

TOWARDS A HISTORY OF THE BAHAI FAITH IN ZAMBIA

BY

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fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of
Master of Education in Religious Studies.**

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DECLARATION

I MWANZA BEARD, do hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own, and that it has not been submitted for a degree at this or any other university, and that it does not include any published work or material from another dissertation except where due reference has been made.

Signature:

Date:

APPROVAL

This dissertation by Mwanza Beard, has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Master of Education in Religious Studies by the University of Zambia.

Signed:

Date:

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Sibongiso Julia Theo Mwanza and all our six children who endured a lot of hardships during the period that I was undertaking this study.

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This dissertation has been made possible due to the help of many people. My special thanks go to my supervisor and mentor Dr Austin Cheyeka (PhD) for his guidance and supervision throughout my work. I would like also to pay tribute to my Bahá'í friends especially the following: Mr. and Mrs. Yazalmeidi, Mr. Adam Mwandila the National Spiritual Assembly (NSA) Chairperson, Mr. Alex Kalumba, Mrs. Pavern Allavian, Mr. Innocent Mileji and Mr. Muhammed Abdul Salam from whom I collected a great amount of material for this dissertation. Without their assistance this dissertation would have been impossible to write.

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ABSTRACT

This particular study investigated the history of the Bahá'í Faith in Zambia. The study focused on the four areas of the Bahá'í Faith, namely; the background of the faith in Zambia, the techniques used in this faith to convert people to this religion, to find out why the Bahá'í Faith are interested in girl-education and to find out the nature of spiritual, moral and economic contribution of the Bahá'í faith to the wellbeing of Zambians. The purpose of the study was to find out more information about the Bahá'í Faith in Zambia. The Bahá'í Faith are involved in providing education and they are also carrying out social economic activities aimed at empowering Zambians economically. It was due to these activities that the researcher got interested to find out more about this religion.

Data for this study was collected by sampling three (3) Bahá'í Communities in Zambia. These are the Lusaka Bahá'í Community, Kabwe Bahá'í community and Liteta South Bahá'í community. Data was collected through interviews and document analysis. The researcher used interview guides to interview leaders, members and school authorities running the Banani International Secondary School for girls, which is a Bahá'í school.

The major findings were that the Bahá'í Faith was a religion that originated in the ancient land of Persia in the 19th century. It was founded by Bahá'u'lláh, a son of a Persian Noble man born to wealth and luxury (Effendi, 1976). According to Effendi, Bahá'u'lláh was born on 12th November, 1817 in Persia and died in 1892. He spent most of his life in prison in exile. During the year 1853, while he was suffering this affliction, the Holy Spirit descended on him and revealed to him his mission as

Bahá'u'lláh, the promised one of all religions and nations. From the day when Bahá'u'lláh received his revelation, he committed his whole life and time to spreading the word of God. Since then, his religion is reported to have continued to grow throughout the world.

The Bahá'í Faith spread to Zambia in 1952. It was spread through national, regional and local conferences. Apart from that, study classes, correspondence courses and other means such as regular visits by International Bahá'í Community Members helped the growth of this faith.

The Bahá'í Faith are interested in girl-child education, mainly due to the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, which emphasises that women must be equal to men in the acquisition of knowledge and moral values for successful development to take place in the world. In Zambia, they are running Banani International Secondary School.

Arising from these findings, the researcher would like to make the following recommendations:

- (i) The R.E. syllabus in Zambia should be revised so that it is multi-faith to capture other religions such as the Bahá'í faith.
- (ii) Scholars of Religion in Zambia should take interest in studying minority religions because some of them are contributing a lot to the spiritual, moral and economic development of Zambia.

CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

This chapter will introduce the study of the history of the Bahá'í faith in Zambia. It will cover the following areas of the study: The background of the Bahá'í faith in Zambia, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, aims and objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study and the limitation of the study.

The Bahá'í faith as a religion originated in the ancient land of Persia (present day Iran) in the 19th Century. It was founded by Bahá'u'lláh, a son of a Persian Noble man born to wealth and luxury (Effendi, 1976). According to Effendi, Bahá'u'lláh was born on 12 November 1817 in Persia and died in 1892. He spent most of his life in prison and exile. He was being persecuted because he abrogated laws of the Muhammadan Dispensation. He called upon Muslim kings and rulers to govern with justice. During the year 1853, while he was suffering this affliction, the Holy Spirit descended on him and revealed to him his mission as Bahá'u'lláh, the promised one of all religions and nations, (*Bahá'í World Faith*, 1943). From that day when Bahá'u'lláh received his revelation, he committed his whole life and time to spreading the Word of God. Since then, his religion is reported to have continued to grow throughout the world.

The word Bahá'í is derived from the title by which the founder of the faith is known, *Bahá'u'lláh*, meaning 'Glory of God'. Bahá'í stands for the individual follower or believer, just as Christian or Buddhist identifies the followers of Christ or Buddha. A Bahá'í is one who accepts Bahá'u'lláh as his Lord, knows his teachings and obeys his precepts.

The Bahá'í faith spread to the southern part of Africa, including Zambia in the 1950s. It spread through holding national, regional and local conferences. Apart from that, study classes, correspondence courses and other means such as regular visits by International Bahá'í Community members were done, (*Bahá'í World Centre*, 1981).

Although this religion has been established in Zambia since 1952, very little has been written about it. At times some members of other religions such as Christians, harbour prejudices against Bahá'í faith members and this makes it very difficult to work and cooperate with them for the sake of building a better society. Apart from that insufficient knowledge and understanding of this religion leads to lack of appreciation of the Bahá'í faith. Therefore the purpose of this study was to provide more information about the Bahá'í faith as an independent world religion in Zambia.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The Bahá'í faith exists in Zambia as one of the minority religions. Despite being a minority religion, the Bahá'í faith has contributed to the social, economic and spiritual development of the country, especially in the provision of girls' education. It is, however, surprising to note that despite all these contributions, nothing has been documented, either in monographic or book form about this religion. It is for this reason that the researcher undertook this study to find out more information about this religion in Zambia and document it so that people can learn about it.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to find out the origins and establishment of the Bahá'í faith in Zambia and how it is contributing to the social, spiritual and moral development of this country.

1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The study aimed at achieving the following:

- a) To find out the history of the Bahá'í faith in Zambia.
- b) To find out the methods used by the Bahá'í faith to convert people to their religion in Zambia.
- c) To establish why the Bahá'í faith are interested in girl-child education in Zambia.
- d) To find out the nature of spiritual, moral and economic contribution of the Bahá'í faith to the well being of Zambians.

1.4 Research Questions

The study was guided by four research questions related to the objectives stated above.

They are as follows:

- (i) What is the history of the Bahá'í faith in Zambia?
- (ii) What methods and strategies do the Bahá'í faith use to convert Zambians to their religion.
- (iii) Why is the Bahá'í faith interested in girl-child education?
- (iv) How does the Bahá'í faith contribute to the spiritual , moral and economic well being of Zambians ?

1.5 Limitation and Delimitation on the Study

Due to financial constraints, the study was confined to three (3) Bahá'í Communities in Zambia which are as follows:- The Lusaka Bahá'í community . Liteta South Bahá'í community and Kabwe Bahá'í community.

CHAPTER TWO : LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter explored literature on the Bahá'í faith. It was very difficult to find literature on this topic because books were not available in the university and public libraries in Lusaka. The researcher tried to find out if there was any research that was conducted before on this topic but, the researcher did not find any similar study on this subject. Therefore, the review of literature mainly depended on the books that were written and published by the Bahá'í themselves, which the researcher borrowed from Bahá'í institutions.

2.1 The Background of the Bahá'í faith

According to Effendi (1976) the Bahá'í religion originally grew out of the Babi Faith, or Sect, which was founded in 1844 by Mirza Ali Muhammad of Shipaz in Iran. He proclaimed a spiritual doctrine emphasising the forth coming and appearance of a new prophet or messenger of God who would overturn old beliefs and customs and usher in a new era. Though new, these beliefs originated from *Shiite* Islam, which believed in the forth coming return of the 12th Iman (Successor of Muhammad), who would renew religion and guide the faithful. Mirza Ali Mohammad first proclaimed his belief in 1844 and assumed the title of the *Bab*, which in Persian means the 'Gate way'. Soon the Bab's teachings spread throughout Iran, provoking strong opposition from both the *Shiite* Muslim clergy and the government. The Bab was arrested and, after several years of imprisonment he was executed in 1850.

Effendi (1976) reports that one of the Bab's earliest disciples and strongest supporter, Mirza Hoseyn Ali Nuri, who had assumed the name of Bahá'u'lláh, claimed that he was the prophet and messenger of God whose coming had been predicted by the Bab.

The *Bahá'í World Faith* (1943 : iv) records that during the year 1853, while Bahá'u'lláh was going through intense suffering and persecution, the Holy Spirit descended upon him and revealed to him his mission as the promised one of all religions and nations. According to the *Bahá'í World Faith* (1943), in a letter addressed to the Shah of Persia the following year, Bahá'u'lláh informed him that he had been transformed by the Holy Spirit and that now he was different from all other human beings. He claimed that God had revealed himself to him and that he was full of knowledge from God. What Bahá'u'lláh meant by these words was that, like other prophets such as Muhammad of Islam and the Buddha of Buddhism, he had been appointed by God to be his messenger or prophet to carry his message throughout the world.

This particular study tried to find out more information about Bahá'ullah and his claim of having received a revelation from God. The study will further shed some light on the important events that took place in the life of Bahá'u'lláh.

Magesa (1997) states that it has been argued by some scholars of religion that a world religion is one that is capable of converting people to its faith. Christianity and Islam are such good examples of world religions because they are engaged in activities designed to convert people belonging to other or no religions to their religions. *The Bahá'í World* (2000-2001) reports that the Bahá'í faith has equally grown and spread throughout the world. The members of the Bahá'í faith all over the world are now reported to be more

than five million. According to *The Bahá'í World Publication* (2004), this number represents two thousand and one hundred and twelve (2,112) ethnic and tribal groups who live in some one hundred and twenty seven thousand (127,000) localities in one hundred and ninety (190) independent countries and forty-six dependent territories. *The Bahá'í World Publication* claims that Bahá'í faith membership cuts across all boundaries of class and race. It claims that what was once regarded by some as a small Sect as reported by the *Britannica Book of the Year 1992*, is now the second most widely spread independent religion in the world after Christianity.

One of the aims of this study is to find out the methods and strategies that the Bahá'í are using to reach out to other people. These methods will further be examined to find out if they have been successful here in Zambia.

Besides scriptures, revelation and the demand to proselytize, Magesa (1995) reports that, some western scholars of religion argue that a world religion must have leadership and places of worship. This refers to presence of priests and temples or chapels. *The Bahá'í World Centre* (1993) argues that professional leadership such as priests is no longer necessary in religious affairs at the moment because most of the people in the world are now literate and they can make a proper study of their religion on their own. Due to this reason, in the Bahá'í faith, professional priesthood was abolished and this is one of the distinctive character of this religion. Apart from that, *The Bahá'í World Centre* (1993) argues that it is dangerous to have professional priests because many insincere people may be attracted to this profession for no other reason than that they want to live an easy life or have a good income. The Bahá'í further argue that such people have always misled others on the pretext of priesthood and have committed many crimes in the name of

religion so as to serve their own selfish interests. The Bahá'ís claim that Bahá'u'lláh abolished the institution of priesthood so that no one could ever hope to misuse religion in order to serve their own selfish and worldly desires.

The Bahá'í Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa (1990 : 17) reports that instead of professional priests, the Bahá'í faith has a unique administrative order to manage the affairs of the faith. The following institutions have been established: The Universal House of Justice, The Hands of the Cause of God, The International Teaching Centre, The Continental Board of Counsellors, The National Spiritual Assembly, the Local Spiritual Assembly, the Auxiliary Board and the Assistants.

According to *The Bahá'í Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa* (1990), The Universal House of Justice is the highest Bahá'í Institution. It consists of nine members and is elected every five years by all the National Spiritual Assemblies in the world. It is based at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel.

The Hands of the Cause of God were people appointed by Bahá'u'lláh and Abdul-Baha. The Guardian Shoghi Effendi appointed more hands as indicated in the will and testament of Abdul-Baha. The hands were given two main duties, propagation of the faith and protection of the faith. This particular piece of work will go further to find out more information about the duties of the House of Justice and the Hands of the Cause of God.

The other Administrative Institution is the International Teaching Centre. According to *The Bahá'í Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa*, The International Teaching Centre was first established in June 1973 by the Universal House of Justice. It is based in

Haifa, Israel at the Bahá'í World Centre. The members are the Hands of the Cause and some Counsellors appointed by the Universal House of Justice.

The Continental Board of Counsellors was first established by the Universal House of Justice in 1968. There are Boards in every continent of the world. For example, there is a Board of Counsellors for Africa; Counsellors are appointed by the Universal House of Justice for a five year term. Their work is co-ordinated by the International Teaching Centre.

The other administrative body is the National Spiritual Assembly. The National Spiritual Assembly was first established by Abdul-Baha in his will and testament. The National Spiritual Assemblies are elected in every country where there are enough Bahá'ís. A National Spiritual Assembly has nine members and is elected every year at a National Convention.

The other administration bodies are the Auxiliary Board and the Assistants. According to *The Bahá'í Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa* (1990), The Auxiliary Board members are appointed by the Hands of the Cause and are to act as the deputies and helpers of the Cause. The assistants are appointed by Auxiliary Board members to help them in their work, which can either be propagation or protection.

This study will shed some light on how these institutions of administration in the Bahá'í faith are working in Zambia in regard to the growth of the faith.

On places of worship, *The Bahá'í* (2000-2001) states that the Bahá'í writings call for erection in a community of a beautifully designed house of worship surrounded by gardens and functioning as a spiritual centre of activity. Apart from that, a variety of social and humanitarian institutions are also to be established around the house of worship. Christensen and Hein (1985 : 7) further report that all Bahá'í houses of worship have nine sides and nine doors. Each one is different and made especially for the place where it is built. All people are welcome in Bahá'í houses of worship. During worship services, the word of God is read or sung. People can also go there anytime to pray by themselves. This study will indeed try to shed light on how far the Bahá'ís have gone in building these beautiful houses of worship here in Zambia.

2.2 The History of the Bahá'í Faith in Zambia

Johnson and Johnson (2003 : 114) report that Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) was opened to the Bahá'í faith by a British pioneer, Eric Manton. According to Johnson and Johnson, Mr. Eric Manton, a widower and his twelve year old son, Terry, arrived from England to pioneer in Zambia on 7th February, 1952. They were the first pioneers to Southern Africa. At that time Manton was already a seasoned steadfast teacher and administrator of the faith and devoted the rest of his life to his pioneering work.

Later Manton was joined by a New Zealand pioneer in 1955 and others joined in 1957. Johnson and Johnson report that at that time, Northern Rhodesia was part of the Central African Federation of British colonies with a strong presence of the African National Congress agitating for independence. Johnson and Johnson explain that many Africans found Bahá'í teachings attractive but often became disillusioned because the faith remained aloof to political activism and social change. However, after two years, one

thousand two hundred and twelve (1,212) assemblies were established, with the faith spreading into fifty-nine (59) other localities.

