

**Black Men's Gathering Central
c/o Dr. William Roberts
1233 Central Street
Evanston, Illinois 60201**

April 29, 2006

BMG New York City
c/o Elders Nasan Fitz-Henley, Lloyd Lawrence, Carl Murrell, Kenneth Ray

Beloved Brothers,

Our hearts are moved at this moment knowing that you are Gathering in the midst of the Ridvan Festival in the City of the Covenant. This, the ninth Day of Ridvan, is that period when the Messenger of God for this Day announced to the believers that a mantle had been placed upon His shoulders by the Almighty God to lead mankind to a new spiritual beginning in religious history. This was to begin one of the most difficult and horrific periods of persecution ever witnessed.

The ugliness of those who opposed the emergence of this new Faith has continued unabated from then until now in the land of its birth while simultaneously the Faith has spread far and wide across the planet bringing joy and inspiration to its adherents.

Today, in New York, you have the opportunity to gather to discuss your role in vindicating that attempted suppression and to bring to men who like you have experienced oppression and subjugation in a world that views them as less than.

The call of the Universal House of Justice to embrace the cohesive plan to welcome larger and larger numbers of individuals to experience the wondrous teachings designed for the betterment of humankind has been heard by men of African descent the world over and through the Black Men's Gathering they are assuming responsibility for contributing to its success.

Study of the 27 December 2005 Message and now the Ridvan Message from the Universal House of Justice offers us the opportunity to fully understand the pattern useful in applying our efforts to make the difference we yearn to witness.

Your expertise in the preparation and promotion of devotional meetings has become legendary and celebrated across the planet. Hush Harbor has become a model demonstrating the joy that devotional meetings in the spirit and style of the Black Men's Gathering can bring to everyone who participates. Congratulations on this mighty achievement!

Now it is time to move ahead building on this success to find ways to develop a broader array of capacity in New York of capable, committed and determined men who are demonstrating their vision in action.

What will you do to expand your arena of service? How will you expand your human resource base? Who else among you will step forward to join those already serving at the Threshold of Light?

We anxiously await your response and yearn to see a significant increase in the cadre of brothers in New York who can be counted upon to consistently carry their share of responsibility. Will you consider providing mentoring programs for junior youth offering them moral training, teaching classes for children in their neighborhoods inspiring their hearts and minds, leading study circles as tutors for those who wish to explore the Holy Word of God or hosting intimate meetings for prayer where people don't have to travel for hours to have access to this opportunity? When designed for people of African descent these activities can become the pathway to a walk toward freedom from the wolf we know is lurking around every corner in our community.

We stand to salute your successes already won and look forward to hearing news of the next stage of your activity to serve. Our prayers for your wisdom and verve are offered here at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette.

With great admiration and affection,

Your brother,

Billy