

17th Annual Baha'i Black Men's Gathering
Green Acre Baha'I School
Eliot, Maine

July 19, 2003

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada

Dear Friends:

With elated hearts we bring you joyous greetings from the 108 men assembled at Green Acre for the 17th annual Bahá'í Black Men's Gathering. The Spirit of the Blessed Beauty flowing in the devotional portions of the Gathering, accented by the pulsating rhythms of African drumming, transported us to heights of ecstasy and filled us all with a sense of wonderment impossible to describe. The unity of our fellowship, and the balance of spontaneity and systematic, focussed deliberations, that characterized the entire week's activities, owed in no small measure to the devotions with which we started each day.

Many of our Canadian friends had a taste of the unique flavor of these devotional meetings at the 26th annual conference of the Association for Bahá'í Studies in Ontario last summer. We wish to express our heartfelt appreciation to the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada for having given us this opportunity to share the spirit of the Black Men's Gathering with your community.

The Black Men's Gathering was blessed with the participation of Counselor Gene Andrews, three members of the Auxiliary Board, and two members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States. We were especially pleased to have among us three participants from the esteemed Canadian Bahá'í community.

In the midst of the turbulent period of transition being experienced worldwide, our annual gathering served to renew our sense of confidence, resolve, and commitment to service. The Ridván 2003 Message of our beloved Universal House of Justice provided the central themes motivating our dedicated study and discussion during these precious, spirit-filled days. To enhance our efforts to play an increasingly significant role in the institute process, forty-six brothers were trained as facilitators of the Ruhi Book 1 course, and forty others as facilitators of the Fundamental Verities course in the Core Curriculum series. Eager to begin their work, these new tutors/facilitators represent an injection of human resources, fanning out across the continent, to assist in advancing the process of entry by troops. Participants also engaged in intensive workshops to study and discuss the Law of Huqúqu'lláh, the letters of the Guardian from *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, the Universal House of Justice's January 17th letter, and strategies for blazing the name of Bahá'u'lláh.

We look forward to any opportunity to assist the Canadian Bahá'í community in

whatever way we can in advancing the process of entry by troops.

With love and affection,

The Bahá'í Black Men's Gathering