



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

Te Rūnanga Wairua Tapu o nga Bahá'í o Aotearoa

8 December 2021
17 Qawl 178

To the friends in Aotearoa

Tēnā koutou katoa beloved whanau

Upon the return to Aotearoa of our four representatives who had the privilege of representing not only the National Spiritual Assembly and their respective Regional Bahá'í Councils, but also the entire body of believers in New Zealand, the fragrances from the gathering and commemorative occasions in the Holy Land in honour of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Covenant have begun to be diffused. The Universal House of Justice has explained that the spiritual energy generated by the Centenary activities in the Holy Land and by the forthcoming Conference of the Counsellors and Auxiliary Board members in the Holy Land will be carried to the friends via the series of conferences worldwide. These conferences, in which it is hoped all friends and those in our various circles of engagement will participate, are going to create the momentum needed to launch the Nine Year Plan at Ridván with the necessary impetus.

The vision for the conferences is of widespread and diverse participation. Already in the North Island, ten conferences around the region are being planned, and in the South Island it is likely that there will be at least three. At this stage it is envisaged that all conferences will be of three days' duration. The purpose of this letter is to fulfil the express wishes of the House of Justice, in their letter of 15 September 2021 to all National Spiritual Assemblies, which stated: "Early consideration of the artistic and creative components to be incorporated into the programme would allow for some of the preparations for these to be made well in advance." All individuals, families, groups of families, junior youth groups, children's classes and others – whether Bahá'ís or not – are invited to consider what they may be able to contribute to this aspect of the programme. While some contributions may be included in plenary sessions, others may be included in smaller breakout groups. Displays of visual arts will adorn the venues. Some artistic components may be well suited to evening programmes where more guests are likely to come along. All offerings reflective of the themes of the conferences will be considered a gift of love.

The aim of this request for artistic and creative components is that friends will naturally be moved to respond to the themes of the conference from a genuine place of connection with these themes. For this reason, we identify below the broad aspects that will be featured in the conferences (all taken from the above-mentioned letter of the House of Justice) and invite any and all to respond to one or more of these themes in a creative way:

Continues...



- The Sacred Writings and devotional aspects;
- “carrying to the friends in every land the spiritual energy released by the gatherings in the Holy Land, as the community prepares for a dynamic thrust forward with the launch of the Nine Year Plan.”
- “an opportunity to gain greater insight into the nature of the spiritual enterprise in which [the friends] are engaged”;
- “a sense of the distance traversed thus far”;
- “a deeper understanding of the exigencies of the current stage in the unfoldment of the Divine Plan.”
- “the privilege of being part of a community that has set its gaze upon the spiritual and material transformation of society”;
- “the bounty of being connected by bonds of love and camaraderie with brothers and sisters in a global effort, each one labouring within the same framework for action, all united under the sheltering shadow of the Covenant.”

You will have identified from the above that there will be no sense of “booking professionals” to “perform” at the conferences. Everything done in preparation for the conferences will be designed to uplift, inspire, inform, and invigorate friends for embarking upon the next phase of the Divine Plan and will be an integral part of the exploration of the conference themes.

Friends may like to use periods of the forthcoming decentralised summer school to consult about and plan with those in their wider circles some collective artistic offerings – whether visual-graphic, dramatic, musical, poetic, story telling, or a combination of various art forms, and in whatever cultural way is appropriate for your group. The beloved Supreme Institution has assured us that prayers will be offered at the Sacred Threshold “that the efforts made in preparation for this series of worldwide conferences may attract the confirmations of the Blessed Beauty”. To this assurance of prayers, the National Spiritual Assembly adds its own, including for those who arise to apply their creative energies as a contribution to this enterprise.

With loving and heartfelt greetings,
National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of New Zealand

Suzanne Mahon
Secretary

Note: The conferences will be held between February and April 2022. More information about locations and dates will be shared in the near future.