minutely the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the "Dispensation." This study coupled with searching meditation during many sleepless nights led me to come to the following conclusions concerning the Guardianship which, now as I look back in retrospect, prepared me to approach the Proclamation of Mason Remey with an open mind:

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- The Institution of the Guardianship was essential to the continued existence of our beloved Cause.
  - The view that one heard from some sources that the Guardianship had ended with the passing of Shoghi Effendi was completely untenable and could never be accepted from whatever source.
  - The Universal House of Justice could not come into existence and function as an infallible body without the Guardian sitting as its "*sacred head*" in view of the following ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS which Shoghi Effendi had so carefully pointed out in the Dispensation" are performed by the Guardian as its President:
    1. PROVIDES THE INTERPRETATIVE AUTHORITY OF THE SACRED WRITINGS.
    2. "INSISTS UPON A RECONSIDERATION BY THEM OF ANY ENACTMENT HE CONSCIENTIOUSLY BELIEVES TO CONFLICT WITH THE MEANING AND TO DEPART FROM THE SPIRIT OF Bahá'u'lláh's REVEALED UTTERANCES" (This clearly indicates that without the guidance of the Guardian it is possible for this body to pass a law which runs counter to both the meaning and the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings and is therefore fallible without his guidance.)
    3. DEFINES THE SPHERE OF ITS LEGISLATIVE ACTION.
    4. POSSESSES THE SOLE AUTHORITY TO EXPEL A MEMBER WHO COMMITS A SIN INJURIOUS TO THE COMMON WEAL.
  - Mason Remey was the only one who could possibly sit as President of the Universal House of Justice when it came into existence (provided he were living) because of his appointment by Shoghi Effendi as President of the International Bahá'í Council (the Head of its embryo). This conclusion came to me when in my meditations I recalled a very interesting and highly significant conversation at table with Shoghi Effendi on the evening of November 30, 1952 when my wife and I were on pilgrimage. Shoghi Effendi had been describing the successive stages through which the International Bahá'í Council would
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evolve in its development towards maturity and in speaking about its second stage (Bahá'í Court, cited by Shoghi Effendi in his message of 25 April, 1951, as an "essential prelude to the institution of the Universal House of Justice"), these were his words:

"THE PRESENT PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL WILL THEN BECOME THE JUDGE." (THE GUARDIAN IN AN ASIDE TO MASON AND WITH A SMILE ASKED, "MASON, ARE YOU READY TO BECOME A JUDGE").

**Note:** The above may be verified from hand written notes taken by me at the table at the time and inscribed in ink in a book of consecutive unattachable pages.

I remembered being puzzled at the time as to why Shoghi Effendi had singled out Mason Remey as "the Judge" when all the other members of the Council were also seated at the table, except one, and I had considered them all as having co-equal status. Now while meditating on the question of who could possibly occupy the position of President of the Universal House of Justice, if it were to be formed, (as obviously someone would have to fulfill this role) it suddenly dawned on me that Mason Remey by virtue of his having been appointed by the beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, as President of the International Bahá'í Council (the embryo of this body) was the only logical one. What now amazes me, since receipt of the Proclamation, is that, although I had come to this conclusion, I did not, either then, or at any time prior to the Proclamation, carry this conclusion one step further and realize, what then should have been obvious, that as Presidentship of the Universal House of Justice and Guardianship are synonymous titles, Shoghi Effendi's appointment of Mason Remey as President of the International Bahá'í Council during his lifetime was, in effect, identical with naming him his successor. (The embryo with its appointed head conceived in the infallible mind of Shoghi Effendi was only awaiting its birth.)

With the receipt of the momentous Proclamation of our second Guardian, the final veil was lifted from my eyes and I was led to discover and realize the following additional facts:

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- The tremendous import and significance which Shoghi Effendi had attached to *"his epoch making decision"* to establish the International Bahá'í Council was evidenced in his historic message to the Bahá'í world of 9 January 1951 in which he had referred to establishment of the Council *"as the greatest event shedding lustre on the second epoch of the formative age of the Bahá'í Dispensation potentially unsurpassed by any enterprise undertaken since the inception of the Administrative Order of the Faith on the morrow of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Ascension, ranking second only to glorious immortal events associated with the Ministries of the Three Central Figures of the Faith."*
  - The obvious fact (now that it had been brought to our attention in the Proclamation) that, as Presidentship of the Universal House of Justice is synonymous with Guardianship, (i.e., they are one and the same position) Shoghi Effendi's appointment of Mason Remey as the President of the Council - the embryonic Universal House of Justice - was identical with naming him the future Guardian.

