

Association for Bahá'í Studies–North America
39th Annual Conference
“Advancing the Life of the Mind”

6 – 9 August 2015
Hyatt Regency Orange County, California, USA

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Important Information

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

Security The security 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 Salons I, II & III** on the **Second Floor (North Tower)**. 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, 6 August 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Friday, 7 August 9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Saturday, 8 August 9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, 9 August 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 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 is operated by the Bahá'í Distribution Service in the United States. The bookstore is located in **Garden 4** room on the 1st floor and offers a wide selection of books and

materials, including books and CDs by authors and artists presenting at the conference, and Bahá'í jewellery. Hours of operation are

Thursday, 6 August 2:00 p.m. — 7:00 p.m.

Friday, 7 August 9:00 a.m. — 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, 8 August 9:00 a.m. — 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, 9 August 9:00 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.

Evaluation Forms The ABS Executive Committee asks for your assistance and cooperation in filling out the conference evaluation forms provided in your conference kit. 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 **Salon VI (Second Floor-North Tower)** 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 **Garden 2 & 3 rooms** where conference attendees can socialize and enjoy listening to live music until 11 pm. 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.

Theme Statement

“Advancing the Life of the Mind”

Since the establishment of the Association for Bahá'í Studies in 1975, it has served to foster the intellectual life of its members and of the Bahá'í community. The annual conference has developed as one way in which the Association seeks to bring together a growing number of participants to explore the implications of the Bahá'í teachings for a variety of disciplines, professions and fields of inquiry. The conference and other specialized settings created by the Association promote learning among a range of attendees across a range of interests. Our common purpose is to develop our capacity to examine the ideas, concepts and theories operating within the scholarly and professional disciplines, and to contribute to the development of a growing body of knowledge associated with Bahá'í thought.

The theme of this year's conference is “Advancing the Life of the Mind.” The “power of intellectual investigation” is praised by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as “an eternal gift producing fruits of unending delight.” He says, “It is the very foundation of all individual and national development.”¹ The Bahá'í teachings convey a vision of the future that calls for “profound change not only at the level of the individual but also in the structure of society.”² This concerted effort to transform society is intimately related to advances in thought: “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.”³

With this vision in mind, the conference will serve as a venue in which fresh approaches can be taken to generate and apply knowledge related to various disciplines and fields of study. Participants are invited to consider how they can play a role in working with others “to earnestly strive to reflect on the implications that the truths found in the Revelation may hold for their work.”⁴ This calls for a greater appreciation of the harmony of science and religion, examining scientific methods of discovery and considering how the Revelation sheds light on the process of inquiry. How might the Bahá'í teachings illuminate study of the core theoretical concerns of economics and political science? How do they guide inquiry into history, philosophy, and the role of art in society? What insights from the teachings inform discourses about the application of the health and life sciences? How might they advance our understanding of the process of education and the development of human capabilities? These are only a few of the kinds of questions that might be considered over the course of the conference – whether in small working groups or the large plenary sessions – and which will continue to be investigated in other spaces and gatherings outside of the conference.

¹ *The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 50.

² The Universal House of Justice, *Ridván Message 2010*.

³ The Universal House of Justice, *Ridván Message 2010*.

⁴ The Universal House of Justice, Letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, 24 July 2013.

Thursday, 6 August 2015

10:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m. Special Simultaneous Workshop Sessions

Garden 2 & 3

10:00 – 12:00

Workshop on Bahá'í Scholarship: Responding to the Guidance in the Universal House of Justice Letter Dated 24 July 2013

Facilitator: HOLLY HANSON

Harbor

10:30 – 12:00

The Badí' Calendar – Time for Peace MARK LUTNESS

12:00 – 2:00

Lunch Break

Garden 2 & 3

2:00 – 3:15

The Conceptual Framework for Physical Reality JOHN S. HATCHER

3:30 – 5:00

The Mental and Social Benefits of Bahá'í Prayers in Mindfulness Meditation
KEYVAN GEULA

Harbor

2:00 – 4:00

Presentations by ebbf

The True Seeker: A Strategic Imperative for Enterprise Outcome

VAFA AKHAVAN

Applying Bahá'í Teachings to Better Integrate Our Values, Money, and Time to Drive Transformative Change at the Individual and Societal Level

JENNA NICHOLAS

Pacific

3:30 – 5:00

Sunshine on the Verge of Your Threshold FARIBORZ SAHBA

Salons VII & VIII

2:00 – 4:00

Movie: Luminous Journey: 'Abdu'l-Bahá in America, 1912 – Persian Version

ANNE and TIM PERRY

5:00 – 7:00

Dinner Break

Thursday Evening – 6 August 2015

Grand Ballroom

7:00

Plenary Session

Chair: MEHRAN KIAI

Devotions

Official Conference Welcome

Representatives of the National Spiritual Assemblies of the United States and Canada

Bahá'í Participation in the Public Sphere: Considerations Related to History, Concepts, and Approaches SHAHRIAR RAZAVI

Garden 2 & 3

9:30

Evening Arts Programme

Friday, 7 August 2015

Grand Ballroom

9:00

Plenary Session

Chair: KAREN MCKYE

Devotions

Plenary Panel: Role of Religion in Society

JULIA BERGER, EMILY GOSHEY, BENJAMIN SCHEWEL, and MATTHEW WEINBERG
(MODERATOR)

Plenary Panel: From Self Interest to Altruism

NAVID SABET, SAHAR SATTARZADEH, RYAN SIEGEL, and MOJGAN SAMI
(MODERATOR)

12:30 – 2:00

Lunch Break

2:00 — 5:30 p.m. Simultaneous Breakout Sessions

<i>Salons VII & VIII</i>	Arts I Convener and Chair: ANNE GORDON PERRY 2:00 – 3:00 Jazz and the Bahá'í Faith: An Interactive Workshop KEVIN HOMMA 3:15 – 4:15 The Ethno-musicological Revolution DONALD ADDISON
<i>Plaza Terrace D/E/F</i>	Business, Ethics and Management Science I Convener and Chair: NOUSHA RAM 2:00 – 3:00 Building on Our Strengths in the Workplace NOUSHA RAM 3:15 – 4:15 Common Management Practices in Light of the Bahá'í Teachings FRANÇOIS COUILLARD
<i>Grand Ballroom F</i>	Education I 2:00 – 3:00 Striving for Universal Education: The Community as a Protagonist ELENA VANDERDUSSEN TOUKAN 3:15 – 4:15 Advancing the Life of the Mind Online: Twenty Years of Wilmette Institute Experience ROBERT STOCKMAN 4:30 – 5:30 Building Educational Pedagogy on Bahá'í Principles: A Change in Perspective BELINDA HILL
<i>Plaza Terrace D/E/F</i>	Human and Natural Environment I Convener and Chair: JOHN STEERE 4:30 – 5:30 Regenerative Design: The Spiritual Frontiers of Sustainable Design JASON BURTWISTLE
<i>Harbor</i>	Humanities Chair: PIERRE-YVES MOCQUAIS 2:00 – 3:00 Data Mining and the Epistemological Paradigm Shift PIERRE-YVES MOCQUAIS 3:15 – 4:15 Postsecular Literary Criticism and Bahá'í Thought MARY SOBHANI
<i>Grand Ballroom E</i>	International Affairs Convener and Chair: JULIA BERGER 2:00 – 3:00 Capacity Development Models in the Bahá'í Process of Community Growth and Transformation KATHARINE KRIPKE and ANN HENDRIX-JENKINS 3:15 – 4:15 Constructive Resilience: Lakota Seven Generations Vision and Spiritual Renewal JUSTIN DE LEON 4:30 – 5:30 The Secret to Global Transformation: A Look at How the Writings Depart from What Traditional Research Says Will Propel Global Advancement JENNIFER YAZDI Poster Presentation 1:30 – 3:15 A Junior Youth's Experience in Presenting Human Rights Issues in a National Competition RIAZ MOWZOON-MOGHARRABI
<i>Grand Ballroom A</i>	Law & Governance I 4:30 – 5:30 Transforming Disaster Response Initiatives Through Collective Access, Participation, Generation, Application and Diffusion of Knowledge SHAHLA ALI

<i>Grand Ballroom A</i>	Marriage & Family
2:00 – 3:00	Mindfulness Meditation — Enhancing our marriage and family relationships DEBORAH THORPE RANA and CATHERINE CHAPMAN-WONG
3:15 – 4:15	The Search for Love: An Unexpected Roadmap in the Bahá'í Writings NURA MOWZON
<i>Grand Ballroom B/C/D</i>	Panel on Economics
	Convener and Chair: MICHAEL KARLBERG
2:00 – 4:15	Engaging the Discourse on Economic Inequality Part I NAZANIN HO, VESALL NOURANI, JORDAN VAN RIJN, NAVID SABET, RYAN SIEGEL, and HOLLY HANSON
4:30 – 5:30	Engaging the Discourse on Economic Inequality Part II NAZANIN HO, VESALL NOURANI, JORDAN VAN RIJN, NAVID SABET, RYAN SIEGEL, and HOLLY HANSON
<i>Salons VII & VIII</i>	Peace and Conflict Studies I
4:30 – 5:30	Alternatives to Violence Program Creates a Peace Conference: A Personal Narrative for Social Action in the Local Community MARY JO WILDER
<i>Pacific</i>	Psychology I
	Chair: JASON IGHANI
2:00 – 3:00	The Power of Mind, The Power of Belief, The Only Hope for Change MARJAN DAVOUDI
3:15 – 4:15	Self, Selfishness and Selflessness SUSAN FINCH
4:30 – 5:30	A Bahá'í Approach to the Concept of Magnanimity DANIEL LORD
<i>Garden 2</i>	Philosophy
	Convener and Chair: IAN KLUGE
2:00 – 3:00	A Scientific Basis for Understanding Materialism within the Context of the Bahá'í Faith DINESH SINGH
3:15 – 4:15	Bahá'í Theology as Theophanology WOLFGANG KLEBEL
4:30 – 5:30	Bahá'u'lláh's Toolbox: Advancing the Life of the Mind IAN KLUGE
<i>Garden 3</i>	Race & Intercultural Issues
2:00 – 3:00	Proposing Alternatives of Oneness: Decolonization of the Self and Discourses on Injustice SAHAR D. SATTARZADEH
3:15 – 4:15	The Wisdom of the Grandmothers — The Importance of Indigenous Wisdom SUSAN STARK CHRISTIANSON and NAOMI MICHALSEN
4:30 – 5:30	Sleeping in the Fire and Painting with Light: The Art and Life of Bunch Washington ELIZABETH DE SOUZA
<i>Plaza Terrace A/B/C</i>	Science and Religion I
	Conveners: STEPHEN FRIBERG and RON SHIGETA
2:00 – 3:00	Science, Religion, and Bahá'í Contributions to the Extraterrestrial Life Debate LEE MINNERLY
3:15 – 4:15	Rational Soul: Healing Soul DEBORAH WALTERS
4:30 – 5:30	Scientific Research with an Explicit Theistic Framework: Why We Would Want It and How It Could Be Good Science SELVI ADAIKKALAM ZABIHI

