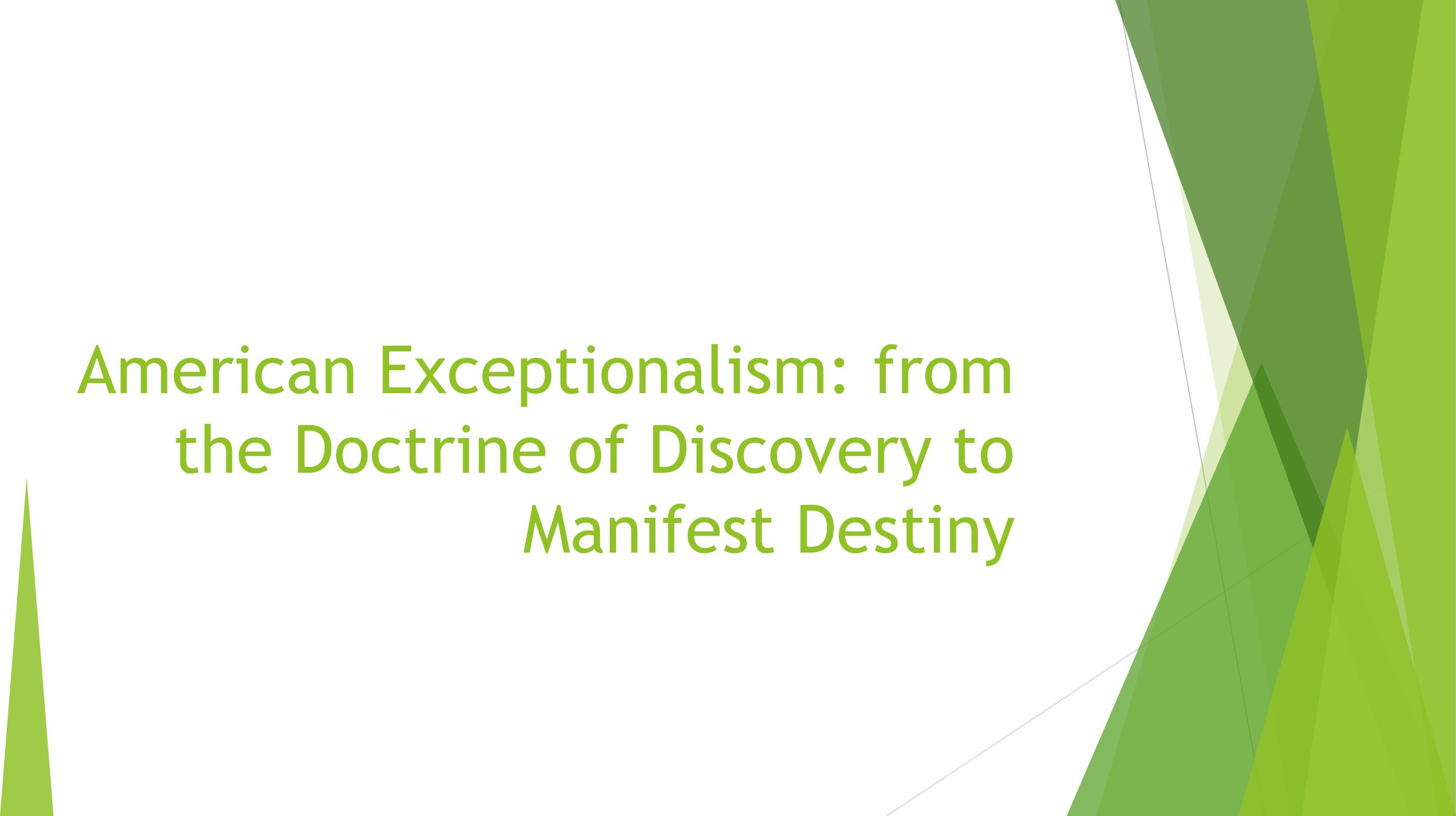


THE SPECIAL PLACE OF AMERICA IN THE BAHA'I AUTHORITATIVE TEXTS

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the right side of the slide, with some extending towards the center. The overall aesthetic is modern and clean.

American Exceptionalism: from the Doctrine of Discovery to Manifest Destiny

American Exceptionalism Defined -

New World Encyclopedia, www.newworldencyclopedia.com

- ▶ American exceptionalism has been historically referred to as the belief that the United States differs qualitatively from other developed nations because of its national credo, historical evolution, or distinctive political and religious institutions. The difference is often expressed in American circles as some categorical superiority, to which is usually attached some alleged proof, rationalization or explanation that may vary greatly depending on the historical period and the political context.
- ▶ However, the term can also be used in a negative sense by critics of American policies to refer to a willful nationalistic ignorance of faults committed by the American government.

Common Elements of American Exceptionalism -

New World Encyclopedia, www.newworldencyclopedia.com

- ▶ REPUBLICAN IDEALS - The U.S. is exceptional because it was founded on a set of republican ideals, rather than on a common heritage, ethnicity, or ruling elite.
- ▶ FRONTIER SPIRIT - The “American spirit” or the “American identity” was created at the frontier and is best understood “not as a continuation of certain European ideas, not [as] the implementation of such ideas, but [as] an entirely new set of phenomenon deriving from the unique interaction between the white man and the ‘Virgin Lands.’” *quoting, Gutfield, Arnon, 2002, American Exceptionalism: The Effects of Plenty on the American Experience.*
- ▶ MOBILITY - The “land of opportunity” was exceptional in its occupational and physical mobility, independent of the social circumstances of one’s birth.
- ▶ AMERICAN REVOLUTION - the claimed ideological origin of exceptionalism.

