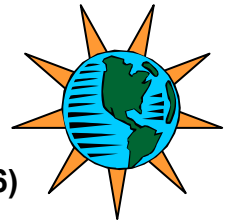
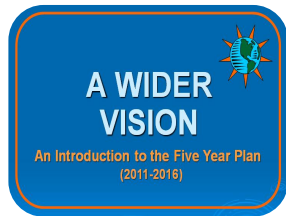


# Study Guide



## **A Wider Vision: An Introduction to the Five Year Plan (2011-2016)**

For use during the PowerPoint program



“A Wider Vision” presents an overview of the current Five Year Plan (2011-2016)—the fifth in a series with the explicit aim of advancing the process of entry by troops. The PowerPoint summarizes the text and uses vivid images to illustrate key messages from the Universal House of Justice.

In its 1 January 2011 message to the Bahá'ís of the World, the House of Justice asks us to give “thoughtful study” to these documents “at gatherings of all kinds—whether at the national, regional, or cluster level, in local communities, in neighbourhoods and villages, or in the home.”

“We are certain,” they write, that “through the consultations about the Plan in which you participate, your understanding will deepen and, conscious of the spiritual forces that support you, you will resolve to make this global enterprise a personal concern...”

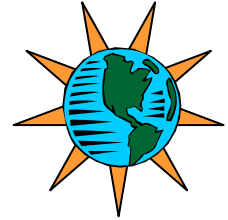
This study guide is designed to accompany the PowerPoint program. It can be completed by individuals, small groups or a whole class working together.

The intent of the program is to convey both the letter and the spirit of these messages. Rather than a paragraph-by-paragraph enumeration of their content, however, the program is organized around nineteen common themes. While much of the original language has been retained, some sections of the text have been shortened and paraphrased. The program is therefore not a substitute for studying the original documents.

The illustrations that accompany the text are designed to make the content easier to recall. In the interest of visual simplicity, references and quotation marks have been largely omitted from the slides. Paragraph numbers from the guidance can be found at the start of each topic in this study guide. The viewer should refer to the original letters for the exact wording.

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# Study Guide



## A Wider Vision

### An Introduction to the Five Year Plan (2011-2016)

This study guide is designed for use during the PowerPoint program. It consists of an introduction and nineteen sections as listed below. Each section may be copied as needed.

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# Study Guide for

# A WIDER VISION

## An Introduction to the Five Year Plan (2011-2016)



### Source Documents from the Universal House of Justice

- R-2010 = Ridván 2010 letter (33 paragraphs)
- R-2011 = Ridván 2011 letter (7 paragraphs)
- Dec. 28 = Dec. 28, 2010 letter (44 paragraphs)

### **INTRODUCTION: Overview and Context** (slides 1-18)

1. What is the name of the current global Plan? Who is the author of the Plan?  
When did it begin? How long is it and how much time do we have left?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why do you think 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages us to lift our hearts above the present,  
and look with eyes of faith into the future?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What are the Tablets of the Divine Plan? When were they revealed? By Whom? For whom?  
What is their essential message? What is their ultimate goal and when will this occur?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. In order to achieve the goal of the Tablets of the Divine Plan, what must happen first and why?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What will be the focus of the Bahá'í world through the year 2021?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Why are mere numbers not sufficient?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. How did the previous Five Year Plan help to advance the process of civilization building?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. What is the purpose of the training institute and how does it serve as an *engine of growth*?

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9. What are the four core activities and why are they important?

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10. Once the Faith had spread around the globe, what became the new focus for the Bahá'í world?

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## SECTION 1: Rise in Capacity of the Bahá'í Community

(slides 21-22)

R-2010:1-3;  
Dec. 28:2



1. List several ways the Bahá'í community has grown in capacity during the previous Plan.

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## SECTION 2: Developing a Culture of Learning and Encouragement

(slides 23-26)

R-2010:10,  
19-21



1. Name some characteristics of a culture of learning and encouragement.

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2. Why do you think the House of Justice calls this culture change *an accomplishment of enormous proportions*?

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3. How does this culture change manifest itself in Bahá'í administrative affairs?

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## SECTION 3: Strengthening the Institute Process

(slides 27-33)

R-2010:7-12;  
Dec. 28:3,16



1. How can we strengthen the institute process?

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2. Why is the institute called *an instrument of limitless potentialities*?