According to Johnson and Johnson (2003), another lone woman pioneer by the name of Ethna Archibald from New Zealand arrived in Lusaka on 6 October 1955. During this visit, Ethna was inspired to join Manton in the pioneering field and began applying for a secretarial job in Lusaka. She got a job as a secretary at the Office of the Senior Colonial Civil Servant of Northern Rhodesia. Getting started with the teaching of the Bahá'í faith was slow as it was difficult and sometimes dangerous for a single woman like Ethna to socialise with the local population. However, the first breakthrough came when a Bahá'í youth from Kitwe enrolled as a student at Munali Boarding School in Lusaka and Ethna visited him. The headteacher was so surprised that a European would visit a pupil at his school. He invited Ethna for tea and asked her if she would consent to inviting two or three students to dinner so that they would have the experience of a European home before they went to university in Salisbury and the United Kingdom the next year. Bahá'í deepening classes started with students from Munali. Administratively, Ethna was always a member of whatever teaching committee was guiding the work in her religion and often served as its secretary. Ethna remained in Zambia until 1974. She returned to New Zealand, pioneered in Western Samoa and was then invited to serve at the World Centre as a secretary for many years, finally retiring in her home country of New Zealand, but visiting the Holy Land once again in 2001 (Johnson and Johnson, 2003 : 116).

This study will go beyond to find out how the Bahá'í faith spread further in Zambia. The study will discuss in details how the early pioneers managed to propagate the faith in the country and how they converted some Zambians to the Bahá'í faith.

2.3 Methods and Strategies the Bahá'í Faith use to convert people to their Religion

The Bahá'í World Publication (2000-2001) records that the Bahá'í faith has grown and spread throughout the world. The members of the Bahá'í faith all over the world are now reported to be over five million. Like other world religions, the Bahá'í faith are engaged in a number of activities aimed at converting people to their religion.

According to the *Bahá'í World Centre* (1981) the Bahá'í faith spread to the southern part of Africa, including Zambia in the 1950s. the spread of the faith was done through holding national, regional and local conferences. Apart from that, study classes, correspondence courses and other means such as regular visits by international Bahá'í community members were done.

Johnson and Johnson (2003 : 121) record that in the North-Western Province of Zambia the Bahá'í faith was introduced in Mwinilunga district through holding local conferences after getting permission from the local chief. Johnson and Johnson further report that forty-five adults and many children attended the first conference. After this conference, seven adults declared to join the Bahá'í faith. Johnson and Johnson (2003) further report that to reinforce the campaign, a visit by an International Bahá'í Teaching Committee member was organised. Jessie Manton collected Doris Ballard from Chingola and drove to Mwinilunga to help. This was the beginning of the conversion campaign in Mwinilunga.

The other method used to spread the Bahá'í faith was the distribution of literature about the Bahá'í faith. Johnson and Johnson (2003) report that a lot of literature was distributed in Mwinilunga to help in the spreading of the religion in that area.

The other method of propagating the faith is the holding of study classes. The Ruhi Institute based in Columbia has prepared books to be studied in these classes. *Ruhi Institute* (1987) explains that the books are intended to be used in sequence of courses of a formal education programme for youth and adults aimed at building capacity for service. Below are the current titles in the series designed by the Ruhi Institute.

Book 1 : Reflecting on the life of the spirit

Book 2 : Arising to serve

Book 3 : Teaching children's classes, Grade 1

Book 4 : The twin manifestation

Book 5 : Realising powers of young youth

Book 6 : Teaching the Cause

Book 7 : Walking together on a path of service.

Book 8 : The Covenant (in the final stage of development)

In these study classes, *The Ruhi Institute* (1987) explains that the lesson booklets should be used as a means of serving the cause and promoting the well-being of humanity. In every study group, there should always be a more experienced person who acts as a tutor, the other members of the group constitute the students who seek the tutors' help with their studies. It should clearly be understood by all participants that they are engaged in a reciprocal process, in which every one learns, and the responsibility of learning rests on each participant. It is the student who undertakes the active work of learning. The tutor facilitates this process, and also gains new insights into the material. The relationship should not be that of a learned one with a group of ignorant people.

According to *The Ruhi* (ibid), Book 1 contains three units which are: understanding the Bahá'í writings, prayer, and life and death. Understanding the Bahá'í writing is aimed at developing in the participant, the habit of reading the writings and thinking about them, beginning at first with one sentence statements. To read the holy writings everyday, at least in the morning and at night is one of the very important ordinances of the Bahá'í faith.

'Prayer' is the second unit included in Book 1. This unit clarifies the concept of prayer itself and helps the participants understand its great importance as one of the laws of the Bahá'í faith. The third unit of Book 1 is "life and death". The theme life and death has been included in the first book because it is considered essential for the participants understanding of the paths of service they will choose to follow. Service in this world has to be understood in the fullest context of life, which extends beyond our earthly existence and continues forever as our souls progress through the worlds of God, (*Ruhi*, ibid). The title for Book 2 is *Arising to Serve*. According to *The Ruhi* (ibid), this book also has three units which are: 'The Joy of Teaching', 'Deepening Themes' and 'Introducing Bahá'í Beliefs'. According to *The Ruhi* (ibid), Book 2 is largely concerned with skills and abilities for specific acts of service. The first act of service is introduced in the second unit of the books 'Deepening Themes', which is designed to help the students to develop the capability of making periodic visits to the homes of newly enrolled believers and sharing with them a number of themes such as the External Covenant of God, the life of Bahá'u'lláh, love and unity in the Bahá'í community, Bahá'í meetings and the Nineteen Day Feast, the significance of contributing to the fund, and teaching the Cause. The third unit of this book, 'Introducing Bahá'í Beliefs' is concerned with some of the skills related to teaching the faith. As one gains experience in teaching the faith,

one acquires a number of skills and abilities. Generally, this unit is concerned with helping the student to develop the ability to introduce Bahá'í ideas into a conversation. To do this, the unit presents to them a number of short passages on various subjects which, though not exact quotations of 'Abdul-Baha, are based on his talks and tablets and contain many of the words and phrases he used. The students are expected to read the messages carefully and study them in small groups so that they become familiar with the ideas presented and be able to express them with ease in their own words.

The title for Book 3 is '*Teaching Children's Classes Grade 1*'. According to *The Ruhi* (ibid), this book also has three units namely: some principles of Bahá'í education, lessons for children's classes grade 1, and conducting classes for children. This booklet is aimed at helping individuals who wish to undertake the highly respected service of teaching regular classes for the spiritual education of children. It is assumed that those who study it have already participated in courses in which at least the content of Book 1 of the Ruhi Institute has been covered.

Book 4 is entitled *The Twin Manifestations*. According to *The Ruhi Foundation* (1990), this book has three units namely: 'The Greatness of this day', 'The life of the Bab' and 'The Life of Bahá'u'lláh'. The three units that comprise Book 4 are devoted to helping students acquire a thorough and systematic knowledge of the lives of the Bab and Bahá'u'lláh. A chronological account of each of their lives is presented in units 2 and 3 respectively and it is hoped that students will learn to narrate them in some detail. These chronological accounts are complemented by passages from the writings that show certain themes associated with the person of the manifestation. Several of these passages

are followed by exercises, while others merely ask for repeated reading and personal reflection.

Book 5 is entitled *Releasing the Powers of Junior Youth*. According to *The Ruhi Foundation* (ibid), the three units of this book focus on some of the concepts, skills, qualities, and attitudes that experience has shown are required by those wishing to implement one such programme.

Book 6 is entitled *Teaching the Cause*. *The Ruhi Foundation* (1990), records that this book has three units as well. The units are as follows: The Spiritual Natural Teaching , The Qualities and Attitudes of the Teacher, and The Act of Teaching. According to *The Ruhi Foundation*, the first, ‘The Spiritual Natural Teaching’ is intended to enhance the participants’ understanding of the spiritual significance of teaching. The second, ‘The Qualities and Attitudes of the Teacher’, provides the opportunity to reflect on the attributes that a teacher of the cause should strive to acquire. In the third unit, ‘The Act of Teaching’ approaches to personal teaching endeavours and collective campaigns are discussed.

Book 7 is entitled *Walking together on a path of service*, includes: The Spiritual Path, Becoming a Tutor and The Use of the Arts.

Book 8 is entitled *The Covenant*, it includes: ‘The covenant of God’, The covenant of Bahá’u’lláh.

This particular study will find out more about these study classes. It will try to find out if these classes have assisted in converting Zambians to the Bahá’í faith.

The Bahá'í faith also carry out social economic activities that bring them into contact with different people. Some people have ended up becoming Bahá'ís through these socio-economic activities. The Bahá'í s are involved in social economic activities in order to promote community well-being. *Bahá'í World Faith* (1943) records that Bahá'u'lláh set forth principles of guidance and teaching for economic readjustment. Regulations were revealed by him, about the welfare of the common man. Bahá'u'lláh in his writings states that, as the rich man enjoys his life surrounded by ease and luxuries, so the poor must likewise, have a home and be provided with basic needs. This readjustment of the social economic development is of the greatest importance in as much as it ensures the stability of the world of humanity, and until it is effected, happiness and prosperity are impossible (*Bahá'í World Faith*, 1943).

Due to these writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Bahá'í take it as their duty to participate in social economic activities to help improve standards of living of people, especially the poor. In Zambia, the Bahá'í are running a programme called 'Preparation for Social Action Programme' (PSA). The PSA programme is managed by the Inshindo Foundation. The head office of the Inshindo Foundation is in Kabwe and another regional office is in Mwinilunga. According to the *Inshindo Foundation Brochure* (2010), Preparation for Social Action Programme (PSA) is described as a community based training programme that prepares youths to become promoters of community well-being, agents of social and economic development of the community. At the end of the two and half years of training, participants graduate as 'promoters of community well-being' with the capacity to mobilise the community, initiate and manage projects in various areas of community development, including support of food production by small scale producers,

promoting environmental health, supporting family and community health efforts and fostering community based educational initiatives. According to the Inshindo Foundation Brochure (2010), the PSA curriculum is divided into five capability areas. At the centre of the curriculum are units of study that will strengthen the youth's capacity to engage in the areas of community action and service. Other courses are meant to strengthen the youths' technological, mathematical, language and scientific capabilities which the youths require in order for them to be effective promoters of community well-being. The various units of study are:

- a) Service and community action capabilities.
- b) Technological capabilities.
- c) Mathematical capabilities.
- d) Scientific capabilities.
- e) Language capabilities.

This study will go further to find out exactly how this programme is managed and the impact it has made in areas where it is run. The study will further assess whether the programme has really helped to propagate the Bahá'í faith in these areas.

2.4 The Bahá'í Faith and Girl Education

The Bahá'í faith is reported to be very interested in the advancement of women. *The Bahá'í World Publication* (2002) states that the Bahá'ís value the equality of men and women because it is necessary for the development of society. They believe that men and women exist to uplift and assist each other. Bahá'u'lláh is quoted to have emphasized that the world of humanity has two wings, one is women and the other men, and that not until both wings are equally developed can the bird fly. What Bahá'u'lláh meant was that

unless women became equal to men in the acquisition of knowledge and moral values, success and prosperity cannot be attained in the world. Below are some selected writings of Bahá'u'lláh on universal education for girls and boys:

Unto every father hath been enjoined the instruction of his son and daughter in the art of reading and writing and in all that hath been laid down in the Holy Tablet. He that putteth away that which is commanded unto him, the trustees are then taken from him that which is required for their instruction, if he be wealth, and if not the matter devolveth upon the House of Justice. (*Bahá'u'lláh, a synopsis and codification of the Kitab-i-Aqdas, pp.15-16*).

It is for this reason that, in this new cycle, education and training are recorded in the Book of God as obligatory and not voluntary. That is, it is enjoined upon the father and mother, as a duty, to strive with all effort to train the daughter and the son, to nurse them from the breast of knowledge and to rear them in the bosom of science and arts. Should they neglect this matter, they shall be held responsible and worthy of reproach in the presence of the stern lord.' (*Abdul-Baha World Faith*)

The first duty of the beloved of God and Maid-Servants of the merciful is this: They must strive by all possible means to educate both sexes, male and female, girls like boys; there is no difference whatsoever between them. The ignorance of both is blame worthy, and negligence in both cases is reparable. 'Are they who know and they who don't know equal?' Beware! Beware! That ye fail not in this matter.

Endeavor with heart, with life, to train your children, especially the daughters. No excuse is acceptable in this matter. (*Abdul-Baha World Faith*)

As can be observed from the above selected scriptures of the Bahá'í faith, there is emphasis on universal education for both girls and boys. According to these scriptures, the Bahá'ís are commanded to educate their children especially the girls. It is probably due to this commandment that the Bahá'í faith show keen interest in girl education.

Here in Zambia, the Bahá'í community has established Banani International Secondary School for girls. According to *The 50th Anniversary of the Bahá'í faith in Zambia Brochure*, Banani International Secondary School for girls was established in 1993 and receives female students of all nationalities and religions from grade 8 to 12.

This study will go further to find out more information about why the Bahá'í Faith is interested in the education for girls. The researcher will also further try to find out more information about the Banani International Secondary School for girls in Chibombo district.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed literature that is relevant and significant about the Bahá'í faith in the world and Zambia in particular. The literature reviewed is that which has to do with the History of the Bahá'í Faith as a religion and the methods used by the Bahá'í to propagate their faith and literature that is on the Bahá'í faith and girl education and literature on how the Bahá'í faith are contributing to the well-being of Zambians.

This study is however, an attempt to provide a written history of the Bahá'í faith in Zambia which does not exist at the moment. Apart from that, the study will enable Zambians who belong to other religions to know and understand the Bahá'í faith. At times people who belong to other religions such as Christianity harbor prejudices against Bahá'ís and this makes it difficult to cooperate with them. Therefore, this study is also an attempt to overcome this problem.

CHAPTER THREE : METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter of the dissertation dealt with the description of the methods applied in carrying out the research study. It is organized under the following headings: research methods, population, sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis.

3.1 Research Methods

According to Best and Kahn (2009 : 79) research can be divided into two broad categories: quantitative research and qualitative research. Quantitative research consists of research in which the data can be analyzed in terms of numbers while on the other hand a qualitative research mainly deals with data that is principally verbal. This particular study used the qualitative research method.

According to White (2005) in a qualitative research, data is collected by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. It can be used when collecting information about peoples' attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety of education or social issues. Such a method according to White is non-experimental. White (ibid) further explains that one characteristic of a qualitative research is that it is descriptive. This means that it focuses on process, meaning and understanding. Words and pictures rather than numbers are used to convey what a researcher has learnt about a phenomenon (White 2005 : 86). Furthermore, data in the form of participant's own words and video tapes are likely to be included to support the findings of the study. In this particular study, the researcher employed descriptive qualitative research.

To find out the background history of the Bahá'í faith, the researcher analysed different documents. These documents were found in Bahá'í institutions, which the researcher visited during the study period. Direct citations from documents and excerpts of pictures about the Bahá'í faith were included to support the findings of the study.

To find out how the Bahá'í faith is propagating their religion, the researcher used interview guides to collect data. The interview guides were used to interview members and leaders of the Bahá'í faith. The researcher also analysed a lot of documents about the Bahá'í faith and direct citations were made to support the findings. Apart from that the researcher had to participate in certain Bahá'í activities that are aimed at converting people to this religion so that he could observe how they are done.

To find out why the Bahá'ís are interested in girl-child education, the researcher used an interview guide to collect information. The interview guide was used to interview education authorities managing Banani Secondary School for Girls which was established by the Bahá'í community in Zambia.

To find out how the Bahá'í faith is contributing to the social and economic wellbeing of Zambians, the researcher used an interview guide. The interview guide was used to interview the National Co-ordinator responsible for the Inshindo Foundation.

3.2 Population

According to White, (2005 : 113), a population is defined as a collection of objects, events or individuals having some common characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying. The population can be described as all possible elements that can be included in a research. Therefore, the population can be people or TV programmes or

curricula or anything that is investigated as the focus of the research project (White, 2005:13). The population in this study was the entire Bahá'í community in Zambia.

3.2.1 Sample Size

According to white (2005), sampling means to make a selection from the sampling frame (a concrete listing of the elements in the population) in order to identify the people or issues to be included in the research. A sample is also described as a portion of the elements in a population.

