

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

October 15, 2015

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

Dearly loved Friends,

To the accumulating accounts of victories we are receiving, some of which we have shared in recent Feast messages, we are delighted to add news received from South Carolina—the home state of the illustrious Hand of the Cause of God Louis G. Gregory and the scene of episodes in the history of the Faith in this country that are unparalleled and unforgettable.

Some months ago, the Regional Bahá'í Council of the Southeastern States, in concert with a few Local Spiritual Assemblies and others, initiated the “South Carolina Enterprise,” a project which—through the placement of homefront pioneers and mobile tutors, many of them youth—is focusing new attention on three clusters. Concentrating their community-building work in selected neighborhoods, these devoted young servants of the Cause have begun to develop friendships with their peers and to walk with them in the path of service. As a result, a small but growing contingent of young people in these neighborhoods are actively engaged in service—and some have already given their allegiance to Bahá'u'lláh.

A report from one of these homefront pioneers included the following remarks about the impact of the young people now entering the life of the community:

“The spirit of enthusiasm and joyful service is now infusing other community activities, as the youth spontaneously sing and drum during devotional gatherings and at Feast, and facilitate the consultations and reflections at reflections gatherings. As our community does not currently have a regularly functioning core group, the youth were invited to plan the reflections gathering, which was a venue for joyful study, reflection and planning, with the youth (all of whom were not Bahá'ís at that time) being among the most vocal and expressive during consultations and planning.

“The culture that I think has really transformed our community and the youth activities is the spirit of being a true family. The youth see each other every day, meet up after school and accompany each other in their junior youth groups and reflections afterwards. When we haven't seen one of the youth, we truly miss each other and reach out to each other. We are there for each other through difficult and easy times. We help each other to rise above family difficulties, personal struggles, depression and insecurities, and challenges both within and outside of the group, and literally walk together on a path of service, encouraging each other as much as possible.”

Several of the new Bahá'ís have also remarked on the transforming nature of their experiences over the past few months. A 16-year-old stated, “With [Ruhi] Book 1, I feel like I've learned a lot more about my abilities and what God has given me and the capacity of my own being and what I'm able to reveal for myself. In Book 5, I've learned that the Bahá'í view of junior youth and youth is [that they are] a very powerful group of people. [Bahá'ís] have a different view [of youth] than society, and knowing that one person has a different outcome for your life than others do can change the whole way you move in life.” Another new believer, 17 years old, wrote: “The help of my friends and the love of my family around me keeps me going. When I say family I mean you guys, not my biological family. Everybody from the youth group keeps on telling me ‘We love you, we're your family.’ They don't kick me when I'm down, they sit with me and, together, we can get up. I became a Bahá'í because I really feel like with me belonging to something I understand is a good thing for me. I now know that truthfulness is the foundation of all human virtues. If you don't have truthfulness[,] you have nothing.” And a 15-year-old believer wrote: “I learned that the betterment of the world can be accomplished through pure and goodly

deeds. That means that if you do something for someone without expecting to get it back, you show other people that there [are] good people out there and they might follow in your footsteps and make the world a better place.”

A joy to us for their testimony to the way these precious young people have obtained a new vision for their lives, these wonderful narratives also remind us of the countless seeds that were planted in South Carolina over many decades of intense and sacrificial teaching efforts—efforts which have surely endowed the state with great potential. As these early results already show, we have in today’s framework for action a practical system by which the work of expansion and consolidation can proceed with far greater effectiveness than was possible in years past. And as our capacity grows, we will assuredly achieve both accelerated and sustained growth of the Cause.

Dearest friends, we share with you this stirring news of the South Carolina Enterprise certain you will rejoice in it and will join us in supplicating the Blessed Beauty that it may continue to grow from strength to strength. May we all take from its heartening early success renewed energy and inspiration for our own efforts to serve this unifying Cause and bring the current Plan for its development to triumphant conclusion at Ridván!

With loving Bahá'í greetings,  
NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF  
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Kenneth E. Bowers  
Secretary