Why We Can't Wait

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1963)

- ▶ "Our nation was born in genocide when it embraced the doctrine that the original American, the Indian, was an inferior race. Even before there were large numbers of Negroes on our shores, the scar of racial hatred had already disfigured colonial society. From the sixteenth century forward, blood flowed in battles of racial supremacy. We are perhaps the only nation which tried as a matter of national policy to wipe out its indigenous population. Moreover, we elevated that tragic experience into a noble crusade. Indeed, even today we have not permitted ourselves to reject or to feel remorse for this shameful episode. Our literature, our films, our drama, our folklore all exalt it."

The Choices Program - Brown University

*Why learn how Native Americans experienced the
Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny?*

<http://www.choices.edu/video/why-should-high-school-students-learn-about-the-experiences-of-black-people-in-colonial-and-early-america/>

Clickable link: <https://tinyurl.com/y7fmdjvo>

*from The Proclamation of Baha'u'llah - The Rulers
of America (1867 - 1873 Adrianople exile to Akka)*

- ▶ “HEARKEN ye, O Rulers of America and the Presidents of the Republics therein, unto that which the Dove is warbling on the Branch of Eternity: There is none other God but Me, the Ever-Abiding, the Forgiving, the All-Bountiful. Adorn ye the temple of dominion with the ornament of justice and of the fear of God, and its head with the crown of the remembrance of your Lord, the Creator of the heavens. Thus counselleth you He Who is the Dayspring of Names, as bidden by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. The Promised One hath appeared in this glorified Station, whereat all beings, both seen and unseen, have rejoiced. Take ye advantage of the Day of God. Verily, to meet Him is better for you than all that whereon the sun shineth, could ye but know it. O concourse of rulers! Give ear unto that which hath been raised from the Dayspring of Grandeur: Verily, there is none other God but Me, the Lord of Utterance, the All-Knowing. **Bind ye the broken with the hands of justice, and crush the oppressor who flourisheth with the rod of the commandments of your Lord, the Ordainer, the All-Wise.**”

European Christian Origins the Doctrine of Discovery

- ▶ “The Papal Bull ‘Inter Caetera,’ issued by Pope Alexander VI on May 4, 1493. . . . stated that any land not inhabited by Christians was available to be ‘discovered,’ claimed, and exploited by Christian rulers and declared that “the Catholic faith and the Christian religion be exalted and be everywhere increased and spread, that the health of souls be cared for and that barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to the faith itself.’”

*The Doctrine of Discovery, 1493 - The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History,
www.gilderlehrman.org*

European Christian Origins the Doctrine of Discovery and Slavery

- ▶ “Under various theological and legal doctrines formulated during and after the Crusades, non-Christians were considered enemies of the Catholic faith and, as such, less than human. Accordingly, in the bull of 1452, Pope Nicholas directed King Alfonso to “capture, vanquish, and subdue the saracens, pagans, and other enemies of Christ,” to put them into perpetual slavery’ and ‘to take all their possessions and property.’ [Davenport: 20-26]

We the People: the Citizen and the Constitution in Navajo Nation Experience Seminar materials, Five Hundred Years of Injustice by Steven Newcomb

EuroAmerican Christian Origins the Doctrine of Discovery in U.S. law

- ▶ “To understand the connection between Christendom's principle of discovery and the laws of the United States, we need to begin by examining a papal document issued forty years before Columbus' historic voyage In 1452, Pope Nicholas V issued to King Alfonso V of Portugal the bull Romanus Pontifex, declaring war against all non-Christians throughout the world, and specifically sanctioning and promoting the conquest, colonization, and exploitation of non-Christian nations and their territories.”

We the People: the Citizen and the Constitution in Navajo Nation Experience Seminar materials, Five Hundred Years of Injustice by Steven Newcomb

EuroAmerican Christian Origins

the Doctrine of Discovery in international law

- ▶ “ In fact, the Christian ‘Law of Nations’ asserted that Christian nations had a divine right, based on the Bible, to claim absolute title to and ultimate authority over any newly ‘discovered’ Non-Christian inhabitants and their lands. Over the next several centuries, these beliefs gave rise to the Doctrine of Discovery used by Spain, Portugal, England, France, and Holland - all Christian nations.”

We the People: the Citizen and the Constitution in Navajo Nation Experience Seminar materials, Five Hundred Years of Injustice by Steven Newcomb

EuroAmerican Christian Origins the Doctrine of Discovery

- ▶ “This ‘Doctrine of Discovery’ became the basis of all European claims in the Americas as well as the foundation for the United States’ western expansion. In the US Supreme Court in the 1823 case *Johnson v. McIntosh*, Chief Justice John Marshall’s opinion in the unanimous decision held ‘that the principle of discovery gave European nations an absolute right to New World lands.’ In essence, American Indians had only a right of occupancy, which could be abolished [by whites].”

