

Association for Bahá'í Studies–North America

43rd Annual Conference

8 — 11 August 2019
Westin Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

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Important Information

Conference Badge Your conference badge is your “ticket of admission” to all sessions. You must wear it to attend conference sessions. 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 The program for ages 5 to 14 takes place in rooms **Ontario** and **Saskatchewan** on **level 3**. Parents may drop off children at their program 15 minutes before the adult session starting time and are required to sign a Medical Information and Emergency Health Care Release form and return it to the Children and JY program coordinators. Snacks are included in the program. Please pick up your children promptly at the close of each session and for the lunch breaks. The times for the sessions are:

Thursday, 8 August	10:00 am – 12:00 pm	/	2:00 pm – 5:30 pm
Friday, 9 August	10:00 am – 12:00 pm	/	2:00 pm – 5:30 pm
Saturday, 10 August	10:00 am – 12:00 pm	/	2:00 pm – 5:30 pm
Sunday, 11 August	9:00 am – 12:00 pm		

Room for Parents with Young Children Room **Alberta** on **level 4** is assigned to parents with children under the age of five. Toys and books are available. Plenary sessions will be live streamed to this room.

The Youth Conference (ages 15 to 18) takes place in **Les Saisons**, on **level 3**.

The Conference Bookstore is located in **Quebec** on **level 4** and offers a wide selection of books and materials, including books and CDs by authors and artists presenting at the conference, and Bahá'í-inspired jewelry. Hours of operation are

Thursday, 8 August 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Friday, 9 August 11:00 am – 1:00 pm / 3:00 pm – 7:00 pm
Saturday, 10 August 11:00 am – 1:00 pm / 3:00 pm – 7:00 pm
Sunday, 11 August 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Evaluation Forms The ABS Executive Committee values your feedback in continuing efforts to improve the conference, and invites you to submit your evaluation online at <http://bahai-studies.ca/conference-evaluation>.

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.

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.

Social Media, Photography, and Video Recordings Please do not film, and/or live stream any part of the conference sessions. Three official Conference Photographers, identified by their badge, will be taking photos throughout the event. These photos are property of the Association for Bahá'í Studies, which uses them for as historical records, for promotion of its own activities, and in reports to the institutions and to the general public. Plenary session recordings are available for free streaming and downloading on the ABS Vimeo page at <https://vimeo.com/absna>.

Conference Statement

Beyond Critique: Laying the Groundwork for Social Transformation

The theme for the 2019 Association for Bahá'í Studies (ABS) Conference—Beyond Critique: Laying the Groundwork for Social Transformation—builds on insights shared, and knowledge generated, at ABS gatherings over the past few years. A plenary presentation at the 2016 conference in Montreal, highlighted the “lamentably defective” nature of our current social order and the distinct contribution of our intellectual abilities, when inspired by the Revelation, in creating sound alternatives.¹

Several contributions at the 2017 conference delved deep into knowledge systems that have given rise to the present order, and ways in which they perpetuate social, economic and political inequalities, instead of resolving them. This line of thinking calls for a need to examine the interconnection between knowledge and power. As demonstrated at last year's conference by a panel of presenters working to build community with refugee populations in Clarkston, Georgia, important questions must be asked about how new knowledge is generated. Several presentations offered examples of the ways in which knowledge generated in active engagement with community (and, therefore, with social reality) can offer uniquely relevant and potentially transformative insights for a given context.

This year, ABS seeks to extend this line of thinking to reconcile two intentions in the process of generating, diffusing, and applying new knowledge: on the one hand, continuing to explore some of the deficiencies of the current order, while at the same time moving beyond critique alone, to introduce modes of thought and practice that align with Bahá'u'lláh's vision for social transformation.

The 2019 conference invites intellectual pursuits that endeavor to correlate the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh with lines of inquiry in various fields and disciplines in order to effect change at the level of thought, with further implications for change in practice and attitude. Specifically, we welcome contributions that help us grapple with the following questions:

How can we explore fundamental defects in present knowledge systems, while at the same time, advancing our understanding and generating spiritually grounded alternatives?

How can we engage in a critique of the underlying ideologies of knowledge systems without being limited by relativist, postmodern and materialistic modes of thinking?

Through Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, how can we ensure that our contribution to discourse includes both a deep understanding of what is, but also informed insights of what could be?

How can Bahá'í scholarship contribute to knowledge that seeks to lay the groundwork for new social structures built on principles of justice and oneness?

¹ Dr. Farzam Arbab, *The Intellectual Life of the Baha'i Community*. The 34th Hasan M. Balyuzi Memorial Lecture. Association for Bahá'í Studies Annual Conference, 12 August 2016.

	Thursday		Friday								
8:00			8:15 – 8:45 Welcome Breakfast: Grab a coffee and meet us in room <i>Oak</i>								
			9:00 – 10:30								
10:00	<p>10:00 – 12:00</p> <p>Contributing to Academic and Professional Discourses</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Part 1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Some General Considerations</p> <p><i>Governor General 1</i> <i>Governor General 2</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">See “Workshops” p. 28</p> <p style="text-align: center;">This session will be repeated on Friday morning at 9am.</p>		<p>Contributing to Academic and Professional Discourses – Part 1</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Social Sciences</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: right;"><i>Governor General 1</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>General & Professionals</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><i>Governor General 2</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Natural Sciences</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><i>Governor General 3</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Humanities</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><i>Provinces 1</i></td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">See “Workshops” p. 28</p> <p>10:45 <i>Ballroom</i> Plenary Session</p> <p>Beyond Resistance, Beyond Critique: Exploring Constructive Agency in Social Movement and Critical Scholarship Caity Bolton, Elizabeth de Souza, Holly Hanson, Michael Karlberg, Layli Maparyan, Michael Penn, Sahar Sattarzadeh, Derik Smith, Bradley Wilson p.13</p>	Social Sciences	<i>Governor General 1</i>	General & Professionals	<i>Governor General 2</i>	Natural Sciences	<i>Governor General 3</i>	Humanities	<i>Provinces 1</i>
Social Sciences	<i>Governor General 1</i>										
General & Professionals	<i>Governor General 2</i>										
Natural Sciences	<i>Governor General 3</i>										
Humanities	<i>Provinces 1</i>										
12:00	Lunch Break		Lunch Break								
14:00	<p>14:00 – 16:00</p> <p>Contributing to Academic and Professional Discourses</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Part 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Taking Initiative within a Shared Framework</p> <p><i>Governor General 1</i></p> <p>This session will be repeated on Saturday morning at 9am</p>	<p>14:00 – 17:30</p> <p>Simultaneous Breakout Sessions</p> <p>Details: table on p. 7</p> <p>Abstracts and presenters’ biographical information: pp. 12-28</p>	<p>14:00 – 17:30</p> <p>Simultaneous Breakout Sessions</p> <p>Details: table on pp. 8-9</p> <p>Abstracts and presenters’ biographical information: pp. 12-28</p>								
17:30	Dinner Break		Dinner Break								
19:30	<p>19:30 – <i>Ballroom</i> Plenary Session</p> <p>Official Conference Welcome Representatives of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: 0;"/> <p>Expressions of Constructive Resilience: African American Womanism and the Bahá’í Faith in Dialogue Layli Maparyan p.20</p>		<p>19:30 – <i>Ballroom</i> Plenary Session</p> <p>Bahieh Moayyad-Khademi Scholarship Award <i>Gelara Fanaeian</i></p> <p>ABS Award for Distinguished Scholarship <i>Roshan Danesh</i></p> <p>Contributing to Discourse Through Media and Storytelling: Insights from Practice Esther Maloney, Kyle Schmalenberg, and Amelia Tyson (chair) p.19</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: 0;"/> <p>Concert: Shadi Toloui-Wallace and Rosanna Lea pp.18 and 27</p>								

	Saturday	Sunday
9:00	9:00 – 10:30 Contributing to Academic and Professional Discourses – Part 2 <i>Taking Initiative within a Shared Framework</i> Choose any room <i>Governor General 1, 2, and 3</i> <i>Provinces 1 and 2</i> See “Workshops” p. 28	9:00 – <i>Ballroom</i> Plenary Session Some Thoughts on Contributing to the Intellectual Life of the Bahá’í Community Stephen Birkland p.13
10:45	10:45 – <i>Ballroom</i> Plenary Session Remarks on the work of the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity Ashraf Rushdy p.24 Accompanying Youth to Live Coherent Lives: Reflections from Ontario and Quebec Hoda Farahmandpour, Eric Farr, Ilya Shodjaee-Zrudlo p.17	What Lies Ahead for ABS? Julia Berger, Selvi Adaikkalam Zabihi p.13 Concert Joel in Real Life p.18
12:00	Lunch Break	End of conference program
14:00	14:00 – 17:30 Simultaneous Breakout Sessions Details: table on pp. 10-11 Abstracts and presenters’ biographical information: pp. 12-28	
17:30	Dinner Break	
19:30	19:30 – <i>Ballroom</i> Plenary Session Remembering Don Rogers Social Transformation through Reconciliation: Love, Justice and Unity in the Defining Moment in Indigenous Peoples Relationship with Canada Douglas S. White p.27 <i>Atsän Män</i> – Facing the World with Courage Louise Profeit-LeBlanc p.22	

Youth Conference – Les Saisons Room

Thursday		<p><i>Louise Profeit-LeBlanc</i></p> <p>Strength and resilience: What do we learn from our stories?</p> <p>2:00 – 3:30 p.22</p>	<p><i>Joel W. Corey Tamas</i></p> <p>The Music You Love</p> <p>3:45 – 5:00 p.26</p>
Friday	<p><i>Andrea Salguero</i> <i>Greg Newing</i></p> <p>Reflections on a life of service: Pursuing a profession and calling</p> <p>10:30 – 12:00 p.24</p>	<p><i>Masud Olufani</i></p> <p>Black roses grow from concrete</p> <p>2:00 – 3:30 p.22</p>	<p><i>Ashraf Rushdy</i></p> <p>Challenges and opportunities facing Bahá'í university students</p> <p>3:45 – 5:00 p.24</p>
Saturday	<p><i>Shidan Cummings</i></p> <p>One love: Exploring Bahá'u'lláh's concept of love</p> <p>10:30 – 12:00 p.15</p>	<p><i>Hoda Farahmandpour,</i> <i>Eric Farr, Ilya Shodjaee-Zrudlo</i></p> <p>Accompanying youth to live coherent lives</p> <p>2:00 – 3:30 p.17</p>	<p><i>Stephen Birkland</i></p> <p>Meeting with member of the Universal House of Justice</p> <p>3:45 – 5:00 p.13</p>
Sunday	<p>Main Ballroom</p> <p><i>Julia Berger,</i> <i>Selvi Adaikkalam Zabih</i></p> <p>What lies ahead for ABS?</p> <p><i>Stephen Birkland</i></p> <p>Some thoughts on contributing to the intellectual life of the Bahá'í community</p> <p><i>Joel in Real Life</i></p> <p>Concert</p>		