**Note:** For those who may argue that the third stage of the embryonic Institution ("the duly elected body") calls for the election of all 9 members, careful thought should be given to the *"principle"* involved in the "operation" of this Institution for, unlike the National Houses of Justice, of which the present National Spiritual Assemblies are the embryo, the Universal House of Justice combines *"the hereditary authority"* symbolized by the Guardian - its President with the democratic element elected by "the representatives of the faithful" (NSA's). We, as fallible beings, are certainly not empowered to alter this principle and destroy *"this divinely revealed Order," "this unique Order"* which *"however long it may endure and however extensive its ramifications, cannot ever degenerate into any form of despotism, of oligarchy, or of demagoguery which must sooner or later corrupt the machinery of all man made and essentially defective political institutions"*. (See p.154, *"Dispensation."*)

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- That the foregoing conclusion is further supported by the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá concerning the embryo. He said, "*the embryo possesses from the first all perfections....all the powers - but they are not visible and become so only by degrees*" (p.313, BWF). Therefore, the embryonic Universal House of Justice (the International Bahá'í Council) potentially (embryonically) possesses all the powers exercised by the fully developed Universal House of Justice.
  - That as a result of our preconceived idea that Shoghi Effendi's successor would be named in a traditional-type testamentary document (although this is not prescribed as a requirement in the Will and Testament), we (the Hands included) had overlooked or failed to go back and examine Shoghi Effendi's message of 9 January 1951 for the key.
  - That, if the Hands had realized the significance and intent of the aforementioned message they would not have found it necessary to create a separate organization called "*Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land*" (or "*Custodians of the Faith*" - a term, by the way, applied to Assemblies in the words of Shoghi Effendi on page 331, "God Passes By"). If they had grasped the import of this message which hailed the formation of the International Bahá'í Council as the "*forerunner of the supreme administrative institution*" they would have realized that the international administration of the Faith should have been placed in its hands while they occupied themselves with their spiritual "*obligations*" and "*responsibilities*" as the chief stewards. Obviously, this institution (International Bahá'í Council) which Shoghi Effendi had waited so long to establish and whose final formation he had hailed with such joy had been pushed aside and had been all but forgotten (howbeit unintentionally).
  - That the separate organization "*constituted*" by the Hands in their Proclamation of 25 November 1957 (a body of 9 Hands) to reside in Haifa was not the "*NINE PERSONS*" elected from their own number spoken of in the Will and Testament (as they were selected and not elected). Therefore this body presently in
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Haifa this "organization of the Hands of the Faith" has no authority to exist on the basis of the Will and Testament.

- The Hands in Haifa as time went on inevitably became involved in administrative matters which are clearly outside their domain according to the Will and Testament.
- That, as the Will and Testament makes very clear and as re-emphasised repeatedly by Shoghi Effendi in his writings, the Guardianship is an "**hereditary office**", the Guardian "**symbolizes the hereditary principle in this Dispensation**" and he exercises "**the hereditary authority.**" Therefore, the Guardianship can only be handed down from one Guardian to another (i.e. inherited). The successor in Guardianship cannot be chosen or elected by any other Institution such as the Universal House of Justice or the Hands.
- That the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh had remained INVIOLEATE; the CONTINUITY of Guardianship had been preserved. Shoghi Effendi had not only appointed his successor "during his lifetime" but had announced it to the entire Bahá'í world.
- That the Hands are not assigned authority in the Will and Testament but only spiritual "**obligations**" and "**responsibilities**", serving under the direction of the living Guardian of the Faith.
- That the Hands have no authority according to the Will and Testament to consult with the Universal House of Justice (such as cited in their 4 November 1959 message).
- That the Hands had interpreted the last message of Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'í world in October 1957 wherein he designated them as "**Chief Stewards,**" to confer upon them a role of collective Guardianship of the Faith and had fostered this unwarranted interpretation on the part of the mass of the believers throughout the world. (It is interesting to note that in the last paragraph of this same fateful message, not only the Hands but the "**entire body of the believers**" and "**their elected**

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*representatives" are all called upon to display a "worthy stewardship of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.")*

**Note:** For those who insist that "*stewardship*" denotes authority, your attention, is kindly invited to page 143 of "**Bahá'í Administration**" wherein Shoghi Effendi has clearly outlined, in writing about the responsibilities of NSA's, the difference between authority on the one hand and stewardship on the other.

It need only be said in conclusion that those who continue to accept the self-delegated authority and interpretation of the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land instead of the explicit provisions of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the instructions and appointment of our first beloved Guardian, have only the following to look forward to:

- The termination of the Guardianship. (The "*Center of the Cause*", the "*Guardian of the Administrative Order*", "*The Head Cornerstone of the Administrative Order.*")
- The election of a so-called Universal House of Justice which will not have its sacred appointed HEAD (the Guardian) and therefore, will not be the infallible institution prescribed in the Will and Testament.
- The complete absence of a source of divine infallibility.
- The annihilation of the Bahá'í Faith and the setting up in its place of a man-made religious organization with all the attendant evils found in the past religious organizations.

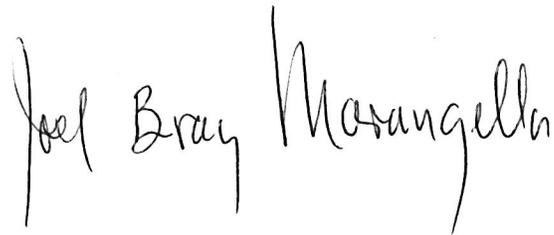
Whereas, those who accept the second beloved Guardian of the Cause of God:

- Praise Bahá'u'lláh that His Covenant has remained inviolate and the continuity of the Guardianship of His Cause has been preserved as promised.

