

# **The Use of Radio and Television in Teaching**

Extracts from letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi

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- <sup>1</sup> In regard to your wish of broadcasting the Message, Shoghi Effendi would advise you to consult with the Spiritual Assembly as to whether such an action meets their approval, and if so to ask their assistance and help for finding the best means through which to carry out your plan. The idea of a wireless station is rather ambitious and requires much financial expenditure. If, however, you find it feasible and within your financial capacity you should not hesitate to do so, in as much as this will enable you to spread the Cause in a much easier and more efficient manner.

(13 August 1933 to an individual believer)

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- <sup>2</sup> Your suggestion regarding the installation of a radio station in the Temple is truly splendid. But it remains to be seen whether the National Spiritual Assembly finds it financially feasible to undertake such a project, which is, beyond doubt, a very costly enterprise. Whatever the expenditure involved in this project, there is no reason why the believers should not start now considering seriously the possibility of such a plan, which, when carried out and perfected, can lend an unprecedented impetus to the expansion of the teaching work throughout America.

It is for the National Spiritual Assembly, however, to take the final decision in this matter, and to determine whether the national fund of the Cause is at present sufficiently strong to permit them to install a radio station in the Temple.

The Guardian feels, nevertheless, confident that this plan will receive the careful consideration of the National Spiritual Assembly members, and hopes that, if feasible, they will take some definite action in this matter.

(31 January 1937 to an individual believer)

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- 3 He read with interest the various suggestions you made to the National Spiritual Assembly, and feels they are fundamentally sound, especially the wider use of the radio. Unfortunately at the present time anything that would make a fresh demand on the financial resources of the Cause in America—such as a Bahá'í-owned broadcasting station—is out of the question, as the friends are finding it difficult to meet the great needs of the teaching and Temple Funds. However the idea should, he feels, be kept in mind for future realization.

(14 October 1942 to an individual believer)

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- 4 In connection with the radio work ... he would suggest that the main consideration is to bring to the attention of the public the fact that the Faith exists, and its teachings. Every kind of broadcast, whether of passages from the Writings, or on topical subjects, or lectures, should be used. The people need to hear the word “Bahá'í” so that they can, if receptive, respond and seek the Cause out. The primary duty of the friends everywhere in the world is to let the people know such a Revelation is in existence; their next duty is to teach it.

(24 July 1943 to an individual believer)

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- 5 He feels it would be excellent if the Cause could be introduced more to the people through the medium of radio, as it reaches the masses, especially those who do not take an interest in lectures or attend any type of meeting.

(7 March 1945 to an individual believer)

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- 6 The matter of obtaining free time on the radio is one which the Radio Committee and the National Spiritual Assembly must decide upon: but the principle is that every effort should be made to present the teachings over the air as often as possible as long as the manner in which it is done is compatible with the dignity of our beloved Faith.

(15 August 1945 to an individual believer)

- 7 He was sorry to learn through your cable that the project for a Bahá'í radio station can not be carried out at present; he considers that such a station would be a very great asset to the Cause, not only as a teaching medium and a wonderful form of publicity, but also as an enhancement of its prestige. He feels your Assembly should not drop the matter, but go on investigating ways to make such a project materialize as soon as possible.

(20 March 1946 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada)

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- 8 He hopes that a Bahá'í radio station will prove feasible during the coming years, as he considers it of great importance.

(4 May 1946 to the Radio Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada)

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- 9 The Bahá'ís should not always be the last to take up new and obviously excellent methods, but rather the first, as this agrees with the dynamic nature of the Faith which is not only progressive, but holds within itself the seeds of an entirely new culture and civilization.

(5 May 1946 to an individual believer)

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- 10 The Guardian approves in principle of a radio station, and sees no objection to its being in the Temple; but he considers the cost you quote too much of a burden at the present time for the Fund to bear, in view of the multiple expenses of the new Seven Year Plan. If there is any way it can be done for a price you feel the Fund could pay, and which would be more reasonable, he approves of your doing it. In any case the National Spiritual Assembly should strongly press for recognition as a Religious Body, and claim full rights to be represented on the air on an equal footing with other established Churches.

(20 July 1946 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada)

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- 11 He approves of your desire to teach the principles of the Faith through radio. But he urges you to do all you can to always, however small the reference you are able to make to it may be, clearly identify or associate what you are giving out with Bahá'u'lláh. The time is too short now for us Bahá'ís to be able to first educate

humanity and then tell it that the Source is this new World Faith. For their own spiritual protection people must hear of the name Bahá'í— then, if they turn blindly away, they cannot excuse themselves by saying they never even knew it existed! For dark days seem still ahead of the world, and outside of this Divine Refuge the people will not, we firmly believe, find inner conviction, peace and security. So they have a right to at least hear of the Cause as such!

(24 April 1949 to an individual believer)

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