Thursday Breakout Schedule — 10:00am to 5:30pm

Room	Governor General 1	Governor General 2	Governor General 3	Provinces 1	Provinces 2	Oak
10:00 – 12:00	Contributing to Academic and Professional Discourses Workshop <i>Part 1</i> <i>Some general considerations</i>	Contributing to Academic and Professional Discourses Workshop <i>Part 1</i> <i>Some general considerations</i>				
Track	Workshop	Justice	Infrastructures	Agriculture	Psychology	Science
2:00 – 3:00	Contributing to Academic and Professional Discourses Workshop <i>Part 2</i>	<i>Chew, Dodson, & Nicholas</i> Bringing compassion and justice to the world of finance: Developing a Baha'i-inspired discourse about the role of wealth in society	<i>Tom Grushka</i> Transportation transformation: What would a universal, unity-building mobility system look like? p.17	<i>Gary Reusche</i> The rural cooperative concept of "village storehouse" p.22	<i>Talwar & Ghadirian</i> Socialization of children: Integrating perspectives of psychological science and Bahá'í Faith p.26	<i>Science Working Group meeting and information session</i>
3:15 – 4:15	<i>Taking initiative within a shared framework</i> p.28	p.15	<i>Rickards & Sheldon</i> New knowledge from old: Librarianship and the right to participate fully in the generation and application of knowledge p.23	<i>Karryn Olson-Ramanujan</i> Cultivating a regenerative world order: The pivotal role of agriculture p.21	<i>Louis Soucy</i> The mindfulness paradigm of mental health: Searching for a spiritual grounding p.26	
4:30 – 5:30				<i>Agriculture Working Group meeting</i>	<i>Melody Rowhani</i> Empowering spiritual and physical health education in vulnerable or incarcerated populations p.23	

Friday Afternoon Breakouts Schedule – 2:00 to 5:30

Room	Governor General 1	Governor General 2	Governor General 3	Provinces 1
Track	Science	Arts	Youth	Dialogues
2:00 – 3:00	<p><i>Stephen Friberg</i></p> <p>Science and the existence of God: Following 'Abdu'l-Bahá's example in engaging with the current discourse</p> <p>p.17</p>	<p><i>Lloyd, de Souza, Clarke, Kiel, Ighani</i></p> <p>I'm building me a home: How black artists can help us transform the devotional character of our communities and neighborhoods</p> <p>p.18</p>	<p><i>Akhavan, Aayah, Salguero, Akhavan</i></p> <p>Spiritual Knowledge, Social Transformation, and Youth Empowerment: An Intergenerational Dialogue</p>	<p><i>Tyler Carlson</i></p> <p>Environmental monitoring as a tool for community empowerment and protection of natural resources</p> <p>p.14</p>
3:15 – 4:15	<p><i>Yasmin Ayman</i></p> <p>The ethics of technological innovation: The role of artificial intelligence in a divine civilization</p> <p>p.13</p>	<p><i>Shadi Toloui-Wallace</i></p> <p>Writing songs for Junior Youth – Sharing insights and experiences</p> <p>p.27</p>	<p>2:00 – 4:00</p> <p>p.12</p>	<p><i>Paul Hanley</i></p> <p>Man of the Trees, Richard St. Barbe Baker: a Bahá'í pioneer in social action and public discourse</p> <p>p.17</p>
4:30 – 5:30	<p><i>Kevin Mehrabi</i></p> <p>Bitcoin, Blockchain, and the Bahá'í Faith</p> <p>p.20</p>	<p><i>Michèle Jubilee Davey-Hatcher</i></p> <p>Another kind of sight: creativity as divine inquiry</p> <p>p.15</p>	<p><i>Cindy Catches</i></p> <p>Life skills for the young Native American wellness program</p> <p>4:15 – 5:15</p> <p>p.14</p>	<p><i>Bolton, de Souza, Hanson, Karlberg, Maparyan, Penn, Sattarzadeh, Smith, Wilson</i></p> <p>Beyond Resistance, Beyond Critique</p> <p>Plenary follow-up</p> <p>p.13</p>

Special sessions

Indigenous Studies Working Group meeting: 2:00 – 3:00, *Manitoba*

Law Working Group meeting and information session: 4:30 – 5:30, *Manitoba*

BIHE open meeting: 6:15 – 7:15, *Governor General 2*

Friday Afternoon Breakouts Schedule — 2:00 to 5:30

Provinces 2	Oak	Maple	British Columbia	Room
Economies	Changes	Writings	Systems	Track
<p><i>ABS Economies Working Group</i></p> <p>Communities as economic actors?: Questions explored by the Economies Working Group</p> <p>2:00 – 3:30</p>	<p><i>Kamran Sedig</i></p> <p>Who am I? Identity and knowledge of self</p> <p style="text-align: right;">p.25</p>	<p><i>Foad Seddigh</i></p> <p>A mystic poem illumines the dark space of the Black Pit</p> <p style="text-align: right;">p.25</p>	<p><i>Elias & Parker</i></p> <p>Implementing the action-reflection cycle in transforming work environments: The case of “achieving moral excellence in business”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">p.16</p>	<p>2:00 – 3:00</p>
	<p><i>Chuck Egerton</i></p> <p>Being and Becoming: A photographic inquiry with Bahá’í men into cultures of peace</p> <p style="text-align: right;">p.16</p>	<p><i>Marasco-Vojdani</i></p> <p>Bahá’í Wills: The basics, the requirements, and an examination of society’s current concept of wealth</p> <p style="text-align: right;">p.20</p>	<p><i>Kimia Sedig</i></p> <p>How do we collaborate effectively? Exploring the dialogue between two complimentary knowledge systems</p> <p style="text-align: right;">p.26</p>	<p>3:15 – 4:15</p>
<p><i>Khajehi, Garrison, & Kempf</i></p> <p>Contributing to the discourse on corporate social responsibility: how the three protagonists play a part</p> <p>3:45 – 5:15</p> <p style="text-align: right;">p.18</p>	<p><i>Ramin Eshraghi-Yazdi</i></p> <p>A Bahá’í lens as a methodology towards documentary film</p> <p style="text-align: right;">p.16</p>	<p><i>Kathy Moore</i></p> <p>Huququ’lláh: Promoting oneness through a tax</p> <p style="text-align: right;">p.21</p>	<p><i>Adib Sedig</i></p> <p>Exploring principles and processes of the administrative order: A systems theory perspective</p> <p style="text-align: right;">p.25</p>	<p>4:30 – 5:30</p>

Saturday Breakout Schedule – 2:00 pm to 5:30 pm

Room	<i>Governor General 1</i>	<i>Governor General 2</i>	<i>Governor General 3</i>	<i>Provinces 1</i>
Track	Resilience	Race	Places	Rights
2:00 – 3:00	<p><i>Naqvi, Hanson, & Bolton</i></p> <p>Beta Modernity: three contexts for defining "Development as People"</p> <p>2:00 – 4:00</p>	<p><i>Masud Olufani</i></p> <p>Black roses grow from concrete</p> <p>p.22</p>	<p><i>Miloff, Padgett, & Rohipour</i></p> <p>The art of aging and dying</p> <p>p.20</p>	<p><i>Rohani, Aguilera, & Farahani</i></p> <p>Revelation and reconciliation: engaging in the discourse on reconciliation in light of the Revelation of Baha'u'llah</p> <p>p.23</p>
3:15 – 4:15	<p>p.21</p>	<p><i>Angelita Reyes</i></p> <p>"I don't see color": From global blackface to social transformation in global diasporas</p> <p>p.22</p>		
4:30 – 5:30	<p><i>Layli Maparyan</i></p> <p>Expressions of Constructive Resilience: African American Womanism and the Bahá'í Faith in Dialogue</p> <p>4:15 – 5:15</p> <p>Plenary follow-up p.20</p>	<p><i>Orkideh Mohajeri</i></p> <p>Troubling racial discourses extant in larger society: A close analysis of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's labor toward racial amity</p> <p>p.21</p>	<p><i>Ashraf Rushdy</i></p> <p>Remarks on the work of the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity</p> <p>Plenary follow-up</p> <p>p.24</p>	<p><i>Patricia Verge</i></p> <p>Contributing in a meaningful way to reconciliation as non-Indigenous people</p> <p>p.27</p>

Special sessions

BIHE open meeting: 12:45 – 1:45, *Governor General 2*

Saturday Afternoon Breakouts Schedule — 2:00 to 5:30

Provinces 2	Oak	Maple	British Columbia	Manitoba	Room
Health	Discourse	Economies	Humanities		Track
<p><i>Loghmanee & Osoro</i></p> <p>Reconceptualizing value-based medicine</p> <p>p.19</p>	<p><i>Samimi-Farr, Lample, Andrews, Abay, Hamilton, & McBean</i></p> <p>Developing an approach to discourse: The experience of the Office of Public Affairs</p> <p>14:00 – 16:00</p> <p>p.24</p>	<p><i>Dittmer & Kempf</i></p> <p>Rethinking consumer technology: Towards an orientation of individual as protagonist</p> <p>p.16</p>	<p><i>Michael Sabet</i></p> <p>Exploring political theory in light of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation: Finding resonance and contributing to a discourse</p> <p>p.24</p>	<p><i>Yogachandra & Taherzadeh</i></p> <p>Publishing with the US Bahá'í Publishing Trust</p> <p>p.28</p>	<p>2:00 – 3:00</p>
<p><i>Tania Nordli</i></p> <p>Applying four ways of knowing to finding diet solutions for illness</p> <p>p.21</p>	<p>14:00 – 16:00</p> <p>p.24</p>	<p><i>ABS Economies Working Group</i></p> <p>Questioning the Introductory Economics Course</p>	<p><i>Jordan van den Hoonaard</i></p> <p>Arguing for the necessity of God in Kant's moral philosophy</p> <p>p.27</p>	<p><i>Robert Stockman</i></p> <p>Progress on making Baha'i courses available for university credit</p> <p>p.26</p>	<p>3:15 – 4:15</p>
<p><i>Omid Yousefian</i></p> <p>Healing Prayer: Does current research assessing the healing power of this spiritual tradition support the harmony of science and religion?</p> <p>p.28</p>	<p><i>Media Working Group meeting</i></p>	<p>p.12</p>		<p><i>Agriculture Working Group meeting</i></p>	<p>4:30 – 5:30</p>

Abstracts and Biographical Notes

ABS Economies Working Group • Questioning the Introductory Economics Course

This presentation questions, from a Bahá'í perspective, the assumptions underlying economics as it is currently taught at the introductory level. While such courses do not capture the range and nuance found in the discipline as a whole, they are influential in shaping, through a set of simplified and materialistic conceptions, students' and society's understanding of human nature and economic life. How can we help undergraduate students approach their studies in a way that is coherent with the Bahá'í framework for social transformation?

