

# BAHÁ'Í CENTER ASSISTANCE CORPORATION

---

AKA 'BCA'

# INTRODUCTION

---

- Welcome to Bahá'í Center Assistance (BCA) board's presentation
- My name is Farshad F. Monfared and along side my esteemed colleagues
- Ms. Kerry Mogharebi
- Mr. Ron Lillejord

# BAHÁ'Í CENTER ASSISTANCE CORP

---

An Agency of The National Spiritual Assembly of Bahá'ís of  
the United States (NSA)

## BAHÁ'Í CENTER ASSISTANCE CORP. (BCA)

---

- BCA an agency of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States
- Became operational in December 2005, after considerable investigation, consultation and planning since 1999.
- The National Spiritual Assembly provides ongoing direction and guidance to BCA through its Office of the Treasurer.

# THE PRINCIPAL ROLE OF BAHÁ'Í CENTER ASSISTANCE CORP. (BCA)

---

- Bring attention to the guidance about Bahá'í facilities
- Provide
  - Training
  - Technical Assistance
  - Ongoing Consultation with Communities / LSAs

# BAHÁ'Í CENTER ASSISTANCE CORP. (BCA)

---

- Since inception the BCA has visited communities:
- South West to North East,
- South East to North West,

That includes states from Kentucky & Alabama to Wisconsin  
From New York to California, Washington to Florida and....

# BAHÁ'Í CENTER ASSISTANCE CORP. (BCA)

---

- The BCA board has the honor / privilege of **in person** meetings with
- 35+ Local Spiritual Assemblies (LSAs)
- 55+ Communities
- Plus numerous Conference Call and email communications

# BAHÁ'Í CENTER ASSISTANCE CORP. (BCA)

---

The joy of years of consultation and bounty of visiting numerous communities and LSAs has help us to create a

1- Comprehensive (about 164 pages) Technical Manual

2- Comprehensive Database of the Facilities including pictures



# BAHÁ'Í CENTER ASSISTANCE CORP. (BCA)

---

As a resource to beloved Assemblies we provide:

1- Availability to Consult upon LSA's Request

[Info@bahaicenterassistance.org](mailto:Info@bahaicenterassistance.org)

(847) 425-7940

2- Technical Manual

3- Website: <http://www.bahaicenterassistance.org/>

# THE PURPOSE OF BAHÁ'Í FACILITIES

---

FROM 1996 TO 2021 THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD IS FOCUSED ON ONE AIM:

*“ADVANCING THE PROCESS OF ENTRY BY TROOPS AND ON ITS SYSTEMATIC ACCELERATION”*

*MESSAGE DATE 26 NOVEMBER 1999 UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE TO THE BAHÁ'IS OF THE WORLD*

## SYSTEMATIC AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

---

*“Experience has shown that it is the friends’ focus on the core activities that determines the extent to which a Center furthers the aim of entry by troops and promotes growth in a community .....Before taking action to acquire, expand, or renovate a Baha'i Center, Assemblies need to give careful consideration to the question of whether such action would support or detract from their communities’ core activities and pursuit of other elements of the Plan...”*

*Letter dated November 28, 2007 to Local Spiritual Assemblies from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States*

*One important principle that the BCA emphasizes in accompanying local communities is that their facilities serve the community and the Plan, and not the other way around.*

# PRIMARY FOCUS ON THE PLAN

---

- The prime directive of any activity or resource, including a facility or center, is to serve the current Plan. Therefore Baha'i communities and the Spiritual Assemblies that serve them are responsible for aligning their resources in support of the core activities of the Plan.
- A facilities size should be proportionate to the community's size resources and needs. Small and mid-size centers are the best fit for most communities.
- Large facilities, while impressive, are sometimes not what is called for, as they can divert much needed money, energy, attention and time from the urgent needs of the teaching and consolidation work.

# HOW BAHÁ'Í FACILITIES SERVE INDIVIDUALS, THE COMMUNITY AND THE INSTITUTIONS

---

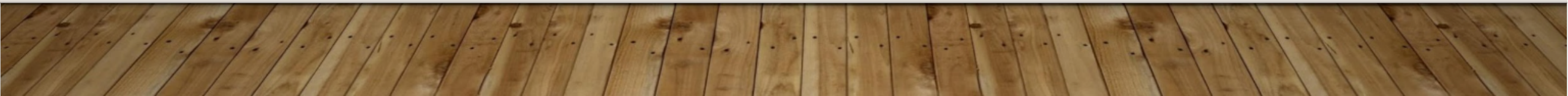
- In support of individuals, facilities/centers can offer services and resources that provide information – i.e. a bookstore or a lending library
- Facilities can also provide activities that help develop the devotional character of their communities with prayer gardens, meditation rooms and “Tranquility Zones”. These can be a service for the Baha'i's as well as the community at large.
- Centers are used in an institutional capacity for Nineteen Day Feasts, Holy Days, Assembly meetings and outward-oriented core activities – i.e. devotional gatherings, children’s classes, junior youth empowerment activities and study circles.
- Reflecting the importance of the arts in our communities, Baha'i facilities can offer a wide variety of artistic activities including open-mic events, jazz jams, poetry readings, choir or band practice, music lessons, art classes, children's drama, and many more

