

Association for Bahá'í Studies–North America  
38<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference  
“Scholarship and the Life of Society”

7 - 10 August 2014  
The Fairmont Royal York  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Conference Theme Statement .....	3
Thursday .....	4
Friday .....	5
Saturday .....	8
Sunday .....	11
Abstracts and biographical notes .....	12
Artists performing .....	35

*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 and usher volunteers at the conference 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 on “silent” mode while you are in the conference sessions.

**The Children’s and Junior Youth Program.** (Children must be preregistered to attend.)

The Children and Junior Youth Program for ages 5 to 14, is being held in the **Library and York rooms** on the Mezzanine Floor. 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. (Snacks are included in the children’s program.) The times for Children/Junior Youth sessions are

Thursday, 7 August 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Friday, 8 August 9:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Saturday, 9 August 9:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, 10 August 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

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:*** This year, due to changes in the operation of the Bahá'í Distribution Service in Canada, there is no bookstore at the conference. Some ABS publications and CD/DVDs will be available for sale in the conference registration area. Bahá'í books are available for sale at the Toronto Bahá'í Centre, 288 Bloor Street West, Toronto, M5S 1V8. Tel.: 416-961-0035.

***Evaluation Forms*** The ABS Executive Committee asks for your assistance and cooperation in filling out the conference evaluation forms provided in your conference kit. Your feedback is very valuable to us in our continuing efforts to improve the Conference.

***Audio Recordings*** Conference plenary sessions will be recorded and will be available for purchase in DVD format. 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 order 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 **Newfoundland room**, on the Mezzanine Floor, has been set aside for prayer and meditation from **Friday to Sunday**, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

***Evening Arts*** After the evening programs there will be an extended arts programme held in the **Canadian room** 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.

***Association Endowment Funds:*** These funds are established by individuals to support and encourage Bahá'í Scholarship initiatives. If you wish to explore opportunities to contribute to these funds and support the goals of the Association, please feel free to consult with the treasurer of the Executive Committee.



*For up-to-date information*, follow us @ABSConferences. Tweet your experience #ABS2014.

## Theme Statement

### “Scholarship and the Life of Society”

The 2014 ABS Conference is being planned in light of ongoing consultations on the new guidance received from the Universal House of Justice regarding the role of the Association. The 24 July 2013 letter from the House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada is available on the ABS website, [www.bahai-studies.ca](http://www.bahai-studies.ca), for all to study, such that the spirit and aims of this guidance may increasingly be reflected in the presentations and consultations at the conference.

Writing about developments in the worldwide Bahá'í community in 2010, the House of Justice noted “the significant strengthening of a culture in which learning is the mode of operation, a mode that fosters the informed participation of more and more people in a unified effort to apply Bahá'u'lláh's teachings to the construction of a divine civilization, which the Guardian states is the primary mission of the Faith.” (The Universal House of Justice, Ridván Message 2010, para. 19)

This culture of learning is evident within the field of Bahá'í scholarship. Those engaged in Bahá'í scholarship represent every field of knowledge, every profession, and all areas of the arts and sciences. While their methods and approaches vary widely, they are united in striving to gain a deeper understanding of the Bahá'í teachings and the implications they hold for the issues and challenges facing the wider society.

Strengthening individuals' capacity to engage in diverse forms of Bahá'í scholarship is central to the mission of the Association for Bahá'í Studies. In the recent letter, the Universal House of Justice described the role of the Association:

Every believer has the opportunity to examine the forces operating in society and introduce relevant aspects of the teachings within the discourses prevalent in whatever social space he or she is present. It is, perhaps, as a means to enhance the abilities of the friends to explore such opportunities in relation to their scholarly interests that the endeavours of the Association for Bahá'í Studies can be conceived. Through the specialized settings it creates, the Association can promote learning among a wide range of believers across a wide range of disciplines. (The Universal House of Justice, Letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, 24 July 2013)

The Association's 2014 conference will focus on scholarship and its potential to contribute to the life of society. All those who are interested in promoting and pursuing Bahá'í scholarship in all its forms are invited to come together, share their learning, and reflect on the challenges and transformative possibilities ahead. As the Universal House of Justice has explained,

Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation is vast. It calls for profound change not only at the level of the individual but also in the structure of society. . . . There are no shortcuts, no formulas. Only as effort is made to draw on insights from His Revelation, to tap into the accumulating knowledge of the human race, to apply His teachings intelligently to the life of humanity, and to consult on the questions that arise will the necessary learning occur and capacity be developed. (The Universal House of Justice, Ridván Message 2010, para. 25)

## ***Thursday, 7 August 2014***

### ***9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Special Simultaneous Workshop Sessions***

#### *British Columbia*

9:00 – 12:00    **Faculty and Student Workshop**  
Convener: PIERRE-YVES MOCQUAIS

#### *Ontario*

10:00 – 12:00    **Workshop: Letter from the Universal House of Justice Dated 2 March 2013 – Exploring Social Justice**  
Facilitator: HOLLY HANSON

12:00 – 2:00    *Lunch Break*

#### *Ontario*

2:00 – 4:00    **Workshop: Letter from the Universal House of Justice Dated 2 March 2013 – Exploring Social Justice** (*Repeat of morning session*)  
Facilitator: HOLLY HANSON

#### *British Columbia*

2:00 – 4:00    **Workshop: Bahá'í Dating: Fact, Fiction, and Social Physics**    NURA MOWZOON

#### *Territories*

2:00 – 5:00    ***Luminous Journey: 'Abdu'l-Bahá in America, 1912*** Film Screening with Stories and Introduction by Filmmakers/Producers    ANNE GORDON PERRY and TIM PERRY

5:00 – 7:00    *Dinner Break*

## ***Thursday Evening***

#### *Canadian*

7:00            **Plenary Session**  
Chair: LISA DUFRAIMONT

Devotions

Official Conference Welcome  
Representatives of the National Spiritual Assemblies of the United States and Canada

**Toward a Framework for Action**    PAUL LAMPLE

#### *Canadian*

9:30            **Evening Arts Programme**

## Friday, 8 August 2014

Canadian

9:00

### Plenary Session

Chair: ANNE PEARSON

Devotions

### Plenary Panel: Exploring the Social Sciences

**The Prospect of Collective Action in Political Science** GEOFFREY CAMERON

**Discourse Matters: The Potential of Qualitative Sociology to Illumine Bahá'í Studies** DEBORAH VAN DEN HOONAARD

**Challenges for Social Science from the Perspective of Urban Practice** JUNE THOMAS

11:00 – 12:30

**Subject Area Consultations Sessions** - 14 simultaneous sessions on the following areas (see p. 32 for more information)

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1) <i>Confederation 3</i>  | Arts (fine and performing)  |
| 2) <i>Alberta</i>          | Applied Sciences (including IT, Engineering)  |
| 3) <i>Quebec</i>           | Business and Management   |
| 4) <i>Tudor 7</i>          | Communications and Media  |
| 5) <i>British Columbia</i> | Counseling and Mental Health  |
| 6) <i>Nova Scotia</i>      | Economics   |
| 7) <i>Manitoba</i>         | Education   |
| 8) <i>Saskatchewan</i>     | Environmental Studies   |
| 9) <i>Ontario</i>          | Health Sciences   |
| 10) <i>Confederation 6</i> | Humanities (including Philosophy, History, Literature)                                      |
| 11) <i>Confederation 5</i> | International Affairs   |
| 12) <i>Tudor 8</i>         | Law   |
| 13) <i>New Brunswick</i>   | Natural Sciences (including Math, Biology, Chemistry, Physics)                              |
| 14) <i>Territories</i>     | Social Sciences (including Development Studies, Anthropology, Sociology, Political Science) |

12:30 – 2:00

*Lunch Break*

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

*Manitoba*

### Arts I

Convener and Chair: ANNE GORDON PERRY

2:00 – 3:00

Use of Art (Drama) in Respect of "Salt of My Tablets" DOUGLAS L. MCGRATH

3:15 – 4:15

"The Horizon's Little Joke" The Circle as Spatial Perfection in the Poetry of B.K. Filson  
ROBERT MICHELL

- Manitoba*      **Bahá'í History & Biography**  
 Convener and Chair: SUSAN MANECK  
 4:30 – 5:30      The Untold Story of Albert Durrant Watson and the Bahá'í Faith    MARLENE MACKE
- Tudor 7*      **Bioethics and Health Sciences**  
 2:00 – 3:00      False Dichotomies—Beginning a Discourse between Alternative Health Practices and Western Medicine    SANDRA J. BEAN  
 3:15 – 4:15      Food as Medicine: The Bahá'í Writings and the State of the Science  
 FARSHAD FANI MARVASTI and BAHAR BROCKEN  
 4:30 – 5:30      How Is Science Improving the Effectiveness of Prayers for Healing?    ROGER BLAINE
- British Columbia*      **Business, Ethics and Management Science**  
 Convener and Chair: NOUSHA RAM  
 2:00 – 3:00      Networking for Success Via a Shared Culture of Learning    SUSAN BRILL DE RAMIREZ  
 3:15 – 4:15      Social Discourse: ebbf — A 25 Year Old Success Story    FRANÇOIS COUILLARD
- Confederation*  
 5&6      **Contributing to Discourses I**  
 Convener and Chair: MICHAEL KARLBERG  
 2:00 – 3:00      Contributing to Discourses on Education    ERIN MURPHY-GRAHAM, HODA FARAHMANDPOUR, ELENA TOUKAN, KEVIN NAIMI and BITA CORREA  
 3:15 – 4:15      Contributing to Discourses on Economics    JORDAN VAN RIJN, RYAN SIEGEL, NAVID SABET, NAZANIN HO and VESALL NOURANI
- British Columbia*      **Gender and Equality Studies**  
 Convener and Chair: ELIZABETH WRIGHT  
 4:30 – 5:30      Your Story Project: Breaking the Cycle of Poverty    FURUGH SWITZER
- Territories*      **General Bahá'í Studies**  
 2:00 – 3:30      Welcoming Our New Neighbours: The Contributions of Recent Immigrants to Core Activities    HOLLY HANSON and VASU MOHAN  
 4:30 – 5:30      Exploring Bahá'í Approaches to Social Change    ROSHAN DANESH and LEX MUSTA
- Confederation*  
 5&6      **International Affairs**  
 Convener and Chair: JULIA BERGER  
 4:30 – 5:30      The Bahá'í Faith and the Public Sphere    BENJAMIN SCHEWEL and GEOFFREY CAMERON
- Tudor 8*      **Marriage and Family**  
 2:00 – 3:00      A New Race of Couples    RAYMOND and FURUGH SWITZER
- Quebec*      **Philosophy I**  
 Convener and Chair: IAN KLUGE  
 2:00 – 3:00      Procrustes' Bed: The Insufficiencies of Secular Humanism    IAN KLUGE  
 3:15 – 4:15      The Unconscious Civilization, the Great Awakening, and John Ralston Saul  
 JAY HOWDEN  
 4:30 – 5:30      The Bahá'í Faith and Modernity: A Comparative Analysis    MIKHAIL SERGEEV

