

HUNTSVILLIANS IN HAIFA

Seeking peace amid rockets



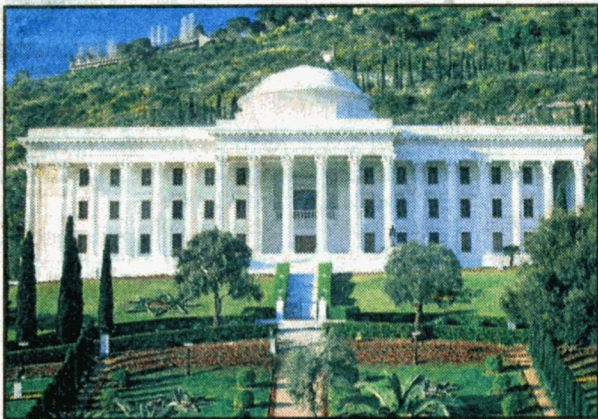
Courtesy photo

Huntsville's Roya Foroughi, Lucia Tyson, Nathan Wolfe and Amelia Tyson are all working at the Baha'i World Center in Haifa, Israel. Below is the center's Seat of the Universal House of Justice, a main building.



Source: ESRI

AP



Baha'i Media Bank photo

Baha'i who grew up near arsenal 'can feel the house shaking just like home'

By **PATRICIA C. MCCARTER**

Times Staff Writer

patricia.mccarter@htimes.com

The ground quakes in Haifa, Israel, when rockets shot from neighboring Lebanon find their target.

It's a familiar feel for Nathan Wolfe, a recent University of Alabama in Huntsville graduate who moved to Haifa two weeks ago to work in the World Baha'i Center.

Growing up in south Huntsville, he often heard and felt the blast from missile testing and rocket engines at Redstone Arsenal.

"I can feel the house shaking just like home, thanks to Redstone," the 23-year-old wrote Wednesday morning in an e-mail from Israel.

Wolfe joined three other Huntsville Baha'is already living in Haifa and work-

ing at the World Center. Amelia Tyson moved to Haifa almost two years ago, while her sister, Lucia Tyson, and cousin Roya Foroughi - all Grissom High School and UAH graduates - have been there for about a year.

Each has agreed to work at the World Center for 30 months.

The most basic premise of the Baha'i faith is peace through world unity. The religion was founded in 1844, when a Persian merchant named Siyyid Ali-Muhammad announced that he had been sent by God to prepare humanity for a new age. There are 5 million Baha'is; about 50 worship in Huntsville and Madison.

Even though she hears the Katyusha rockets landing in the holy city of Haifa every day, Amelia Tyson, 25, said in a phone interview Wednesday that she is cautiously unafraid, though she is "definitely aware of my surroundings."

Amelia - who handles correspondence

Please see **PEACE** on A6

Peace

Continued from page A1

for the Baha'i International House of Justice - said she isn't even considering coming back to Huntsville early. She pledged to work at the World Center for 2½ years, and that is what she'll do. She loves it there, and when she does leave, "it will be bittersweet."

Before the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah guerrillas began, she and her sister and cousin enjoyed visiting the Dead Sea and Tiberias and hiking the Golan Heights.

"Haifa and the surrounding towns ... have a history of peace and tolerance that spans over a century," she said. "And this peace and tolerance still exist,

though at the moment it is being acted upon by outside forces so it seems less so.

"We hope and pray that soon the residents of northern Israel and Lebanon can return to living in safety."

Having two daughters living in this political hot spot doesn't worry Tim Tyson as much as you might think. He said he and his wife, Rosana, support their daughters' wishes to "bring peace to the planet" by working at the World Center.

He likens his daughters' opportunity to work in the World Center as Catholics having the chance to work in the Vatican or Muslims working in Mecca: "It's the spiritual source of our entire beliefs."

"I wouldn't say I worry, but I am concerned," Tyson said. "I'm intently aware of the situ-

ation, and I pray for them constantly. I know that they're smart and know how to take care of themselves and that the World Center has their best interests in mind.

"They're in the safest place they can be in Israel. I'm confident in them and in my faith."

Because Baha'is are nonpolitical, Tyson said they don't support or denounce either side in the conflict. Instead, he said, they "drive people to consultation and consensus to bring about unity."

"By avoiding the entrapment of partisan politics, we stay focused on helping the planet arrive at peaceful, spiritual-based solutions."

Nathan Wolfe's mother said it was a shock that, just a day after he arrived in Haifa, rockets began landing in Israel, close to where her son had just moved. While Wolfe is saddened that people have been killed and injured during the past two weeks, he is not dwelling on potential harm that could come to him there, his mother said.

"He called to ask me what herb I put in rice to make it taste so good," his mother said. "Dill," I told him.

"He's much more concerned about doing what he went over there to do than he is about rockets."