# OUTWARD ORIENTED SERVICE

## THE POSSIBILITIES OF SERVING THE WIDER COMMUNITY ARE ENDLESS.

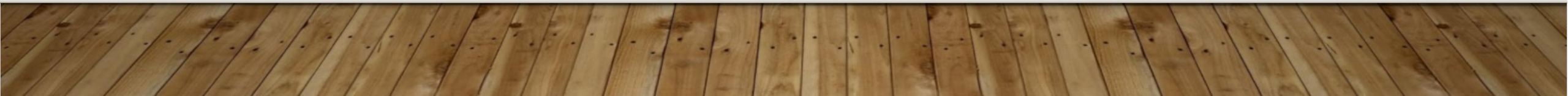
---

- *“The most precious and telling attribute any organized group of Baha’is possesses is the vitality of its community life, for the world will increasingly measure our success as a religious community by the vibrancy and joy it reflects.” (Letter of National Spiritual Assembly, November 28, 2007)*
- A few of the services the BCA has seen over the years:
  - Neighborhood gardens, various classes in service to the individual and community
  - Cafe Ruhi, Soul Food, open mic,
  - Memorial Services, weddings, family reunions, baby showers, wedding showers, children’s play groups,
  - Teaching walls and free literature for the public
  - Charity fundraisers, Disaster relief shelter,
  - Use by other community groups and organizations for meetings, classes and events
  - For a more complete list please see the list of [101 Uses of Bahá’í Centers](#) on the Bahá’í Center Assistance website ([bahaicenterassistance.org](http://bahaicenterassistance.org))



# TEACHING WALLS

---



# Baha'i Facility Teaching Walls - Silent Teachers



## Oneness of God

Baha'u'llah teaches there is only one God, the Creator of the universe. Throughout history, God has revealed Himself to humanity through a series of divine Messengers—they have included Abraham, Krishna, Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, and for this new age, Baha'u'llah.

The teachings of these divine Educators are the foundations of the world's great religions; their progressive revelation reflects a single great historical process by which God has guided humanity, provided for the spiritual and intellectual growth of individuals, and the advancement of civilization.

"All praise to the unity of God, and all honor to Him, the sovereign Lord, the incomparable and all-glorious Ruler of the universe, Who, out of utter nothingness, hath created the reality of all things, Who, from thought, hath brought into being the most refined and subtle elements of His creation, and Who, rescuing His creatures from the abandonment of annihilation and the perils of ultimate extinction, hath received them into His kingdom of incomparable glory, bestowing upon them His all-encompassing grace. His all-pervading mercy, could have possibly achieved it."

—Baha'u'llah

## Oneness of Religion

Baha'u'llah explains that the Creator has, and always will, send divine Educators to humanity—for there is no end to what people can learn, nor any end to our spiritual development.

The tremendous spiritual powers released by each of God's Messengers, and the pervasive influence of their progressively revealed teachings, and laws, have aroused mankind to objectively viewing and judging.

"These principles and laws, these firmly established and mighty systems, have proceeded from one Source and are the signs of one Light. That they differ one from another is to be attributed to the varying requirements of the ages in which they were promulgated."

—Baha'u'llah

"These sanctified Mirrors, these Bay Springs of ancient glory, one and all, the Essences of truth of how Who is the central One of the universe, its Essence and ultimate Purpose. From Him proceed that knowledge and power; from Him is derived their sovereignty..."

By the revelation of these Signs of divine virtue all the names and attributes of God, such as knowledge and power, sovereignty and dominion, mercy and wisdom, glory, beauty, and grace, are made manifest.

These attributes of God are not, and have never been, restricted specifically into certain Prophets, and withheld from others. That a certain attribute of God hath not been subjected manifested by these Essences of detachment is due to no other cause than that they are the Bay Springs of God's attributes and the Treasures of His Holy Names and not actively possessed by."

—Baha'u'llah



## Oneness of Humankind

The oneness of humanity is the pivot around which the Baha'i teachings revolve. It is at once a statement of principle and an assertion of the ultimate goal of human existence on this planet. More than a century ago, Baha'u'llah wrote: "The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unobtainable unless and until its unity is firmly established." Humanity's essential oneness is a fact that is in harmony with the genesis and very purpose of human existence.

"Having collectively passed through the stages of its infancy and turbulent adolescence, mankind is now witnessing the time of its maturity, a stage destined to witness the reconstruction and re-orientation of the whole civilized world—a world organically unified in all the essential aspects of its life."

In no country is the power and promise of true unity more demonstrative than in the United States—for the population of this nation clearly reflects the beautiful diversity of the human family.

"How ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exult himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul. Be with us the same heart, and with the same mouth and deed in the same land, that from your inward being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. Such is My counsel to you, O concourse of light! Heed ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit of business from the love of another's gain."