*Tudor 8*                    **Psychology**  
3:15 – 4:15            Positive Psychotherapy – A Bahá’í-Inspired Method of Psychotherapy and Counseling  
in Transcultural Settings    HAMID PESESCHKIAN  
4:30 – 5:30            Common Themes in Diverse Voices: The Role of Spirituality in Children’s Lives  
VICTORIA TALWAR

*Confederation 3*       **Science and Religion I**  
Conveners: STEPHEN FRIBERG and RON SHIGETA. Chair: STEPHEN FRIBERG  
2:00 – 3:00            The Independent Investigation of Truth as a Prerequisite for Navigating Today’s Social  
Media and Targeted Marketing    LAYLA PARKER-KATIRAI  
3:15 – 4:15            Collective Diversity: Consultation, the Seven Valleys, and the Formation of a Collective  
SHAHIN MOVAFAGH-MOWZOON  
4:30 – 5:30            Towards Universal Scientific Literacy: Lessons from the 2013 Wilmette Institute Course  
“Science, Religion, and the Future”    STEPHEN FRIBERG

*Alberta*                    **Workshops: Investigating Harmony of Science and Religion: On the Mind, the  
Method, and the Object of Our Quest**  
Conveners and Presenters: KAMRAN SEDIG, PAUL PARSONS and ASHLEY NAIMI  
2:00 – 3:00            Part 1: The Books of Creation and Revelation  
3:15 – 4:15            Part 2: The Human Mind  
4:30 – 5:30            Part 3: Methodology  
  
5:30 – 7:30            *Dinner Break*

## ***Friday Evening – 8 August 2014***

*Canadian*  
7:30                    **Plenary Session**  
Chair: ESTHER MALONEY  
  
**The Sunchief’s Daughter – Storytelling**    LOUISE PROFEIT-LEBLANC  
  
**Arts Gala – “Soundscapes”**  
  
Songwriter Circle #1 – “The Masses”  
MIKE FERGUSON, MJ CYR, VEDAD HAGHIGHI, TRAVIS BIRCH, NOAH GOODBAUM,  
ALBERTO LOPEZ  
  
Piano Interlude    BEN MCGREGOR  
  
Songwriter Circle #2 – Sounds of Persia  
AMIR BRANDON and MARYAM TOUMRAI  
  
Songwriter’s Circle #3 – “A Celebration”  
SMITH & DRAGOMAN, JACK LENZ, WALTER HEATH

*Canadian*  
10:00                    **Evening Arts Programme**

## *Saturday, 9 August 2014*

### *Canadian*

9:00

#### **Plenary Session**

Chair: VALERIE DANA

Devotions

#### **Plenary Panel: Exploring the Natural and Life Sciences**

Moderator: STEPHEN FRIBERG

**“Let Your Vision be World-Embracing” – Why Health Sciences and Bioethics?**

ELIZABETH BOWEN

**The Human Mind and Its Interaction with the World** KAMRAN SEDIG

**Natural Sciences and Society** ARTHUR DAHL

Musical Interlude

#### **Learning to Read Social Reality in the Light of the Revelation**

HALEH ARBAB

**Can Neuroscience Inform the Relationship between the Rational Soul, the Mind, and the Brain?** FARANEH VARGHA-KHADEM

12:15 – 2:30

*Lunch break*

### *Ontario*

1:15 – 2:30

#### **Consultative Session on the Vision and Activities of the Association for Bahá'í Studies – North America**

All are invited to an open consultation chaired by the ABS Executive Committee. How can ABS most effectively, in the words of the Universal House of Justice, “stimulate scholarly study of the Faith and its teachings, promote a sound understanding of the Cause in academic circles and demonstrate its relevance to the study of social issues”? Grab your lunch and come reflect on learning to date, consult about how you would like to see ABS develop, and suggest initiatives you might take to help make this possible

## **2:45 – 5:30 p.m. Simultaneous Breakout Sessions**

### *British Columbia* **Arts II**

Convener and Chair: ANNE GORDON PERRY

2:45 – 3:45

Multi-Language Production: Opportunities and Challenges in Translating the Story of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's North American Journey ANNE GORDON PERRY and TIM PERRY

- Manitoba*      **Bahá'í History and Biography II**  
 Convener and Chair: SUSAN MANECK  
 2:45 – 3:45      From the Valley of Achor to Doors of Hope – Bahá'í Studies at Israeli Academia in the Last  
 Two Decades      SHAY ROZEN  
 4:00 – 5:00      Táhirih and the Women of the West      HUSSEIN AHDIEH
- Territories*      **Bioethics and Health Sciences II**  
 Convener and Chair: ELIZABETH BOWEN  
 2:45 – 3:45      Exploring Spirituality with Medical Students in an Academic Environment – An  
 Analysis of 12 years of Experience      ABDU'L-MISAGH GHADIRIAN  
 4:00 – 5:30      Panel Presentation: Death as a Messenger of Joy      ELIZABETH BOWEN, JAMES CRIBB,  
 ABDU'L-MISAGH GHADIRIAN and BRENDA MAXWELL
- Confederation*  
 5 & 6      **Contributing to Discourses II**  
 Convener and Chair: MICHAEL KARLBERG  
 2:45 – 3:45      Contributing to Discourses on Religion in Society      GEOFFREY CAMERON, BENJAMIN  
 SCHEWEL, GERALD FILSON and JULIA BERGER  
 4:00 – 5:30      Contributing to Discourses on Primary Health Care      DARIUS LOGHMANEE, LITA  
 CAMERON, SANA REZAI, TINA SHAHIDYAZDANI and SHIRIN MADJZOUB
- Tudor 8*      **General Bahá'í Studies**  
 2:45 – 3:45      Shaping Habits of Thought for the Love of God – Further Considerations  
 DAVID R. SMITH  
 4:00 – 5:00      Bahá'í Scholarship: The Process of Learning at The Bahá'í Chair for World Peace  
 HODA MAHMOUDI
- Quebec*      **International Environment Forum**  
 Chair: PETER ADRIANCE  
 2:45 – 3:45      Addressing Sustainability Challenges: A Framework for Material and Spiritual  
 Transformation      ARTHUR LYON DAHL  
 4:00 – 5:30      Contributing to Sustainability Discourse and Action      PETER ADRIANCE, ARTHUR LYON  
 DAHL and CHRISTINE MULLER
- Tudor 7*      **Law & Governance**  
 4:00 – 5:00      Electing the Trustees of the Merciful: Towards a New Paradigm of Power  
 HELEN CHENG
- British Columbia*      **Peace and Conflict Studies**  
 4:00 – 5:00      Beyond Traditional Conflict Resolution Methods: Dynamical Systems Theory in the  
 Context of Bahá'í Peacemaking      ISAR MAHANIAN
- Tudor 7*      **Philosophy II**  
 Convener and Chair: IAN KLUGE  
 2:45 – 3:45      Thinking Sociologically About Independent Investigation      KEVIN NAIMI

Alberta

**Science and Religion II**

Conveners: STEPHEN FRIBERG and RON SHIGETA. Chair: STEPHEN FRIBERG

2:45 – 3:45

Physics and Spirit: Self-Similarity and the Holographic Soul ADIB SEDIG

4:00 – 5:00

A Scientific View of the Reality of Man – Part 3: The Ego MEHRDAD EHSANI

Confederation 3

**Science and Religion III**

2:45 – 3:45

Secular Science, Meet Spiritual Search: A Ten-Point Comparison of How the Rational Soul Explores ELAINE MCCREARY

4:00 – 5:00

The Human Spirit as Recognition Engine and Easy Topic of Conversation: First Result of a Rapid Application Development Project ALAN KELLOGG

5:30 - 7:30

*Dinner Break*

***Saturday Evening, 9 August 2014***

Canadian

7:30

**Plenary Session**

Chair: PIERRE-YVES MOCQUAIS

Devotions

***Presentation of Awards by the Association for Bahá'í Studies Executive Committee***

Dr. Robert Stockman, 2014 Award for Distinguished Scholarship - Book Category

Dr. Selena Crosson, 2014 Award for Distinguished Scholarship - Graduate Thesis Category

Ms. Nasim Rowshanabadi, 2014 Bahieh Moayyad-Khademi Award for Distinguished Scholarship

**The 32nd Hasan M. Balyuzi Memorial Lecture**

**The Evolving Role of Bahá'í Scholarship** VAHID RAFATI

Canadian

9:30

**Evening Arts Programme**

Territories

9:30

Screening of Film *Death by Joy: An Escorted Journey*

## ***Sunday, 10 August 2014***

*Canadian*

9:00

### **Plenary Session**

Chair: JUDY FILSON

Devotions

### **Plenary Panel: Exploring the Humanities**

Moderator: ROBERT STOCKMAN

**Reading Utopias: From Dichotomy to Complementarity** ELHAM AFNAN

**Global History and the Oneness of Humanity** SUSAN MANECK

**Reading Philosophy in a New Culture of Learning** GERALD FILSON

Musical Interlude

**Re-Telling Reconciliation** ROSHAN DANESH

**Closing Observations:** DANIEL SCOTT, Member Continental Board of Counsellors

1:00

Conference Closing: Association for Bahá'í Studies Executive Committee

## *Abstracts and Autobiographical Notes*

### **Peter Adriance, Arthur Lyon Dahl and Christine Muller • Contributing to Sustainability Discourse and Action – Panel Presentation**

The creative interaction of spiritual principles and practical problems can shed new light on difficulties that have proven intractable in traditional frameworks and thus influence the life of society. The challenges of climate change and sustainability are particularly pressing. This panel will present examples of this process in UN dialogues and conferences, in the American Bahá'í community, and in individual behavior and activities responding to climate change at the community level.

