

# US Dec Trust

Exported from Holy-Writings.com on 2026-07-04 — 1 clipping

## DECLARATION OF TRUST AND BY-LAWS OF THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAH'A'IS OF THE UNITED STATES

October 14, 1994

Constitution of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States

The NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAH'A'IS OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA on April 4, 1927, adopted a Declaration of Trust under which the powers, responsibilities, rights, privileges and obligations reposed in the Assembly by Baha'u'llah, the Founder of the Baha'i Faith, by 'Abdu'l-Baha, its Interpreter and Exemplar, and by Shoghi Effendi, its Guardian, were to be and have been exercised. Said Declaration of Trust was amended from time to time to vest in the NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAH'A'IS OF THE UNITED STATES all of the functions and powers therein contained and to exclude from the jurisdiction of the NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAH'A'IS OF THE UNITED STATES the States of Alaska and Hawaii and all United States trusts and territories including Puerto Rico. With the approval of The Universal House of Justice, the Head of the Baha'i Faith and its supreme institution, the Trustees determined that it was necessary and appropriate for the NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAH'A'IS OF THE UNITED STATES to adopt the corporate form as the means of administering the affairs and properties of the Baha'i Community in the United States, and therefore as incorporators caused Articles of Incorporation to be filed on October 14, 1994, with the Secretary of the State of Illinois creating an Illinois not-for-profit corporation bearing the name of NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAH'A'IS OF THE UNITED STATES. The Trustees subsequently transferred all powers, responsibilities, rights, privileges, obligations, assets and liabilities reposed in the NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAH'A'IS OF THE UNITED STATES under said Declaration of Trust to the newly incorporated NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAH'A'IS OF THE UNITED STATES, including the right to receive gifts and bequests of all kinds and from all sources. The Trustees of the NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAH'A'IS OF THE UNITED STATES under said Declaration of Trust caused this new corporation to be created as the successor organization and administrative body of the Baha'i religious community in the United States of America. This action was taken by the Trustees in complete unanimity and with full recognition of the sacred relationship thereby created. The Trustees are now the Directors of this new corporation. The Trustees acknowledge on behalf of themselves and their successors the exalted religious standard established by Baha'u'llah for Baha'i administrative bodies in the utterance: "Be ye Trustees of the Merciful One among men"; and seek the help of God and His guidance in order to fulfill that exhortation. In consideration of the foregoing, the Directors of this new corporation shall hereinafter be known as the "Trustees" of this new

corporation. The Trustees acknowledge that they are acting in all respects hereunder in their legal capacity as Directors of an Illinois not-for-profit corporation and the corporation is subject to the rules and regulations of the Illinois General Not-For-Profit Corporation Act.

#### Article I.

The name of this corporation is the NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHAI'S OF THE UNITED STATES. Hereinafter, the phrase "Baha'is of the United States" shall be understood to exclude the States of Alaska, Hawaii and all United States trusts and territories, including Puerto Rico.

#### Article II.

Sharing the ideals and assisting the efforts of our fellow Baha'is to establish, uphold and promote the spiritual, educational and humanitarian teachings of human brotherhood, radiant faith, exalted character and selfless love revealed in the lives and utterances of all the Prophets and Messengers of God, Founders of the world's revealed religions --and given renewed creative energy and universal application to the conditions of this age in the life and utterances of Baha'u'llah -- the Trustees declare the purpose and objects of this corporation to be to administer the affairs of the Cause of Baha'u'llah for the benefit of the Baha'is of the United States according to the principles of Baha'i affiliation and administration created and established by Baha'u'llah, defined and explained by 'Abdu'l-Baha, interpreted and amplified by Shoghi Effendi and supplemented and applied by The Universal House of Justice. These purposes are to be realized by means of devotional meetings; by public meetings and conferences of an educational, humanitarian and spiritual character; by the publication of books, magazines and newspapers; by the construction of temples of universal worship and of other institutions and edifices for humanitarian service; by supervising, unifying, promoting and generally administering the activities of the Baha'is of the United States in the fulfillment of their religious offices, duties and ideals; and by any other means appropriate to these ends, or any of them.