This study targeted ordinary members and leaders of the three (3) selected Bahá'í communities. At least two (2) national leaders and eight (8) ordinary members were interviewed in all the selected Bahá'í communities. The respondents that were selected were those who have declared their membership to the Bahá'í faith and are conversant with the beliefs and practices of the Bahá'í faith. The total sample of the study was ten (10) respondents from all the three (3) selected sites.

3.2.2 Sampling Techniques

Kombo and Tromp (2006 : 77) define sampling techniques as the procedure a researcher uses to gather people, places or things to study. It is a process of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group. When dealing with people as was the case with this study, it can be defined as a set of respondents (people) selected from a larger population for the purpose of a survey. Samples are always sub-sets or small parts of the total number that could be studied (Kombo and Tromp, 2006 : 7).

In this study the random sampling technique was used to select eight (8) members of the Bahá'í faith from the Bahá'í communities in Zambia.

In simple random sampling each individual case in the population (theoretically) has an equal chance to be selected for the sample (White, 1995 : 118). In this study the eight respondents were randomly selected simply because they are members of the study population. The purposive sampling technique was employed to select two national leaders was. According to this technique, sampling is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher, in that a sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristic representative or typical attributes of the population (ibid : 120). In this study a purposive sampling technique was used to select two national leaders of the Bahá'í faith in Zambia with the hope that they would provide the best information to address the purpose of the research.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006 : 88), research instruments include the following: questionnaires, interview schedules, observation guides and focus group discussion.

In this study, participant observation was used to find out certain practices of the Bahá'í faith. The other important instruments that were used were interview guides. The interview guides were designed for the selected Bahá'í community members and their leaders. The guides helped the researcher to find out the views of the respondents on the Bahá'í faith.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected in a period of four months from August 2010 to December 2010. Data was collected through oral interviews using interview guides. Data was also collected through documentary analysis. The researcher collected a lot of data from documents written by Bahá'í scholars, which were available in the Bahá'í institutions that

the researcher visited. Apart from that, the researcher obtained data through participant observation. The researcher had to participate in activities aimed at converting Zambians to the Bahá'í faith such as devotional meetings and study circles to observe how they are done.

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the School of Education at the University of Zambia. Using this letter, the researcher got permission from the District Commissioner of the districts where the study was conducted. Later, with the permission from the District Commissioner, the researcher went to Bahá'í faith authorities in the selected sites to seek permission to carry out this study in their institutions. Permission was granted and the researcher carried out this study under a very conducive atmosphere.

3.5 Data Analysis

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006 : 117) data analysis refers to examining what has been collected in a survey or experiment and making deductions and inferences. It involves uncovering underlying structures, extracting important variables, detecting any anomalies and testing any underlying assumptions. It involves scrutinising the acquired information and making references.

In this particular study, data was analysed according to the set objectives. The researcher also took note of other issues of interest regarding the Bahá'í faith that were provided by the respondents arising from the interviews. Data was mainly analysed qualitatively. The qualitative analysis involved identifying specific information required in the set objectives about the Bahá'í faith provided by the respondents through interviews.

3.6 Conclusion

The chapter has provided information on the research methods, study site, population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis. Generally this chapter discussed qualitative and quantitative research methods and the differences between them have also been highlighted.

CHAPTER FOUR : PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study on the history of the Bahá'í faith in Zambia. The purpose of the presentation is to provide answers to research questions. The first research question sought to find out the history of the Bahá'í faith in Zambia. The second aimed at finding out the methods and strategies used by the Bahá'í faith to convert people to their religion in Zambia. The third research question was intended to find out why the Bahá'í faith have a particular interest in girl-child education, and the fourth research question was aimed at finding out the nature of spiritual, moral and economic contribution of the Bahá'í faith to the well-being of Zambians.

The first research question was addressed by first finding out the background of the Bahá'í faith. This was done by analysing different documents about the Bahá'í faith. The history of the Bahá'í faith in Zambia was also discovered through documentary analysis. The second research question was addressed by using interview guides to interview members and leaders of the Bahá'í faith. Data was also collected through analysing different documents about the Bahá'í faith. Apart from that, data was collected by participant observation. The researcher had to participate in Bahá'í activities such as devotion services and study circles in order to observe how they are used to convert Zambians to the Bahá'í religion. The third research question was tackled through the use of an interview guide. Data was collected by interviewing the school authorities running Banani International Secondary School for girls. The fourth research question was also addressed through the use of an interview guide. The guide was used to interview the National Co-ordinator of Inshindo Foundation, a Bahá'í organisation that runs economic programmes for the youths in Zambia. The presentation and discussion focus on the

history of the Bahá'í faith in Zambia, their methods of spreading the faith, and the interest they have in girl-child education as observed here in Zambia, and the spiritual, moral and economic contribution of the Bahá'í faith to the well-being of Zambians.

4.1 Background History of the Bahá'í Faith

According to Effendi (1976), the Bahá'í faith as a religion originated in the ancient land of Persia in the 19th century. The word 'Bahá'í' is derived from the title by which the founder of the faith is known, Bahá'u'lláh, meaning 'Glory of God'. It designates the individual follower or believer, as a Christian or Buddhist identifies with Christ or Buddha, respectively. A Bahá'í is one who accepts Bahá'u'lláh as his lord, knows his teachings and obeys his precepts, (*Bahá'í World Centre Publication*, 1943:1). According to Effendi (1976), the Bahá'í faith originally grew out of the Babi faith or sect, which was founded in 1844 by Mirza Ali Muhammad of Shiraz in Iran. He proclaimed a spiritual doctrine emphasising the forth coming appearance of a new prophet or messenger of God who would overturn old beliefs and customs and usher in a new era. Though new, these beliefs originated in Shíite Islam. Shíism according to Sayyid Hasayn Nasr (1989:39), began at the death of the Prophet Muhammad. When the prophet died, the friends and followers of Ali, the first leader of the household of the prophet believed that the caliphate and religious authority of Islam belonged to Ali. They protested against the act of choosing the caliph by consultation or elections which had been done. It was this protest and criticism which separated the followers of Ali from the majority Sunni Muslims. They later came to be known as Shíites.

Shíite Islam from which the Bahá'í faith originated believed in the forth coming return of the 12th Iman (successor of Muhammad), who would renew religion and guide the faithful.

According to Effendi (1976), Mirza Ali Mohammad who founded the Bahá'í faith or sect from which the Bahá'í faith grew from, first proclaimed his beliefs in 1844 and assumed the title of Bab which in Persian means the 'gate way'. Later, the Bab's teachings spread throughout Iran, provoking strong opposition from both the Shíite Muslims clergy and the government. The Bab was arrested and after several years of imprisonment, was executed in 1850. The main reason why the Bab was killed was that in the eyes of Orthodox Shiism he was considered to be a heretic or an imposter.

One of the earliest disciples and strongest advocate of Mirza Ali Muhammad's teachings was Mirza Hoseyn Ali Nuri, who had assumed the name of Bahá'u'lláh and took over the leadership of the Babi faith. Later Bahá'u'lláh claimed that he was the prophet and messenger of God whose coming had been predicted by the Bab.

According to Alexander (1998:14), during this period that Bahá'u'lláh took over the leadership of the Babi faith, both Christianity and Islam faced a lot of problems. There were a lot of divisions in Christianity. A lot of denominations appeared with each having their own particular version of the belief that Christ was about to return. At this very moment, a wave of expectancy swept through Islam. In Islam also, some students and theologians felt that Islamic prophecies indicated an end of the Law of the Qur'an and a beginning of a new spiritual age. According to the Bahá'ís, these events clearly indicated that Bahá'u'lláh was the prophet who had come to carry on the works started by earlier prophets such as Jesus and Muhammad.

4.1.1 Bahá'u'lláh, Founder of the Bahá'í Faith

According to *The Bahá'í International Community Publication* (2005 : 20), Bahá'u'lláh whose name means 'The Glory of God' in Arabic was born on 12 November 1817 in Tehran, Iran. He was the son of a wealthy government Minister, Mirza Buzurg-i-Nuri. His given name was Hoseyn-Ali and his family could trace his ancestry back to the great dynasties of Iran's imperial past. Bahá'u'lláh led a princely life as a young man, receiving an education that focused largely on horsemanship, swordsmanship, calligraphy, and classic poetry (*Bahá'í World Publication*, 2005 : 20).

In October 1835, when he was eighteen years old, Bahá'u'lláh married Asiyih Khanun, the daughter of another nobleman. They had three children: a son, Abdul-Baha, born in 1844; a daughter, Bahiyyih, born in 1846; and another son, Mihdi, born in 1848. Bahá'u'lláh declined the ministerial position offered to him in government and chose instead to devote his energies to a range of philanthropies which, by the early 1840s earned him wide spread renown as 'father of the poor'. According to *The Bahá'í International Publication* (2005), the privileges that Bahá'u'lláh had swiftly eroded after 1844 when he became one of the leading advocates of the Babí religion. After the execution of the Bab in 1850, Bahá'u'lláh was arrested and taken in chains and on foot, to Tehran. Influential members of the court and the clergy demanded a death sentence. Bahá'u'lláh was however protected by his personal reputation and the social position of his family, as well as by protests from Western embassies. In 1852, Bahá'u'lláh was cast into the notorious 'Black pit', the Siyah-chal. Authorities thought this would result in his death. Instead, the dungeon became the birth place for a new religious revelation. According to *The Bahá'í International Publication* (2005), Bahá'u'lláh spent four months in the pit, during which time he contemplated the full extent of his mission. This

is what he said, *“I was but a man like others, asleep upon my couch, when lo, the breezes of the All-Glorious were wafted over me, and taught me the knowledge of all that hath been”*. He later wrote, *“This thing is not from me, but from one who is Almighty and All-knowing. And he bade me lift up my voice between earth and heaven.”*

The Bahá'í World Faith (1943) reports that after receiving this revelation, Bahá'u'lláh wrote a letter to the Shah of Persia the following year informing him that he had been transformed by the holy spirit and that now he was different from all other human beings. He claimed that God had revealed himself to him and that he was full of knowledge from God. From that time Bahá'ullah committed his whole life to the service of God.

The Ruhi Institute (1990:135) reports that during the years that Bahá'u'lláh walked among men, his extraordinary powers spread throughout the world, causing a profound change in the reality of all created things.

Like other prophets, Bahá'u'lláh is described as having possessed very unique characteristics. According to Sears (2002), there were a lot of similarities between Bahá'u'lláh and Jesus Christ. Some of the similarities outlined by Sears are as follows:

- (1) They were both youthful when they received the revelation.
- (2) They were both known for their meekness and loving kindness.
- (3) Both of them boldly challenged the time honoured conventional laws and rites of the religions into which they had been born.
- (4) They both courageously condemned the rampant corruption which they saw in both religious and secular life.
- (5) The purity of their own lives shamed the people among whom they taught.

(6) Their chief enemies were among the religious leaders of the land. These officials were the instigators of the outrages they were made to suffer.

(7) Each of them addressed their disciples, charging them to carry their messages to the ends of the earth.

The Bahá'í believe that Bahá'u'lláh is the most recent prophet after Jesus and Muhammad. They claim that Bahá'u'lláh revealed teachings about the emergence of a new world civilization built on the foundation of world peace. They further say that Bahá'u'lláh is the messenger of God who has brought new, divinely inspired teachings suitable for this age. According to Sears, (2002) the prime purpose of his words is the unity of mankind. However, the Bahá'í also believe in Jesus Christ. Sears (2002) confirms that the belief of the Bahá'í in Jesus is very firm and unshakable. Although the Bahá'í associate themselves with Christianity, Christians do not recognise them and Bahá'u'lláh is not mentioned in any of their scriptures.

According to *The Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa* (1990), Bahá'u'lláh accepted forty years of suffering in exile and imprisonment. He was poisoned by the enemies of the faith three times. His hand was shaking to the end of his life in 1892 due to these poisons. This is the brief history of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í faith.

4.1.2 The Bahá'í Scriptures

The study revealed that the Bahá'í have a large quantity of authentic writings of all the central figures of their faith. However, only those writings of the Bab and Bahá'u'lláh are regarded as Holy Scriptures. According to *The Bahá'í International Publication* (2005), the main teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are found in the following books:

(a) *Kitab-i-Aqdas (The Most Holy Book)*

This is the Book of Laws. According to *The Bahá'í World Centre* (1992) explains that this book contains the Law of God for the Bahá'í Faith and the entire human family. These Laws were revealed to Bahá'u'lláh during the darkest days, of his imprisonment in Acre.

According to *The Bahá'í World Centre* (ibid), the *Kitab-i-Aqdas* contains laws that Govern 3 areas which are as follows: The individual relationship with God, physical and spiritual matters which benefit the individual directly, and relations among individuals and between the individual and society. These laws can be grouped according to the following headings

- (i) Prayer and Fasting.
- (ii) Laws of personal status governing marriage.
- (iii) Divorce and interference.
- (iv) Ordinances and prohibitions.
- (v) Exhortations and the abrogation of specific laws and ordinances of previous dispensations (*The Kitab-i-Aqdas*, 2002:4). According to *Kitab-i-Aqdas* the laws in this book can not be changed or replaced not even by the highest institution, the Universal House of Justice.

(b) *The Hidden Word*

This is a small book containing words that Bahá'u'lláh wrote on his first exile. According to Effendi (1976), in this book Bahá'u'lláh restated the essential Spiritual truth which has been taught by the founders of the entire world religions. Effendi describes the words in this small book as the voice of God speaking directly to the heart of man.

(c) The Kitab-i-Iqan (The Book of Certitude)

According to Effendi (1976:14) this book is one of the major keys to understanding the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. The great theme of this book is that in every age God reveals His will and purpose for human destiny through a chosen individual or manifestation. Bahá'u'lláh wrote this book when he was banished to Adrianople. It is while there that he publicly proclaimed his message, addressing collectively, the temporal and spiritual rulers of the earth. According to Effendi (ibid) he addressed these letters to the Sultan of Turkey, the Shah of Persia, and Napoleon III, Emperor of France. Among the themes in these letters was a call to the rulers “to be just and vigilant, to compose their differences and reduce their armaments. Later he addressed such letters to Queen Victoria, Alexander II of Russia, Pope Pius IX, William I, the Emperor of Germany, and Francis Joseph, the Emperor of Austria.

(d) The Seven Valleys

This book is in poetic language. This mystical work traces the stages of the soul's journey to union with its Creator.

(e) Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

According to Effendi (1976 : XV), the Gleanings is a book for meditative study. It is not a book of history and facts, but of love and spiritual power. According to Effendi this book can be divided into 5 parts as follows: part one, pages 1- 46. This part of the gleanings says that in this age the past religions will bear fruit as men and women the world over will unite in a common faith; part two, pages 46-136, concerns the manifestation of God and the significance of the manifestation in representing the attributes of God. Part three, pages 136-200, deals with basic questions concerning the soul and its immortality, party four, pages 200-259, concerns spiritual aspects of world

order and the most great peace; part five, pages 259-346, deals with the duties of the individual and the spiritual meaning of life.

(f) The Summons of the Lord of Host: Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh

The Bahá'í World Centre (2002:1) records that Bahá'u'lláh wrote this book upon his arrival in Adrianople. The message of this book was addressed to kings and rulers of the world during this brief but turbulent period of the Bahá'í Faith history. In this book Bahá'u'lláh summoned the monarchs of the East and the West collectively to recognise the Day of God and to acknowledge the one promised in the scriptures of the religions. Some of the rulers addressed included Pop Pius IX, Napoleon III, Czar Alexander II, Queen Victoria and Nasirid-Din Shah.

According to the *Bahá'í World Centre* in this book, Bahá'u'lláh talks about the obligation of these rulers in whose hands God had entrusted civil authority to institute the reign of justice. He also appeals to them to resolve conflicts among nations. Bahá'u'lláh further appealed to these rulers to end the excessive expenditures that were impoverishing their subjects.