PETER ADRIANCE is Representative for Sustainable Development in the Office of Public Affairs of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the U.S., a board member of the International Environment Forum, and representative of the Bahá'í International Community and Bahá'ís of the U.S. at numerous national and international fora.

### **Elham Afnan • Reading Utopias: From Dichotomy to Complementarity (Humanities Panel)**

The presentation gives a brief overview of the various approaches to modern literary criticism and then examines ways of overcoming the false dichotomies in this field through the application of the concept of complementarity, which suggests that we cannot fully understand a phenomenon unless we understand its seemingly contradictory manifestations. It will look specifically at the genre of the utopian novel, where the paradigm shift from dichotomous to complementary thinking opens up new ways of reading texts. Finally, it will consider how insights gained from this alternative mode of analysis may open up spaces for achieving coherence—rather than competition—in other cultural and social arenas.

ELHAM AFNAN completed her doctoral studies in English Literature at McMaster University. She has written a number of articles on literary utopias as well as on a variety of Bahá'í topics. She currently serves as translation facilitator in the Research Department at the Bahá'í World Centre.

### **Hussein Ahdieh • Táhirih and the Women of the West**

In the 19th century, countless individuals believed a new Revelation was imminent. In Persia, the Báb fulfilled the prediction by several clerics of the appearance of the Promised Qa'im. Táhirih, a gifted teacher, was at the vanguard of spreading His Teachings. Murdered in 1852, her legacy persists in her poems. At the same time, many Americans believed the Second Coming of Christ was imminent. Several churches emerged, few founded by women. In the hearts of Persian and American women, God's Hand was at play, orchestrating a realization of the spiritual basis of life and the need to move towards oneness.

HUSSEIN AHDIEH moved to the USA as a teenager to pursue a Masters in European Intellectual History and a Doctorate in Education. He is a co-founder of the world-renowned Harlem Preparatory School in NYC and author of several books, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in New York, Awakening*, and *The Life of Táhirih*.

## **Haleh Arbab • Learning to Read Social Reality in the Light of the Revelation**

Learning to read social reality in the light of the revelation and to contribute effectively to the many efforts directed towards the advancement of civilization is a long process and involves the participation of different people from diverse backgrounds. Some of the thinking behind the programs of the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity, whose mandate is to learn systematically about enhancing the capacity of individuals and groups to participate in some of the prevalent discourses of society, is presented in this talk.

HALEH ARBAB, Ed.D. (Education and Development, University of Massachusetts), worked (1982-2005) with FUNDAEC in Colombia, developing educational content and programs to promote community wellbeing, and serving (1995-2005) as Rector of Centro Universitario de Bienestar Rural. Since 2005 she is Director of the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity in Haifa, Israel.

## **Sandra J. Bean • False Dichotomies—Beginning a Discourse between Alternative Health Practices and Western Medicine**

Western and alternative medicine emanate from culturally different perspectives. In the absence of a common language for health and well-being, practitioners from different medical paradigms may avoid discourse completely because the potential for misunderstanding is so great. Because Bahá'ís above all seek to avoid disunity, Bahá'í health care providers from different medical traditions may avoid discussing their health paradigms with each other. Informed by Bahá'u'lláh's admonition to consult "in all matters" and His description of consultation as both "bestow[ing] greater awareness" and "transmut[ing] conjecture into certitude," this session will search for a shared language to describe health, healing, and wellness.

SANDRA J. BEAN, MPH, PhD, earned her doctorate in public health from Oregon State University focusing on health behavior, specifically on opposition to vaccination. Sandra lived and worked as a Bahá'í pioneer in Asia after which she worked for several years for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## **Julia Berger, Geoffrey Cameron, Gerald Filson and Benjamin Schewel • Contributing to Discourses on the Role of Religion in Society – Panel Presentation**

The work of the Bahá'í community is advancing within an evolving conceptual framework that will guide our contributions to the discourses of society over time. Panelists will discuss how this framework has shaped their own thinking and/or practice in relation to the role of religion in society; prevailing assumptions or conceptions about the role of religion in society that might be problematic in relation to this framework; prevailing insights and conceptions related to the role of religion in society that appear to be coherent with this framework; and spaces Bahá'ís might want to be present in, over time, to contribute to the evolution of thought regarding the role of religion in society.

JULIA BERGER is the Principal Researcher at the Bahá'í International Community's United Nations Office. She is completing her PhD in Religious Studies at the University of Kent (Canterbury, UK). Julia lives in New York with her husband and twin daughters.

## **Roger Blaine • How Is Science Improving the Effectiveness of Prayers for Healing?**

Healing prayer has been used since the dawn of time, but only recently have large scale, triple-blind, objective studies been conducted to determine its effectiveness. This presentation examines intercessory (distance) prayer using the same processes and criteria as any other candidate medical treatment. We will recount the history of healing prayer, study the evidence for its effectiveness, explore the mechanism of how healing prayer may work, and see how modern science is helping to improve its effectiveness.

ROGER BLAINE is a retired chemist. A homefront pioneer in his youth, he has served on Local Spiritual Assemblies in four localities. A past coordinator for the ABS Science and Technology SIG, he currently explores the application of Bahá'í principles to science and social issues.

## **Elizabeth Bowen • Death as a Messenger of Joy – A Panel Presentation (see Cribb for abstract)**

### **Elizabeth Bowen • “Let Your Vision be World-Embracing” – Why Health Sciences and Bioethics? (Natural and Life Sciences Panel)**

In bioethics and health sciences, questions arise that affect us all. Let's consider a few: 1) how might you “let your vision be world embracing,” personally, professionally, and as a Bahá'í, 2) how might we best apply the Bahá'í teachings intelligently to the life of humanity, 3) how do you envision transforming your discipline to bring it under the shelter of the Bahá'í revelation, and 4) how might you, ABS, your institutions and your communities, participate in a unified effort to apply Bahá'í teachings to the construction of a divine civilization?

ELIZABETH BOWEN (MD, PA; Ed.D) is a public health physician and writer. In Jungian depth psychology, she aims to increase happiness and strengthen constructive resilience. As a representative to the United Nations for the International Society of Doctors for the Environment, her concern is global public health policy.

## **Susan Brill de Ramirez • Networking for Success Via a Shared Culture of Learning**

Every person has hopes and dreams, but adopting a lifestyle and culture of shared learning enables the actualization of those potentialities. Twentieth-century educator Stanwood Cobb taught that most people do not understand how education contributes to individual service in the world. James Paul Gee (2013) points out the crucial challenge for most people in fulfilling their potential: simply not knowing what they need to do and how it will make a difference. This presentation/workshop presents new research in the area of SHRM (strategic-human-resource-management/development), recent college success research, and social media networking/mentoring strategies for personal and community growth and development.

SUSAN BRILL DE RAMÍREZ is Caterpillar Professor of English at Bradley University (Ph.D. English, M.B.A. management/human resource development), National Councilor for the Arts/Humanities (Council for Undergraduate Research), PMLA Advisory Board member (Modern Language Association), Book Review Editor (CUR Quarterly), book series editor with Lexington Books, and volunteer BIHE faculty member.

**Bahar Brocken • Food as Medicine: The Bahá'í Writings and the State of the Science** (see Marvasti for abstract)

BAHAR BROCKEN (BSc., RD) has presented workshops on healthy eating, healing and food justice in Canada, Los Angeles and, most recently, at the European Bahá'í Conference on Justice in the Netherlands. She is currently working as a clinical dietician with Alberta Health Services.

**Lita Cameron • Contributing to Discourses on Primary Health Care** (see Loghmanee for abstract)

LITA CAMERON is a medical student at McMaster University, where she collaborates with a group of students and faculty to advance a discourse on science, religion and medicine. She has an MSc in global health from Oxford University, and has worked previously with research projects on international and Aboriginal health.

**Geoffrey Cameron • The Bahá'í Faith and the Public Sphere** (see Schewel for abstract)

**Geoffrey Cameron • Contributing to Discourses on the Role of Religion in Society** (see Berger for abstract)

**Geoffrey Cameron • The Prospect of Collective Action in Political Science (Social Sciences Panel)**

Among the central concerns of political science are the questions of why, when and how people cooperate. This presentation will consider how political scientists study cooperation at different levels of analysis, such as individual behaviour, group mobilization, and institutional development. Assumptions about human nature have undergone important shifts as a result of empirical research, and scholars are asking how norms and institutions can help to limit the detrimental effects of self-interested action. The question of how cooperation is sustained on a large scale invites further consideration by scholars who apply elements of a conceptual framework influenced by the Bahá'í teachings.

GEOFFREY CAMERON (MPhil, Oxford) is a PhD student and Trudeau Scholar in the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto, where he studies immigration and refugee policy. He also serves with the Office of External Affairs of the Bahá'í Community of Canada as principal researcher.

**Helen Cheng • Electing the Trustees of the Merciful: Towards a New Paradigm of Power**

Bahá'u'lláh stated, "We have assigned to every end a means for its accomplishment." Dramatizing this means-ends relationship is the relationship between the Bahá'í electoral process and the broader architecture of the Bahá'í Administrative Order. Bahá'í election elects those whom Bahá'u'lláh called the "Trustees of the Merciful." In eschewing all electioneering practices, Bahá'í election prescribes in concrete terms how to create and maintain a democratic authority that reflects and engenders the spirit of trusteeship. It questions prevailing notions of and approaches to power in governance and introduces a new paradigm of political power that fundamentally redefines its nature, purpose, and ethics.