<i>Grand Ballroom G</i>	Science and Religion II
2:00 – 3:00	Conveners: STEPHEN FRIBERG and RON SHIGETA. Chair: STEPHEN FRIBERG Health Empowerment: Unlocking the Power of Individuals and Communities DARIUS LOGHMANEE, TINA SHAHIDYAZDANI, SANA REZAI, BAYAN AGHDASI, and LITA CAMERON
3:15 – 4:15	Meditation MEHRDAD EHSANI
4:30 – 5:30	The Universe and Our Place In It: Cosmology, Matter, Creation, and Spiritual Development in the Bahá'í Writings STEPHEN FRIBERG and ROBERT SARRACINO
<i>Harbor</i>	Study of Religion
4:30 – 5:30	Seven Narratives of Religion BENJAMIN SCHEWEL
5:30 – 7:30	<i>Dinner Break</i>

Friday Evening – 7 August 2015

<i>Grand Ballroom</i>	Plenary Session
7:30	MC: Eric Dozier
	Arts Gala – “A Feast for Soul and Mind”
	Rejoice! ERIC DOZIER, JAMIE HEATH, WALTER HEATH, SANDY SIMMONS, NAIMEH HEATH LAWRENCE
	Living Artfully: How the Principles of Art and Creativity Advance Mankind SoulPancake SHABNAM MOGHARABI and GOLRIZ LUCINA
	Grand Contemplations AFSHIN TOUFIGHIAN
	Sounds of Hope ZINNIA
	Music From Up There TOM FRANCIS
	Midnight Sighings ERIC DOZIER, JAMEY HEATH, WALTER HEATH, SANDY SIMMONS, NAIMEH HEATH LAWRENCE
	A Soulful Encounter with World Rhythms ERIC HARPER
	The Greatest Name ERIC DOZIER, JAMEY HEATH, WALTER HEATH, SANDY SIMMONS, NAIMEH HEATH LAWRENCE
	Inspired Hip-Hop BAYAN SANAEE, MJ CYR and COMPANY
<i>Grand Ballroom</i>	
10:00	After Hours Arts

Saturday, 8 August 2015

Grand Ballroom

9:00

Plenary Session

Chair: VALERIE DANA

Devotions

Plenary Panel: From Oppression To Empowerment

NANABAH BULMAN, MARILYN CALDERON, ERIC DOZIER, LOUIS VENTERS, and
PAYAM AKHAVAN (MODERATOR)

Nature and Dynamics of Oppression, Empowerment, and Battle against Oppression NADER SAIEDI

12:00 – 2:45

Lunch break

Grand Ballroom A

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, “enhance the abilities of the friends” 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”? What elements of the evolving conceptual framework for expansion and consolidation might be most relevant to the work of the Association? 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

Salons VII & VIII

Arts II

Convener and Chair: ANNE GORDON PERRY

2:45 – 3:45

Dance as Transformative Practice OWEN ALLEN

4:00 – 5:00

Film as an Impetus for Social Awareness and Change ANNE GORDON PERRY

Plaza Terrace D/E/F

Business, Ethics and Management Science II

Convener and Chair: NOUSHA RAM

2:45 – 3:45

Best Practices for Creating a Culture of Experimentation and Continuous Improvement at Work LAWRENCE MILLER

4:00 – 5:00

Shoghi Effendi: The CEIO (Chief Executive and Inspired Officer) The Ultimate Example and Guide for Principled Leadership and Management
SHAHEEN TEDJARATI

<i>Plaza Terrace A/B/C</i>	Bahá'í History and Biography II Convener and Chair: SUSAN MANECK 2:45 – 3:45 Bahá'í Influences on Mirzá 'Abdu'lláh, Qájár Court Musician and Master of the <i>Radíf</i> MARGARET CATON 4:00 – 5:00 Panel on American Bahá'í History After Tuskegee: The Lives of Dempsey Morgan and Myron Wilson SUSAN MANECK A Bahá'í-Inspired School—Harlem Prep, the Forerunner of the Charter Schools HUSSEIN AHDIEH
<i>Garden 3</i>	Community Development 2:45 – 3:45 Challenging Assumptions, Seeking Answers and Searching for the Truth DAVID SMITH 4:00 – 5:00 Forging Young Minds for Meaningful Conversations through First-Person Case Studies MAY MOWZON
<i>Pacific</i>	Education II 2:45 – 3:45 Infusing Spiritual Concepts in Training of Professionals FARZIN AGHDASI and BAYAN AGHDASI
<i>Grand Ballroom F</i>	Human and Natural Environment II Convener and Chair: JOHN STEERE 2:45 – 3:45 Industrialized Animal Farming – Ethical Considerations LISA MOLIN 4:00 – 5:00 Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity PAUL HANLEY
<i>Grand Ballroom E</i>	Information Technology 2:45 – 3:45 New Methods in Bahá'í Studies – Using Technology and Traditional Scholarly Methods to Build Research Infrastructure for Bahá'í Studies JACOB HILL 4:00 – 5:00 The Life of the Mind Online – BahaiTeachings.org DAVID LANGNESS, PAYAM ZAMANI, and SAHAB MAHBOUBI
<i>Grand Ballroom G</i>	Law & Governance II 2:45 – 3:45 Democracy and Spiritual Values BRIAN AULL 4:00 – 5:00 Exchanging the Gifts of the Earth: Business and Ethics in Society TARAZ DARABI
<i>Grand Ballroom B/C/D</i>	Peace and Conflict Studies II 2:45 – 3:45 Asking Better Questions TRIP BARTHEL
<i>Grand Ballroom B/C/D</i>	Psychology II 4:00 – 5:00 Learning from Recent Bahá'í Martyrs to Transcend Mentally and Spiritually without Being Bound by the Ranking of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs FERESHTEH BETHEL
<i>Grand Ballroom A</i>	Psychology III 2:45 – 3:45 An Exploration of Intrinsic Commitment to Service as a Potential Therapeutic Approach in Mental Health Counselling REBECCA TAVANGAR 4:00 – 5:30 Social Health, Mental Health, and Relational Authenticity: A Bahá'í-inspired

Paradigm for Sustainable Wellbeing ELENA MUSTAKOVA-POSSARDT,
MARY K. RADPOUR, and MICHAEL PENN

Harbor

2:45 – 3:45

Social Sciences

The Person-Building, Culture-Changing Powers of the Hidden Words: How Bahá'u'lláh's *Arabic Hidden Words* Might Inform the Anthropology of Sociocultural Change WHITNEY WHITE KAZEMIPOUR

4:00 – 5:00

Constructing a Bahá'í-inspired Methodology in Social Science Research: Reflections and Considerations FIONA PURTON

Garden 2

Science and Religion III

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

2:45 – 3:45

Digging Deeper for the Gold: Coping with Quasi-scientific Interpositions
ROGER NEYMAN

4:00 – 5:00

Defining the Mind: The Holy Manifestation, Intellectual Investigation, and the Solution to Social Discord NICOLE JAFARI

5:30 - 7:30

Dinner Break

Saturday Evening, 8 August 2015

Grand Ballroom

7:30

Plenary Session

Chair: GEOFFREY CAMERON

Devotions

Presentation of Awards by the ABS Executive Committee

PAUL HANLEY, 2015 Award for Distinguished Scholarship – Book Category

VARGHA DANA, 2015 Award for Distinguished Scholarship – Graduate Thesis
Category

SOHEIL KAMALI, 2015 Bahieh Moayyad-Khademi Scholarship Award

FAHIMEH MEHRABKHANI and RAVAND SAMAEKIA, 2015 Dr. Redwan Moqbel
Scholarship Award

The 33rd Hasan M. Balyuzi Memorial Lecture

Striving for Human Rights in an Age of Religious Extremism

NAZILA GHANEA

Garden 2 & 3

9:30

Evening Arts Programme

Sunday, 9 August 2015

Grand Ballroom

9:00

Plenary Session

Chair: LISA DUFRAIMONT

Devotions

Epiphany of the Prophets JOHN S. HATCHER

ebbf Presentation JENNA NICHOLAS

11:00

Closing Artistic Presentation

11:30

Conference Closing: Association for Bahá'í Studies Executive Committee

Abstracts and Autobiographical Notes

Selvi Adaikkalam Zabihi • Scientific Research with an Explicit Theistic Framework: Why We Would Want It and How It Could Be Good Science

The process of learning how to bring insights from the teachings of the Faith to bear in scientific and academic discourses requires that we address the relationship between science and religion. This presentation argues that the inflexible secularism of science is based on old notions of science and religion and is not scientifically justified. In certain disciplines, those for which spiritual reality is an acting part of the phenomena under study, dogmatic secularism is a hindrance to understanding. There are resources within some of these disciplines for moving toward scientific approach

SELVI ADAIKKALAM ZABIHI, completed her Master in International Development Studies from Roskilde University in Denmark, 2012. She has been a stay-at-home mother since 2006.

Donald Addison • The Ethnomusicological Revolution

Ethnomusicology is turning around the traditional academic study of music in society by making musical cultures of the world a study far more advantageous to society than simply the traditional musicology which always has studied European music. I propose that ethnomusicology reflect in music a Bahá'í understanding of diversity and the importance of musical arts in the academy as well as music wherever in life it is found. My focus is a Bahá'í understanding of world music reflecting a new vision in the life of the mind.

DONALD ADDISON is Choctaw Native American tribal elder and traditional culture educator, and a Bahá'í since 1960. Retired professor of Cultural Anthropology, Ethnomusicology and American Indian Studies, as well as Anthropological Linguistics at both the University of Oregon and Lane Community College, both in Eugene, Oregon.

Farzin Aghdasi and Bayan Aghdasi • Infusing Spiritual Concepts in Training of Professionals

The classical curriculum for training of university undergraduate or graduate students in electrical and computer engineering is entirely materialistic, even though a few universities attempt to introduce elements of ethics and social responsibility in the course material. We report on an experiment over three years to include substantive study material on spiritual concepts taken from Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í authors, inspired by the content of ISGP seminars, that inculcate Bahá'í-inspired spiritual concepts of direct relevance to practice of engineering and its societal impact.

FARZIN AGHDASI was a Bahá'í pioneer in Africa much of his adult life and intimately involved in training institute development in southern Africa and North America. He served as a Continental Counselor for the Americas. Working in industrial research in California, he holds a PhD in Electrical Engineering.