As already stated Bahá'u'lláh wrote volumes and volumes of books. These discussed above are just a few among many books written by him. Alexander (2007) confirmed that in the same way as Christians consider the Bible as a Holy Book, Bahá'ís consider the writings of the Bab and Bahá'u'lláh as their Bible or Holy Writings. Alexander further observed that the Bible and the Bahá'í writings are the same. He argues that the Bible is not one book but a collection of Books written at different times. It is the same with the Bahá'í writings except that with the Bahá'í writings, each book stands alone. The only difference that Alexander observed was that Jesus, the founder of the Christian faith,

never wrote anything himself. Most of his teachings were by word of mouth. According to Alexander (ibid) it took 40 years after the crucifixion of Jesus before Paul wrote the Epistles, which were the first written words on the gospels. On the other hand, the writings of Bahá'u'lláh were written by Bahá'u'lláh himself. However, the Bahá'í respect and accept the Bible as a Holy Book. Abdul-Baha, the son of Bahá'u'lláh who took over the leadership of the Faith after Bahá'u'lláh's death had this to say about the Bible:

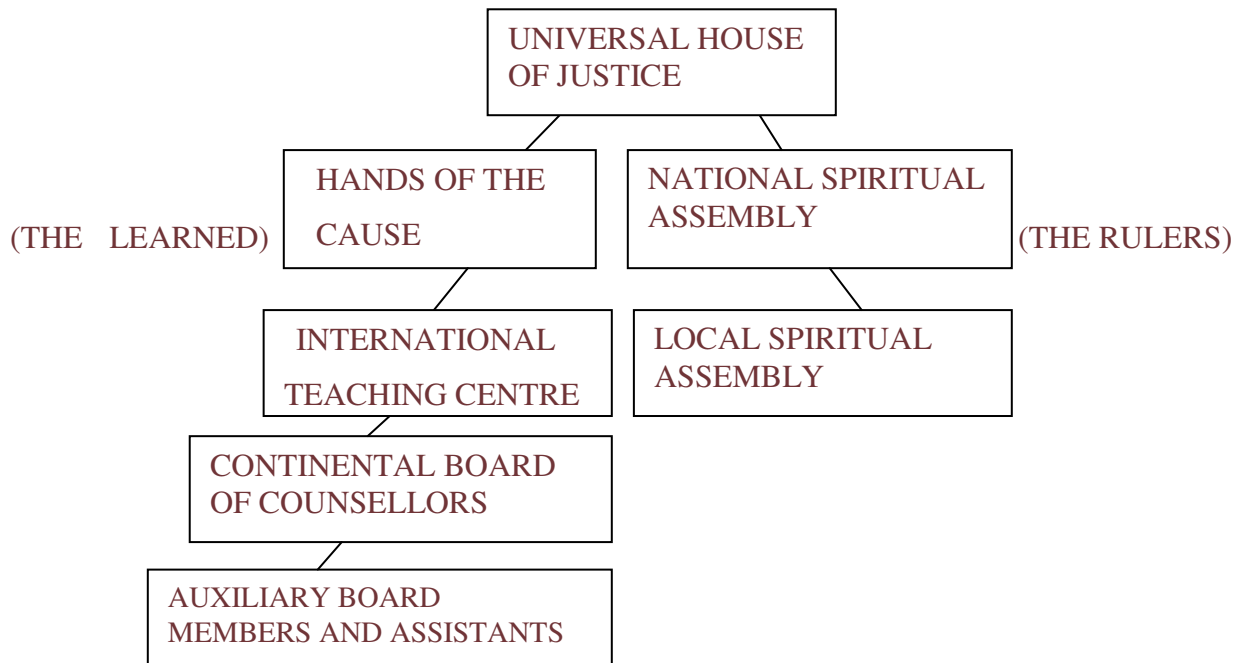
This book is the Holy Book of God, of celestial's inspiration. It is the Bible of Salvation, the Noble Gospel. It is Mystery of the Kingdom and its light. It is Divine Bounty, the sign of the guidance of God

As already stated the Bahá'í writings praise the Bible. The Bahá'í refer to it in their devotion services.

4.1.3 Leadership

The Bahá'í World Centre (1993:45) records that professional leadership such as priests is no longer necessary in religious affairs at the moment because most of the people in the world are now literate and they can make a proper study of their religion on their own. Due to this reason, in the Bahá'í faith professional priesthood was abolished and this is one of the distinctions of this religion. Apart from that, the Bahá'í feel it is dangerous to have professional priests because many unfaithful people may be attracted to this profession for no other reason than that of wanting to live an easy life or to have a good income. *The Bahá'í World Centre* (1993) argue that such people have always misled others to the pretext of priesthood, and have committed many crimes in the name of religion so as to serve their own selfish interests. Bahá'u'lláh abolished the institution of priesthood so that no one can ever hope to misuse religion in order to serve his own

selfish and worldly desires. To manage the affairs of the faith, Bahá'u'lláh established Administrative Institutions. According to *The Bahá'í Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa* (1990 : 4), the Bahá'í administration is unique. It is different from all other administrative systems because it was given to them by God. The administrative structure of the institutions of the faith is as follows: The Universal House of Justice, The Hands of the Cause of God, The International Teaching Centre, The Continental Boards of Counsellors, The National Spiritual Assembly, The Local Spiritual Assembly, The Auxiliary Board and the Assistants (*Bahá'í Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa.*, 1990 : 8). The administrative institutions are in two (2) categories, the rulers and the learned. The rulers are those that get into positions through elections while the learned are those appointed and mainly do administrative work of propagating the faith. When presented in a diagram form the structure looks as follows:



Source: Field work derived.

All these institutions work together in the Bahá'í administrative structure.

The functions of the various institutions are as follows:

(i) *The Rulers*

These are elective institutions, they are elected after a specific period as indicated in the diagram and they are, the Universal House of Justice, National Spiritual Assemblies and Local Spiritual Assemblies. Their functions are as follows:

a) Universal House of Justice

The Universal House of Justice is the head of the Bahá'í administrative structure. According to *The Continental Board of Counsellors* (1990 : 17), The Universal House of Justice is guided and protected by God. Its decisions are infallible, which means they are free from any error. According to *The Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa*, (ibid) this principle was guaranteed and promised to the Bahá'í faith by Bahá'u'lláh.

The Universal House of Justice is composed of nine individuals. According to the publication of *The Bahá'í International Community* (2005 : 49), the Universal House of Justice members are elected every five years by the combined membership of all the world's National Spiritual Assemblies. In these elections, there are no nominations and campaigning is forbidden. The voters are expected to consider only those individuals of recognised ability and have a spiritual capacity to perform. The nine people who receive the most votes are elected.

According to *The Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa* (1990 : 17) one of the most important responsibilities of the Universal House of Justice is to make laws. However, the House of Justice cannot change any of the laws given by Bahá'u'lláh, but it can make new laws to cover situations Bahá'u'lláh did not mention. At the same time the Universal House of Justice has power to repeal the laws it has made depending on the

changes taking place in the world but they have no power to change laws that are part of the divine text.

Other duties of the Universal House of Justice as stipulated by *The Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa* (1990) are as follows:

- (i) To direct and guide the progress of the faith throughout the world.
- (ii) To direct and advise National Spiritual Assemblies.
- (iii) To answer difficult questions.

In summary, the Universal House of Justice co-ordinates all the affairs of the faith, protects, guides, encourages and promotes unity throughout the Bahá'í faith in the world (*Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa*, 1990 : 17).

(b) The National Spiritual Assembly

According to *The Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa* (1990), the National Spiritual Assembly is in charge of all the affairs affecting the faith in a country or region. *The publication of The Bahá'í International Community* (2005 : 48) explains that the National Spiritual Assembly is elected annually, following the same basic electoral procedures. No nominations are permitted, campaigning is forbidden, secret ballots are used, moral character and practical ability is the criterion used to elect these leaders. The men and women who receive the most votes are elected. The National Spiritual Assembly performs the following duties:

- (i) It is the highest body in a country to which all Bahá'ís of that country turn to for guidance. All of them must obey its decisions.
- (ii) it guides the teaching work and sets goals for the community.
- (iii) it supervise the publication and distribution of Bahá'í faith literature.

- (iv) It takes care of the house of worship if there is one in that country.
- (v) It handles national funds for the Faith.
- (vi) It encourages the believers to deepen, individually or in groups, and arranges for institutes to be held.
- (vii) It settles disagreements or misunderstandings between Bahá'í communities and promotes unity in every possible way.

This is according to *The Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa* (1990).

(c) Local Spiritual Assembly

According to *The Publication of the Bahá'í International Community* (2005), the Local Spiritual Assembly is the basic unit of the Bahá'í faith. Like the National Spiritual Assembly, this assembly is also elected each year in every community where there are nine or more adult Bahá'í. According to *The Publication of the Bahá'í International Community* (ibid), the Local Spiritual Assembly performs many of the functions that were traditionally associated with clergy men. *The Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa* (ibid) describes the Local Spiritual Assembly as a loving father for Bahá'ís in a community and all must turn to it for guidance and protection. According to *The Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa* (ibid), the Local Spiritual Assembly performs the following duties:

- (i) It is responsible for the growth of the faith in its area and for the spiritual health of its community.
- (ii) It must develop teaching plans to carry the message of Bahá'u'lláh to every group in the community and to encourage the believers to become active teachers.
- (iii) It must help the friends to deepen their faith.
- (iv) It should arrange for someone to teach the faith to the children of the Bahá'í.

- (v) It must promote unity among the believers by planning gatherings such as feasts and Holy day celebrations.
- (vi) It should encourage the youth in the community to learn more about the faith and have their own youth activities.
- (vii) It should constantly keep in touch with the National Spiritual Assembly and keep the friends informed of all the important Bahá'í activities.
- (viii) It witness Bahá'í weddings.
- (ix) It establishes the local fund.
- (x) It supervise Bahá'í funerals.
- (xi) It settles differences among the believers.

(ii) *The Learned*

According to *The Publication of the Bahá'í International Community* (2005) The Institution of the learned is composed of appointed individuals who complement the faith's elected institutions at all levels. These include the Hands of the Cause of God, the International Teaching Centre and the Continental Board of Counsellors. They perform the following functions:

(a) Hands of the Cause of God

According to *The Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa* (1990), the work of the Hands of the Cause of God was to protect the faith and to encourage, teach and inspire the believers. They had no decision-making power and could not serve on Assemblies. However, they were often asked to consult with the Universal House of Justice and National Spiritual Assemblies, and this advice was greatly valued. According to *The publication of the Bahá'í International Community* (2005 : 47) so far fifty individuals have served as Hands of the Cause of God in the history of the Bahá'í faith. According

to this publication, all of them were appointed by Bahá'u'lláh, Abdu'i-Baha or Shogi Effendi. By 2004, there was only one serving Hand of the Cause, by the name of Ali-Muhammad Vargas, who was still serving the Faith in Haifa. In 1968, the Faith resolved that they begin to assign individuals as counsellors, so as to continue to do the work that was being done by the Hands of the Cause of God.

(b) The International Teaching Centre

According to *The Publication of the Bahá'í International Community* (ibid), the International Teaching Centre is based at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel. Its main work is to direct the work of the Continental Boards of Counsellors. It is composed of nine counsellors plus the remaining Hand of the Cause. This body is mainly concerned with the extension of the teaching work into receptive and needy areas and provides advice to the Universal House of Justice and the Continental Boards of Counsellors on the same. They also make recommendations on what should be done for the faith to progress.

(c) The Continental Boards of Counsellors

According to *The Publication of the Bahá'í International Community* (2005), the Continental Boards of Counsellors are appointed by the Universal House of Justice for a five year term. Those assigned to Continental Boards serve in the five religious worlds: Africa, America, Asia, Australasia and Europe. Those appointed to these Boards are experienced men and women who seek to inspire and enlighten Bahá'ís in the application of Baha'u'llah's teachings in their every day lives, working to help them realise their full potential. They also seek to nurture and advise communities and institutions in their growth and development, working to ensure their proper functioning and they seek to

promote the acquisition of knowledge and capacity at all levels so as to empower the faith's institutions to become guiding lights for the society at large (*Publication of the Bahá'í International Community*, 2005 : 47). Other duties of the Continental Board of Counsellors are as follows:

- (i) To protect and propagate the cause of God.
- (ii) To guide the Auxiliary Board members.
- (iii) To consult and work in collaboration with National Spiritual Assemblies.
- (iv) To provide information about the activities and conditions of the faith to the International Teaching Centre and the Universal House of Justice.

(d) The Auxiliary Board and their Assistants

According to *The Publication of the International Bahá'í Community* (2005), the Auxiliary Board members and their assistants work closely with the Local Spiritual Assemblies to offer insight advice, and encouragement. They try to create an atmosphere of learning and disciplined behaviour. According to this publication, the Auxiliary Board members also seek to build and maintain unity of thought and action in an environment free of excessive criticism, of back biting, of conflict which at the same time welcomes the freedom of expression on the part of every believer. The Auxiliary Board members are appointed by continental boards. By 2005, there were 990 Auxiliary Board members and each member was assigned to cover a specific region within the continental board's area of coverage. Auxiliary Board members themselves appoint individuals to serve as their assistants.

As noted, the Bahá'í Administrative Institutions are not very different from other religions. In most of the religions, there are administrative structures from the local community up to the international level. The only difference is that in other religions

such as Christianity, at each level or institution there is a professional priest or clergyman who is in charge of that institution. All the other members look to him for guidance in their spiritual life. On the other hand, in the Bahá'í administrative institutions, there are no professional priests. The elected committees of laymen and women run the affairs of each institution. This is done through consultation. The Bahá'í administration believes in group decision-making. According to *The Publication of the Bahá'í International Community* (2005), the principles of consultation were laid down in Bahá'u'lláh's writings. These principles are not only used by the faith's own institutions, but in Bahá'í owned businesses, in Bahá'í operated schools and in day-to-day decision-making in Bahá'í families.

4.1.4 Places of Worship of the Bahá'í Faith

The publication of the Bahá'í International Community (2005) reports that the houses of worship that have been constructed stand as beacons calling the world to a new mode of religious worship and life. According to this publication, each temple has its own distinctive design and yet conforms to a set of architectural requirements that give a unifying theme. All Bahá'í houses of worship must have nine sides and a central dome. *The publication of the Bahá'í International Community* (2005 : 41) records that so far, eight big houses of worship have been built at least one on each continent. The first house of worship was built in Russia in the city of Ashkhabad in central Asia, completed around 1908. The Ashkhabad House of worship served the Bahá'í community of that region until 1938, when the site was taken over by the Soviet government. The building was demolished in 1962 after being damaged by an earth quake (*Bahá'í International Community Publication*, 2005 : 41).

The first Bahá'í house of worship in the West was completed in 1953, in Wilmette, Illinois, USA on the shores of Lake Michigan, just north of Chicago. Its filigreed dome and extraordinary ornamentation combine features drawn from the architectural styles of both East and West, has attracted millions of visitors over the years. Other Bahá'í houses of worship have also been built in Kampala, Uganda, near Sydney Australia, outside Frankfurt Germany, overlooking Panama City, and in Apia Samoa. The most recent big house of worship was completed in 1986 in New Delhi, India. Since it was built, it has won numerous architectural awards and has been featured in hundreds of newspapers and magazine articles (*Bahá'í International publication*, 2005 : 41).

However, only one big house of worship has been constructed here in Zambia. It is in Lusaka, along Alick Nkata Road, near Mass Media Complex. It is one of those shown in Fig. 1. The house of worship in Lusaka was recently built. It was officially opened on 27th August, 2011. The house of worship in Lusaka is not as big and attractive as the ones described above. However, by Zambian standards, the building has its own distinctive design. It is far better than other houses of worship belonging to other religions. The Bahá'ís of Lusaka are still working hard to make it meet the required standards. Other sites have been identified in North Western and Southern Provinces.