*The Doctrine of Discovery, 1493 - The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History,
www.gilderlehrman.org*

EuroAmerican Christian Origins

the Doctrine of Discovery today

- ▶ “The Bull Inter Caetera made headlines again throughout the 1990s and in 2000, when many Catholics petitioned Pope John Paul II to formally revoke it and recognize the human rights of indigenous ‘non-Christian peoples.’“

The Doctrine of Discovery, 1493 - The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, www.gilderlehrman.org

2018: The Doctrine of Discovery has not been formally revoked by either Pope John Paul or Pope Francis, both of whom have been approached about revoking or even repudiating it. Nor has the Doctrine of Discovery been formally revoked or even repudiated in the laws applicable to indigenous peoples within the United States, Canada, New Zealand or Australia.

EuroAmerican Christian Origins from Doctrine of Discovery to Manifest Destiny

▶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBAqizD_7Ls

“Professor Robert Miller: The Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny
Professor of Law, Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law, Arizona State
University

Speaking at:

Indigenous Peoples’ Forum on Doctrine of Discovery

Arizona State Capitol

House of Representatives

March 23, 2012

U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Marshall

Supreme Injustice: Slavery in the Nation's Highest Court
Paul Finkelman (Harvard University Press - 2018)

- ▶ One of the three most important justices in the Supreme Court before the Civil War
- ▶ Details their proslavery positions, reasoning behind opposition to black freedom, and the personal incentives for their views
- ▶ Marshall “aggressively bought and sold slaves throughout his lifetime,” a fact that biographers have ignored
- ▶ “Embedded racism ever deeper in American civic life”

Marshall Trilogy

fundamental cases of federal Indian law

Case One

- ▶ “In the first of these cases, *Johnson v. McIntosh* (21 U.S. (8 Wheat.) 543 (1823)), Chief Justice Marshall ruled for the Court that Indian tribes could not convey land to private parties without the consent of the federal government. The Court reasoned that, after conquest by the Europeans and the establishment of the United States, the rights of the tribes to complete sovereignty were diminished, and the tribes' power to dispose of their land was denied.”

From Marshall to Marshall: The Supreme Court's changing stance on tribal sovereignty BY PHILIP J. PRYGOSKI,
https://www.americanbar.org/newsletter/publications/gp_solo_magazine_home/gp_solo_magazine_index/marshall.html

Marshall Trilogy

fundamental cases of federal Indian law

Case Two

- ▶ “In *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (30 U.S. (5 Pet.) 1 (1831)), the Court addressed the question of whether the Cherokee Nation was a “foreign state” and, therefore, could sue the State of Georgia in federal court under diversity jurisdiction. Chief Justice Marshall ruled that federal courts had no jurisdiction over such a case because Indian tribes were merely “domestic dependent nations” existing “in a state of pupilage. Their relation to the United States resembles that of a ward to his guardian.”

From *Marshall to Marshall: The Supreme Court's changing stance on tribal sovereignty* BY PHILIP J. PRYGOSKI,
https://www.americanbar.org/newsletter/publications/gp_solo_magazine_home/gp_solo_magazine_index/marshall.html

Marshall Trilogy

fundamental cases of federal Indian law

Case Three

- ▶ the state of Georgia could impose criminal penalties on a number of missionaries who were residing in Cherokee territory, without having obtained licenses from the governor of Georgia. Ruling that the laws of Georgia could have no effect in Cherokee territory, the Court said, "[t]he Cherokee nation...is a distinct community, occupying its own territory, with boundaries accurately described, in which the laws of Georgia can have no force, and which the citizens of Georgia have no right to enter, but with the assent of the Cherokees themselves, or in conformity with treaties, and with the acts of Congress...." In *Worcester*, the Court established the principle that states are excluded from exercising their regulatory or taxing jurisdiction in Indian country.

- ▶ The collective effect of the Marshall trilogy on the development

*from The Hidden Words of Baha'u'llah (1857/1858
during His exile in Baghdad*

- ▶ “O SON OF SPIRIT! The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behooveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.”

from The Proclamation of Baha'u'llah - the Elected Representatives of the Peoples in Every Land (1867 - 1873)

- ▶ O ye the elected representatives of the people in every land! Take ye counsel together, and let your concern be only for that which profiteth mankind, and bettereth the condition thereof, if ye be of them that scan heedfully. Regard the world as the human body which, though at its creation whole and perfect, hath been afflicted, through various causes, with grave disorders and maladies. Not for one day did it gain ease, nay its sickness waxed more severe, as it fell under the treatment of ignorant physicians, who gave full rein to their personal desires, and have erred grievously. And if, at one time, through the care of an able physician, a member of that body was healed, the rest remained afflicted as before. Thus informeth you the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

*from The Proclamation of Baha'u'llah - the Elected
Representatives of the Peoples in Every Land (1867-1873)*

We behold it, in this day, at the mercy of rulers so drunk with pride that they cannot discern clearly their own best advantage, much less recognize a Revelation so bewildering and challenging as this. And whenever any one of them hath striven to improve its condition, his motive hath been his own gain, whether confessedly so or not; and the unworthiness of this motive hath limited his power to heal or cure.

That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician. This, verily, is the truth, and all else naught but error....

1491

▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8qwEmars30>

1491: The Untold Story of the Americas Before Columbus

Eight-Part Docu-Drama Series

“ABSOLUTE HORROR”

- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vBhjLKreflc>

“Every tribe in this country has a time of horror, absolute horror, when they were confronted by this invader.”

Quote from Trailer for PBS Home Video,
WE SHALL REMAIN: AMERICA THROUGH NATIVE EYES

from Some Answered Questions - Abdu'l-Baha (1904 - 1906)

“. . . answers compiled from a series of talks He gave at table during 1904, 1905, 1906.”