Bayan Aghdasi • Health Empowerment: Unlocking the Power of Individuals and Communities (see Loghmanee for abstract)

Bayan Aghdasi • Infusing Spiritual Concepts in Training of Professionals (see Farzin Aghdasi for abstract)

BAYAN AGHDASI is a medical doctor currently specializing in Orthopaedic Surgery in Houston, Texas. His Bachelor degree in Philosophical Studies was completed at UCLA. Bayan serves on the Area Teaching Committee (ATC) of Harris Central Cluster, and animates a weekly junior youth group.

Hussein Ahdieh • A Bahá'í-inspired School – Harlem Prep, the Forerunner of the Charter Schools

What does an educational experiment from half a century ago have to do with today? Harlem Preparatory School was conceived as a means to prepare poor black youth in Harlem for college. Through the efforts of Bahá'í teachers and administrators, including Edward Carpenter, Ann Carpenter and Hussein Ahdieh, the school proved that youth who had not academically survived the public system, could achieve academic success, rise out of poverty, and find a place in the professional world. The presentation describes the history, teaching approach, and profiles of typical students, community, and foundation support and media attention

DR. HUSSEIN AHDIEH moved to the United States to pursue a Master in European Intellectual History and a Doctorate in Education. He has written, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in New York, Awakening, The Calling: Tahirih of Persia and Her Contemporary American Women* and *A Way Out of No Way: The Untold Story of Harlem Preparatory School*.

Payam Akhavan (moderator), Nanabah Bulman, Marilyn Calderon, Eric Dozier, and Louis Venters • From Oppression to Empowerment – Plenary Panel Presentation

How can lofty spiritual principles be reconciled with the grim realities of racism, poverty, and violence? What can we learn from the dynamics of injustice in order to appreciate the potentialities inherent in humankind? In what ways might the Bahá'í approach resemble or differ from conventional social and political activism? This panel will reflect on these themes based on exceptional grassroots engagement, ranging from holistic health and community transformation on the Mexican border, to retrieving spiritual identity through Navajo traditions, to African-American gospel music as a social force, and the history of racial unity in South Carolina.

DR. PAYAM AKHAVAN is Professor of International Law at McGill University in Canada, Visiting Fellow at Oxford University in the UK, and counsel before the International Court of Justice at The Hague. He was previously a UN prosecutor in former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Cambodia, Guatemala, and Timor Leste, and is co-founder of the Iran Human Rights Documentation Centre.

Vafa Akhavan • The True Seeker: A Strategic Imperative for Enterprise Outcome

The pursuit of excellence is nothing new in organizational performance or enterprise culture. However, guidance for a true seeker, outlined in Bahá'u'lláh's *Kitáb-i-Íqán*, outlines distinct factors and attributes

that can propel performance to new heights. Once understood and incorporated, it can transform an organization's very heart and soul, making it recognizable as a unique place with outcomes surpassing its intentions. This interactive session explores the potential impact of this guidance on enterprise outcomes. Specifically, it highlights key attributes of "true seekership," and facilitates discourse around their impact on critical business levers such as decision making, innovation, strategic planning and operational excellence.

VAFA AKHAVAN, founder and senior adviser at NueBridge, has also served as President and CEO of The Forum Corporation, led Global Operations at McGraw Hill's Information & Media, led the global consulting business of J.D. Power, worked with F500 companies covering 7 sectors across 16 countries, and is an award winning filmmaker.

Owen Allen • Dance as Transformative Practice

The author proposes that contemporary dance theatre, as a multi-genre, inclusive, collaborative approach, is transformative of the individual and the community. The presentation explores concepts of human identity, suffering, and life-long development as a process intricately bound to our experience of the physical body. Looking at dance as a tool for creating a generative life, the presentation will be an experience in the transformative process that dance theatre tools can provide. Examples from the imagery in Bahá'í teachings will be considered. Delegates can expect to be moved.

OWEN ALLEN has been an Australian physiotherapist for 34 years, working with people of all ages and abilities. After working 15 years on national rural health issues, he was inspired to work around performing arts as a facilitation of community transformation, leading, for the past four years, to dance theatre.

Shahla Ali • Transforming Disaster Response Initiatives Through Collective Access, Participation, Generation, Application, and Diffusion of Knowledge

Inspired by the understanding that "access to knowledge ... and participation in its generation, application and diffusion a responsibility that all must shoulder...", a growing number of programs working in the area of disaster relief have emerged that provide insights into the development and application of capacities for community consultation and action in extreme conditions. Whether in response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004 or Cyclone Nargis of 2008, this discussion will examine some lessons learned in the application of consultation skills in the wider community.

SHAHLA ALI is an Associate Professor and Deputy Head of the Department of Law and Deputy Director of the LLM in Arbitration and Dispute Resolution at the University of Hong Kong. She writes and practices in the area of comparative dispute system design drawing on empirical and comparative methods.

Brian Aull • Democracy and Spiritual Values

What does it mean to have a "democratic" society? A common view is that citizens elect leaders who advocate for their interests and desires. Competition among conflicting interests then leads to a fairly

equitable distribution of benefits. Many societies are now experiencing government dysfunction, divisive partisanship, and political corruption. The Bahá'í administrative system models a new understanding of democratic process based on spiritual values of justice and unity. In this session, three principles that guide Bahá'í projects, service, learning, and community building, are proposed as a triad of civic virtues that are needed for a healthful democratic society.

BRIAN AULL is a research scientist at MIT and engineering instructor at Tufts University. He served on the Cambridge Peace Commission and has taught spiritual education classes for children. He is the author of a new book, *The Triad: Three Civic Virtues That Could Save American Democracy*.

Trip Barthel • Asking Better Questions

“... ye may be free to ask what you need to ask, but not such idle questions as those on which the men of former times were wont to dwell.” (*Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, para. 126) “Computers are useless, they can only give you answers.” (Pablo Picasso) This interactive and explorational program will consider the role of questions in comprehending our material and spiritual worlds. Better questions open up exciting possibilities and lead us into undreamt of realms. Independent investigation, one of the core principles of the Bahá'í Faith, is based on asking questions. You will leave this session being able to ask deeper and more meaningful questions.

TRIP BARTHEL has been teaching and practicing mediation and conflict resolution for the past 18 years. He has been living in Shanghai for the past eight years, and teaching at various universities. He was the visiting scholar in conflict resolution at the Shanghai University of Politics and Law.

Julia Berger • Role of Religion in Society – Plenary Panel Presentation (see Weinberg for abstract)

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.

Fereshteh Bethel • Learning from Recent Bahá'í Martyrs to Transcend Mentally and Spiritually without Being Bound by the Ranking of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Across many disciplines, Maslow's (1943-1954) hierarchy of motivational needs is used in order for individuals to self-actualize themselves in particular areas. Recent research indicates that this model does not necessarily apply to every culture, nor does it work sequentially in the order that it has been presented. In the study of the psychology of martyrdom it was inferred that the Bahá'í martyrs of Iran actually reversed Maslow's theorized model of motivational needs. If so, then their mental and spiritual transcendence within their predicament can become a model for others to emulate.

FERESHTEH BETHEL, PhD, is a licensed clinical psychologist, with 22 years of academic career at California State University system, taught undergraduate and some graduate level courses in psychology and human development. In 1984, she wrote her doctoral dissertation on “A Psychological Theory of Martyrdom.”

Nanabah Bulman • From Oppression to Empowerment – Plenary Panel Presentation (see Payam Akhavan for Abstract)

NANABAH FOGUTH BULMAN serves as the Junior Youth Coordinator in the American Indian cluster of Ft. Defiance, Arizona. She was raised Bahá'í and spent most of her childhood and youth summers serving at the Native American Bahá'í Institute, in which she continued to spend time coordinating its youth year of service corps.

Jason Burtwistle • Regenerative Design: The Spiritual Frontiers of Sustainable Design

A building is part of a community. A community is part of a culture. A culture is part of a global civilization. The current approach to design and development tends to see these things in isolation from one another. A regenerative approach to design and development seeks to develop the material, economic, social and spiritual capacities within a community such that all scales are working as a harmonious, self-sustaining system. This workshop will familiarize you with current regenerative approaches and allow you to engage in some first-hand capacity building exercises in small groups.

JASON wants to integrate things. People and buildings, communities and institutions. Since obtaining a Master in Architecture from the University of British Columbia in 2013, he has been working as a Green Building Strategist at a local sustainability consulting firm in Vancouver.

Marilyn Calderon • From Oppression to Empowerment – Plenary Panel Presentation (see Payam Akhavan for Abstract)

MARILYN CALDERON is family medicine doctor in Chula Vista, a suburb south of San Diego, close to the Mexican- American border, and has experience with service in neighborhood Bahá'í activities for 7 years. Her combined experiences provide an outlook of the interplay between physical, emotional, and spiritual health.

Lita Cameron • Health Empowerment: Unlocking the Power of Individuals and Communities (see Loghmanee for abstract)

LITA CAMERON is a resident in family medicine and has been working with a group of medical students in exploring the intersection of science, religion and medicine.

Margaret Caton • Bahá'í Influences on Mírzá 'Abdu'lláh, Qájár Court Musician and Master of the Radíf

Mírzá 'Abdu'lláh (1843-1918 A.D.) was a noted court musician and master of the *sitár* and *tár* (plucked long-necked lutes). His *radíf* (musical repertoire) is considered to be the main source of contemporary Persian classical music as taught in conservatories and universities in Iran. One of the greatest Persian musicians of the nineteenth century, Mírzá 'Abdu'lláh was a Bahá'í and received praise and encouragement for his work from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, then the head of the Bahá'í Faith.

MARGARET CATON, PhD in Music (UCLA) and Doctorate in Psychology (Ryokan College), has authored articles and books on topics in music, psychology, and intercultural communications, particularly focusing on Persian music. Research for her presentation was conducted in Iran concurrently with field work for her dissertation on Persian classical music.

Catherine Chapman-Wong • Mindfulness Meditation – Enhancing Our Marriage and Family Relationships (see Rana for abstract)

CATHERINE, graphic designer, editor and writer, facilitates conversations on Spiritual Education, Parenting and Family Life in London, Ontario, and has experience with Mindfulness Meditation and the Mindful Way through Anxiety and Depression.

Susan Stark Christianson and Naomi Michalsen • The Wisdom of the Grandmothers – The Importance of Indigenous Wisdom

This presentation focuses on incorporating grandmothers and traditional wisdom into our activities. Susan Stark Christianson, author and filmmaker from Juneau, Alaska, spent the past seven years interviewing grandmothers from Siberia to Patagonia in response to the indigenous teaching, "There won't be peace on earth until the voices of the grandmothers are heard." Susan and co-presenter Naomi Michalsen, former director of a domestic violence shelter in Ketchikan and presenter on her Tlingit tribal values, explore how and why grandmothers and traditional wisdom are essential today.

