

# Melbourne's Black Men's Gathering

## Victoria, Australia



Chris Okelo of Uganda, and most

**Date:** 15 October 2005

**Time:** 11:30 am – 4:30 pm

**Venue:** Melbourne University

**Total Attendees:** 10

(2 Bahá'í / 8 non-Bahá'í)

### Leading up to the gathering....

As men of African descent are relatively few in number in Melbourne, the issue of finding men to invite to the gathering was a challenge.

I expected around 15 participants, and was met with 10 (a few of which could not stay the whole five hours). Many of

the brothers that I expected to attend for one reason or another, were unable to attend, but instead had encouraged a friend or relative to attend. This served to widen the community to which future gatherings / events and simply personal relationships will open up!

### The day of the gathering...

Melbourne's first annual BMG began with some drumming and socializing as the participants arrived.

After the participants arrived, I introduced myself to the group and explained why we were all gathering and also explained the history of the BMG. The message to our gathering was read and all seem to feel part of a larger movement. Everyone then introduced themselves and talked a little bit about where they were from and what brought them to Australia.

As I explained that the impetus behind such an event was my belief in Bahá'u'lláh and the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith, the issue of religion / spirituality arose. We all spoke briefly about our spiritual / religious beliefs and were able to see that the part

that we were to play in the development of a new world civilization was shared by us all!

The day continued with lunch, more drumming, reading and consulting on the Writings and Guidance as well as how we could all apply such in our lives.

The highlight of the day was the agreement by all that we would commit to working together to effect positive changes by reaching out to the wider community.

The gathering successfully took on a life of its own and it could be seen that the participants enjoyed themselves and agreed on the importance of such a gathering – all vowing to be part of the next as well as ongoing social gatherings and community strengthening events!

**Bahá'u'lláh once compared the peoples of African descent to the black pupil of the eye surrounded by the white. "In this black pupil you see the reflection of that which is before it, and through it the light of the Spirit shines forth."**



Deric Cumberbatch, member Bahá'í Council for Victoria.