Jordan van Rijn, Andres Shahidinejad, Stefan Faridani, Frances Mastry, and Selvi Adaikkalam Zabihi belong to a sub-group under the umbrella of the ABS Economies Working Group. Originally inspired by Farzam Arbab's 2016 Balyuzi Lecture, they aimed to examine the intellectual foundations of the current economic order that produces the extremes of wealth and poverty that we see today. Their exploration led them to focus on examining and reflecting on the purpose and role of the introductory college economics course content as an influential facet of the discourse. Currently, they are working on a document that humbly attempts to explore, in light of the Bahá'í framework for social transformation, the current discourse in economics as taught by the introductory textbook. Among the questions being explored: What is the current economic discourse teaching students? What can we learn from this discourse? What are some of its origins? What are some of its consequences? What critiques are being offered about the mainstream discourse on economics? How can the teachings of the Faith and experiences of the Bahá'í community help us build further on the current understanding of economics to advance civilization? The presenters hope that this evolving document will prove useful to anyone studying, or being introduced to, the concepts of economics under the prevalent approach.

ABS Economies Working Group • Communities as Economic Actors?: Questions Explored by the Economies Working Group

How can communities generate economic dynamism and reduce economic inequality? Is the cultivation of moral capacity essential to the ability of communities to be economic actors, and if so, how do they do it? Participants in this session will study and reflect on a

set of materials which highlight select activities of the ABS Economies Working Group over the past year. We will discuss key questions posed by the Working Group that illuminate the 1 March 2017 guidance of the Universal House of Justice asking believers "to make their own individual and collective contributions to economic justice and social progress."

Payam Akhavan, Aayah Amir, Andrea Salguero, Kian Akhavan • Spiritual Knowledge, Social Transformation, and Youth Empowerment: An Intergenerational Dialogue

Humankind has "been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization." How does participation in the discourses of society contribute to this aspiration? Beyond intellectualization, how does spiritual knowledge figure in social transformation and empowerment of youth to build a better world? Drawing on Bahá'í themes from the bestselling 2017 CBC Massey Lectures, Prof. Payam Akhavan will moderate an intergenerational panel conversation among three inspiring youth at varying stages of their academic studies and professional development who will reflect on how their personal experiences and insights from the Bahá'í Writings have allowed them to overcome challenges in pursuing a life of service in diverse contexts—high school, university, the work environment, and beyond.

Payam Akhavan is Professor of international law at McGill University, Member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, and formerly a UN Prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague. In 2017, he delivered the bestselling CBC Massey Lectures "In Search of a Better World."

Aayah Amir is a Master's candidate, pursuing an M.Ed in Social Justice Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education - University of Toronto. She obtained a B.A (Honours) in Gender Studies at Queen's University. She is currently working as the Socio-Recreation Coordinator at Tyndale St. George's Community Centre in Montreal.

Andrea Salguero is a second year law student at McGill University. Prior to this, she served as a staff member for the Bahá'í Community of Canada's Office of Public Affairs in Toronto and Ottawa. Andrea has a Bachelor of Arts from McGill University with a concentration in Political Science and Philosophy.

Kian Akhavan is a graduate of St. Edward's School in Oxford and founder of Girls Write the Future, a UK-registered charity with projects in Zambia. He has delivered a TedX talk on the impact of girls' education on development and is currently serving as a gardener at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Santiago, Chile, prior to pursuing studies at McGill University

Yasmin Ayman • The Ethics of Technological Innovation: The Role of Artificial Intelligence in a Divine Civilization

In light of staggering technological advancements, with the perils and possibilities they undoubtedly present, there needs to be a unified ethical approach to innovation. Even though the Bahá'í Writings state that science provides the basis in which development is made possible, science on its own provides no direction nor ethical standard, and is thought to only contribute to material civilization. Divine civilization, on the other hand, is the realm of ethics and moralities. Scientists, and the society to which they belong, imbue technology and science with value systems and ethical norms. In this session, we will explore justice and technology in a globalized world, particularly in relation to artificial intelligence, and the execution of a plan for more conscientious and spiritually inspired innovation.

Yasmine Ayman, born in Luxembourg, is a rising junior at Columbia University double majoring in Neuroscience and Philosophy. She conducts research as an Amgen Scholar in a neuroscience lab at Columbia's Zuckerman Institute. She is eager to incorporate spiritual principles in her future career in using science and technology to tackle disease and injustice.

Julia Berger, Selvi Adaikkalam Zabihi • What Lies Ahead for ABS?

This panel traces ABS efforts over the years to implement the vision and guidance of the Universal House of Justice as conveyed in its letter of 24 July 2013 regarding the work of the Association. It considers the endeavors of the Association in the context of advancing the intellectual life of the Bahá'í community, and as an indispensable element of the Five Year Plan. Focus is given to the development of the Working Groups and related seminars, fresh approaches and emerging initiatives, and efforts to reimagine the annual conference.

Julia Berger serves on the Executive Committee of the Association for Baha'i Studies. She holds a PhD in The-

ology and Religious Studies and is completing a book based on her dissertation about religious NGOs in international affairs. She is a Senior Fellow at Baha'i International Community's United Nations Office, and serves on the Leadership Team of the Women's Caucus of the American Academy of Religion.

Selvi Adaikkalam Zabihi has a master's degree in international development studies and education studies. She teaches courses on economic inequality in the United States and does qualitative research for program analysis in higher education.

Stephen Birkland • Some Thoughts on Contributing to the Intellectual Life of the Bahá'í Community

Mr. Birkland is a current member of the Universal House of Justice, to which he was elected in 2008. Mr. Birkland possesses a Bachelor of Science from the University of Minnesota and a Master of Science in counseling from the University of Wisconsin.

Caity Bolton, Elizabeth de Souza, Holly Hanson, Michael Karlberg, Layli Maparyan, Michael Penn, Sahar Sattarzadeh, Derik Smith, Bradley Wilson • Beyond Resistance, Beyond Critique: Exploring Constructive Approaches in Social Movement and Critical Scholarship

Over the past century, activists and scholars have understood that strategies to overcome oppression can be either constructive, focusing on building radically innovative, just social structures; or contentious and critical, drawing attention to the unjust behavior of those in authority to dismantle or transform them. Recent letters from the Universal House of Justice have specifically drawn attention to both the Bahá'ís of Iran and the African American Bahá'ís in the United States as communities demonstrating constructive resilience in response to oppression. Participants explore how constructive approaches manifest in social movement and critical scholarship within their respective fields, correlating such literature with Bahá'í experiences and ideas, and engaging in a discussion on this important topic.

Caitlyn Bolton is a PhD candidate in Cultural Anthropology at the City University of New York. Her dissertation, "The Spirit of Progress: Islamic Education, Development, and Modernity in Zanzibar" examines

the role of religious knowledge in conceptions of development employed by transnational Islamic NGOs.

Elizabeth de Souza is a writer and educator whose work explores the mysterious link between artistic genius, culture, and mental health, with a special interest in the arts of the African diaspora. She is a graduate of Hofstra University, and holds an MFA in creative writing from George Mason University.

Holly Hanson is a professor of history at Mount Holyoke College, where she teaches African history, the history of global inequality, and history of small-scale agriculture. Her publications include *A Path of Justice: Building Communities with the Power to Shape the World* (2011), *Landed Obligation: The Practice of Power in Buganda* (2003), and *Social and Economic Development: A Bahá'í Approach* (1989).

Michael Karlberg is a professor of Communication Studies at Western Washington University. His scholarship examines prevailing conceptions of human nature, power, social organization, and social change. His program of research focuses on moving “Beyond the Culture of Contest.”

Layli Maparyan, PhD, is the Katherine Stone Kaufmann '67 Executive Director of the Wellesley Centers for Women and Professor of Africana Studies at Wellesley College. She holds a PhD in psychology from Temple University. Her books include: *The Womanist Reader* (2006), *The Womanist Idea* (2012), and *Womanism Rising* (forthcoming 2020).

Michael Penn is a Clinical Psychologist and Professor of Psychology at Franklin & Marshall College. His research interests and publications explore the application of psychological research and theory to human rights, the interpenetration of psychology and philosophy, and the epidemiology of gender-based violence.

Sahar D. Sattarzadeh, Ph.D., is assistant professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at Champlain College and a research associate with the Chair for Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation (CriSHET) at Nelson Mandela University in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. She studies critical comparative global perspectives on (in)equity and (in)justice in sociologies of knowledge and education, science, technology, media, human rights, and activism/social movements.

Derik Smith is an Associate Professor in the Department of Literature at Claremont McKenna College. His

teaching and writing is anchored in the analysis of American culture and, particularly, African American literary culture.

Dr. Bradley Wilson is Associate Professor of Geography and founding director of the Center for Resilient Communities at West Virginia University. Dr. Wilson's research focuses on the role of cooperative practice in building community economies, particularly in agriculture and food systems.

Tyler Carlson • Citizen Science as a Tool for Community Development and Protection of Natural Resources

Public participation in scientific research—often called citizen science—is helping to expand global monitoring of issues such as water quality, biodiversity, natural disasters and public health. Recent advances in mobile and sensing technology, and increasing uptake of citizen-generated data by organizations and governments across the world are providing opportunities for communities to help monitor key sustainable development issues. Such initiatives are often voluntary, place-based, and driven by motivations of community service and environmental protection. Drawing on Bahá'í literature, this session explores citizen science through the lens of social transformation and the complementary roles of scientific knowledge and spiritual development.

Tyler Carlson is a policy analyst with Environment and Climate Change Canada and an independent researcher focused on community-based approaches to hydrology and climate change adaptation. His research explores the inclusion of citizen-generated data in national monitoring of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Cindy Catches • Life Skills for the Young Native American: A Culturally-based Wellness Program

The non-profit organization *Oceti Wakan* (Sacred Fireplace) has developed a seven-year wellness program for children from the 2nd through 8th grades. This curriculum has a Lakota/Native American culturally-based, whole-body approach using the ancient medicine wheel to teach how each of our “four bodies” (the physical, the emotional, the spiritual, and the mental body) needs to be equally nourished, educated, developed and protected in order to experience wholeness and to have the life each human being deserves. Our curriculum will, year-by-year, help Native children de-

velop the life skills, tools, and habits necessary to make healthy choices for their lives. This includes tools for dealing with trauma.

Cindy has been a home-front pioneer on the Lakota Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota for the past twenty-eight years. Prior to this, she worked with Mr. Sahba for two years, putting together a team to design and develop the terraces on Mount Carmel. She ran her own landscape business for twenty years.

Emily Chew, Daryn Dodson, Jenna Nicholas • Bringing Compassion and Justice to the World of Finance: Developing a Bahá'í-inspired Discourse about the Role of Wealth in Society

The global financial system is a crucial lever to reimagine to support the emergence of Divine Civilization. Yet the financial system's opacity disempowers participants to wield influence over it. The presentation seeks to empower each participant to seize opportunities presented by everyday activities of work, production, and consumption to influence the values underpinning systems of wealth creation and finance. It will explore how the concepts of "interdependent protagonists" gained from the Bahá'í community's experience, and the moral injunction to "lead a coherent life," can support us to identify and act on shared responsibility in relation to wealth creation and finances. The presenters will draw on their professional experiences in sustainable finance, impact investing, and philanthropy to illustrate and apply these concepts.