- ▶ Theodore Roosevelt, U.S. President, 1901 to 1909.
- ▶ *“The most vicious cowboy has more moral principle than the average Indian. I don’t go so far as to think that the only good Indians are the dead Indians, but I believe that nine out of every 10 are. And I shouldn’t like to inquire too closely into the case of the tenth.”*
- ▶ Told Congress Indians were not equal to whites, stressing Indian education was to be “elementary and largely industrial” and that the need of Indian higher education was “very, very limited.”

Part of a series of 44 newspaper articles “exploring past presidents’ attitudes toward Native Americans . . . And the federal laws and Indian policies enacted during their terms in office,” written by Alysa Landry and appearing in Indian Country Today in 2016.

President Theodore Roosevelt's tenure during talks Some Answered Questions - Abdu'l-Baha (1904-1906)

- ▶ Roosevelt's Indian Commissioner William Jones -
 - ▶ Issued famous "haircut order" demanding native males cut their hair
 - ▶ Suggested Indian agents withhold rations from Indians who refused to stop painting or discard "Indian costumes and blankets."
 - ▶ Traditional gatherings also should be prohibited, according to Jones, because "in many cases these dances and feasts are subterfuges to cover degrading acts and to disguise immoral purposes."

Part of a series of 44 newspaper articles "exploring past presidents' attitudes toward Native Americans . . . And the federal laws and Indian policies enacted during their terms in office," written by Alysa Landry and appearing in Indian Country Today in 2016

President Theodore Roosevelt's tenure during Abdu'l-Baha's talks, Some Answered Questions(1904-1906)

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President Theodore Roosevelt's tenure during Abdu'l-Baha's talks, Some Answered Questions(1904-1906)

- ▶ Continued Bureau of Indian Affairs outlawing of the “'sun dance' and all other similar dances and so-called religious ceremonies,” as well as the “usual practices of so-called ‘medicine men.’”
- ▶ Supervised the dissolution of Indian Territory for Oklahoma to become a state in 1907.

American Indian Religious Freedom Act in Native America n the Twentieth Century: An Encyclopedia (Garland Reference Library of Social Science (Vol. 452,1996)

President Theodore Roosevelt's tenure during Abdu'l-Baha's talks, Some Answered Questions

- ▶ From 77. The Right Method of Treating Criminals
 - ▶ “As forgiveness is one of the attributes of the Merciful One, so also justice is one of the attributes of the Lord. The tent of existence is upheld upon the pillar of justice and not upon forgiveness. The continuance of mankind depends upon justice and not upon forgiveness. . . .”

President Theodore Roosevelt's tenure during Abdu'l-Baha's talks, Some Answered Questions

- ▶ From 77. The Right Method of Treating Criminals
 - ▶ “To recapitulate: the constitution of the communities depends upon justice, not upon forgiveness. Then what Christ meant by forgiveness and pardon is not that, when nations attack you, burn your homes, plunder your goods, assault your wives, children and relatives, and violate your honor, you should be submissive in the presence of these tyrannical foes and allow them to perform all their cruelties and oppressions. No, the words of Christ refer to the conduct of two individuals toward each other: if one person assaults another, the injured one should forgive him. But the communities must protect the rights of man. . . .”

Abdu'l-Baha's journey across North America - 1912

- ▶ U.S. President - William Howard Taft, 1909 - 1913
 - ▶ America's first permanent movie studio opened in Fort Lee, N.J.
 - ▶ 1911 - delegation of Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians travel to D.C. seeking audience with Taft and Robert Valentine, then Commissioner of Indian Affairs, to complain about how Indians were “discreditably depicted in moving pictures.” *Washington Post* reports on the delegation's concerns. Valentine expresses sympathy.
 - ▶ President Taft did not respond to delegation. National Board of Censorship continues to approve the films.
 - ▶ Placed millions of acres of land under “public protection” even though they were already under Indian claim. Ignored the impact on the tribes of restricting their use of these lands. Ex = 1910 E.O establishing Rainbow Bridge National Monument without consulting Southwest tribes who had considered the area sacred for at least 10,000 years. White explorers first set eyes on this natural bridge a scant 9 months before the executive order.

Abdu'l-Baha's journey across North America - 1912

- ▶ U.S. President - William Howard Taft, 1909 - 1913
 - ▶ Encouraged Indians to accept allotments under Dawes Act of 1887 so he could open “surplus” land to white settlers.
 - ▶ Issued more than three dozen proclamations and executive orders opening Indian land for white settlement.
 - ▶ Unilaterally created, expanded, reduced or otherwise changed the size of existing reservations.
 - ▶ Signed proclamations admitting Arizona and New Mexico into the Union, making himself the first president to govern the 48 contiguous states.
 - ▶ BIA begins investigating peyote meetings

From The Advent of Divine Justice by Shoghi Effendi

- ▶ “Small wonder, therefore, that the Author of the Bahá’í Revelation should have chosen to associate the name and title of that House, which is to be the crowning glory of His administrative institutions, not with forgiveness but with justice, to have made justice the only basis and the permanent foundation of His Most Great Peace, and to have proclaimed it in His Hidden Words as “*the best beloved of all things*” in His sight. It is to the American believers, particularly, that I feel urged to direct this fervent plea to ponder in their hearts the implications of this moral rectitude, and to uphold, with heart and soul and uncompromisingly, both individually and collectively, this sublime standard—a standard of which justice is so essential and potent an element.’”