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- Have turned to the "*Center of the Cause*" and sworn fealty to him.
  - Have preserved the integrity of the Bahá'í Faith for the present and future generations.

With warm and loving Bahá'í greetings.

Faithfully, in devotion to His Covenant,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joel Bray Marangella". The signature is written in black ink and is centered on the page.

Joel Bray Marangella

P.S. What has shocked and distressed me since the issuance of the Proclamation is the obviously superficial manner in which some of the friends have read this document and the first Encyclical letter which followed. Some are saying that Mason Remey is advocating putting aside the Ten Year Crusade when he speaks of "this fallacious program for 1963" whereas it is evident he is speaking about the announced program of the Hands to proceed with the election of the Universal House of Justice in 1963 (which was never called for under the objectives of the Ten Year Global Crusade given by Shoghi Effendi), or they are saying that in his First Encyclical letter he is claiming the Hands have no authority to exist, whereas, if you read this passage closely, it says: "this organization of the Hands", which is quite a different matter. The Will and Testament outlines no organization of the Hands, such has been developed by them since the passing of Shoghi Effendi. Nor does this Document prescribe that they meet in conclaves or in consultative meetings to make joint decisions. On the contrary the Will and Testament prescribes that the Hands work as individuals under the direction of the living Guardian of the Faith.

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**NOTE:** THIS OPEN LETTER HAS BEEN SUBMITTED TO THE SECOND GUARDIAN OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH FOR APPROVAL PRIOR TO ITS DISPATCH. HE HAS NOT ONLY GIVEN HIS APPROVAL BUT HAS URGED ITS WIDE SPREAD CIRCULATION THROUGHOUT THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD, EVEN TO THOSE WHOM I DO NOT KNOW PERSONALLY.

J.B.M.

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**SECOND OPEN LETTER  
TO THE BELIEVERS  
WRITTEN IN  
ORLEANS, FRANCE  
21 OCTOBER 1960**

21 October 1960  
Orleans, France

Dear Bahá'í friends ,

I am writing this second open letter to the believers based on a personal letter which I addressed to a Bahá'í friend some time ago. I am doing this at the request of our beloved Guardian as he had been furnished a copy of the aforementioned letter and felt that the arguments set forth therein would constitute a further document of proof to the believers. In this letter I should like to discuss certain questions which were not treated in my former letter - questions which I am sure have been in the minds of many, if not most, of the believers. Concerning the reasons behind and the causes of the present crisis facing the Bahá'í world.

First, before going into these questions, I would like to say that at the time I took my own stand in support of the Second Guardian I felt that a majority of the friends throughout the Bahá'í world would not at the outset accept the Second Guardian for the following reasons:

- The manner of the appointment of Mason Remey by Shoghi Effendi as his successor had obviously been veiled.
- The Hands in Haifa had immediately rejected his claims and advised all National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the Bahá'í world to do likewise.

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- The Proclamation issued by Mason Remey had not been reproduced and given general circulation amongst the mass of the believers by the National Spiritual Assemblies so as to permit the believers to investigate his claims independently and reach their own decisions.
  - In non-English speaking countries there was a dearth of translations of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Writings on the Covenant and Shoghi Effendi's writings on the Institution of the Guardianship (writings which were essential to a full understanding and appreciation of the issues involved).

In the face of the above listed handicaps to recognizing the claims put forth in the Proclamation of the Second Guardian, it would have been surprising indeed if more than a handful of believers had immediately accepted the Second Guardian on the morrow of his Proclamation.

As subtle a test as the Proclamation proved to be to the mass of the believers, it was apparent that it would be even a greater test to the Hands of the Cause because:

- A majority, if not all, of the Hands had already made up their minds definitely that the Institution of the Guardianship had ceased to exist with the passing of the beloved First Guardian.
- An acceptance of the Second Guardian on the basis of his Proclamation would necessitate an admission by the Hands that they had lacked the spiritual perception to recognize him during the period since the passing of Shoghi Effendi.
- Many of them had already revealed the fact that their love for the person of Shoghi Effendi was so great that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for them to transfer this love to his successor even if the appointment were clear and not veiled.

Why is it that the Bahá'í world should be faced with this great test? Most of us had assumed that our period of testing in connection with the Covenant had come to an end following the early years of Shoghi

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Effendi's Ministry and the consolidation of the Institution of the Guardianship accomplished during his ministry.

