



“From Island to Island “

Recollections from the Paccassi Pioneering Journeys’ to the Caribbean Islands of Puerto Rico, St. Thomas, Barbados, St. Vincent, Dominica, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago from 12 October 1965 to present, November 2018
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Contents:

Chapter 1	Introduction:
Chapter 2	Puerto Rico:
Chapter 3	St. Thomas:
Chapter 4	Barbados:
Chapter 5	Dominica:
Chapter 6	St. Lucia: 1 st stay:
Chapter 7	Trinidad and Tobago:
Chapter 8	St. Lucia: 2 nd stay:
Chapter 9	Stories:

Chapter 1: Introduction: February 1964 to 1965:

It is not often that one can look to a specific point and say "That's when it all started", but in this case I can. I became a Bahá'í in February, 1964 and Frank a few weeks later in Carmichael, California. Our spiritual Mother was Maxine Roth and our spiritual



Father was Wayne Hoover.



It was a foot dragging process for me. But thank God, Maxine was a wonderful, persistent teacher. She remembered we had first met in 1963, during a volleyball game at the elementary school that both our children attended. After that game she said she went home, said prayers and was so sure of an answer she got, she immediately told her then non-Bahá'í husband, Marty, "the Paccassi's will be Bahá'ís before next Ridván!"

This is not the forum for the story of that long year to Ridván 1964, but it is in the book about various pioneers "And the Trees Clap their Hands" by Clair Veer land, published by George Ronald Books.

Suffice it to say that during the Fast period in 1964, I enrolled and Frank right after me. Actually, he was ready much earlier, but he waited for me. The following year was one of great fun and lots of teaching, and one hopes, spiritual growth and weaning.

Maxine had wonderful firesides every week which were well attended and greatly looked forward to by me. One day I went to visit her and made a remark about the upcoming fireside and she told me I couldn't come! What? Why not? Well she said, "If you like firesides so much start your own". At that point, my underlying competitive, petty nature kicked in, and I replied, "OK, but you

can't come to mine either". Later I realized she was starting me on my own path of service to the Faith.

For the next several months we continued with the teaching and firesides. Ours was well attended also. Wayne Hoover, in spite of living in San Francisco, a hundred miles away, came on a regular basis to give the talks. I learned a very special message one night during one of his talks. One of the young seekers asked a question which Wayne began to answer. I was sitting in the middle of the room between the seeker and Wayne. As Wayne was answering the question, I became increasingly annoyed. He was not answering the question! I wasn't sure what to do, should I interrupt, keep still, talk to the seeker and/or Wayne later. Then I turned my head, and the seeker was nodding his head off, up and down, clearly saying yes, yes, yes! I then realized that often it is the unasked question that needs answering, and one must listen closely to hear it.

I mention these lessons learned as I have come to realize that it is these lessons which come all through life. If one cannot understand and be connected to the Holy Spirit during your life as a Bahá'í, whether a pioneer or not, all will not go smoothly. This applies especially as a pioneer living in a new culture. I have seen so many new pioneers not being able to adapt to a new culture simply because they looked at the wrong things in life, especially in a new cultural life. When I heard negative remarks about the place, area, people, conditions etc. I knew it wouldn't be long before they were gone!

A good example of cultural unawareness came from a pioneer who had recently come from the United States as a pioneer to Barbados and was a strong administrative type.

Phil Wood who was the chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly was talking at a meeting about our Local Spiritual Assemblies. When our new pioneer heard that there were only ten Local Spiritual Assemblies on Barbados, he stood up exclaiming "Good God man, how does your National Assembly function?" Phil,

without skipping a beat, put his hands up in the air, clenched his fists and said, "We hang on real tight!"



But back to 1964 as new Bahá'ís. It passed wonderfully! Then in April, 1965, The Ridván Message contained a message from the Hands of the Cause of God, including this quote from Shoghi Effendi on the need for pioneers:

"There is no time to lose. There is no room left for vacillation. Multitudes hunger for the Bread of Life. The stage is set. The firm and irrevocable Promise is given. God's own Plan has been set in motion.... The powers of heaven and earth mysteriously assist in its execution.... Let the doubter arise and himself verify the truth of such assertions. To try, to persevere, is to ensure ultimate and complete victory."

Shoghi Effendi, Messages to America, p. 17

The seed was planted!