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3. With the adoption of institute courses, deepening classes are no longer needed.  
True or false? (Explain.)

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4. How does the institute process contribute to the culture change envisioned by the House of Justice?

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5. Why is it important for study circle participants to see themselves as active agents  
of their own learning, and how does this compare with traditional systems of education?

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6. What are some things tutors might do to provide a spiritually-empowering environment?  
(Discuss with your group.)

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7. How can institute coordinators foster the development of such an environment?

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## SECTION 4: Bahá'í Children's Classes

(slide 34)

R-2010:13-15



1. Children's classes should be regular, systematic and open to all Bahá'ís.

True or false? (Explain.)

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2. Why do you think children's classes are a requirement of the community-building process?

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3. Can other materials be used for Bahá'í children's classes beyond the Ruhi core?

(Give examples of other materials you have used.)

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## SECTION 5: Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program

(slides 35-36)

R-2010:16-18



1. How are junior youth viewed by the Bahá'í community and by society at large?

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2. What is the purpose of the junior youth program?

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3. How many junior youth groups exist in your cluster, and what can be done to multiply these?

(Discuss with your group.)

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## SECTION 6: Programs of Growth with Increasing Intensity (slides 37-49)

Dec. 28:3-11,15;  
R-2010:25



1. In previous Plans, clusters were seen as moving through four broad stages [A-B-C-D] along the path of organic development. Experience now allows us to view this movement as:

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2. What is the first milestone along that path?

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3. What can serve as the initial stimulus for growth, and how does the process gain momentum?

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4. Name some of the administrative roles and structures needed to facilitate orderly growth.

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5. The core team is composed of: \_\_\_\_\_

6. In time, the process of growth conforms to a rhythm with distinct three-month cycles. What are the components of each cycle and what is the purpose of each component?

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7. What is an intensive program of growth (IPG), and how do the friends know if they are ready to launch one?

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8. How can we guarantee continuing expansion of this whole system of growth?

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9. What is the second milestone along a cluster's path of organic development?

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10. What is the third milestone?

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11. As we launch and manage programs of growth with increasing intensity, because we are following the instructions of the Universal House of Justice, we can expect our progress to be smooth and steady. True or false? (Explain.)

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12. If we just stick to the formula, victory is inevitable. True or false? (Explain.)

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13. The building of a global civilization (circle all that apply):

- a. Should be completed by the end of this century.
- b. Will happen more quickly if we take advantage of a few proven shortcuts.
- c. Will require centuries of exertion by humanity.

14. In developing plans for our own cluster, it is best to rely on the experience of more advanced clusters. True or false? (Explain.)

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15. At the start of this Plan, there were some 1,600 clusters worldwide with an intensive program of growth. What is the new goal?

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16. This is approximately what fraction of all the clusters in the world at present?

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17. How can clusters with well-functioning programs of growth assist other clusters?

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## SECTION 7: Advancing the Frontiers of Learning

(slides 50-56)

Dec. 28:12



1. Since its founding, there has been a single consistent approach to the growth of the Bahá'í community. True or false? (Explain.)

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2. Why did the process of growth slow considerably after masses of humanity embraced the Faith?

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3. Describe the current approach to growth, which is based on decades of experience.

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## SECTION 8: Teaching the Faith

(slides 57-68)

Dec. 28:4,15;  
R-2010:3-6



1. How does this entire process of growth begin?

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2. How can we utilize the sample conversation (known as Anna's Presentation) in Ruhi Book 6?

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3. How does the Guardian define *direct teaching*?

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4. Why does the label "door-to-door teaching" not do justice to the process of visiting homes without prior notice?

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5. What does it mean to say that an individual or group is receptive?

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6. With regard to teaching the Faith, the House of Justice praises the believers for:

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7. Newly-found friends must be enrolled in the Faith as quickly as possible, so they can begin working with the Bahá'í community on a path of service to humanity. True or false? (Explain.)

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8. The House of Justice asks us to extend our teaching efforts more broadly, while at the same time focusing on smaller pockets of the population. How can we accomplish both?

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9. Consider ways to extend your personal teaching efforts more broadly.  
(Share ideas in your group.)

