

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

4 December 2011

Transmitted by email: WRoberts@usbnc.org

The participants of the Black Men's Gathering  
c/o Dr. William Roberts  
U.S.A.

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

Recently, consultations were held at the Bahá'í World Centre with a few of the founders and long standing participants of the Black Men's Gathering to reflect upon its quarter century of achievements and the future prospects for those who have benefited from the Gathering over the years. The Universal House of Justice was pleased to observe the distance that has been traversed since the first gathering in 1987, and to note the far reaching ramifications of the interactions of so many men who have fanned the flames of their devotion to Bahá'u'lláh and arisen to teach His Cause on the home front and in other lands. The sentiments expressed in your letter of 16 July 2011 from the most recent Gathering reflect the depth of understanding that animates your effort: "The Plan of God is our answer no matter the question". And, again:

The vibration in our spirits arising from intense prayer and song, ardent study and consultation on your guidance, intense love for the Bahá'í Institutions, for the communities we serve and for one another, uplift our vision and renew our determination. Our pledge is to, with prayerful hearts, take flight as active servants of the Plan and to demonstrate in deeds our devotion to the framework you have outlined.

In assessing the range of your achievements, the House of Justice has concluded that the activities of the Black Men's Gathering, which were conceived as an initiative of limited duration, should now be brought to a close. This does not mean, of course, that all the challenges which brought about the initiation of the gathering are overcome or the concerns it addressed are completely allayed. It is, however, a recognition that new possibilities and new spaces for thought and action have been created in the Bahá'í community in the United States by the Divine Plan in these intervening years, and that your hopes and aspirations are best met in future through possibilities discussed in the letter to you dated 28 August 2011, written on behalf of the House of Justice.

As you are aware, in early 2012, a series of regional Black Men's Gatherings will be held, and the House of Justice encourages your participation. There, together with Dr. William Roberts and others that have accompanied you in your journey over so many years, you can

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celebrate your achievements, reflect on the tasks ahead, and increase further your consecration to a Plan that opens the way to the fulfilment of the heartfelt longings of all peoples.

You are assured of the ardent prayers of the House of Justice in the Holy Shrines that you may be ever surrounded by the tender mercies and strengthening grace of the Blessed Beauty.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

cc: National Assembly of the United States