Emily is Head of ESG Research & Integration at Manulife Investment Management, responsible for bringing a sustainability focus to the investing of a top 40 asset manager and for defining sustainable investment client solutions. She sits on the Climate Action 100+ Steering Committee, a global collaborative investor initiative focused on the Paris Agreement on climate change, and is a co-founder of Asia Society's Action Lab for social entrepreneurs.

Daryn is a passionate advocate of social and economic justice, especially for disadvantaged and marginalized groups. He partners with investors to address the world's most pressing social and environmental problems. Illumen Capital provides a pathway for investors, foundations, and family offices to access the world's top impact funds and actively reduce bias throughout global financial markets.

Jenna is CEO of Impact Experience which facilitates convenings that build lasting relationships between investors, philanthropists, innovators, and leaders of marginalized communities—linking vision with action and directing investment to vulnerable communities. Jenna is also President of Phoenix Global Impact, a recipient of the Stanford Social Innovation Fellowship and an Echoing Green Fellow.

Shidan Cummings • One Love: Exploring Bahá'u'lláh's Concept of Love

The Manifestation of God is sent to revitalize and revolutionize the world of being and nothing whatsoever in human life is not touched by this transformative force. The concept of love, which differs widely between cultures and belief systems, and which has evolved and diversified over time, was refreshed and made anew by Bahá'u'lláh. This new vision of love and its role in human society is critically important to a correct application of Bahá'u'lláh's social teachings. This love is one that centres the servants on God, on the non-temporal in all creation, and is in its essence the elimination of undue prejudice.

Shidan holds a doctorate in chemical engineering and has academic, industrial, and government experience researching green technologies. He has been engaged in Bahá'í community building since he was a youth, and has been intensively studying Bahá'í concepts of love and marriage for the last five years.

Michèle Jubilee Davey-Hatcher • Another Kind of Sight: Creativity as Divine Inquiry

What is the role of art in investigating reality? Let us examine creativity as a faculty of the soul, which allows for spiritual and material inquiry and insight. A way of seeing, guided by meditation and intuition, and divine revelation. A vision that encompasses new ways of thinking, feeling and learning, through methods of consultation, collective action and a new understanding of the role of the artist in society.

Michèle Jubilee is a multidisciplinary artist and illustrator currently based in Vancouver, Canada. She holds a BFA in both Art History and Visual Arts from the University of British Columbia. Her research examines the human spiritual condition, mediated by modernity, materiality and the body.

Mark Dittmer and Brian Kempf • Rethinking Consumer Technology: The Individual as Protagonist

Computing devices for personal use are sold under the label of “consumer technology,” supporting passive consumption as their primary mode of operation. In this session we recast the individual as a protagonist applying computing in active pursuit of noble goals. We provide a brief overview of the history of networked technologies for personal use, and analyze their current configuration both physically and socially. Finally, we suggest principles different from those exposed in our analysis that we feel are fundamental to realizing technologies for individuals as protagonists, highlighting areas of research that show potential for their application.

Mark Dittmer is a part-time student pursuing a Ph.D. in computer engineering at the University of Waterloo. For the last four years he has worked on web browsers and operating systems at Google, Inc. Within the Google community he strives to advance discourses on user empowerment, and moral values and technology.

Brian Kempf has over ten years of experience in product management and operations in software industry and is at the heart of the professional discourse on how and why software should be built.

Chuck Egerton • Being & Becoming: A Photographic Inquiry with Bahá’í Men into Cultures of Peace—A Study into New Understandings of Masculinity

This study asks how Bahá’í men seek transformation to internalize equality of the sexes and summon the “moral courage” to “convey and model a new understanding of masculinity.” It is a narrative of my doctoral research with ten Canadian Bahá’í men seeking to advance Bahá’í thought, scholarship and academic discourse using PhotoSophia, a new art-based qualitative interview method. PhotoSophia is a positive, spiritual and introspective method that can reveal the potential for genuine gender equity while resisting patriarchy, vital to laying the essential groundwork in the internal and external “double crusade” to build the oneness of humanity and peace.

Chuck Egerton is a photographer, artist, writer and educator. He is a PhD Candidate in Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) at the University of Manitoba and lecturer at the University of North Carolina Greensboro

where he earned his MA degree. His BFA is from the Maryland Institute (MICA).

Nabil Elias and Jean Parker • Implementing the Action-Reflection Cycle in Transforming Work Environments: The Case of “Achieving Moral Excellence in Business”

The action-reflection cycle impact goes far beyond the core activities; it carries into every-day life and applies to the workplace. It is a part of transformational learning and an integral component that contributes to the welfare of society. To demonstrate how knowledge can be integrated with learning in action in the workplace, we use the example of the recently delivered course “Achieving Moral Excellence in Business,” offered by the Wilmette Institute in collaboration with ebbf, a Bahá’í-inspired global learning community. Each of the course units require action, however small or simple, consistent with the unit theme and the cumulative actions and reflection may contribute to the transformation of the learner’s workplace.

Dr. Nabil Elias, Faculty Emeritus, Belk College of Business, UNC Charlotte, is Dean of Education at ebbf. He has served as professor and MBA director at the University of Manitoba, visiting professor at Laval, INSEAD, HEC, ESCP (France), EGADE (Mexico), and has taught in MBA programs in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Dr. Jean Parker’s research interests include applying the Bahá’í Writings to community-based economic development and sustainability as necessary components of community resilience. She is on the economics faculty of the Wilmette Institute and teaches NGO management at Regis University in Denver, CO. Additional information about her research can be obtained at <http://www.trans-4-m.com/integral-innovations/integral-community-based-learning-for-emergency-preparedness/>.

Ramin Eshraghi-Yazdi • A Bahá’í Lens as Methodology toward Documentary Film

My practice in documentary film has become an exploration of common-place social ideas with which we live day by day yet hardly ever question. Following a screening of my latest documentary film, “Name”—a look at how common names affect our development and shape the world around us—I will discuss how through documentary film and my own lens as a Bahá’í, I am attempting to investigate current societal conditions in a way that opens common ground with

people who might otherwise be critical of a religious-based methodology. While my films are not focused on explicitly Bahá'í subjects, they utilize the lens of the Faith in the investigative approach geared towards a non-Bahá'í audience.

An award-winning professional film and video producer/director, primarily working out of Calgary, Alberta, and Montreal, Quebec, *Ramin Eshraghi-Yazdi* has over twelve years of experience, with credits in over 250 projects with over 600 videos produced.

Hoda Farahmandpour, Eric Farr, Ilya Shodjaee-Zrudlo • Accompanying Youth to Live Coherent Lives: Reflections from Ontario and Quebec

A growing number of friends in Ontario and Quebec are striving to assist youth involved in the community-building activities to establish a pattern of life coherent in its spiritual, intellectual and material dimensions. These efforts have generated questions that are being explored in the context of expansion and consolidation, social action initiatives, and efforts to participate in relevant discourses. The nature of these questions challenges us to bring a new level of intellectual rigour to the process: to delve deeper into the Revelation, analyze our experience more carefully and place it in broader contexts, and seek insights from pertinent academic fields and disciplines. This presentation will share reflections on some initial steps to participate in such a process.

Hoda Farahmandpour is a PhD student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. Her research examines the relationship between youth, employment and community wellbeing in urban neighbourhoods.

Eric Farr is a PhD student in the Department for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto. His research examines the interaction of secularism and religion in public education systems.

Ilya Shodjaee-Zrudlo is a PhD student in McGill University's Faculty of Education. His research examines the moral and political dimensions of modernity and how they influence educational thought and practice.

Stephen Friberg • Science and the Existence of God: Following 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Example in Engaging with the Current Discourse

'Abdu'l-Bahá used 19th century science concepts to explain how we can be assured of the existence of God. In this presentation, we review 'Abdu'l-Bahá's arguments, discuss their applicability to modern discourse on science, technology, and religion, and consider their relationship to once dominant views that saw both nature and scripture as teaching us about the unseen divine Reality. We will conclude with learnings from the presenter's extensive experience in bridging science and religion.

Stephen Friberg is a physicist living in Silicon Valley and working in the semiconductor industry. His work concentrated on quantum optics, entanglement and photonics. He has written over sixty technical papers and seven patents, and writes and speaks frequently on science, religion and the Bahá'í Faith.

Tom Grushka • Transportation Transformation: What Would a Unity-building Mobility System Look Like?

Transportation and mobility systems in North America are undergoing unprecedented disruption at a pace and magnitude never before imagined. Transportation systems of the past and present, dominated by single-occupancy vehicles and options that often segregate based on race and class, have reinforced division and isolation, but this need not be the case in the future. How can Bahá'í principles guide the development of universal, equitable, and inclusive mobility technologies and systems that foster opportunities for connection and unity building?

Tom earned his Master of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Colorado in 2018 and researches emerging transportation technologies, connected autonomous vehicles, and mobility behavior at the National Renewable Energy Lab. Tom lives in Littleton, Colorado with his guide dog, Relish.

Paul Hanley • Man of the Trees, Richard St. Barbe Baker: A Bahá'í Pioneer in Social Action and Public Discourse

Richard St. Barbe Baker, known as the Man of the Trees, was one of the first persons—and first Bahá'ís—to engage in transformative action and public discourse on global environmental issues. Working at the local, national and international levels, inspired and supported by Shoghi Effendi, and often collaborating with Bahá'í institutions and agencies, Baker articulated a critique of modern civilization environmental impact.

He engaged with local people to develop solutions in keeping with their cultural values and practices. On a global level, he strived to build an international consensus on forest conservation and afforestation. His vision and approaches created a ripple effect that continues to inspire some of the most effective social action underway today in forestry, agroforestry, and climate change mitigation.

Paul Hanley has published five books on the environment and agriculture. He is the recipient of multiple awards, including the Canadian Environment Award. His book *Man of the Trees*, with a forward by Prince Charles and introduction by Jane Goodall, is shortlisted for three Saskatchewan Book Awards.

Joel In Real Life is a fusion of original World and Ambient music that draws inspiration from the mystical teachings and history of the Bahá'í Faith. With two albums behind them (*Majnun* and *200 Years*) and another arriving fall 2019 (*The Primal Point*), Joel In Real Life debuts live this summer at the Association for Bahá'í Studies conference.

Samira Khajehi, Garrison Turner, Brian Kempf • Contributing to the Discourse on Corporate Social Responsibility

This presentation will examine the concept of corporate social responsibility through the lens of its three protagonists. Questions to be explored include: What is the current discourse around corporate social responsibility? Is there a place for the global vision of human prosperity? What are the roles and responsibilities of the three protagonists when it comes to business? Is there a difference when the business is publicly or privately owned?

Samira Khajehi resides in Montreal and works in mergers and acquisitions for TELUS Health. She completed her MBA in Strategy and Finance at McGill University and her Bachelor of Science in Biology and Political Science at Western University. She has experience working in fundraising, pharma and health technology.

Garrison is a strategy consultant with KPMG's Deal Advisory and Strategy practice where he assists clients with corporate strategy and M&A work. Prior to obtaining his MBA from the Marshall School of Business and joining KPMG, Garrison worked as an environmental engineer focusing on air quality.

Brian Kempf has over ten years of B2B software industry experience in product management and operations. Interested in the reciprocal impact technology and people have on each other, particularly in areas of retail merchandising, e-commerce, and digital marketing.