HELEN CHENG is a lawyer who teaches and works in the areas of constitutional law, privacy law, leadership development, and ADR. Her research interests include cyber law, legal pluralism, and institutional design. She received her Master of Laws from Harvard Law School.

**Bitá Correa • Contributing to Discourses on Education** (see Murphy-Graham for abstract)

BITA CORREA is currently finishing a Masters in Sociology at the Universidad del Valle in Cali, Colombia. Her research focuses on the ability of educational programs, particularly those offered by FUNDAEC, to contribute to social transformation and change by fostering a sense of agency in its students

**François Couillard • Social Discourse: ebbf — A 25 Year Old Success Story**

The European Bahá'í Business Forum (ebbf) is a Bahá'í inspired network “dedicated to bringing ethical values, personal virtues and moral leadership into our workplaces.” Since its inception in 1987, ebbf has achieved unparalleled influence. How did this small group of individuals have so much success in so little time? This presentation will consider how ebbf has helped its members understand the broader conversations of society and contribute to the advancement of discourse in a business context. We hope to extract lessons learned for Bahá'í groups and institutions seeking to achieve similar success in reaching out and influencing the broader society.

FRANÇOIS COUILLARD has over 30 years experience managing businesses and non-profits. He is the CEO of the CAMRT, a National Professional Association representing over 12,000 Canadian health professionals. He holds a Chemical Engineering degree and a MBA in Marketing and International Business. He is a member of ebbf's research team.

**James Cribb, Elizabeth Bowen, Abdu'l-Missagh Ghadirian and Brenda Maxwell • Death as a Messenger of Joy – A Panel Presentation**

The Bahá'í concept of death as a messenger of joy contrasts sharply with society's dread of dying. Framed in such a promising light, how can this idea be used as a positive force in our lives to awaken a truer sense of our purpose on this earthly journey? Prefaced with clips from the documentary film — *Death by Joy: An Escorted Journey*— director Jim Cribb and a panel of practitioners dedicated to and highly experienced in the field of palliative and hospice care will explore this idea.

JAMES CRIBB is a photographer, writer, and filmmaker. For over twenty-five years, he has combined visual artistry with technical insight to create works that honour his subjects. He has been published widely, including three collections of his sensitive coverage of marine environments in book form and two feature-length documentaries.

**Arthur Lyon Dahl • Contributing to Sustainability Discourse and Action – Panel Presentation** (see Adriance for abstract)

**Arthur Lyon Dahl • Natural Sciences and Society** (Natural and Life Sciences Panel)

The tendency in the natural sciences to increasing specialization and reductionism is countered by the need for transdisciplinary systems approaches to sustainability. Scientists are caught between the ideal of scientific neutrality and the need for engagement, and the tension between quality peer review publication, and opening to citizen science and indigenous knowledge. The science-policy dialogue has been strengthened at the global level responding to planetary environmental and social challenges. However, this is countered by a powerful anti-science movement well-funded by vested interests, and by limitations in political receptivity to science, forcing a strengthening of scientific advisory processes and public mobilization.

### **Arthur Lyon Dahl • Addressing Sustainability Challenges: A Framework for Material and Spiritual Transformation**

While the response to present environmental, social and economic crises needs to be as much spiritual as material, there is strong resistance to this in academic, social and political circles. The challenge is to demonstrate the validity of spiritual principle as a necessary complement to sectoral approaches to the sustainability challenge. Recent work on values, systems approaches, cooperation, well-being and happiness are opening a door to a wider dialogue. Youth in particular need hope and intellectually-sound proposals and frameworks to empower them to lead the coming transformation.

DR. ARTHUR LYON DAHL, President of the International Environment Forum, is a retired Deputy Assistant Executive Director of UNEP, with 45 years' experience in sustainability, international environmental governance, development, indicators, and systems science. He lectures widely and consults with the World Bank, World Economic Forum, and UNEP, among others.

### **Roshan Danesh • Re-Telling Reconciliation**

Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples is a central challenge facing Canada, as well as other societies around the world. Meeting this challenge is hindered by ways of thinking and talking, as well as concepts of history, that limit understandings and perspectives on why this challenge is a fundamental one facing humanity, and what might be done to address it. This presentation will examine what the story of reconciliation might be from a perspective informed by the Bahá'í writings and experience and what the roles and responsibilities of individuals and communities are in rising to meet this challenge.

### **Roshan Danesh and Lex Musta • Exploring Bahá'í Approaches to Social Change**

This interactive dialogue session will focus participants on exploring Bahá'í approaches to social change, including through a discussion of elements of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas as well as excerpts from letters from the Universal House of Justice. Particular topics that will be explored through consultative dialogue will be the meaning of unity in action, and the nature of the Bahá'í understanding of politics and how political and social action relate.

ROSHAN DANESH works, teaches, and researches in the areas of law and religion, constitutional law, Indigenous rights, and conflict resolution. Roshan completed his doctoral studies at Harvard Law School, and has published extensively in academic journals on Bahá'í law.

### **Mehrdad Ehsani • A Scientific View of the Reality of Man—Part 3: The Ego**

There are dimensions not captured in science: the inner space of reality. Neurology claims that human experiences are brain activities that can be studied by instruments and consciousness is simply a physical brain function. However, this outer space focus misses the important inner human space that includes the mind and spirit. Here, the inner-outer spaces are explained. The mind copes by producing a false sense of these realities: the ego. This makes us insane as seen from the inner space of spirit. This awareness is the gateway to enlightenment and liberation from suffering. These are shown in Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.

MEHRDAD EHSANI is the Robert M. Kennedy Endowed Professor at Texas A&M University. He has received 130 international awards and recognitions, has co-authored 17 books, over 380 publications, over 20 patents on energy and its uses, and is the director of National Science Foundation Center for Sustainable Transportation.

### **Hoda Farahmandpour • Contributing to Discourses on Education** (see Murphy-Graham for abstract)

HODA FARAHMANDPOUR earned her M.A. in Adult Education and Community Development from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. She is currently serving the office of the network of learning sites for the junior youth spiritual empowerment programme in North America.

### **Gerald Filson • Contributing to Discourses on the Role of Religion in Society – Panel Presentation** (see Berger for abstract)

#### **Gerald Filson • Reading Philosophy in a New Culture of Learning (Humanities Panel)**

Noting Bahá'u'lláh's praise of philosophy and His caution regarding the limits and variability of mind, reading philosophy is rewarded by following the Guardian's advice to study the history of philosophy. Through the centuries' shifting philosophical preoccupations—from metaphysics to epistemology, then to language and analytical issues, to recent philosophical use of reconstructive histories—we see the correlation of concepts of the Revelation to classical, modern and emerging insights, for example, on justice, science, consciousness, moral theory, religion, and the relation of conceptual reasoning to practice (traditions or social spaces). An emerging culture of collective learning is informed by philosophy illumined by the Revelation.

GERALD FILSON is the Director of the Office of Public Affairs of the External Affairs Department for the Bahá'í Community of Canada. After graduating from the University of Toronto in 1971, he became a Bahá'í. He has a BA in mathematics, an MA in Educational Technology, and a PhD in Philosophy of Education.

## **Stephen Friberg • Towards Universal Scientific Literacy: Lessons from the 2013 Wilmette Institute Course “Science, Religion, and the Future”**

Science and religion are “the two most potent forces in human life” and the means by which “the human soul can progress.” If the world is to fully benefit from science and religion, it needs a widespread literacy in science, much as it needs for all to be able to read, write, and use the internet. In this presentation, we consider what this perspective and other teachings of the oneness of science and religion mean in practical terms, reviewing lessons learned from the 2013 Wilmette Institute course entitled “Science, Religion, and the Future: Creating a New Discourse.”

STEPHEN FRIBERG is a physicist living in Silicon Valley and works in the semiconductor industry. The author of pioneering experiments in quantum optics, optical telecommunications, photonics, and 46 technical papers, he has written, spoken, and blogged frequently on science and religion and its relationship to the Bahá’í teachings.

**Abdu’l-Missagh Ghadirian • Death as a Messenger of Joy – A Panel Presentation** (see Cribb for abstract)

**Abdu’l-Missagh Ghadirian • Exploring Spirituality with Medical Students in an Academic Environment - An Analysis of 12 Years of Experience**

A natural affinity exists between spirituality and medicine as human reality is essentially spiritual and medicine is a sacred art that seeks to heal human ills. Although materialistic society may challenge this premise, nevertheless medical schools in North America have begun to offer courses for budding physicians to explore how spirituality might influence their future practice. For twelve year Dr. Ghadirian has taught such a course at McGill University and in his presentation he will discuss the successes and challenges encountered with a spectrum of students from the deeply religious to the atheistic.

DR. ABDU’L-MISSAGH GHADIRIAN, Professor Emeritus at McGill University, Faculty of Medicine is a researcher, author and educator with extensive publications in peer-reviewed/scientific journals and several books including *Creative Dimensions of Suffering* (2009), *Materialism – Moral and Social Consequences* (2010), and *Steadfastness in the Covenant: Responding to Tests and Tribulations* (2014).

**Holly Hanson and Vasu Mohan • Welcoming Our New Neighbours: The Contributions of Recent Immigrants to Core Activities**

New immigrants from all over the world are active participants in the efforts undertaken by Bahá’ís and their friends to build strong, connected, dynamic communities. This workshop seeks to increase our effectiveness in recognizing the strengths of our new neighbours, and assisting them to fully contribute to the advancement of the neighborhoods in which they live. This highly interactive workshop will involve learning about new immigrants’ lives in their former homes, the journeys they made, and their arrival, and structured opportunities to share experiences and solutions to challenges participants have faced in integrating these gifted community members.

HOLLY HANSON teaches African History at Mount Holyoke College. She has published widely on East African history and ideas regarding social transformation in the Bahá'í writings. Her most recent book, *A Path of Justice: Building Communities with the Power to Shape the World*, published by Grace Publications.

**Nazanin Ho • Contributing to Discourses on Economics** (see van Rijn for abstract)

NAZANIN HO received her Bachelor's degree in Economics and has been working at a fixed-income asset management firm in Pasadena, CA for the past six years.

