

BMG Chicago
December 2-4, 2005

Dr. William Roberts
1233 Central Street
Evanston, IL 60201

Dearest Billy,

The brothers gathering over the weekend of December 2-4, 2005 in the city of Chicago concluded a befitting chapter in the evolution of the local Black Men's Gathering (BMG) in our region. This was our first Gathering, since you issued the call last July at Green Acre for the decentralization of the BMG, with a new focus on developing the scope of this model to reach the hearts of a wider segment of black men with the healing message of Baha'u'llah.

Significant features of our weekend together included the participation of 26 Bahá'í black men, including two members of the Regional Bahá'í Council of the Central States, all five elders from our area, plus elder Alvin Daniels from Springfield, Illinois and of course our four brothers Harish Anderson, Louis Anderson, Vincent Gholston and Maurice Haynes who journeyed all the way from Kansas City, Missouri to lend support to our efforts here in Chicago. The entire weekend was effused with a spirit of kinship, love, joy, music, prayer, laughter and service, and concluded with a soul stirring devotional gathering at the Chicago Bahá'í Center, attended by over 50 participants including many seekers.

The Gathering convened on Friday night, December 2 at the Bahá'í Center with fellowship and refreshments. The brothers present served each other by helping to collate all the study materials, which were to be used on Saturday. 17 brothers attended this evening get together, a pleasant surprise to most of us. A spirit of warm longing was generated as we saw each other assembled for yet another historic step along this road of transformation. It brought tears to the eyes and singing to the hearts. We held a brief devotional in the spirit of the BMG, welcomed and introduced ourselves and set the expectations for the Saturday Gathering, at Ecumenical Institute, 4750 North Sheridan Road, Chicago 60640; to be followed by a public BMG devotion back at the Center on Sunday.

Our entire Saturday BMG was spiritually focused, launched with our trademark musical drum session that lifted our spirits and relaxed our minds. With our catered breakfast being a little late, we filled the time with music and prayer. After breakfast, brother Cam Hearth then welcomed the brothers and read your message to us upon which we consulted and took note of your personal appeal to us to analyze these questions **“is this record satisfactory?”** (Our past efforts to serve the Cause) **“Have we/I done enough? What more will I do during this important time?”** The vibration of these questions and your call to action were heard, **“Now is not the time to tarry! Now is the time to step it up with verve! Now is the time!”** We all await the demonstration of noble deeds commensurate with the urgency of your call.

With this tone of action set, we conducted our individual introductions before breaking for a most sumptuous lunch -- the standard for each of our meals on that blessed day, all made possible

through the efforts of Andre Ballew and Kelsey Taylor, our meals task force team.

After lunch, brother Willis Burris facilitated our study of the Ridvan 2005 message, which impelled much consultation and insights into our current mission. Foremost of which was to complete the sequence of courses and multiple the core activities. Brothers again recommitted to supporting our monthly devotions in the metro area and pledged to take the necessary steps to complete the sequence.

Brother Pierre Pickens then facilitated our study of the letter from the National Spiritual Assembly about the life of Mr. Robert Turner, the first African American to embrace the Cause of Baha'u'llah. This study called to mind other champions of our race, and two brothers who had met the Hand of the Cause Mr. Enoch Olinga shared stories of meeting him and of his station as a Hand along with Mr. Louis Gregory. Pierre concluded with some excerpts from the book *Pupil of the Eye*, which helped to remind us of the unique obligations we bear for the spiritual insight of our communities and the plight of America in general.

Brother Walter Mays concluded the formal study with a report on the progress of core activities in the Chicago area. We then had enough time for each brother to reflect on the day and to share with us what his commitment would be to answer the call of the Universal House of Justice. Each person pledged to refocus their energies on accomplishing the requirements of the two essential movements and to assist others in this process. Our day concluded with dinner, at which a brother from the neighborhood joined us and also helped un-asked with the cleanup.

Our weekend concluded with a spirit-filled BMG style devotion at the Chicago Bahá'í Center, on Sunday morning, which brought many in attendance to tears. Some of the seekers present at that devotion now frequently attend other core activities, including monthly BMG devotions and the Paradise Drum Circle Friday night devotions.

Dear Billy, we thank and honor you for your unending devotion to assisting us through this model for service and transformation and we thank all the task forces members and our communications man Walter for helping us to realize yet another beautiful Gathering.

Attached is the list of all the beloved brothers who participated in the Saturday BMG.

With tender love,

BMG Chicago brothers