For an answer to this question let us go back in time and recall to mind the confusion, despair and consternation which seized the Bahá'í world on the eve of the passing of Shoghi Effendi when it was learned that a testamentary document of the type which most of us had anticipated was not found. Even those believers who refused to believe that the Guardianship had ended, instead of retaining their faith that Shoghi Effendi had in some inexplicable way appointed his successor according to the manner enjoined upon him in the Will and Testament, deluded themselves into thinking that the question of successorship would be resolved by the Universal House of Justice when it was formed. I, too, was guilty of this delusion for a time. However, when time was found to study and re-study carefully the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the "Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh", the complete falsity of holding such a belief and the impossibility of the Universal House of Justice deliberating upon and resolving such a question became glaringly obvious. It became clear that the believers would either have to maintain their faith that the beloved First Guardian had fulfilled his obligation to name his successor according to the provisions of the Will and Testament, in some way not as yet clear to us, and despite appearances to the contrary, or face the only other alternative, namely; that the Guardianship had ended. Acceptance of this alternative meant that our Divinely conceived, perfect Administrative Order fashioned by its Master Architect, delineated in the "immortal Document" representing "His greatest legacy to posterity" and "the brightest emanation of His mind" - "the supreme act" associated with His mission, would be forevermore deprived of its Guardian and thereby permanently mutilated and rendered imperfect.

So many of the friends have asked why it was that Shoghi Effendi did not leave a clearly written testament naming Mason Remey his successor which would have left no doubts in the minds of the believers. If we consider this question carefully in the light of the explicit provisions of the Will and Testament it is clear that the Will and Testament does not specify that the Guardian should name his successor in a testamentary document to be opened after his passing. On the contrary, the Will and Testament makes it incumbent

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upon the Guardian to name his successor during his lifetime. Conceding that this is so, the question then follows, why did not Shoghi Effendi appoint his successor in such a clear way during his lifetime that there would not be any doubt as to his rightful successor and the Bahá'í world would not now be faced with its present crisis? Without presuming to be able to answer this question, as it is not for the servants of God to question His inscrutable ways, let us ask ourselves this question: What would have been the affect on the believers throughout the Bahá'í world had Shoghi Effendi come right out in a clearly announced statement and named Mason Remey, during his own lifetime, as his successor - a man some twenty-five years his senior? If such an announcement had been made, would it not have caused utter consternation and even incredulity amongst the believers? For such an open and clear appointment would have indicated that Shoghi Effendi would not live to an old age, as Mason Remey was destined to outlive him. If for no other reason, was there then not a wisdom in the manner in which Shoghi Effendi chose to accomplish the appointment of his successor in accordance with the sacred provisions of the Will and Testament, while at the same time veiling this appointment and its immediate implications from the believers? It was not the first time in religious history that a Divine appointment has been veiled even from those who have been the closest to the one making the appointment. We need only to call to mind this principle as applied to the appearance of the Manifestations of God down through the ages. Religious history teaches us that rivers of blood have flowed and every Manifestation of God has suffered the direst persecution and drunk from the cup of martyrdom because the followers of His Predecessor have failed to pierce the veils of love, of pride or their own preconceived ideas concerning the characteristics of the succeeding Manifestation and the manner and conditions of His appearance. And both the Center of the Covenant and the First Guardian were deluged in a sea of tribulations at the beginning of their Ministries because of this same failure to understand and to remain steadfast in the Covenant even on the part of many of those closest to Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, including their own families. Does this explain the behaviour and opposition of the former Hands of the Cause to this Divine appointment; those, who had been elevated to foremost spiritual rank among the believers by the First Guardian. Could the very love and admiration they have for Shoghi

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Effendi now be the veil interposing itself between them and the recognition of his appointed successor? If this be so, then, is it not reminiscent and characteristic of what has happened in past Dispensations and what transpired following the first two Divine appointments in our own Dispensation? (i.e., the appointment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as Center of the Covenant, and his appointment of Shoghi Effendi as the First Guardian). Both 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi were made the target of every abuse and were denied, repudiated, vilified by the very ones who should have been the first to accept and support them. In connection with this theme, it is significant that the Master should have seen fit to quote in His Will and Testament the Báb's warning to His followers: "Beware, beware, lest the Nineteen Letters of the Living and that which hath been revealed in the Bayán veil thee" (pg. 4, 1944 U.S. Edition ). Is this, then, the test that now faces the Bahá'ís the world over, especially those who loved our First Guardian the most - the test of being able to overcome their Great personal love for him as an individual and recognize that the Institution which he represented - the Institution of Guardianship - is eternal in this Dispensation and must be adored above all? In this test do we not find the true meaning of steadfastness in the Covenant? Must the history of mankind's violation down through the ages of the Greater Covenant and the violation of the Lesser Covenant in this Dispensation which we have already twice witnessed be repeated once more in order that we may be forever freed from the worship of the human personality and attach ourselves, instead, to reality? Are we not Bahá'ís followers of the Light? In pursuance of this theme it is appropriate to call to mind the Báb's words of warning addressed to Vahid, characterized by Shoghi Effendi as the "most learned, most eloquent and influential among his followers": "By the righteousness of Him whose power causeth the seed to germinate and Who breatheth the spirit of life into all things, were I to be assured that in the Day of His manifestation thou wilt deny Him I would unhesitatingly disown thee and repudiate thy faith ..... If, on the other hand, I be told that a Christian, who beareth no allegiance to my Faith will believe in Him, the same will I regard as the apple of Mine Eye" (Pg. 101, Dispensation).

