

18th Annual Black Men's Gathering
Green Acre Bahá'í School
Eliot, Maine

July 17, 2004

National Spiritual Assembly
of the Bahá'ís of Canada

Beloved National Spiritual Assembly,

The Brothers attending the 18th Annual Black Men's Gathering greet you with the utmost love and heartfelt joy. As is our custom, our voices have continually been raised in praise and song on these sacred grounds, blessed by the footsteps of the beloved Master. We are pleased to report that three members of the Canadian Bahá'í community—George Symonds, Reginald Newkirk and Tallis Newkirk—were among the 117 participants of this year's Gathering that brought together Brothers from North America, Honduras, the West Indies and Africa.

Our deliberations during the week centered on the goals of the Five Year Plan. Each one of us has rededicated himself to advancing the process of entry by troops through wholehearted participation in study circles, devotional gatherings and classes for children and youth. Additionally, a full day was spent studying compilations about the Institutions of the National Spiritual Assembly and the Counsellors.

We were honored by a visit from Dr. Gene Andrews, member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for the Americas for a day and a half. He lovingly called our attention to the importance of fostering an outward looking orientation and to our indispensable role in bringing people of African descent into the fold of the Faith.

We were deeply saddened to learn of the shameful destruction of the house of Mírzá Buzurg-i-N?rí, the father of the Blessed Beauty. The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States charged each of us to “prayerfully reflect on the kind of response required by this challenging assault.” This draconian act has steeled our resolve and fueled our sense of urgency to arise, to seize initiative and to complete the tasks at hand.

It is our sincere hope that the spirit of our Gathering will soar over Canada and be felt by your beloved Spiritual Assembly and all of the believers whom you serve. Our love and our prayers are with you.

With Loving Bahá'í Greetings,

The participants of the 18th Annual Black Men's Gathering

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