—Baha'u'llah





# BELLEVUE, WASHINGTON

## GLOBAL VISION

**A NEW ERA**  
The essential message of Bahá'í Faith is one of unity. The teacher there is only one God, that all races are members of one beautifully diverse human family, and that all the world's major religions have been progressive stages in the revelation of God's will and purpose for humanity. As revealed agencies of the collective coming of age, the true spiritual as well as physical progress for the world depends on our ability to grasp the spiritual goals underlying the outward phenomena. Bahá'í Faith is a religion that is not merely a set of dogmas but a way of life that is based on the highest spiritual principles that the earth has ever known and is destined to endure.

**HUMANITY'S FUTURE & A NEW SYSTEM OF VALUES**  
One of the most distinctive aspects of Bahá'í cosmopolitanism is its emphasis on the scientific and pragmatic way in which members face the future. The first step toward the future is to create a new civilization based on the global principles of justice, equality, and universal peace that underlie the world's religions. This new civilization will only be possible if humanity's highest longings for peace and collective well-being, and the most advanced scientific and spiritual knowledge, are united in a new system of values that is based on the highest spiritual principles that the earth has ever known and is destined to endure. There is no possibility to create a new civilization based on competition, greed, and egoistic competition for others or the quest for power, wealth, and status. Bahá'í Faith is a religion that is based on the highest spiritual principles that the earth has ever known and is destined to endure. It is a religion that is based on the highest spiritual principles that the earth has ever known and is destined to endure.

**SOCIAL & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
Nothing is more the central, essential work, Bahá'í is work around the globe with others who hold similar ideals. The Bahá'í Faith has been established as an international non-governmental organization with the United Nations and World Intellectual Property Organization, and the World Health Organization, the World Development Fund for Women, the World Bank, the World Bank, and many other international agencies. Bahá'í communities around the world practice the Bahá'í Faith in thousands of Bahá'í-sponsored social, economic, educational, and environmental development projects as a primary in the construction of a new world.

# BAHÁ'Í FAITH

"LET YOUR VISION BE WORLD-EMBRACING."  
—BABY'U'LÁHÍ

*"The gift of God to this enlightened age is the knowledge of the oneness of mankind and of the fundamental oneness of religion."* —BABY'U'LÁHÍ

**HISTORY**  
The Bahá'í Faith is a monotheistic religion that is based on the highest spiritual principles that the earth has ever known and is destined to endure. It is a religion that is based on the highest spiritual principles that the earth has ever known and is destined to endure. It is a religion that is based on the highest spiritual principles that the earth has ever known and is destined to endure. It is a religion that is based on the highest spiritual principles that the earth has ever known and is destined to endure.

**FOUNDED BY BABY'U'LÁHÍ**  
The Bahá'í Faith was founded by the Báb, a Persian religious leader who claimed to be the promised Messiah of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims. He was executed in 1850, but his teachings were preserved and spread throughout the world. The Bahá'í Faith is a monotheistic religion that is based on the highest spiritual principles that the earth has ever known and is destined to endure. It is a religion that is based on the highest spiritual principles that the earth has ever known and is destined to endure. It is a religion that is based on the highest spiritual principles that the earth has ever known and is destined to endure.

## COMMUNITY

**EVERYONE KEY UNITED**  
"The diversity in the human family should be the cause of love and harmony, as it is in nature, where many different notes blend together in the making of a perfect chord."  
—BABY'U'LÁHÍ

**PRINCIPLES EMPHASIZED**

- Oneness of Humanity
- Recognition of All Peoples
- Equality of Men and Women
- Independent Investigation of Spiritual Truths
- Religious Understanding and Unity
- Harmony Between Science and Religion
- Universal Education

**BAHÁ'Í ENDORSE TO**

- Pray and Meditate Daily
- Regularly Study the Word of God
- Develop Spirituality in Our Personal Lives
- Promote the Unity of All Peoples
- Avoid Backbiting and Slandering Others
- Live Bahá'í Faith's Teachings in Our Interactions with Others

**A WARM WELCOME**  
The Bahá'í Faith is a monotheistic religion that is based on the highest spiritual principles that the earth has ever known and is destined to endure. It is a religion that is based on the highest spiritual principles that the earth has ever known and is destined to endure. It is a religion that is based on the highest spiritual principles that the earth has ever known and is destined to endure. It is a religion that is based on the highest spiritual principles that the earth has ever known and is destined to endure.

### The Universal House of Justice

The Universal House of Justice is the supreme governing body of the Bahá'í Faith. It is composed of nine members from different parts of the world, elected by the Bahá'í community. It is responsible for the interpretation of the Bahá'í Faith and the guidance of the global community.

### Abdu'l-Bahá

Abdu'l-Bahá was the son of the Báb and the central figure of the Bahá'í Faith. He was a brilliant orator, a skilled diplomat, and a devoted servant of humanity. He spent his life promoting the teachings of his father and establishing the Bahá'í Faith in various parts of the world.

### Bahá'í Uluh

The Bahá'í Uluh is the sacred text of the Bahá'í Faith. It is a collection of writings by the Báb and Abdu'l-Bahá, which contain the principles and teachings of the Bahá'í Faith. It is a book that is read and studied by Bahá'ís around the world.

### The Báb

The Báb was the founder of the Bahá'í Faith. He was a Persian religious leader who claimed to be the promised Messiah of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims. He was executed in 1850, but his teachings were preserved and spread throughout the world.