**Jay Howden • The Unconscious Civilization, the Great Awakening, and John Ralston Saul**

Canadian activist and thinker John Ralston Saul— in *The Collapse of Globalism, On Equilibrium and The Unconscious Civilization*—delivers broad critiques of Western culture, and its narrow conception of economic “world order.” Saul, a superb social commentator, urges the renewal of democracy, the enrichment of ethics, and deeper commitments to education as foundations of genuine progress. His diagnoses of the world's ills, and his prescriptions for societal regeneration, both mirror and depart from the Bahá'í vision. This presentation examines the work of one of the most thoughtful participants in the wider discourse on individual development and civilization-building.

JAY HOWDEN is a writer and educator. He has spent the past five years teaching and learning in Dalian, China, with his wife and the youngest of his four sons. He has been searching for the Bahá'í way since his teens. His writing can be sampled at [JamesHowden.com](http://JamesHowden.com).

**Alan Kellogg • The Human Spirit as Recognition Engine and Easy Topic of Conversation: First Result of a Rapid Application Development Project**

The human spirit: source of our most profound insights, loves, concerns and recognition fed by biological recognition systems. It is the wellspring of progress and beyond the understanding of the science which it creates. This initial effort demonstrates surprising insights about the nature of the human spirit discovered via computer assisted research of the Holy Writings as well as continuing development of tools to facilitate this process.

ALAN KELLOGG (BS Physics and Computer Science, MBA International Finance) is a Foreign Service Officer, international management consultant and database application developer. He became a serious atheist at age 11 but continued searching due to the inadequacy of physics. Alan became a Bahá'í in 1971 and pioneered to Mali, Korea, Taiwan, China, India and Ivory Coast.

**Ian Kluge • Procrustes' Bed: The Insufficiencies of Secular Humanism**

Although secular humanism (SH) strives to replace theism as a model for the renewal of modern society, its alternative turns out to be a Procrustes' Bed. Unlike the Bahá'í Writings, which accept and work with human nature as it is, SH truncates its vision of human nature to fit its pre-determined premises of the SH philosophy. Our goal is to show the far-reaching negative effects of such truncations and how the Bahá'í Writings demonstrate a more scientific and effective way of dealing with human nature.

IAN KLUGE is a poet, playwright and independent philosophy scholar who has published numerous in-depth articles correlating the Bahá'í Writings with other religions or schools of thought.

### **Paul Lample • Toward a Framework for Action**

The Universal House of Justice recently explained: “Central to the effort to advance the work of expansion and consolidation, social action, and the involvement in the discourses of society is the notion of an evolving conceptual framework, a matrix that organizes thought and gives shape to activities and which becomes more elaborate as experience accumulates. It would be fruitful if the elements of this framework most relevant to the work of the Associations for Bahá'í Studies can be consciously and progressively clarified.” This presentation will explore some concepts that contribute to clarifying relevant aspects of the framework.

PAUL LAMPLE has been a member of the Universal House of Justice since March 2005. He served for nine years in the Office of Social and Economic Development at the Bahá'í World Centre and for two years as a member of the International Teaching Centre.

### **Darius Loghmanee, Lita Cameron, Sana Rezai, Tina Shahidyazdani, and Shirin Madjzoub • Contributing to Discourses on Primary Health Care**

The work of the Bahá'í community is advancing within an evolving conceptual framework that will guide our contributions to the discourses of society over time. Panelists will discuss how this framework has shaped their own thinking and/or practice in relation to primary health care; prevailing assumptions or conceptions about primary health care that might be problematic in relation to this framework; prevailing insights and conceptions related to primary health care that appear to be coherent with this framework; and spaces Bahá'ís might want to be present in, over time, to contribute to the evolution of thought regarding primary health care.

DARIUS LOGHMANEE cares for children with sleep disorders and their families at the Sleep Medicine Center of the Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, Illinois. His research interests are primarily focused on insomnia and non-invasive ventilation for the treatment of sleep disordered breathing.

### **Marlene Macke • The Untold Story of Albert Durrant Watson and the Bahá'í Faith**

Dr. Albert Durrant Watson's place in history has been regarded as celebrity psychic researcher, spiritualist, theosophist, poet, and amateur astronomer. Dr. Watson's funeral eulogies and newspaper obituaries in 1926, however, remained silent on the role he played in championing the Bahá'í Faith. After adopting the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith in 1919, he eschewed his former psychic connections and, through his public talks and writings, helped to build the foundation of the Bahá'í Faith in Toronto and Canada.

MARLENE MACKE is the author of *Take My Love to the Friends*, *The Story of Laura R. Davis*.

**Shirin Madjzoub • Contributing to Discourses on Primary Health Care** (see Loghmanee for abstract)

SHIRIN MADJZOUB is a family physician currently working at the Cambridge Health Alliance, a safety net integrated delivery system in Boston, MA. She is interested in learning about systems and processes that will allow patients and communities to take responsibility for their own health.

**Isar Mahanian • Beyond Traditional Conflict Resolution Methods: Dynamical Systems Theory in the Context of Bahá'í Peacemaking**

Dynamical systems theory (DST) is a conflict resolution approach used to deal with social issues which are highly complex or conflicts which are deemed intractable. Traditional conflict resolution methods are proven ineffective in the face of complexity and can at times exasperate the problem. DST involves three practices. The practices addresses complexity and simplicity; creation and destruction; and change and stability. The work which Bahá'ís are engaged in globally has many characteristics of DST practices. Looking through the lens of DST we see that Bahá'í activities, though seeming micro in their impact, have potential for system wide change.

ISAR MAHANIAN is receiving her Masters of Science in Negotiation and Conflict Resolution at Columbia University in New York City. Previously she was a Program Assistant at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Agricultural Development team. She holds B.A. in International Development and Geography from the University of Washington, Seattle.

**Hoda Mahmoudi • Bahá'í Scholarship: The Process of Learning at The Bahá'í Chair for World Peace**

The Bahá'í Chair for World Peace at the University of Maryland is engaged in discourse with academics about global peace. Drawing from the guidance in the letter dated 24 July 2013 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada about Bahá'í scholarship, the session examines the current process of learning underway at The Bahá'í Chair for World Peace. A conceptual framework focused on generation and application of knowledge is explored from an interdisciplinary lens about advancing discourse on global peace.

DR. HODA MAHMOUDI holds the Bahá'í Chair for World Peace at the University of Maryland. From 2001-2011 she was Coordinator of the Research Department at the Bahá'í World Center. Previously, she was the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and member of the Sociology Department at Northeastern Illinois University.

**Susan Maneck • Global History and the Oneness of Humanity (Humanities Panel)**

This presentation seeks to explore questions related to the study of history. We will examine the reasons typically given for studying history, such as avoiding the mistakes of the past, a dubious proposition at best or heritage conveyance, which runs the risk of distorting the past. The thesis of my presentation is that history is best examined from a global perspective even when we are researching seemingly local issues. A global perspective enables us to see humanity moving through history together and creates the kind of mutual understanding that enables us to avoid tragic errors in the first place.

SUSAN MANECK, Associate Professor, History, Jackson State University, teaches Middle East and South Asian History, World Civilization, and Comparative Religion. She has researched Bahá'í and Zoroastrian history extensively, published numerous articles in Bahá'í journals and academic presses, and a book on the history of the Parsis, *The Death of Ahriman*.

**Farshad Fani Marvasti and Bahar Brocken • Food as Medicine: The Bahá'í Writings and the State of the Science**

The goal of this presentation will be to provide an update on the current state of the science on how diet impacts health and compare it with the Bahá'í Writings on this topic. Attendees will be able to take away specific insights on how to use food as medicine and to appreciate the Writings on this subject.

FARSHAD FANI MARVASTI (MD, MPH) is board certified by the American Board of Family Medicine and the American Board of Integrative Holistic Medicine. He serves as Adjunct Clinical Instructor & Educator Care Associate at Stanford University School of Medicine where he routinely lectures on disease prevention and nutrition.

**Brenda Maxwell • Death as a Messenger of Joy – A Panel Presentation** (see Cribb for abstract)

DR. BRENDA MAXWELL is a family doctor and educator who has studied healing worldwide and directed a university post graduate Care of the Elderly program, and a Complementary Medicine course for medical students. She accompanied Mary, the dynamic woman who is the focal point of the documentary film, *Death By Joy: An Escorted Journey*.

**Elaine McCreary • Secular Science, Meet Spiritual Search: A Ten-Point Comparison of How the Rational Soul Explores**

Science as scientific method for knowledge production can properly be compared with its counterpart of spiritual method for knowledge production. Both methods are rational, systematic and require active exploration. Both ultimately fail to tell us *what* exists; but succeed in telling us *how* to proceed toward complementary destinations. This paper illustrates the sequences of scientific and spiritual search drawing on Bahá'í Sacred Writings to reveal remarkable parallels.

ELAINE served as a tenured Associate Professor in the 1980's, a Bahá'í World Centre Coordinator in the 1990's and a public servant with the BC Ministry of Advanced Education since 2000. She is now full-time Creative Director of Harvest Home Lifelong Learning focusing on advanced life skills and world citizenship.

**Douglas McGrath • Use of Art (Drama) in Respect of "Salt of My Tablets"**

This presentation explores the question of using theatre to tell stories relating to the Bahá'í Faith.

DOUGLAS MCGRATH, actor of over 45 years, with experience in directing and teaching.

**Robert Michell • “The Horizon’s Little Joke” The Circle as Spatial Perfection in the Poetry of B.K. Filson**

Bruce Filson’s trickle-down poetry fills our laps and cups with strange new countries. His poetry is deft, subtle, warm and surprising, weaving homilies with profound observations on what makes us deeply human. Much modern poetry is opaque and clever, but inaccessible to most. Bruce’s poetry has such a delight of sound and imagery that the reader comes away uplifted, no matter what depth he has taken from the words. Our investigation of Bruce’s poetry will look at his use of the circle (the horizon) that so dominated his youthful prairie upbringing, and its later meaning in his city, and spiritual life.

ROBERT JAMES MICHELL is a Montreal, poet, song-writer, author and teacher who has performed poetry in plenary session and read papers at previous ABS philosophy and religion SIGS. He lives with his wife, and has four sons.

