



A MESSAGE OF LOVE FROM THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE PUPIL OF THE EYE ARISE CONFERENCE

To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

The friends in attendance at the 2019 ARISE Pupil of the Eye Conference in Nashville, TN, send you our heartfelt greetings. It is our great desire to share with you the love and enthusiasm we have experienced at this inaugural conference for the Bahá'ís of African descent in the United States.



We wish to express sincere gratitude to the National Spiritual Assembly, for receipt of the letter dated November 27, 2019, as read by Ms. Rabi Musah at the beginning of the conference. Your letter of such loving support gave our conference the knowledge that our national institution is with us, praying for the success of this special gathering and supporting the conference goals.

Over 300 friends and family of African descent attended this historic convocation - an amazing spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually affirming experience reflecting on the Word of God and the meaning of being "the pupil of the eye." We came to a much deeper understanding of the work that is necessarily in store for us, as we listened to and reflected on the guidance about the spiritual station of people of African descent.

The conference leaders included sessions on the history of the Black Men's Gathering and the Sisters Gatherings, including their historic travel teaching trips to the continent of Africa and Brazil.



"and Bestir Yourself."

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We were deeply inspired by multiple stories of the sacrificial contributions of the earliest Bahá'ís of African descent in the US. We learned of successful community-building activities currently taking place across the country by African American Baha'is, at the grassroots.

Great focus was given to listening for how to use our skills, spirit, and energies to arise from where we are, to where we need to be. Deep consultation was conducted on the need to arise to serve our beloved Cause, in whatever ways have meaning, and to step out on faith. We learned from brilliant scholars, amazingly talented musical and visual professional artists, and spiritually deepened "griots" (poets and storytellers) who shared their life experiences with the healing, challenges, and blessings that flow from study, reflection, and action in the Word of God. Friendships and relationships were developed or renewed and deepened. Our children, junior youth, and youth shared their special gifts of music, art, and their unique insights into "the most vital and challenging issue."

We are deeply appreciative of the support and guidance of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Nashville, TN, and for the gracious use of this exquisite community center.

Our hearts and souls are full, soaring, and ready to "gird our loins" for individual and collective "herculean" efforts in service to our beloved Faith in the days, weeks, and months ahead, culminating with the conclusion of this current Five Year Plan.

With Loving Bahá'í Greetings,

Attendees at the 2019 ARISE "Pupil of the Eye" Conference,
Nov. 29 - Dec. 1, 2019, Nashville, Tennessee.