# CHAMPAGNE-URBANA, ILLINOIS



## MADISON, WISCONSIN



Many Facilities have store front exposure with large windows and Madison, Wisconsin decided on the perfect solution for the abundant street traffic in the neighborhood. It seems not two centers have the same opportunities or challenges.



## HOUSTON, TEXAS



# HOUSTON, TEXAS



# HOUSTON'S MUSEUM QUALITY "SILENT TEACHERS"



## Bahá'u'lláh's Imprisonment, and Exiles



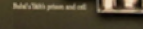
**1852 Tehran, Persia**  
Bahá'u'lláh was placed into an underground prison known as the "Black Pit." He sat in this vermin-infested dungeon with His feet in stocks and a 100-pound iron chain around his neck. It was here that the breathers of the All-Glorious wafted over Him and He was made aware of His exalted station as "The Promised One of all Ages."



**1853 Baghdad**  
On 22 April 1853, Bahá'u'lláh and His companions camped in a garden on the banks of the Tigris River for twelve days. Bahá'u'lláh told these few friends that He was the One foretold by the Báb, and all the world's scriptures. He describes it as,



"the Spot from which He shed upon the whole of creation the splendours of His Name, The All-Merciful."



**1863 Adrianople**  
The mid-winter journey from Constantinople to Adrianople (Edirne) lasted only twelve days, but it was undertaken during the coldest winter in over forty years.

In September 1867, Tablets embued with power and authority flowed unceasingly from His pen to the world leaders of His time proclaiming His station as a Messenger of God, urging them to band together, and warning them of the dire consequences should they fail to establish peace.

**1868 Akka, Israel**  
This was the final exile of Bahá'u'lláh and His companions. The city had no source of fresh water. It was damp, infested with fleas, and rife with disease. It is here that Bahá'u'lláh wrote His most important work, The Most Holy Book - The Kitáb-i-*asfán*. It outlines the laws and principles that we observed by His followers worldwide.

## GOD IS UNKNOWABLE IN HIS ESSENCE

He sends us Divine Educators from age to age



The Manifestations of God are like perfect mirrors that reflect the light of God in all its splendor. While God is beyond our reach, these perfect Beings come to us from time to time giving us guidance and filling us with the energy we need to progress materially and spiritually.

## THE BÁB The Gate 1819-1850

Mirzá 'Alí Muhammed, later known as The Báb, was born in Persia in 1819.

### The Herald of a New Faith

In 1844, at the age of 25, the Báb announced that He brought a new Message (Faith) from God to prepare humanity for the appearance of yet another Messenger, One who would usher in the age of peace and justice as promised in Islam, Christianity, and all the other world religions.



Room where The Báb, declared His Station.



Execution Barracks

Thousands of the Báb's followers were put to death. The Báb Himself, after suffering seven persecutions during the six years of His ministry, was publicly executed in the city of Tehran, Persia, at the age of thirty.

# 1844

# ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS

## The Changeless Faith of God.

"...With faces beaming with joy, hasten ye unto Him. This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future. Let him that seeketh, attain it.... Through it the poor have been enriched, the learned enlightened, and the seekers enabled to ascend unto the presence of God."

— Bahá'u'lláh



In 1868, Sultan 'Abdu'l-Aziz, the ruler of the Ottoman Empire, further banished Bahá'u'lláh, ordering him to the Ottoman prison city of 'Akká (now known as Acre, Israel), a destination so remote and foul that the authorities expected Bahá'u'lláh, his companions and his Cause to quickly perish. Above is pictured the citadel where Bahá'u'lláh was confined for over two years.

### SOME SIGNIFICANT DATES IN BAHÁ'Í HISTORY

- Nov. 12, 1817 Bahá'u'lláh is born in Tehran, the capital of Persia (now Iran).
- 1835 Bahá'u'lláh inherits Faqih Khánuqá, with whom he cares for the poor and disadvantaged. They were recognized as "the Father of the Poor" and "the Father of the Community."
- May 23, 1844 A young Persian merchant, who announced the revelation of the "New Tablet" (the Gáziq), proclaims the mission of establishing a new day in God's eternal plan. Throughout Persia, he proclaims the advent of a new age and announces the coming of the Bearer of an even greater revelation, "One Whom God will make manifest."
- Letter 10/1844 Bahá'u'lláh recognizes the prophetic mission of the Báb and becomes an active and much-admired participant in this religious movement.
- July 9, 1850 The Báb is publicly executed by firing squad in Tabriz, in an effort by the religious and secular authorities to end the rapidly spreading Cause.
- 1852 Fearfully discerning this new religion and the Persecution it brings through-out Persia, Bahá'u'lláh is seized and imprisoned in a dungeon known as the "Black Pit."
- Dec. 1852 Bahá'u'lláh is released from the dungeon, stripped of his wealth, and exiled with his family to Baghdad. The journey was arduous during a harsh winter.
- April 1854 Bahá'u'lláh survives for two years with solitude in the mountain wilderness of Káshán. "I shudder at what God, our Creator, Meow does to us except Him."
- April 1863 Bahá'u'lláh is banished to Constantinople. As he leaves Baghdad, he announces to Persia in his company that this is the Manifestation of God foretold by the Báb and by all the religions of the past. The annual commemoration of this event is known as the Ráhidá Festival and is the most important season of the year for Bahá'ís.
- Dec. 1863 Bahá'u'lláh is further banished to Akko. An unparalleled period of evolution begins including proclamations to the kings and rulers of the world.
- Aug. 1868 Willing to relinquish his cause, enemies of Bahá'u'lláh instigate a final banishment to the prison city of 'Akká in Ottoman Palestine (now part of Israel).
- 1873 Bahá'u'lláh reveals the KÍTAB-I-AQDÁS, His Book of Laws.
- 1892 The KÍTAB-I-AQDÁS (Book of the Covenant) is revealed. Bahá'u'lláh arranges for his authority after His passing to be transferred to His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
- May 29, 1912 Bahá'u'lláh passes from earthly life at Bahjí, north of 'Akká.
- April 1912 Bahá'u'lláh arrives in the United States to meet Bahá'ís in America. The fundamental principles of the Revelation and teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, "the law of the covenant" and Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois.
- Nov. 28, 1921 Bahá'u'lláh's remains pass. His will names His grandson, 'Abdu'l-Efendi, as Guardian of the Faith. 'Abdu'l-Efendi serves until his death in 1957.
- April 1963 In accordance with the instructions of Bahá'u'lláh, the Bahá'ís world elect the nine-member governing body of the worldwide Bahá'í community, the Universal House of Justice.

