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 LARGE PRINT / Standard Print.Infuse – Youth Empowerment Project

Letters to the Editor



Dear Friends,

INFUSE – YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

After months of work, I am delighted to announce the launch of the INFUSE internet site at the following address: www.infuse.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk [now at www.infuse.org.uk – CM]. The internet site, known as INFUSE Communications, is one of the core parts of the INFUSE – Youth Empowerment Project, which will in time, evolve to provide a greater range of information and services. My thanks go to Helen Elliott, who has built the site in the middle of her A-Levels and is the Service Manager for INFUSE Communications.

Loving greetings,
Darren Howell
Project Co-ordinator

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

PERSONAL COMPUTERS

I am very concerned that those of us without computers are in danger of being left out and disregarded by some Bahá'í organisers, registrars, etc. I do not own, and have no intention of owning a computer.

I may be the loser with this attitude and I accept that. But I ask that in future, house addresses as well as an email address be used for those without personal computers.

Yours sincerely,
Bryan Huxtable
North Devon

So long, Farewell, Auf Wiedersehen, Good ... luck?

HAVING displayed a little over-enthusiasm toward the Editor of the Journal, I was enticed into writing an article about my planned studies for the next year. My name is Michael Sunderland and my recent declaration of Faith has made me, so I've been told, both a "baby" and a "fire". I'm not entirely sure how well suited I am to either of these descriptions. The former is perhaps more apt than the latter. At a time when I was first becoming acquainted with the Bahá'í Faith, I made the decision that I wanted to take a Masters degree in Conflict Resolution, or some other such commercially useless subject.

Thoughts of mounting student debts safely suppressed at the back of my mind, I applied and was accepted to study at the European University Centre for Peace Studies (EPU) in east Austria. I am, as I write, about to leave and only have a vague sense of the experience that awaits me. EPU is designed to run on a completely multi-cultural ethic. It takes about 35 students a year from all around the world. They have, to date, taken students from about 70 countries worldwide. Essentially we are locked away in a Castle for two three-month

... to continue to maintain a community, we are looking away in a search for the more normal periods of studying and living together. Rather than merely formulating the rhetoric of toleration and cultural understanding I think we might actually have to live it!

This is a bit of a substanceless article, as I am merely waiting on the brink of what will be, and have only those dreamy anticipations of what the future may hold. But I suppose Iâ€™m writing to ask you to think about the practicalities and the very nature of the future we are seeking to achieve. I will be seeking to communicate and discuss with people my perspective on the possibility of peace. I will seek to make points, like the inevitability of peace, that in isolation seem utopian and naïve, and that are part of an entire belief system. A system of belief that is but a drop in the ocean that is Bahá'í's Revelation.

I feel a great responsibility to represent the Faith justly, and engage academically in an inclusive way that doesn't come across as self-righteous or gauche. As you all know, a significant number of people around the world see religion as one of the primary causes of conflict, or at least a barrier to resolution. Piety has become associated with intolerance and intransigence. The UN seems, understandably so, a little resistant to giving religion a significant role in trying to address the international problems we face. The job of making a strong case for the peace-making role of religions to a sceptical secular audience is still perhaps to be done (despite the Bahá'í's recent successes in Johannesburg).

... my recent declaration of Faith has made me, so I've been told, both a "baby" and a "fire".

Reading back I've realised I've hyped my situation to well beyond its worth. Really, I'm just a student going back to school. But I think you should all take heart that perhaps the Lesser Peace is not as far off as it might seem. That institutions like the one I am about to attend seem to have evolved, basing themselves on a dynamic and principle that seems very Bahá'í but was created independently of the efforts of our Faith community, is a cause for celebration. And if not celebration, then perhaps a sense of mild relief that the key principles of the Bahá'í Revelation are being shouted and heard in a great many other places than the halls of our conferences and the rooms of our summer schools.

God grant that the light of unity may envelop the whole earth, and that the seal "the Kingdom is God's", may be stamped upon the brow of all its peoples. (Bahá'í's *Gleanings*. VII)

Mike Sunderland

BJUK welcomes letters on any topic of general interest, which may be printed at the Editor's discretion. Letters may be edited for brevity or clarity. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the National Assembly or the Editor.
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