

**17<sup>th</sup> Annual Baha'i Black Men's Gathering**  
**Green Acre Baha'i School**  
**Eliot, Maine**

July 19, 2002

Universal House of Justice  
Baha'i World Center  
P.O. Box  
31 001 Haifa, Israel

Dearly loved servants of the King of Glory

We greet you in the name of God the Most High!

Once again we have convened the Black Men's Gathering, however, this time we meet in the newly completed Kelsey Center at Green Acre Baha'i School. It is a very beautiful center and our meeting is truly a spiritual conference of joy and upliftment, with an underlying pledge to transformation, so vitally necessary for the successful achievement of the remaining goals of the 5 Year Plan. Led by Dr. William Roberts, one hundred eight black men, so poignantly aware of the plight of their brothers and sisters in the cities of America, registered their personal commitment to any and all marching orders we will henceforth receive from our beloved Universal House of Justice.

From the opening session, the atmosphere was charged with a strong dedication on the part of the brothers to acquire those skills that will be necessary for the successful functioning in the institute process. Toward this end, more than eighty brothers, over a two-day period, received intensive tutorial training in the two curricular sequences: Fundamental Verities, and Ruhi. The brothers vow to continue this training in their respective communities so that they can become competent facilitators in service to their Assemblies and the waiting souls in their clusters.

In order to understand the "perplexities" of the times, we took to heart your recommendation to study the letters of Shoghi Effendi mentioned in your Ridvan 2003 letter. We established three workshops that elucidated our understanding of the present hour and the need to prioritize our efforts to only those activities that will achieve the goals of the Cause. Additionally, we gained further knowledge through seminars on the law of Huquq'u'llah, deepened on your 17<sup>th</sup> January 2003 letter, and explored the communiqué from our beloved National Spiritual Assembly titled; "Blazoning The Name of Baha'u'llah".

Our hearts were further motivated and challenged by Counsellor Eugene Andrews and Dr. Robert Henderson who both arranged to spend a day with us. They encouraged the brothers to look at ourselves anew. Dr. Andrews encouraged us to continue in building momentum and to assume greater responsibility for advancing the Cause in our communities, while Dr. Henderson fired our appreciation about the relationship between the brothers, and Baha'u'llah.

The report of the successful trip by the younger brothers to Bahia Brazil earlier this year, emboldened us to the realization that with your supplications to the Blessed Beauty on our behalf, we can move those mountains that have encrusted and immobilized our hearts and minds.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation for the continued support of the Black Men's Gathering and your encouragement to actualize those spiritual potentials of the heart that we are just now dimly perceiving through the pupil of our eyes.

We love you from the bottom of our hearts.  
Sincerely,

The Men of the 17<sup>th</sup> Black Men's Gathering

c/o William Roberts  
wroberts@usbnc.org