Lloyd Lawrence, Elizabeth de Souza, Kojo Clarke, Ursula Kiel, Jason Ighani • I'm Building Me a Home: How Black Artists Can Help Us Transform the Devotional Character of Our Communities

Many artists and scholars have, over time and in various ways, defined certain tenets that are specific to the arts emerging from the African diaspora. For those of us experimenting with ways to enhance our devotional gatherings by drawing upon various cultural traditions, this scholarship offers valuable insights. In fact, as we journey from congregational models of worship to those that encourage participation and co-creation, these insights might prove invaluable—especially in our Western culture that has historically misinterpreted and distorted the artistic intelligence found in these art forms. African American artists are uniquely positioned to help us access this knowledge, once we devise new strategies that promote their participation.

Lloyd Lawrence is an interdisciplinary artist who studied at the Tyler School of Art. A protégé of Sonia Sanchez, he studied painting under Jacob Lawrence. He created "Hush Harbor," a NYC devotional that ran for a decade, and is co-creator of Urban Juke Joint, an NYC open-mic.

Elizabeth de Souza is a writer and educator whose work explores the mysterious link between artistic genius, culture, and mental health, with a special interest in the arts of the African diaspora. Her undergraduate studies were completed at Hofstra University, and she has an MFA in creative writing from George Mason University.

Kojo Clarke is an educator who has a BA from Franklin & Marshall College and an M.Sc from Northwestern University. He is currently the Director of Diversity and Inclusion at New Canaan County School. Kojo is a great believer in the power of youth.

Ursula Kiel is the director of a non-profit Day Habilitation program for adults with intellectual disabilities. With her daughter, Ursula hosts monthly musical devotionals and contributes to monthly "race unity" devotionals. When she made her first pilgrimage to Haifa, she feels, Bahá'u'lláh illumined her voice. There, alone

in His shrine, she felt confirmed in her heart to sing to share the glad tidings of the Bahá'í Faith.

Rosanna Lea is a singer-songwriter from Cornwall, United Kingdom, who writes and performs original songs inspired by spiritual perspectives as well as musical settings of extracts from the Bahá'í Writings. Her new album *Story to Tell*, a collection of original songs, was released in June 2019. You can find her music at <https://rosannalea.bandcamp.com/>.

Darius Loghmanee, Sam Osoro • Reconceptualizing Value-based Medicine

For individuals who are striving to apply concepts from Bahá'í thought/scholarship in order to improve health outcomes, value-based care—a type of health care payment model that emphasizes keeping a patient healthy by addressing the root cause of a potential illness—is an approach that aligns with many Bahá'í principles. Since this is a fairly new conception of how health care can be analyzed, there are many questions that need to be addressed. What is the role of education in sharing and expanding this vision for the community, patients, family of patients, and health care practitioners? What assumptions are we making about the role of health care institutions? How are society's motivations expressed in its approach to healthcare?

Darius Loghmanee is a sleep specialist from Chicago, Illinois. He is the Director of the Advocate Children's Sleep Network, which is focused on helping develop capacity in a growing number of people within a multi-hospital system to think and act systematically to optimize sleep health in children.

Sam Osoro is a senior risk adjustment analyst at Tufts Health Plan in Boston, Massachusetts. He holds a master's degree from University of Texas at Arlington in Economics with a focus on Public Policy. His expertise ranges from risk adjustment to social determinants of health and healthcare payment reform.

Contributing to Discourse Through Media and Storytelling: Insights from Practice • Esther Maloney, Kyle Schmalenberg, Amelia Tyson (chair)

This presentation will share insights from efforts to contribute to the discourses of society through the arts, specifically narrative and documentary film. Film clips, theory and experience related to the application of the Baha'i framework for action to both grassroots and more formal spaces will be explored. Though tools

for media creation and media literacy programs proliferate, practitioners and scholars note that “horrific, grotesque and forbidden content” (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009, p.4) continues to emerge. What approaches, methods and knowledge from the community building process might be extended to the wider community through the use of story and media?

Esther Maloney is a theatre and film actor, director, writer and producer. She is the director of Illumine Media Project which creates and shares original narrative media content in Toronto neighbourhoods. Esther holds a BFA in Theatre Performance from Concordia University in Montreal and is completing her MA in Education at OISE/University of Toronto.

Kyle Schmalenberg is a filmmaker from Toronto. He has worked on TV shows, feature films, commercials and has travelled the world making documentaries, as well as working on an array of projects for NGOs at the United Nations. Locally, he also volunteers and participates in several community-based, grassroots, media initiatives focusing on youth and the promotion of positive, uplifting, and socially conscious content. Kyle is currently pursuing a Master's degree in psychotherapy.

Amelia Tyson is a documentarian engaged in telling stories about the environment and the role of women in society. Most recently, her film, *Water: Keep It Flowing*, was a selection in the environmental documentary category at the 2019 Visions Awards film festival. She is an MFA candidate in environmental and wildlife documentary filmmaking at American University in Washington, DC.

Layli Maparyan • Expressions of Constructive Resilience: African American Womanism and the Bahá'í Faith in Dialogue

In a letter dated 4 February 2018, the Universal House of Justice encouraged the Bahá'ís of the United States to look to the Bahá'ís of Iran, as well as to the African American friends, to better understand constructive resilience as an effective response to societal oppression. Womanism—a social theory and social movement praxis articulated by African American women based on their African cultural roots as well as their experiences of responding to and thriving despite racial oppression—is one avenue by which we might deepen our engagement with this important discourse. What can Bahá'ís learn from womanists and vice versa?

Layli Maparyan, Ph.D., is the Executive Director of the Wellesley Centers for Women at Wellesley College and Professor of Africana Studies at Wellesley College. She has published two books on womanism, *The Womanist Reader* (2006) and *The Womanist Idea* (2012). Her third book, *Womanism Rising*, is forthcoming. She is a member of the Constructive Resilience Working Group and serves on the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Framingham, Massachusetts.

Michelle Marasco-Vojdani • Bahá'í Wills: The Basics, the Requirements, and an Examination of Society's Current Concept of Wealth

In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh states: "Unto everyone hath been enjoined the writing of a will." Although Bahá'ís are permitted to dispose of their wealth as they wish, Shoghi Effendi explains that every Bahá'í is conscientiously bound to bear in mind the necessity of upholding Bahá'u'lláh's teachings regarding the social function of wealth, and the consequent necessity of avoiding its over-accumulation and concentration in the hands of a few individuals or groups. This session will explore the basics of Wills and Powers of Attorney, the requirements as set out in the Bahá'í Writings regarding one's Will, and how the Bahá'í Writings seek to lay the groundwork for new social structures built on the principles of justice and oneness.

Michelle Marasco-Vojdani holds a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of British Columbia, and a Masters of Social Work and Juris Doctor from the University of Windsor. She currently works at the Ministry of the Attorney General.

Kevin Mehrabi • Bitcoin, Blockchain, and the Bahá'í Faith

Blockchain is the underlying technology behind Bitcoin as well as many other projects. What enables this new technology is, in large part, a system of distributed self-governance that is reflective of a Bahá'í understanding of the concepts of consultation, elections, and community empowerment. In fact, there are fascinating parallels between the language used to describe the tenets of these technologies and quotes from the Bahá'í Writings describing voting and elections. Blockchain's main value is a "tamper-proof" system of record-keeping ensured by simultaneous agreement by distributed consensus of participants. For what other social issues can this technology be used, besides banking and finance?

Kevin Mehrabi is a Los Angeles-based entrepreneur and Founder of Wealthchain, Inc., a blockchain financial services company focused on empowering individuals to have more access to the benefits of their financial holdings. Kevin earned his MBA at UCLA Anderson as well as two bachelor degrees from USC.

Hayley Miloff, Molly Padgett, Varqa Rohipour • The Art of Aging and Dying Well

The Writings of Bahá'u'lláh inform us that among our most important purposes in this life is preparing, spiritually and socially, for our transition into the next world. Yet this is not reflected in contemporary society where fear of death and of the dying process is reflected in many forms: from pursuing heroic health care measures well beyond any hope of success to, conversely, hastening death through physician assisted death and dying. Communities are often unprepared to deal with the passing of a loved one. Using the lens of both science and religion, a group of health care workers seeks to explore what the prevalent attitudes towards dying are, how they contrast with a Bahá'í understanding of the topic, and what contributions Bahá'ís can make to a discourse that seeks to bridge this gap.

Hayley Miloff works as a Client Director at Silver Sherpa Inc. helping seniors navigate crises. Her passion for improving the care of seniors, caregivers, and the terminally ill led her to an MSc in Health, where she investigated the needs of family caregivers from ethnocultural minorities.

Molly Padgett works as a palliative care chaplain at Bellevue Hospital in New York City, where she provides spiritual counseling to patients and their families around complex medical decision-making and the dying process. She completed her Masters of Divinity at Union Theological Seminary in inter-religious engagement.

Varqa Rohipour's work as an orthopedic surgeon primarily focused on trauma brings him into contact with many patients and families who must make challenging decisions about their own or their loved ones' health, particularly those in their elder years. He often finds that for these patients this is the first time such a conversation has been broached and wonders what role physicians, society, and the Bahá'í community can play in changing this situation.

Orkideh Mohajeri • Troubling Racial Discourses Extant in Larger Society: A Close Analysis of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Labor Towards Racial Amity

Discourse shapes and orders society, mental models, behavior and more. There are a set of powerful racial discourses extant in American society that shape our realities and perceptions, both on individual and systemic levels. However, we have agency to reshape these discourses. In this session, we first explore the extant racial discourse; we then analyze stories of ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s actions and words during His historic travels to the United States in 1912, with an eye towards identifying concrete ways in which He opposed and disrupted the accepted racial tenets of that time. We end with reflection on how to carry forward in the light of His example.

Orkideh Mohajeri is an Assistant Professor of Higher Education and Policy Studies at West Chester University, Pennsylvania.

Kathryn L. Moore • Huqúqu’lláh: Promoting Oneness Through a Tax

The Kitáb-i-Aqdas establishes a unique and significant socio-economic and spiritual law: Huqúqu’lláh. Because it applies to material resources, Huqúqu’lláh resembles, at least superficially, a well-known material law: the US federal income tax law. Because it is a spiritual law, however, Huqúqu’lláh is also profoundly different. Indeed, because it is a spiritual law, it has the potential to transform society. This presentation will compare and contrast three basic aspects of Huqúqu’lláh and the US federal income tax: (1) the computation of the two “taxes;” (2) the enforcement of these laws; and (3) their goals or purposes. In discussing the law’s spiritual purpose, the presentation addresses how and why Huqúqu’lláh has the potential to transform society.

Kathryn L. Moore is the Stites & Harbison Professor of Law at the University of Kentucky College of Law. She is contributing a chapter, entitled “Huqúqu’lláh: A New Kind of Tax?” to the forthcoming book, *Transforming the Global Legal Order: Bahá’í Principles and Contemporary Social Issues*.