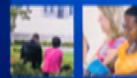
© 2008, a publication of the Bahá'í Faith, published by permission of the Universal House of Justice. The Bahá'í Faith is a world religion that is the latest in a long line of divine messengers. The Bahá'í Faith is a world religion that is the latest in a long line of divine messengers. The Bahá'í Faith is a world religion that is the latest in a long line of divine messengers.



At the Bahá'í House of Worship, there are 99 gates and 99 windows. The Bahá'í House of Worship is a place of prayer and reflection. It is a place where people of all faiths and backgrounds can come together in harmony and unity.

## LIVING AN INSPIRED LIFE: EACH OF US CAN HELP TO CHANGE THE WORLD

"One must see in every human being only that which is worthy of praise. When this is done, one can be a friend to the whole human race. If, however, we look at people from the standpoint of their faults, then being a friend to them is a formidable task."  
— Bahá'í Writings



**YOU ARE A PART OF THE ANSWER: YOUR SPIRIT BRINGS VITALITY, VISION AND LOVE INTO YOUR RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNITY**

- Bahá'ís pray to God and read from the Bahá'í Writings daily
- "I should be not content of the virtues with which ye have been imbued, neither be regardless of your high destiny... We are the stars of the heavens of understanding, the breeze that stirs the forest of life... With the common unity, and in a spirit of perfect fellowship, exert yourselves, that ye may be enabled to achieve that which becometh this Day of God."  
— Báb's Lúke



### BECOME A BETTER MEMBER OF THE HUMAN FAMILY. BUT REMEMBER: IT TAKES PRACTICE!

- Investigate truth for yourself, without preconceptions
- Abandon all forms of prejudice — race, religion, nationality, or gender
- Love humanity, demonstrate it with your actions, serve others
- Strengthen your spiritual character: truthfulness, purity, sincerity, modesty, humility, courtesy, patience, moderation
- Learn a trade or profession, work toward perfection in what you do



**WORK IS A FORM OF WORSHIP**  
Bahá'ís know that their daily work — when done in the spirit of service — is a form of worshipping and praising God. Bahá'í Writings: "It is incumbent upon each one of you to engage in some occupation... We have exalted your engagement in such work to the rank of worship of the one true God."

"O ye dear friends!... The dark night of hate hath taken over, and the light of good faith is blotted out. ... The Faith of the Blessed Beauty is summoning mankind to safety and love, to amity and peace... Therefore, O ye who are God's lovers, know ye the value of this precious Faith, obey its teachings, walk in this road that is drawn straight, and show ye this way to the people."  
— Bahá'í Writings





## GOD'S REVELATION: THE POWER TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD

THE REVELATION BROUGHT BY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IS CENTERED AROUND THREE PRINCIPLES:

- 1) **GOD IS ONE** "His creation hath ever existed, and the Manifestations of His Divine glory and the Day Springs of eternal holiness have been sent down from time immemorial, and been commissioned to summon mankind to the one true God." — Bahá'u'lláh
- 2) **THE RELIGIONS ARE ONE** "God, the Creator, saith: There is no distinction whatsoever among the Bearers of My Message. They all have but one purpose: their secret is the same secret... The measure of the revelation of the Prophets of God in this world, however, must differ. Each and every one of them hath been the Bearer of a distinct Message, and hath been commissioned to reveal Himself through specific acts." — Bahá'u'lláh
- 3) **HUMANKIND IS ONE** "Ye dwell in one world, and have been created through the operation of one Will. Blessed is he who mingeth with all men in a spirit of utmost kindness and love." — Bahá'u'lláh



The central building above the seat of the Universal House of Justice on Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel. Elected every five years by the members of national Bahá'í assemblies, the Universal House of Justice was endowed by Bahá'u'lláh with the authority to legislate on all matters not specifically laid down in the Bahá'í writings, thus keeping the Bahá'í community united and responsive to the needs and conditions of an evolving world.