#### Article III.

The Trustees shall adopt such by-laws, rules of procedure or regulations as are required to define and carry on its own administrative functions and those of the several local and other elements composing the body of the Baha'is of the United States, not inconsistent with the terms of the Articles of Incorporation and this instrument and all in accordance with the instructions and enactments of The Universal House of Justice. Since the corporation is the successor organization to said Declaration of Trust, the Trustees shall refer to said Declaration of Trust and By-Laws and all Resolutions thereunder if such reference is necessary or appropriate in interpreting this Constitution and the by-laws, rules of procedure or regulations adopted hereunder.

#### Article IV.

The central office of the corporation shall be located in the Village of Wilmette, State of Illinois, United States of America, the site of the Baha'i House of Worship.

## Article V.

This Constitution may be amended by majority vote of the Trustees at any special meeting duly called for that purpose, provided that at least thirty (30) days prior to the date fixed for said meeting a copy of the proposed amendment or amendments is mailed to each Trustee by the Secretary-General.

(Multiple signatures of Trustees)

By-Laws of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States

## Article I.

The NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHAI'S OF THE UNITED STATES (hereinafter referred to as the "National Spiritual Assembly"), in the fulfillment of the sacred duties under this corporation transferred to it by the Trustees of the NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHAI'S OF THE UNITED STATES charged with administering the Declaration of Trust dated April 4, 1927, shall have exclusive jurisdiction and authority over all the activities and affairs of the Baha'i Faith throughout the United States, excluding the States of Alaska and Hawaii and all United States trusts and territories, including Puerto Rico (see Article I, Constitution). It shall endeavor to stimulate, unify and coordinate the manifold activities of the Local Spiritual Assemblies (hereinafter defined) and of individual Baha'is in the United States and by all possible means assist them to promote the oneness of mankind. It shall be charged with the recognition of such Local Spiritual Assemblies, the scrutiny of all membership rolls, the calling of the Annual Meeting or special meetings and the seating of delegates to the Annual Meeting and their apportionment among the various electoral districts. It shall appoint all national Baha'i committees and shall supervise the publication and distribution of Baha'i literature, the reviewing of all writings pertaining to the Baha'i Faith, the construction and administration of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar and its accessory activities and dependencies and the collection and disbursement of all funds for carrying out the purposes of this corporation. It shall decide whether any matter lies within its own jurisdiction or within the jurisdiction of any Local Spiritual Assembly. It shall, in such cases as it considers suitable and necessary, entertain appeals from the decisions of Local Spiritual Assemblies and shall have the right of final decision in all cases where the qualification of an individual or group for continued voting rights and membership in the Baha'i body is in question. It shall furthermore represent the Baha'is of the United States in all their cooperative and spiritual activities with the Baha'is of other lands and shall constitute the sole electoral body of the United States in the election of The Universal House of Justice provided for in the Sacred Writings of the Baha'i Faith. Above all, the National Spiritual Assembly shall ever seek to attain that station of unity in devotion to the Revelation of Baha'u'llah which will attract the confirmations of the Holy Spirit and enable the National Spiritual Assembly to serve the founding of the Most Great Peace. In all its deliberation and action the National Spiritual Assembly shall have constantly before it as divine guide and standard the utterance of Baha'u'llah: It behooveth them [i.e., members of Spiritual Assemblies] to be the trusted ones of the Merciful among men and to regard

themselves as the guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth. It is incumbent upon them to take counsel together and to have regard for the interests of the servants of God, for His sake, even as they regard their own interests, and to choose that which is meet and seemly.