SUSAN STARK CHRISTIANSON is a grandmother, author and filmmaker from Juneau, Alaska. She has spent the past seven years traveling from Siberia to Patagonia to better understand the importance of the indigenous teaching, "There won't be peace on earth until the voices of the grandmothers are heard."

François Couillard • Common Management Practices in Light of the Bahá'í Teachings

How do the Writings of the Faith address some common management orthodoxies? What are the implications of the truths found in the Bahá'í revelation on day-to-day management practices? In this interactive talk we will examine areas such as management structure and hierarchies, decision making, performance management and compensation. We will look at examples from the business and non-profit worlds. Participants will be invited to share their own examples and contribute to our understanding of quotes from the Writings relevant to the topic.

FRANÇOIS has over 30 years' experience managing businesses and non-profits. He is the CEO of the CAMRT, a national association representing over 12,000 Canadian health professionals. He holds a Chemical Engineering degree and a MBA. He is a member of ebbf's research team and Advisory Council.

Taraz Darabi • Exchanging the Gifts of the Earth: Business and Ethics in society

"It is in exchanging the gifts of the earth that you shall find abundance and be satisfied. Yet unless the exchange be in love and kindly justice, it will but lead some to greed and others to hunger."

This presentation dives into the roots of social interaction and how the origins of human thought and language are rooted in our propensity to exchange. As Gibran notes above, exchange is important, but the spirit in which it is conducted is paramount. We will take a look at the perspective of great poets, philosophers and economists on business, ethics and social responsibility.

TARAZ DARABI is the Director of Operations at Venwise. Prior to joining Venwise, he worked as an Analyst in the Mergers and Acquisitions investment banking group at Deutsche Bank. Taraz received a Bachelor of Science from New York University Stern School of Business in Finance and Management.

Marjan Davoudi • The Power of Mind, The Power of Belief, The Only Hope for Change

There is a mass of evidence that suggests we, humans, have known about our innate ability to have power over our destinies by what we think. We cannot change things that happen outside of us, we cannot change the resulted feelings which lead to our actions in life, the only part we can change is our interpretation of what is happening and the way our thoughts have been shaped and inspired. This presentation provides information about the means to tap the power of our mind and to find the best path for a consistent and endless change towards the advancement of a meaningful life.

DR. MARJAN DAVOUDI, is a clinical psychologist. Currently, she is the director of Behavioral Mental Health—a private practice in two locations, San Diego and La Jolla, California—she has been also a global faculty at BIHE, Psychology department for eight years.

Justin de Leon • Constructive Resilience: Lakota Seven Generations Vision and Spiritual Renewal

The Lakota Seven Generations Vision places survivance (survival + endurance) and constructive resilience (non-adversarial means of facing oppression referenced by the Universal House of Justice) into meaningful dialogue and provides a framework for the evolving role of Native Americans in modern America. Constructive resilience contributes significantly to approaching processes of rebuilding, allowing for means of social transformation that foregrounds spiritual renewal, unity, long-term transformation, and the spiritual dimensions of human reality. The Vision suggests generations of persecution and deterioration are now being followed by generations of rebuilding, rewriting history, and spiritual renewal, having transformative effects on Lakota society and beyond.

JUSTIN DE LEON is an International Relations PhD candidate at University of Delaware. His research focuses on impacts of Indigenous experiences and frameworks on (de)militarization discourse. De Leon draws upon feminist theory, Native American studies, and critical theory and he is a Rotary World Peace Fellow and a documentary filmmaker.

Eric Dozier • From Oppression to Empowerment – Plenary Panel Presentation (see Payam Akhavan for abstract)

ERIC DOZIER is a cultural activist who employs music to create spiritual environments to engage in moral reasoning about racism and oppression. He is pursuing a doctorate at the University of Tasmania investigating the effects of African American Gospel Music on communities outside of the auspices of the Black Church.

Mehrdad Ehsani • Meditation

The art of meditation is to come in touch with reality: not the reality that we construct for ourselves, but the reality that is there on the inside and outside. Most of religious practice is verbal: sermons, lectures, and verbal prayers, rather than contemplative and experiential: inner silence, listening, and observing the inner and outer reality. However, Bahá'u'lláh said: "In thy soul of love build thou a fire. And burn all thoughts and words entire" (*Seven Valleys* 28). We will discuss the scientific and spiritual confluence of meditation and some of its misunderstandings.

MEHRDAD EHSANI is the Robert M. Kennedy Endowed Professor at Texas A&M University. He has won 150 international honors and awards, is the co-author of 17 books, 380 publications, 20 patents, and has given numerous talks around the world on technology, convergence of scientific and spiritual search.

Susan Finch • Self, Selfishness and Selflessness

The self is described in philosophy, psychology and spiritual traditions. Discussions of the self are dichotomous, describing a lower self and a higher self characterized by selfishness and selflessness respectively. Although these terms seem clear, many people had childhood developmental needs called selfish, and were traumatized without support for the developing self. Without implementation of self worth and self care, a desire for selflessness can lead to selfishness. Development of the self is important for psychological growth, spiritual progress and recovery from mental illness.

DR. FINCH is an adult psychiatrist who works in addiction psychiatry and PTSD. Her other interests include emergency psychiatry, psychotherapy, medical education, spirituality and psychiatry. Dr. Finch is a Bahá'í and Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Queen's University.

Stephen Friberg and Robert Sarracino • The Universe and Our Place In It: Cosmology, Matter, Creation, and Spiritual Development in the Bahá'í Writings

Central to modern Western discussions—scientific, religious, and otherwise—about the universe and our place in it are questions as to its origins and the nature of its laws: How did the universe start? Has it always been here? How did life arise? Where do consciousness and the mind come from? What is the source of morals and ethics? In this presentation, we survey how the Bahá'í Writings answer these questions and consider how they might guide further inquiry and engagement with the broader community in our schools, the professions, among specialists, and with our neighbors.

STEPHEN FRIBERG is a research physicist by training. He has been active in the ABS, has written 175 blogs on science and religion at <http://www.commongroundgroup.net>, and wrote *Religion and Evolution Reconciled* with Courosh Mehanian. He worked in Japan for ten years before moving to Silicon Valley.

Keyvan Geula • The Mental and Social Benefits of Bahá'í Prayers in Mindfulness Meditation

The Bahá'í Writings are a unique instrument rich in metaphors and imageries that train the mind to adopt God-like thoughts, perceptions and wishes. Recent research about mindfulness and mental health acknowledges the role of spiritual components in meditation. Bahá'í prayers serve as powerful tuning

fork that rescue the individual mind from wayward patterns of thought qualifying mankind to create and perform in one universal and divine symphony, therefore realizing the ideal of oneness of all humanity. In this workshop, we will explore the mental and social benefits of mindfulness meditation.

KEYVAN GEULA, MFT, is a Marriage, Family, and Child Counselor specializing in the integration and application of psychotherapy and spirituality from a Bahá'í perspective. She is the founder and president of the Center for Global Integrated Education.

Nazila Ghanea • Striving for Human Rights in an Age of Religious Extremism

Religious extremism has spawned academic and policy attention on religion, and this attention largely stems from an impulse to control 'religion.' Approaching this challenge from the perspective of international human rights law reveals interesting challenges regarding both 'religion' and 'human rights,' and the relationship between them. Bahá'í perspectives give multiple accounts of religion: as something that should result from individual search; that can stimulate service and fellowship on the one hand and ignite a world-devouring fire on the other. Considering the global onslaught of religious extremism, what is the scope for seeking to bring the positive role of religion into the frame?

NAZILA GHANEA Associate Professor, International Human Rights Law, University of Oxford, is a member of the *OSCE Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief* and on the Board of Trustees of the independent think tank, the Universal Rights Group.

Emily Goshey • Role of Religion in Society – Plenary Panel Presentation (see Weinberg for abstract)

EMILY GOSHEY is currently pursuing her PhD in Religion at Princeton University. Her research interests include modern Islamic/Islamist movements; Arabian Gulf studies; and questions of religion and race, gender.

Paul Hanley • Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity

As the human population moves toward 11 billion, the ecosphere—the realm of life—is increasingly shaped by the noosphere—the realm of mind. With human attention preoccupied by the self-interested acquisition of power and things, the ecosphere is increasingly fragmented. Based on the award-winning book *ELEVEN*, this audiovisual presentation shows how problems such as climate change and ecological fragmentation are consequences of fragmented thinking and how the reintegration of the ecosphere comes as a consequence of achieving unified human consciousness. The Ruhi participatory education model will be an important agent of the unification process.

PAUL HANLEY is a journalist and author of four books. A recipient of the Canadian Environment Award and the Meewasin Conservation Award, he has published 1,500 articles on environment and agriculture. His latest book, *ELEVEN*, received the University of Saskatchewan President's Award for Non-Fiction and the ABS Book Award.

Holly Hanson • Engaging the Discourse on Economic Inequality Part I & Part II (see Ho for abstract)

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 is *A Path of Justice: Building Communities with the Power to Shape the World*, published by Grace Publications.

John S. Hatcher • Epiphany of the Prophets

The foundation of this presentation will consist of examining the implications of passages from authoritative Bahá'í texts outlining the basic ontology of the Manifestations. However, the most critical outcome of this discussion will be an attempt to discover what is happening to Bahá'u'lláh with the appearance of the Veiled Maiden in the Siyáh-Chál. By inference, we will then try to determine what is taking place when previous Manifestations have similar experiences with the first intimations of Their own revelations.

John S. Hatcher • The Conceptual Framework for Physical Reality

Nothing has meaning without context. When context results from a logical plan designed to manifest a spiritual concept, the resulting construct becomes a “conceptual framework.” Underlying the five-year plans of the House of Justice since 2001 is an evolving conceptual framework calculated to manifest at community and cluster levels the foundation of what in time will become a global commonwealth, Bahá'u'lláh's conceptual framework, that is “the furthestmost limits in the organization of human society” (*World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* 163), itself part of the conceptual framework of physical reality as a whole.

JOHN S. HATCHER, PhD, is Professor Emeritus in English Literature at the University of South Florida. He has published some thirty books, numerous articles and poems in refereed journals. He taught at universities for forty-three years and is now editor of the *Journal of Bahá'í Studies*.

Ann Hendrix-Jenkins • Capacity Development Models in the Bahá'í Process of Community Growth and Transformation (see Kripke for abstract)

HENDRIX-JENKINS has a Master in International Development from American University and has been working in international public health and development since 1993. She is currently the Technical Director for Capacity Building at Futures Group International. She currently conducts mathematical modeling for international HIV policy analysis at Avenir Health.