**GOD HAS RENEWED HIS ETERNAL COVENANT AND PROVIDED THE MEANS TO ESTABLISH A JUST AND PEACEFUL GLOBAL SOCIETY.**

Bahá'u'lláh protected His Faith against disunity and division by providing written instructions on the succession of leadership and the interpretation of His teachings after His death. He appointed His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, to be His successor and interpreter of His writings. Bahá'u'lláh brought a unique administrative system founded on spiritual principles and methods. There is no clergy. Instead the Faith administers its affairs through a system of annually elected councils at the local, national and international levels.

"The worldwide Bahá'í community is a single social organism, representative of the diversity of the human family, conducting its affairs through a system of commonly accepted consultative principles, and cherishing equally all the outpourings of divine guidance in human history. Its existence is yet another convincing proof of the practicality of its

Founder's vision of a united world, another evidence that humanity can live as one global society..."

— from the statement: *The Promise of World Peace*, by The Universal House of Justice, October, 1985.



Believers in Bahá'u'lláh's Faith are united in their spiritual and practical objectives.



Every Bahá'í is called to contribute to the well-being of the world.



## THE BAHÁ'Í PERSPECTIVE: 6 BELIEFS YOU WILL APPRECIATE KNOWING

"Great is the blessedness of him who hath in this Day cast away the things current amongst men and hath clung unto that which is ordained by God... He Who is come from the heaven of eternity through the power of the Most Great Name, invested with so invincible an authority that all the powers of the earth are unable to withstand Him." — Bahá'u'lláh



**1 THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH IS A WORLD RELIGION THAT IS BUILDING HUMANITY'S PATHWAY TO JUSTICE, PEACE, AND UNITY.**

EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE. The Bahá'í Faith is outward reaching and inclusive. Most Bahá'í activities and programs are open to everyone regardless of their religious affiliation or viewpoint.



Qom, the birthplace of Bahá'u'lláh, is a city of peace and unity.

**2 BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IS RECOGNIZED BY BAHÁ'ÍS AS THE REVEALER OF GOD'S WORD FOR TODAY.**

THESE WORDS SHARING (THE COMPANION) IS A BLESSING — FROM THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

Bahá'u'lláh is the most recent of God's Manifestations. He was born in Persia in 1817 and passed away in Palestine in 1852. People from all walks of life and religious backgrounds have recognized Bahá'u'lláh as the promised One sent by God to quicken the world, unite its peoples and guide humanity into the next phase of an ever-unfolding civilization.



Qom, the birthplace of Bahá'u'lláh, is a city of peace and unity.

**3 BAHÁ'U'LLÁH TAUGHT THAT GOD IS UNKNOWABLE IN HIS ESSENCE.**

WE'RE HERE TO SERVE AND LEARN — FROM THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

God is the Creator of all, and He is beyond our comprehension. He created us out of love, and His love touches our spirits continually. Our purpose is to know His qualities and attributes and to express them through service to humanity. Death is the transition point at which the soul, having gained spiritual capacities in this earthly life, continues its journey toward God in realms beyond. Our aim here on Earth is practical lessons and mystical advancement.



**4 GOD HAS BEEN GUIDING HUMANITY TOWARD THIS DAY. HE HAS SENT PROPHETS THROUGHOUT HISTORY TO TEACH US. EACH REFLECTED HIS SPIRIT.**

THE DIFFERENCES IN THE MAJOR RELIGIONS ARE ONE OF THE THINGS AND FACTS THAT HAVE REMAINED AND IS HUMANITY'S STRIDES OF PROGRESS AND CIVILIZATION. God has revealed His Will to mankind by means of a series of divine Messengers, whose teachings guide and educate us and provide the basis for the advancement of civilization. Now we have come to the end of humanity's childhood and reaching through the tumultuous period of maturity toward adulthood. We have been given the guidance necessary to bring peace and unity to the world through the spiritual transformation of individuals and society.



**5 THE TEACHINGS THAT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH BROUGHT ARE NEEDED NOW.**

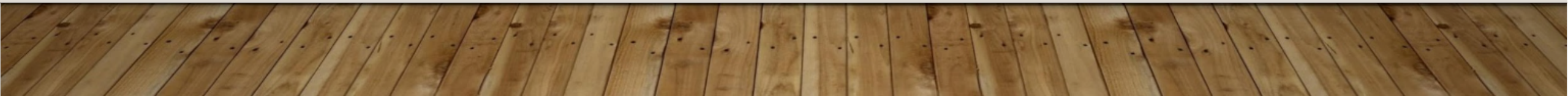
THE BAHÁ'Í ARE A NEW COMMUNITY BEING FORMED IN THIS DAY. THE WILL OF GOD FOR THIS DAY IS A "PROGRESSIVE" ACTION — TO BRING THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD INTO EACH AND EVERY INDIVIDUAL'S LIFE.