#### Article II.

The Baha'is of the United States, for whose benefit this corporation is established, shall consist of all persons of the age of fifteen years or over resident in the United States who are accepted by the National Spiritual Assembly as possessing the qualifications of Baha'i faith and practice required under the following standards:

Full recognition of the station of the B.b, the Forerunner, of Baha'u'llah, the Author, and of 'Abdu'l-Baha, the True Exemplar of the Baha'i religion, unreserved acceptance of and submission of to whatsoever has been revealed by Their Pen; loyal and steadfast adherence to every clause of 'Abdu'l-Bah sacred Will; and close association with the spirit as well as the form of Baha'i administration throughout the world.

Those residing in the area of jurisdiction of any Local Spiritual Assembly recognized by the National Spiritual Assembly may declare their faith to and be enrolled by the Local Spiritual Assembly; those living outside any such area of local Baha'i jurisdiction shall be enrolled in such manner as shall be prescribed by the National Spiritual Assembly.

Upon attaining the age of twenty-one years, a Baha'i is eligible to vote and to hold elective office.

#### Article III.

The National Spiritual Assembly is an Illinois not-for-profit corporation. Its Board of Trustees shall consist of nine members (sometimes hereinafter referred to as "members") chosen from among the Baha'is of the United States who shall be elected by the said Baha'is in manner hereinafter provided and who shall continue for the period of one year or until their successors shall be elected.

#### Article IV.

The officers of the National Spiritual Assembly shall consist of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary-General, Treasurer and such other officers as may be found necessary for the proper conduct of its affairs. The officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the Trustees taken by secret ballot.

#### Article V.

All meetings shall be called by the Secretary-General of the Assembly at the request of the Chairman or, in his absence or incapacity, of the Vice-Chairman or of any three Trustees, provided, however, that the Annual Meeting of the National Spiritual Assembly shall be held at a time and place to be fixed by a majority vote of the Trustees as hereinafter provided.

#### Article VI.

Five members of the National Spiritual Assembly present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum, and a majority vote of those present and constituting a

quorum shall be sufficient for the conduct of business except as otherwise provided in these By-Laws and with due regard to the principle of unity and cordial fellowship involved in the institution of a Spiritual Assembly. The transactions and decisions of the National Spiritual Assembly shall be recorded at each meeting by the Secretary-General, who shall supply copies of the minutes to the members after each meeting, and preserve the minutes in the official records of the National Spiritual Assembly.

#### Article VII.

Whenever, in any locality of the United States, the number of Baha'is resident therein recognized by the National Spiritual Assembly exceeds nine, these shall on the First Day of Ridvan, being that period between sunset on April 20 and sunset on April 21, of any year convene and elect by plurality vote a local administrative body of nine members, to be known as the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of that community. Every such Spiritual Assembly shall be elected annually thereafter upon each successive First Day of Ridvan. The members shall hold office for the term of one year or until their successors are elected and qualified.

When, however, the number of Baha'is in any authorized civil area is exactly nine, these shall on the First Day of Ridvan of any year, or in successive years, constitute themselves the Local Spiritual Assembly by joint declaration. Upon the recording of such declaration by the Secretary-General of the National Spiritual Assembly, said body of nine shall become established with the rights, privileges and duties of a Local Spiritual Assembly as set forth in this instrument.

Section 1. Each newly-elected Local Spiritual Assembly shall at once proceed in the manner indicated in Articles IV and V of these By-Laws to the election of its officers, who shall consist of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and such other officers as the Assembly finds necessary for the conduct of its business and the fulfillment of its spiritual duties. Immediately thereafter the Secretary chosen shall transmit to the Secretary-General of the National Spiritual Assembly the names of the members of the newly-elected Local Spiritual Assembly and a list of its officers.

Section 2. The general powers and duties of a Local Spiritual Assembly shall be as set forth in the writings of Baha'u'llah, 'Abdu'l-Baha, and Shoghi Effendi and as laid down by The Universal House of Justice.

Section 3. Among its more specific duties a Local Spiritual Assembly shall have full jurisdiction of all Baha'i activities and affairs within the local community subject, however, to the exclusive and paramount authority of the National Spiritual Assembly as defined herein.

