



**National Spiritual Assembly
of the Bahá'ís of New Zealand**

Te Rūnanga Wairua Tapu o nga Bahá'í o Aotearoa

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Very dear friends gathered at the 14 unit conventions around Aotearoa

Tēnā koutou! Ngā mihi aroha nui!

As we rejoice in the ability to be with one another in person, let us remember our brothers and sisters around the globe who are unable to meet together and for whom the Coronavirus pandemic has wreaked untold hardships. As the events in our own country in late January reminded us, circumstances can rapidly change and we all need to continue to be prepared to be agile and adapt to changing conditions. While this country has been largely buffered from the worst effects of this evolving global crisis, yet the appalling dangers carried by the pandemic and the waves of suffering and sorrow being experienced in other parts of our human family elicit our heartfelt sympathies and provide a strong motivating force for us all to continue contributing tirelessly, with composure and calm determination, towards creating a better world.

As the pandemic and other forces of disintegration in the world become stronger, so too does a corresponding measure of the spiritual forces at our disposal increase and become more available to any individual, institution or community that marshals these forces, especially at the hour of need. One of these spiritual forces is the power generated when higher levels of unity are attained in the context of an outward-looking orientation that seeks to have a wide embrace of others. We have many examples in Aotearoa of the elevation in the life of the community that occurs when the force of unity is tapped into, through utilising the power of collective action in a spiritually edifying way. Perhaps this is one example of the potential waiting to be tapped in every community, which the beloved Universal House of Justice mentions in the message of 25 November 2020 to the Bahá'ís of the world, referring to the coming One Year Plan commencing at Ridván:

In this year-long effort, every community must draw on whatever untapped potential it may possess and seek to overcome any obstacles that are impeding its growth, thereby preparing it for the demands to come.

What might be the untapped potential that can be identified in your locality, cluster or unit? Is it that there are devoted friends yet to be mobilised to contribute to collective action in some way? Is there a need to enhance the devotional character of the community? Can the community become a more welcoming environment for people of all backgrounds? What kind of environment could be created so that tangata whenua can feel comfortable to express their culture within the life of the community in a way that enhances the richness of the fabric of community life? Are we as individuals tapping into stores



of hope and confidence in a way that inspires those around us to also be nourished by these same spiritual resources? Are there individuals amongst us who can arise and contribute to achieving the nine remaining intensive programmes of growth?*

And last but not least, how can greater participation in the bounty of contributing to the Funds of the Faith be encouraged in your community?

As we stand together on the cusp of a new series of Plans, and the closure of another chapter of the Formative Age of this Faith, we are entering a year of huge significance, referred to by the House of Justice[†] in the following way:

Besides providing for advances within clusters everywhere, the coming Plan will be a year for profound reflection on the life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the strength of the Covenant of which He was the Centre, as the community prepares to commemorate the centenary of His Ascension.

Your resilience and your unwavering commitment to the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh have filled the National Spiritual Assembly with hope, and we are excited by the energy and dynamism generated over this summer period through many, many friends arising to serve and engaging hundreds from the broader community in various locations around the country with the aim of meeting the goals of the current Five Year Plan. The prospects that are unfolding for the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh to influence the nature of our society in this country have never been stronger.

We close with words of the House of Justice[‡] about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

... to the faithful of this age, He remains without parallel: a perfect embodiment in word and deed of all that His Father taught, the One through Whom the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh was “proclaimed, championed and vindicated”. We are conscious that the coming year will also mark a century since His Will and Testament—that “momentous”, “historic”, “immortal” Document—“called into being, outlined the features and set in motion the processes” of the Administrative Order, “the very pattern of that divine civilization which the almighty Law of Bahá’u’lláh is designed to establish upon earth”. This “unique” and “divinely-conceived” Order, this “mighty administrative structure”, had been fashioned by its Architect to perpetuate the Covenant and channel the spiritual powers of the Cause.

The National Spiritual Assembly assures you all of its loving thoughts and prayers as you continue contributing with zeal, confidence, and devotion, to the significant spiritual enterprise of building this divine civilisation,

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ’ÍS OF AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

* In West Coast, Central Otago, Ruapehu, Waitomo/Otorohanga, South Waikato/Taupo, Thames/Coromandel, Tairāwhiti, Eastern Bay of Plenty, and Wairarapa clusters.

† Letter to the Bahá’ís of the World, dated 25 November 2020 (the Day of the Covenant), a letter which can be viewed as the charter for the coming One Year Plan and which all believers, institutions and communities must study deeply and put into action, particularly paragraph 2.

‡ Again quoting from the letter of 25 November 2020