

Association for Bahá'í Studies–North America  
31<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference  
“Scholarship and Community Building”

16–19 August 2007  
Delta Meadowvale Resort and Conference Centre  
Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

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***Important Information***

***Conference Badge.*** Your conference badge is your “ticket of admission” to all sessions. You must wear it to attend conference sessions. The security personnel will not allow admittance to anyone without a badge.

***Security.*** The security personnel are there to assist you. Please follow their instructions at all times. They can be identified by red ribbons on their badges.

***Promptness.*** The schedule of sessions is very full. To give equal time to the speakers, the sessions must begin on time. We request your cooperation in arriving promptly.

***Cell Phones.*** The ringing of mobile telephones in the audience is very disruptive to a presentation. Please turn off your cell phone or put it in “silent” mode while you are in the conference sessions.

***The Children’s and Junior Youth Program.*** (Children must be preregistered to attend.) The Children’s Program, for ages 5 to 15, is being held in the **Featherstone** and **Wentworth** rooms in the North Tower (Lower Level). For pre-youth in the **Indian Trail** room (Lower Lobby Level) from Friday onwards and in **Bridgewater** (North Tower/Main Floor) on Thursday. Parents may drop off children at their program 15 minutes before the adult session starting time. Parents are asked to pick up their children promptly at the close of each session and for the lunch breaks. (Meals are not included in the children’s program.) The times for Children/Junior Youth sessions are

Thursday 16 August	10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Friday 17 August	9:00 a.m.– 5:30 p.m.
Saturday 18 August	9:00 a.m.– 6:30 p.m.
Sunday, 19 August	9:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

The program of children’s activities is available at the Conference Registration Table. Parents are required to sign a Medical Information and Emergency Health Care Release form and return it to the Children’s Program coordinators.

**The Conference Bookstore** is operated by the Bahá'í Distribution Service in Canada. The bookstore is located in the **Britannia** room and offers a wide selection of books and materials, including books and CDs by authors and artists presenting at the conference, and Bahá'í jewellery. Hours of operation are

Thursday 16 August	2:00 p.m.– 7:00 p.m.
Friday 17 August	9:00 a.m.– 7:00 p.m.
Saturday 18 August	9:00 a.m.– 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, 19 August	9:00 a.m.– 2:00 p.m.

**Evaluation Forms.** The ABS Executive Committee asks for your assistance and cooperation in filling out the conference evaluation forms provided in your conference kit. **We will be having a draw and will pick out 5 names from the box for each one to receive a one year free membership in the Association. Just fill out the bottom portion of the form, tear off and place it the box provided at the Conference Registration Table.** Your feedback is very valuable to us in our continuing efforts to improve the Conference.

**Membership.** In support of the Association's membership drive, we ask you to encourage your friends and Spiritual Assemblies to join the Association. Please use the membership form enclosed in your conference kit. More forms are available at the Conference Information Table.

**Audio Recordings.** Conference plenary sessions will be recorded and will be available for purchase on audio CD. An order form is included in your conference kit and additional forms are available at the Conference Information Desk. Please fill out the form with your credit card number and the CDs will be mailed to you after the conference.

**Lost and Found.** Lost and found articles should be reported to the Conference Registration Table. After the close of the conference, any items not picked up will be turned over to the hotel.

**Prayer Room.** The Silverthorn Room, on the North Tower-Main floor of the hotel, has been set aside for prayer and meditation from Thursday to Sunday, 8:00 a.m.–10:00 p.m.

### ***SPECIAL FEATURES AT THE CONFERENCE THIS YEAR***

**Evening Coffeehouse.** After each evening's program there will be a coffeehouse held in the **Hazel McCallion Ballroom** where conference attendees can socialize and enjoy listening to live music until midnight. Performing artists at the conference are encouraged to sign up to perform at these events. A sign-up sheet will be available near the Conference Registration Table.

**Networking Lunches**— Check the information board for time, topics, and locations.

***Thursday, 16 August 2007***

**10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Simultaneous Sessions**

**Special Development Program for Faculty and Students**

<i>Streetsville</i>	<b>Joint Session for Faculty and Students</b> Convener: Association for Bahá'í Studies Executive Committee Chair: MICHAEL KARLBERG
10:00	Devotions Welcome and Opening Remarks MICHAEL KARLBERG Introduction DAN SCOTT, Member, Continental Board of Counsellors for the Americas
11:00	Introduction to and Consultation on <i>Scholarship, Service, and Social Action</i> Workbook
<i>Indian Trail</i>	<b>Faculty Development Session</b> Chair: MICHAEL KARLBERG
11:30 - 12:30	Introduction of participants and consultation
12:30 - 2:00	<i>Lunch Break</i>
2:00	Consultative Forum
3:30	<i>Break</i>
<i>Springfield</i>	<b>Student Development Session</b> Chair: ROSHAN DANESH
11:30 - 12:30	Small Group Sessions with Workbook
12:30 - 2:00	<i>Lunch Break</i>
2:00 - 3:30	Introductions and Consultation
3:30	<i>Break</i>
<i>Streetsville</i>	<b>Joint Session for Faculty and Students</b> Chair: MICHAEL KARLBERG
3:45	Panel Presentations of simultaneous sessions, followed by discussion  DAN SCOTT Summary Remarks MICHAEL KARLBERG Closing Remarks
5:00	<i>Dinner Break</i>

## **Special Session for In-Depth Study of the Theme**

### *Hazel McCallion Ballroom*

- Convener: ASSOCIATION FOR BAHÁ'Í STUDIES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
Chair: KIM NAQVI
- 10:00 Devotions  
Welcome KIM NAQVI  
Introductory Remarks ANN BOYLES, Member, Continental Board of Counsellors for the Americas
- 10:15 The History and Role of Scholarship in the Iranian Bahá'í Community  
MINA YAZDANI
- 11:00 Steering a Course Beyond Rugged Individualism: A Workshop HOLLY HANSON
- 12:30 - 2:00 *Lunch Break*

## **Simultaneous Breakout Sessions on Scholarship and Community-Building**

### *Hazel McCallion Ballroom AB*

- 2:00 - 3:15 The Philosopher in the Bahá'í Community IAN KLUGE  
3:30 - 4:45 Scholarship and Covenant in the Bahá'í Community  
ABDU'L-MISSAGH GHADIRIAN

### *Hazel McCallion Ballroom CD*

- 2:00 - 3:15 'Abdu'l-Bahá on Leadership: The Spiritually Learned KURT HEIN (paper presentation and discussion moderated by HOLLY HANSON)  
3:30 - 4:45 Toward the Unity of Science and Religion: A Personal Journey STEPHEN FRIBERG
- 5:00 *Dinner Break*

## **Thursday Evening**

### *Graydon Ballroom*

- 7:30 **Plenary Session**  
Chair: MARTHA SCHWEITZ
- Devotions
- Official Conference Welcome
- The Generation of Knowledge and the Advancement of Civilization  
HALEH ARBAB
- 8:30 Break

### *Hazel McCallion Ballroom*

- 9:00 Coffee House

## **Friday, 17 August 2007**

*Graydon Ballroom*

9:00

**Plenary Session**

Chair: ANDY TAMAS

Devotions

Coping with the Challenges of Globalization AUGUSTO LOPEZ-CLAROS

Musical interlude

Scholarship and Community-Building DEBORAH VAN DEN HOONAARD (chair),  
CHERYL FENNELL, MARIE GERVAIS, LISA-JO VAN DEN SCOTT, and ÉLIZABETH  
WRIGHT

12:00

*Lunch Break*

**2:00 - 5:30 p.m. Simultaneous Breakout Sessions**

*Proudfoot Hollow*

**Architecture and the Built Environment**

Convener: DOUGLAS RAYNOR (acting convener, programme chairs)

3:15 - 4:15

The Ringstone Symbol: Concept for a Bahá'í Centre SAMAN AHMADI

4:30 - 5:30

Passion as an Engine to Creation NOUSHIN EHSAN

*Great White Pines*

**Arts I**

Convener: ANNE GORDON PERRY

2:00 - 2:30

Creative Devotions

2:30 - 3:30

Reflection on History Through the Arts with a Special Focus on Drama

GLORIA SHAHZADEH

3:45 - 4:15

*The Matrix*: Themes of After-Life LAHEEB QUDDUSI

*Springfield*

**Bahá'í History and Biography**

Convener: SUSAN MANECK

2:00 - 3:00

Abiding Faith: The Toronto Bahá'í Community from 1919 to 1938

MARLENE MACKE

3:15 - 4:15

A Century of Progress Toward Community Building in Topeka, Kansas:  
Some Observations about Researching a Community DUANE L. HERRMANN

*Comfort Mill*

**Bahá'í Language Educators**

Convener: JOY ALLCHIN and DARA SHAW

2:00 - 2:30

Community Building through the Virtual University (paper presentation)

JEFF WILLIAMS

2:30 - 3:00

Five Research Based Issues in International Distance Education and their

Application to Teaching EFL MARK H. ROSSMAN

3:15 - 3:45

Online Oral English: An Exploratory Qualitative Study of Teaching Language  
Skills Using "1 to 1" Voice over Internet (Skype) JAMES COBURN

4:00 - 5:30

Session on Volunteering and Bahá'í Language Educators Special Interest  
Group Business Meeting

- Hazel McCallion*     **Business Ethics and Management Science**  
*Ballroom A*     Convener: NOUSHA ETEMAD  
3:15 - 4:15     Capitalism and Community: The New Reality that Unites Wealth, Social  
and Spiritual Development LAWRENCE M. MILLER  
4:30 - 5:30     Shadow Boxing - Developing Ethical Organisations GORDON J. KERR  
5:30 - 6:30     Business Ethics and Management Science Special Interest Group  
Business Meeting
- Streetsville*     **Gender Equality Studies I**  
Convener: ÉLIZABETH WRIGHT  
2:00 - 2:30     The 2007 UN Commission on the Status of Women: Elimination of All  
Forms of Discrimination and Violence against the Girl Child  
ÉLIZABETH WRIGHT  
2:30 - 3:00     Missing Daughters in Québec: A Silent Form of Gender Inequity  
NATHALIE AUGER  
3:15 - 4:15     Closing the Gender Gap AUGUSTO LOPEZ-CLAROS  
4:30 - 5:30     Literacy and Community-Building in Africa GERALDINE GRABER  
5:30 - 6:00     Gender Equality Studies Special Interest Group Business Meeting
- Hazel McCallion*     **Intercultural Issues/Indigenous Studies**  
*Ballroom D*     Convener: PROGRAMME CHAIR  
4:00 - 4:30     Literary Voices in First Nation Francophone Literature (some portions will  
be in French) MARYANNE DEWOLF  
4:30 - 5:30     Concepts of Oppression in Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Writings  
MARIE GERVAIS and TIM HEINS
- Springfield*     **Law and Governance**  
Convener: NEYSAN MAHBOUBI (acting convener, programme chairs)  
4:30 - 5:30     How Bahá'í Voters Should Vote ARASH ABIZADEH
- Hazel McCallion*     **Marriage and Family I**  
*Ballroom A*     Convener: HEATHER CARDIN (acting convener, programme chairs)  
2:00 - 3:00     The Status and Attitudes of Singles in the North American Bahá'í  
Community KAMILLA BAHBAHANI
- Hazel McCallion*     **Peace and Conflict Studies**  
*Ballroom B*     Convener: KIMBERLY SYPHRETT (chair, HOSSAIN DANESH)  
2:00 - 2:30     Bahá'í Consultation: Toward a New Paradigm of Power HELEN CHENG  
2:30 - 3:30     Myers-Briggs Personality Typology and Religious Prejudice: Preserving  
Unity and Analyzing Conflict in Progressive Revelation JOHN RICHARD DAVIDSON  
3:45 - 5:15     Unique Dimensions of the Bahá'í Concept of Peace HOSSAIN DANESH  
5:30 - 6:30     Peace and Conflict Studies Special Interest Group Business Meeting
- Hazel McCallion*     **Psychology**  
*Ballroom C*     Convener: ELENA MUSTAKOVA-POSSARDT (acting convener, JASON IGHANI)  
2:00 - 3:00     The Heart and the Art of Community Building: A View of Recent  
Psychological Research Relating to Community Development A. JANE FAILY  
3:15 - 4:15     The "Breakthrough" Moment in Psychotherapy, Is It Really a Moment of

