

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

August 19, 2015

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

Dearly loved Friends,

A report forwarded to us by the Area Teaching Committee of North Carolina's Triangle cluster highlights a recent gathering celebrating an important milestone in the cluster's development. Finding the sense of joy and confidence it conveys inspiring and its description of essential processes and their results impressive, we felt moved to share a portion of it with you:

This afternoon on the 19th day of July, our cluster celebrated the consistency and focus of our efforts to reach 1,000 people participating in the core activities—more than half of whom are friends of the Faith. Part of the victory is not that we reached this goal in a sudden surge in one three-month cycle, but that we steadfastly worked towards accomplishing this feat over successive cycles in this Plan, particularly in the last nine months. This is a testament to different capacities being patiently built over time, including the capacity to work more harmoniously and to be in a constant mode of learning. At this new stage of development of our cluster, we have crossed a bridge that does not need turning back. Now, our task is to discover “[W]hat are the new capacities and skills we need to learn and strengthen to cross the next bridge together?”

The spirit at the cluster reflection meeting was very high[,] filled with prayers and songs led by many youth, warmth and friendship shared across all ages and amongst new and veteran believers. . . . The presentation also showed the progression of growth over recent cycles and captured qualitative learning. . . .

With about 179 individuals forming the hundreds serving the thousands, one can confidently say that the Triangle cluster has a strong sense of community and collective will.

The meeting closed with rose petals from the Holy Land given to each of the friends. A special token reminding us of the sacredness of our work—the teaching work, the community-building process, the creation of the pattern of the New World Order, the diffusion of the Word of God.

One can discern in this brief description many of the characteristics of a flourishing community, among them the participation of new and veteran believers of all ages, the achievement of significant success in attracting people from the larger society, and the presence of a vibrant devotional life, a strongly felt unity of purpose, and a consciousness of their sacred mission on the part of all. One notes as well that these successes were not achieved overnight, but were the result of an attitude of learning, patient endeavor, and systematic effort sustained over the course of many years. Surely it is such perseverance that has enabled the friends in the Triangle to come this far, and such deep experience that now gives them the confidence to reach for still higher levels of growth. But perhaps the quality that shines through more brilliantly than all the others is the love of the friends for the Blessed Beauty and their consecration to His service.

How perfectly this bears out this statement in the Universal House of Justice's most recent Ridván message to the Bahá'ís of the world:

Where a programme of growth has been established in a previously unopened cluster, we see how the initial stirrings of activity arise out of the love for Bahá'u'lláh held in the heart of a committed believer. Notwithstanding the orders of complexity that must eventually be accommodated as a community grows in size, all activity begins with this simple strand of love. It is the vital thread from which is woven a pattern of patient and concentrated effort, cycle after cycle, to introduce children, youth, and adults to spiritual ideas; to foster a feeling for worship through gatherings for prayer and devotion; to stimulate conversations that illuminate understanding; to start ever-growing numbers on a lifetime of study of the Creative Word and its translation into deeds; to develop, along with others, capacity for service; and to accompany one another in the exercise of what has been learned.

This same powerful dynamic is on display in countless communities across the country. May the success of the friends in the Triangle serve to inspire the friends working assiduously in every cluster, at whatever stage of development, with renewed enthusiasm for service to the Divine Plan.

We ardently pray that each and every one of you will contribute your unique and precious share to "the onward surge" of the Cause of God as we press on toward a victorious conclusion of the current Five Year Plan.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES



Kenneth E. Bowers
Secretary