Jacob Hill • New Methods in Bahá'í Studies – Using Technology and Traditional Scholarly Methods to Build Research Infrastructure for Bahá'í Studies

This presentation examines various scholarly methodologies employed in the field of Digital Humanities and their application in Bahá'í studies. Argues that traditional methods of scholarship are inadequate for modern historical and religious scholarship in general, and particularly so in the case of Bahá'í studies, because of the sheer volume of extant textual materials. Proposes an integrative approach to scholarship

that includes traditional methods of historical research, innovations in the application of technology to the study of the humanities, and advances in the field of knowledge organization.

JACOB HILL is a third-year PhD student in Information Science at UNC Chapel Hill. His research is at the intersection of Knowledge Organization, Digital Humanities, and Bahá'í Studies.

Belinda Hill • Building Educational Pedagogy on Bahá'í Principles: A Change in Perspective

Whether we teach at the K-12 school level, adults in higher education, Bahá'í classes, online, or in person, we can facilitate our students' learning by using Bahá'í principles. A change in our perspective can support our efforts to actualize the statement by Bahá'u'lláh, "Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom."

BELINDA HILL currently teaches courses in teacher education in the College of Education and Counseling Psychology at Saint Martin's University, a Catholic Benedictine institution. She also teaches courses in education and curriculum planning for BIHE.

Nazanin Ho, Vesall Nourani, Jordan van Rijn, Navid Sabet, Ryan Siegel, and Holly Hanson • Engaging the Discourse on Economic Inequality (Part I)

This panel discussion builds on the 2014 ABS panel titled "Contributing to the Discourse on Economics." Panelists will collectively analyze key articles on economic inequality that represent major currents of thought within the contemporary discourse. This analysis will set up a broader exploratory conversation, in Part II of this session, regarding the most salient features of the prevailing discourse on economic inequality and how to contribute to the advancement of that discourse.

Nazanin Ho, Vesall Nourani, Jordan van Rijn, Navid Sabet, Ryan Siegel, and Holly Hanson • Engaging the Discourse on Economic Inequality (Part II)

This session builds on the preceding panel titled "Engaging the Discourse on Economic Inequality (Part I)." The session will take initial steps toward a meta-analysis of the evolving discourse on economic inequality, in the light of the Revelation and in relation to the evolving conceptual framework informing the work of the Bahá'í community, in order to begin exploring the content of a substantive contribution to that discourse. Participants will also discuss spaces in which the economic discourse on inequality is advancing and next steps on the path of learning to contribute to this discourse.

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

Kevin Homma • Jazz and the Bahá'í Faith: An Interactive Workshop

Through an interactive, hands-on approach, this workshop will explore the striking parallels between the Bahá'í Faith and Jazz, a language of love and unity. Using the Soul as the impetus and the Writings as a guide, this workshop aims to illustrate the effectiveness of music as a means to promote Bahá'í

principles, all in a simple, fun and yet poignant manner. The concepts and tools presented will be able to be implemented directly into the core activities. All are welcome; participants do not need to have any musical background!

KEVIN HOMMA is a composer, orchestrator, and music educator. He graduated from Chapman University with a double major in music performance and music education. Currently, Kevin writes music for CBS's *Survivor*, and teaches elementary school music. Kevin hopes to bring his knowledge of music to the Bahá'í Faith.

Nicole Jafari • Defining the Mind: The Holy Manifestation, Intellectual Investigation, and the Solution to Social Discord

Central to any sustainable resolution to the world's social, economic, and political is an understanding of mind, both our own and the divine universal mind of the Dawning-Places of Prophethood. In this talk, we draw on the Bahá'í Writings to see how the mind and intellectual Investigation can be in accord religiously and scientifically. Then, using Maslow's discussion of the hierarchy of needs, we see what this implies for a high intelligence society.

DR. JAFARI teaches at California State Universities in Long Beach and Fullerton focusing on the field of Human Development. She has published and co-authored many research articles in various scientific and academic journals in addition to recently publishing a college textbook with a cultural and multi-disciplinary view on child development.

Whitney White Kazemipour • The Person-Building, Culture-Changing Powers of the Hidden Words: How Bahá'u'lláh's Arabic Hidden Words Might Inform the Anthropology of Sociocultural Change

Are we able to change the culture that shapes us? The themes and the complex structure of Baha'u'llah's Arabic Hidden Words present methods for such a transformation. The Hidden Words includes guidance on the pace of change, and the barriers to and capacity for human agency. Bahá'u'lláh's implicit models can enrich an anthropology of sociocultural change, as we will explore in this workshop. The presenter will draw examples from her anthropological research with Panamanian indigenous Bahá'ís and Iranian-American mothers.

WHITNEY WHITE KAZEMIPOUR (PhD, UCLA) is a psychocultural anthropologist. She also coaches academic writers at AcademicMuse.org.

Wolfgang Klebel • Bahá'í Theology as Theophanology

What is the difference between Bahá'í theology and the theology of Islam, Christianity, Hebrew and Zoroastrian Faith? Bahá'í Writings require us to know God, yet it is stated that "God ... is in His Essence sanctified above all names and exalted beyond even the loftiest attributes" (*Gems of Divine Mysteries* 34). This paper distinguishes between apophatic and kataphatic Theology and concludes that all Bahá'í theology is apophatic (negative theology), what can be called kataphatic Bahá'í theology is actually theophanology. God appears to man, comes to light of understanding, in His Creation and Manifestations.

WOLFGANG KLEBEL, was born in Austria in 1933, pursued philosophy, theology and archivistics studies in Rome and Austria and earned a PhD in Clinical Psychology from Fuller Graduate School, Pasadena, California. Priest in Austria until immigration to USA in 1969, psychologist in the California prison system, and now in private practice.

Ian Kluge • Bahá'u'lláh's Toolbox: Advancing the Life of the Mind

The Bahá'í Writings provide the philosophical tools to establish a strong program for advancing the life of the mind. They give us the intellectual concepts and illustrate the skills necessary to understand the Writings and the world in a philosophically coherent manner. In addition to individual study, advancing the life of the mind also requires a mentally active family life and a community that incorporates what the Writings have given into its regular activities.

IAN KLUGE is a poet, playwright and independent philosophy scholar who specializes in the philosophical study of the Bahá'í Writings. He has numerous publications and has taught for BIHE and the Wilmette Institute.

Katharine Kripke and Ann Hendrix-Jenkins • Capacity Development Models in the Bahá'í Process of Community Growth and Transformation

Over the past 20 years, guidance from the Universal House of Justice and other Bahá'í institutions have gradually begun to outline a process for community development that encompasses individuals, communities, and institutions from the grassroots to a global scale. In parallel, professionals in the field of international development have begun to outline frameworks for capacity development that encompass many similar concepts. This lecture-format presentation will organize the guidance from the Bahá'í institutions as it relates to the secular field of capacity development.

DR. KRIPKE, a Bahá'í for nineteen years, has a PhD in Immunology from Stanford and has been working in the field of international public health since 2000, with an emphasis on HIV and tuberculosis. She is currently a Senior Health Policy Analyst at Avenir Health.

David Langness, Payam Zamani and Sahab Mahboubi • The Life of the Mind Online— BahaiTeachings.org

The founder and staff of BahaiTeachings.org—the largest Bahá'í website in the world—explain the genesis of the site and its unique teaching and “democratized scholarship” model. BahaiTeachings.org has quickly become the most-visited Bahá'í site in the world, with a global audience of more than a quarter million readers and more than a hundred contributors from all continents. Join us to understand how the wisdom of the crowd can advance online learning, action and teaching in the internet age.

DAVID LANGNESS is the managing editor of BahaiTeachings.org, a veteran journalist, a literary critic for *Paste Magazine* and a senior communications executive.

Darius Loghmanee, Lita Cameron, Sana Rezai, Tina Shahidyazdani, and Bayan Rezai • Health Empowerment: Unlocking the Power of Individuals and Communities

Limited funds and practitioners present a seemingly insurmountable barrier to the goal of universal health care. In this session we will describe the challenges facing our field, review literature about novel approaches to providing care, and explore how insights gleaned from efforts to release the power inherent in individuals and communities in the expansion and consolidation work might be applied to the discourses about health. During the session, attendees will be invited to participate in this exploration through study of materials prepared for this purpose.

DARIUS LOGHMANEE MD is a pediatric sleep specialist and the Director of the Pediatric Sleep Service Line for the Advocate Hospital Network in Illinois. His interests include population health and health systems development.

Daniel Lord • A Bahá'í Approach to the Concept of Magnanimity

Magnanimity is known as a favorite virtue of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and it is used repeatedly in His *Tablets of the Divine Plan*. This presentation briefly outlines a history of the concept, beginning with Aristotle's *megalopsuchia* to the *magnanimitas* of Aquinas. Psychological research on magnanimity as relevant in modern everyday life is also reviewed. A perspective on magnanimity based on the Bahá'í Writings is then explored, one in which the concept is spiritualized and its integrality for teaching the Faith emphasized.

DANIEL B. LORD, PhD, recently retired as a psychology professor from University of Alaska Southeast, and currently works as a counselor in Anchorage.

Mark Lutness • The Badí' Calendar – Time for Peace

We begin with the 10 July 2014 letter of the Universal House of Justice. As background, we will review the science behind the use of calendars, with attention to the ways in which scientific observations and principles reflect the underlying spiritual reality. For historical context, we will compare the calendars of various civilizations and consider the significance of a calendar to one's culture. We will explore the history and parameters of the Badí' calendar, presenting two formats to display the year 172 BE. Finally, we will consider how the Badí' Calendar may serve as a pathway to peace.

MARK LUTNESS combines a professional background of science, education, and medicine with a lifelong interest in cosmology, linguistics, and religious studies, to use an integrated approach to the study of the Badí' Calendar. His wife Kitty keeps him grounded in all things.

Sahab Mahboubi • The Life of the Mind Online—BahaiTeachings.org (see Langness for abstract)

SAHAB MAHBOUBI is the webmaster for BahaiTeachings.org, and a Canadian Bahá'í with a lifelong interest in teaching the Faith online.

Susan Maneck • After Tuskegee: The Lives of Dempsey Morgan and Myron Wilson

This presentation looks at the lives of Dempsey Morgan and Myron Wilson, two Tuskegee Airmen who subsequently became Bahá'ís. Myron Wilson initially attempted to remain the service, even though he was forced to give up his commission in order to do so. This experience left him spiritually wounded—a wound for which the Bahá'í Faith provided a measure of healing. Dempsey Morgan became a pioneer during the Ten Year Crusade, extending his reach far beyond the country of his birth, achieving remarkable victories in both Southeast Asia and Africa.

SUSAN MANECK is an Associate Professor at Jackson State University in Mississippi, with fields in Middle East, South Asian, and Early Modern Europe. She conducts research in the history of religion and gender issues in Iran and India.