Can we use preservation of "Divine Unity" as an excuse to oppose and repudiate the second Guardian of the Cause of God, i.e., join with the

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majority who have opposed and repudiated him because they are the majority and in order to preserve unity? The answer is clear if we but recall what would have happened if this principle had been followed when the beloved Master was struggling against the machinations and evil doings of the arch breaker of the Covenant at that time who was then supported by "almost the entire family of Bahá'u'lláh and who had accused 'Abdu'l-Bahá of being an "ambitious, a self-willed, and unprincipled and pitiless usurper, Who had deliberately disregarded the testamentary instructions of His Father . . ." - they, together with many who had been the closest to Bahá'u'lláh, all united in a determined effort to subvert the foundations of the Covenant which the newly proclaimed Will had laid" (See pg. 247, "God Passes By" ). And, a second time, we have the example of what happened to our First beloved Guardian who suffered the repudiation of his entire family. If unity had been the principle followed in both of these instances of violation of the Covenant our precious Cause would have long since been destroyed. We only have to refer to the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá for the answer. Now it is unmistakably clear that the principle of unity does not apply when the Covenant is being violated. (See Pg. 12 W&T).

And are we to be veiled because there was no Aghsan to inherit the Guardianship? Do we think that the Hand of God was chained up and unable to assure the continuance of this Divine Institution ordained by Him for the preservation of His Cause? Does not 'Abdu'l-Bahá answer this question for us, and significantly in His last Tablet to America treating exclusively of the Covenant, when He says: "The Divine Gardener cuts off the dry or weak branch from the good tree and grafts to it, a branch from another tree. He both separates and unites..... (BWF, Pg. 438). What could be clearer than this statement of the Master pointing out how God - the Divine Gardener - changes the bad branch for the good? Are we then, in the face of this statement, prepared to say that the Guardian of the Cause of God, acting under His infallible guidance, is incapable of changing the bad branch for the good in appointing his successor?

And, finally, there if the question of approval and endorsement of the nine Hands elected from their company based on the argument advanced by many that the provision contained in the Will and Testament requiring these nine Hands to give their "assent" to the

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one whom the Guardian has appointed his successor gives them the authority to overrule the Guardian. If those who advance this argument would search out the writings of Shoghi Effendi they would find the following pertinent statement of his appearing in a letter published in the U.S. Bahá'í News of February 1955:

"The statement in the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (the passage in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá which provides for successor to the Guardian and reference is made to the Hands) does not imply that the Hands of the Cause of God have been given the authority to overrule the Guardian. 'Abdu'l-Bahá could not have provided for a conflict of authority in the Faith. This is obvious in view of His own words, which you will find on Pg. 13 ( Pg. 11, 1944 U.S. edition) of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. "The mighty stronghold shall remain impregnable and safe through obedience to Him who is the Guardian of the Cause of God. It is incumbent upon .....the Hands of the Cause of God to show their obedience, submissiveness and subordination unto the guardian of the Cause of God, to turn unto him and be lowly before him. He that opposeth him hath opposed the True One...etc. "

In view of this clear and highly significant statement made by the beloved First Guardian, it is obvious that the argument cited above is completely false and without foundation. How could we have permitted ourselves to think otherwise for the Guardian is infallible in making his appointment. Is he to be opposed or overruled by his fallible assistant? Then you may ask why does this provision appear at all in the Will and Testament. In view of Shoghi Effendi's statement we must search for another significance behind this provision. Without attempting to interpret what this significance is, it is certainly obvious that, as all, including the Hands, are enjoined to be submissive, obedient and lowly before the Guardian of the Cause, any refusal on the part of these nine elected Hands to give their assent would constitute disobedience and disloyalty to the Guardian and indicate that they would not be willing to work under the guidance of his successor (should they be living at that time). Under these circumstances the Guardian would have no choice but to

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expel them. Aside from all this, we know that the present organization of nine Hands in the Holy Land, designated by them as the "Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land" or "Hands of the Faith in Haifa" is not the "nine persons" elected from the company of the Hands as provided for in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. We further know that Shoghi Effendi did not call for this election during his lifetime.

There are many who are still clinging to the hope that the Universal House of Justice scheduled to be formed in 1963 under the plan of the Hands (not being one of the objectives outlined by Shoghi Effendi for the Ten Year Global Crusade) will find a way to the continuance of the Guardianship. Aside from the fact that such a body would not be the Divine infallible Institution described in the Will and Testament without its sacred head - the Guardian- serving as its President (a point which I discussed in detail in my general letter), is not such a hope completely unfounded and a delusion when one considers that the Hands have already definitely made up their minds that the Guardianship has ended and have announced in their message of 4 November 1959 to the Bahá'í world that they will sit in consultation with the Universal House of Justice which they are bringing into existence (a right not given them by the Will and Testament) and decide the question of the Guardianship. Does anyone harbour the illusion that their minds are going to be changed in the meantime and that their view will not prevail during such consultation and that we shall find any other decision coming out of this body but that the Guardianship (i.e., the living Guardianship) has ended forever? When this happens, those who have deluded themselves into believing that the Universal House of Justice, formed under the plan of the Hands without its sacred head, is, in fact, the infallible Institution described in the Will and Testament will then be forced to bow to the decision made by this body that the Guardianship has ended, under pain of being labelled a Covenant Breaker. This great deception will have then run its full course and the mass of the believers who have supported this decision will find themselves united in a permanent violation of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh.