Section 4. Vacancies in the membership of a Local Spiritual Assembly shall be filled by election at a special meeting of the local Baha'i community duly called for that purpose by the Assembly. In the event that the number of vacancies exceeds four, making a quorum of the Local Spiritual Assembly impossible, the election shall be held under the supervision of the National

Spiritual Assembly.

Section 5. The business of the Local Spiritual Assembly shall be conducted in like manner as provided for the deliberations of the National Spiritual Assembly in Article VI above.

Section 6. The Local Spiritual Assembly shall pass upon and approve the qualifications of each member of the Baha'i community before such member shall be admitted to voting membership; but where an individual is dissatisfied with the ruling of the Local Spiritual Assembly upon his Baha'i qualifications, such individual may appeal from the ruling to the National Spiritual Assembly, which shall thereupon take jurisdiction of and finally decide the case.

Section 7. On or before the 1st day of September of each year the Secretary of each Local Assembly shall send to the Secretary-General of the National Spiritual Assembly a duly certified list of the voting members of the local Baha'i community for the information and approval of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Section 8. All matters arising within a local Baha'i community which are of purely local interest and do not affect the national interests of the Faith shall be under the primary jurisdiction of the Spiritual Assembly of that locality, but decision whether a particular matter involves the interest and welfare of the national Baha'i body shall rest with the National Spiritual Assembly.

Section 9. Any member of a local Baha'i community may appeal from a decision of his Spiritual Assembly to the National Spiritual Assembly, which shall determine whether it shall take jurisdiction of the matter or leave it to the Local Spiritual Assembly for reconsideration. In the event that the National Spiritual Assembly assumes jurisdiction of the matter, its finding shall be final.

Section 10. Where any dissension exists within a local Baha'i community of such character that it cannot be remedied by the efforts of the Local Spiritual Assembly, this condition shall be referred by the Local Spiritual Assembly for consideration to the National Spiritual Assembly, whose action in the matter shall be final.

Section 11. All questions arising between two or more Local Spiritual Assemblies or between members of different Baha'i communities shall be submitted in the first instance to the National Spiritual Assembly, which shall have original and final jurisdiction in all such matters.

Section 12. The sphere of jurisdiction of a Local Spiritual Assembly with respect to residential qualification of membership and voting rights of a believer in any Baha'i community shall be the locality included within the recognized civil limits.

All differences of opinion concerning the sphere of jurisdiction of any Local Spiritual Assembly or concerning the affiliation of any Baha'i or group of

Baha'is in the United States shall be referred to the National Spiritual Assembly, whose decision in the matter shall be final.

#### Article VIII.

The members of the National Spiritual Assembly shall be elected at an Annual Meeting to be known as the National Convention of the Baha'is of the United States. This Convention shall be held at a time and place to be fixed by the National Spiritual Assembly. The National Convention shall be composed jointly of representatives chosen by the Baha'is of each State or Electoral District under the principle of proportionate representation and the members of the National Spiritual Assembly. Notice of the Annual Meeting shall be given by the National Spiritual Assembly sixty days in advance in the Convention Call which sets forth the number of delegates assigned to the various electoral units in proportion to the number of Baha'is resident in each such unit to a total number of one hundred seventy-one delegates for the Baha'is of the United States.

Section 1. All delegates to the Convention shall be elected by plurality vote. Baha'is who for illness or other unavoidable reasons are unable to be present at the election in person shall have the right to transmit their ballots to the meeting by mail. The meeting held in each State or Electoral District for the election of delegates shall be called by the National Spiritual Assembly and conducted by the Baha'is present under whatever procedure may be uniformly laid down by said body. Immediately after the meeting a certified report of the election containing the name and address of each delegate shall be transmitted to the National Spiritual Assembly.

Section 2. All delegates to be seated at the Convention must be recognized Baha'is and residents of the State or Electoral District represented by them.

Section 3. The rights and privileges of a delegate may not be assigned nor may they be exercised by proxy.

Section 4. The recognition and seating of delegates to the National Convention shall be vested in the National Spiritual Assembly.