4:30 - 5:00 Spiritual Transformation? PATRICIA ROMANO MCGRAW  
Religion and Psychology: Combining Potent Forces KAREN P. WILLIAMS  
5:00 - 6:00 Psychology Special Interest Group Business Meeting

*William Lyon*  
*MacKenzie*  
2:00 - 3:00 **Scholarship and Bahá'í External Affairs Work**  
Convener: JEFFREY HUFFINES (acting Convener, JULIA BERGER)  
Evolving Relationships: Communities of Scholars and External Affairs Work  
GERALD FILSON  
3:15 - 4:45 The Bahá'í International Community at the United Nations: From Principles  
to Problem Solving JULIA BERGER and TAHIRIH NAYLOR

*Hazel McCallion*  
*Ballroom D*  
2:00 - 2:30 **Science and Religion I – General**  
Convener: STEPHEN FRIBERG  
The Role of Intuition and Logic in Science Research AMANDA HENCK and  
FRANK FAHDAD FANI  
2:30 - 3:00 The Role of Science in an Ideal Community TIMOTHY KRAFT  
3:15 - 3:45 Mind and Matter: Why Both Are Necessary to Explain the Universe STEPHEN R.  
FRIBERG

*Proudfoot Hollow*  
2:00 - 2:30 **Science and Religion II - Engineering**  
Conveners: SABA MAHANIAN and FARJAM MAJD  
Manifestations of Unity in Order and Chaos: Correlating System  
Engineering with Bahá'í Principles SABA MAHANIAN and FARJAM MAJD  
2:30 - 3:00 The Shrine of the Báb: Bahá'í Identity through Architecture FARIS BADI'Í

*Credit Valley*  
2:00 - 3:00 **Study of Religion I**  
Convener: PETER TERRY (chair, PAULA DREWEK and DONNA PICKEL)  
The Greatest Pilgrimage: The Bahá'í as Hospital Chaplain PATRICK MARSHALL  
3:15 - 4:15 The Long Obligatory Prayer and Mirror Neurons, A Recent Finding in  
Neuroscience KEYVAN GEULA  
4:30 - 5:00 The Miracle of Suffering ROBERT MICHELL  
5:00 - 5:30 Divine English: The Guardian and the King James Bible GEZA FARKAS

5:30 - 7:30 *Supper Break*

## ***Friday Arts Evening***

*Graydon Ballroom*

7:30

**Plenary Session**

Presentation of the Association for Bahá'í Studies Award of Excellence to  
TODD LAWSON  
Special Award Presentation

**Arts Gala**

M.C., GLORIA SHAHZADEH

Why Art at ABS?

*Bring Chocolate*: Remembering Roger White ANNE GORDON PERRY

Songs inspired by the Bahá'í Writings SUSAN LEWIS WRIGHT & FRIENDS

“The Sword Is Pen”: A Tribute in poetry and prose to Shoghi Effendi on  
the 50th Anniversary of his Passing. ROBERT MICHELL AND ANNE GORDON PERRY

Uplifting the Souls: Original jazz arrangements SHIRLENE ZARINTAJ BROWN -  
accompanied by JOHN EBATA

Music about heroes and heroines from the early history of the Bahá'í Faith  
SMITH & DRAGOMAN

*Hazel McCallion Ballroom*

9:30

Coffee House

***Saturday August 18, 2007***

*Graydon Ballroom*

9:00

**Plenary Session**

Chair: CHESHMAK FARHOUMAND-SIMS

The Garments of Learning and Knowledge: Reflections on the Protection  
and Refinement of the Human Spirit MICHAEL L. PENN

Musical Interlude

The Up Side of Down: Catastrophe, Creativity and the Renewal of Civilization  
THOMAS HOMER-DIXON

11:30

*Lunch Break*

*Great White Pines*

**Annual General Meeting of the Association for Bahá'í Studies–  
North America**

12:45 - 2:15

*All are invited to attend, to meet the Executive Committee, and to consult  
about the activities and future directions of the Association*

**2:30 - 6:30 p.m. Simultaneous Breakout Sessions**

*Great White Pines*

**Arts II**



Convener: ANNE GORDON PERRY  
 2:30 - 3:30 Yours, Roger: Letters to and from Roger White ANNE GORDON PERRY  
 3:45 - 4:15 Undiscovered Geniuses: Can a Song Build a Community? MARTIN KERR  
 4:30 - 6:00 Artist of Service: Appreciated, Integrated, and Supported JEAN TSCHOHL QUINN

*Springfield*

**Bahá'í History and Biography II**

Convener: SUSAN MANECK  
 2:30 - 3:00 Anti-Bahá'í Polemics and Historiography MINA YAZDANI  
 3:00 - 3:30 The Báb's Encounter with the Promised Qa'im OMID GHAEMMAGHAMI  
 3:45 - 4:45 The Dasatir and the Tabernacle of Unity SUSAN MANECK  
 5:00 - 6:00 Bahá'í History and Biography Special Interest Group Business Meeting

*Streetsville*

**Bioethics and Health Sciences**

Convener: ELIZABETH BOWEN  
 2:30 - 3:00 Exploring the Role of Faith-Based Organizations in Addressing HIV/AIDS  
 ASHLEY ROBERTS  
 3:00 - 4:00 A Novel Approach to Depression PHILIP SQUIRES  
 4:15 - 5:15 Health, Healing, Personal Responsibility and the Bahá'í Faith LISA MOLIN  
 5:30 - 6:30 Can Science Unravel the Mystery of Prayer's Effect in Medicine?  
 ABDU'L-MISSAGH GHADIRIAN  
 6:30 - 7:30 Bioethics and Health Sciences Special Interest Group Business Meeting

*William Lyon  
 MacKenzie*

**Communication**

Convener: Programme Chairs  
 2:30 - 3:00 The Press as a Consultative Public Forum MICHAEL KARLBERG  
 3:00 - 4:00 Sanctifying the Hearts for His Descent: Communion with God as an  
 Ontological Condition of Community JASON COMBS  
 4:15 - 5:45 For a Postcolonial and Post-Diasporic World: The Progressive yet Ancient  
 Heuristic of the Conversive SUSAN BRILL DE RAMIREZ

*Comfort Mill*

**Ecology and Sustainable Development**

Convener: PAUL HANLEY  
 2:30 - 3:30 A New Model of Human-Nature Relationships PAUL HANLEY  
 3:45 - 4:45 'Abdu'l-Bahá the Environmentalist SAMUEL BENOIT  
 5:00 - 6:00 Ecology and Sustainable Development Special Interest Group Business Meeting

*Hazel McCallion  
 Ballroom A*

**Education**

Conveners: KAMILA BAHBAHANI and MARIE GERVAIS  
 2:30 - 3:30 Games and Activities for Developing Vibrant Bahá'í Communities  
 KATHY MADJIDI  
 3:45 - 4:45 Changing Worldviews and Paradigm Shifts in the 20th Century in  
 Disciplines of Scientific Inquiry: Impact on Scholarship and Community Building  
 PATTABI S. RAMAN  
 5:00 - 6:30 Approaching Spiritual Education within the Context of Secular Institutions  
 MARIE GERVAIS, STEPHANIE AFAGANIS, LOIE GERVAIS and EMILY HERMAN  
 6:30 - 7:30 Education Special Interest Group Business Meeting

*Hazel McCallion*

**External Affairs Information Session**

- Ballroom C* 6:00 - 6:30 Open Discussion on Faculty and Student Initiatives to Address the Denial of Post Secondary Education to the Bahá'ís of Iran  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT, BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY OF CANADA
- Hazel McCallion Ballroom C* 2:30 - 3:30 **Gender Equality Studies II**  
Convener: ÉLIZABETH WRIGHT  
Faith and Football: Junior Youth Study Circles in Kenyan Slums  
CLARE JAMAL O'BRIEN  
3:45 - 5:15 New Perspectives on Gender and the Bahá'í Revelation JOELL ANN VANDERWAGEN
- Hazel McCallion Ballroom B* 4:15 - 6:00 **Marriage II**  
Searching for Methods to Strengthen Bahá'í Marriage  
DANIEL LORD, KEYVAN GEULA, and RON SHIGETA
- Proudfoot Hollow* 2:30 - 3:30 **Philosophy**  
Convener: IAN KLUGE  
Dialectics, Materialism and Religion: Bahá'í Faith and the Advancement of Civilization ARVIND AULUCK-WILSON  
3:45 - 4:45 Relativism and the Bahá'í Writings IAN KLUGE  
5:00 - 6:00 A Chalice of Pure Light: A Vision of Divine Symmetry in the Sacred Reality of Creation BONITA MILBY  
6:00 - 7:00 Philosophy Special Interest Group Business Meeting
- Hazel McCallion Ballroom B* 2:30 - 4:00 **Science and Religion III – Neuroscience**  
Convener: SAMIR KOIRALA  
Autism and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders: Scientific and Spiritual Challenges of Mis-Wired Minds SAMIR KOIRALA, FARANEH VARGHA-KHADEM (paper read by Samir Koirala) and DAVID WELLMAN
- Credit Valley* 2:30 - 4:00 **Science and Religion IV: Information Technology and Society**  
Convener: MITRA SOLOMON  
Bahainine Project: Bahá'í Inspired Blogs, Podcasts, and Videos  
MITRA SOLOMON, KEVIN TROTTER, and DAVID DIEHL  
4:15 - 5:15 Planet Bahá'í: Reflections on an Online Community DALE E. LEHMAN and KATHLEEN KETTLER LEHMAN  
5:30 - 6:00 Developing WikiText Books on Bahá'í Topics RODNEY H. CLARKEN
- Hazel McCallion Ballroom D* 2:30 - 3:30 **Study of Religion II**  
Convener: PETER TERRY (chairs, PAULA DREWEK and DONNA PICKEL)  
The Concept of Civilization in Bahá'í Writings and Cyclical Theory of Pitirim A. Sorokin BEHROOZ SABET  
3:45 - 4:45 Memory of the Future: A New Form of Use of Persecution Memory and Its Relationship to the Resolution of Conflicts (question and answer session will be in both French and English) JOUBIN ESLAHPAZIR  
5:00 - 5:30 Why Become a Bahá'í Scholar? ALEXANDER KOLODNER, SHIRIN MAJIDI, TALEL AISSI, and MUNIB LOHRASBI  
5:30 - 6:30 "An Excellent and Priceless Heritage": The Scholarship of Bahá'u'lláh's Life and His Revelation SHAHROKH MONJAZEB

*Mullet Creek*      **Special Open Session for Potential Contributors to *Journal of Bahá'í Studies***  
5:00 - 6:00      Convener: ROSHAN DANESH

6:30 - 8:00      *Dinner Break*

## ***Saturday Evening***

Graydon Ballroom

8:00      **Plenary Session**

### **The 25<sup>th</sup> Hasan M. Balyuzi Memorial Lecture**

Musical Performance

Emerging From Obscurity: The Journey of Sociology in the Bahá'í Community  
WILL VAN DEN HOONAARD

*Hazel McCallion Ballroom*

9:30      Coffee House

## ***Sunday August 19, 2007***

9:00      **Plenary Session**

Devotions

An Interview with Ross Woodman, ROSS WOODMAN and ANN BOYLES

Young Scholars Panel LISA DUFRAIMONT (chair)

Scholarship and Social Justice: The Bahá'í International Community

TAHIRIH NAYLOR

Ethical Questions and Answers in Epigenetics LAYLA PARKER-KATIRAEI

The Spiritual in the Material: Studying Society as a Bahá'í NADIM SOBHANI

12:15      Closing Remarks

Closing Musical Presentation

## *Abstracts and Autobiographical Notes*

### **Arash Abizadeh • How Baha'i Voters Should Vote**

There are four distinct types of criteria that voters should consider when voting in Bahá'í elections: criteria 1) concerning the qualifications of individual assembly members, 2) concerning the collective makeup of the assembly as a whole, 3) concerning changes in the individual makeup of the assembly, and 4) concerning changes in the collective makeup of the assembly over time.

ARASH ABIZADEH teaches political philosophy at McGill. He received his MPhil from Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar and Ph.D. from Harvard. His publications appear in journals including *Philosophical Studies*, *Review of Metaphysics*, *Journal of Political Philosophy*, and *Political Theory*.