If there are any of the believers who may still be unconvinced that the former Hands have not made up their minds that the Guardianship

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has ended, a few of the multiple evidences might be cited. For the American believers, there was the letter put out by the American Hands in 1958 stating all hope should be abandoned for a future Guardian. More recently, in France, we have the statements made by both Mr. Faizi and Mr. Khadem. Mr. Faizi in meeting with the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of France, who had accepted the Second Guardian, stated emphatically that the Guardianship had ended supporting his contention with a perversion of the well-known passage in the Holy Writings of Bahá'u'lláh wherein Bahá'u'lláh states there will not be another Manifestation "ere the expiration of a full thousand years" saying that in the text from which he was reading (Persian or Arabic) and translating, this statement of Bahá'u'lláh's also applied to the Guardianship. This was a shocking and amazing statement. It is significant that the Master in the Will and Testament twice refers to the use of this same quotation (pgs. 6 and 8, W & T) by those who violated the Covenant in former times and asks, "can a transgression be imagined more glaring than this, the interpolation of the Holy Text?" Mr. Khadem, in a talk given at the Paris Bahá'í Centre, (as reported in the illegal French Bahá'í Journal of September 1960), had this to say: "The station of the Guardianship of the Faith is so divine and lofty that one is not even able to conceive it. In order to give an elementary idea of it, it is necessary to recall this prophecy of the Koran which says: "In the future Manifestation, the Guardianship will be for God, Himself, the true Lord of the world . . ." The Báb, Bahá'u'lláh as well as 'Abdu'l-Bahá have spoken of it" It is interesting to compare this statement of Mr. Khadem with Shoghi Effendi's own words contained in the "Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh" which Shoghi Effendi states he has written to lay special stress "upon certain truths which lie at the basis of our Faith and the integrity of which it is our first duty to safeguard. In this document Shoghi Effendi says: "The Guardian of the Faith must not under any circumstances and whatever his merits or his achievements, be exalted to the rank that will make him a co-sharer with 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the unique position which the Center of the Covenant occupies--much less to the station exclusively ordained for the Manifestation of God. So grave a departure from the established tenets of our Faith is nothing short of open blasphemy. (Starting with last line on pg. 150) Then, there are the recent addresses of Rúhíyyih Khánum throughout the United States in which she has reiterated views expressed publicly at the Kampala

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Intercontinental Conference that God had changed His plan with regard to the Guardianship - that is, He has ended the Guardianship. Also in hand is a copy of a letter addressed by former Hand, Mr. Alá'í, to a French believer in which we find this curious statement: "According to the opinion of this impotent one, it is certain that the House of Justice will designate among its members someone to be President who in deference to the Blessed Testament will have the title of deputy director or representative, who will operate in accordance with the duties designated under the House of Justice; but it is certain that he will never be the Guardian of the Cause of God."

Dear friends, it should be clear and obvious that the only hope and salvation for the Bahá'í world in this time of crisis is to closely study again the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and all that our beloved First Guardian wrote on the Guardianship. Then in the light of these Writings, let us prayerfully read and reflect on the Proclamation issued by the Second Guardian of the Faith and his Encyclical Letters so that we may discover for ourselves how Shoghi Effendi did not abandon this precious, infant Faith of God to the pitfalls of man-made interpretations, plans and institutions, but on the contrary, has preserved the integrity of our glorious Faith in the manner he was enjoined to do under the sacred provisions of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá for both the present and future Bahá'í generations.

Very sincerely in my love for  
His Covenant,



Joel Bray Marangella

"O ye spiritual friends Firmness (constancy) must reach a degree that if all the souls (Bahá'is) be destroyed by the evil wishers and there remain but one, that one singly and alone should be capable of withstanding all who live on earth, and of spreading the fragrance of holiness." (Pg. 25, Vol.1, Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá)

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# AN OPEN LETTER TO HETERODOX BAHÁ'ÍS

During the 36-year ministry of the first Guardian of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi, the Bahá'ís proclaimed their undying fidelity to the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh and to the appointed Centre of that Covenant, 'Abdu'l-Bahá . In 'Abdu'l-Bahá they recognised not only the Centre to whom all should, turn, following the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh as the sole Interpreter of the Holy Word but the true Exemplar of their Faith and the “perfect Architect” of a divinely-conceived Administrative Order—an Order unique in religious history and the distinguishing feature of their Faith. As Shoghi Effendi has said “this Order constitutes the very pattern of that divine civilisation which the almighty Law of Bahá'u'lláh is designed to establish upon earth”. Bahá'u'lláh, Himself, extolled this future Order as “this unique, this wondrous System—the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed”.

