

VINSON BROWN: Passion for Exploring Nature

"Science is nothing more or less than the search for truth," wrote Vinson Brown, "and how can such a search . . . be anything but an adventure!" Vinson's love of science and nature led to exciting escapades throughout his life.

Vinson was born in Nevada, U.S., in 1912. His father was a doctor near an American Indian reservation. Native cultures interested Vinson from childhood. He even inherited from his father a pipe bag thought to have belonged to Crazy Horse, a famous Lakota leader.

At 17, Vinson's daring spirit found him setting sail for Asia as a sailor on a freight ship. He loved to watch sea creatures, including flying fish, sea turtles, dolphins, and whales. On the trip, he was almost killed in a typhoon, but danger didn't dampen his enthusiasm for the natural world.

Finding Faith

In his early 20s, Vinson traveled to Panama and Costa Rica, where he gathered plants, insects, reptiles, and other creatures for museums and collectors. At that time, he didn't believe in God—he wanted proof of God's existence.

A youth named Chio, from the Guaymi tribe, helped guide



Vinson Brown encouraged people to explore nature. He wrote, "Science is the human's way of reaching toward the stars."

him through the jungle. One day at dawn, Vinson saw Chio near a waterfall, his arms raised to the sky, singing in his native language. Though Vinson couldn't understand the words, he said he felt something "so tremendous . . . that all my doubts about the spiritual truth of the existence of God disappeared and I knew I was in His presence!"

Vinson built a career devoted to the environment. In 1936, he founded the Boy Naturalist Club in California and led kids on nature explorations. He also earned a master's degree in biology from Stanford University. A few years later, he met a Bahá'í

named Marion Holley. After his scientific mind inspired him to ask questions for a year, Vinson became a Bahá'í in 1945. In the years that followed, he gave several hundred talks about the Faith around the U.S.

"Our Time is Short"

Along with his other interests, Vinson always wanted to be a writer. In 1946, he founded Naturegraph Publishers. He and his wife, Barbara, published books about investigating the environment. Vinson wrote or co-authored around 40 books, including some on American Indians.

One book trained the reader to study nature as an "explorer naturalist," who "may be one of the heroes who helps save the world from destruction by pollution and waste and point it toward a new age where men are in harmony with nature and with each other . . ."

In 1984, Vinson and Barbara went on Bahá'í pilgrimage in Israel, which he called the trip of his life. Vinson passed away in 1991, but Naturegraph continues to publish books that support his mission. "We live on a shrinking planet," he wrote, "and our time is short to convince others that there is no future for mankind unless we can learn to come into harmony with ourselves and our surroundings."