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10. Consult with your team about opportunities to focus on smaller pockets  
of the population in your own cluster.

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11. As the core activities are established in a community, they should be maintained over time  
by visiting teachers and homefront pioneers. True or false? (Explain.)

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12. How can we move closer to the long-cherished goal of universal participation?  
(Share specific ideas for helping your own community reach this goal.)

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## SECTION 9: Vital Role of the Auxiliary Board

(slides 69-75)

R-2010:24;  
Dec. 28:1,5,8,19,31



1. What is the role of Counselors and Auxiliary Board members in this global development effort?

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2. Auxiliary Board members and their assistants have a special responsibility for helping the friends to visualize the first milestone on the path of organic development, and the multiplicity of ways it can be reached. What does this mean? Give some examples.

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3. List nine or more additional things that Board members are asked to do. Give a practical example of how each one might be accomplished.

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4. Auxiliary Board members, Regional Councils and other agencies should ensure that new cluster institutions take on the required characteristics. What are some of those characteristics? Suggest ways to encourage the development of each characteristic.

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5. Circle those qualities that the House of Justice says will prove essential to the work of Board members. Discuss your answers, and give an example or definition for each quality you select.

- Ability to interpret the guidance
- Attention to detail
- Authoritative style
- Breadth of vision
- Calm determination
- Clarity of thought
- Enthusiasm for door-to-door teaching
- Faith in the capacity of everyone with a desire to serve
- Flexibility
- Focus on best practices
- Kind fatherly manner
- Readiness to listen with heightened spiritual perception
- Readiness to speak on a variety of topics
- Resourcefulness
- Skill in eliminating distractions
- Strict adherence to proper procedure
- Unqualified love free of paternalism

6. Define *paternalism* and give several examples or demonstrate (without mentioning names).

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7. What is the role of Auxiliary Board members with regard to Local Spiritual Assemblies?

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8. What are some ways to increase capacity in Local Spiritual Assemblies?  
(Discuss ideas with your group.)

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## SECTION 10: Enhancing Administrative Capacity

(slides 76-85)

R-2010:23;  
Dec. 28:13-18



1. Shoghi Effendi says that Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Order is the “nucleus” and “pattern” for a future global society. What does this mean? Define *nucleus* and *pattern*.

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2. In your own words, how does the Guardian characterize the old world order, and the new one that is taking shape?

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3. What do the following terms mean and what is Shoghi Effendi referring to?

Healing Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Leavening Power: \_\_\_\_\_

Cementing Force: \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Why do you think he calls this slow process of building the Bahá'í administrative order the “one hope” of a disillusioned humanity?

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5. Why is it essential for the Bahá'í community to grow significantly in size?

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6. As the community grows, what types of new organizational designs might prove useful?

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7. To facilitate the growth process, we are asked to be methodical but not rigid, creative but not haphazard, decisive but not hasty, and careful but not controlling. Define each of these terms.

If desired, groups can also role play, demonstrating positive and negative examples for each pair of words.

methodical: _____	rigid: _____
creative: _____	haphazard: _____
decisive: _____	hasty: _____
careful: _____	controlling: _____

8. Technique is the key to progress. True or false? (Explain.)

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9. What is the role of National Assemblies and Regional Councils, and why is their work so important?

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10. It is imperative that all Regional Councils pay close attention to what two things?

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11. As Regional Councils develop, what are some of the things they will need?

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12. What might happen if Councils themselves are not in a learning mode, and how can they enhance their own learning process? (Discuss with your group.)

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## SECTION 11: Development of Local Spiritual Assemblies (slides 86-103)

Dec. 28:20-27;  
R-2010:22



1. The maturity of an Assembly can be assessed by the regularity of its meetings and efficiency of its functioning. True or false? (Explain.)

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2. List some of the responsibilities of a Local Spiritual Assembly.

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3. In addition to carrying out basic administrative functions, what are some other key areas for Assembly consultation? How can the Assembly ensure progress in each of these areas?

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4. What is the connection between the Local Assembly, large-scale expansion, and the Plan?

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5. Why is it important for Assembly members to be personally involved in the core activities?

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6. What are some of the additional tasks faced by Assemblies in large metropolitan areas?