Section 5. Delegates unable to be present in person at the Convention shall have the right to transmit their ballots for election of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly under whatever procedure is adopted by the National Spiritual Assembly.

Section 6. If in any year the National Spiritual Assembly shall consider that it is impracticable or unwise to assemble together the delegates to the National Convention, the National Spiritual Assembly shall provide ways and means by which the Annual Election and the other essential business of the Convention may be conducted by mail.

Section 7. The presiding officer of the National Spiritual Assembly present at the Convention shall call together the delegates, who after roll call shall proceed to the permanent organization of the meeting, electing by ballot a chairman, a secretary and such other officers as are necessary for the proper

conduct of the business of the Convention.

Section 8. The principal business of the Annual Meeting shall be consultation on Baha'i activities, plans and policies and the election of the nine members of the National Spiritual Assembly. Members of the National Spiritual Assembly, whether or not elected delegates, may take a full part in the consultation and discussion but only delegates may participate in the election of Convention officers or in the Annual Election of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly. All action by the delegates, other than the organization of the Convention, the transmission of messages to the World Center of the Baha'i Faith and the election of the National Spiritual Assembly, shall constitute advice and recommendation for consideration by the National Spiritual Assembly, final decision on all matters concerning the affairs of the Baha'i Faith in the United States being vested solely in that body.

Section 9. The general order of business to be taken up at the Annual Convention shall be prepared by the National Spiritual Assembly in the form of an agenda, but any matter pertaining to the Baha'i Faith introduced by any of the delegates may upon motion and vote be taken up as part of the Convention deliberations.

Section 10. The election of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly shall be by plurality vote of the delegates recognized by the outgoing members of the National Spiritual Assembly, i.e., the members elected shall be the nine persons receiving the greatest number of votes on the first ballot cast by delegates present at the Convention and delegates whose ballot has been transmitted to the Secretary-General of the National Spiritual Assembly by mail. In case, by reason of a tie vote or votes, the full membership is not determined on the first ballot, then one or more additional ballots shall be taken on the persons tied until all nine members are elected.

Section 11. All official business transacted at the National Convention shall be recorded and preserved in the records of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Section 12. Vacancies in the membership of the National Spiritual Assembly shall be filled by a plurality vote of the delegates composing the Convention which elected the members, the ballot to be taken by correspondence or in any other manner decided upon by the National Spiritual Assembly.

#### Article IX.

Where the National Spiritual Assembly has been given in these By-Laws exclusive and final jurisdiction and paramount executive authority in all matters pertaining to the activities and affairs of the Baha'i Faith in the United States, it is understood that any decision made or action taken upon such matters shall be subject in every instance to ultimate review and approval by The Universal House of Justice.

#### Article X.

Whatever functions and powers are not specifically attributed to Local Spiritual Assemblies in these By-Laws shall be considered vested in the

National Spiritual Assembly, which body is authorized to delegate such discretionary functions and power as it deems necessary and advisable to the Local Spiritual Assemblies in its jurisdiction.

Article XI.

In order to preserve the spiritual character and purpose of Baha'i elections the practice of nominations or any other electoral method detrimental to a silent prayerful election shall not prevail so that each elector may vote for none but those whom prayer and reflection have inspired him to uphold. Among the most outstanding and sacred duties incumbent upon those who have been called upon to initiate, direct and coordinate the affairs of the Faith as members of Local or National Spiritual Assemblies are:

To win by every means in their power the confidence and affection of those whom it is their privilege to serve; to investigate and acquaint themselves with the considered views, the prevailing sentiments and the personal convictions of those whose welfare it is their solemn obligation to promote; to purge their deliberations and the general conduct of their affairs of self-contained aloofness, the suspicion of secrecy, the stifling atmosphere of dictatorial assertiveness and of every word and deed that may savor of partiality, self-centeredness and prejudice; and while retaining the sacred right of final decision in their hands, to invite discussion, ventilate grievances, welcome advice, and foster the sense of interdependence and co-partnership, of understanding and mutual confidence between themselves and all other Baha'is.