The Priceless Pearl, biography of Shoghi Effendi by Ruhiyyih Khanum, 1969.

- ▶ "In 1923 he refers to 'the confusion and the gross materialism in which mankind is now sunk'. A few years later he writes of 'the apathy, the gross materialism and superficiality of society today'. In 1927 he wrote to the American National Assembly: 'in the heart of society itself, [page 354] where the ominous signs of increasing extravagance and profligacy are but lending fresh impetus to the forces of revolt and reaction that are growing more distinct every day'".

The Priceless Pearl, biography of Shoghi Effendi by Ruhiyyih Khanum, 1969.

- ▶ Some pivotal events leading up to publication of *The Priceless Pearl*:
 - ▶ 1934 - federal government fully recognizes the right of free worship on Indian reservations but many obstacles remain to free religious practice
 - ▶ For example, traditional Indian practitioners were frequently denied access to sacred sites located outside of reservations, often on federal lands
 - ▶ Continuing obstacles led Congress to enact the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) in 1978:
 - ▶ Congress determined - “the lack of a clear, comprehensive, and consistent Federal policy has often resulted in the abridgement of religious freedom for traditional American

The Priceless Pearl, biography of Shoghi Effendi by Ruhiiyyih Khanum, 1969.

- ▶ “In 1941 Shoghi Effendi castigated the prevalent trends of society in no uncertain terms: . . . In 1948 he again stigmatizes modern society . . . However it was towards the end of his life that Shoghi Effendi dwelt more openly and frequently on this subject, pointing out that although Europe was the cradle of a "godless", a "highly-vaunted yet lamentably defective civilization", the foremost protagonist of that civilization was now the United States and that in that country, at the present time, its manifestations had led to a degree of unbridled materialism which now presented a danger to the entire world.

The Priceless Pearl, biography of Shoghi Effendi by Ruhiyyih Khanum, 1969.

- ▶ In 1954, in a letter to the Bahá'ís of the United States, couched in terms he had never used before, he recapitulated the extraordinary privileges this Community had enjoyed, the extraordinary victories it had won, but said it stood at a most critical juncture in its history, not only its own history but its nation's history, a nation he had described as "the shell that enshrines so precious a member of the world community of the followers" of Bahá'u'lláh. In this letter he pointed out that the country of which the American Bahá'ís formed a part is passing through a crisis which, in its spiritual, moral, social and political aspects, is of extreme seriousness - a seriousness which to a superficial observer is liable to be dangerously underestimated."

The Priceless Pearl, biography of Shoghi Effendi by Ruhiiyyih Khanum, 1969.

- ▶ “From the outset Shoghi Effendi realized that there was a great cancer eating away at the vitals of men, a materialism reaching a state of development in the West unrivalled by the decadence it had invariably produced in past civilizations when their decline set in. As very many people do not know what materialism means it can do not harm to quote Webster who defines certain of its aspects as "the tendency to give undue importance to material interests; devotion to the material nature and its wants" and says another definition is the theory that human phenomena should be viewed and interpreted in terms of physical and material causes rather than spiritual and ethical causes. Shoghi Effendi's attitude towards this subject, the evils that produce it and the evils it in turn gives rise to, is reflected in innumerable passages of his writings, beginning in 1923 and going on to 1957.”

The Priceless Pearl, biography of Shoghi Effendi by Ruhiyyih Khanum, 1969.

- ▶ "Parallel with this, and pervading all departments of life - an evil which the nation, and indeed all those within the capitalist system, though to a lesser degree, share with that state and its satellites regarded as the sworn enemies of that system - is the crass materialism, which lays excessive and ever-increasing emphasis on material well-being, forgetful of those things of the spirit on which alone a sure and stable foundation can be laid for human society."

The Priceless Pearl, biography of Shoghi Effendi by Ruhiiyyih Khanum, 1969.

- ▶ (cont'd from previous slide) “It is this same cancerous materialism, born originally in Europe, carried to excess in the North American continent, contaminating the Asiatic peoples and nations, spreading its ominous [page 356] tentacles to the borders of Africa, and now invading its very heart, which Bahá'u'lláh in unequivocal and emphatic language denounced in His Writings, comparing it to a devouring flame and regarding it as the chief factor in precipitating the dire ordeals and world-shaking crises that must necessarily involve the burning of cities and the spread of terror and consternation in the hearts of men.”

The Priceless Pearl, biography of Shoghi Effendi by Ruhiyyih Khanum, 1969.

- ▶ “Shoghi Effendi reminded us that 'Abdu'l-Bahá, during His visit to both Europe and America, had, from platform and pulpit, raised His voice ‘with pathetic persistence’ against this “all-pervasive, pernicious materialism” and pointed out that as ‘this ominous laxity in morals, this progressive stress laid on man's material pursuits and well-being’ continued, the political horizon was also darkening ‘as witnessed by the widening of the gulf separating the protagonists of two antagonistic schools of thought which, however divergent in their ideologies, are to be commonly condemned by the upholders of the standard of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh for their materialistic philosophies and their neglect of those spiritual values and eternal verities on which alone a stable and flourishing civilization can be ultimately established.’”