In this day, humanity is facing unprecedented challenges that cannot be solved without a global outlook and unity of thought and purpose among peoples of all races, nations and cultures. Building a just, sustainable and peaceful global society will require immense, focused effort over many generations — but we have God's promise that it will be achieved. Every individual, regardless of race, class or educational level, has spiritual capacities and abilities that they can discover and apply to the service of humanity. The Bahá'í Faith has no clergy and empowers everyone to become a channel of personal and social transformation.



**6 LOVE, KNOWLEDGE, AND SPIRITUALITY: IT IS WHAT WE PRACTICE EVERY DAY IN OUR ACTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, OUTLOOKS.**

- How does a Bahá'í facility express the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh to a casual visitor or interested inquirer? How does it convey what Bahá'ís do as a community and the aims of those activities? How does it support believers in teaching the Cause?
- There are as many possibilities as there are facilities. Some facilities, such as Eugene, Oregon have utilized outdoor space to create artistic expressions of Bahá'í writings in their gardens for passers-by to see. Some have utilized walls with messages and art combined. Some have used banners in windows with beautiful photographs and the Bahá'í writings, to reach the passers-by and the street traffic. Some have included history of their community to share with visitors. Some merely have a sign that reads Bahá'í Faith or Bahá'í Center.
- Whatever a community decides in regards to teaching walls, or windows will be predicated on the funds available in that community and the resources budgeted for their project. The key point to remember is that the facilities serve the community and the Plan, and not the other way around.
- WHO TO CONTACT FOR RESOURCES FOR YOUR TEACHING WALLS OR WINDOWS  
– ELLEN AT OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS (847) 733-3559



# SOME KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

---

*Emergency Plans*

*Rental of the Bahá'í Facilities*

# EMERGENCY PLANS

---

*“See what catastrophes overwhelm mankind.”* ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

- BCA has prepared “Emergency Operations Planning Manual”
  - Available on BCA website
  - Article in January/February 2018 issue of *The American Bahá’í*
- Reviewed federal guidelines, best practices and consulted with National Assembly’s Development and office of Public Safety
- Each community can develop own plans to respond to emergencies, based on tested set of principles and actual experiences

# EMERGENCY PLANS

---

## “Emergency Operations Planning Manual”

- Offers a series of templates to help gather key facts, appoint teams for planning and emergency response, identify local resources that can assist
- Sets out the elements of an emergency action plan, and needed trainings
- Includes information on recognizing and handling specific types of emergencies, from fire, natural disasters, acts of violence and other emergencies

# RENTAL OF BAHÁ'Í FACILITY

---

- Raises complex issues about
  - Federal, State, Local and Property Tax
  - Insurance issues
- Before renting its facility, a Local Spiritual Assembly or Registered Group should consult on the issues described below with:
  - An experienced local tax attorney or accountant on the tax issues;
  - An experienced real estate attorney on the zoning issues; and,
  - An experienced insurance broker or agent on the insurance issues.

# RENTAL OF BAHÁ'Í FACILITY

---

- **Non-profit Tax Exemption via NSA**
- **Federal Unrelated Business Income Tax (UBIT)**
- **Related and Unrelated Income**

Examples of related income (not taxable)

- Book store sales; occasional rental of Center parking lot
- Charging a rental to organizations with compatible service goals
- Fees for Bahá'í marriage ceremonies or occasional non-Bahá'í marriage ceremony

Examples of unrelated income (potentially taxable)

- Fees for regular non-Bahá'í marriage ceremonies
- Regular rentals of Center parking lot

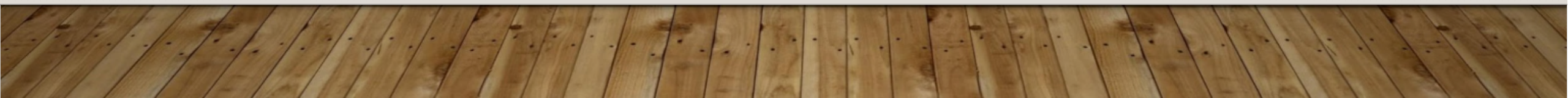
# RENTAL OF BAHÁ'Í FACILITY

---

## **Federal Form 990-T**

- If the LSA's unrelated business income from all activities, before deductions, is \$1,000 or more, it would need to file an annual form 990-T with the IRS
- If income less allowable expenses exceed \$1,000, federal income taxes at corporate rates would be due

## **Filing form 990-T does not affect tax-exempt status**

- LSA remains tax exempt
  - Tax-exempt status jeopardized only in rare circumstances
- 



# RENTAL OF BAHÁ'Í FACILITY

---

## **State UBIT and Property Tax issues**

- States and some municipalities may also tax unrelated business income
- For property tax, some States require Centers be used exclusively for religious purposes; many States allow an occasional/minimal use for other purposes

**Local Zoning Issues** - seek assistance from experienced real estate attorney

**Insurance Issues** - seek assistance from local insurance agent or legal advisor

- LSA may need to get a separate insurance policy (or a rider to an existing policy) or have renter buy insurance with Assembly as an additional named insured