Article XII.

These By-Laws may be amended by majority vote of the Trustees of the National Spiritual Assembly at any of its regular or special meetings, provided that at least fourteen days prior to the date fixed for the said meeting a copy of the proposed amendment or amendments is mailed to each member of the National Spiritual Assembly by the Secretary-General.

Resolution

by the National Spiritual Assembly of  
the Baha'is of the United States

Adopted at Special Meeting, October 9, 1994

WHEREAS, the NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHA'IS OF THE UNITED STATES has exclusive jurisdiction and authority over all the activities and affairs of the Baha'i Faith through the United States excluding the states of Alaska and Hawaii and all United States trusts and territories including Puerto Rico; and WHEREAS, one of the sacred duties of the NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHA'IS OF THE UNITED STATES is to endeavor to stimulate, unify and coordinate the manifold activities of Local Spiritual Assemblies; and WHEREAS, the NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHA'IS OF THE UNITED STATES has determined that it is necessary and appropriate to adopt a set of by-laws to assist Local Spiritual Assemblies in administering the affairs of the members of the Baha'i Faith in each Spiritual Assembly's local Baha'i community.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Trustees listed below that the document

entitled "By-Laws of a Local Spiritual Assembly" attached hereto as Exhibit A is hereby adopted as the form by-laws for Local Spiritual Assemblies to use in administering the affairs of the members of Baha'i Faith in each Spiritual Assembly's local Baha'i community.

(Multiple signatures of Trustees)

#### By-Laws of a Local Spiritual Assembly

##### Article I.

The Trustees, i.e., the members of the Spiritual Assembly of .... recognize that this action has been taken in full unanimity and agreement. They acknowledge for themselves and on behalf of their successors the sacred meaning and universal purpose of the Baha'i Faith, the teachings and principles of which fulfill the divine promise of all former revealed religions.

##### Article II.

In administering the affairs of Baha'i religion under the Corporation for benefit of the Baha'is of ... in accordance with the religious teachings and administrative principles of the Faith, the Spiritual Assembly shall act in conformity with the functions of a Local Spiritual Assembly as defined in the By-Laws adopted by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation, and published by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States for the information and guidance of Baha'is throughout the United States.

##### Article III.

The Spiritual Assembly, in the fulfillment of its obligations and responsibilities under this Corporation, shall have exclusive jurisdiction and authority over all the local activities and affairs of Baha'i community of .... including paramount authority in the administration of this Corporation. It shall be responsible for maintaining the integrity and accuracy of all Baha'i teaching, whether written or oral, undertaken throughout the local community. It shall make available published literature of the Faith. It shall represent the community in its relations to the National Spiritual Assembly, to The Universal House of Justice, to other local Baha'i communities and to general public in.... It shall be charged with the recognition of all applicants requesting membership in the local Baha'i community. It shall report to the National Spiritual Assembly any facts concerning a member or members of the community which indicate either abandonment of membership in the community or inability to qualify as a believer for decision by the National Spiritual Assembly, in which body is vested sole authority to pass upon the qualifications of an enrolled Baha'i and if necessary to deprive him or her of membership rights. It shall call the meetings of the community, including the Baha'i anniversaries and Feasts, the meetings of consultation and the Annual Meeting at which the members of the Spiritual Assembly are elected. It shall appoint and supervise all committees of Baha'i community. It shall collect and disburse all funds intended for the maintenance of this Corporation. It shall have full and complete custody of the headquarters and meeting place of the

Baha'i community. It shall have exclusive authority to conduct Baha'i marriage ceremonies and issue Baha'i marriage certificates within the area of its jurisdiction. It shall report to the National Spiritual Assembly annually, or when requested, the membership roll of the Baha'i community for the information and approval of the National Spiritual Assembly. The Spiritual Assembly, however, shall recognize the authority and right of the National Spiritual Assembly to declare at any time what activities and affairs of the Baha'i community of ... are national in scope and hence subject to the jurisdiction of the National Spiritual Assembly. It shall likewise recognize the right of any member of the community to appeal to the National Spiritual Assembly for review and decision of any matter in which the previous decision of the Local Spiritual Assembly is felt by the member to be contrary to the explicit teachings of the Baha'i Faith or opposed to its best interest. It shall, on the other hand, have the authority and right to appeal from the decision of the National Spiritual Assembly to the Universal House of Justice for review and final decision of any matter related to the Faith in....