**Pierre-Yves Mocquais • Workshop for Faculty and Students**

At this workshop, we will review guidance from the Universal House of Justice about scholarship; discuss possible strategies to engage fellow students and increase the visibility of Bahá’í scholarship and Bahá’í discourse in universities; review the document *Teaching Courses with Bahá’í Content in Universities and Other Institutions of Higher Learning: Opportunities and Issues to Consider*; and address challenges and opportunities, questions of content and methodology, and new ways of approaching the question in the broad context set by the Universal House of Justice in its 2010 Ridván message about “participation in the prevalent discourses of society.”

DR. PIERRE-YVES MOCQUAIS is member of the Executive Committee of the Association for Bahá’í Studies and of the Editorial Committee of the *Journal of Bahá’í Studies*. He is Full Professor of French Studies at the University of Alberta and Dean of the Faculté Saint Jean, the multi-disciplinary francophone Faculty of the University of Alberta.

**Vasu Mohan • Welcoming Our New Neighbours: The Contributions of Recent Immigrants to Core Activities** (see Hanson for abstract)

VASU MOHAN has over 13 years of experience in democracy, governance and human rights programming in Asia with a focus on political, social and legal empowerment of the disenfranchised—youth, women, ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities. He is currently Deputy Regional Director for Asia of the International Federation of Electoral Systems.

**Shahin Movafagh-Mowsoon • Collective Diversity: Consultation, the Seven Valleys, and the Formation of a Collective**

The Universal House of Justice, referring to the mode of operation of the Bahá’í community, delineates the process of Action-Reflection-Consultation and Study and states that study requires constant reference to the Writings of the Faith as well as “scientific analysis of patterns unfolding.” A scientific analysis of consultation itself is presented drawing on original research including data collected during two Bahá’í workshops, the modeling of collective decisions using probability theory, game theory, and

simulation studies. The concept of bringing a collective to life is presented within the framework of the Seven Valleys based on results and research as possible impacts and avenues of consultation.

SHAHIN MOVAFAGH-MOWZON holds a graduate degree in engineering focused on applied mathematics and data science. He has worked in decision support, operation research, and predictive analytics job roles, and is currently working in business intelligence and adjunct faculty at a college in Mesa Arizona. Shahin is a published author in his field.

### **Nura Mowzoon • Bahá'í Dating: Fact, Fiction, and Social Physics**

What should dating in the Bahá'í community actually look like? This candid discussion will examine “core lore” that exists in the Bahá'í community, and compare it to what the guidance in the Writings actually states. Additionally, current research in the field of love, gender dynamics, dating and marriage will be explored and connected to the guidance given in the Bahá'í writings, in an effort to relate spiritual guidance with real-world dynamics.

NURA MOWZON currently works as an instructor at Arizona State University, and also maintains a practice as a couple's coach. She holds a doctoral degree in Marriage and Family Therapy, and has a particular interest working with couples on issues of communication, emotional intimacy, trust and love.

### **Christine Muller • Contributing to Sustainability Discourse and Action – Panel Presentation** (see Adriance for abstract)

CHRISTINE MULLER wrote “Scientific and Spiritual Dimensions of Climate Change”, an interfaith study course for the International Environment Forum, is lead faculty for the Wilmette Institute Course on Climate Change, and is on the Board of Rhode Island Interfaith Power and Light—a religious response to global warming.

### **Erin Murphy-Graham, Hoda Farahmandpour, Elena Toukan, Kevin Naimi, Bitá Correa • Contributing to Discourses on Education**

The work of the Bahá'í community is advancing within an evolving conceptual framework that will guide our contributions to the discourses of society over time. Panelists will discuss how this framework has shaped their own thinking and/or practice in relation to education; prevailing assumptions or conceptions about education that might be problematic in relation to this framework; prevailing insights and conceptions related to education that appear to be coherent with this framework; and spaces Bahá'ís might want to be present in, over time, to contribute to the evolution of thought regarding education.

ERIN MURPHY-GRAHAM is a faculty member at the University of California, Berkeley, in the Graduate School of Education. Her recent book, *Opening Minds, Improving Lives: Education and Women's Empowerment in Honduras*, examines the connections between the Bahá'í-inspired alternative secondary education program *Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial* (SAT) program and women's empowerment in Honduras.

**Lex Musta • Exploring Bahá'í Approaches to Social Change** (see Danesh for abstract)

LEX MUSTA is an independent researcher whose work focuses on the role of social meanings in shaping race relations. He completed his MBA studies in Paris at Schiller International University.

**Kevin Naimi • Contributing to Discourses on Education** (see Murphy-Graham for abstract)

**Kevin Naimi • Thinking Sociologically about Independent Investigation.**

In this presentation I will address what the sociological and philosophical literature on “situated agency” (that our capacity to think and act freely is conditioned by our social environment) can tell us about what it means, as Bahá'ís, to independently investigate reality. I will argue that this concept challenges our common-sense individualism and helps us to understand how our thoughts and actions are tied to society in deep, subtle and unconscious ways. This is a crucial reflection for Bahá'ís because authentic independent investigation requires an understanding of the types of dependencies that we take for granted in everyday life.

Kevin Naimi is a PhD candidate in the Sociology of Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education where he also obtained an M.A. in the Philosophy of Education. Kevin's work focuses on how the measurement regime within education today impacts students' broader conception of learning as a life process.

**Ashley Naimi • Investigating Harmony of Science and Religion: On the Mind, the Method, and the Object of Our Quest** (see Sedig for abstract)

ASHLEY I. NAIMI is Assistant Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Occupational Health at McGill University. He specializes in the logic of causal inference in empirical science, and the design and analysis of research studies on the social determinants of health.

**Kim Naqvi • Contrasting Visions of Modernity: The Landscape Paintings of Albert Anker and Paul Klee** (Poster Session)

This poster explores contrasting visions of modernity in the landscapes of Swiss-born painters Albert Anker (1831-1910) and Paul Klee (1879-1940). Their visions, the scholarly response to their visions, and the varying criticism and praise of modernity found in Bahá'í Writings are used to interpret the paintings from a human geography perspective. Anker's “Der Geometer” depicts an exciting, mysterious, yet reductionist measure of the communal Swiss village, while Klee's modernism abstracts colour, light, and form from landscape and music, exploring the human spirit. Both views are an interesting contrast to contemporary disillusionment over modernity's descent into sterility and uniformity.

KIM NAQVI is a human geographer specialising in the study of social and economic development and cultural change. She teaches at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, BC.

**Vesall Nourani • Contributing to Discourses on Economics** (see van Rijn for abstract)

VESALL NOURANI is an NSF Graduate Research Fellow pursuing a PhD in Economics at Cornell University. Through his research, he hopes to contribute to discourses on the functions of community institutions and structures in contributing to learning and coordination processes.

**Layla Parker-Katirae • The Independent Investigation of Truth as a Prerequisite for Navigating Today's Social Media and Targeted Marketing**

The Bahá'í Writings stress the importance of scientific knowledge, as well as the independent investigation of truth. However, these two concepts are rarely merged and the latter is generally viewed through the lens of religious search for truth. This workshop will explore the importance of the independent investigation of truth when researching the validity of scientific claims, particularly in social media and targeted marketing. It will stress the importance of setting aside prejudices and preconceived notions of industries and sectors of the market. It will highlight how the absence of independent investigation of truth leads to the spread of misinformation and discredited data.

DR. LAYLA PARKER-KATIRAE is a Senior Scientist who has worked in Next-Generation Sequencing biotech companies for the last 6 years. She holds a PhD in Molecular Genetics from the University of Toronto, and currently lives in the state of California. She also blogs about the facts surrounding genetically modified foods.

**Paul Parsons • Investigating Harmony of Science and Religion: On the Mind, the Method, and the Object of Our Quest** (see Sedig for abstract)

PAUL PARSONS is a Postdoctoral Fellow at Western University in London, Canada. His research is situated at the intersection of human cognition, computation, and interactive information design. He is passionate about understanding the workings of the human mind in its investigation of reality.

**Anne Gordon Perry and Tim Perry • Luminous Journey: 'Abdu'l-Bahá in America, 1912 Film Screening with Stories and Introduction by Filmmakers/Producers**

Hear behind-the-scenes stories and then see the feature-length documentary film, *Luminous Journey: 'Abdu'l-Bahá in America, 1912*, shot on location and in high definition in Canada and the United States. Capturing an impression of what it was like to meet the son of the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith as He traveled to various specific places, the documentary brings to light a little-known chapter of North American history, with important aspects related to peace, racial unity, gender equality, and the future of the world. (A Persian version of the film is currently in production, and a Chinese version is available.)

**Anne Perry and Tim Perry • Multi-Language Production: Opportunities and Challenges in Translating the Story of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's North American Journey**

Aspects of cultural navigation, flexibility, and creativity abound when one translates a work of art into other languages. Anne Gordon Perry and Tim Perry share aspects of their own journey of translation,

production, and post-production related to Chinese and Persian versions of their film, *Luminous Journey: 'Abdu'l-Bahá in America, 1912*.

ANNE GORDON PERRY, PhD Aesthetic Studies, teaches film appreciation, writing, and humanities at the Art Institute of Dallas. Co-producer and primary scriptwriter of the film, *Luminous Journey*, she is also the author of *Green Acre on the Piscataqua* and serves as the main editor of the arts journal, *ORISON*.

TIM PERRY has over 40 years of experience as a director/producer. He currently works part time with U.S. Bahá'í Media Services creating video footage for the new welcome center at the Bahá'í House of Worship. *Luminous Journey* is his first feature-length film.

### **Hamid Peseschkian • Positive Psychotherapy – A Bahá'í-Inspired Method of Psychotherapy and Counseling in Transcultural Settings**

Bahá'í-inspired methods, such as Positive Psychotherapy (PPT) bring new insights and treatment concepts. PPT shows how the harmony between religion and science can be applied into practice and encourages the dialogue between the Bahá'í Faith and psychotherapy. Main principles of PPT are introduced with case samples, emphasizing their application in different countries. The main focus will be on life balance, self-esteem, psychovampires, family life consultation and the use of tales. Examples for the application of PPT in different areas such as management, counseling, marital preparation and conflict resolution are discussed. Bahá'í concepts are generally very close to the humanistic-psychodynamic approach.