President Obama on American Exceptionalism

*How the Obama Era Gave Us A Dangerous Patriotism, John Blake,
www.cnn.com*

- ▶ “Consider Obama's speech in Selma, Alabama, last year (2015). Some consider it his own ‘Gettysburg Address.’ He gave it at the foot of the Edmund Pettus Bridge, commemorating the epic civil rights campaign that spawned the Voting Rights Act [aka “Bloody Sunday”].
- ▶ In that speech, Obama declared that America is great not just because of what it was, but because of what it is becoming. He said "America is not some fragile thing" that can't tolerate citizens demanding change.
- ▶ "What greater form of patriotism is there than the belief that America is not yet finished, that we are strong enough to be self-critical?" he asked.
- ▶ He called members of disparaged groups -- gays and lesbians, Mexican immigrants -- American heroes. He praised the "hopeful strivers who cross the Rio Grande" and ‘the gay Americans whose blood ran on the streets of San Francisco and New York.’“

World Council of Churches

“Statement on the doctrine of discovery and its enduring impact on Indigenous Peoples” (Feb 17, 2012)

- ▶ “3. The patterns of domination and oppression that continue to afflict Indigenous Peoples today throughout the world are found in numerous historical documents such as Papal Bulls, Royal Charters and court rulings. For example, the church documents Dum Diversas (1452) and Romanus Pontifex (1455) called for non-Christian peoples to be invaded, captured, vanquished, subdued, reduced to perpetual slavery and to have their possessions and property seized by Christian monarchs. Collectively, these and other concepts form a paradigm or pattern of domination that is still being used against Indigenous Peoples.”

World Council of Churches

“Statement on the doctrine of discovery and its enduring impact on Indigenous Peoples” (Feb 17, 2012)

- ▶ “4. Following the above patterns of thought and behaviour, Christopher Columbus was instructed, for example, to "discover and conquer," "subdue" and "acquire" distant lands, and in 1493 Pope Alexander VI called for non-Christian "barbarous nations" to be subjugated and proselytized for the "propagation of the Christian empire." Three years later, England's King Henry VII followed the pattern of domination by instructing John Cabot and his sons to locate, subdue and take possession of the "islands, countries, regions, of the heathens and infidels . . . unknown to Christian people. . . ."

World Council of Churches

“Statement on the doctrine of discovery and its enduring impact on Indigenous Peoples” (Feb 17, 2012)

- ▶ “4. (cont’d from previous slide) . . . Thereafter, for example, English, Portuguese and Spanish colonization in Australia, the Americas and New Zealand proceeded under the Doctrine of Discovery as Europeans attempted to conquer and convert Indigenous Peoples. In 1513, Spain drafted a legal document that was required to be read to Indigenous Peoples before "just war" could commence. The Requerimiento informed Indigenous Peoples that their lands had been donated to Spain and that they had to submit to the Crown and Christianity or they would be attacked and enslaved.”

World Council of Churches

“Statement on the doctrine of discovery and its enduring impact on Indigenous Peoples” (Feb 17, 2012)

- ▶ “5. In 1823, the U.S. Supreme Court used the same pattern and paradigm of domination to claim in the ruling *Johnson & Graham's Lessee v. M'Intosh* that the United States as the successor to various "potentates" had the "ultimate dominion" or "ultimate title" (right of territorial domination) over all lands within the claimed boundaries of the United States. The Court said that as a result of the documents mentioned above, authorizing ‘Christian people’ to ‘discover’ and possess the lands of ‘heathens,’ the Indians were left with a mere ‘right of occupancy;’ an occupancy that, according to the Court was subject to the ‘ultimate title’ or ‘absolute title’ of the United States. . . .”

World Council of Churches

“Statement on the doctrine of discovery and its enduring impact on Indigenous Peoples” (Feb 17, 2012)

- ▶ “5. (cont’d from previous slide) . . . The Johnson case has been cited repeatedly by Australian, Canadian, New Zealand and United States courts, and the Doctrine of Discovery has been held by all these countries to have granted European settler societies plenary power (domination) over Indigenous Peoples, legal title to their lands, and has resulted in diminished sovereign, commercial and international rights for Indigenous Peoples and governments. Europeans believed this was proper based on their ethnocentric, racial and religious attitudes that they and their cultures, religions and governments were superior to non-Christian European peoples.”

World Council of Churches

“Statement on the doctrine of discovery and its enduring impact on Indigenous Peoples” (Feb 17, 2012)

- ▶ “6. Consequently, the current situation of Indigenous Peoples around the world is the result of a linear programme of ‘legal’ precedent, originating with the Doctrine of Discovery and codified in contemporary national laws and policies. The Doctrine mandated Christian European countries to attack, enslave and kill the Indigenous Peoples they encountered and to acquire all of their assets. The Doctrine remains the law in various ways in almost all settler societies around the world today. The enormity of the application of this law and the theft of the rights and assets of Indigenous Peoples have led indigenous activists to work to educate the world about this situation and to galvanize opposition to the Doctrine. Many Christian churches that have studied the pernicious Doctrine have repudiated it, and are working to ameliorate the legal, economic and social effects of this international framework. . . . This issue of the Doctrine of Discovery has also been brought to the forefront of world attention by Indigenous Peoples working with international bodies.”

World Council of Churches

“Statement on the doctrine of discovery and its enduring impact on Indigenous Peoples” (on U.S. Law)

- ▶ “5. In 1823, the U.S. Supreme Court used the same pattern and paradigm of domination to claim in the ruling *Johnson & Graham's Lessee v. M'Intosh* that the United States as the successor to various "potentates" had the "ultimate dominion" or "ultimate title" (right of territorial domination) over all lands within the claimed boundaries of the United States. The Court said that as a result of the documents mentioned above, authorizing "Christian people" to "discover" and possess the lands of "heathens," the Indians were left with a mere "right of occupancy;" an occupancy that, according to the Court was subject to the "ultimate title" or "absolute title" of the United States. . . .”