## BAHÁ'Í CENTER ASSISTANCE CORP. (BCA)

---

- Rent / Lease / Purchase / Build?
- Sale or Keep Bahá'í Facility

# BAHÁ'Í CENTER ASSISTANCE CORP. (BCA) RENT / LEASE / PURCHASE / BUILD?

---

- Most, if not all of the information required for the decision are available via
- Technical Manual
- Website
- Consultation with BCA

# BAHÁ'Í CENTER ASSISTANCE CORP. (BCA) RENT / LEASE / PURCHASE / BUILD?

---

- Let us consider Beaverton Community as an example.
- Prior to the current center we had about 120 on membership rolls with about 45% - 55% participation.
- We simply ran out of room at homes. There were insufficient houses that could hold that many people.
- So LSA consulted for a while and chose:

# BAHÁ'Í CENTER ASSISTANCE CORP. (BCA) RENT / LEASE / PURCHASE / BUILD?

---

- Rent:
  - Renting was a great option.
  - Affordable
  - As needed basis
  - No long term commitment
  - No maintenance expenses
  - This went on for a while until our wonderful and very active kids got us barred from most of available rentals 😊

# BAHÁ'Í CENTER ASSISTANCE CORP. (BCA) RENT / LEASE / PURCHASE / BUILD?

---

- Lease?
  - LSA searched all available buildings but
  - none of them wanted us or qualified for community needs / requirements
  - LSA reduced its requirement and searched again but no results...

# BAHÁ'Í CENTER ASSISTANCE CORP. (BCA) RENT / LEASE / PURCHASE / BUILD?

---

- Purchase
  - LSA contacted two/three Real Estate agents and presented the requirements
  - For over a year we actively search, visited, reviewed and analyzed numerous properties
  - The properties simply either
    - Did not meet the basic requirements or
    - Too expensive and not within budget.

# BAHÁ'Í CENTER ASSISTANCE CORP. (BCA) RENT / LEASE / PURCHASE / BUILD?

---

- The LSA was simply out of options
- Exhausted every possible venue
- And yet no solution
- Thus once an opportunity presented itself on the main road, the LSA decided to
  - BUILD



# BAHÁ'Í CENTER ASSISTANCE CORP. (BCA) RENT / LEASE / PURCHASE / BUILD?

---

- As the Project Manager and member of LSA:
- Although we had Volunteer
  - Designer
  - Builder
  - Project Manager
- Most difficult / challenging project !!!
- Took about 5 Years
- Lots of tears, pain and joy

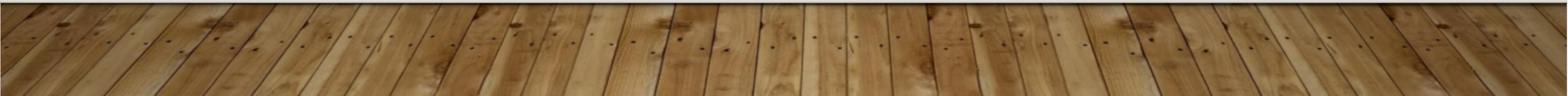
# BAHÁ'Í CENTER ASSISTANCE CORP. (BCA) RENT / LEASE / PURCHASE / BUILD?

---

- Beaverton Bahá'í Center:
  - 1- The most prominent Bahá'í facility in the state.
    - It is designed to stand out and silently teach the Faith
  - 2- The most heavily used center
    - Although we have decentralized key activities, the Baha'i center is used almost 7 days a week.
  - 3- The most recognized symbol of the Faith in Oregon
    - The center due to its location and design has brought prominence
  - 4- An incredible silent teacher since over 100,000 cars go by every day, especially during rush hour when they get to read the sign with Baha'i writings

# BEAVERTON BAHÁ'Í CENTER

---



## SALE OR KEEP FACILITY

---

- Ownership of facility compatible with grassroots growth
- In fact can complement each other
- Importance of sustaining unity
- Can decision be deferred?
- Permit focus on the teaching work and minimize community distraction

# SALE OR KEEP FACILITY

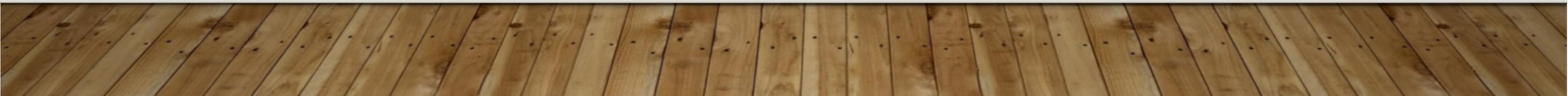
---

## Additional considerations

- Loss of purchasing power after selling may prove greater than cost of maintaining facility
- Avoid conflating “would we buy/build a facility now” with “should we sell the facility we have now?”

Many uses of Bahá'í facilities—see “101 Uses of Bahá'í Centers” [BCA Website](#)

- Can promote service to others, facilitate teaching work, while contributing to a vibrant community life



# BAHÁ'Í CENTER ASSISTANCE CORP. (BCA)

---

## Any Questions?

Please feel free to contact us:

Email: [Info@bahaicenterassistance.org](mailto:Info@bahaicenterassistance.org)

Phone: (847) 425-7940

Website: <http://www.bahaicenterassistance.org/>