HAMID PESECHKIAN (M.D., D.M., D.M.Sc., IFAPA) Managing and Medical Director, Wiesbaden Psychotherapy School and Clinic (WIAP); President, World Association for Positive Psychotherapy; Board-certified in psychiatry, neurology, psychotherapy. Besides administrative, publishing, research and clinical work, conducting training seminars and lectures in different countries. Residing with his family in Germany. hamid@peseschkian.com

### **Louise Profeit-Leblanc • The Sunchief's Daughter – Storytelling**

The story that will be shared was given to me by grand matriarch, my mentor, Mrs. Angela Sidney, an extraordinary Tagish storyteller from southern Yukon. This story is about jealousy and what transpires when a man's wife is overcome with this dreaded disease and how he is forced to deal with it. As the story unfolds we enter into the sacred sky-world where the Sun-chief lives with his wife and two daughters, with one of whom his wife has accused him of having a love relationship. This story is significant to the world today in that eventually her light comes to this world and their descendents become the people of the light!

LOUISE is a member of the Nacho N'yak Dun First Nation from Mayo, in north-eastern Yukon. She is a mother, grandmother and a keeper of stories. She worked as the Aboriginal Arts Coordinator at the Canada Council for the Arts for 12 years. She has been a Bahá'í for over 30 years.

## **Vahid Rafati • The Evolving Role of Bahá'í Scholarship**

The Bahá'í Faith has long had challenges with established Islamic scholarship: it must free itself from existing attitudes and practices and establish Bahá'í scholarship on its own merits. Bahá'u'lláh abrogated the authority of the Ulama (Muslim clergy) in many fields of religious affairs, asking Bahá'í scholars to be concerned with the requirements of the time. The nourishment and emergence of Bahá'í scholars and scholarship, its place within the community, its relationship with the Faith's Institutions, and the potential for collaboration amongst Bahá'í scholars, and with the broad community of scholars are some of the substantial questions to be addressed.

VAHID RAFATI, native of Shiraz, received his BA Psychology from Tehran University. Civil war interrupted studies in Lebanon, and he completed his PhD in Islamic Studies at UCLA. He has served at the Research Department of the Bahá'í World Centre since 1980 and has numerous publications in Persian and English.

## **Sana Rezaei • Contributing to Discourses on Primary Health Care** (see Loghmanee for abstract)

SANA REZAI is a primary care physician striving to learn about empowering patients at a community level to become protagonists of their health care, and interested in learning how systems can build capacity in individuals to take charge of health.

## **Shay Rozen • From the Valley of Achor to Doors of Hope — Bahá'í Studies at Israeli Academia in the Last Two Decades**

In 1868, the Bahá'í Faith, its history and its concrete presence (shrines, buildings, gardens etc.) were considered by most of the Israelis as an enigma and a source for prejudice and conspiracy theories, based on lack of true knowledge. In the last two decades, scholars from two Universities in Israel (Jerusalem and Haifa) started a new field of studies related to the Bahá'í Faith. I will review the two fields of Bahá'í research at the Israeli Academia and present some new discoveries about the history of the Bahá'í Faith and community in the Holy Land in the years 1868-1968.

SHAY ROZEN M.A graduate (Summa cum laude) and doctoral student at the Department of Land of Israel Studies, University of Haifa. My field of research is "The Bahá'ís in the Holy Land, 1868-1968." I present papers on Bahá'í history topics at international conferences and have received awards and scholarships for academic excellence.

## **Navid Sabet • Contributing to Discourses on Economics** (see van Rijn for abstract)

NAVID SABET is currently completing a Master of Public Administration degree in Public and Economic Policy at the London School of Economics. Prior to the LSE, Navid worked for four years at the Office of Social and Economic Development at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel.

**Benjamin Schewel • Contributing to Discourses on the Role of Religion in Society – Panel Presentation** (see Cameron for abstract)

**Benjamin Schewel and Geoffrey Cameron • The Bahá'í Faith and the Public Sphere**

Throughout the 20th century, the prevalent view of scholars and policy-makers was of the gradual decline and marginalization of religion's influence on global affairs. Over the past three decades, however, the opposite has been the case: in almost every region of the world, religious actors have displayed a resurgent role in the public sphere. While recognition of this fact has done much to debunk theories of secularization, there is still little understanding about the distinctly constructive role that religion can and should play in modern, global societies. The proposed paper aims to offer a contributions to this growing field of study by drawing insight from the Bahá'í teachings and the Bahá'í community's contemporary experience.

BENJAMIN SCHEWEL, PhD candidate in philosophy at the University of Leuven (KUL). Currently a visiting graduate student with Cambridge's Faculty of Divinity and collaborating with a nascent research initiative at Oxford's Department of Politics and International Relations. Previous recipient of a Fulbright scholarship and a Belgian American Education Foundation fellowship.

DANIEL SCOTT serves as Member of Continental Board of Counsellors for the Americas.

**Kamran Sedig • The Human Mind and Its Interaction with the World (Natural and Life Sciences Panel)**

The past decades have seen the introduction of two important theories: activity theory and theory of distributed cognition, meant to address flaws in the brain-centric paradigm of cognition (i.e., the view that human thought is a thing that "happens in the brain"). They posit that the human mind is a dynamic, distributed, and emergent phenomenon resulting from the relationships between human beings, their environment (physical and social artifacts), and their activities. We correlate these theories with concepts and ideas in the Bahá'í Faith, examining implications for how we view such things as reasoning, information, media, society, scientific research, and action.

**Kamran Sedig, Paul Parsons and Ashley Naimi • Investigating Harmony of Science and Religion: On the Mind, the Method, and the Object of Our Quest**

Bahá'í Scriptures admonish humanity to investigate reality and proclaim the inherent harmony and oneness of science and religion. It is therefore incumbent upon all to understand this harmony and question how to approach this investigation. In this 3-session workshop we will explore the three main components of investigation of this harmony, namely: 1) Books of creation and revelation: the objects of investigation; 2) Human mind: the investigator; and 3) Methodology: the means by which we investigate. We will draw upon systems theory, cognitive theory, and research methodology to examine the above components and connect them together.

KAMRAN SEDIG is an Associate Professor at Western. He received his M.Sc. from McGill (specializing in artificial intelligence) and his Ph.D. from UBC (specializing in applied cognitive sciences). His research

is interdisciplinary, in the areas of cognitive science, computing, information science, media studies, educational technologies, systems theory, game studies, and health informatics.

### **Adib Sedig • Physics and Spirit: Self-Similarity and the Holographic Soul**

Bahá'í Scriptures suggest that physical and spiritual reality have self-similarity: “the smallest atoms in the universal system are similar to the greatest beings of the universe,” and “drops are patterned after seas, and ... atoms are structured after suns.” One of the principles of the holographic theory of the universe is self-similarity. In this presentation, I will draw upon insights from the holographic theory of the universe to demonstrate that this theory can help us with a better understanding of the Bahá'í concepts of soul and spirit. We will also explore harmony of physical and spiritual reality.

ADIB SEDIG is a grade-9 graduate. He is fascinated with investigating and correlating concepts and principles in science, mathematics, and the Bahá'í Faith so that they are made accessible to the youths and adults of our generation.

### **Mikhail Sergeev • The Bahá'í Faith and Modernity: A Comparative Analysis**

The purpose of my presentation is to compare the basics of modern ideology as formulated by the 18th-century Enlightenment thinkers, and the Bahá'í teachings. My thesis is that the Bahá'í Faith represents a religious tradition, which is neither anti-modern, nor simply modern or even postmodern, but instead truly post-modern in a sense that it regards the Enlightenment as a ski-jump for its own development that will eventually supersede it. Such a position with regard to modernity gives the Bahá'í Faith a unique attraction and advantage over all other religious movements, an advantage that reveals its high long-term potentials.

MIKHAIL SERGEEV holds his master's degree and a doctorate in religious studies from Temple University, Philadelphia. He teaches history of religion and philosophy at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia and is the author of several books, including *Sophiology in Modern Orthodoxy: Solov'ev, Bulgakov, Losskii and Berdiaev* (2006).

### **Tina Shahidyazdani • Contributing to Discourses on Primary Health Care** (see Loghmanee for abstract)

TINA SHAHIDYAZDANI is a practicing pediatrician at the Maternal and Child Health Center, in San Diego, CA, a non-profit organization providing healthcare to the underserved, uninsured, and immigrant population of Southern San Diego. Her particular interests are addressing health issues associated with culture of excess, particularly obesity and adolescent mental health.

### **Ryan Siegel • Contributing to Discourses on Economics** (see van Rijn for abstract)

RYAN SIEGEL works at SecondMuse researching and applying collaborative approaches to solve systemic challenges. Prior to this, Ryan received a PhD in Applied Economics, studying the foundational models and methods used by the vast majority of economists.

## **David R. Smith • Shaping Habits of Thought for the Love of God — Further Considerations**

The beloved Master said “Act in accordance with the counsels of the Lord... so that war and strife will pass and be no more and love and trust will pitch their tents on the summits of the world.” What are these counsels and how do we see them? How do we adjust our lives in response to them? What new habits of thought and new behavior are intended to develop and what are the forces we can draw on to assist us in acting in accordance with these counsels of the Lord?

DR. DAVID R SMITH is a staff surgeon at the Hospital for Sick Children, the North York General Hospital and the Humber River Regional Hospital in Toronto and an Assistant Professor in Ophthalmology at the University of Toronto. He is also a visiting Professor at the Tianjin Medical University Eye Hospital Tianjin PRC.