### **Saman Ahmadi • The Ringstone Symbol: Concept for a Bahá'í Centre**

The Bahá'í Centre is the first Bahá'í City; it is where Bahá'ís gather – for prayer, for consultation, for fellowship and for learning. It is the Seat of the Spiritual Assembly, the embryonic Haziratu'l-Quds, the Sacred Fold – but is this Institution currently seen and treated as a Sacred space? This paper will present a general introduction to Architecture, suggest ideas on what makes a space Sacred, and discuss a hypothetical scheme for a Bahá'í Centre in Houston, Texas, based on the Ringstone Symbol.

SAMAN AHMADI received his Bachelors in Civil Engineering and his Masters in Environmental Engineering from Texas A&M University. He completed his Master of Architecture degree at the University of Houston and currently works for the firm of Kendall/Heaton Associates.

### **Stephanie Afaganis • Approaching Spiritual Education within the Context of Secular Institutions** (Panel, see Gervais for abstract)

STEPHANIE AFAGANIS is a fourth year student of the Bachelor of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta. She enjoys studying world history and languages, specifically French and Spanish. Stephanie works part time as a legal assistant and currently serves as area coordinator for children's classes in Edmonton.

### **Talel Aissi • Why become a Bahá'í Scholar? (See Kolodner for abstract)**

TALEL AISSI is a High School junior and Eagle Scout. He is a regular volunteer for a local food bank and soup kitchen, teaches a weekly children's "Virtues Class," and will be volunteering as a youth conflict resolution mediator. He is planning on pursuing a degree in Business and Finance.

### **Haleh Arbab • The Generation of Knowledge and the Advancement of Civilization**

Bahá'ís engage in the generation and application of knowledge, a pursuit that grows in vigour and scope as the community's resources multiply. Knowledge generation occurs at different levels and degrees of formality. A culture of learning and attendant structures is promoted for community expansion and consolidation; Bahá'í-inspired organizations combine advances in diverse fields with insights from the Writings to empower people to become protagonists of material and spiritual progress; and individual

Bahá'ís participate in structured academic research in disciplines crucial to advancing civilization. Understanding how these efforts reinforce one another in a coherent process is one challenge of Bahá'í scholarly activity.

HALEH ARBAB, Doctor of Education and Development, University of Massachusetts, worked with the Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences (FUNDAEC), was Rector of Centro Universitario de Bienestar Rural, a Colombian university, and is currently Director of the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity in Haifa, Israel.

### **Nathalie Auger • Missing Daughters in Québec: A Silent Form of Gender Inequity**

Gender inequality is increasingly taking on new forms. Recently, a preference for male infants has manifested itself as an increase in male relative to female births, particularly in East Asian nations. This increase in male births has been attributed to selective abortion of female fetuses during pregnancy. While sex selection is known to occur in developing nations, we do not know whether this silent form of gender inequality might be occurring in nations such as Canada. Our objective is to determine whether the ratio of male to female births varies in Canada based on a mother's ethnicity.

NATHALIE AUGER is a community medicine physician with a specialization in epidemiology and biostatistics. She is involved in population health surveillance in Québec, and pays particular attention to social determinants of health in relation to newborn health.

### **Arvind Auluck-Wilson • Dialectics, Materialism and Religion: Bahá'í Faith and the Advancement of Civilization**

This presentation seeks to demonstrate how the Bahá'í Writings conceptualize the phenomenon of religion as dialectical in its essence, its historical manifestation and its impact on humanity in all its dimensions. It explains how 'Abdu'l-Bahá resolves the long standing philosophical dichotomy between materialism and idealism using the schematic of the spirit. It further explores the practical implications of this unifying world-view by exposing a dynamic of the advancement of civilization through combined spiritual and material processes. This model of advancement is then validated using the global historical events and trends witnessed in modern times and currently under way.

ARVIND AULUCK-WILSON has been a Bahá'í since 1979. Originally from India, he has lived in the US for 17 years with his wife and daughter. He trained as a physicist at the Indian Institutes of Technology in Mumbai and Kharagpur, and is a consultant in holistic health, sustainable development and appropriate technologies.

### **Faris Badi'i • Shrine of the Báb: Bahá'í Identity through Architecture**

Shoghi Effendi's passion in creating a Bahá'í identity through an architectural design that would recount the story of the Báb for generations to come is discussed. Intrinsic characteristics of each of the five sections of the shrine, and the four parts of the superstructure are examined. The selection of colours, the symbolism of eight pointed stars alluding to Qur'anic prophecies, the involvement of the institution of the Hands of the Cause, the fundamental respect for that which 'Abdu'l-Bahá had accomplished to the point of not moving a single stone, are intrinsic to the Shrine's meaning and its purpose.

FARIS BADI'I, Ph.D. was born in Iran. He earned his Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering from the Southern Methodist University of Texas. He has wide-ranging interests including science, business, education, religion, and history.

### **Kamilla Bahbahani • The Status and Attitudes of Singles in the North American Bahá'í Community**

This paper presents preliminary research results on unmarried Bahá'ís in the US and Canadian communities based on data collected in spring 2007. An online survey instrument was validated through expert review for content and construct validity, and pilot testing with singles. The survey items covered general characteristics of the responding singles; beliefs and expectations about being single and married; past relationship experiences; perceived obstacles to marriage; courtship behaviours; and experiences with parental consent. Conclusions cover the characteristics of these Bahá'í singles with recommendations for meeting their needs.

KAMILLA BAHBAHANI works as a research assistant and independent writer in the areas of education, environmental issues and qualitative research. She completed her Ph.D. in Education in 2004 at Old Dominion University.

### **Samuel Benoit • 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Environmentalist**

Multiple environmental crises has brought about a re-evaluation of every aspect of society, including religion and its figures. This presentation will review a comparison study of the teachings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to a number of philosophies in contemporary environmental ethics by a process of labelling, where some of the labels or terms such as ecofeminist, scientist, vegetarian and environmentalist that are prominent in contemporary environmental ethics will be explained and applied to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Cosmology and the dialog between religion and the environmental movement will also be discussed.

SAMUEL BENOIT, a 22 year old Environmental Studies student from Chelsea, Quebec, chaired Carleton University's ABS from 2005 to 2007, worked at the Olinga Foundation in Ghana, the School of the Nations in Macau and Santitham Vidhayakhom School in Thailand, and the Bahá'í National Centre of Canada.

### **Julia Berger and Tahirih Naylor • The Bahá'í International Community at the United Nations: From Principles to Problem Solving**

This presentation will give an overview of the representational, thematic, and research work of the Bahá'í International Community's United Nations Office. Participants will be asked to examine their area of scholarship in light of pressing global issues and consider how their areas of interest and expertise may contribute to the Office's policy recommendations and to external affairs work at the national and international levels.

JULIA BERGER is the Senior Researcher and Writer at the Bahá'í International Community's United Nations Office in New York. Prior to this, she was a Research Associate at Harvard's Program on Religion and Public Life. She holds a Master's degree in Comparative International Development.

**Ann Boyles • An Interview with Ross Woodman** (see Woodman for abstract)

ANN BOYLES has a Ph.D. in modern American poetry, teaches part-time at the University of Prince Edward Island, and writes poetry, short fiction, drama, and nonfiction. She serves as member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for the Americas.

**Susan Brill de Ramirez • For a Postcolonial and Post-Diasporic World: The Progressive yet Ancient Heuristic of the Conversive**

Bahá'í scripture advocates a progressive yet ancient heuristic that is fundamentally rooted in interpersonal communications that are intersubjective and conversive and whose explicit purpose is the strengthening of “the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men.” Coming into global community is now far from a luxury or choice but a crucial necessity for the well-being of all. Language is an essential means for the coming together of peoples (in families, communities, tribes, nations, regions, and globally), but such communications must needs take the form of conversive relations centred in heartfelt, spiritualized interpersonal interactions.

SUSAN BRILL DE RAMIREZ, Professor of English at Bradley University, teaches literary criticism and theory, environmental literatures, Native American literatures, and folklore. Widely published, she recently completed *Native American Life History Narratives: Colonial & Postcolonial Navajo Ethnography*.

**Helen Cheng • Bahá'í Consultation: Toward a New Paradigm of Power**

One common critique against voluntary decision making processes such as mediation or negotiation is that these processes tend to serve the interest of the more powerful and work to perpetuate existing social inequalities. Bahá'í consultation is a decision making process which Bahá'u'lláh urged his followers to engage in when dealing with all matters. How does Bahá'í consultation compare with other voluntary processes? Does it offer any response to the concern of power imbalance articulated by the critics of those processes?

HELEN CHENG practices law in Toronto. She obtained her LL.B. from the University of Victoria and completed her LL.M. from Harvard Law School. She is also the mother of two young children.

**Rodney H. Clarcken • Developing WikiText Books on Bahá'í Topics**

Almost everyone is aware of the influence of Wikipedia. A relatively new technology started in 2005, WikiTextbooks offer further opportunities to develop, expand and share Bahá'í scholarship. A WikiTextbook can be used as a resource for encouraging research and collaboration among Bahá'ís throughout the world. Though anyone can contribute to a WikiTextbook, some editorial control could be held by a party. This session would explore the value and logistics of creating various WikiTextbooks on topics related to the Bahá'í Faith. Maybe some first attempts could be launched from the attendees.

RODNEY CLARKEN, [www-instruct.nmu.edu/~rclarcken](http://www-instruct.nmu.edu/~rclarcken), is Director, School of Education, Northern Michigan University, has his Ph.D. in Administration and Supervision; MA in General/Experimental Psychology; MST in Elementary Education and taught and lived in Africa, Asia, America, Caribbean and Europe on all levels and in diverse settings.

### **James Coburn • Online Oral English: An Exploratory Qualitative Study of Teaching Language Skills Using “1 to 1” Voice over Internet (Skype)**

This presentation is based on semi-structured interviews with conversation teachers on the EFL programme. A short summary of the circumstances of the conversations will be followed by a brief description of the teachers' backgrounds and education. The main focus will be on comparing and analysing the results with reference to 1) how and when correction and feedback is provided, 2) how skype “chat” is used, 3) how non-comprehension is dealt with, 4) how new vocabulary is introduced, 5) how critical thinking is stimulated, and 6) differences noted between Skype and face to face teaching.

JAMES COBURN spent 25 years in UK, and 25 in Norway, has a BSc in Management (Warwick), PGCE, three years of English/TEFL courses, and is presently doing a TEFL Masters. He has ten years experience teaching high school English, including management of International student exchange projects.

### **Jason Combs • Sanctifying the Hearts for His Descent: Communion with God as an Ontological Condition of Community**

This presentation explores communion with God as a requisite condition in the development of community. Definitions of community current in academe tend not to consider reliance upon God as a foundation for community. This presentation offers insights regarding community in which communion with God is understood as its most basic ground. It examines the role of the heart in establishing communion and concrete practices that prepare one's heart for entering that communion. Such insights suggest an alternate view of human relationships as greater or lesser reflections of the Unity of God.

JASON COMBS, Ph.D., lives with his wife Laura and six children in Dayton, Ohio, USA, where he works as a lecturer at the University of Dayton. His academic interests focus on consultation as a paradigmatic form of communication and building spiritual community in institutions and relationships.

### **Hossain Danesh • Unique Dimensions of the Bahá'í Concept of Peace**

This presentation/workshop explores the Bahá'í Peace Program and its twin fundamental features – the Bahá'í Peace concept and the peace-based foundations of the Bahá'í community. The specific role of individual Bahá'ís in peace-building, as outlined by ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, will be also explored.

HOSSAIN DANESH is the Founder and President of the International Education for Peace Institute, retired professor of Psychiatry (University of Ottawa) and Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution (Landegg International University), and author of many articles and 11 books in his fields of specialization.

### **John Richard Davidson • Myers-Briggs Personality Typology and Religious Prejudice: Preserving Unity and Analyzing Conflict in Progressive Revelation**

Examples among Occidental and Oriental religions will be viewed through the lens of personality. People differ according to their preferred energy source, information input, decision-making strategy, and management of their environment. Dispensations have favoured one type only to exclude another and open the door for schism. Manifestations of God are perfectly balanced with every type actualized. False prophets and their followers are characterized by rigidity and limitation. Conflict resolution can be realized and unity preserved by providing for personality preferences and development.