#### Article IV.

The Spiritual Assembly, in administering this Corporation, shall ever bear in mind the ideals upheld in the Sacred Writings of the Baha'i Faith respecting relationships of a Spiritual Assembly to its Baha'i community, the relations of Baha'is to one another in community and relationships of Baha'is to all non-Baha'is, without prejudice of race, creed or nationality. The Assembly shall therefore above all recognize its sacred duty to maintain full and complete unity throughout the Baha'i community, to relieve and comfort the sick and distressed, to assist the poor and destitute, to protect the orphans, the crippled and the aged, to educate the children of Baha'is according to the highest religious and intellectual standards, to compose differences and disagreements among members of the community, to promulgate the principles of divine civilization revealed by Baha'u'llah and to promote in every way possible the Baha'i aim of the oneness of mankind. It shall faithfully and devotedly uphold the general Baha'i activities and affairs initiated and sustained by the National Spiritual Assembly. It shall cooperate wholeheartedly with other Local Spiritual Assemblies throughout the United States in all matters declared by the National Spiritual Assembly to be of general Baha'i importance and concern. It shall rigorously abstain from any action or influence, direct or indirect, that savors of intervention on the part of a Baha'i body in matters of public and civil jurisdiction. It shall encourage intercourse between the Baha'i community of ... and other recognized Baha'i communities, issuing letters of introduction to Baha'is traveling from, and passing upon letters of introduction issued by other Baha'i Spiritual Assemblies. It shall regard its authority as a means of rendering service to Baha'is and non-Baha'i and not as a source of arbitrary power. While retaining the sacred right of final decision in all matters pertaining to Baha'i community, the Spiritual Assembly shall ever seek the advice and consultation of all members of the community, keep the community informed of all its affairs and invite full and free discussion on the part of community of all matters

affecting the Faith.

#### Article V.

The Baha'is of ... for whose benefit this Corporation has been established, shall consist of all persons of age of fifteen years or over residing in . . . who are accepted by the National Spiritual Assembly as possessing the qualifications of Baha'i faith and practice required under the following standard set forth by the Guardian of the Faith:

Full recognition of the station of the B.b, the Forerunner, of Baha'u'llah, the Author, and of 'Abdu'l-Baha, the True Exemplar of the Baha'i religion; unreserved acceptance of and submission to whatsoever has been revealed by Their Pen; loyal and steadfast adherence to every clause of 'Abdu'l-Bah sacred Will; and close association with the spirit as well as the form of Baha'i administration throughout the world.

Upon attaining the age of twenty-one years, a Baha'i is eligible to vote and to hold elective office.

#### Article VI.

The Spiritual Assembly shall consist of nine Trustees chosen from among the Baha'is of.... who shall be elected by these Baha'is in a manner hereinafter provided and who shall continue in office for a period of one year, or until their successors shall be elected.

#### Article VII.

The officers of the Spiritual Assembly shall consist of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and such other officers as may be found necessary for the proper conduct of its affairs. The officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the entire membership of the Assembly taken by secret ballot.

#### Article VIII.

The first meeting of a newly-elected Spiritual Assembly shall be called by the member elected to membership by the highest number of votes, or, in case two or more members have received same said highest number of votes, then by the member selected by lot from among those members; and this member shall preside until permanent Chairman shall be chosen. All subsequent meetings shall be called by the Secretary of the Assembly at the request of Chairman or, in his absence or incapacity, of the Vice-Chairman or of any three members of the Assembly, provided, however, that the Annual Meeting of the Assembly shall be held on the First Day of Ridvan.n, being that period between sunset on April 20 and sunset on April 21, in accordance with the administrative principles recognized by all Baha'i Spiritual Assemblies.