### **Subject Area Consultations, Friday 11:00 - 12:30: Simultaneous sessions on 14 subjects (listed on p. 5)**

These experimental sessions are in response to the guidance in the Universal House of Justice letter of July 24, 2013, to discover ways to enhance the abilities of the friends to engage in public discourse in relation to their scholarly or professional interests, while progressively clarifying the underlying and evolving conceptual framework. The Executive Committee is looking to these sessions primarily to seed more focused gatherings throughout the year, such as the small seminars and specialized settings on various topics envisioned in that letter. Each session will have two facilitators, who will briefly introduce the letter from the House of Justice and offer a few comments to orient the discussion. Most of the time will be devoted to consultation, in which we hope as many people will participate as possible, with the aim of sharing learning from their own experience and identifying topics and spaces where they might productively engage in discourse at this time. We hope that new connections among participants with similar interests may emerge from these sessions and that individuals will look to ABS to help facilitate their collaborative efforts going forward. The Executive Committee looks forward to following up with participants to help generate systematic patterns of capacity-building through study, action, and reflection.

### **Furugh Switzer • Your Story Project: Breaking the Cycle of Poverty**

Reading stories to children not only results in better literacy skills for mothers, but also enriches the child/mother bond, leading to holistic development of the child. Research shows that children who have been read to before school age have a higher chance of integrating, continuing and achieving success in educational institutions. The Your Story Project has empowered and motivated hundreds of Roma mothers in Eastern Europe to continue their own studies while their children become the main beneficiaries of the project. The success of this Bahá'í inspired approach in Europe can be replicated with other disadvantaged minorities around the world.

### **Raymond Switzer and Furugh Switzer • A New Race of Couples**

Utilizing recent advances and insights in the areas of couples therapy and neuroscience, the Bahá'í community can better manifest the vision of the sacred institution of marriage as revealed in its Writings. We posit that the union of marriage is the archetypal building block for actualizing the Bahá'í

watchword of unity in diversity, making successful marriages integral to 'living the life' and providing a model to the world at large. The spiritual, social and psychological purpose of couplehood will become the background for developing new skills in conflict resolution, empathic listening, eliminating negativity and developing a new language to communicate at an intimate level.

FURUGH SWITZER is a Sociologist, Educator, co-author of *Mindful Matrimony* and Founder/Director of Your Story Project in Europe. She does couples therapy with her husband and has presented in a dozen countries across Europe.

RAYMOND SWITZER is a Canadian Psychologist, author of *Conscious Courtship* and co-author of *Mindful Matrimony*. He specializes in couples therapy and has presented and given workshops in a dozen countries in Europe.

### **Victoria Talwar • Common Themes in Diverse Voices: The Role of Spirituality in Children's Lives**

The importance of children's spirituality is emphasized in the Bahá'í Teachings and given a central place in their education. Scientific study of children's spirituality, however, has been limited. In this talk, data will be presented from an on-going research program that is examining children's spiritual and religious experiences using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Interviews with children who come from various faith and cultural backgrounds have revealed emergent common themes. This data will be discussed in terms of the scientific study of children's spirituality and its relation to the Bahá'í teachings.

DR. VICTORIA TALWAR is a Canada Research Chair (II) and Associate Professor in the Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology at McGill University. She specializes in the social emotional and moral development of children.

### **June Manning Thomas • Challenges for Social Science from the Perspective of Urban Practice (Social Sciences Panel)**

Many professions, including public administration, social work, and urban planning, use a social science base for training, theory, and practice. However many flaws of social science make enlightened theory and practice difficult, particularly for metropolitan areas with a history of decentralization, racial or class-based segregation, and concentrated poverty. This presentation highlights some responsibilities for social science from the perspective of spiritual principles, briefly reviews some difficulties that have emerged with social science as a guidepost in urban practice contexts, with a focus on planning, and suggests strategies for scholars and practitioners informed by key concepts which emerge in Bahá'í Writings.

JUNE MANNING THOMAS is Centennial Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Michigan, and President of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. Her books include *Planning Progress: Lessons from Shoghi Effendi*, *Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit*, and *Mapping Detroit: Land, Community, and Shaping a City*.

**Elena Toukan • Contributing to Discourses on Education** (see Murphy-Graham for abstract)

ELENA TOUKAN earned her M.A. in Curriculum, Teaching and Learning from the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, focusing on the role of service in individual and social transformation. Since her previous work with FUNDAEC, Elena serves as a resource to organizations contributing to the advancement of education and community wellbeing.

**Deborah van den Hoonaard • Discourse Matters: The Potential of Qualitative Sociology to Illuminate Bahá'í Studies (Social Sciences Panel)**

How can qualitative research using a sociological perspective shed light on issues related to Bahá'í studies? This overview introduces how qualitative research addresses issues of discourse and allows us to understand social process involved in acquiring perspectives and integrating Bahá'í teachings into individual and community life. Using two published examples, *The Equality of Women and Men: The Experience of the Bahá'í Community of Canada* by D.K. and W. C. van den Hoonaard and *Life Histories of Bahá'í Women in Canada: Constructing Religious Identity in the Twentieth Century* by L. Echevarria, it illustrates the potential richness of qualitative methods in Bahá'í Studies.

DEBORAH K. VAN DEN HOONAARD is a sociologist and Canada Research Chair in Qualitative Research at St. Thomas University. Author of books on qualitative research and widowhood, she and her husband studied Iranian Bahá'í immigrants in Canada and wrote *The Equality of Women and Men: The Experience of the Bahá'í Community of Canada* (2006).

**Jordan van Rijn, Ryan Siegel, Navid Sabet, Nazanin Ho, Vesall Nourani • Contributing to Discourses on Economics**

The work of the Bahá'í community is advancing within an evolving conceptual framework that will guide our contributions to the discourses of society over time. Panelists will discuss how this framework has shaped their own thinking and/or practice in relation to economics; prevailing assumptions or conceptions about economics that might be problematic in relation to this framework; prevailing insights and conceptions related to economics that appear to be coherent with this framework; and spaces Bahá'ís might want to be present in, over time, to contribute to the evolution of thought regarding economics.

JORDAN VAN RIJN is a PhD student in Applied Economics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and holds a master's degree in International Development and Economics from UC San Diego. For the past seven years, he has conducted practice and research internationally in the fields of microfinance and economic development.

**Faraneh Vargha-Khadem • Can Neuroscience Inform the Relationship between the Rational Soul, the Mind, and the Brain?**

Advances in neuroimaging enable us to peer inside the living brain, seeing networks that activate when we imagine, think of new words or scenes, replay favourite music, or remember our past. Though these processes arise within the brain, do they *reside* there, or are they awakened by a mind unconstrained by

time and space? More intriguingly, is the mind itself a mere vehicle for the expressions of the human spirit? 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes five human-specific "inner powers" communicating between the physical and spiritual realms. This lecture considers the contributions of neuroscience to advancing knowledge, while recognizing the limitations of our finite minds.

FARANEH VARGHA-KHADEM is a developmental cognitive neuroscientist working at University College London Institute of Child Health, and Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children. She conducts research on brain plasticity and the organisation of higher cognitive functions (e.g. memory, language) after early injury.

## *Artists Performing*

Singer-songwriter AMIR BRANDON is spreading his voice far and wide. Finding international recognition for his music through social media and live performances, Amir sees his art as an outlet for service — promoting love, unity and youth empowerment through his music <http://amirbrandon.com>.

MIKE FERGUSON, TRAVIS BIRCH, ALBERTO LOPEZ, VEDAD HAGHIGHI, NOAH GOODBAUM and MJ CYR have joined forces, bringing their collective years of musical experience to the ABS stage, to entertain and uplift

WALTER HEATH is the real deal. Born the son of a preacher man, into a family of singers, music shaped his life. His soulful melodies, smooth voice, and consummate musicianship make him a musical force to be reckoned with. He has released albums both Bahá'í inspired and devotional.

Throughout his prolific career, JACK LENZ has composed music for a variety of television productions, feature films, documentaries, and has been the musical director of numerous live to broadcast events. Jack Lenz is a passionate humanitarian dedicated to inspiring children. He co-founded the Canadian chapter of Hillary Duff's "Kids with a Cause".

ANTHONY LOHAN Soulful yet energetic, it is not easy to fit Anthony's music into a traditional genre. He believes that his music is as much about the notes he plays as those he doesn't. Anthony strives to create room for people to connect to his songs through his characteristically fearless lyrics, imaginative chord progressions, and haunting vocals.

BEN MCGREGOR began playing piano when he was a young boy. He has developed an interest in a broad range of musical genres and styles, and loves playing with others in ensembles. He is currently working on his Associate of the Royal Conservatory Diploma.

Together for more than ten years now, SMITH & DRAGOMAN have been writing songs dedicated to the early history of the Bahá'í Faith. With three CD's and a Live in Concert DVD, their music explores themes of courage, love, search, sacrifice, crisis and victory and attempts to bring the listener on a sonic journey through world music sounds and rich harmonies.

MARYAM TOUMRAI is a vocalist and a creative writer. She is a graduate of York University Creative Arts Program, and has been active in the Toronto community for over 20 years, performing on stage and on recordings. Her singing has been heard on CBC Radio and a documentary presented at TIFF 2013.

ED VANDENDOOL is a singer/songwriter/actor born in Northwood, a tiny Southern, Ontario village surrounded by acres of wheat fields. His unique brand of acoustic music and travels have taken him to summer festivals and concerts throughout Ontario, Nova Scotia, the Arctic, India, China and Israel.

## Conference Organization

<i>Conference Task Force</i>	Lisa Dufraimont, Mehran Kiai, Kim Naqvi, Parvin Rowhani
<i>Arts Programme</i>	MJ Cyr
<i>Children/Junior Youth Program</i>	Faten Shaheed, Shohreh Ghaemmaghami and Shapoor Turkian
<i>Conference Coordinator</i>	Parvin Rowhani
<i>Logistics</i>	Arash Mehra
<i>Photography</i>	Victor Voytek
<i>Programme Chairs</i>	Kim Naqvi, Lisa Dufraimont
<i>Registration</i>	Nilufar Gordon, Bahereh Mehra and Cinthya Moshtagh
<i>Security/Ushers</i>	Saba Eskandarian
<i>Stage Décor</i>	Niloufar Khazra
<i>Stage Manager</i>	Sama Kokabi & Tahirih Vejdani
<i>Technical Director</i>	Geoff Cohen
<i>Volunteer Coordinator</i>	Sasha Eskandarian

**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 Toronto and Mississauga.**