

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

December 13, 2023

To the American Bahá'í community

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The turmoil increasingly evident throughout the world, as well as in our own country, surely causes deep concern in the heart of every conscientious soul. Despite these difficulties, we look with hope to the constructive endeavors of the ardent followers of the Blessed Beauty to build, alongside their fellows, communities that will banish prejudices of every kind, alleviate suffering, and serve as beacons of true safety for all people. We fully understand that, as citizens of this nation, we are not immune to the challenges faced by our brethren. On the contrary, we very much share in these troubles—yet we are also confident in the power of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh to effect a complete transformation in the present conditions. Our duty is to strive unceasingly to translate His vision into reality.

In this effort, we lovingly encourage and accompany each other on a path of learning. In so doing, we realize that not everyone progresses at the same pace or has the same talents and capacities. In addition, certain communities face very different social realities than others, and might not, as a whole, progress at the same rate as others. Sometimes it can feel as if our communities are not advancing very far along the path described for us in the current series of Plans. The National Spiritual Assembly feels it is timely to share with you the following remarks, excerpted from a letter dated October 27, 2023, written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual in this country, which clarify how one can approach community building, even in the face of such difficulties:

The House of Justice acknowledges the concern for the health of your community that has prompted you to raise this matter. You write that you have not succeeded in your collaborations with the friends in your community to learn how to strengthen a vibrant pattern of community life that is not only conducive to the spiritual happiness and well-being of its members, but also serves as a refuge from a world buffeted by the excesses of a wayward age. While this is regrettable, it may be helpful for you to bear in mind that the Nine Year Plan provides a framework for action that enables individual believers who are committed to building unified and diverse communities to initiate their own community-building activities that can be havens for those seeking environments free from prejudice. This means that it is not necessary to convince the entire community in a specific area of the efficacy of a particular approach; rather, it would be sufficient to identify a few like-minded individuals with whom one can collaborate. You are therefore encouraged to persist in your efforts to teach the Cause and assist those who are receptive—in an appropriate setting that they would not find overwhelming—to arise and contribute to community-building endeavors. Moreover, other individuals...can, likewise in the context of the Plan, proceed in a similar manner by making a conscious effort to establish relationships with people from different cultural backgrounds and initiate activities which need not necessarily involve the participation of the generality of the community.

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It is noted that you believe that the issues you have raised have not been directly addressed by the institutions of the Faith. You are encouraged to once again turn to your Local Spiritual Assembly and, if necessary, the members of the Auxiliary Boards in your area, as these institutions are in the best position to provide you with advice and guidance concerning these challenges. Having done so, you should leave the matter entirely in their hands, assured that they will give it due consideration, and focus your energies on serving the Cause you love so dearly.

As you labor daily to construct a better world, we hope that these words from our beloved House of Justice will serve as a source of strength and encouragement. Be assured of our prayers that your endeavors may attract the confirmations of the Abhá Beauty.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

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

Kenneth E. Bowers
Secretary