Naomi Michalsen • The Wisdom of the Grandmothers — The Importance of Indigenous Wisdom (see Christianson for abstract)

NAOMI MICHALSEN, Kaasei, (Higher Voice, Tlingit), belongs to the Wooshkeetaan, Auke Kwaan family, Chaak/Gooch Toos' Hit: (Eagle/Wolf of the Shark House) from Berner's Bay, Juneau. Naomi is a strong advocate of prevention and education efforts through use of traditional and indigenous knowledge.

Lawrence M. Miller • Best Practices for Creating a Culture of Experimentation and Continuous Improvement at Work

The Bahá'í Writings say that even religion must conform to science. It is scientific thinking, the systematic study of what works, that has led to much of human progress. This is true in the process of business management and human motivation as well as other fields of human endeavor. In this presentation we will examine the best practices, particularly as practiced at Toyota, to apply scientific thinking to the creation of a system and culture of continuous improvement.

LAWRENCE MILLER has been consulting with major corporations on their culture and leadership with emphasis on developing team based, highly participative, organizations for the past forty years. He is the author of ten books on leadership and management, including *Spiritual Enterprise: Building Your Business in the Spirit of Service*, published by George Ronald. His website is ManagementMeditations.com.

Lee Minnerly • Science, Religion, and Bahá'í Contributions to the Extraterrestrial Life Debate

Historians of science have traditionally led scholarship on the extraterrestrial life debate (ELD), the 2,500-year-old unbroken written record of thought concerning the existence of intelligent life beyond Earth. Developments in astronomy and Christian theology permeate this rich yet little known body of knowledge outside the history of astronomy. Statements on extraterrestrial life appearing in Bahá'í canonical texts are an important addition to the ELD within the Abrahamic tradition. They validate extraterrestrial life and offer perspectives on science and religion that circumvent historically problematic issues of Christian doctrine.

LEE MINNERLY (MA Anthropology) teaches seminars on the extraterrestrial life debate and cultural astronomy at the Newberry Library in Chicago. He is currently completing the finding aid for a major collection of original sources on the debate at the Webster Institute for the History of Astronomy at Adler Planetarium.

Pierre-Yves Mocquais • Data Mining and the Epistemological Paradigm Shift

The rise of massive data mining and its application to humanities (or “digital humanities”) is leading to a profound epistemological shift. Not only does “big” data allow to look scientifically and systematically at “big” questions which were hitherto the purview of prospective philosophers, but it sheds a new light on the respective role of the individual in society in relations to the collective. Moreover, it breaks down age-old intellectual dichotomies between science, the humanities and religion. Finally, it allows to bring together science and the Bahá’í inquiry process.

PIERRE-YVES MOCQUAIS is Dean, Faculté Saint-Jean, University of Alberta and Professor of French and French-Canadian Studies. Member, Executive Committee Association for Bahá’í Studies and Editorial Committee, *Journal of Bahá’í Studies*. Author of six books and Officer in the French Order of the Palmes Académiques.

Lisa Molin • Industrialized Animal Farming — Ethical Considerations

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time. The need to incorporate change as individuals and as a society has never been more critical. Agriculture, in particular industrialized animal farming, accounts for a substantial portion of our carbon footprint and has enormous implications for the use of the planet's limited resources. The spiritual/ethical issues revolving around this practice— animal cruelty, environmental degradation, prejudice, economic disparity— will be identified and discussed in light of the Bahá’í Writings.

LISA MOLIN, M.D. Practicing Otolaryngologist-Head and Neck Surgeon. She received her undergraduate degrees in Agricultural Biochemistry and Agronomy and completed her medical training at UC Davis. Her special interests are nutrition, health, and environmental consequences of food choices. She participates in medical missions for treatment of cleft lips/palates and general otolaryngology.

Nura Mowzoon • The Search for Love: An Unexpected Roadmap in the Bahá’í Writings

While most people desire marriage, many are confused by, and fearful of, the road it takes to get there. Choosing a spouse is the most important decision of one’s life, yet too often we feel as if we have little to no guidance on how to make this decision. This presentation will explore a potential roadmap provided to us by Bahá’u’lláh, in what is commonly known as His “Tablet of the True Seeker”. Current research findings in the field of marriage will also be incorporated to illustrate the wisdom behind this divine guidance.

NURA MOWZOON holds a doctorate in the field of Marriage and Family Therapy. She works as full time faculty at Arizona State University and also runs a private couples coaching practice, with a particular interest working with couples on issues of communication, emotional intimacy, trust and love.

May Mowzoon • Forging Young Minds For Meaningful Conversations Through First-Person Case Studies

A case study approach to the Bahá'í principles provides a forum for youth and junior youth to actively investigate complex social issues, fostering their capacity to have meaningful conversations with their peers. A first-person perspective in the case study puts the students in a decision making position to determine the implications of applying Bahá'í principles in various settings. This allows the students to explore the boundaries of their values and reconstruct the lesson so that it is more personally useful. Six such case studies will be presented and discussed.

MAY MOWZOON has provided legal counsel addressing intellectual property issues to clients in various industries. Her practice covers patents, trademarks, copyrights, and licensing negotiation. She brings a legal analysis perspective to the youth and junior youth students in her Bahá'í classes.

Riaz Mowzoon-Mogharrabi • A Junior Youth's Experience in Presenting Human Rights Issues in a National Competition

In sixth grade I entered an exhibit on the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran in the 2014 National History Day competition. The theme was "Rights and Responsibilities." My exhibit stood covered with detailed descriptions of persecution and quotes, ever-strengthening why this genocidal crime should be abolished. Although I won at the local and State levels, I did not win at the national level. Nonetheless, I realized I had done something extremely impactful. Academics is the perfect tool to raise awareness of the plight of the Bahá'ís in Iran, even in elementary school.

RIAZ MOWZOON-MOGHARRABI is a thirteen year old junior youth in middle school. His interests are Chinese, Taekwondo, and science, particularly astrophysics.

Elena Mustakova Possardt • Social Health, Mental Health, and Relational Authenticity: A Bahá'í-inspired Paradigm for Sustainable Wellbeing (see Penn for abstract)

DR. MUSTAKOVA POSSARDT is a consultant and mental health professional in private practice in Washington, DC, as well as the author of several ground breaking works, including: *Toward a Socially Responsible Psychology for a Global Era*, published by Springer in 2014.

Roger Neyman • Digging Deeper for the Gold: Coping with Quasi-scientific Interpositions

Interpretation can be problematic when the text appears to contradict science. Two examples are considered. Review of language about science and of the scientific perspective on the terms employed, yields a distilling phrase: "quasi-scientific interpolations", a microcosm of the conflict between science and religion. Enumeration of some prior responses brings our focus onto contextualization, which is extended to include cultural and worldview contexts. In particular, brief consideration of alchemical references in the Writings is illuminating. We end with some concrete actions for growth.

ROGER NEYMAN was on faculty for the Wilmette Institute course on Science and Religion in 2012 and will be again in 2015. A father and a long-time student of science and of its relationship to religion, he has been a Bahá'í since late 1994, and active in the promotion of Institute process since early 1996.

Jenna Nicholas • ebbf and Intersection of Business and Values

ebbf is a Bahá'í-inspired global learning community that accompanies mindful individuals and groups through daily work and discourse to transform business and the economy thereby contributing to a prosperous, just and sustainable civilisation. The ebbf community is made up of women and men active in over 50 countries. ebbf and its members positively influence 10.000+ people around the world through our daily work, every year. Jenna Nicholas will be sharing some background of this community and growth over recent years. She will also share some personal reflections on how an intersection of business and values influences her daily life.

Jenna Nicholas • Applying Bahá'í Teachings to Better Integrate Our Values, Money, and Time to Drive Transformative Change at the Individual and Societal Level

It is common to feel a disconnect between our professional and spiritual lives, particularly around how we allocate our time and financial capital. The speaker will share first hand experiences and case studies (stories) from leaders who are signatories to Divest-Invest Philanthropy, a coalition of foundations that are divesting from fossil fuels and reinvesting in clean energy solutions. These experiences, viewed through the Bahá'í lens, serve as an example of how a small group of change makers are exercising moral leadership to fundamentally change how the philanthropic sector is protecting the global environment and advancing social equity through thoughtful deployment of its financial capital.

JENNA NICHOLAS is CEO of Phoenix Global Impact, a consulting company that specializes in impact investing, social entrepreneurship and strategic philanthropy. She graduated from Stanford University Graduate School of Business and also studied at Oxford University. Jenna is a Stanford, 2017 MBA candidate, and has been selected as a World Economic Forum Global Shaper.

Vesall Nourani • Engaging the Discourse on Economic Inequality Part I & Part II (see Ho 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.

Michael Penn, Elena Mustakova Possardt and Mary K. Radpour • Social Health, Mental Health, and Relational Authenticity: A Bahá'í-inspired Paradigm for Sustainable Wellbeing

This symposium, which is inspired by the Bahá'í teachings on human nature and human spiritual ontology, as well as by the rapidly developing sciences of psychology and public health, introduces the concept of "social health" as a paradigmatically new level of organizing public health research and advocacy in the context of a rapidly growing global burden of mental disease and intensifying threats to collective wellbeing.

DR. PENN is a Clinical Psychologist and Professor of Psychology at Franklin & Marshall College. His research interests and publications include works in the relationship between culture and psychopathology and the interpenetration of psychology and philosophy.

Anne Perry • Film as an Impetus for Social Awareness and Change

Narrative and documentary films play an important role in shaping our thoughts and attitudes toward crucial aspects such as cultural values, awareness of global issues, and empathy for the oppressed. They explore and help us heal from hard circumstances, while evolving our visual literacy / aesthetic appreciation. Looking at films that relate to the Holocaust, civil rights, apartheid, war, cultural change, and the plight of the Bahá'ís and others in Iran (including *To Light a Candle* and *Rosewater*), the presentation will focus on what film adds to social discourse and how it can promote change.

ANNE PERRY, PhD Aesthetic Studies, teaches writing, humanities, and film appreciation at the Art Institute of Dallas, and serves as an instructor for the Wilmette Institute. With husband Tim Perry, she created the documentary film, *Luminous Journey: 'Abdu'l-Bahá in America, 1912*, now in a Persian version.

Fiona Purton • Constructing a Bahá'í-inspired Methodology in Social Science Research: Reflections and Considerations

Methodologies are expressions of different epistemological, ontological and axiological assumptions and beliefs. This paper asks: when inspired by the Bahá'í Writings, how might we think about the relationship between participants and researchers; how might we approach the construction of knowledge; and what kinds of questions are we being prompted to ask and have answered through our research. This paper will investigate what a Bahá'í inspired methodology might look like when developed in light of key epistemological, ontological and axiological themes in the Bahá'í Writings.

FIONA PURTON is a PhD student in Curriculum Teaching and Learning at OISE, University of Toronto. Her work seeks to understand pedagogical approaches of teaching BEd students Aboriginal studies; particularly how students can be supported to move from resistance to engagement with the material.