According to *The Bahá'í International Community Publication* (2005), all Bahá'í houses of worship are open to people of every religion. There are no sermons, rituals or clergy. According to this publication, there are 120 sites around the world which have been set aside for future houses of worship.

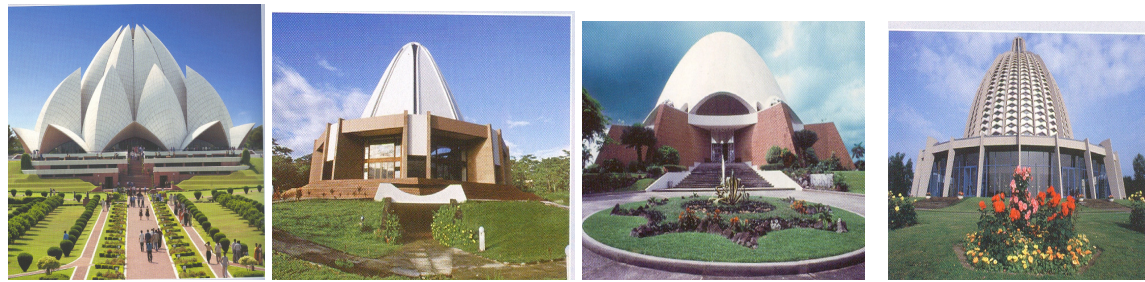
Figure 1: Bahá'í Houses of Worship



Lusaka, Zambia, Alick NKata Road

Wilmette, Illinois, USA

Kampala, Uganda



New Delhi, India

Apia, Samoa

Panama City, Panama

Frankfurt, Germany

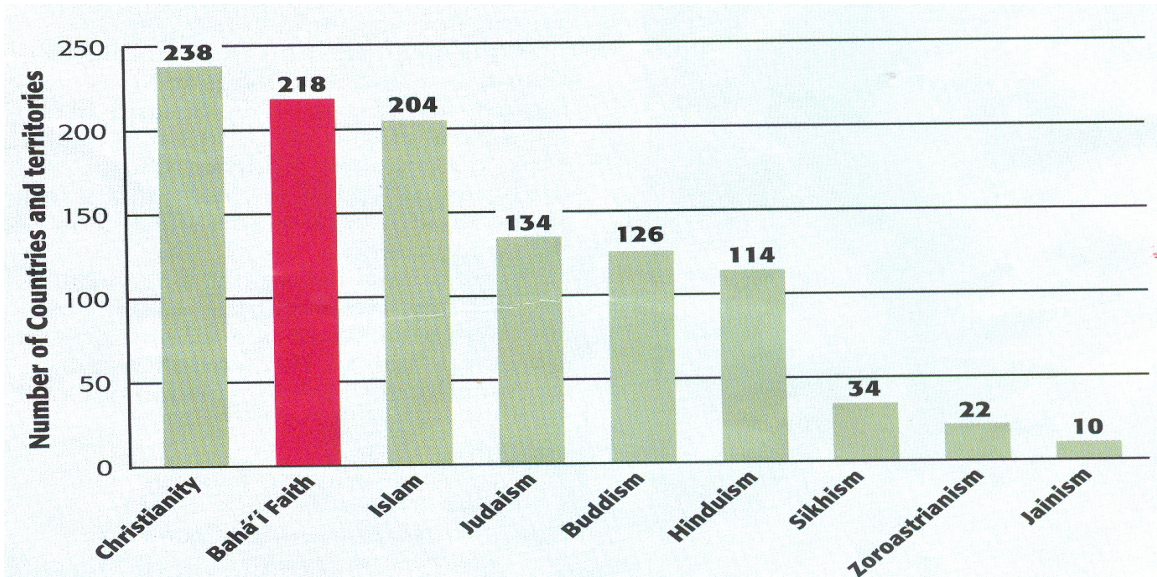
Source: The Bahá'í International Community (2005:40)

4.1.5 The Universality of the Bahá'í Faith

The Bahá'í World Publication (2000-2001) reports that the Bahá'í faith has grown and spread throughout the world. According to the publication, the members of the Bahá'í faith all over the world are now reported to be more than five million. This number represents two thousand one hundred and thirteen (2,113) ethnic and tribal groups living in some one hundred and twenty-seven thousand (127,000) localities in 190 independent countries and forty-six dependent territories. *The Bahá'í World Publication* (ibid) claims that its membership cuts across all boundaries of class and race. The Bahá'ís claim that what was once regarded by some as a small sect as reported by the *Britannica Book of the Year 1992*, is now the second most widely spread independent religion in the world after Christianity.

The *Bahá'í International Community* (2005) records the following statistics of the Bahá'í faith worldwide:

Figure 2: Geographical Spread of the World's Independent Religions



Source: Britannica Book of the Year (2003).

Figure 2 shows the geographic spread of the world's independent religions. According to this graph, apart from Christianity the Bahá'í have established themselves in more countries and territories in the world than any other independent religion. According to the information given in Figure 2, by 2003 the Bahá'í faith had established themselves in 218 sovereign countries and independent territories. Islam was at 204, Hinduism at 114 and Jainism was the least at only ten. Christianity recorded the highest figure at 238. Information in Figure 2 is evidence that the Bahá'í faith has spread fast since it is only 200 years old. .

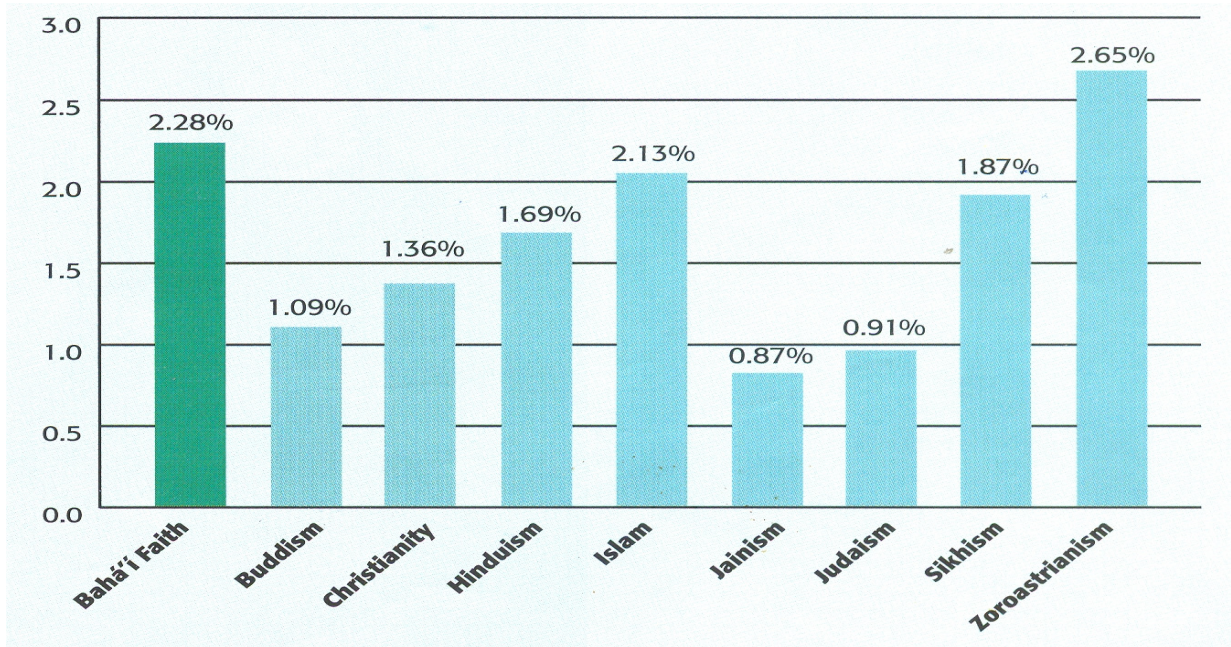
Figure 3: Summary of some statistics of the Bahá'í World Community

	World Total	Africa	Americas	Asia	Austral- asia	Europe
National Spiritual Assemblies	183	46	43	40	17	37
Local Spiritual Assemblies*	9,631	3,067	2,741	2,186	777	860
Countries where the Faith is established:						
independent countries	191	53	35	45	14	44
dependent territories or overseas departments	47	6	17	3	13	8
Localities where Bahá'ís reside*	101,969	26,746	22,702	41,057	4,343	7,121
Continental Counsellors	81	19	19	19	11	13
Auxiliary Board members	990	234	234	288	108	126
Indigenous tribes, races, and ethnic groups	2,112	1,250	340	250	250	22
Languages into which Bahá'í literature is translated	802	266	172	174	110	80
Publishing Trusts	33	7	3	9	2	12

Source: Department of Statistics, Bahá'í World Centre for the Year 2004

Figure 3 is a summary of some statistics of the Bahá'í World Community. This is as obtained by the Department of Statistics at the Bahá'í World Centre for the year 2004. The figure summary shows the world totals of National Spiritual Assemblies, Local Spiritual Assemblies, countries where the faith is established, localities where Bahá'ís reside, continental counsellors, auxiliary board members, indigenous tribes, races and ethnic groups, languages into which Bahá'í literature is translated and publishing trusts. A careful study of the information given in this figure shows that the Bahá'í faith has expanded. For example, there were 183 National Spiritual Assemblies by 2004 compared to about less than twenty in 1963. This shows a very big progress for the faith.

Figure 4.: Annual Rate of Growth, 1990 – 2000 of the World’s Independent Religions



Source: World Christian Encyclopedia 2nd Edition, 2001

Figure 4 shows the annual rate of growth, from 1990 to 2000 of the World Independent Religions. A careful study of the figures in Figure 4 show that Zoroastrianism recorded the highest growth rate at 2.65%, seconded by the Bahá'í faith at 2.28%, the third is Islam at 2.13%, followed by Sikhism 1.87%, Hinduism at 1.69%, Christianity at 1.36%, Buddhism at 1.09%, Judaism 0.91% and Jainism was the least at 0.87%. This record shows that the Bahá'í faith annual growth rate is very good compared to other independent world religions as it was seconded only to Zoroastrianism. The information presented on figures 3 and 4 shows that the Bahá'í faith is growing very fast world wide.

4.2 The History of the Bahá'í Faith in Zambia

According to Johnson and Johnson (2003 : 114), the Bahá'í faith was introduced in Northern Rhodesia by a British pioneer called Eric Manton. Mr. Eric Manton, a widower who arrived in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) accompanied by his twelve year old son

Terry on 7 February 1952. At that time, Manton was already a seasoned experienced teacher and administrator of the Bahá'í Faith. According to Johnson and Johnson (2003), Eric Manton first stopped in Lusaka for a short time where he obtained a government job in his field of work as an electrical engineer. Later he was posted to Livingstone. He did not stay long in Livingstone; as he was again posted to Ndola and later Kitwe. It was not long after his arrival in Kitwe that Mr. Eric Manton became known for his love of people and his ideas of peace. His closest Zambian companion was Mr. Mwitumwa, a Lozi, who worked for him in his house. On Mr. Manton's first leave, Christopher Mwitumwa accompanied him to Nyasaland (Malawi). There, they met other Bahá'ís and on their return to Zambia in late 1954, Mr. Mwitumwa declared his belief in Bahá'u'lláh, thus becoming the first Zambian to accept the Bahá'í faith (*50th Anniversary of the Bahá'í faith in Zambia*, 2002:5).

The second Zambian to accept the Bahá'í faith was Sandikonda Sani, a friend of Christopher Mwitumwa. He was Ngoni by tribe. Sandikonda had a reasonable knowledge of English and helped Manton understand the contents of a Bahá'í pamphlet sent to him, which had been translated from English into Nyanja (Johnson and Johnson, 2003). In March 1955, the small group of Bahá'ís in Zambia received the first declarations from people of foreign origin. These were Staurt Davidson and Jessie Frankson, both became Bahá'ís on the same day in October 1955.

In October 1956, Eric Manton got married to Jessie Frankson and soon after their marriage, they settled in Luanshya in the Fisenge area. Their family continued to offer services towards the growth of the Bahá'í faith (Johnson and Johnson, 2003 : 131). With additional Bahá'ís from other countries moving to Zambia, the faith slowly became

established. This led to the formation of the first Bahá'í Local Spiritual Assembly in 1956 at Fisenge. After the formation of the Fisenge Local Spiritual Assembly, Manton and Jessie started deepening classes using the new deepening booklets on the principles, the history and the administration of the faith received from Kampala, Uganda. The couple (the Mantons) was also visiting Kitwe, Ndola and Luanshya township three times every week. Later, Local Spiritual Assemblies were formed in Kitwe and Luanshya.

Those who got converted to the Bahá'í faith at Fisenge included the following: Simon Chanda, who enrolled as a Bahá'í through the Hadden family on 20 September 1956 and served in the Spiritual Assembly of Fisenge during the years 1957 to 1959; Belesi Chimbeta, who was a member of the Spiritual Assembly of Fisenge from 1958-1959; others were Richard Changwalulu, who became a Bahá'í on 20 September 1956, Mary Dorothy Civunda, Langford Kabalinde declared on 20 September 1956, Stanley Maybo Kabanda declared in 1956, Saya Kandeka declared in 1958, Joseph Mwaka who served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Fisenge in 1958-9, and Liseli Mpundu who served as a member of the first Spiritual Assembly of Fisenge in 1957. According to Johnson and Johnson (ibid : 127), these were among the most influential people that accepted and got converted to the Bahá'í faith at Fisenge.

From the Copperbelt Province, the Bahai'a faith spread to the North-Western Province. The Bahai'a faith got to the North-Western Province through Mary Dorothy Civunda of Fisenge who decided on 25th August 1962 to visit her home district of Mwinilunga on 25h August, 1962 and consulted Manton and Jessie Manton about teaching there. The following day, Mary Dorothy Civunda, Mrs Saya Chilesbye and the Mantons travelled to Miss. Civunda's village, Chibwakala in Mwinilunga. On 1 September 1962, with the

permission of the chief, a meeting was held in the village with forty-five adults and many children attending. According to Johnson and Johnson (2003), the local people there showed a lot of interest. A lot of questions were asked. A short devotion was held and seven people declared to join the Bahá'í faith.

Later, the Mantons reported to the Area Teaching Committee and a plea for help was sent to the National Teaching Centre in South Africa. At that very time, Jessie Manton collected Doris Ballard from Chingola and they drove to Mwinilunga to help. When they returned to Chingola a week later they found Florence Marumo at Doris's house. She had been sent by the National Teaching Committee from Johannesburg to come and re-enforce the Teaching Committee. According to Johnson and Johnson (ibid), this was the beginning of the mass conversion campaign in Mwinilunga. The campaign in this district was started by two ladies from Fisenge, Mary Dorothy Civunda and Saya Chilesheye.

Forty years later, Dorothy Civunda was the caretaker of the Bahá'í centre in Fisenge and was present during the 50 Anniversary celebrations in Lusaka on 21 June 2002. She has since passed away.

From this point onwards, the Bahá'í faith began to spread rapidly attracting people from all walks of life. This progress came about due to the efforts of newly declared Bahá'ís, the vigilance of the pioneers as well as visits from numerous Bahá'ís from outside Zambia (*50th Anniversary of the Bahá'í Faith in Zambia*, 2003 : 6).

In 1967 elections of the first National Spiritual Assembly in Zambia were conducted and Eric Manton was elected as Chairman. He served as Chairman for seven (7) consecutive years with his wife Jessie as Treasurer.