JOHN RICHARD DAVIDSON is working toward a Master's degree in English Language and Literature at Central Michigan University. He plans to specialize in the Romantic Era and American Transcendentalism as well as religions and mythology in literature. John works at the University's Writing Centre as a consultant.

**David Diehl • Bahainine Project: Bahá'í Inspired Blogs, Podcasts, and Videos** (see Solomon for abstract)

DAVID DIEHL is a doctoral student at Stanford University studying, among other things, social networks. He lives in San Francisco, California.

**MaryAnne DeWolf • Literary Voices in First Nation Francophone Literature** (some portions will be in French)

'Abdu'l-Bahá tells us that "through the Divine teachings [the original inhabitants of America] will become so enlightened that the whole earth will be illumined." These words have inspired much interest in First Nation cultures, and for me, a particular fascination with First Nation Francophone literature, now the focus of my graduate research. This paper will discuss some exciting parallels between the Bahá'í teachings and one particularly salient thematic philosophy – variously described as the "Sacred Circle of Life", "circular perception", "organicist principles", or "cosmocentricity" – as revealed in the poetic texts of Eleonore Sioui.

MARYANNE DEWOLF, is doctoral candidate in French literature at University of Wisconsin, Madison. Her dissertation topic reflects her passions for First Nations cultures, arising from twelve years in the Canadian Northwest Territories, and for French literature. She has a son in undergraduate studies, and another starting graduate work.

**Lisa Dufraimont (chair) Tahirih Naylor, Layla Parker-Katirae, Nadim Sobhani • Young Scholars Panel** (see Naylor, Parker-Katirae, and Sobhani for individual abstracts)

LISA DUFRAIMONT is Assistant Professor at Queen's University, Faculty of Law, where she teaches criminal law and evidence. She holds a doctorate in law from Yale University. Before studying at Yale, Lisa completed law school at the University of Toronto and served as law clerk to the Ontario Court of Appeal.

**Noushin Ehsan • Passion as an Engine to Creation**

The focus of this talk is the phenomena that have channelled the passions of architects to creations that have uplifted the human spirit. The passion which is imbued in an everlasting edifice is not inherent in its physical form. It is intrinsic in the context of belief, culture, and lifestyle of its creator. The purpose arising from concise efforts to serve humanity and preserve cultural values are tools for the creation of those soulful designs. Spirituality of an individual can transform the negative and violent side of passion to the creative side, acting as the force for the design of an inspiring edifice.

NOUSHIN EHSAN, AIA, is the president of Accessible Architecture and serves national and international clients on "Second Opinion in Design". She lectures on "The Spirit of Space" in universities and

conferences. She was professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Northeast London Polytechnic.

**Joubin Eslahpazir • Memory of the Future: A New Form of Use of Persecution Memory and Its Relationship to the Resolution of Conflicts** (question and answer session will be in both French and English)

The memory and awareness of persecutions of their co-religionists in Iran is a special type hitherto unseen in the history of religions. In effect, the co-existence of private and public space and understanding their role in accomplishing mankind's final destiny permits Bahá'ís to leap over two dangers facing persecuted communities: a retrograde memory centred on itself and the building of an insular communitarism. Thus, Bahá'ís have created a new form of memory which can be called Memory of the Future, which can serve as a model for conflict resolution at all levels of modern society.

JOUBIN ESLAHPAZIR is a scholar, primarily in Bahá'í studies, who is currently pursuing a doctorate degree at the Centre d'Anthropologie Religieuse Européenne. His main interest is the reactions of the Bahá'ís to persecution in Iran and their consequences. He is currently living in Montreal.

**External Affairs Department, Bahá'í Community of Canada • Open Discussion on Faculty and Student Initiatives to Address the Denial of Post Secondary Education to the Bahá'ís of Iran**

This open session is designed to provide the latest update and to go over the essential features of the campaign to publicize the denial of education to Bahá'í students in Iran, and to answer any questions. It also will allow reports on any new achievements in raising awareness of the unacceptable human rights violations visited upon Bahá'í university students in Iran. All are welcome, and special information will be provided for both Canadian and US students.

**A. Jane Faily • The Heart and the Art of Community Building: A View of Recent Psychological Research Relating to Community Development**

The work of Daniel Siegel, MD, and Marshall Rosenberg, Ph.D., which demonstrate how individuals can build healing communities, will be described. Recent findings in neurophysiology and interpersonal communications models will be examined. Their application to building Bahá'í community life will be examined. The role of the Bahá'í scholar in bringing relevant knowledge from his/her domain of expertise to the community will be considered.

A. JANE FAILEY, BA University of Michigan, Cours de la civilization Francaise Sorbonne, MAT Harvard University; MA, Atlanta University; Ph.D., University of Georgia; Assistant Clinical Professor, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Senior Psychologist Royal Ottawa Hospital; Psychotherapist, Cobb Mental Health Center Georgia; has been a Bahá'í since childhood.

**Frank Fahdad Fani • The Role of Intuition and Logic in Science Research** (see Henck for abstract)

FRANK FAHDAD FANI recently completed a BS in Physics from the University of Washington. His academic interests are in the field of renewable energy, which led to an interest in the study of thin films and other phenomena at scales less than a micron.

### **Geza Farkas • Divine English: The Guardian and the King James Bible**

This session explores the drama of the production of the King James Bible, and its relation to and ramifications upon both consultation and the Bahá'í Writings in English, including a look at the translation policies and procedures of the Translation Department at the Bahá'í World Centre, its criteria and methods, as well as the Beloved Guardian's impeccable English and his relationship to the style and mode of the King James version. This exposition will include a liberal sprinkling of examples, anecdotes, linguistic comparisons and conundrums.

GEZA FARKAS is a musician, teacher, and author from the Toronto area who has recently moved to Chicago. He is experienced as a Ruhi tutor, and speaker at firesides, public talks, media interviews and was secretary for the Markham, Ontario Spiritual Assembly. He has a lifelong love of language and world scripture.

### **Cheryl Fennell • Scholarship and Community-Building** (plenary panel, see Deborah van den Hoonaard for abstract)

CHERYL FENNELL is from northern Canada. She is a Policy Advisor specializing in aboriginal self government. Her MA in Conflict Analysis and Management focussed on collaborative mechanisms in tri-party organizations. An Auxiliary Board Member until 2006, she is now a Huqúq'u'lláh representative and is working on a film about Greenland.

### **Gerald Filson • Evolving Relationships: Communities of Scholars and External Affairs Work**

As an individual initiative, scholarship can work together, for mutual advantage, with the institutions' external affairs programs. The latter aim to influence government policy, leaders of thought, civil society and business. Helpful Bahá'í scholarship will require systematic and coherent efforts, correlated with other contemporary research programs. Examples include 1) research on the core activities related to policy research on social cohesion, social capital and well-being, 2) Bahá'í research programs on moral development correlated with ongoing work in this area, and 3) contemporary work on justice and the liberal/pluralism debate correlated with Bahá'í concepts.

GERALD FILSON, Ph.D., is Director of External Affairs, Bahá'í Community of Canada, taught school in Quebec, college in Ontario, did research for TVOntario, produced the Bahá'í program on VisionTV, chaired VisionTV's Mosaic Program Group, chaired Canada's Network on International Human Rights, and is the current Chair of the Couchiching Conference.

### **Stephen Friberg • Toward the Unity of Science and Religion: A Personal Journey** (Thursday Programme)

When I was a little boy, I believed in science. But as I grew up, I realized that science failed to capture the reality I experienced – my mind, other people, the interrelatedness of things, and purpose and reason. But still, I believed first and foremost in science. When I embraced the Bahá'í Faith as an adult, I had to validate my faith in God in light of my belief in science. I briefly describe how I did so, outlining and simplifying the argument and engaging participants in discussion about spiritual and scientific search as both a social and individual process.

### **Stephen Friberg • Mind and Matter: Why Both Are Necessary to Explain the Universe**

Which is first, mind or matter? Many say that matter is first. Science, they say, shows mind to have evolved from matter. Not so, say others. God created the universe and all that is in it, including matter. And God is best understood as mind. To resolve this and other clashes between science and religion, we propose that mind and matter both be taken as fundamental, an idea grounded in the Bahá'í Writings. We use this proposal to formulate a proof for the existence of God.

STEPHEN FRIBERG has done pioneering experiments in quantum mechanics and photonics. A Bahá'í since 1973, he pioneered in Japan and helped start ABS Japan. He lives in Mountain View, CA and serves on the ABS California Area Committee and the ABS Science and Religion SIG.

### **Loie Gervais • Approaching Spiritual Education within the Context of Secular Institutions (see Marie Gervais for abstract)**

LOIE GERVAIS is a recent high school graduate where she completed the final three of her eight years in the International Baccalaureate program. She is travelling to the Czech Republic in August for a year of service in Brno. Loie enjoys writing, music and art and hopes to pursue a career in journalism.

### **Marie Gervais • Scholarship and Community-Building (plenary panel, see Deborah van den Hoonaard for abstract)**

### **Marie Gervais, Stephanie Afaganis, Loie Gervais and Emily Herman • Approaching Spiritual Education within the Context of Secular Institutions**

In this panel presentation, three educators at different stages of their profession will speak to spaces in secular contexts where spiritual education can be prominent. Stephanie Afaganis, an undergraduate student in Education, will address issues of student motivation, Loie Gervais and Emily Herman will speak to the spiritual framework of the International Baccalaureate program, and Marie Gervais will address issues of spiritual mentorship for student teachers, in-service teachers, university colleagues and graduate students. All three themes will use quotes and insights from the Bahá'í Writings as well as recent pertinent research from secular academic sources.

### **Marie Gervais and Tim Heins • Concepts of Oppression in Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Writings**

The theme of oppression is a continuous thread in both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Writings. In this presentation, themes on this subject that identify Bahá'í positions on individual and societal oppressions will be outlined. Following will be a Bahá'í contribution to social theory's understanding of the roles of structure and agency in society via analysis of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Writings on oppression.

MARIE GERVAIS received her Doctorate in Secondary Education at the University of Alberta, Canada, focusing on minority teacher cultural identity and practice. She works as Educational Coordinator for the Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations, and is a practising visual artist, choir and theatre director and writer.

### **Keyvan Geula • Searching for Methods to Strengthen Bahá'í Marriage (see Lord for abstract)**

## **Keyvan Geula • The Long Obligatory Prayer and Mirror Neurons, A Recent Finding in Neuroscience**

Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, includes prayers in various categories that are unprecedented in previous religions, both in volume and in variety of purpose and character. The Bahá'í Sacred Writings are a unique instrument rich in metaphors and imageries training the believer's mind as how to commune with one's Creator in a befitting and spiritual manner and thereby elevating human perception and character. Recent discoveries in neuroscience about mirror neurons and metaphors plus the presenters clinical observations are used to explore the transforming powers of regular and daily recital of the Bahá'í obligatory prayers. A 15 minute documentary on mirror neurons is included.

KEYVAN GEULA, MFT, is a listed Marriage, Family, and Child Counsellor in private practice, specializing in the application of integration of psychotherapy and spirituality from a Bahá'í Perspective. She is the founder and president of Centre for Global Integrated Education. She serves on South Western Regional Bahá'í Council.

## **Abdu'l-Missagh Ghadirian • Scholarship and Covenant in the Bahá'í Community (special Thursday programme)**

In the Bahá'í Revelation, scholarship and Covenant are interrelated. Knowledge should be a path to demonstrate the truth of the Revelation and service to humanity. Bahá'í scholarship is characterized with knowledge as well as virtues: humility, steadfastness, tolerance, sincerity, defence of the Cause. Acquisition of knowledge combined with ambition for power leads to self-centeredness, egotism and feelings of superiority. How does egotism align itself with knowledge and eclipse the true self? How can we develop an attitude of humility in our pursuit of academic excellence?

## **Abdu'l-Missagh Ghadirian • Can Science Unravel the Mystery of Prayer's Effect in Medicine?**

There has been a growing volume of research literature concerning the effect of spirituality and prayer on health and healing. While some research findings suggest beneficial effects of prayer on illness, these results are contradicted by other studies. While researchers focus on alternatives to medical models of treatment, the applied methodology is flawed by a materialistic concept of investigation. There is no consensus over the definition of spirituality or the nature, origin and frequency of prayer. Often prayer is viewed as another form of relaxation and not as the language of the soul longing to commune with God.