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7. Describe the relationship between a mature Assembly and:

a. The individual believer

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b. The Area Teaching Committee and the training institute coordinators

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c. The Bahá'í community

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d. The community at large

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8. As an Assembly grows in capacity, it will need a large, well-furnished Bahá'í center for its activities. True or false? (Explain.)

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9. What is the lofty vision of the Local Assembly, as revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá?

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10. Every Spiritual Assembly is under the loving care and protection of: \_\_\_\_\_

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## SECTION 12: Social Action and Public Discourse

(slides 104-123)

R-2010:26-32;  
Dec. 28:24-25



1. The future world civilization will be constructed largely by Bahá'ís who are putting Bahá'u'lláh's teachings into practice. True or false? (Explain.)  

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2. Once a Bahá'í community reaches the first milestone on its path of organic development, it should turn its focus to a variety of social action projects. True or false? (Explain.)  

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3. In order to respond to the material needs of the larger society, Bahá'ís will have to create new methods and approaches to social and economic development. True or false? (Explain.)  

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4. Take a moment to reflect on some initial contributions your own Bahá'í community might make to the material and spiritual progress of society. (Share your ideas.)  

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5. The Bahá'í community has already gained much experience in the areas of social action and public discourse. To whom can we look for examples of this experience?  

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6. Social action includes a wide range of activities—from short-term informal efforts by individuals, to complex programs carried out by Bahá'í-inspired organizations. Share some examples you are aware of.  

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7. Whatever its scope and scale, what is the purpose of all social action?  

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8. The House of Justice states that the world civilization now on humanity's horizon must achieve a *dynamic coherence* between the material and spiritual requirements of life. Reflect on the meaning of this statement, which has "profound implications" for any social action pursued by Bahá'is. How can we achieve this dynamic coherence in our social action work?

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9. How can we ensure that our social action work is consistent with these fundamental concepts?
- a. Knowledge is central to social existence.
  - b. Access to knowledge is the right of every human being.
  - c. All are responsible for generating, applying and sharing knowledge.
  - d. Justice demands universal participation—each according to his or her talents and abilities.
  - e. Social change is not a project that one group of people carries out for the benefit of another.
  - f. The scope and complexity of social action must be commensurate with local human resources.
  - g. Efforts should begin on a modest scale and grow organically as local capacity develops.
  - h. The primary goal is to build capacity in the local population, enabling them to participate in creating a better world.

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10. What is the role of the Local Assembly with regard to social action projects initiated by Bahá'is?

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11. What are some of the pitfalls the friends should avoid? Give a concrete example of each one.

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12. With regard to social action, what is the Assembly's role in relation to the larger society?

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13. Give some examples of public discourse.

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14. The effectiveness of social action and public discourse can be judged by the number of enrollments that result. True or false? (Explain.)

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15. What might happen if we exaggerate the Bahá'í experience, project an air of triumphalism, or draw undue attention to fledgling efforts, such as the junior youth program?

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16. Define the following terms.

a. triumphalism: \_\_\_\_\_

b. fledgling: \_\_\_\_\_

17. What is the watchword in all cases of social action and public discourse? \_\_\_\_\_

18. Are social action and public discourse seen as alternative types of Bahá'í service? (Explain.)

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(slides 124-128)

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## SECTION 14: Spiritual Prerequisites for Success

(slides 129-142)

Dec. 28:31-35



1. What are the three preeminent and vital spiritual prerequisites for the success of all Bahá'í undertakings, as highlighted by Shoghi Effendi in *The Advent of Divine Justice*?

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2. Given conditions in the world today, reflect on how these might impact our efforts to infuse cluster after cluster with the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. (Discuss with your group.)

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3. What are some of the qualities associated with rectitude of conduct?

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4. Give concrete examples of how these qualities might be manifested in our business dealings, domestic life, employment, and service to the Faith.

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5. Though intended for all Bahá'ís, this requirement is primarily directed to our elected representatives at every level. True or false? (Explain.)

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6. While all those involved in Bahá'í activity are encouraged to uphold the high standards of the Faith, there may be some room for self interest. How much?

- Only enlightened self-interest
- A moderate amount
- It depends on the circumstances
- Not the slightest trace

7. Who is asked to ponder in their hearts the implications of moral rectitude?

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8. What does it mean to live a chaste and holy life?  
(Discuss with your group and give concrete examples.)