Section 1. Five members of the Spiritual Assembly present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum, and a majority vote of those present and constituting a quorum shall be sufficient for the conduct of business except as otherwise provided in these By-Laws and with due regard to the principle of unity and cordial fellowship involved in the institution of a Spiritual Assembly. The

transactions and decisions of the Assembly shall be recorded at each meeting by the Secretary, who shall have the minutes adopted and approved by the Assembly, and preserve them in the official records of the Assembly.

Section 2. Vacancies in the membership of the Spiritual Assembly shall be filled by election at a special meeting of the local Baha'i community duly called for that purpose by the Assembly. In the event that the number of vacancies exceeds four, making a quorum of the Spiritual Assembly impossible, the election shall be under the supervision of the National Spiritual Assembly.

#### Article IX.

The sphere of jurisdiction of the Spiritual Assembly with respect to residential qualification of membership and voting rights of a believer in the Baha'i community shall be the locality included within the civil limits of....

#### Article X.

Section 1. In the event that any decision of the Spiritual Assembly is unacceptable to any member or members of the community, the Assembly shall after endeavoring to compose the difference of opinion invite the said member or members to make appeal to the National Spiritual Assembly and notify that body of the condition of the matter and the readiness of the Spiritual Assembly to become party to the appeal.

Section 2. In the same manner, if any difference arises between the Spiritual Assembly and another Assembly, or Assemblies, in the United States, the Assembly shall report the matter to the National Spiritual Assembly and inform that body of its readiness to make joint appeal together with other Assembly or Assemblies.

Section 3. If, however, the result of such appeal is unsatisfactory to the Spiritual Assembly, or the Assembly at any time has reason to believe that actions of the National Spiritual Assembly are affecting adversely the welfare and unity of the Baha'i community of it shall, after seeking to compose its difference of opinion with the National Spiritual Assembly in direct consultation, have the right to make appeal to The Universal House of Justice.

Section 4. The Spiritual Assembly shall likewise have the right to make complaint to the National Spiritual Assembly in the event that matters of local Baha'i concern and influence are referred to the national body by a member or members of the local community without previous opportunity for action by the Spiritual Assembly.

#### Article XI.

The Annual Meeting of the Corporation at which its Trustees shall be elected shall be held on the First Day of Ridvan, being that period between sunset on April 20 and sunset on April 21, at an hour and place to be fixed by the Spiritual Assembly, which shall give not less than fifteen days' notice of the meeting to all members of the local Baha'i community.

Section 1. The Spiritual Assembly shall accept those votes transmitted to the Assembly before the election by members who by reason of sickness or other

unavoidable reason are unable to be present at the election in person.

Section 2. The election of members to the Spiritual Assembly shall be by plurality vote.

Section 3. All voting members of the local Baha'i community are eligible for election as members of the Spiritual Assembly.

Section 4. The Spiritual Assembly shall prepare an agenda for the Annual Meeting in which shall be included reports of the activities of the Assembly since its election, a financial statement showing all income and expenditure of its fund, reports of its committees and presentation of any other matters pertaining to the affairs of the Baha'i community. The Assembly, both preceding and following the Annual Election, shall invite discussion and welcome suggestions from the community in order that its plans may reflect the community mind and heart.

Section 5. The result of the election shall be reported by the Spiritual Assembly to the National Spiritual Assembly.

Article XII.

In addition to the Annual Meeting the Spiritual Assembly shall arrange for regular meetings of the Baha'i community throughout the year at intervals of nineteen days in accordance with the calendar incorporated in the teachings of the Baha'i Faith.

Article XIII.

The seal of the Corporation shall be circular in form, bearing the following description: The Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of ....

Article XIV.

These By-Laws may be amended only by majority action of the National Spiritual Assembly, which, in making amendments, does so for the By-Laws of all Local Spiritual Assemblies throughout the United States.