

Regional Bahá'í Council of the Atlantic States

Delaware • District of Columbia • Maryland • North Carolina • Virginia

19 'Ilm 174
November 2, 2017

To: The Lovers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the Atlantic Region

Re: Some Reflections on the Bicentenary

Dearly loved co-workers,

Your Regional Council would like to take a moment to reflect with you on our wondrous, collective experience leading up to and through the celebrations of the Bicentenary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh. At our meeting this past weekend, Council members shared stories of their own community celebrations, and many others. Several things became clear to us.

First, we reflected on our region's collective effort to follow the guidance of the House of Justice in its 18 May 2016 letter: "The locus of activity for the bicentenaries is to be at the local level. The House of Justice anticipates that in countless places across the world, both rural settings and urban centres, the friends will find creative ways to honour the Twin Manifestations..." Both the quantity as well as the creative diversity of the celebrations were evident, all across the region. Attendance at gatherings ranged from less than ten in rural communities to hundreds attending in urban centers. There were parades, tree plantings, plays, musical performances, heartfelt testimonies, governmental resolutions and much, much more. What this clearly demonstrated was not only the deep love for Bahá'u'lláh that we collectively share, but also the capacity that we have to work together and sacrifice our time and resources in honoring "Him Who is the Unifier of the world".

The Council also reflected on the enhanced capacity throughout our region to converse about the Person of Bahá'u'lláh and His Revelation. The House of Justice and our National Assembly has been calling us to increasingly find a language of openness and inclusion as we engage in meaningful conversations about the light that Bahá'u'lláh has brought to the world. The film, "Light to the World", as well as the October letter of the Universal House of Justice to the world, are wonderful examples of this language, which we can all study and model as we further refine our capacity to converse. This capacity was the focus of the nearly one thousand souls attending the 14 Teaching Conferences held in the weeks prior to the Bicentenary. Clearly, the conversations that were initiated in advance of the Bicentenary and the invitations that were offered to attend the celebrations now need to be extended and deepened in the coming weeks and months. As much as we want to take a "breather" from the exertions of the past few months, we cannot ignore the fact that hearts have truly been opened to the Revelation and that we continue to have an unprecedented opportunity to teach the Cause of God.

Finally, dear friends, the Council reflected on the words of the House of Justice from that May 18, 2016 letter: "The spiritual forces that are sure to be released on that most auspicious occasion will do much to spur the friends into action as they commence the eight cycles that lie between the two bicentenaries, during which the greatest share of the effort needed to fulfil the goal of the Plan will be required."

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We have all witnessed this release of spiritual energy. We have all experienced the joy of working together. We have all enhanced our capacity to speak about Bahá'u'lláh and His Revelation. And so, during these next eight cycles until the Bicentenary of the Birth of the Bab, may we all now become engaged in the work of this Plan like never before.

The Council invites you to share with us stories, photos and videos that not only highlight the joy of the Bicentenary celebrations themselves, but those that can illustrate the further spread of these spiritual forces in the world and the increase of our capacity to have conversations about the Person of Bahá'u'lláh and His Revelation. Please email these to secretariat@rbcatlantic.org, and they will be added to the Council website, www.rbcatlantic.org, along with those that are already posted. You are also welcomed to visit the Council website to view videos or download [program materials from the recent teaching conferences](#).

With great love and hope,

REGIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL of the ATLANTIC STATES

Peter Oldziej
Secretary

cc: Counselor Farah Guchani-Rosenberg
Auxiliary Board Members serving the Atlantic Region
Atlantic Regional Training Institute Board of Directors