Mary K. Radpour • Social Health, Mental Health, and Relational Authenticity: A Bahá'í-inspired Paradigm for Sustainable Wellbeing (see Penn for abstract)

MARY K. RADPOUR is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and the author of *Inner Freedom and Self-Mastery: The Dynamics of Moral Authenticity*. Mary K. is admired around the world for her good sense, clinical acumen, and insightful analyses.

Nousha Ram • Building on Our Strengths in the Workplace

Research shows that we are innovative, creative and resilient in the areas that we are strong. Yet, current systems of employee performance management are built on the belief that get better you must measure "weaknesses." So how do you identify strengths? How do you see or identify what is already innately present in the person? The session will explore how the practical application of the Bahá'í Writings can

enable us to navigate a strength-based model in our workplace, and identify the spiritual value base that must be the foundation of the change.

NOUSHA RAM is a Partner at Deloitte Consulting in Ottawa. She is a member of ebbf - a Bahá'í -inspired global learning community that accompanies mindful individuals and groups through daily work and discourse to transform business.

Deborah Thorpe Rana and Catherine Chapman-Wong • Mindfulness Meditation — Enhancing our Marriage and Family Relationships

Mindfulness, the quality or state of being conscious in the present moment with openness, finds its roots in many spiritual practices, including the Bahá'í Faith. In this interactive workshop, cousins Dr. Deborah Rana and Catherine Chapman-Wong will share their understanding and applications of mindfulness meditation, prayer and study of the Bahá'í Writings to enhance intimacy, compassion and understanding, assist with stress, and improve communication in marriage, parenting and family life.

DEBORAH is Catherine's cousin. She is a practicing pediatrician who also engages in teaching courses in Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) at the UCSD School of Medicine.

Shahriar Razavi • Bahá'í Participation in the Public Sphere: Considerations Related to History, Concepts, and Approaches

The talk will briefly survey the history of the presentation of Bahá'í thought in the public sphere, bearing on the betterment of the world. A common overarching conceptual framework guides the various endeavours of the community in terms of both method and content. This presentation seeks to explore how that framework finds expression through Bahá'í participation in the discourses of society. A further area of exploration will be the distinctive nature of the contribution of each of the Plan's three protagonists—the individual, the community, and the institutions—to involvement in public discourse.

SHAHRIAR RAZAVI has been a member of the Universal House of Justice since 2008. He and his family lived in the United Kingdom before serving at the Holy Land.

Sana Rezai • Health Empowerment: Unlocking the Power of Individuals and Communities (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 populations to take charge of their health.

Navid Sabet • From Self-Interest to Altruism – Plenary Panel Presentation (see Sami for abstract)

Navid Sabet • Engaging the Discourse on Economic Inequality Part I & Part II (see Ho for abstract)

NAVID SABET, MPA in Public and Economic Policy, LSE, resides with his wife in Bonn, and is a Research Assistant at UNESCO. Before his studies, he served four years in the Office of Social and Economic Development, Bahá'í World Centre, helping monitor worldwide progress of the junior youth spiritual empowerment program.

Fariborz Sahba • Sunshine on the Verge of Your Threshold

The life of the mind can only be advanced through the power of vision, without which the mind is dead. Propounding the analogy of a rainbow, the presenter will reason that the mind is like rain, while vision is like the light which transforms the rain into a rainbow, and without which the rainbow cannot exist. The Bahá'í Faith, in essence at one level is a vision, a dream whose central aim is the unity of mankind. He will explore the words of Baha'u'llah "By God this is the arena of vision and upliftment," illustrating that: There is a sunshine on the verge of your threshold, Which, if you open wide your door, Will illumine your life. —Sohrab Sepehri

FARIBORZ SAHBA, at age 28, designed the Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi, India which is known as "the most visited building in the world," currently shortlisted by the UNESCO to become a World Heritage site; he designed the terraces of the Shrine of the Báb and is Project Manager of the buildings on Mount Carmel.

Mojgan Sami (moderator), Navid Sabet, Sahar Sattarzadeh, and Ryan Siegel • From Self-Interest to Altruism – Plenary Panel Presentation

This panel offers critical reflection on the implied assumption in social science research, public policy and community service that human and organizational nature is limited to self-interest. The intention is to encourage the critical reflection on the underlying assumptions in social science, public policy and community service that prevent the advancement beyond outdated theories and practices regarding human and organizational nature which perpetuate the "self-interest" paradigm. The panel aims to enhance the understanding of the role of Bahá'í Revelation in contributing to the study of the multi-faceted capabilities latent in individuals, communities and institutions that lead to transformative social change.

MOJGAN SAMI, critical scholar and social justice activist with an interdisciplinary doctorate in urban planning, public policy and public health, currently teaches at the University of California, Irvine (UCI) and serves as a researcher for the Sustainability Initiative, mentoring students on research related to climate resilience and food justice.

Robert Sarracino • The Universe and Our Place In It: Cosmology, Matter, Creation, and Spiritual Development in the Bahá'í Writings (see Friberg for abstract)

ROBERT SARRACINO became a Bahá'í in 1968, then pioneered to Botswana. Later, he pioneered to Africa (20 yrs) and Iraq (3 yrs). His PhD is in physics and he has done research in astrophysics, relativity, rock fracturing, and ice mechanics.

Sahar D. Sattarzadeh • From Self-Interest to Altruism – Plenary Panel Presentation (see Sami for abstract)

Sahar Sattarzadeh • Proposing Alternatives of Oneness: Decolonization of the Self and Discourses on Injustice

Imagine how contemporary discourse spaces—academia, digital and print media, literature, social networks—highlight (and sometimes fetishize) disparities, having the capacity to either further exacerbate or help facilitate actions and attitudes of contention. In this session, participants will review and analyze a variety of discourse mediums (press and video clips, articles, literary excerpts, etc.) that underline disunity, inequality, inequity, and injustice. Through a coherence of selected Sacred Texts and critical and decolonial analyses (e.g., Césaire, Dissanayake, Fanon, Foucault, Macedo, Said, Tuck, and Thiong'o), participants will collaborate in learning about “decolonizing the self” and transforming these discursive tools and “ourselves.”

SAHAR D. SATTARZADEH is an educator, researcher, and activist with a doctorate in international education policy. She teaches sociology and conducts research for Minority Rights Group International and UN-based Independent Experts. Her research and advocacy areas include: critical studies, demography of inequality, human rights law, and transformation of underrepresented groups.

Benjamin Schewel • Role of Religion in Society – Plenary Panel Presentation (see Weinberg for abstract)

Benjamin Schewel • Seven Narratives of Religion

The purpose of this presentation is to organize and evaluate the primary narrative frameworks that scholars are advancing today, paying particular attention to how they describe the shifting place of religion in the modern world. My basic argument is that the contemporary scholarly discourse on religion pivots around seven narrative frameworks, which I describe respectively as the i) subtraction, ii) renewal, iii) transsecular, iv) postnaturalist, v) construct, vi) perennial, and vii) developmental narrative.

BENJAMIN SCHEWEL is an Associate Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia and has held visiting positions at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. He received his PhD in philosophy from the KU Leuven under the auspices of a Fulbright fellowship. His first book is currently forthcoming with Yale UP.

Tina Shahidyazdani • Health Empowerment: Unlocking the Power of Individuals and Communities (see Loghmanee for abstract)

DR. TINA SHAHIDYAZDANI, MD, MPH, is a practicing pediatrician and clinic director at San Ysidro Health Center, a non-profit organization providing healthcare to underserved populations in the border area of San Diego, California. Her primary interests are adolescent medicine and obesity.

Ryan Siegel • From Self-Interest to Altruism – Plenary Panel Presentation (see Sami for abstract)

Ryan Siegel • Engaging the Discourse on Economic Inequality Part I & Part II (see Ho for abstract)

RYAN SIEGEL, PhD in Applied Economics, Oregon State University, resides with his wife in Tacoma, Washington, and will begin teaching economics at University of Washington Tacoma this Fall. For the last two years Ryan worked with SecondMuse to advise foundations and multilateral organizations using system dynamics tools and approaches.

Dinesh Singh • A Scientific Basis for Understanding Materialism Within the Context of the Bahá'í Faith

The Bahá'í Writings make it very clear that materialism is a fundamentally destructive social force, using words like “cancerous,” “pernicious,” and “brutal” to describe its characteristics and impact upon global society. Given that the basis for holding a belief in materialism is the physical universe itself, it is very important to address what are the physical properties of matter, such that its implications can be identified in how human beings with materialistic mindsets interact with other people and their environments. This presentation will establish this link with examples.

DINESH SINGH, PhD, is a Canadian theoretical physicist from the University of Regina and a member of the Bahá'í Faith since 1994. Dr. Singh's scientific research is on gravitation and cosmology, as described by Albert Einstein's Theory of General Relativity, plus the quantum nature of space-time.

David Smith • Challenging Assumptions, Seeking Answers, and Searching for the Truth

Considering we are constantly being informed of multiple versions and shades of the “truth” through various agencies of society such as, the news, social media, the internet, institutions of learning, various religious doctrines, political ideologies etc. how do we measure and weigh this information and in an unfettered manner search for the truth? Answers to these questions can be found in the Writings of the Faith and through engaging in the Plans of the Universal House of Justice.

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, China.

Mary Sobhani • Postsecular Literary Criticism and Bahá'í Thought

This presentation offers postsecular literary theory as a bridge towards the development of Bahá'í literary theory. Through the examination of Bahiyyih Nakhjavani's novel *The Woman Who Read Too Much* as well as Luis Alberto Urrea's *The Hummingbird's Daughter*, this presentation explores how a world-view in which the spiritual has particular importance, not as a supersession of quotidian reality but in an integral partnership with it, not only is the baseline upon which postsecular thought is built, but also offers fascinating points of juncture with nascent Bahá'í literary theory.

DR. MARY SOBHANI holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Arkansas. She teaches at the University of Arkansas Fort Smith's Department of World Languages. Her work can be found in *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies*, *The Acentos Review*, *@Urban Magazine*, and *Humanities Education and Research Journal*.

Robert Stockman • Advancing the Life of the Mind Online: Twenty Years of Wilmette Institute Experience

For 20 years the Wilmette Institute has been advancing the life of the mind in the Bahá'í community and encouraging the application of that life in acts of service. It conducts 45 online courses reaching 1,100 learners annually, covering world religions and Bahá'í texts, history, and teachings. Its courses impart knowledge and skills and encourage the learners to use their new understandings in study circles, children and youth classes, firesides, deepenings, and public talks. The Institute is now conducting Web Talks, publishing student projects, stimulating the arts and fostering scholarship.

ROBERT STOCKMAN has a doctorate in religious studies from Harvard University. He is the author of four books of Bahá'í history, one introductory textbook on the Faith, and numerous articles. He is Director of the Wilmette Institute and instructor of religious studies at Indiana University South Bend.