4.2.1 Visits of Hands of the Cause of God to Zambia

The Hands of the Cause of God were high ranking officers of the Bahá'í faith. According to *The Publication of the Bahá'í International Community* (2005), the title of the Hands of the Cause of God has been given to some fifty individuals in the history of the faith, all were appointed by Bahá'u'lláh, Abdul-Baba or Shoghi Effendi. They can be compared to Christian Missionaries. However, the Hands of the Cause of God had no legislative, executive or judicial authority and were entirely free from priestly functions or the right to make authoritative interpretations (*The Universal House of Justice*, 2001 : 6). The Hands of the Cause of God were given two main duties: (a) Propagation of the faith and (b) Protection of the faith.

The Hands of the Cause of God had a great responsibility to guide the Bahá'í world and protect it from disunity. Apart from that, they were highly learned and mature in issues to do with the faith. Wherever they went, they greatly inspired their fellow believers and encouraged many people to join the Bahá'í faith. A number of Hands of the Cause of God visited Zambia to help establish the faith. Prominent ones include the following:

(i) *Ruhiyyih Khanum*

Among the several Hands of the Cause of God who visited Zambia, Ruhiiyyih Khánum inspired a lot of Bahá'ís in Zambia. She visited Zambia from 1 February to 10 March 1971. It was the 22nd African country she was visiting on her tour of Africa called, 'The Great African Safari'. During this visit, she proclaimed the faith on radio and television and gained extensive newspaper coverage on all the events that took place (*The 50th Anniversary Bulletin of the Bahá'í faith in Zambia*, 2002). According to the *50th Anniversary Publication of the Bahá'í faith in Zambia* (ibid), it was reported that

Ruhiyyih Khánum in an unforgettable interview with the President of the Republic of Zambia, then Dr Kenneth Kaunda, spoke freely about many principles of the faith including obedience to Government. Dr Kaunda received Ruhiyyih Khánum and her two companions, Mr. Makwakwa, chairman of the Local Assembly of Lusaka and Mrs. Nakhjavani, her companion during the safari around Africa, in his private office at State House and expressed his joy in meeting them.

In the capital city Lusaka, Ruhiyyih Khánum met with the National Spiritual Assembly and the believers of the Bahá'í faith. She also addressed more than four hundred (400) people at Evelyn Hone College on the subject entitled, 'The Spiritual Destiny of Africa' (*The 50th Anniversary Bulletin of the Bahá'í Faith in Zambia*, 2002).

Ruhiyyih Khánum also visited Mwinilunga and Ikelenge, where she met with Chief Ikelenge, a prominent chief in that area who was a good friend of the Bahá'í faith. In this village, over a hundred people gathered to hear Ruhiyyih Khánum speak about: 'The Importance of Women in Society' (Ibid).

In Kitwe, before she became ill with flu, she had several radio interviews and press interviews, which resulted in a long and favourable publication on the faith in the press. Due to her ill health, she was unable to visit Mukuni village in Livingstone, where an active Bahá'í group was anxiously waiting for her. However, after leaving Zambia and after recovering, she came back and visited the Mukuni village. The Bahá'í local community of this area was overjoyed with her visit and presented her with wooden carvings, which they had made especially for this occasion (*50th Anniversary of the Bahá'í Faith in Zambia Publication*, 2002 : 7)

(ii) John Robarts

John Robarts visited Zambia in January 1965. According to *The 50th Anniversary Publication*, he visited Zambia at the time when a Teachers Training Programme was held in Choma, arranged by the Bahá'í Regional Teaching and Deepening Committee of the Southern Province of Zambia. Twenty-six believers were present and this gathering which was blessed with the presence of the Hand of the Cause of God, Mr John A. Robarts and his wife. The courses that were covered were based on the book, "About Being a Bahá'í". Hand of the Cause of God, John Robarts gave an inspiring talk about the Holy Land and the House of Justice, which had only recently been formed, (*50th Anniversary of the Bahá'í Faith in Zambia Publication*, 2002)

(iii) Dr. Muhajir

Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Muhajir visited Zambia on the 28th of June 1975. He visited Ndola and Lusaka cities. In the two cities the Bahá'í Committees and the National Spiritual Assembly enthusiastically gathered to receive his spiritual enlightening talks. Dr. Muhajir again visited Zambia from the 24th to the 29th of December, 1977. In this tour he visited Lusaka, Machipisa, Magoye, Bulanda and Ndola. Many public meetings, proclamation events and interviews were arranged for him during this one week visit. One of the teaching programmes that was arranged was a trip to the Mumbwa area on the 25th of December, 1977. The Bahá'ís of Mumbwa were informed in advance and they organised a wonderful gathering at Machipisa village. More than 60 adults and children, Bahá'ís and friends of Bahá'ís, gathered to receive Dr. Muhajir with a lot of joy (Ibid).

Dr. Muhajir also on this visit attended the dedication of the local centre that had been built at Mpuku Village south of Lusaka. Members of that community, along with the help of some Bahá'ís from Lusaka had carefully build a centre, accomplishing a goal of the five year plan, having finished it in time to have the blessings of the presence of a Hand of the Cause of God at its dedication. The love, knowledge, inspiration and wisdom that the Hand of the Cause Dr. Muhajir brought to the Bahá'í communities of Zambia which he visited would always be remembered by the Bahá'ís in Zambia, (Ibid).

(iv) Collins Featherstone

Collis Featherstone first visited Zambia in early April, 1978. During this tour he visited the Lusaka Bahá'í community. The community enjoyed listening to him about the wonderful progress of the faith around the world.

He again came back to Zambia on the 19th of May, 1987. This was his second visit. During this visit he was the guest speaker at a Rotary Luncheon, he was interviewed on radio, and met with the members of the press and media at a dinner function. Mr Featherstone is also reported to have spoken one morning to a class of 90 engineering students at the University of Zambia. During this visit, Mr and Mrs Featherstone met and consulted with the National Spiritual Assembly. The Featherstones also met with Auxiliary Board Members at the William Masetlha Bahá'í Institute. Apart from, that the Featherstones also visited the Mwinilunga Bahá'í community where more than 400 adults and 100 children had gathered to meet them. Some of the Bahá'ís are reported to have walked as far as 80 kilometres to see the Hand of the Cause of God, Mr. Featherstone, (Ibid).

Other Hands of the Cause of God who visited Zambia are Enock Olinga and William Sears and his wife.

According to the *50th Anniversary Publication of the Bahá'ís in Zambia* (2002), these were the Hands of the Cause of God who visited Zambia to come and inspire and help build the Bahá'í Faith in Zambia.

4.2.2 Administrative Institutions

As already noted, the Bahá'í faith does not have professional priests as is the case with other religions. A nation is administratively governed by a National Spiritual Assembly, which has nine members and is elected every year at the National Convention (*The Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa*, 1990 : 11). At the time of this research in 2010 the composition of the administrative institutions in Zambia was as follows:

The National Spiritual Assembly for Zambia

Mr. Adam Mwandila – Chairperson – (Liteta South Local Spiritual Assembly)

Mr. Hamateyo Jeke – Vice Chairperson (Pemba Local Spiritual Assembly)

Mrs. Pavern Allavian – Secretary – (Lusaka Local Spiritual Assembly)

Mr. Kabambayi Mudendi – Treasurer (North-Western)

Mr- Timothy Iseki – (Zambezi)

Mr. Kenneth Sapilinga – (North-Western)

Miss. Margret Lengwe – (Lusaka)

Mr. Muhammed Abdul Salam – (Kabwe)

Mr. Kaumba Mwendafwashi (North-Western)

The Local Spiritual Assemblies in the selected Bahá'í communities were as follows:

Lusaka Local Spiritual Assembly

Chairperson – Mrs. Susan Allavian

Vice Chairperson – Mrs. Margret Lengwe

Secretary – Mr. Tandoze Naitando Ingwe

Treasurer – Aniza Javaheri

Committee Members

Mr. William Nkausu

Mr. Martin Bwalya

Mrs. Pavern Allavian

Mrs. Soheila Yazahmeidi

Mr- Samson Phiri

Kabwe Local Spiritual Assembly

Chairperson – Mohamed Abdou-Salami

Vice Chairperson – Wallace Kakoma

Secretary – Isabelle Meleki Abdou Salami

Treasurer – Kawawa Chitiya

Committee Members

Bwalya Kangwa

Kombe Kelvin

Banda Eunice

Mondoka Yvonne

Mwansa Chikonde

Liteta South Local Spiritual Assembly

Chairperson – Mr. Allan Moore

Vice chairperson: Mr. Mwandila Adam

Secretary- Mr. Daniel Muyoka

Treasurer – Miss. Teretsa Mwika

Committee Members

Mrs. Chisha Muyoka

Mrs. Mukendi Kozalia

Mrs. Jenny Tembo

Mrs. Sandra Chibanda

Mr. Mukendi Kalambai

4.3 Methods and Strategies Used by the Bahá'í Faith to Convert People to their Religion in Zambia

The study established that the Bahá'í use different methods to spread their religion here in Zambia. Some of the methods include the following:

(i) parental influence, (ii) Distributing Bahá'í Literature to people, (iii) Devotion services (iv) Teaching campaigns (v) Book exhibition (vi) Youth programmes (vii) Children classes (viii) Inviting non-Bahá'ís to Bahá'í feasts (ix) Living exemplary lives and upholding Bahá'í beliefs (x) Study circles.

This section will discuss how these listed methods help to convert people to the Bahá'í Faith.

(i) Parental Influence

Parental influence refers to a situation where a person joins a religion because the parents belong to that religion. He or she is introduced to the religion when he or she is still very young. He grows up into this religion. Two out of the people interviewed during this study confessed that they were Bahá'ís by birth. Both of their parents belonged to this faith. This is common in almost all religions in the world. Most of the people tend to follow the religion introduced to them by their parents when they are still very young. This is the case even in the Bahá'í Faith. Most of the children of the Bahá'í end up joining the Bahá'í faith when they grow up.

(ii) Distributing Bahá'í Literature

The study revealed that Bahá'u'lláh commands all the Bahá'ís to be involved in spreading his message. Therefore, it is the duty of each individual Bahá'í to respond to this command. One way of doing this is by giving out literature about the Bahá'í Faith to people. One of the respondents confessed that he was introduced to the Bahá'í Faith through reading a book given to him by a friend who belonged to this faith.

This is also common in other religions. Christianity is one such religion that uses this method. Many Christians throughout the world distribute literature about the good news of Jesus Christ to other people.

(iii) Devotion Services

Devotion refers to worshipping God with strong affection. It is during this period of devotion that religious people give themselves fully to God. According to The Bahá'ís a publication of *The Bahá'í International Community* (2005) devotional meetings are

classified as one of the major activities that has helped the Bahá'í Faith to spread. According to this publication, devotional meetings aim at providing participants, whatever their religious background, with the opportunity to discover their inner nature and to begin practicing the spiritual capacities latent in the human soul. Devotional meetings are also held in other religions. One such religion that appreciates devotional meetings is Christianity. However, devotional meetings of the Bahá'í Faith are different from those practiced in Christianity.

The Bahá'í devotion service which the researcher attended at the Bahá'í Centre on 14th August, 2010 was conducted as follows:

- (a) The devotion service started with praise and worship. The members gathered in a semi-circle and sang songs from Bahá'í hymns translated in Zambian languages.
- (b) After praise and worship in songs, there came children's prayers. Children who were present said their memory prayers. After children prayers, selected adults read out prayers from Bahá'í prayer books.
- (c) After the prayers, children went to attend children classes while the adults broke into groups for discussions. Compilations from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh were distributed to all the members of the group. One of the members of the group acted as a facilitator. Each member was asked to read a paragraph aloud. Later there was a group discussion on the topic presented.
- (d) After the group discussion the groups came together and a closing prayer was given. Later, announcements and welcoming visitors present was done.

The major difference that I observed between Bahá'í devotional meetings and Christian devotional meetings was that in the Bahá'í devotional meetings there is no preaching as is

the case in Christianity where the Bible is read then one man or woman preaches on the chapter or verses read. The Bahá'ís believe in group discussions. There is no preaching in this faith.

(iv) Teaching Campaigns

Teaching campaigns refer to a situation where people move in groups or pairs to share the Word of God. They go door to door talking to people about the message they have about their religion. Like other religions such as Christianity, the Bahá'ís conduct such teaching campaigns. According to the information obtained from the Bahá'í members interviewed, this method has been effective. The Regional Co-ordinator of Central, Lusaka and Eastern Province Mr Alex Kalumba confirmed that the teaching campaign that was held in 2010 in Garden Compound in Lusaka was quite successful with about 12 adults joining the Bahá'í faith.

(v) Book Exhibition

A book exhibition is a public display of books. The aim is to show the public in that locality and those invited the books available. In other words it serves to advertise to the public the books that are available for use. The Bahá'í do conduct book exhibitions especially in institutions of learning. The Bahá'í Association at the University of Zambia do conduct a book exhibition every semester. During this event, different types of literature on the Bahá'í faith is displayed and made available to the public to read or even borrow. Other books are even sold. Some people have come to learn about the Bahá'í faith through such activities. One of the members interviewed at Liteta South Local Spiritual Assembly confessed that she was introduced to the Bahá'í faith through a book exhibition.

(vi) Youth Programmes

The William Mmutle Masetlha Foundation which is the National Institute of the Bahá'í Faith, prepares and runs programmes for the junior youth between the ages of 12 and 15 years. The institute first trains animators, these are youths who after being trained go to facilitate in training others in the youth programmes. The programmes are also available at all the Bahá'í centres. Most of the non-Bahá'í youths who undergo these programmes end up joining the faith. In August 2010 twenty-five (25) non-Bahá'í youths attended these youth programmes at the National Institute. The co-ordinator of these programmes confirmed that at the end of the programmes twelve (12) of them declared interest in the Bahá'í Faith. The Bahá'í Faith has a systematic programme for youths than most of the other religions. Christians have youth programmes but they are not as systematic and organised as those offered by the Bahá'í faith.

(vii) Children Classes

According to *The Publication of the Bahá'í International Community* (2005 : 7), Bahá'í children classes are among the three (3) major activities that have helped the faith to grow. According to this publication, Bahá'í classes for children are open to all. They focus on moral development, in the context of the Bahá'í teachings of the oneness of human kind and the unity of the world's religions. Book 3 of the Ruhi Institute (1995) explains that Bahá'í children classes are not like the classes of indoctrination which are common in many other religions. This book further explains that even though children are instructed in the principles, teachings and basic beliefs of the faith, the emphasis is on learning to think, to reflect and to apply spiritual laws to the life of the individual and society, especially during the early years of childhood, great attention is given to the

development of spiritual qualities and to those beliefs, habits and behaviours that constitute the essential attributes of a spiritual being.

Most of the children of non- Bahá'ís who under go these classes end up being Bahá'ís when they grow up. The lessons are systematically arranged and very interesting for children. Although other religions have their own children classes, I feel the Bahá'í children classes are systematically arranged and well organised.

(viii) Bahá'í Feasts

The Bahá'í Faith hold feasts on certain special days of the calendar. One important feast that all Bahá'ís observe and participate in the Nineteen Day Feast. According to *The Publication of the Bahá'í International Community* (2005), The Nineteen Day feast is held once every 19 days. It is the local community's regular worship gathering. According to this publication, this feast is open to both adults and children. The Nineteen Day feast promotes and sustains the unity of the local Bahá'í community. The feast always contains three elements: spiritual devotions, administrative consultation, and fellowship. As such, the feast combines religious worship with grassroots governance and social enjoyment. Although the word 'feast' is used, it does not imply that a large meal will be served. While food and beverages are usually served, the term itself is meant to suggest that the community should enjoy "a spiritual feast" of worship, companionship, and unity. Bahá'u'lláh stressed the importance of gathering every 19 days, at the beginning of each Bahá'í month "to bind your hearts together" even if nothing more than water is served (*The Bahá'í a Publication of the Bahá'í International Community*, 2005:12).

