

1 Jalál (Glory) 179 B.E.

Letter to the Universal House of Justice on behalf of the Midwest Region of the United States

To our beloved Universal House of Justice:

The friends serving the region of the Midwest encompassing the three states of Ohio, Indiana & Michigan wish to convey our deepest gratitude upon the receipt of the Nine Year Plan, which has filled our region with a renewed sense of mission and direction, and for enabling us to come together in this inter-institutional gathering in a spirit of utmost joy and eagerness to share learning across diverse contexts. We are extremely grateful to have been immersed these past days in a spiritual atmosphere of collective prayer, deep study, and consultation about the path ahead, elevated by cultural arts and loving comments shared by Counsellors of the International Teaching Center and the Continental Board, Directors of the Baha'i International Development Organization, and members of our beloved National Spiritual Assembly. The insights shared by all the regions of our country, and from Alaska and Bermuda, made clear the universality of the Cause of Baha'u'llah. They inspired our minds and hearts and were offered and received with deep hope and generosity. We wish to express our joy in seeing the diversity and prevalence of youth in this space, and our confidence in the youth of our own region. We are anxious to bring the insights gleaned here home to our communities and to the friends laboring alongside us who were not able to be with us in this space, but whose learnings we carry with us. Thank you for calling us all to arise to greater heights of service and to continue advancing and systematizing our learning.

Within our regional consultations, our minds and spirits were uplifted as we were joined by beloved members of our senior institutions who sat with us, listened to our deliberations, and shared rich insights. Through your guidance, we are learning what we have learned, and what we still need to learn, and are urgently reflecting upon how such learning can be further systematized and effectively disseminated. We wish to share with you some of the objects of learning that emerged from our regional consultations on the following areas:

Movement of clusters

- How can we, with increasing effectiveness, disseminate learning so that the knowledge existing in pockets in our region becomes the region's knowledge? We will know it belongs to the region when it has been considered and applied in different contexts throughout our region.

Strengthening teaching efforts with a focus on historically significant and immigrant populations

- How can we unleash the "untapped potential" of our Baha'i communities to teach the Faith, with an emphasis on historically significant and immigrant populations?
- We recognize that one of the strengths of our region as the Nine Year Plan begins is our large population of African American friends. In our consultations, we recognized how deep expression of devotion to the Covenant is related to the movement of clusters. Our region shares a collective vision around the use of Ruhi Book 8 as an effective means to reactivate friends of African descent, and to appreciate the particular ways distinct populations will connect with, and take charge of, the Institute.
- In our region, we want to maintain this focus on historically significant and immigrant populations, with a particular and long-term focus on friends of African descent, conscious that our efforts depend upon unleashing the capacities and distinct contributions of all the populations of the world, and that these significant populations have a crucial role to play in making the world anew.

Strengthening the Institute

- The content seminars for the Institute courses are helping develop an expansive vision of the institute and the capacity of tutors across our region to invite new friends into the institute and accompany one another. These seminars were received here as a gift from other regions and are a sign of the dissemination of learning throughout our country and our region. We are dedicated to continually refining our process of learning through the collaborative group around the three educational imperatives.
- How can we more systematically learn about creating conditions through which more of the friends of the Faith participating in core activities can be encouraged and accompanied to formally enroll?

Increasing collaboration and mutual support

- How can we advance a shared reading of the reality of our region, and the body of knowledge and experience upon which we are drawing? How can we develop sustained focus while also advancing learning on multiple fronts, with an eye for the interconnectedness of lines of action? We will seek to develop one common map of our region, reflecting one shared vision, one plan of action, and one unified reading of reality.

These words strive to convey our profound allegiance to you, but we know what will really shine forth is our actions over these next nine years. Thank you for holding our hands with such patience and love, for teaching us to be heavenly farmers, and helping us to learn to cultivate the conditions for the emergence of divine civilization.

Sincerest love,

The Midwest Regional collaborators