World Council of Churches

“Statement on the doctrine of discovery and its enduring impact on Indigenous Peoples” (Plenary Power)

- ▶ “5. (cont’d from previous slide) . . . The Johnson case has been cited repeatedly by Australian, Canadian, New Zealand and United States courts, and the Doctrine of Discovery has been held by all these countries to have granted European settler societies plenary power (domination) over Indigenous Peoples, legal title to their lands, and has resulted in diminished sovereign, commercial and international rights for Indigenous Peoples and governments. Europeans believed this was proper based on their ethnocentric, racial and religious attitudes that they and their cultures, religions and governments were superior to non-Christian European peoples.”

World Council of Churches

“Statement on the doctrine of discovery and its enduring impact on Indigenous Peoples” (Legal Precedent & Current Law)

- ▶ “6. Consequently, the current situation of Indigenous Peoples around the world is the result of a linear programme of "legal" precedent, originating with the Doctrine of Discovery and codified in contemporary national laws and policies. The Doctrine mandated Christian European countries to attack, enslave and kill the Indigenous Peoples they encountered and to acquire all of their assets. The Doctrine remains the law in various ways in almost all settler societies around the world today. The enormity of the application of this law and the theft of the rights and assets of Indigenous Peoples have led indigenous activists to work to educate the world about this situation and to galvanize opposition to the Doctrine. Many Christian churches that have studied the pernicious Doctrine have repudiated it, and are working to ameliorate the legal, economic and social effects of this international framework. . .”

Doctrine of Discovery

World Council of Churches officially. . .

- ▶ “A. Denounces the Doctrine of Discovery as fundamentally opposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ and as a violation of the inherent human rights that all individuals and peoples have received from God;
- ▶ B. Urges various governments in the world to dismantle the legal structures and policies based on the Doctrine of Discovery and dominance, so as better to empower and enable Indigenous Peoples to identify their own aspirations and issues of concern;
- ▶ C. Affirms its conviction and commitment that Indigenous Peoples be assisted in their struggle to involve themselves fully in creating and implementing solutions that recognize and respect the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples and to exercise their right to self-determination and self-governance;
- ▶ D. Requests the governments and states of the world to ensure that their policies, regulations and laws that affect Indigenous Peoples comply with international conventions and, in particular, conform to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the International Labour Organization's Convention 169;”

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE on “organic change” (2013)

- ▶ “The principle of oneness of humankind implies, then, an organic change in the very structure of society. What should be stated plainly here is that Baha’is do not believe the transformation thus envisioned will come about exclusively through their own efforts. Nor are they trying to create a movement that would seek to impose on society their vision of the future. Every nation and every group - indeed, every individual - will, to a greater or lesser degree, contribute to the emergence of the world civilization towards which humanity is irresistibly moving.”

Letter from the Universal House of Justice to the Baha’is of Iran dated March 2, 2013.

“On social action, public discourse, and non-involvement in political affairs”

Universal House of Justice (2017)

- ▶ “Much as the friends must guard against in any way ever seeming to identify themselves or the Cause with any political party, they must also guard against the other extreme of never taking part, with other progressive groups, in conferences or committees designed to promote some activity in entire accord with our teachings - such as, for instance, better race relations.”

Shoghi Effendi cautioned, through his secretary, and appearing in Letter on behalf of Universal House of Justice to an individual Baha’I, dated April 27, 2017.

“On social action, public discourse, and non-involvement in political affairs”

Universal House of Justice

- ▶ “This involvement in activities for social reform and well-being can in certain circumstances even extend to taking part in demonstrations. A letter written on the Guardian’s behalf indicated that he did not see any objection to Baha’i students taking part as Baha’is in a protest concerning racial prejudice on campus, since ‘there was nothing political about it’ and ‘he does not see how they could remain indifferent when fellow-students were voicing our own Baha’I attitude on such a vital issue and one we feel so strongly about.’”

“On social action, public discourse, and non-involvement in political affairs”

Universal House of Justice

- ▶ “Thus, individual Baha’is are free to participate in those efforts and activities, such as peaceful rallies, that uphold constructive aims in consonance with the Baha’i teachings, for example, . . . the promotion of social justice, the elimination of all forms of discrimination, and the safeguarding of human rights.”

Letter on behalf of Universal House of Justice to an individual Baha’i, dated April 27, 2017.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

on U.S. Baha'is avoiding polarization and fragmentation occurring with the United States

- ▶ “One of the current features of the process of the disintegration of the old world order manifest in the United States is the increasing polarization and fragmentation that has come to characterize so much of political and social life. . . . Matters of moral principle and questions of justice are reduced to intractable liberal or conservative viewpoints, and the country is increasingly divided along divergent lines.”