During the devotion programme, selections from the Bahá'í writings are read aloud. A general discussion follows, allowing every member a voice in community affairs and making the feast an “arena of democracy at the very root of society”. The feast ends with a period of socializing (*Publication of the Bahá'í International Community*, 2005:12). Even non- Bahá'ís are invited to attend such feasts. Some of them end up joining the faith through this activity.

Other religions do have such activities on their calendars. For example in Islam the Hijra is celebrated on the first day of the first lunar month of the year.

(ix) Living exemplary lives and upholding Bahá'í beliefs

Findings of the study have revealed that some people have joined the Bahá'í Faith by being impressed by the lives being led by Bahá'ís. Eric Manton, the founder of the faith in Zambia is described to have been a man full of love for mankind. His personality is reported to have attracted a lot of people to join his religion. One of the members interviewed during this study confessed that she was trying hard to lead a blameless life according to Bahá'í principles in order to attract people to join the Bahá'í Faith. This principle is also advocated in Christianity. Jesus encouraged his followers to be like a city built on a hill, implying his followers must be models to guide other people, especially non-believers.

(x) Study circles

According to *The Publication of the Bahá'í International Community* (2005), study circles are among the three major activities that have helped the Bahá'í Faith to spread. Study circles, as the term implies, are small gatherings devoted to the exploration of

Baha'u'llah's writings. Bahá'ís throughout the world are involved in these study circles. The Faith has designed booklets from Book 1 to 8 to be studied during these study circles. These study circles are open to everyone including non- Bahá'ís. After studying all these modules, most of the people who are non-Bahá'ís end up joining the faith.

4.3.1 The Role of the National Spiritual Assembly in the Growth of the Bahá'í Faith in Zambia

The study revealed that the National Spiritual Assembly has an important role in making sure the faith is growing in the country. This section will discuss the duties of the (NSA) as explained by the Chairman, Mr. Mwandila, Adam.

(i) Training of Human Resource

The NSA, through the William Mmutle Masetlha Foundation which is the National Institute, train human resource to be competent teachers of the Bahá'í Faith. People are invited from different Local Spiritual Assemblies in the country to come and learn how to conduct study circles using the published books. Junior Youth Animators are also trained who in turn to facilitate in training the junior youths in their Local Spiritual Assemblies

(ii) To Organise Junior Youth Programmes

The NSA is responsible for organising Junior Youth Programmes. The NSA makes sure that all the required materials for these programmes are in place. The youths are invited from all parts of the country for these programmes.

(iii) Organise Teaching Campaigns

The NSA is also responsible for organising teaching campaigns. They identify places where there is need to teach the message of Bahá'u'lláh. After that, they plan how to get there. During the interview, the NSA chairperson stated that in 2010 they had targeted

Luapula Province, Kawambwa District in particular. They organised a team that went to Luapula and he confirmed that the teaching campaigns were very successful.

(iv) Organising National Conferences

The NSA does organise for National Conferences where leaders from different parts of the country meet at the National Institute to discuss important issues pertaining to the growth of the faith. Apart from National Conferences, the NSA sometimes hosts international conferences. They have a responsibility to see that these conferences are successfully held.

(v) Providing Required Bahá'í Literature to the Local Spiritual Assemblies

The National Spiritual Assembly also has a responsibility to see to it that all the necessary Bahá'í Literature is available for the Local Spiritual Assemblies. These include study circle materials and youth programme materials.

(vi) Translating Bahá'í Literature into Zambian Local Languages

Most of the Bahá'í Literature is in English. The NSA has a duty to translate this literature into the seven main Zambian languages. The NSA identifies competent members of the faith to do this exercise. When the researcher visited the National Institute in August, 2010 this exercise was in progress. According to the NSA Chairman, so far they have translated Bahá'í hymn books into Tonga, Bemba, Nyanja, Kaonde, Lunda and Luvale

(vii) Stocking Study Circle Materials

The National Spiritual Assembly ensures that the materials to be used in study circles are readily available in the country for use in the local spiritual assemblies. The materials to be used are books which are arranged in series from Book 1 to 8. The NSA chairperson listed them as follows:

Book 1: Reflecting on the Life of the Spirits

This book is divided into 3 units namely: “Understanding the Bahá’í Writings, Prayer and Life and Death”. The Purpose of the first unit of the book is to develop in the participants the habit of reading the writings of Bahá’u’lláh and thinking about them. The second unit “Prayer”. The aim in the second unit is to help the participants to understand the importance of prayer. The third unit “Life and Death”. This unit aims at making participants understand that life extends beyond our earthly existence and continues forever as souls progress through the worlds of God, (*Ruhi Institute*, 1987:3).

Book 2: Arising to Serve

This book is also divided into 3 units. “The Joy of Teaching”, Deepening Themes” and “Introducing Bahá’í Beliefs”. Book 2 according to *The Ruhi Institute* is largely concerned with imparting into participants the knowledge of skills and abilities for specific acts of service. The first unit “Deepening Themes”, which is designed to help the students to develop the capability of making periodic visits to the homes of newly enrolled believers and sharing with them a number of themes (*Ruhi Institute, Book 2*, 1987:1).

Book 3: Teaching Children’s Classes grade 1

This book is a collection of three units aimed at helping individuals who wish to undertake the excellent service of teaching regular classes for the spiritual education of children.

Book 4: The Twin Manifestations

The 3 units of this book are aimed at helping participants to acquire a thorough and systematic knowledge of the lives of the Bab and Bahá’u’lláh. A chronological account

of each of their lives is presented. It is hoped that the participants will learn to narrate them in some detail (*Ruhi Institute*, 1990).

Book 5: Releasing the Powers of Junior Youth (Pre-Publication Edition)

This book aims at providing information to the participants why it is important to engage the youth between the ages of 12 and 15 into junior youth programmes. These are programmes that seek to enhance the spiritual and intellectual capabilities and prepare them to participate effectively in the affairs of their communities (*Ruhi Institute*, 2007).

Book 6: Teaching the Cause

According to *The Ruhi Institute* (1990:1) Book 6 consists of three units. The first “The Spiritual Nature of Teaching” is aimed at enhancing the participants understanding of the spiritual significance of teaching. The second “Qualities and Attitudes of the Teacher” provide the opportunity to reflect on the attributes that a teacher of the cause should strive to acquire. In the third unit, “The Act of Teaching”, approaches to personal teaching endeavours and collective campaigns are discussed.

Book 7: Walking together in the Path of Service

This book aims at helping participants to learn how to lead others in the study of books 1-6. After someone has done book 7, he/she should be a tutor to help others learn how to study Book 1-6.

Book 8: The covenant

This book includes “The covenant of God” and “The covenant of Bahá’u’lláh.” This book has not yet reached Zambia.

(viii) Materials for Youth Programmes

The National Spiritual Assembly has a responsibility of making available materials for the Junior Youth programmes. As already seen, the books for the youth programmes are

in 3 levels arranged in series. According to the *Ruhi Institute* (2002), the Junior Youth programmes strive to create within the youths the moral structures that will underlie their decisions and guide their actions as they mature into young adults and active members of the society. The main aim of these programmes is to impart essential moral concepts and build certain attitudes required to live a fruitful and rewarding life. In other words junior youth programs help the junior youth to learn more about the purpose of their existence as spiritual beings in conjunction with the natural world around them, and to encourage them to think about the purpose of physical reality in a spiritual and scientific way (Ruhi Institute, 2005).

4.4 Bahá'í Faith and Girl-Child Education

The third objective of this study sought to find out why the Bahá'í Faith are interested in the education of girls. To achieve this objective, the researcher used an interview guide to interview the principal of Banani International Secondary School for Girls in Chibombo.

To answer the questions why the Bahá'í Faith seems to have a particular interest in the education of girls, the Principal referred to the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and gave the following reasons:

- (i) The writings of Bahá'u'lláh emphasize that women must be equal to men in the acquisition of knowledge and moral values for successful development to take place in the world. *The Bahá'í World Publication* (2000) states that the Bahá'ís value the equality of men and women because it is necessary for the development of society. They believe that each gender exists to uplift and assist the other. Bahá'u'lláh is quoted to have emphasized that the world of humanity had two

wings, one is woman and the other is man. Bahá'u'lláh explained further that not until both wings were equally developed could the bird fly. What Bahá'u'lláh meant was that unless the world of women becomes equal to the world of men in the acquisition of knowledge and moral values, success and prosperity cannot be attained in the world. Below are some selected writings of Bahá'u'lláh on universal education for girls and boys:

It is for this reason that, in this new cycle, education and training are recorded in the Book of God as obligatory and not voluntary. That is, it is enjoyed upon the father and mother, as a duty, to strive with all effort to train the daughter and the son, to nurse them from the breast of knowledge and to rear them in the bosom of science and arts. Should they neglect this matter, they shall be held responsible and worthy of reproach in the presence of the stem Lord (*Abdul-Baha, Bahá'í World Faith*).

The other quotation is as follows:

The first duty of the beloved of God and maid-servants of the merciful is this: They must strive by all possible means to educate both sexes, male and female, girls like boys there is no difference whatsoever between them. The ignorance of both is blame worthy, and negligence in both cases is reprieveable. (*Abdul-Baha, Bahá'í World Faith*).

As observed from these quotations from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Bahá'ís are commanded to ensure that both girls and boys are given equal opportunities for education.

The Bahá'ís, a publication of the Bahá'í International Community (2005:29)
equally observed that the apparent inequality between the capacities of women and men was due solely to the lack of educational opportunities open to women.

In response to the writings of Bahá'u'lláh on universal education for both girls and boys, The Bahá'í Communities around the world, including Zambia, are striving on a number of fronts to uplift and empower women, seeking to improve the education of women, to promote equality between men and women.

This is one of the reasons why the Bahá'ís are interested in the education of girls. They would like to promote gender equality in the acquisition of knowledge as propagated by Bahá'u'lláh.

- (ii) Bahá'u'lláh emphasized that education for girls was more important than for boys. The other reason why the Bahá'ís are interested in the education of girls is that the writings of Bahá'u'lláh emphasise that it is more important to educate girls because they will grow up to be mothers and will be responsible of moulding the lives of the children. Below are selected writings of Bahá'u'lláh, emphasising the importance of girl education:

The command is decisive concerning both. If it be considered through the eye of reality, the training and culture of daughter is more necessary than that of sons, for girls will come to the station of motherhood and will mould the lives of the children. The first trainer of the child is the mother. The babe, like unto a green and tender branch, will grow according to the way it is trained. If the training be right, it will grow right, and if crooked, the growth likewise, and into

the end of life it will conduct itself accordingly. Hence, it is firmly established that an untrained and uneducated daughter, on becoming a mother, will be the prime factor in the deprivation, ignorance, negligence and the lack of training of many children (*Abdul-Baha, Bahá'í World Faith*).

Beware! Beware! That ye fail not in this matter. Endeavour with heart, with life, to train your children, especially the daughters. No excuse is acceptable in this matter (*Bahá'u'lláh "Epistle to the Son of the World, p. 138*).

As can be seen from the above quotations Bahá'u'lláh emphasises that education for girls is more important because of the role they play as the first trainers of children. According to the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, girls should be given preference over boys when educational opportunities and resources are limited.

The Bahá'í International Community (2005) also confirmed that Bahá'u'lláh was the first founder of a religion to explicitly uphold complete equality for women and men. The publication appeals to all people to uphold what Bahá'u'lláh, commanded about girl education. This publication upholds Baha'u'llah's command by saying:

Indeed, girls should receive priority in education, if by some circumstances a family (or a society) cannot afford to educate its children equally. (*The Bahá'ís, a publication of the Bahá'í International Community, 2005 : 30*)

It is due to these writings of Bahá'u'lláh that the Bahá'í Faith is committed to the development and improvement of girls education throughout the world.

In response to the call to educate girls the Bahá'í community of Zambia have established Banani International Secondary School for Girls. The school is located one hour's drive from Lusaka (80km on the Great North Road) on 150 hectares of woodland and farmland near Landless Corner.

During the interview, the principal explained that Banani International Secondary School was opened in January 1993. The objective was to promote girl-child education in Zambia because it had been observed that a lot of girls were out of school as compared to boys. The land on which the school is built was offered to the Bahá'í Faith by one of the members of the faith. The funds used to build the school were contributed by the Bahá'ís worldwide. The principal gave the following details about the school: there were eight classrooms, two science laboratories, one big library and a computer science room. The school has three main departments, namely: Mathematics, Science and the Social Sciences. The enrolment was as follows: Grade 8, thirty three pupils; Grade 9, thirty seven pupils; Grade 10, twenty-four pupils; Grade 11, forty-six pupils; and Grade 12, twenty-two pupils. The total enrolment at that time was one hundred and fifty-six pupils.

The school had thirteen teachers and forty-five support staff who were all employed by the school. According to the principal, the school administrative structure was as follows: the school board, the school advisory council, the principal, the vice principal, heads of departments, the teachers and school prefects.

The school board is comprised of the owners of the school, the Bahá'ís. They are in charge of the school and deal with policy matters. The school advisory council is like the P.T.A. and boards in government schools. It is made up of parents elected at the annual general meeting and some teachers. The main role of the advisory council is to represent the parents of the pupils to ensure that the pupils are receiving quality education. The principal is the chief executive of the school. He is in charge of the day to day running of the school. He is assisted by the vice principal. The next in the hierarchy are the heads of departments. They are in charge of the different departments in the school. They are followed by teachers who teach different subjects and are in charge of classes. Finally there are prefects who are appointed by the school authorities to represent fellow pupils in the school administration.

The school has been designed to ensure the health, happiness and physical safety of the students in its care. Apart from the classrooms and the administration centre, the facilities available include a computer enhanced library, a 30-station computer lab, an art centre, science laboratories, a multi-purpose dining hall, restricted satellite television, a recording studio and five dormitories accommodating 150 students, playing fields, courts and an enclosed swimming pool supplement these facilities.

The school receives students of all nationalities and religions from grade 8 to 12. As already stated, the school provides a safe, stimulating and caring environment where young girls develop qualities and internal resources such as academic knowledge, moral responsibility, practical skills and physical fitness that enable them lead a fulfilling and rewarding life. The school follows the University of Cambridge curriculum for the 'O' level International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and is one of its

approved examination centres. As revealed in the study subjects offered include; Agriculture Science, Biology, Chemistry, English, French, Geography, History, Mathematics, Physics, Business Studies and World Religions. At the time of the study in August 2010, the school had a total enrolment of 156 learners from grade 8 to 12.

According to *The Banani International School 2008 Brochure*, the programmes offered at the school prepare the learners for the demands required by institutions of higher learning throughout the world. The brochure confirms that learners from Banani have entered universities in Canada, China, England, Ireland, Namibia, Romania, South Africa, the United States, Zambia and Zimbabwe. It is really a very nice school among the best schools in Zambia.

Figure 5: Picture of Pupils of Banani International Secondary School for Girls



Source: Banani International School 2008 Yearbook.

Although Banani International School has been described as one of the best girls schools in the country aimed at promoting girl education, it has not fulfilled the objective. The major challenge is that of school fees. The school charges very high boarding and tuition fees by Zambian standards.

According to the records obtained from the principal, the fees for 2010 were as follows:

Admission fee	K1, 500,000 payable after the pupil is accepted.
Refundable deposit	K1,000,000 paid at the time of admission, this is refundable on leaving the school provided written notice is given one term in advance or when the learner graduates at the end of grade twelve.
Grade 8	K9,360,000 per term (K28,080,000) per year.
Grade 9-12	K10,800,000 per term (32,400,000) per year.
Annual building fund	K500,000 (per year) set by the School's Parent Advisory Council.
Tuck Account	K400,000 recommended advance payment. This amount is used to finance miscellaneous pupils' expense items such as stationary, lost books, field trips, etc.