As every Bahá'í knows, this unique Administrative Order was delineated by the unerring Pen of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will and Testament, a Document acclaimed by Shoghi Effendi as the very “Child of the Covenant” for as he explained: “The creative energies released by the Law of Bahá'u'lláh, permeating and evolving within the mind of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, have by their very impact and close interaction given birth to an Instrument which may be viewed as the Charter of the New World Order which is at once the glory and promise of this most great Dispensation: The Will may thus be acclaimed as the inevitable offspring resulting from that mystic

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intercourse between Him Who communicated the generating influence of His divine Purpose and the One Who was its vehicle and chosen recipient. Being the Child of the Covenant — the Heir of both the Originator and the Interpreter of the Law of God — the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá can no more be divorced from Him Who supplied the original and motivating impulse than from the One Who ultimately conceived it”. Hence, as Shoghi Effendi has stated, this momentous Document should be considered as “Their Will”. Moreover, in expatiating on the sacred character of this divine Charter, Shoghi Effendi conferred on this Document a rank coequal with The Most Holy Book revealed by Bahá’u’lláh—the Kitáb-i-Aqdas—stating that “A study of these sacred documents will reveal the close relationship that exists between them” and “that they are not only complementary, but that they mutually confirm one another and are inseparable parts of one complete unit”. And he has said further: “For nothing short of the ... provisions of their Will could possibly safeguard the Faith for which They have both so gloriously labored all Their Lives”.

As the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá—His “greatest legacy to posterity”— constitutes a part of the explicit Holy Text, it is clear that not one jot or tittle of this Document may be annulled, altered or amended for as long as the Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh endures. Therefore, “This Divine Masterpiece which the hand of the Master-builder of the world has designed for the unification and the triumph of the world-wide Faith of Bahá’u’lláh”, must remain immutable and inviolable for no less than a full thousand years.

How then can any Bahá’í claiming to accept the divine origin and immutability of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Divine Charter and its co-equal rank with The Most Holy Book reconcile this belief with the insidious doctrine promulgated by some that God has changed His Mind (“BADA”) concerning the continuity of the guardianship of the Cause? And, consequently, those provisions of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Charter pertaining to the supreme institutions of the Bahá’í Administrative Order have become null and void a mere thirty-six years following the inception of that Order due to the alleged inability or failure of Shoghi Effendi to appoint a successor under the terms of that Charter.

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It should be clear even to a non-Bahá'í observer that, in the light of the foregoing, such a conclusion would constitute nothing less than a flagrant repudiation of the previously professed belief of the Bahá'ís in the immutability of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Charter. Indeed to believe that Shoghi Effendi was unable or failed to appoint his successor is to place him in the position of being a party to the destruction of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. For, to put an end to the guardianship—the very heart and centre of the Cause—is to also destroy the two remaining supreme institutions of the Administrative Order which depend on the presence of a living Guardian of the Faith, namely; the Universal House of Justice of which the Guardian is “the sacred head and distinguished member for life” and the Hands of the Cause who are appointed only by him.

Those familiar with the auspicious record of Shoghi Effendi's untiring labors during his ministry to erect the machinery of the Bahá'í Administrative Order throughout the world and his copious writings pertaining to the distinguishing features of that Order will vouch that they bear eloquent testimony to the depths of his devotion, dedication, and undeviating fidelity to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Testament and his unwavering resolve to faithfully discharge every mandate bequeathed to us in that Charter as well as in His other Charter: “The Tablets of the Divine Plan.” One may search his writings and not find a single phrase in them or in his historic messages to the Bahá'í world alluding to anything but the indispensability and the continuity of the guardianship down through the ages to come of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh.

Indeed, faithful to his sacred trust, Shoghi Effendi carefully provided for the continuity of the guardianship as prescribed in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and publicly announced the appointment of his successor to the Bahá'í world at the time. This being the case, why was it that this all-important appointment was not recognised by the Bahá'ís either then or following the passing of Shoghi Effendi? The answer is to be found in the erroneous beliefs and notions unfortunately held by most, if not all, of the Bahá'ís as to the manner in which Shoghi Effendi would appoint his successor coupled with equally fallacious views as to the qualifications that his successor was required to possess. As Shoghi Effendi had been appointed to his supreme Office in the Faith through the instrumentality of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá they automatically assumed (without

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re-examining the phraseology of the Will) that Shoghi Effendi would employ a similar instrument to appoint his successor whereas if they had closely re-examined the language of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Testament they would have noted that it is mandatory for the Guardian to appoint his successor “in his own lifetime ... that differences may not arise after his passing”.

Thus, it may be seen that the guardians of the Faith are barred from using a testamentary-type document in the appointment of their successors. The Bahá’ís held an equally false notion as to the qualifications of the Guardian’s successor believing that only the Guardian’s son could inherit, the guardianship (Shoghi Effendi had no offspring) whereas ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will permits the Guardian to choose another male believer (“branch”— not Branch) whose fidelity and service to the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh— the “Tree of the Covenant”— has qualified him to be a spiritual “branch” of that glorious Tree.

Spiritually blinded, as they were (and still are), by these preconceived ideas and notions (so reminiscent of religious history), it is little wonder that the Bahá’ís, as a whole, were ill-prepared to perceive the significance of the act taken by Shoghi Effendi to assure the continuity of the guardianship and to recognise the unique and ingenious manner in which he accomplished the appointment of his successor (a public yet veiled appointment).