Kimberley Naqvi, Holly Hanson, Caitlyn Bolton • Beta Modernity: Three Contexts for Defining “Development as People”

This discussion traces development as an ethic and practice embodying a materialist view of human iden-

tity and social and natural law. Since the identification of sustainable development in the mid-eighties, with its uncomfortable implication that modernity is premised on unsustainable foundations, implementing an alternative has struggled against the pre-existing vision. Various practices at global and local scales, however, do provide both venues for change and collaboration, and scholarship redefining policy and practice. Participants examine the foundations of such critiques and resulting practices, and explore how they enhance our understanding of Bahá’í teachings, and how these teachings can contribute to community and collaborative efforts.

Kim Naqvi (BSc Biology, MA, PhD Geography) is a human geographer specializing in the study of social and economic development and cultural change. She teaches at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, BC.

Holly Hanson, see bio on page 13.

Caitlyn Bolton, see bio on page 13.

Tania Nordli • Applying Four Ways of Knowing to Finding Diet Solutions for Illness

In *Some Answered Questions*, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá states, “It is, therefore, evident that it is possible to cure by foods, aliments and fruits; but as today the science of medicine is imperfect, this fact is not yet fully grasped. When the science of medicine reaches perfection, treatment will be given by foods, aliments, fragrant fruits and vegetables.” He also describes four ways of knowing: the method of the senses, the method of reason, the method of traditions, and the Holy Spirit. An ongoing view of these methods can help contribute to the generation of new knowledge, all are necessary for acquiring knowledge, all need humility, consultation and learning in action.

Tania Nordli is a family physician, Assistant Clinical professor in Family Medicine at the university of Alberta, with a diploma from the American Board of Addiction Medicine. For over twenty years she has been treating patients afflicted by chronic pain, with experience using diet change as one way of ameliorating their condition.

Karryn Olson-Ramanujan • Cultivating a Regenerative World Order: The Pivotal Role of Agriculture

This session introduces the systems thinking “iceberg model” as a resource for identifying the intellectual

foundations of the current “lamentably defective” societal systems—with focus on agriculture, because of its centrality in the New World Order proclaimed by Bahá’u’lláh, and because of the potential of regenerative agriculture in addressing climate disruption and other interconnected ecological and social crises. Together, we explore the intellectual foundations of regenerative approaches, and what the Bahá’ís can learn from them. If we bring spiritual perception to these physical endeavors, what is then possible? Why are women key in this work?

Karryn Olson-Ramanujan, MPA, is adjunct faculty in Environmental Studies at Ithaca College, a teacher of ecological design, and has raised her family in an Ecovillage. She supports women’s leadership in the field of permaculture and teaches online courses in regenerative entrepreneurship.

Masud Olufani • Black Roses Grow from Concrete

This is a multidisciplinary presentation that investigates how creativity and artistic expression have served as mechanisms for survival and spiritual transcendence for the marginalized and the dispossessed. Inspired in part, by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s encounter with a thirteen-year-old impoverished African American boy in New York City in 1912 (whom the Master referred to as a “black rose”), this presentation will link the Bahá’í concept of the arts as “a ladder for the soul,” to the innovative ways creativity has been employed by the downtrodden to reveal the latent potentialities of the soul. Masud Olufani will pay particular attention to the inventive brilliance of Black vernacular expressions, which often contain multiple meanings, revealing the expansive possibilities of language.

Masud Ashley Olufani is an Atlanta based actor, mixed media artist, and writer whose studio practice is rooted in the discipline of sculpture. He has exhibited his work nationally and internationally, and has performed roles in numerous feature film and television shows.

Louise Profeit-LeBlanc • *Atsän Män*. Facing the World with Courage: Indigenous Storytelling

There is body of unwritten Indigenous stories which is relevant today as it was in past. These stories hold many spiritual and moral teachings for a broken and disunited world of chaos and lack of direction. Indigenous stories were instructive and were used as a guides to strengthen the community, by setting the

example of what their ancestors had had to face. Stories such as *Atsän Män* help us to strive to be strong like our ancestors and to emulate spiritual strengths and innovation that we never thought we could, they inspire us to take courage, persevere, keep our vision strong and to have the faith that any obstacle can be overcome if we are firm in our beliefs.

Louise Profeit-LeBlanc - Tse Duna, is a member of the Nacho N’yak Dun First Nation from the Yukon. She has shared stories from her people for the past thirty-five years and developed workshops for both adults and children to create a better understanding between the Indigenous and other cultures in Canada.

Gary Reusche • The Rural Cooperative Concept of “Village Storehouse”

News and research publications broadcast warnings of food shortages in the coming decades. Strategies for creating sustainable agriculture will require a sea change away from large-scale corporate agriculture and a reemphasis on locally managed farming communities. The emphasis of the Bahá’í teachings about the importance of agriculture implies dynamic rural communities capable of adaptation to climate change, extinction risk, water stress, political turmoil, and rapid change. Cooperative development in rural neighbourhoods is a response where Bahá’í communities can play a central role in the future of agriculture and overcome developmental obstacles. Cooperative entities coincide perfectly with Bahá’í development activities.

As a Bahá’í youth I was encouraged to study agriculture for international pioneering. I obtained PhD and MBA degrees, and since 1975 I have worked in more than 80 countries. As a socio-economic development worker, my service has always been based on the Teachings and experiences within the Bahá’í community.

Angelita Reyes • “I Don’t See Color”: Undoing Blackface for Social Transformation in Global Diasporas

To say, “I don’t see racialized color” is to deny a portion of humanity in the context of racism and oppression. Blackface, stereotypical antics of the subservient black body, is an imposed representation originating out of historical racialized hierarchies. This presentation explores blackface images depicted in the USA, the Netherlands, and Iran. How can we apply principles of

the Bahá'í Faith to help liberate the demeaning icons of blackface? Bahá'í perspectives on the “most challenging issue” engender new understandings for social transformation. We will also explore concepts from visual art, history, migration, and theoretical approaches on race, class, and gender.

An award-winning author, educator, and public speaker, Dr. *Angelita Reyes* is a distinct voice in today's global arena of new approaches for social justice. She has published extensively and presented her work for racial justice and ideas of social transformation at numerous national and international conferences, workshops, and seminars.

Lev Rickards, Lorraine Sheldon • New Knowledge from Old: Librarianship and the Right to Participate Fully in the Generation and Application of Knowledge

From the writings of Shoghi Effendi it is clear that libraries have a role to play in the civilization envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh. Participants will explore statements from the Guardian about the various roles the library might play in society, and then compare these statements to passages from current professional literature. Whether you are a professional librarian, a prospective graduate student, or a volunteer in a local Bahá'í library, this session will provide a space to consider concepts related to knowledge and justice from a Bahá'í perspective and apply them to the practice of librarianship. Participants will have the opportunity to begin articulating potential contributions to professional literature in library science.

Lev Rickards is the Associate University Librarian for Collections and Scholarly Communication at Santa Clara University. He holds a Master of Science in Information from the University of Michigan and a Bachelor of Arts in Biology from Carleton College.

Lorraine Sheldon serves as Outreach Librarian at the Gibson D. Lewis Health Science Library in Fort Worth, Texas, connecting communities in the North Texas area with knowledge and resources available through the National Library of Medicine. She previously served at the Bahá'í World Center as a photo archivist and received her M.S. in Information Science from the University of North Texas.

Sara Rohani, Rolando Aguilera, Nika Farahani • Revelation and Reconciliation: Engaging in the Discourse on Reconciliation in Light of the

Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh

As Canada moves towards understanding its history and the injustices perpetrated against Indigenous peoples across the nation, Canadian individuals, communities and institutions are grappling with the meaning of “reconciliation.” From the Judeo-Christian notion of redemption, to reconciliation as accountability, to outright “forgetting,” reconciliation is a concept that is susceptible to multiple interpretations. This presentation will outline some of the scholarship on reconciliation. It will then explore some of the philosophical underpinnings of the Canadian political and legal system that present challenges to reconciliation. Finally, it will draw on the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh in an attempt to offer new insights on the topic.

Sara Rohani is an associate with a Toronto-based law firm that works with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Governments across Canada. Her practice focuses on a range of areas including the negotiation of modern treaties and the negotiation of agreements between indigenous Governments and industry.

Rolando Aguilera is legal counsel at the Ministry of the Attorney General, where he advises the provincial government on Crown-Indigenous relations. He is the son of Salvadoran immigrants and currently lives in London, Ontario with his wife and sons.

Nika Farahani works as legal counsel with the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Melody Rowhani • Empowering Spiritual and Physical Health Education in Vulnerable or Incarcerated Populations

The increasing harms of substance use, addictions, and related complications such as the spread of infections the incarcerated population is at a higher health risk compared to the rest of the Canadian population. As a strategy to address this, Correctional Service Canada has implemented a Peer Education Course (PEC) in federal institutions around the country. Among the goals of the PEC program is empowering inmates to guide and educate their friends—and the rest of the population— about harm reduction, infections, and the implementation of spiritual principles relating to health and wellbeing. This presentation will particularly focus on the Ontario region and the experience in developing the curriculum as well as key feedback from the program recipients.

Melody Rowhani is a registered nurse who started her career as a nurse at The Ottawa Hospital. She has since completed her Master of Public Health and has worked at Correctional Service Canada at the regional level in Ontario facilitating and designing a peer program for offenders.

Ashraf Rushdy • Remarks on the Work of the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity (ISGP)

The Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity (ISGP) is an agency of the Universal House of Justice, created in 1999. Since its inception, the work of this agency has grown to include several research projects and some educational programs for youth and young adults all over the globe. This brief presentation will share some of the work of this agency, both in its efforts to foster research directed to pressing social issues and to raise capacity in young people to engage in the prevalent discourses of their fields and societies.

At a follow up to the plenary presentation, we will have a chance to discuss together some of the educational programs organized by ISGP.

Ashraf Rushdy • Challenges and Opportunities Facing Bahá'í University Students

Conference participants will have a chance to join a presentation and panel discussion on the Seminars for University Students offered by the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity (ISGP). We will explore together the opportunities and challenges Bahá'í youth find in universities and the role that these seminars can play in assisting them throughout their studies.

Ashraf holds an MEd, with a focus on Distance Education, and a BA, majoring in Psychology and Philosophy. He currently serves the Canadian Office of Public Affairs as a project coordinator and as a member of a Regional Coordinating Team for ISGP's seminars for university students in North America.

Michael Sabet • Exploring Political Theory in Light of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation: Finding Resonance and Contributing to a Discourse

Bahá'ís are aware that the politics of today's liberal democracies are inadequate for humanity's period of maturity. Many in the wider society agree but do not know where to look for alternatives. Bahá'ís can contribute to a discourse on governance by correlating Bahá'u'lláh's teachings with those strands of political theory that resonate in some way with a Bahá'í under-

standing. Participants in this session will explore some promising facets of classical and modern political theory, consider how these might find expression in practice, and reflect on how can we engage with them fruitfully in light of the Revelation.

Michael Sabet is a PhD student in Political Science at the University of Toronto, where he researches how participation in non-adversarial democratic processes impacts individuals. He is a lawyer by training, having practiced constitutional litigation in Ottawa after clerking at the Supreme Court.