Rebecca Tavangar • An Exploration of Intrinsic Commitment to Service as a Potential Therapeutic Approach in Mental Health Counselling

Considering the positive causal effects of eudaimonic behavior, this presentation proposes that intrinsic commitments of service to one's family, friends, and connections within one's local and the broader community, may assist in ameliorating presenting symptoms of existential distress and/or psychopathology. Fundamental to this social dynamic is a salutogenic approach that values the subtle equilibrium between our psychological, physical, and spiritual integrity as foundational to well-being.

REBECCA TAVANGAR is a Contemplative Psychotherapist in Malvern, Pennsylvania. She holds an MA in Mental Health Counseling from Union Institute and University in Vermont. As a clinician she integrates disciplines of mindfulness training and cognitive reframing in the context of core spiritual exploration.

Shaheen Tedjarati • Shoghi Effendi: The CEIO (Chief Executive and Inspired Officer) The Ultimate Example and Guide for Principled Leadership and Management

Principled leadership and management are among the most important topics and ultimate goals for organizations and governments worldwide. History and research prove that principled and moral based leadership are the cornerstone of successful organizations and societies, failure and paucity of which has serious implications. Shoghi Effendi is a bewildering example of a young leader who accomplished feats in 36 years of His ministry that defied all odds and amazes students of leadership. His gift was not just inspiration but rather a methodical, principled, consistent approach to management and leadership that carried a fledgling community and help it blossom into a worldwide faith.

DR. TEDJARATI is a professor and chief of surgery and oncology in New York. He has studied leadership and management extensively. He holds a MBA in Leadership in Healthcare from Yale University and a

MPH from Johns Hopkins University. His interests include effects of leadership and social corporate responsibility.

Elena VanderDussen Toukan • Striving for Universal Education: The Community as a Protagonist

Extending the reach of universal education is not simply achieved through the delivery of goods and services. Rather, education is a relational process that involves collaboration among institutions, individuals and communities. While individuals and institutions may appear especially visible in global educational discourses, the community at times seems more subtle in its constitution. This presentation draws from experiences and concepts from the Bahá'í community as well as from broader discourses of global education to delve deeper into evolving roles of communities in educational growth.

ELENA TOUKAN is a PhD student at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education. Her research interests focus on the empowerment of individuals, communities and institutions to contribute to the advancement of universal education.

Jordan van Rijn • Engaging the Discourse on Economic Inequality Part I & Part II (see Ho for abstract)

JORDAN VAN RIJN is a PhD student in Applied Economics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and holds a Master 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.

Louis Venters • From Oppression to Empowerment – Plenary Panel Presentation (see Payam Akhavan for Abstract)

LOUIS VENTERS is an associate professor of African, African American, and southern U.S. history at Francis Marion University and a public history consultant. His first book, *No Jim Crow Church: The Origins of South Carolina's Bahá'í Community*, is forthcoming from the University Press of Florida. He blogs on issues related to race, religion, history, and culture at www.louisventers.com.

Deborah Walters • Rational Soul: Healing Soul

A clear understanding of the mind allows us to harness its potentiality for health. 'Abdu'l-Bahá tells us the mind is the all unifying agency that unites the parts. How does the mind act between soul and body allowing each to operate in its specific function with perfect order and yet cooperate and react with one another? And what does it mean when 'Abdu'l-Bahá says that it's the mind in the herb and mineral that heals? Explore the various powers of the mind and its limitations in the context of health.

DEBORAH WALTERS is a Naturopath and Homeopath. She is a dynamic speaker on health and spirituality, both professionally and at Green Acre Bahá'í School, summer schools and national conferences. Her recent book, *The Supreme Remedy*, discusses the concepts of mind, body and soul in the context of the Fast and health.

Matthew Weinberg (moderator), Julia Berger, Emily Goshey, and Benjamin Schewel • Role of Religion in Society – Plenary Panel Presentation

This interview-style panel will present the research and reflections of three scholars working in the field of religion and society. Among other things it will address: key concepts and concerns in the study of religion in society, limitations of current approaches in this field, possibilities for Bahá'í engagement, the relationship between community-building efforts and the intellectual life of the community, and the panelists' experiences of applying insights from the Bahá'í Revelation in their areas of research.

MATTHEW WEINBERG served as Research Director of the Bahá'í International Community, and led the initial work of the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity in contributing to international development discourse. He was a senior analyst with the United States Congress Office of Technology Assessment in Washington, DC. He currently serves as director of the Bahá'í Internet Agency.

Mary Jo Wilder • Alternatives to Violence Program Creates a Peace Conference: A Personal Narrative for Social Action in the Local Community

Bahá'u'lláh states, "Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and center your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements." *The Daily News* headline reads that the Virgin Islands "homicide rate still among the world's highest." Every other week, a student or colleague misses classes for a funeral. We are on an island and cannot easily escape; we feel the impact of violence. I sign up for Alternatives to Violence training. This changes the way I teach at the university.

MARY JO WILDER is currently an Assistant Professor of English at the University of the Virgin Islands. She has taught first grade through college classes in East Africa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, China, Native American Reservations, and Northern Michigan alongside raising three daughters and a son.

Jennifer Yazdi • The Secret to Global Transformation: A Look at How the Writings Depart from What Traditional Research Says Will Propel Global Advancement

Why have global standards and policies significantly advanced to protect environmental interests, but not for human rights interests? Modern economists and political scientists posit that our desire to help global situations is motivated only by economic self-interest. Because there is no obvious economic gain from advancing human rights interests, standards and policies therefore stagnate. How then do we go about propelling advancements in human rights interests or any global civil transformation? This session will explore how the Writings provide us with a starting point at the individual level

JENNIFER YAZDI is an attorney practicing complex business litigation in San Francisco. She earned her JD from UC Davis School of Law where she worked for the Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court. She completed her Master at the London School of Economics focusing on globalization and international environmental law.

Payam Zamani • The Life of the Mind Online—BahaiTeachings.org (see Langness for abstract)

PAYAM ZAMANI is the founder and Executive Editor of BahaiTeachings.org, and founder and CEO of three successful tech companies in Silicon Valley. Payam serves on the board of directors or advisors of SoulPancake, Tahirih Justice, Fundly, Les Concierges, TheRealReal, OpenPlacement and TalkWheel.

Artists Performing

URSULA MATLOCK, vocalist, completed albums, Music Food of the Soul and Spirit for Diverse Bahá'í Occasions. She earned her BA in Music from California State University, Fullerton, and MA in Education from California State University, Dominguez Hills. She is a member of the Music Teachers' Association and teaches piano and voice.

PRICELESS PEARLS INTERFAITH CHORUS, formed in 2013, has 20 members, ages 6 to 12. They are uplifting and inspiring, singing various types of music—sacred and secular—with positive and unifying themes, appealing to all. Music is important to the education and development of humanity. Priceless Pearls members reside in Orange County.

New Zealand born, Australia residing singer-songwriter/producer TOM FRANCIS is currently touring North America with his most recent Bahá'í inspired album—*From Up There*. A professional musician for the past five years, Tom writes spacious acoustic music interwoven with mystical and poetic narratives.

All the snow storms and polar bears couldn't stop MJ CYR from singing. Hailing from Canada, MJ snowshoed her way to California to share her devotional music. When asked how she feels about being at ABS: "It's just nice to finally take my parka off." www.mjcyr.com

Persian-Filipino singer ZINNIA says, "I don't know how to fix the world, but I do know how to write music and I hope my songs make things a little better. I know that sounds naïve, but a girl can dream."

ERIC FARR is a singer and songwriter who has been playing roots-influenced music for over ten years. He has played many shows and festivals in the last few years, sometimes by himself and sometimes with his band "Honeyman and the Brothers Farr."

Multi-Award winning guitarist ERIC HARPER creates not only a unique sound all his own but his music is melodically entrancing and virtuosically ferocious. Eric has performed all over world and has written music to over 52 TV shows and movies including Kevin Spacey's movie *Inseparable*.

BAYAN SANAEE, Saving lives by day, rhyming words by night. This 25 year old medical student who moonlights as a rapper says he has written lyrics everyday of his life since the age of nine. When asked why, he says it's "because of an overflow of love for the craft that never stops."

NANCY LEE HARPER (DMA) has been described as "an extraordinarily multi-talented American musician and scholar." Since childhood, Nancy devoted her talents to the service of God. She has performed in 25 countries, is a recording artist, author of books and articles in six languages, wife, mother, grandmother, and long-term pioneer (Argentina 1975-1977, Portugal 1992-2013).

AFSHIN TOUFIGHIAN developed an interest composing music from a young age. Trained as a classical pianist, he has maintained a career composing music for films and video games for the past ten years.

He has also released works written for solo piano, ensembles, orchestra, electronic music, and has written and arranged songs.

SHABNAM MOGHARABI and GOLRIZ LUCINA. *Living Artfully: How the Principles of Art and Creativity Advance Mankind*

Art can move and inspire your daily life. It can illustrate harmony and balance, beauty and perfection. But how can we take the principles of art and put them into practice to advance mankind? The CEO and Creative Director of SoulPancake, Rainn Wilson's Bahá'í-inspired media company, will explore the power of art and how living artfully can galvanize change, elevate conversation, and stir people to better themselves and the world. The presentation also discusses the importance art has in advancing the collective consciousness of society, youth, and mankind.

SHABNAM MOGHARABI is CEO and Executive Producer at SoulPancake, actor Rainn Wilson's award-winning media and entertainment company that spreads joy and celebrates the human experience by creating content for distribution via digital and traditional platforms.

GOLRIZ LUCINA is Creative Director of, SoulPancake, actor Rainn Wilson's Bahá'í-inspired media. SoulPancake creates thoughtful, uplifting video content for digital (www.youtube.com/soulpancake), traditional, and branded programs.

Conference Organization

<i>Conference Task Force</i>	Lisa Dufraimont, Mehran Kiai, Kim Naqvi, Parvin Rowhani
<i>Arts Programme</i>	Eric Dozier
<i>Children/Junior Youth Program</i>	Omid Missaghian and Nadeim Fareid
<i>Conference Coordinator</i>	Parvin Rowhani
<i>Logistics</i>	Camellia Pirmoradi
<i>Photography</i>	Peter Dizaj and Mel Jacobsen
<i>Programme Chairs</i>	Mehran Kiai, Kim Naqvi
<i>Publicity</i>	Farshad Jahed and Ron Carrigan
<i>Registration</i>	Nilufar Gordon
<i>Security/Ushers</i>	Rob Vedovi
<i>Stage Manager</i>	MJ Cyr
<i>Technical Director</i>	Geoff Cohen
<i>Volunteer Coordinator</i>	Ron Carrigan

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 the greater Los Angeles area.