Some five years prior to his passing, Shoghi Effendi issued the only Proclamation of his ministry on 9 January 1951, using the form of a cablegram significantly addressed to the “National Assemblies of the East and West”. In this historic Proclamation he proclaimed the “weighty epoch-making decision of the formation of the first International Bahá’í Council” hailing this decision to form the “first embryonic International Institution” as the “most significant milestone in the evolution of the Administrative Order of the Faith” since the Ascension of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (30 years earlier). Further eulogizing this event, he stated that history would acclaim the constitution, at long last, of the International Council “as the greatest event shedding lustre upon the second epoch of the Formative Age of the Bahá’í Dispensation potentially unsurpassed by any enterprise undertaken since the inception of the Administrative Order ...”. The significance of this “milestone” lay, of

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course, in the fact that Shoghi Effendi had established the embryonic Universal House of Justice. As we know from the Writings, the growth and development of all beings is gradual and “the embryo possesses from the first all perfections.” (pp. 312-313, BWF).

This divine and universal principle applies equally to the organisms of the embryonic World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. Therefore the Universal House of Justice established in the embryonic form by Shoghi Effendi was a complete and whole organism “from the first.” Consider, therefore the significance of Shoghi Effendi’s appointment of a head (or President) of this body—an organism which he stated would evolve through four successive stages in its development towards maturity.

All Bahá'ís, know that according to the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá only the Guardian of the Faith serves as the “sacred head and the distinguished member for life of that body”. In this undeniable fact lay the hidden key to recognising Shoghi Effendi’s appointed successor. For he named a Bahá'í of recognised unsurpassed service, devotion and fidelity to the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh since the earliest days of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to be the head or President of this embryonic body—one whom he had summoned to take up permanent residence in Haifa but a short time earlier to assist him in the work at the World Administrative Centre of the Faith. Significantly, Shoghi Effendi had chosen not to assume the Presidency of this body, himself, and at the same time he did not permit its appointed head to activate this embryonic Institution during the remaining few years of his life, for to have done so would have caused this organism to emerge from its embryonic state into full and active life—a state that necessarily had to await his passing. Coincident with his passing the successor-Guardian-President of the Universal House of Justice (Guardian and President of the UHJ being synonymous titles) would automatically assume active leadership of the Faith (with no break, even for a moment, in the continuity of the guardianship). To choose this method to appoint his successor was indeed ingenious for while Shoghi Effendi made this appointment, as required, “in his own life-time” he, at the same time, veiled the appointment in such a way it did not become obvious to the believers. Had they perceived the significance of the appointment of a man much older than Shoghi Effendi as his successor they could not have then escaped the realisation that this appointment portended the

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death of Shoghi Effendi in the near future (his passing was some six years later). Certainly such a realisation unquestionably would have produced consternation amongst the believers and given rise to chaotic conditions within the Faith.

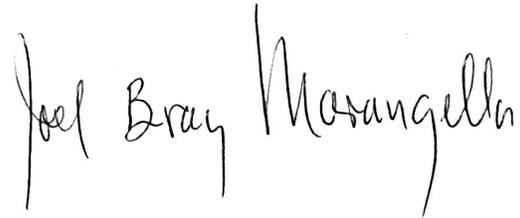
Tragically, as it turned out, the veil with which Shoghi Effendi had purposely enshrouded the appointment of his successor became even more impenetrable following his passing, for the reasons outlined earlier, with dire consequences for the future of the Faith. Not finding a will and testament following the passing of Shoghi Effendi and blinded by their preconceived ideas, as cited above, the Bahá'ís hastily concluded that Shoghi Effendi had no successor, thereby renouncing their faith in the divinely-conceived Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. In place of the "divinely ordained" institutions delineated in that Holy Charter they erected an organisation of their own making that was but a poor substitute for the divine System bequeathed to us by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. In their sans-Guardian organisation:

- There is no longer a Guardian—"Centre of the Cause".
- The interpretative authority of Holy Writ vested solely in the Guardian and vitally essential to safeguard the Faith from future schism is forever lost.
- The institution of the Hands of the Cause ceases to exist as only the guardian can appoint Hands.
- The Universal House of Justice brought into existence by Shoghi Effendi in 1951 with its appointed "sacred head" has been supplanted by a headless body which lacks the essential presence of the Guardian to provide it with the guidance and protection to assure that no legislation is enacted that would run counter to the Laws revealed by Bahá'u'lláh.

Such, then, are the frightful implications of a guardianless Faith. The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh—that "Wondrous System" extolled by Bahá'u'lláh and delineated by the infallible Pen of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will and Testament can never become a reality when the supreme organs of that divinely-conceived Order have all been destroyed or replaced by man-made institutions.

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The Orthodox Bahá'ís adhere to a Faith that has remained unchanged since the days of the first Guardian of the Faith. They hope and pray that those Bahá'ís who have permitted themselves to be led astray and persuaded to abandon the divine Order bequeathed to us by 'Abdu'l-Bahá will return to the Fold of the Covenant with the realisation that the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh and its glorious offspring, the “Child of the Covenant” — the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá—are indestructible and inviolable.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joel Bray Marangella". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial 'J'.

Joel Bray Marangella