

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES

May 16, 2019

To the American Bahá'í community
for the Feast of 'Azamat

Dearly loved Friends,

Our message comes to you this month in the afterglow of the recently completed 111th US Bahá'í National Convention, which in many of its most satisfying features testified to the progress our community made in advancing the aims of the Five Year Plan in the preceding administrative year.

The gathering was pervaded by a special spirit of joy and poignancy, inspired by the Universal House of Justice's Ridván message conveying news of the worldwide growth and development of the Bahá'í community and sharing the wondrous announcement of the newly inaugurated project to build the Shrine of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This stirring message created a deeply spiritual atmosphere for substantive discussions about the affairs of the Faith in our country. Highlights of these discussions included the:

- Advancement of additional clusters to the third milestone on the continuum of growth, for a national total of 19—an increase of 11 since the beginning of the current Plan and reflecting a worldwide trend about which the House of Justice commented in its Ridván message. One of the most exciting features of these clusters is the participation of hundreds, many of whom are not members of the Faith, in the life of the community. The prospects for other clusters to make notable progress, perhaps in the months between now and the next bicentenary, are promising.
- Steady growth—through a process of regular study, action, and reflection—in the community's capacity to engage in meaningful conversations on themes of spiritual significance and to walk a path of service with others. As a result, the friends are becoming more and more adept at inviting others into the life of the community, into the sequence of courses, and into collective efforts for the common good. In many clusters, such interactions have led in a natural way to abundant opportunities for direct sharing about Bahá'u'lláh and the Bahá'í teachings, resulting in invitations to formally enroll in the Faith.
- Success in the settling of hundreds of the friends as homefront pioneers or in their serving as visiting tutors among populations that have shown special receptivity to the Bahá'í teachings. Genuinely thrilling progress is being made among peoples with a unique and rich legacy, such as African Americans and American Indians, as well as among newly arrived immigrant populations. Substantive consultation also took place on the potential of the Plan's framework for action to address issues of race and class in our society.
- Jubilant celebration of the achievement of our \$38 million National Bahá'í Fund goal for the fiscal year—another testament to the vitality and devotion of this greatly blessed community!

These are but a few of the highlights of the Convention weekend, as much as we can comfortably fit within the brief span of a letter. We strongly encourage those of you who would like to know more to attend the meetings to report on Convention that will be convened by the delegate(s) from your respective electoral unit. We also encourage you to visit the Convention reportage [accessible here](#) (after entering your Bahá'í ID number and password), through the portal at the top of the landing page of our member services website.

With hearts uplifted and inspired by the proceedings of this gathering—central to our divinely ordained system and its electoral process—we turn our attention, with eager anticipation, to the community's achievements in the months between now and the bicentenary of the Blessed Báb's Birth, and to a new momentum in our efforts that will surely result in carrying the Plan to a triumphant conclusion. In all you do, be sure our confidence, our prayers, and our abiding love travel with each and every one of you.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth E. Bowers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kenneth" and last name "Bowers" clearly distinguishable.

Kenneth E. Bowers
Secretary