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9. What are some of the forces at work, especially on the hearts and minds of young people, that make it difficult to remain pure and chaste?

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10. In this modern age, prejudices of all kinds have essentially disappeared. True or false? (Explain.)

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11. How does the Guardian characterize racial prejudice? What does *corrosion* mean?

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12. How do the institute process and the current series of global Plans help to foster rectitude of conduct, a chaste and holy life, and freedom from prejudice?

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13. The House of Justice acknowledges that the Bahá'í standard of conduct is very high and that human beings are far from perfect, so what is expected of us?

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## SECTION 15: Transforming Habits of Thought

(slides 143-150)

Dec. 28:36-39



1. We are asked to become increasingly involved in the life of society, while knowing that the Faith aims to completely transform that society. How can we do both?

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2. We should strive to understand the full vision contained in the House of Justice messages, rather than taking phrases and sentences out of context, and viewing them as isolated fragments. What does this mean? Give an example.

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3. Bahá'í institutions and agencies are asked to encourage certain habits of thought and to help the believers overcome other tendencies that are reinforced by the larger society. For each pair of items below, explain what it means and give a concrete example. We should:

a. Analyze but not reduce: \_\_\_\_\_

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b. Ponder meaning but not dwell on words: \_\_\_\_\_

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c. Identify distinct areas of action but not compartmentalize: \_\_\_\_\_

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d. Work with full and complex thoughts rather than reducing entire themes to appealing phrases: \_\_\_\_\_

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e. Recognize the links between contrasting statements rather than perceiving dichotomies where there are none: \_\_\_\_\_

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f. See the activities of a program of growth, and the agencies supporting them, as complementary rather than in competition with one another: \_\_\_\_\_

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g. Think in terms of process rather than isolated events and projects: \_\_\_\_\_

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## SECTION 16: Three Participants in the Plan

(slides 151-163)

Dec. 28:40-44



1. Who are the three participants at the heart of the current global enterprise, and at every stage of the Divine Plan?  

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2. Throughout human history, relationships among these three have been fraught with difficulties. Explain what this means and give specific examples.  

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3. How are the relationships among the individual, the institutions and the community being transformed under the direct influence of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation?  

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4. What is the Bahá'í concept of the role of the individual?  

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5. Why is individual initiative and good will of little benefit when not directed along proper channels or balanced with consultation, sacrifice and collaborative action?  

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6. What is the difference between blind obedience and obedience that marks the emergence of a mature human race?  

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7. Consider the station and function of those who serve on Bahá'í institutions.  
(Circle all that apply.)

- To dictate but with compassion and love
- To consult among themselves and the friends they represent
- To be the central ornaments of the cause
- To be intrinsically superior to others in capacity and merit
- To be the sole promoters of the Bahá'í teachings
- To be instruments for nurturing human potential

8. What are some of the qualities expected of those who serve on Bahá'í institutions?

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9. The House of Justice says that those who serve on Bahá'í institutions should try to win not only the confidence, genuine support and respect of those they serve, but also their esteem and real affection. What are some ways we might achieve this?

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10. How can the Bahá'í community become a spiritually-charged arena where a bewildered humanity can see a pattern of collective life that will propel it towards its high destiny?

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## SECTION 17: World Integration and Disintegration

(slides 164-165)

R-2011:3-4



1. The 2011 Ridván Message highlights the accelerating forces of integration and disintegration in the world. Give examples of each, and explain how both are contributing to the movement of humanity toward Bahá'u'lláh.

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2. What will happen if the remedy prescribed by the Divine Physician is not administered?

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## SECTION 18: The Example of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

(slides 166-169)

R-2011:5



1. In carrying out the Plan, the House of Justice points us to the example of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. What can we learn from His example?

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## SECTION 19: Stages in the Spread of the Divine Light

(slides 170-174)

R-2011:6-7



1. The Guardian describes the successive stages in the spread of the light of God's triumphant Faith around the globe. Although that goal is far from being fulfilled, what progress has been made to date?

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2. Who or what does the House of Justice call "a beacon of light against the gloom"?

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3. What is the House of Justice calling on all Bahá'ís to do?

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4. What can I do to support the Five Year Plan?

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