Andrea Salguero, Greg Newing • Reflections on a Life of Service: Pursuing a Profession and Calling

Workshop participants will reflect on Writings from the Faith related to pursuing a profession and calling and the concept of spiritual distinction. In small groups, participants will be invited to reflect on how insights from the Writings may translate into the pursuit of excellence in a career.

Andrea Salguero – See bio on p. 12.

Greg Newing is currently serving as a regional coordinator for the Junior Youth Empowerment Program in Quebec. He recently completed his Masters in Conflict Studies at Saint Paul University and has a Bachelor's of Arts degree in Religion from Concordia University. His research interests include the development of transitional justice processes, truth commissions, and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups in Canada.

James Samimi-Farr, May Lample, PJ Andrews, Negar Abay, Ian Hamilton, Tschika McBean • Developing an Approach to Discourse: The Experience of the Office of Public Affairs

Over the last five years, the Office of Public Affairs for the Bahá'ís of the United States (OPA) has been reorienting its focus. Moving beyond pure representation of the Bahá'í community in national spaces, the OPA has been learning what it means to contribute to prominent national discourses, including race, media, sustainable development, economic inequality, and human rights. This shift in focus has also reorganized to some degree the OPA's self-conception from an entity that articulates a "Bahá'í perspective" in national spaces, to one that builds collaborations among like-minded people and organizations, developing a common vision on how to advance society.

As the Media Officer, *James* oversees and coordinates publicity for OPA. He also follows media as a discourse, collaborating with journalists, academics, and organizations to shape a productive understanding of media's role in society.

May co-coordinates the OPA's collaboration with individuals, organizations, and agencies in the US engaged in public discourses and policy advocacy directed toward racial justice and racial unity.

Negar coordinates the OPA's collaboration with thought leaders, organizations and government agencies engaged in public discourses and policy work to advance gender equality and economic justice. Prior to joining the office in 2015, *Negar* was a Fulbright grantee in Ethiopia.

Ian works on a number of interrelated issues, including climate change, climate finance and sustainable consumption and production, while seeking to promote principled dialogue in the sustainable development space – often in collaboration with other like-minded organizations. Prior to joining the Office, he worked at the World Bank and at the African Development Bank.

Tschika defends the rights of persecuted Bahá'í communities around the world, promotes international religious freedom and engage with colleagues and partners in discourse around human rights issues, including racial justice. *Tschika* is a licensed attorney, holds a B.A in Sociology, a J.D., and an LL.M. in International Law.

Foad Seddigh • A Mystic Poem Illumines the Dark Space of the Black Pit

Bahá'u'lláh first alluded to His station and mission in 1852 in the form of a mystic poem revealed while He was imprisoned in the Black Pit, a notorious dungeon in Tehran. An official translation of this poem into English was released recently by the Bahá'í World Centre. In this presentation, we will briefly review the oppressive conditions of Bahá'u'lláh's imprisonment and explore the contents of the poem from a historical perspective. We will then consider some of its poetic and mystical references to assist us to better understand the underlying allusions to His mission.

Foad Seddigh, PhD, is a retired Professor of Mechanical Engineering. He is the author of fifty technical papers presented at various conferences, two books, and nu-

merous articles published in *Lights of Irfan* and *Safineh-i-Irfan*. He has pioneered to both Nigeria and Papua New Guinea where he served on the National Spiritual Assemblies for many years.

Adib Sedig • Exploring Principles and Processes of the Administrative Order: A Systems Theory Perspective

Shoghi Effendi refers to the Administrative Order as “a universal system.” Systems theory is an interdisciplinary study of the fundamental elements, processes, and principles of different systems (e.g., natural and socio-political) and provides a high-level framework for evaluating their viability. Using elements of systems theory as a conceptual framework, in this presentation, we will analyze the structural principles and processes of the Administrative Order described in the Bahá'í Writings. Additionally, we will explore the applications of this “universal system” to the betterment of the functioning of other societal systems that are currently in crisis.

Adib Sedig is a 19-year-old youth who avidly studies the Bahá'í Writings, as well as socio-economic, mathematical, and scientific subjects. Since the age of 13, he has presented at several conferences. He is in his first year of undergrad studies in mathematics and economics at Western University.

Kamran Sedig • Who Am I? Identity and Knowledge of Self

Throughout history, the question “Who am I?” has occupied the minds of humanity. While the social order is crumbling, postmodernism dominates academic and media discourses, creating ever-growing fragmentation of the self and resulting in a crisis of identity among the masses, particularly the youth. The post-modernist worldview, lacking any coherent framework, is confusing and is robbing people of any reliable understanding of self. The purpose of this session is to use the Bahá'í Writings along with other scientific and philosophical research to develop a framework that unifies the fragmented identities and to promote a deeper examination of the topic.

Dr. *Kamran Sedig* is an associate professor at Western University. His research and publications are in cognitive, computer, and information sciences. His M.Sc. is from McGill and his Ph.D. from the University of British Columbia. He has published more than 100 scientific articles and books.

Kimia Sedig • How Do We Collaborate Effectively? Exploring the Dialogue Between Two Complementary Knowledge Systems

There is widespread need for effective collaborative work. Intersecting discourses across multiple disciplines agree that collaborative activities are vital in addressing societal challenges at both micro and macro levels, and concepts of collaboration, unified vision, and collective action are highlighted throughout the Bahá'í Writings. However, collaborative work is not simple, and people often lack both skill and practice. This presentation aims to correlate the knowledge system present in the Faith and that in team-based research to facilitate a dialogue between these two systems, highlight how the two complement each other, and identify tools each offers us.

Kimia Sedig is an undergraduate student with a research focus in collaborative activities in healthcare. She is passionate about applying health system organization to improving health equity. She aims to embody Bahá'í principles in her direction and focus of research through her continuing education.

Louis Soucy • The Mindfulness Paradigm of Mental Health: Searching for a Spiritual Grounding

Mindfulness has become a dominant theme in psychotherapy, following on the history of therapies informed by spiritual or spiritual like models. We can explore mindfulness, looking for overlap with the comprehensive spiritual health model proposed by the Bahá'í Faith. Mindfulness may represent a point of commonality with professionals and practitioners, an opportunity for elevated conversations and further exploration of the spiritual.

Dr. *Louis Soucy* MD, FRCP(c), Diplomate American Board of Sleep Medicine. Psychiatrist, Neuropsychiatrist and Sleep Disorders Specialist, Associate Professor, University of Ottawa. He has been a Bahá'í for over forty years.

Robert Stockman • Progress on Making Bahá'í Courses Available for University Credit

In the last year, thanks to a large five year funding commitment, the Wilmette Institute has begun a three-pronged outreach campaign to offer a selected group of its courses for credit: to Bahá'ís attending universities, to schools with which the Institute could establish partnerships, and to non-Bahá'í students at universi-

ties. It has defined the standards its online courses must follow and resolved a series of issues about the nature of Bahá'í courses related to neutrality of the treatment of Bahá'í subjects versus faithfulness to the Bahá'í perspective, and the basic pedagogy they use. The session will review the Institute's progress during its summer 2019 term and its plans for the fall 2019 and winter 2020 terms.

Robert H. Stockman has a PhD in history of religion in the United States, is Director of the Wilmette Institute, and is adjunct professor of religious studies at Indiana University South Bend. He is the author of five books and numerous articles about the Bahá'í Faith.

Victoria Talwar, Hoda Ghadirian • Socialization of Children: Integrating Perspectives of Psychological Science and Bahá'í Faith

The socialization of children has been a central topic of examination in developmental psychology. The Bahá'í Writings shed many insights on the questions that psychological science and education (as well as other fields where practitioners work with children such as law, social work, medicine) are wrestling with. These include the nature of childhood, moral agency, the role of the individual and social environment, the methods of socialization, and then, ultimately, what the goals of this process are: What is the desired outcome of successful socialization? The goal of this session will be to explore the synergy and correlations between the scientific discourse and the Bahá'í teachings and how this can advance our understanding of this important process of human development.

Dr. *Victoria Talwar* is a Canada Research Chair (II) and Professor in the Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology at McGill University. She specializes in the social emotional and moral development of children.

Hoda Ghadirian has been a high school teacher for the last fifteen years, specializing in science and moral education. She is also a graduate student at McGill Faculty of Education, working on her MA thesis, "The Role of Service-Learning and Pedagogy in Social Justice Education: Critical Reflections on a 'World Citizenship Curriculum.'"

Joel W. Corey Tamas • The Music You Love

This brief workshop for youth explores spiritual dimensions of modern music and looks at tools to ana-

lyze, questions to ask, and perspectives from the Baha'i writings to gain insight on what role music can play in a life of service and global awareness. Let's talk about the music you love!

See *Joel in Real Life* on p. 18

Shadi Toloui-Wallace • Writing Songs for Junior Youth—Sharing Insights and Experiences

In a message dated December 12, 2011, the Universal House of Justice expressed its longing to see “the emergence of captivating songs from every part of the world, in every language, that will impress upon the consciousness of the young the profound concepts enshrined in the Bahá'í teachings.” This workshop will explore how this statement is being applied to the field of service, in particular the Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program. This workshop is ideal for those working with junior youth, particularly as animators.

Shadi is widely recognized for her musical contributions to the Bahá'í community and involvement in arts based and community building initiatives. Originally from Brisbane, Australia, she now resides in Vancouver, Canada, where she continues to work, serve, perform, and record her music.

Jordan van den Hoonaard • Arguing for the Necessity of God in Kant's Moral Philosophy

Within his moral philosophy, Kant famously argues that human beings must postulate God to make sense of morality and moral progress. In my paper, I push this concept further by showing that not only do we need to merely postulate God, but, according to Kant's own thought in his essay *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, for moral progress to be possible we need God as a real, operative Being.

Jordan van den Hoonaard is a PhD student at Memorial University of Newfoundland who has worked primarily on Heidegger, German philosophy, and the ethics of technology. Moving forward, he plans to do his doctoral work on environmental philosophy.

Patricia Verge • Contributing to Reconciliation in a Meaningful Way as Non-Indigenous People

Chief Dr. Robert Joseph of Reconciliation Canada has stated, “Let us find a way to belong to this time and place together. Our future, and the well-being of all our children rests with the kind of relationships we build

today.” This session will explore, in consultation with participants both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, prerequisite attitudes, spiritual qualities, and creative approaches to building relationships that will dissolve long-standing differences and separation and enable us to create conditions for the fulfillment of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá's great promise about the spiritual destiny of Indigenous people.

Patricia Verge's books about Indigenous people and the Bahá'í Faith include *Equals and Partners: A Spiritual Journey Towards Reconciliation and Oneness, Wazin Íchinabi* (2018) and *Return to Tyendinaga: The Story of Jim and Melba Loft, Bahá'í Pioneers* (2011, co-written with Evelyn Loft Watts).