ABDU'L-MISSAGH GHADIRIAN, Professor, McGill University Faculty of Medicine and Emeritus Physician, McGill University Health Centre, teaches spirituality and ethics in medicine and his research is well published in Bahá'í and scientific journals. He is on the Board of Trustees of Huqúq'u'lláh, and currently researches the application of Bahá'í principles to current issues.

## **Omid Ghaemmaghami • The Báb's Encounter with the Promised Qá'im**

This presentation will look closely at an episode recounted in one of the Báb's lengthiest Qur'an commentaries, the Tafsir Surat al-Kawthar. In this narrative, the Báb describes a brief encounter He experienced in the city of Mecca with a comely and radiant youth whose face was "as luminous as the moon." In recounting this captivating story, the Báb states that the youth He encountered near the Ka'bih may have been the Hidden Imam. The current study will present a preliminary translation and gloss of the entire narrative and its implications.

OMID GHAEMMAGHAMI is currently a second year doctoral student at the University of Toronto in the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations. His research interests include topics in Shi'ih Messianism, Imamology and Arabic language pedagogy.

### **Geraldine Graber • Literacy and Community-Building in Africa**

From its beginning in 2002, NGO Willing Hearts International Society Canada (WHISCA) has adopted a family of seven orphans and offered 60 scholarships in Chad, Cameroon, and Haiti. Its village school, once held under the trees, enjoys the reputation of being the first village school in the canton to be housed in a building and the first to offer literacy and trade training to women as part of its education programme. A ten-minute DVD clip, "Under the Bushy Trees", illustrates some of the work. Discussion will focus on solutions to the problems of funding, management, and empowerment of the village women.

GERALDINE GRABER pioneered to Africa after retirement from Eastern WA University's Education Department. A former nun, Geraldine fulfilled her dream of serving humanity by founding an NGO dedicated to assisting orphans, disadvantaged youth, and women, which resulted in a community school in Manda.

### **Paul Hanley • A New Model of Human-Nature Relationships**

A new model for understanding the human-nature relationship is key to the transformation of human behaviour with regard to the environment. This presentation presents a model based on the Bahá'í writings, those of other faiths, and secular perspectives. In this model, nature is encompassed by the human reality, in contrast to the dominant and competing views that man is entitled to control nature or that man is merely one species encompassed by the natural world. The presentation will show how this new model would support a sustainable, just, and peaceful civilization.

PAUL HANLEY is a writer by profession, and specializes in research and writing on agriculture, environment and science for lay audiences. He has published a number of books including *Earthcare - Ecological Agriculture in Saskatchewan* and *The Spirit of Agriculture*.

### **Holly Hanson • Steering a Course Beyond Rugged Individualism: A Workshop** (Thursday programme)

Using the quotations from the conference theme statement, and some others, we will set up our problem: what is the new course in social evolution that Bahá'í community creates? What would its characteristics be? How is it different? Why do we need it? What are the consequences of this difference? What facilitates the creation of this new kind of community? What impedes it? These questions will be addressed through study of the quotations, small group discussion, and a final interactive session.

HOLLY HANSON is associate professor of history and teaches African History at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley Massachusetts. The author of books and articles on both African history and Bahá'í perspectives on social change, she is currently researching the social history of economic exchange in Kampala, Uganda.

### **Kurt Hein • 'Abdu'l-Bahá on Leadership: the Spiritually Learned**

Contemporary leadership is often defined in material terms, such as individual economic and political power, which don't easily accommodate spiritual concepts. Perhaps nowhere are the Bahá'í concepts of

leadership more clearly articulated than in Secret of Divine Civilization. In it, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá extols Europe’s material progress and decries the insularity of Persia’s leaders, but also strongly condemns European civilization. One reason people experience oppression, injustice and suffering, He states, is lack of those spiritual virtues acquired through religious faith and education. Primary responsibility for saving people from extinction therefore falls upon “the learned”, whom he proceeds to define by spiritual attributes.

KURT HEIN worked as a consultant, professor, and contractor in 25 countries, for Bahá’í institutions in the US, Ecuador, and Canada, and as consultant for the Office of Social and Economic Development at the Bahá’í World Centre. He is married to Delane Hein, has two children devoted to the Faith, and three grandchildren.

**Tim Heins • Concepts of Oppression in Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Writings** (see Marie Gervais for abstract)

TIM HEINS spent twenty years in a cross-cultural context in Aboriginal communities of the Canadian Arctic. He served as a General Manager of community-cooperatives, Economic Development Officer and Executive Director of an Aboriginal Land Claim organization. He presently works in client/Aboriginal community relations in the oil and gas services industry.

**Amanda Henck and Frank Fahdad Fani • The Role of Intuition and Logic in Science Research**

When science is taught in schools, the scientific method and logical, rational thought are emphasized as the basis for acquiring scientific knowledge. The role of intuition and relational thinking are generally overlooked or brushed aside as being unimportant to the process of studying science. Although scientists are shy about admitting the role of intuition in their research, some have acknowledged its importance and how it can be developed. We will discuss the role of intuition and reason in science research and explore the relationships among intuition, reason, and our spiritual nature.

AMANDA HENCK, a Ph.D. student studying erosion in SW China, is interested in the relationship between tectonics and erosion on a geologic time scale as well as human impacts on erosion. She is also part of an interdisciplinary, international graduate program working on environmental issues around the world.

**Emily Herman • Approaching Spiritual Education within the Context of Secular Institutions** (see Marie Gervais for abstract)

EMILY HERMAN is a new Bahá’í, and recent high school graduate with both honours and an International Baccalaureate diploma. She plans to study Immunology and Infection at the University of Alberta before attending law school. She enjoys reading, travelling, playing the piano, attending plays and operas, skiing, and swimming.

**Duane L. Herrmann • A Century of Progress Toward Community Building in Topeka, Kansas: Some Observations about Researching a Community**

The history of a Bahá’í community can be hidden in many unlikely places. This paper explores some of those found in the process of researching and writing *By Thy Strengthening Grace: One Hundred Years of the Bahá’í Faith in Topeka (1906-2006)*. This may be the first century-long history of a local Bahá’í community

in the west. Many surprises were found about the individual believers and their lives that may have been known at the time, but were never written down. This presentation will explore some of them and the process of finding them. What can be assembled, re-created or concluded from the evidences left behind? That is one challenge of the historian.

DUANE HERRMANN has degrees in History and Education and has been researching the Bahá'í history of Kansas and Topeka since 1974. Results of this research has appeared in various publications in the U.S., Australia, India, New Zealand, and Switzerland. He has four children and three grandchildren, all active Bahá'ís.

### **Thomas Homer-Dixon • The Up Side of Down: Catastrophe, Creativity and the Renewal of Civilization**

The converging stresses of energy scarcity, economic inequality, rapid and diverging demographic change, environmental damage, and climate change are multiplied by rising connectivity and speed and the ability of small groups to cause great disruption. Together, these stresses and their multipliers greatly increase the risk of “synchronous failure”, a cascading collapse of systems vital to our well-being. After considering a general theory of the growth, breakdown, and renewal of societies, I propose that, if people are well-prepared, they may be able to exploit less severe types of breakdown to open up extraordinary opportunities for creative, bold social reform.

THOMAS HOMER-DIXON is George Ignatieff Chair of Peace and Conflict Studies, Trudeau Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Toronto, and received his Ph.D. in international relations and defence and arms control from MIT. His previous books include *The Ingenuity Gap* and *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence*.

### **Michael Karlberg • The Press as a Consultative Public Forum**

The press has evolved into a discursive battlefield, with public discourse transformed into a war of words and images. News outlets capitalize on the spectacle while citizens grow more divided and cynical. Against this backdrop, Bahá'ís have been summoned, by the Universal House of Justice, to implement a model of journalistic practice rooted in the principles and objectives of consultation. The purpose of this paper is to explore salient features of this model and then situate it within the broader literature on press theory in order to discuss its implications for community building.

MICHAEL KARLBERG is Associate Professor in the Department of Communication at Western Washington University. He has published numerous articles in the field of peace and conflict studies, as well as a book entitled *Beyond the Culture of Contest* (George Ronald, 2004).

### **Gordon J. Kerr • Shadow Boxing - Developing Ethical Organisations**

This workshop/discussion focuses on the importance of developing organisations, especially Bahá'í inspired ones such as schools and non-governmental organisations, which facilitate and promote ethical behaviour and practice. The discussion will include issues of management style, employee relations, organisational change and culture, marketing and communications.

GORDON J. KERR is originally from UK, and worked as manager and chief editor of the Bahá'í Publishing Trust (UK) for 19 years. His academic background is in Social Sciences and communications philosophy.



He trained in international marketing and currently teaches Business Ethics and communication at the University of Macau.

### **Martin Kerr • Undiscovered Geniuses: Can a Song Build a Community?**

Martin will share two of his most popular songs, explaining the social and philosophical ideas behind them. He will demonstrate how his approach to song writing and performance encourages listeners to challenge their assumptions, to seek out hidden talents in themselves and in their neighbours. Finally, in the belief that singing together builds unity and hope like no other activity, he will teach the audience to sing a new Bahá'í gospel song, set to the words of 'Abdul-Bahá.

MARTIN KERR is a singer and songwriter of acoustic rock and folk songs. His innovative, touching and occasionally laugh-out-loud lyrics are inspired by his travels to 30 countries (and counting) and his belief in the Bahá'í Faith. He has made six albums, including sacred music and songs for children.

### **Kathleen Kettler Lehman • Planet Bahá'í: Reflections on an Online Community** (see Lehman for abstract)

KATHLEEN KETTLER LEHMAN has a background in library sciences and retail book sales. She is co-publisher of Planet Bahá'í (<http://www.planetbahai.org>) and co-author of *Spiritual Telemetry: Readings from the First Five Years of Planet Bahá'í*. Her interests include textile arts and historical research.

### **Ian Kluge • The Philosopher in the Bahá'í Community** (special Thursday session)

Philosophers can make five contributions to the Bahá'í community. They can use their knowledge and skills to help others develop their own understanding of the Writings, can help with understanding those Writings of a technical philosophic nature, encourage growth in intellectual capacity, help others in explication of the Writings and apologetics, and help understanding of oneness of mankind by fostering rational inter-faith dialogue. To make these contributions, the philosopher will need guidance from “the spirit of faith” as well as a “kindly tongue.”

### **Ian Kluge • Relativism and the Bahá'í Writings**

According to Shoghi Effendi, the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith “revolve around the fundamental principle that religious truth is not absolute but relative.” (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* 58) This paper provides the necessary conceptual tools for Bahá'ís to clarify their understanding of relativism and the Writings, and argues that any description of the Writings as relativist must be carefully nuanced and precisely qualified. It explores several kinds of relativism and relates them to Bahá'í authors as well as to various modern and postmodern philosophers.

IAN KLUGE is poet, playwright and philosophical scholar who lives with his wife, Kirsti in Prince George, B.C. He has published numerous philosophical studies of the Bahá'í Faith as well as the philosophical poet Conrad Aiken. He presents frequently at Irfan Colloquia.

### **Samir Koirala, Faraneh Vargha-Khadem and Dave Wellman • Autism and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders: Scientific and Spiritual Challenges of Mis-Wired Minds**

The developing brain is an instrument of vast potential but also a vulnerable one. In this session we will discuss disorders caused by problems in brain wiring. In “Autism – A New Epidemic?” The panel considers our communities’ alarming surge in autism. What are the causes? What is different about autistic brains? What about the spiritual dimensions of this condition? In “The Cruellest Legacy: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder” the science and the human costs of alcohol use’s devastating damage to the developing brains of fetuses is explored.

SAMIR KOIRALA, Ph.D., is a neuroscientist at the Children’s Hospital at Harvard Medical School. Originally from Nepal, he did his Ph.D. research on nerve regeneration at USC in Los Angeles. His current research is identifying new genes that control the process of brain development.

### **Alexander Kolodner, Shirin Majidi, Talel Aissi and Munib Lohrasbi • Why Become a Bahá’í Scholar**

Why would a teenager want to become a Bahá’í scholar? Although many people our age say religion is a boring topic, for people who are not “cool,” we are four high school students who see great purpose to our lives through studying the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh. Our knowledge of the past and its potential to change the future has led us to share our stories in the hopes of inspiring others to join our study. Our diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, Swiss, Algerian, Persian, English and Russian; Judaism, Christianity and Islam, provide a variety of different perspectives.