As may be seen from the above schedule of school fees, only children of very well to do people learn at Banani International Secondary School. Ordinary Zambians cannot afford such exorbitant fees.

When this concern of school fees was raised to the principal, he explained that children for support staff and teachers were allowed to learn free of charge. The principal further explained that a few places were reserved for local girls around the school area who were given a discount. However, these special cases were very few. The majority of the pupils were those from very rich families and children of prominent politicians. Although the Bahá'ís claim that the objective of establishing the school was to promote girl-child

education, the school has also been used as a fundraising venture. This can be deduced from the high fees that the school collects from pupils. In my opinion, the high fees have defeated the purpose for which the school was built.

4.5 Spiritual, Moral and Economic Contribution of the Bahá'í Faith to the Wellbeing of Zambians

The fourth objective of this study sought to find out the spiritual, moral and economic contribution of the Bahá'í faith to the wellbeing of Zambians. To achieve this objective the researcher used an interview guide to collect information from the National Administrative Co-ordinator of the Inshindo Foundation, a Bahá'í organisation which runs a social economic programme in Zambia. The researcher also analysed documents which had information on this subject.

4.5.1 Spiritual, Moral and Economic Activities of the Bahá'í Faith : William

Maseltha Foundation

According to *The 50th Anniversary Publication of the Bahá'í in Zambia* (2002), the faith started getting involved in social economic undertakings in the 1980s. According to this publication, in 1983, the Bahá'í community in Zambia established the William Maseltha Foundation. This institute was created to undertake spiritual training as well as social economic activities throughout Zambia. In its early days, it combined spiritual training with agricultural activities. Later, The Maseltha Foundation began to diversify its activities into other fields of social and economic development. One of the longest lasting activity that was embarked upon in Zambia has been in the field of primary health care. Dr. Ethel Martens, a prominent health educator from Canada, conducted several training courses in Zambia in the late 1980s. Later, the Canadian Public Health

Association gave a grant to the Maseltha Foundation to carry out a three year programme in the early 90s. This programme was further expanded with funding from the Bahá'í World Centre to include additional geographical areas as well as development training modules (*50th Anniversary of the Bahá'í in Zambia, 2002:11*).

Another avenue of involvement has been in education. In 1993, the Bahá'í community embarked on formal education of students by establishing the Banani International Secondary School. Inspired by the Bahá'í writings on the importance of educating women, and considering the fact that girls often did not have the same opportunities as boys in education, the institution built a boarding school for girls, with its motto "*Let Your Vision be World Embracing*". Banana International Secondary School strives not only to provide first class education to Zambian girls, but also to inspire the hearts of its pupils, developing their love for humanity and equipping them to better serve the world (Ibid : 12).

4.5.2 The Inshindo Foundation : Preparation for Social Action Programme

One of the social economic development activity being carried out by the Bahá'í faith is the Preparation for Social Action Programme (PSA) being managed by the Inshindo Foundation. The preparation for social action programme aims at equipping the youths with skills that can help them to improve their economic status in society.

According to the information obtained from the National Administrative Co-ordinator of this programme, Mr. Mohammed Abdou-Salami, the programme was started in 2008. The programme is being piloted in Kabwe and Mwinilunga Districts. The main objective of starting this programme was to fulfill the writing of Bahá'u'lláh. According to the National Co-ordinator, the writings of Bahá'u'lláh emphasize that spiritual growth must

be side by side with economical growth. Therefore these programmes are aimed at equipping people with skills that can help them improve their economic status in society.

The preparation for social action curriculum is divided into five capacity areas. The Administrative Co-ordinator listed them as follows:

(a) **Service and community action Capabilities:** This involves:

(i) Promoting health environment (ii) Health issues and (iii) Nurturing young minds.

(b) **Technological Capabilities:** This subject involves food production and small farms.

Learners are taught how to plant different crops and how to make proper use of the land.

(c) **Mathematical Capabilities:** This area involves knowledge in basic mathematics such as classification, numerical statements, addition and subtraction, multiplication and division, fractions and percentages and quantifying information.

(d) **Scientific Capabilities:** This subject involves topics such as matter, e.g. heating and cooling of matter and growth of plants. Energy: transformation and transfer of energy and photosynthesis.

(e) **Language Capabilities:** This covers topics such as primary elements of description, dawn of civilization and intent of description.

According to the Administrative Co-ordinator the (PSA) is also aimed at preparing the youths to become promoters of community well-being agents of social and economic development of the community. At the conclusion of the two and half years of training, participants graduate as promoters of community well-being, with the capacity to mobilise the community, initiate and manage projects in various areas of community development, including support of food production by small scale producers, promoting

environmental health, supporting family and community health efforts and fostering community based education initiatives

The funding for the PSA programme mainly comes from the Bahá'í Office of Social and Economic Development at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel. Other resources to meet the cost of allowances and books come from other non-governmental organisations outside the country that appreciate what this organisation is doing.

On the operation of the PSA, the National Administrative Co-ordinator explained that the first task is the recruitment of the tutors. This exercise is done in consultation with the Ministry of Community Development and church leaders. Through the help of the Department of Community Development an advertisement is made for tutors. The minimum qualification required is a Grade 12 certificate. Later on, interviews are organised to choose the best out of the applicants who are usually more than the number required. After the tutors are recruited, they help to recruit the participants from the community where they come from. They also help to advertise the courses on offer. The programme is meant for the youths both male and female. All the interested youths who are able to read and write are eligible to be enrolled in this programme. After enrolment, the recruited participants are put in groups according to the areas where they reside. Tutors follow these participants in the areas where they live to train them.

During the time of this study, there were 12 groups of participants in Kabwe who were undertaking this training. According to the records provided by the Co-ordinator during the interview, the groups were outlined as follows:

COMPOUND	NO. OF GROUPS	TOTALS		
		MALE	FEMALE	TOTALS
Chimanimani	3 groups	26	16	42
Bwacha	1 group	5	7	12
Kawama	1 group	5	10	15
Makululu	2 groups	16	13	29
Makwati	1 group	3	17	20
Natuseko	2 groups	18	10	28
Site and Service	1 group	3	6	09
C Gate Chidwin Barracks	1 group	-	11	11
TOTALS		76	90	166

In terms of administration, the organisation structure, according to the National Administrative Co-ordinator is was follows:

- (i) ***The National Administrative Co-ordinator:*** Mr Mohammed Abdou-Salami : in charge of the programme on behalf of the Bahá'í faith.
- (ii) ***The Assistant National Administrative Co-ordinator:*** Mrs, Cilly Longwe (A Bahá'í)
- (iii) ***Programme Co-ordinator:*** James Mutale (one of the tutors).
- (iv) ***Assistant Programme Co-ordinator:*** Kelvin Kombe.
- (v) ***Administrative Co-ordinator:*** Kawawa Chitiya (in charge of materials for participants and tutors).

Each group is led by a tutor. In Kabwe there were twenty tutors altogether. According to the National Administrative Co-ordinator, the response towards this programme has been excellent in the two places (Kabwe and Mwinilunga) where it is being implemented. He further explained that no incentives are given to participants to entice them to enroll in

the programme, only snacks are provided during the training sessions. However, the tutors get a monthly allowance of K400,000 and are given bicycles for easy mobility.

The impact of this programme has not yet been felt because the first intake will graduate in February 2011. Although the response may be very good as explained by the coordinator, if the graduating participants will not be assisted with financial resources they may not succeed to fulfill the objectives of the programme. However, the Bahá'í will still have made a significant contribution towards the social and economic development of the two areas.

4.5.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented and discussed findings on the History of the Bahá'í Faith in Zambia. It has also revealed the methods and techniques that the Bahá'í Faith use to convert people to their religion. The chapter has further revealed and explained why the Bahá'í Faith are interested in the education of the girl-child. Apart from that, the chapter has discussed how the Bahá'í faith are contributing towards the well being of Zambians. The overall conclusion and recommendations are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE : CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Conclusion

This chapter concludes the investigation about the History of the Bahá'í faith in Zambia. The investigation was conducted according to the objectives of the study as outlined in chapter one.

This study has shown that although the Bahá'í faith is a sect of Islam, it is an independent world religion. According to Magesa's view, a world religion should have the following characteristics: a founder, scriptures, proselytisation, universality, places of worship, and leaders. According to this study the Bahá'í faith meets all these requirements hence it should be respected and recognised as an Independent World Religion.

The study has also revealed that the Bahá'í faith was introduced in Zambia in 1952 by Eric Manton, a British citizen. Since its introduction the faith has grown and spread throughout Zambia. According to the statistics obtained at the Bahá'í Lusaka Centre there are now about twenty two thousand (22,000) visible Bahá'ís living in Zambia. Although still a very minority religion the faith has established itself in Zambia and it is doing everything possible to make an impact in the society. In order for the faith to continue growing the Bahá'í faith are using different methods of conversion. The main ones are: teaching campaigns, study circles, book exhibition, junior youth programmes, children classes and upholding Bahá'í principles.

The study has also revealed that the Bahá'í faith are particularly interested in girl child education because the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh emphasise that both girls and boys should be educated for the society to develop. The study has also discussed how the Bahá'í community in Zambia has responded to the writings of Bahá'u'lláh on promoting

education for girls by establishing Banani International School. Like other religions, the Bahá'í faith are also contributing to the social economic development of Zambia. They are running programmes to equip the youth with skills that can help them improve their economic status in the society. With regard to the purpose and objectives of this study, it can be conclusively stated that the Bahá'í faith is an independent monotheistic religion that exist in Zambia as one of the minority religions which is slowly expanding. In the process of trying to establish itself, the faith has also contributed to the social and economic development of the country.

5.1 Recommendations

- (i) The R.E. syllabus in Zambia should be revised so that it is multi-faith to capture other religions such as the Bahá'í faith.
- (ii) scholars of religion in Zambia should take interest in studying minority religions because some of them are contributing to the spiritual, moral and economic development of our country.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1A : IMPORTANT EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Born on: 12th November, 1817

Place of Birth: Tihran, Iran

Name of Father: Mirza Buzurg-i-Nuri

Name of Mother: Khadijih Khanum

Married on: 1835

Name of wife: Navvab

Became a follower of the Bab and began teaching the new Faith : 1844

Imprisoned in the Siyah-Chalin Tihran: 1853

Declared his mission in the Garden of Ridvan outside Baghdad: 21 April to 2 May 1863.

Exiled to Constantinople 4 months: 1863

Wrote tablets to the Kings, Rulers and Religious Leaders: 1864-1869

Exiled to Akka: 1868

Revealed the Katab-i-Aqdas, the Most Holy Book, the Book of Laws: 1868

Moved outside the City of Akka: 1877

Passed away at Bahji: 29 May 1892

APPENDIX 2A : SUMMARY OF THE HISTORY OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH IN ZAMBIA IN A TIME LINE

<u>Year</u>	<u>Activity</u>
1952	: Arrival of the first Bahá'í, Eric Manton.
1954	: First Zambian declares his faith in Bahá'u'lláh.
1956	: First Local Spiritual Assembly is formed at Fisenge.
1957	: Hand of the Cause of God William Sears visits for the first time.
1958	: Bahá'ís formally given freedom to carry out activities.
1961	: First Bahá'í summer school held at Mulungushi Youth Camp.
1962	: Bahá'ís formally given permission to hold land in their name,
	: The first Zambian Bahá'í marriage – Southern province.
	: The first experience of large scale expansion.
1964	: Hand of the Cause of God Enock Olinga visits for the first time.
1965	: Hand of the Cause of God John Robarts visits for the first time.
1967	: Elections of the first National Spiritual Assembly in Zambia.
1968	: The President of Zambia, Dr Kenneth Kaunda is presented with
	'Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh'.
	: National Centre obtained.
	: National Spiritual Assembly of Zambia officially incorporated.
	: Temple land purchased by the National spiritual Assembly.
1971	: Hand of the Cause of God Ruhiyyih Khánúm visits for the first time.
1973	: Bahá'í children officially permitted not to attend school on Bahá'í Holy
	Days.
	: Bahá'í marriages recognised by the authorities.

- 1975 : First Annual National Teaching Conference held.
- : Hand of the Cause of God Dr Muhajir visits for the first time.
- 1978 : Hand of the Cause of God Collins Featherstone visits for the first time.
- 1981 : First Zambian Bahá'í, Mr. James Mweemba, attends nine day pilgrimage in the Holy land.
- 1983 : William Mmutle Masetlha Bahá'í Institute is established.
- : First Continental Board of Counsellors meeting in Zambia.
- 1984 : Eric Manton passed away.
- 1992 : Bahá'ís of Zambia attend World Congress.
- 1993 : First intake at Banani International Secondary School.
- : Isobel Sebri Teaching Project launched.
- 1994 : William Masetlha Bahá'í Foundation formed.
- 1995 : Introduction of Institute programme.
- 1996 : Banani International Secondary School officially inaugurated.
- : Zambia hosts International Conference on Education of girl-child.
- 1997 : Capstone programme established by Foundation.
- 1997 : Dr Ahdieh's Teacher's Teaching project launched.
- 1998 : Formation of the first Regional Bahá'í Council of Zambia in North-Western province.
- : Eric Manton Institute in Mwinilunga officially inaugurated.
- 2001 : Zambian Bahá'í community represented at official opening of the Terraces in Haifa, Israel.
- 2002 : 50th Anniversary celebrations.

APPENDIX 3A : FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR BAHAI MEMBERS OF LUSAKA, CHIBOMBO AND KABWE SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

1. Do you feel happy, anxious or afraid that you are a Bahá'í?
2. How did you become a Bahá'í?
3. What are you doing to help the Bahá'í faith to grow in Zambia?
4. What other methods of conversion do you use to introduce people to the Bahá'í faith?

APPENDIX 3B : INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

1. When did you become a Bahá'í?
2. How did you become a member of the Bahá'í faith?
3. As a National Spiritual Assembly, what are you doing to see to it that the faith keeps on growing in Zambia?
4. What skills or knowledge do you impart in your leaders and the youths during national training workshops?
5. What other activities do you do as a National Spiritual Assembly to help the faith to grow in Zambia?
6. How effective are your methods and strategies of conversion?
7. What are your future plans with regard to the expansion of your faith in Zambia?
8. What challenges have you been facing in the process of propagating the Bahá'í faith in Zambia?
9. Where exactly in Zambia do we find the Bahá'í faith?
10. How many Bahá'ís are there in Zambia according to the recent statistics?

APPENDIX 4A : INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE PRINCIPAL OF BANANI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

1. When was Banani International Secondary School opened?
2. What was the objective of opening this girls' secondary school?
3. How did you manage to get such big land to build this secondary school?
4. Where did the funds for building up this wonderful school come from?
5. You seem to be very interested in education for girls, why is it so?
6. How big is this secondary school?
7. How is your staffing?
8. What subjects do you offer?
9. What is your enrolment as a school?
10. How do you manage this school?
11. What challenges are you facing as a school?
12. Apart from Banani Secondary School, what other girls schools are you running as Bahá'í faith?

**APPENDIX 5A : INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH THE NATIONAL
ADMINISTRATIVE CO-ORDINATOR OF THE INSHINDO
FOUNDATION**

1. What does Inshindo Foundation mean?
2. What was the objective of the Bahá'í faith to have started preparation of social Action Programme (PSA)?
3. When was the programme first introduced in Zambia?
4. Where in Zambia is the (PSA) programme being implemented?
5. What skills do you impart in the participants?
6. Where do you get the resources to manage such a programme?
7. How do you manage this programme as Inshindo Foundation?
8. How many groups of participants do you have here in Kabwe and where are they found?
9. How are you organized in terms of administration?
10. How is the response from the community towards this programme?
11. What incentives do you give to the participants and tutors?
12. How has the programme benefited the residents in Kabwe?