

# JOHN BOSCH: A Heart that Speaks

**H**ow do you share your faith with others if you don't feel comfortable talking to people? That was John Bosch's struggle as a Bahá'í. He wanted to tell people about Bahá'u'lláh's message of love and peace, but he didn't feel he could speak well enough.

John was born in Switzerland in 1855 and moved to the United States when he was a young man. In 1905, he became a Bahá'í, and he was an active member of the growing American Bahá'í community.

In 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the leader of the Bahá'í Faith at the time, came to North America as part of his historic journey from Israel to the West. He was 67 years old. The day after 'Abdu'l-Bahá arrived in New York City, John took the night train from his home in California and rode across the country to see him.

John hurried to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's suite at the Hotel Ansonia. When they met, John said, "'Abdu'l-Bahá, I came three thousand miles to see you.'" 'Abdu'l-Bahá laughed heartily and said, "I came eight thousand miles to see *you*."

John expressed his concerns that he wasn't doing enough to serve the Bahá'í Faith. He told 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "I am a foreigner, born in Switzerland, and have not the command of the English language. I would love to be a speaker. All I am doing is to give away pamphlets and as many books as are printed."

But 'Abdu'l-Bahá told him, "You are doing well . . . With you it is not the movements of the lips, nor the tongue. With you it is the heart that speaks. With you it is silence that speaks and radiates."

Later, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and John got into a car to go



Bosch Bahá'í School in California is named after John and Louise Bosch, who donated property to the Bahá'í community in 1927.

to lunch. The Bahá'ís wanted to give 'Abdu'l-Bahá a tour of New York during the drive. But John said, "He just looked at me, and all at once with an *immense* sigh . . . like the whole world would be lifted from Him so He could have a rest, He put His head on my left shoulder, clear down as close as He could, like a child, and went to sleep."

John said, "I was still as a mouse; I didn't want to move—I didn't want to wake Him up." 'Abdu'l-Bahá slept during the whole half-hour ride.

'Abdu'l-Bahá gave John a new name—"Núrání," which means "full of light." John didn't need to be a great speaker; he could use his own strengths to touch people's hearts.

Years later, John and his wife, Louise, donated their property in northern California to the Bahá'í community for a Bahá'í school. In 1973, a highway was to be built on the land, so it was sold. The funds were used to build Bosch Bahá'í School in the redwood forest near Santa Cruz, in their honor.