ALEX KOLODNER is fifteen years old and teaches weekly virtues classes to neighbourhood children. After receiving Mediation training this summer he will become the youngest mediator in Howard County, Maryland. He studies Arabic at the local college and is ranked third in the State for BCFL Debate.

### **Timothy Kraft • The Role of Science in an Ideal Community**

Communities now struggle to understand what is theory and what is truth as different groups attempt use science to dictate our diets and medicines, our environment and social order. The question is how has this occurred and what should be the appropriate relationship of science to the community. This will present a sociological model that defines appropriate relationship of arts, science, religion and politics to the community. This will also give a perspective to understanding the appropriate role of science and scientist within the community.

TIMOTHY KRAFT currently is Director of Technology for Business Development at Yahoo! Inc. in Sunnyvale, CA. He holds an advanced degree in Astrophysics from the University of Arizona and BS degree in Physics and Mathematics from Alma College. He lives with his wife Kathy in Del Mar, CA.

### **Dale E. Lehman and Kathleen Kettler Lehman • Planet Bahá’í: Reflections on an Online Community**

Now in its eighth year, Planet Bahá’í has 100 active forum members and 1,000 newsletter subscribers, and its articles have been widely reprinted both electronically and in print. The full extent of its community cannot be accurately estimated, but it displays great diversity in age, race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, religious background, interests, and personality. In this presentation, Planet Bahá’í’s owners offer insights on building and managing a diverse online community. We also share thoughts from Planet Bahá’í members on its value

to their lives and to the Bahá'í community at large, and consider the implications for the future of online communities.

DALE E. LEHMAN is a software developer with 27 years experience in financial, government, and health care. He is co-publisher of Planet Bahá'í (<http://www.planetbahai.org>) and co-author of *Spiritual Telemetry: Readings from the First Five Years of Planet Bahá'í*. He serves on the ABS Science and Religion special interest group's web-site committee.

### **Munib Lohrasbi • Why Become a Bahá'í Scholar** (see Kolodner for abstract)

MUNIB LOHRASBI is a 14 year old freshman in Ellicott City, Maryland where he is an active participant in the Bahá'í community. He likes sports and plays football for his school. When he was four, his family moved to Haifa to serve the Universal House of Justice for five years.

### **Augusto Lopez-Claros • Closing the Gender Gap**

No contemporary society has managed to achieve full gender equality, a concept not synonymous with women, and not a zero-sum game implying loss for men, but a socio-cultural variable referring to a state of human development where being born female or male does not determine one's rights, or opportunities. However, the cause of gender equality has fared much better in some societies. What do recently published data say about the progress in closing the gender gap and, from a Bahá'í perspective, what are the ingredients that will be necessary to bring this noble ideal into concrete reality?

### **Augusto Lopez-Claros • Coping with the Challenges of Globalization**

Increasingly, the focus of the debate on the benefits and costs of globalization is centred on finding efficient ways to better "manage" it. What does this mean in practice? What are the respective roles in this process of government, business, civil society and world institutions? To what extent are the potential gains of globalization being hampered by the absence of a suitable international institutional framework that will help mitigate its undesirable features? These issues will be discussed using many practical examples and against the background of the Bahá'í writings on global governance and the emergence of global institutions.

AUGUSTO LOPEZ-CLAROS, Ph.D. Duke University, was Chief Economist at the World Economic Forum in Switzerland from 2004-2007, and edited its Global Competitiveness Report. He was previously an Executive Director with Lehman Brothers, London and is currently a Geneva-based international consultant in economic, financial and development issues.

### **Daniel Lord, Keyvan Geula and Ron Shigeta • Searching for Methods to Strengthen Bahá'í Marriage**

This panel brings together for the first time Bahá'ís in North America conducting programs on Bahá'í marriage. Panel members will describe their programs, demonstrate a skill acquired by participants, and explain why it is a form of Bahá'í scholarship, how it contributes to Bahá'í community development, and what lessons are being learned. Programs differ in emphasis, with one focussed on developing behaviour patterns for avoiding marital conflict; one on communication skills and character; one on the Bahá'í laws and a new order in relationships; and one on the Bahá'í principles of equality and consultation. Each is offered in a spirit of humble service.

DANIEL B. LORD, Ph.D. is assistant psychology at University of Alaska Southeast, Sitka campus, as well as an attorney with the public defender agency in Kenai, Alaska. He holds graduate degrees in education and psychology from Michigan, and law degrees from Iowa.

### **Marlene Macke • Abiding Faith: The Toronto Bahá'í Community from 1919 to 1938**

The founding of the Toronto Bahá'í community stretches over a nineteen year period. This paper addresses three aspects of its development: the critical role played by American believers such as Martha Root and Agnes Alexander in bringing the Faith to Toronto; Dr. Albert Durrant Watson's involvement with spiritualism; and the surge in momentum once the Seven Year Plan gave the Bahá'ís the specific goal of electing a local Assembly. Archival material written between 1919 and 1938 uncovers these stories and more.

MARLENE MACKE has moved from a career in business consulting to working in theatre and writing. Her biography, *Take My Love to the Friends: The Story of Laura R. Davis*, will be published in 2007.

### **Kathy Madjidi • Games and Activities for Developing Vibrant Bahá'í Communities**

This interactive “playshop” will help participants learn how to think and act creatively in building vibrant Bahá'í activities and community life. We will focus on skill-building, drawing on games, community development activities, the arts, and Indigenous traditions that could enhance and enrich our community life. We will also consider the Bahá'í Writings and community development literature, which challenge us to think about how to intentionally build a new, model community. Come prepared to share, dialogue, interact, and have lots of fun!

KATHY MADJIDI, Ph.D. student in Comparative, International, and Development Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, has over 10 years experience in international community development, focussed on international youth leadership in Latin America and the Caribbean and Indigenous ways of knowing and learning.

### **Shirin Majidi • Why become a Bahá'í Scholar? (See Kolodner for abstract)**

SHIRIN MAJIDI is a sophomore at Catonsville High School in Baltimore. Both of her parents are Iranian Bahá'ís and she has been raised as a Bahá'í. In addition to participating in Bahá'í youth activities, Shirin enjoys playing violin, spending time with her family and working hard in school.

### **Saba Mahanian and Farjam Majd • Manifestations of Unity in Order and Chaos: Correlating System Engineering with Bahá'í Principles**

Unity, as taught in the Bahá'í Faith, is a universal framework for both the study of complexity as well as a framework for its orderly implementation and management. The Bahá'í teachings on conceptual and practical implementation of unity can be correlated with general findings of complex systems.

SABA MAHANIAN obtained his Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from Stanford University and has been a practicing engineer for 26 years. He particularly enjoys history and Philosophy of Religion and Science.

**Farjam Majd • Manifestations of Unity in Order and Chaos: Correlating System Engineering with Bahá'í Principles** (see Mahanian for abstract)

FARJAM MAJD is an attorney in the area of intellectual property. Prior to that, Farjam was a professional engineer for 19 years in the fields of Electrical, Mechanical and Software Engineering at Intel, Microsoft and Sequent Computers.

**Susan Maneck • The Dasatir and the Tabernacle of Unity**

This presentation will examine the correspondence between Bahá'u'lláh and Manakji Limji Hataria as found in the Tabernacle of Unity. It is the thesis of this presentation that Manakji's questions were largely formulated, not against the background of mainstream Zoroastrian beliefs, but that of a peculiar school of Zoroastrianism founded by Azar Kaivan which was heavily influenced by Ishraqi philosophy. Notwithstanding the rather peculiar background to Manakji's questions, Bahá'u'lláh is able to utilize them to articulate some of the more universal aspects to his religion.

SUSAN MANECK is an Associate Professor in the Department of History and Philosophy at Jackson State University. She has numerous publications on both Zoroastrianism and the Bahá'í Faith.

**Patrick Marshall • The Greatest Pilgrimage: The Bahá'í as Hospital Chaplain**

The Universal House of Justice has recently approved Bahá'ís to undertake spiritual care in hospitals as long as this does not involve religious duties typically assigned to clergy. The presenter will propose a Bahá'í framework for spiritual care within the hospital setting, and present his own experiences in the field and those leading to develop a career in this domain. I will affirm that the care of the spirit is in keeping with certain principles of the Bahá'í Faith and that these principles inform the practitioner of a universality of spiritual life.

PATRICK MARSHALL is a career counsellor and recently entered a Chaplaincy internship. Warmly received as a Bahá'í, he is required by the Association of Pastoral Care Practitioners to further his knowledge of the Faith in order to inform his perspective and practice in spiritual care.

**Patricia Romano McGraw • The “Breakthrough” Moment in Psychotherapy, Is It Really a Moment of Spiritual Transformation?**

Facing one's personal truth is traditionally understood as a key to psychological health. It is also the foundation of spiritual advancement. The presenter will offer a number of psychotherapeutic case studies in which the “breakthrough” occurred by directing the therapeutic work to a spiritual dimension.

PATRICIA ROMANO MCGRAW is a forensic psychologist in private practice in Baltimore, author of *It's Not Your Fault: How Healing Relationships Change Your Brain and Can Help You Overcome a Painful Past*, and *Seeking the Wisdom of the Heart: Reflections on Seven Stages of Spiritual Development*.

**Robert Michell • The Miracle of Suffering**

The old dichotomy of good versus evil (with resultant suffering) which for so long has dominated Western thought has been recast by Bahá'u'lláh. Suffering, in whichever form it appears, self-willed or God-given,

is there for our spiritual training. It is absolutely indispensable for the education of souls. It is a sign of immaturity in those who seek to avoid it, whereas it is the hallmark of spiritual maturity in those who embrace it. To all sojourners aboard the coach called “the Lyrical Ride of Reason”, we are bound for the mystical land of suffering.

ROBERT MICHELL is a poet-philosopher-teacher based in Montreal. His passions, besides his lovely wife and four exuberant boys, is writing lyrical-profound, and quixotic poetry, exploring the interface between Complexity Theory and the Bahá’í teachings, and deep-dish apple pie.

### **Bonita M. Milby • A Chalice of Pure Light: A Vision of Divine Symmetry in the Sacred Reality of Creation**

The three aspects of solar emanation and specular reflection belong to a physical geometric continuum that is both directional and symmetrical. We can use these aspects to visualize a divine geometric continuum. Three different, symmetrical perspectives are explored: the criteria for Truth identified by J. A. McLean in *Dimensions of Spirituality*, the onenesses revealed by Bahá’u’lláh in the Valley of Unity, and two examples of natural specular reflection. The physical qualities of natural mirror surfaces can help us to identify the spiritual qualities associated with divine revelation and our nearness to God.

BONITA MILBY’s presentation reflects her life-long interest in metaphysics and religion. As a member of the Stillwater, Oklahoma, Bahá’í Community, she serves on the Spiritual Assembly and as Ruhi facilitator. A former fourth-grade teacher and English lecturer, she is currently employed as an office assistant at Oklahoma State University.

### **Lawrence M. Miller • Capitalism and Community: The New Reality that Unites Wealth, Social and Spiritual Development**

The form of capitalism practiced throughout the world is in transformation, as suggested in the teachings of the Bahá’í Faith. The reality of commerce today is that financial capital, once dominant, is becoming secondary to social, spiritual, human and process or technology capital. The five forms of capital required and created by enterprise today will be presented, along with a new model of wealth, more consistent with current day reality and with the teachings of the Bahá’í Faith.

LAWRENCE MILLER has been a Bahá’í since 1968 and in management consulting for over 30 years. He has written seven books on management and leadership including the recent *Competing in the New Capitalism* and *Spiritual Enterprise: Building Your Business in the Spirit of Service* forthcoming in February with George Ronald.

### **Lisa Molin • Health, Healing, Personal Responsibility and the Bahá’í Faith**

This presentation attempts to examine current medical problems and trends in Western society as it relates to an ever pervading lack of personal responsibility. It examines how these attitudes affect the individual and ultimately society as a whole. These attitudes are then contrasted with an ever increasing interest in spiritual healing and its effects on physical health with supporting evidence from the medical literature. Finally, these examples are examined in light of the Bahá’í Writings on health and healing, personal responsibility, trust, and ultimately one’s relationship with God.