Letter on behalf of Universal House of Justice to an individual Baha’I, dated April 27, 2017.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

on U.S. Baha'is avoiding polarization and fragmentation occurring with the United States

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Letter on behalf of Universal House of Justice to an individual Baha'i, dated April 27, 2017

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

“justice is essential”

- ▶ ‘As Bahá’u’lláh stated: “Say: no man can attain his true station except through his justice. No power can exist except through unity. No welfare and no well-being can be attained except through consultation.” In this light, justice is indeed essential to resist the vain imaginings and idle fancies of social and political machinations, to see reality with one’s own eyes, and to identify the requirements for an equitable social order. But then unity is essential—forged through consultative processes, including action and reflection—to achieve the power required for positive social change.’

Letter on behalf of Universal House of Justice to an individual Baha’i, dated April 27, 2017

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

on the role of justice in Baha'i growth and

development

- ▶ “. . . Baha'is across the globe, in the most unassuming settings, are striving to establish a pattern of activity and the corresponding administrative structures that embody the principle of the oneness of humankind and the convictions underpinning it, only a few of which are mentioned here as a means of illustration: . . . that justice, as a faculty of the soul, enables the individual to distinguish truth from falsehood and guides the investigation of reality, so essential if superstitious beliefs and outworn traditions that impede unity are to be eliminated; that, when appropriately brought to bear on social issues, justice is the single most important instrument for the establishment of unity; . . .”

Letter from the Universal House of Justice to the Baha'is of Iran dated March 2, 2013.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

“Baha’is can learn and grow in capacity”

- ▶ “In their reflections on how to contribute to the betterment of the world, Bahá’ís will undoubtedly recognize that demonstrations are not the only, or even the most effective, means available to them. Rather, they can learn and grow in capacity over time to help their fellow citizens to frame concerns in a way that rises above fissures, to share views in a manner that transcends divisive approaches, and to create and participate in spaces to work together in the quest to enact solutions to the problems that bedevil their nation.”

Letter on behalf of Universal House of Justice to an individual Baha’i, dated April 27, 2017

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

on the role of justice in Baha'i growth and development

- ▶ “Numerous, of course, are the questions that the process of learning, now under way in all regions of the world, must address: . . . [including] how to enable contingents of men and women to break free from the confines of passivity and the chains of oppression in order to engage in activities conducive to their spiritual, social and intellectual development; . . .”

Letter from the Universal House of Justice to the Baha'is of Iran dated March 2, 2013.

*from The Hidden Words of Baha'u'llah
(1857/1858 during His exile in Baghdad)*

- ▶ “O SON OF SPIRIT! The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behooveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.”

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

on nonexistant dichotomies

- ▶ “Unfortunately, sometimes when approaching such important and deeply felt matters, the friends can create dichotomies where none exist. Thus, for example, it is contended that one must choose between either non-involvement in politics or social action; either teaching the Faith or involvement with society; either the institute process and the community-building activities it fosters or a program for race unity; and so on.”

Letter on behalf of Universal House of Justice to an individual Baha’i, dated April 27, 2017

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

on resolving nonexistant dichotomies

- ▶ ‘Such apparent conflicts can be greatly dissipated by keeping in mind Shoghi Effendi’s advice, conveyed in a letter written on his behalf, to conceive of the teachings as one great whole with many facets. “Truth may, in covering different subjects, appear to be contradictory,” the same letter indicated, “and yet it is all one if you carry the thought through to the end.” A careful reading of the Bahá’í writings and the guidance of the House of Justice can clarify how two matters that appear to be in tension with one another are coherent once the concepts and principles that connect them are understood. Particular circumstances in a locality, timeliness, and the periodic need for focus also have a bearing on such issues.’

Letter on behalf of Universal House of Justice to an individual Baha’I, dated April 27, 2017

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

on political power

- ▶ “Bahá’ís do not seek political power. They will not accept political posts in their respective governments, whatever the particular system in place, though they will take up positions which they deem to be purely administrative in nature. They will not affiliate themselves with political parties, become entangled in partisan issues, or participate in programmes tied to the divisive agendas of any group or faction.”

Letter from the Universal House of Justice to the Baha'is of Iran dated March 2, 2013.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

on non-involvement in politics

- ▶ “At the same time, Bahá’ís respect those who, out of a sincere desire to serve their countries, choose to pursue political aspirations or to engage in political activity. The approach adopted by the Bahá’í community of non-involvement in such activity is not intended as a statement expressing some fundamental objection to politics in its true sense; indeed, humanity organizes itself through its political affairs. Bahá’ís vote in civil elections, as long as they do not have to identify themselves with any party in order to do so.”

Letter from the Universal House of Justice to the Baha'is of Iran dated March 2, 2013.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

on government

- ▶ “In this connection, they view government as a system for maintaining the welfare and orderly progress of a society, and they undertake, one and all, to observe the laws of the land in which they reside, without allowing their inner religious beliefs to be violated. Bahá’ís will not be party to any instigation to overthrow a government. Nor will they interfere in political relations between the governments of different nations.”

Letter from the Universal House of Justice to the Baha'is of Iran dated March 2, 2013.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

on just versus tyrannical rule

- ▶ “This does not mean that they are naive about political processes in the world today and make no distinction between just and tyrannical rule. The rulers of the earth have sacred obligations to fulfil towards their people, who should be seen as the most precious treasure of any nation. Wherever they reside, Bahá’ís endeavour to uphold the standard of justice, addressing inequities directed towards themselves or towards others, but only through lawful means available to them, eschewing all forms of violent protest. Moreover, in no way does the love they hold in their hearts for humanity run counter to the sense of duty they feel to expend their energies in service to their respective countries.”

Letter from the Universal House of Justice to the Baha'is of Iran dated March 2, 2013.