

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

September 26, 2015

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

Dearly loved Friends,

In recent messages we have shared with you exciting news of developments in some of the more advanced clusters in the country, where hundreds of individuals—a significant number of them not Bahá'ís—have joined us in the joyful task of building welcoming and spiritually vibrant communities. The complexity and scope of activities in these clusters should not, however, cause us to forget their origins in relationships between individual souls nor blind us to the fact that unity of purpose is achieved one heart at a time. In every cluster, whatever its current stage of development, love is the refreshing rain that waters the seeds of friendship and service, causing the garden of God's Faith to blossom and grow in all its wondrous diversity.

Among reports we have recently received from individual believers, one from West Virginia illustrates this truth especially well. In reading this excerpt from it, we encourage you to reflect on the spiritual qualities and gentle approaches that served to plant the seed of attraction in the hearts of two receptive souls:

"I began working in Charleston on May 11, two days after I arrived [in] the city. I got a job as a Customer Service Representative at the Division of Motor Vehicles. In my mind, it was the perfect job to be of service to humanity, make contact with 50–100 souls a day, and get paid for it! I was certain that Bahá'u'lláh had placed me in my workplace for the purpose of serving His Cause[,] so I prayed to be enabled to recognize those special souls who I would be able to have a meaningful conversation with and ultimately begin a core activity. I was intentional in my conversation and systematic in my approach to the invitations that I extended. I prayed often to find these special souls, to recognize His signs and to be guided in how to converse with them.

"My first week, I [met] a beautiful soul. She had standards of service to her fellow human beings that were not of this world. By the end of the first week, she had asked me if she could take me to lunch. . . . During our lunch, I expressed to her the beautiful virtues that I had observed in her all week. . . . She expressed that she had a desire to learn how to memorize sacred writings to use in times of tests. I was in awe of who she was and I shared it with her; I explained to her that we should get together to study sacred writings and she agreed. Now I knew that I had one participant for the 'Reflections on the Life of the Spirit' study circle: the seed had been planted.

"'H' and I would often have meaningful conversations that would be cut short, which[,] little to my knowledge, left her hungry for more. Each time that we interacted, I tried to think of a way to continue the conversation. . . . I continued to pray to Bahá'u'lláh to help me find other souls for this budding study circle with her.

"One week after this, I asked a co-worker, whom I had a feeling was another potential member of the study circle, if she knew of anyone that lived in the area that I lived so that I could get a ride to work one morning. She said that she lived in my area and not only would she pick me up in the morning, but that she would insist on taking me to the airport to catch my flight after work that day. On the way to the airport, she poured out the beauty of her soul. . . . She also expressed to me her desire to find a religious community to belong to. She had visited a few churches, but nothing felt right. All the

while, I spoke openly and honestly about the Bahá'í Faith and the community. I told her what led me to the Faith and how the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh had transformed my whole life and being.

“‘K’ and her husband serve as a refuge for many youth in their community who do not always have safe homes to stay in. From the beginning, I envisioned them . . . following a path of service that would lead to animating a junior youth group. I shared my vision . . . and I explained the role of an animator. Another seed was planted!

“As time progressed, I was able to speak about the themes of Book 1 with ease and add details to the pending invitation with both ‘H’ and ‘K’ . . . One key aspect to our budding friendships was having social time together. We got together for board games, swimming at the pool, and other fun things. . . .

“[A]t the end of June, ‘K’ came to me at work and explained that she had been thinking about all of our conversations about the Faith and she had been reading online. She asked me how someone ‘converts to Bahá'í.’ I explained that to be a Bahá'í simply means ‘follower of Bahá'u'lláh.’ One is a Bahá'í when their heart recognizes Him as the Manifestation of God for this day and agrees to abide by His laws. . . . We agreed to talk about it more at the next devotional. . . . The topic came up very naturally and I asked ‘K’ if she wanted to formally enroll in the Faith and she did.

“On July 19, at the study circle, ‘H’ asked if she could ‘pick my brain,’ about how to enroll in the Faith, while still having unity with her conservative Christian family, whom she lives with. We read writings about the relationship between parents and children, the importance of family unity, and specific letters that the Guardian had addressed to people in similar situations.”

Friends, this story beautifully illustrates the confirmations that come to every believer whose heart is aflame with love for the Blessed Beauty and who possesses a sincere desire to be of service to others. May such meaningful conversations increase continually, from soul to soul and from coast to coast, until our nation has been transformed from a field of conflict and contention to a verdant and splendid rose-garden of the spirit!

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

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Kenneth E. Bowers
Secretary