LISA MOLIN, M.D. Practices Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery in San Luis Obispo, CA. She has pioneered in West Africa, served at the Bahá'í World Centre, currently travels abroad to treat children with cleft lips and palates, recently started lecturing on the Bahá'í Faith at California Polytechnic University, and enjoys outdoor activities.

**Shahrokh Monjazez • “An Excellent and Priceless Heritage”: The Scholarship of Bahá'u'lláh's Life and His Revelation**

The presentation will examine and attempt to define the role of a “Bahá'u'lláh-scholar” as a defender, educator and promoter of Bahá'u'lláh and His Writing both within the Bahá'í community and the outside world. It will also provide a retrospective look at a select group of such scholars from the time of Bahá'u'lláh to the present day.

SHAHROKH MONJAZEB has been a presenter at the ABS Conference for over fifteen years. His writings and presentations focus primarily on Bahá'í Sacred Text and their literary and historical significance in the context of socio-spiritual conditions of human society.

**Tahirih Naylor • The Bahá'í International Community at the United Nations: From Principles to Problem Solving** (see Berger for abstract)

**Tahirih Naylor • Scholarship and Social Justice: The Bahá'í International Community**, (panelist, Young Scholars Panel)

This presentation will explore the coordinated external affairs work of the Bahá'í community at the local, national and international levels. The characteristics necessary for such coherence of action will be examined. Specific examples of the Bahá'í International Community's active participation in the areas of human rights and global prosperity through its work with civil society, governments, and the United Nations will be presented. The efforts of Bahá'ís in these areas provides an example of a principle based community building process which is both locally rooted and world-embracing.

TAHIRIH NAYLOR is a Bahá'í International Community representative to the United Nations and was previously an external affairs representative in the Office of Governmental Relations for the Bahá'í Community of Canada. She holds a law degree from Osgoode Hall Law School, and has served on volunteer projects in over twenty-five countries.

**Clare Jamal O'Brien • Faith and Football: Junior Youth Study Circles in Kenyan Slums**

Faced with the appalling socio-economic conditions in Nairobi slums this research looks at the effectiveness of Bahá'í inspired curricula, Breezes of Confirmation, in effecting the behaviour of female junior youth in football teams. Football offers them socio-economic support as well as enhanced social capital. This paper will discuss the use of a “Study Circle football” in improving acts of service rendered by the participants. It will also explore possible effects of the intervention on mental health outcomes such as anxiety, depression and high risk sexual behaviour.

CLARE JAMAL O'BRIEN was raised in Alaska, pioneered to Africa at 17 where she became the first foreigner at Tuamiani University in Semtema, Tanzania, completed an MSc in African Studies at Oxford University. She is now working on her Ph.D., testing the social effectiveness of a Bahá'í inspired curriculum.

**Layla Parker-Katirae • Ethical Questions and Answers in Epigenetics, (panelist, Young Scholar Panel)**

Genomic imprinting is a biological phenomenon which causes the expression of genes from only one parental chromosome. Imprinted genes underlie various developmental disorders, stressing the importance of their characterization and study. However, the field is fraught with social and ethical implications, as diverse as the collection of early embryonic human specimens and the possibility of parthenogenetic humans (an individual with no father). Here, I explore difficulties and answers found in genomic imprinting, as well as personal challenges that I have encountered in my studies.

LAYLA PARKER-KATIRAE is completing a doctoral degree in Medical Genetics & Microbiology at the University of Toronto. Her thesis investigates the unequal expression of genes on human chromosome 7. She is currently living in Toronto with her husband of four years and hopes to obtain a post-doctoral degree in England.

**Michael L. Penn • The Garments of Learning and Knowledge: Reflections on the Protection and Refinement of the Human Spirit**

A Bahá'í-inspired approach to social and economic development seeks to extend the reach and application of spiritual learning and knowledge. In these remarks we suggest that if this effort is to meet with success it must not only be promoted in villages, cities and towns, but must be embraced by significant numbers of students and scholars at institutions of higher learning. We thus invite reflection on why current academic trends render this a particularly propitious time to share with colleagues and students the garments of spiritual learning and knowledge and to promote a consciousness of that which is sacred.

MICHAEL L. PENN, Ph.D.(Michael.Penn at fandm.edu), is associate professor of psychology at Franklin and Marshall College. His publications include works in adolescent psychopathology, the relationship between culture and psychopathology, and the epidemiology of gender-based violence. He is the author of *Overcoming Violence against Women and Girls* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

**Anne Gordon Perry • Yours, Roger: Letters to and from Roger White**

Canadian poet Roger White distinguished himself by writing poetry reflecting the history, themes, and early believers of the Bahá'í Faith. But he was also “muse” to creative artists in several genres, many of whom wrote to him from various parts of the world. This presentation highlights some of the facets of Roger’s life and influence and draws from examples of the vast correspondence he maintained.

ANNE GORDON PERRY, Ph.D. Aesthetic Studies, teaches English and Humanities at the Art Institute of Dallas, is co-organizer of the Arts special interest group, edits its journal, *ORISON*. Her dissertation was on the intersection of art and religion, and she is working on a book about poet Roger White.

**Laheeb Quddusi • The Matrix: Themes of After-Life**

The Matrix film trilogy is introduced with an overview of its religious allusions and references, and the term “matrix” explored from the perspective of the film, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s writings, and general language. Themes of embryonic life, the womb, imprisonment and self-imprisonment, and reincarnation are explored from various perspectives.



LAHEEB QUDDUSI is pioneering in a small town outside of Edmonton with his family while attending university. Currently, he is finishing his second year of biological sciences. Serving on CABS has provided the means to elevate academic discourse, although he finds it a challenge to correlate the sciences to the Writings.

### **Jean Tschohl Quinn • The Artist of Service: Appreciated, Integrated, and Supported**

Being an artist in the Bahá'í community that is appreciated, integrated, and supported is a goal which needs to be more reachable. Here are practical tips on what the artist can do and what the community must do, all based on reassuring guidance from Bahá'í Scripture. Jean Tschohl Quinn provides a multimedia presentation regarding the fun and excitement of overcoming the lumps and bumps along the road to serving the Bahá'u'lláh as an artist through technology, song, storytelling, and audience participation.

JEAN TSCHOHL QUINN, mathematician by degree, musician by choice, mom by ... (well you know how someone becomes a mom), prefers to serve the world as an artist, although she wears many hats as most people do. She combines comedy and musicianship to serve the Bahá'í community and teach spiritual concepts.

### **Pattabi S. Raman • Changing Worldviews and Paradigm Shifts in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in Disciplines of Scientific Inquiry: Impact on Scholarship and Community Building**

The Century of Light has seen an irreversible shift in contemporary metaphysical and scientific thinking, presenting a new worldview. This has in turn ushered a new epistemology, stimulating new knowledge, new models of sharing and practising that knowledge. The presentation will provide a succinct review of the salient aspects in the shift of traditionally held paradigms in four major disciplines of inquiry: metaphysics, psychology, healing arts, and education. A discussion will follow of the myriad implications of this shift on the respective professional practices, their effects on community building and in charting a new course in social responsibility.

PATTABI S. RAMAN, Ph.D., EdD. a native of India, has post-graduate training and professional preparation in two fields, medicinal chemistry and education. Currently he holds senior faculty positions at Capella University, in their human services division, and at Antioch University Seattle, as its program director in special education.

### **Ashley Roberts • Exploring the Role of Faith-based Organizations in Addressing HIV/AIDS**

There is great variety in approaches to HIV prevention in adolescents. The organizations that are creating and implementing interventions include faith-based communities, governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, etc. Some argue that interventions initiated by faith-based communities generally achieve better outcomes when compared to non-faith based initiatives. In the course of this workshop, I plan to further explore this argument by first discussing issues around the evaluation of the effectiveness HIV prevention programs; second, examining and comparing the outcomes of faith-based and non-faith based interventions published in the literature; and third, exploring possible explanations for the differences in outcomes.

ASHLEY ROBERTS, BA in History, University of British Columbia; Master's of Education, Harvard University; a Doctor of Medicine (MD), McMaster University, has her diploma in Tropical Medicine from the Gorgas Institute and is finishing her fellowship in Pediatric Infectious Diseases at the University of Toronto.

### **Mark H. Rossman • Five Research Based Issues in International Distance Education and their Application to Teaching EFL**

As Guest Faculty at the University of Salzburg for three months, the author co-facilitated the International Distance Education Faculty Forum (IDEFF), an asynchronous discussion learning network of 68 faculty members experienced in distance education delivery methods from 17 universities in 13 countries. A content analysis of the IDEFF yielded five main issues, 1) faculty power and stature, 2) faculty participation in online courses, 3) barriers to implementing distance education, 4) motivating learners in online classes, and 5) impact of distance education on global access to education. These issues and their relevance to teaching EFL is presented.

MARK H. ROSSMAN is Professor Emeritus at Capella University. He has authored, co-authored or produced nine books, and many chapters, articles, evaluative reports, and media publications. His areas of interest are: adult learning and program development, post-secondary education, distance learning and education, and international education.

### **Behrooz Sabet • The Concept of Civilization in Bahá'í Writings and Cyclical Theory of Pitirim A. Sorokin**

This presentation has two purposes: the first is to examine the dynamics of civilization as they are unravelled in the Bahá'í Writings, the second is to compare Bahá'í perspectives with the prodigious works of the renowned social scientist Pitirim Alexandrovich Sorokin. The critical consideration of this presentation is to argue that Bahá'í perspectives combine Sorokin's cyclical theory with progressive evolutionary views of civilization. Bahá'í Writings point to the reality of recurrent rhythms in civilizations. They also characterize a spiral curve of ordered patterns of evolution.

BEHROOZ SABET EdD 1987, has studied philosophy and economics, been a university professor, international lecturer and education consultant, written extensively on educational, philosophical, and social themes, worked with Iranian Bahá'í higher education initiatives, and has contributed to Payam-e-Doost radio for four years. He was Academic Dean of Landegg International University.

### **Gloria Shahzadeh • Reflection on History through the Arts with a Special Focus on Drama**

This presentation examines drama and its place in history, the terminologies associated with this art form, and its role as an expressive form of reflecting on a community's history and identity. Certain rites and rituals associated with various cultures and religions are explored to demonstrate the use of dramatic art forms by members of clergy to teach or deepen their congregations. A comparison is then made to the Bahá'í Faith and the absence of clergy and sermons therein; and how then this art form could help bring the spirit of the Holy Writings and details of historical events to life!

GLORIA SHAHZADEH lives in Dubai (United Arab Emirates) with her family. She has an extensive background in dance and theatre and has produced, directed, and acted in more than fifteen full-length plays at the Bahá'í World Centre (1990 - 1999).

### **Ron Shigeta • Searching for Methods to Strengthen Bahá'í Marriage (see Lord for abstract)**

RON SHIGETA is a chemist, structural biologist, and biotechnologist. He is researching the marriage curriculum of the Marriage Transformation Project and presents workshops on marriage-related topics.

**Nadim Sobhani • The Spiritual in the Material: Studying Society as a Bahá'í** (panellist, Young Scholars Panel)

When studying society and the ills found within it, the average undergraduate student in North America is faced with a multitude of intellectual tensions, where an indiscriminating academic institution will no doubt challenge the very core of their belief system. This presentation will explore the relatively nascent fields of Equity Studies and Social Justice, as well as some of the opportunities and challenges I have experienced as a Bahá'í in these fields. Further discussions will revolve around the benefits of a Bahá'í Youth Year of Service as well as thoughts on the role of a university student in the core activities.

NADIM SOBHANI is an undergraduate student in the Department of Equity Studies at the University of Toronto. Nadim hopes to pursue a career in the field of public health, with special emphasis on studying the social determinants of health and the barriers that prevent equal access to health care.

**Mitra Solomon, Kevin Trotter and David Diehl • Bahainine Project: Bahá'í Inspired Blogs, Podcasts, and Videos**

Bahainine project is aggregating Bahá'í user generated content across the globe. Its goal is to increase awareness of the Bahá'í blogs and to facilitate creation and discovery of Bahá'í inspired user generated content. This presentation is an overview of our efforts and findings. We also cover what is social networking, give a strong picture of how the web can help with community building, how to start your own blog with helpful guidelines and learnings on the factors and steps that contribute to a successful blog and content, some web2.0 concepts and principals and guidelines on blogging, podcasting, social networking, etc.

MITRA SOLOMON is a Bahá'í and a high tech professional, delivering technology at the world's largest internet companies for the last 12 years. Most recently, she led the development and launch of the new search advertising platform for Yahoo. She resides in the San Francisco Bay Area with her family.

**Philip Squires • A Novel Approach to Depression**

Starting with the DSM-IV definition of depression, a developmental model for determining the purpose of life is used to look at childhood depression in a new way, which leads to effective intervention. The conclusions will be related to the Bahá'í Faith and the core activities. Using the work of late Dr. William Hatcher, it takes secular insights and marries them with spiritual concepts of reality, spirituality and religion. Its focus audience is medical students, but is useful for all. There are model dependant suggestions for raising children and for our education system.

PHILIP SQUIRES has been a general paediatrician for 30 years, is board certified in the US and Canada, and is a clinical teacher and Associate Professor at the University of Western Ontario. He has a diploma in tropical medicine, worked five years in Africa, and is currently interested in behavioural problems in children.

**Kevin Trotter • Bahainine Project: Bahá'í Inspired Blogs, Podcasts, and Videos** (see Solomon for abstract)

KEVIN TROTTER is a software developer mainly focussed on the development of web applications and is currently employed by Oracle Corporation. He currently lives in Burlingame, CA.

**Deborah van den Hoonaard (chair), Cheryl Fennell, Marie Gervais, Lisa-Jo van den Scott, and Elizabeth Wright • Scholarship and Community-Building (plenary panel)**

This session addresses how different people and groups understand and define scholarship and the role it plays in community development processes, and in particular in relation to the Bahá'í community. The focus is on how research can educate us about how different people and groups experience community life, in particular in the Bahá'í community, and how we can use what we learn to improve our understanding and success at implementing the Bahá'í teachings. Panellists will address the theme both generally and in the context of different communities and populations, including French Canadian/Quebecois, Aboriginal, and Inuit communities and by gender and age.

DEBORAH VAN DEN HOONAARD holds a Canada Research Chair at St. Thomas University, New Brunswick. Her work is in developing qualitative analysis methods, which she also applies to understand what it means to be a member of a marginal population, specifically older widows and widowers, and immigrants of non-European descent.

**Will van den Hoonaard • Emerging From Obscurity: The Journey of Sociology in the Bahá'í Community**

I try to exercise the “sociological imagination” where I connect my personal scholarly journey to the larger social and historical forces that have shaped Bahá'í scholarship and the Bahá'í community. Sociology and the Bahá'í Faith share important principles and both critically challenge widely-held beliefs. Yet there is wall of relative silence separating them. Recent developments in both the Bahá'í community and sociology have made the wall more permeable, but what about the Bahá'í scholars themselves? How has the Bahá'í Faith shaped their approach to sociology? The answer has surprised me as I discovered that their Bahá'í contributions to sociology are less explicit than implicit.

WILL VAN DEN HOONAARD, Ph.D., Sociology, researches qualitative and ethnographic research, research ethics, the Bahá'í community of Canada, and the world of mapmakers. His books include *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada, 1898-1948*, and *The Equality of Women and Men: The Experience of the Bahá'í Community of Canada*.

**Lisa-Jo van den Scott • Scholarship and Community-Building (plenary panel, see Deborah van den Hoonaard for abstract)**

LISA-JO VAN DEN SCOTT obtained her Masters in Ancient Greek in Newfoundland where she served as Assistant for Young Bahá'í Academics. For the past three years she has served as a pioneer in Arviat, Nunavut where she maintains a regional newsletter and developed an after school program for pre-youth girls.

**Joell Ann Vanderwagen • New Perspectives on Gender and the Bahá'í Revelation**

Providing a new philosophical framework for gender issues, this workshop will contrast old Western classical notions of masculine and feminine as dualities on a vertical scale (strong-weak), with the Bahá'í understanding of them as polarities, groups of complementary, positive qualities on a horizontal scale (strong-gentle). We will re-examine the old notion of spirit as male and matter as female (duality), looking instead at abstract (scripture) and concrete (personal experience) as two modes in which the Divine Spirit relates to us.

JOELL ANN VANDERWAGEN had a spiritual experience shortly after becoming a Bahá'í in 1995, which focussed her attention on gender issues. She has a BA in Philosophy and Literature and a Master of Science in Urban Planning and has worked as a teacher, mother, planning consultant, and writer.

**Faraneh Vargha-Khadem • Autism and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders: Scientific and Spiritual Challenges of Mis-Wired Minds** (see Koirala for abstract)

FARANEH VARGHA-KHADEM, Ph.D. is Head of Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience at University College London. Her groundbreaking research has explored the cognitive deficits of brain-injured children as well as the development of language and memory. She is the recipient of prestigious research awards.

**Dave Wellman • Autism and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders: Scientific and Spiritual Challenges of Mis-Wired Minds** (see Koirala for abstract)

DAVE WELLMAN is retired from high school science teaching in rural Alaska. Reflection on evocative implications of the principle of the harmony of science and religion has been inspired by the Bahá'í Writings, the concept of scientific integrity, and encounters with young minds.

**Jeff Williams • Community Building through the Virtual University**

This presentation examines how a virtual university can assist in global community building. Focus is given to the de-centralized global infrastructure and the efforts towards building a global community between the instructors and administrators, among the students and between the students and staff. Additional information is presented on the type of instruction and tools. The university utilizes the Moodle platform and Skype for conversation classes. There is also an emphasis on education as a means for service to humanity and each unit focuses on such topics as virtue development, global issues, the importance of art and the sciences.

JEFF WILLIAMS has a Ph.D. in literature from Texas Tech University and Masters degrees from Northern Arizona University. He presents conference papers on technology/education and popular culture, publishes articles on popular culture and teaches Semantics and Literature at the National University of La Rioja.

**Karen P. Williams • Religion and Psychology: Combining Potent Forces**

Religion and psychology have traditionally been depicted as antithetical forces whose goals are similar, but whose strategies and underlying philosophies are inimical to each other. This presentation explores the commonalities between the two forces, and suggests that the combination of the two forces is a potent formula for healing and establishing direction in one's life.

KAREN WILLIAMS, Ph.D. , is a licensed bilingual psychologist living and practising in California. She is currently employed in a public health clinic as well as in a private practice office, which allows her a breadth of experience which enhance her Bahá'í lifestyle.

**Ross Woodman and Ann Boyles • An Interview with Ross Woodman**

Ross Woodman and Ann Boyles explore the intricacies of addressing Bahá'í ideas in academic scholarship in Woodman's upcoming book *Revelation and Knowledge*, and reflect on his life of long-time service to the university Bahá'í communities.

ROSS WOODMAN, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, University of Western Ontario, served on the first Canadian National Spiritual Assembly elected in 1948. His works include *Sanity, Madness, Transformation: The Role of the Psyche in Romanticism*, *The Apocalyptic Vision in the Poetry of Shelley*, and numerous articles on the English Romantics, religion, poetry, and modern art.

**Élizabeth Wright • Scholarship and Community-Building** (plenary panel, see Deborah van den Hoonard for abstract)

**Élizabeth Wright • The 2007 UN Commission on the Status of Women: “Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination and Violence against the Girl Child”**

ÉLIZABETH WRIGHT, MA Sociology, Université Laval, researches gender studies, specifically men and masculinities and the social and family impact of changing parental functions. She is Director of the Bahá'í Community of Canada's Office for the Advancement of Women, and president elect of the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women.

**Mina Yazdani • Anti-Bahá'í Polemics and Historiography**

This presentation examines anti-Bahá'í polemics produced as works of historiography in twentieth century Iran. It advances the thesis that anti-Bahá'í polemics have constructed a version of Bahá'í history that, while not only radically different from the Bahá'í narrative, has 1) been exploited in the service of justifying the ongoing persecution of Iranian Bahá'ís; 2) penetrated Iranian popular culture; and 3) been uncritically arrogated by the Iranian intellectual elite as the “real” image of Iran's largest religious minority. Taking up the depiction of three prominent individuals in scholarly and Bahá'í works as case studies, we juxtapose this with their portrayal in anti-Bahá'í polemical works.

**Mina Yazdani • The History and Role of Scholarship in the Iranian Bahá'í Community** (special Thursday session)

This presentation will provide a historical survey of the role of Bahá'í scholars in Iran from the time of Bahá'u'lláh to the present day. It will explore the ways in which Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá drew on Bahá'í scholars in community building, and will briefly investigate the services offered to the Cause of God by such prominent scholars as Abu'l-Fadá'il Gulpaygání, Nabíl-Akbar, Fádil-i Mázandarání, Abdu'l-Hamíd Ishráqkhávarí, 'Azizu'lláh Sulaymání, 'Alí Murád Davúdí and their spiritual heirs in contemporary Iran. The relationship between these scholars, the Bahá'í community, and the Institutions of the Cause will also be addressed.

MINA YAZDANI is pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Toronto Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations. Her recent publications include the monograph, *Iran at the Time of the Qájár Dynasty: A Perspective from the Bahá'í Sacred Writings*, and articles in *Khushihá'í az Kharman-i Adab va Hunar and Payám-i Bahá'í*.

## Artists Performing

SHIRLENE ZARIN-TAJ BROWN started out her career as first lady radio announcer for Radio Bahá'í, WLGI for 10 years. She later continued her aspirations in studying and obtaining her B.A. in music performance, all the while traveling the world over and becoming of her own as a professional singer/entertainer in the artistry of jazz.

JOHN EBATA's talents run deep in the music world as musician, song writer, arranger, producer and recording engineer. Award winning pianist-keyboardist, his discography includes recordings with renowned Bahá'í artists and much sought after accompanist to singer-songwriters including Buffy Sainte Marie and Morris Albert. He currently resides in King City Canada working from his home studio and as a sales-management consultant.

ROBERT MICHELL is a poet-writer-teacher based in Montreal. His interests are in the confluence between mysticism and science, a new model of spirituality, and writing poetry that combines craftsmanship and accessibly.

ANNE PERRY is a writer, teacher and performer. who has presented numerous times in various formats at past conferences. Her dramatic presentations of Sarah Farmer are well known and well-received.

SMITH & DRAGOMAN - The music of Smith & Dragoman is inspired by the incredible stories of the early history of the Bahá'í Faith; stories of heroes and heroines from mid 19th century Persia who chose to lead a life in accordance with their Beliefs. They have released two CDs, *Open the Gates* and *Under the Lote-Tree* and are currently in production working on their first live concert DVD release.  
[www.smithanddragoman.com](http://www.smithanddragoman.com)

SUSAN LEWIS WRIGHT is a professional singer-songwriter, classical and jazz musician, speaker and author; chair—Global Visions Arts Alliance; producer—Women of One World show. PR, advertising marketing, journalism professional, former National Information officer for the U.S. N.S.A. Three albums: *Down In Mexico*, *Bird* and *Days of Beauty*. Song, "Calling All Colors" was sung on program with President Clinton.

## Conference Organization

*Conference Task Force* Roshan Danesh, Mehran Kiai, Kim Naqvi, Parvin Rowhani

*Conference Coordinator* Parvin Rowhani

*Arts Program* John Ebata and Viktoria Yazdani

*Children's and Junior Youth Program* Brenda Alizadeh and Ted Draack

*Devotions* Anne Perry

*Hospitality* Ramin Modir

*Logistics* Tymon Hsieh

*Photography* Vic Voytek

*Program* Kim Naqvi and Roshan Danesh

*Public Relations/Publicity* Ashkan Vahman

*Registration* Nilufar Gordon, Solange Jabbary

*Security/Ushers* Afshin Modir  
*Stage Decoration* Houmed Arjomand  
*Stage Manager* Jolene Nichols  
*Technical Director* Geoff Cohen  
*Treasurer* Mehran Kiai  
*Volunteers* Ramzi Shams

The ABS Executive Committee extends its deep appreciation to all those who have assisted in the preparation and running of this conference. Our heartfelt thanks are also due to the many volunteers who contributed their service and have worked so hard to make this conference a success.

**With special thanks to The Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís of Mississauga and Toronto**