Douglas S. White • Social Transformation through Reconciliation: Love, Justice and Unity in the Defining Moment in Indigenous Peoples Relationship with Canada

One of the most important political, legal, and social issues of our time—the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the rest of Canada—has arrived at a defining moment where decisions and actions that are taken will either propel our country toward maturity and justice or drive us to deepening conflict and injustice. The momentum, imperatives, and calls to action set out by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report, the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry Final Report, and Canada's commitment to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples create significant pressure for the unjust and deeply rooted status quo to give way and for us all to work together to create a new and more just country. Doug White has been working in this space for the past 30 years as a lawyer and political leader of Indigenous Peoples. He has also spent the last five years as the Director of the Centre for Pre-Confederation Treaties and Reconciliation at Vancouver Island University. Doug will deliver a talk on aspects of his work and these themes that advance the basic proposition that meaningful reconciliation cannot be achieved without proper regard for the spiritual dimension of human relations and the transformative potential of altruistic love.

Douglas S. White, B.A., J.D., is a practising lawyer and negotiator across the country for First Nations governments. He is Chair of the BC First Nations Justice Council and a Co-Chair of BC's Provincial Advisory Committee for Indigenous and Specialized Courts and

Related Initiatives. His Coast Salish name is Kwulasultun, his Nuu-chah-nulth name is Tliishin. He is a member, former Chief, and current Councillor and Negotiator of the Snuneymuxw First Nation in Nanaimo, BC. Douglas is currently the Director of the Centre for Pre-Confederation Treaties and Reconciliation at Vancouver Island University.

Workshops – Contributing to Academic and Professional Discourses Workshops • “Part I: Some General Considerations” and “Part II: Taking Initiative Within a Shared Framework”

A two-part series of workshops focusing on concepts core to the coherence and development of Bahá’í scholarship. In these 75-minute workshops, participants will study and explore guidance pertaining to these themes, as well as the themes’ relationship to Bahá’í scholarship. Groups will be organized according to different stages of study or career in order to facilitate the sharing of experiences, questions, opportunities, and challenges associated with each.

Nat Yogachandra and Bahhaj Taherzadeh • Drop-In with the Bahá’í Publishing Trust

Are you writing a book? Do you have ideas for a book you would like to write? Do you have questions about the types of manuscripts the Bahá’í Publishing Trust is looking for? Drop in for an informal discussion with General Manager Nat Yogachandra and Senior Editor Bahhaj Taherzadeh and pick up a copy of the Publishing Trust’s submission guidelines. A brief discussion of the BPT’s current goals and needs will be followed by an opportunity for authors to speak one-on-one with BPT staff regarding personal writing projects and the process of writing and submitting a manuscript for the Trust’s consideration.

Nat Yogachandra held a number of marketing and management positions working with divisions and companies in several countries over the past twenty

years. He is currently the General Manager of the U.S. Bahá’í Publishing Trust.

Bahhaj Taherzadeh has worked as an editor and writer for the past twenty years. He is currently the Senior Editor of the Bahá’í Publishing Trust and serves on the Editorial Committee for the *Journal of Bahá’í Studies*.

Omid Yousefian • Does Research into the Healing Power of Prayer Support the Harmony of Science and Religion?

Healing prayer has been a long-established practice in the history of all religions. The extent of healing prayers revealed by the Holy Figures of the Bahá’í Faith is indicative of the significance of these prayers in the modern era. Scientific studies have examined the effect of prayer on healing and have found interesting outcomes. However, they have also raised additional questions about the legitimacy and necessity of these studies. While “what” these studies have shown is unique, “why” they should be conducted, if at all, has become an essential concept. These queries, and the ongoing conversation around them, directly relate to one of the fundamental Bahá’í principles, the harmony of science and religion, and the conversation in the broader community about the efficacy of prayer as a spiritual tool in our lives.

Dr. *Omid Yousefian* is currently a cardiology fellow at the University of Arizona. He has also been involved in teaching cardiac pharmacology to the BIHE students in Iran, where he received his first bachelor’s degree. He is an advocate for the human rights for education and spirituality in medicine.

Conference Organization

<i>Arts Program</i>	Nilufar Gordon
<i>Children Conference</i>	Elaheh Mottahedeh-Bos
<i>Conference Coordinator</i>	Nilufar Gordon
<i>Interpreters</i>	Sebastián Amodeo, Ismael Amodeo
<i>Junior Youth Conference</i>	Brooke Talisman
<i>Youth Conference</i>	Martha Schweitz, Nilufar Gordon, Matt Fillmore
<i>Logistics</i>	Dan Sharon
<i>Photography</i>	Louis Brunet, Tom Mennillo, Monib Sabet
<i>Program Chairs</i>	Mariam Ashtiani, Julia Berger, Shabnam Koirala-Azad, Greg Newing, Sahar Sattarzadeh
<i>Publicity & Promotion</i>	Nilufar Gordon
<i>Registration</i>	Arash Hashemi, Rayhan Behin, Nilufar Gordon
<i>Reporting</i>	Tom Mennillo, <i>The American Bahá'í</i>
<i>Stage Décor</i>	Nilufar Gordon
<i>Stage Manager</i>	Diana Cartwright
<i>Ushers / Security</i>	Hayder Aqiqi
<i>Volunteers Coordinators</i>	Sophie Crump, Milook Aqiqi

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 Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ottawa.

Nearby Food Options

Within the Westin hotel

Daly's Monday-Friday 6:30am to 11am;

Weekend 6:30 -11:00 (breakfast) and 11:30-2:00 (brunch)

The Shore Club Monday-Friday 11:30am to 1am; 11:30 to 2:00pm and 5:00pm to 1am

Within the Rideau Centre (shopping mall adjacent to the Westin)

Food Court and other outlets – fast food, coffee 9:00am to 9:00pm

Farm Boy – grocery store, salad bar with cold and hot items 9:00am to 7:00pm

Chipotle Mexican Grill \$

Bazille \$\$ Light lunch fare, rooftop patio

Within three blocks

Aulde Dubliner \$\$ Pub, patio

The Grand \$\$ Italian, pizza, patio

Within four blocks

Byward Market (William St., Byward Market Square, George St.)

Wang's Noodle House \$ Oriental

Shafali Bazaar \$ Indian

Byward Café \$ American

Rocky Mountain \$ Chocolate, desserts

Moroccan Cuisine \$ Moroccan

Sushi Zone \$ Sushi

Beavertail \$ Canadian pastry

Bottega Nicaastro \$\$ Italian grocery, sandwiches

Within five blocks

York Street

Le Moulin de Provence \$\$ Light lunch fare, bakery, patisserie

Olive and Chili \$\$ Light lunch fare, many GF options, patio

Tucker's Marketplace \$\$ All you can eat American buffet and salad bar, patio

Sushi Fresh \$\$ Sushi

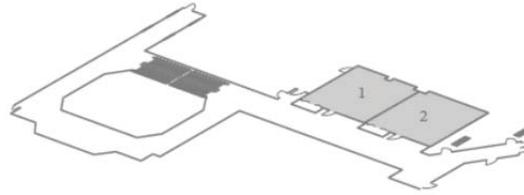
The Keg \$\$\$ Steakhouse

Oh So Good \$\$ Desserts

Floor Plans

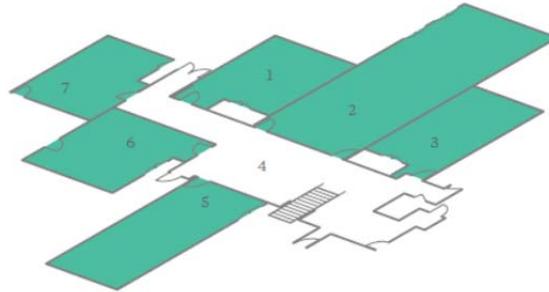
SECOND FLOOR

1. MANITOBA
2. BRITISH COLUMBIA



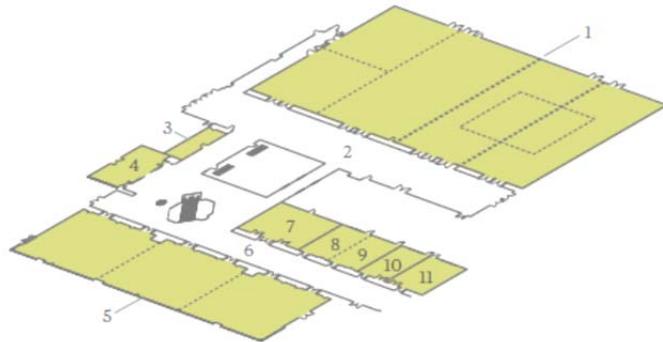
EXECUTIVE MEETING CENTER

1. ASH
2. OAK
3. SPRUCE
4. EXECUTIVE LEVEL FOYER
5. MAPLE
6. BIRCH
7. CEDAR



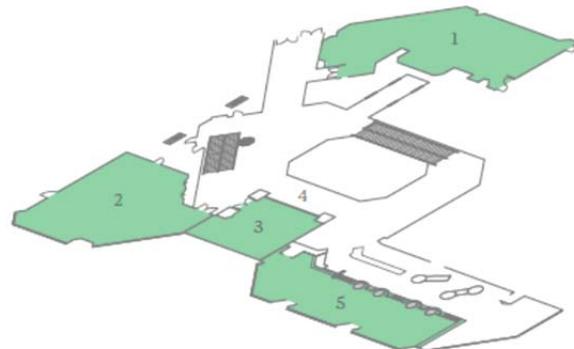
FOURTH FLOOR

1. PROVINCES & CONFEDERATION BALLROOM
2. CONFEDERATION FOYER
3. PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
4. NUNAVUT
5. GOVERNOR GENERAL BALLROOM
6. GOVERNOR GENERAL FOYER
7. QUEBEC
8. NOVA SCOTIA
9. NEWFOUNDLAND
10. NEW BRUNSWICK
11. ALBERTA



THIRD FLOOR

1. LES SAISONS
2. ONTARIO
3. SASKATCHEWAN
4. 3RD FLOOR FOYER
5. DALY'S



The Journal of Bahá'í Studies

Bahá'ís who are involved in various disciplines—economics, education, history, social science, philosophy, and many others—are obviously conversant and fully engaged with the methods employed in their fields. It is they who have the responsibility to earnestly strive to reflect on the implications that the truths found in the Revelation may hold for their work. The principle of the harmony of science and religion, faithfully upheld, will ensure that religious belief does not succumb to superstition and that scientific findings are not appropriated by materialism.

— Universal House of Justice, 24 July 2013

A quarterly scholarly journal published since the beginning of the Association, in 1975, and since 2014 under the editorship of John S Hatcher, the *Journal of Bahá'í Studies* has just released its spring/summer issue, Volume 29, number 1/2, which is available in the conference bookstore and can also be accessed free online at <https://bahai-studies.ca/publications/journal/>.

The goal of the journal is to foster a space for academics from all backgrounds to participate in the major discourses that are emerging during this era of quantum change and dramatic transformation at every level of society. Virtually every discipline is now focused on how these concerns impact our collective thought and action. As members of a global community contracted into in a single body politic, humanity requires that the concerns of every nation and people become innovative in scholarly thinking and social action.

Put simply, scholarship isn't just for scholars anymore, nor is the journal solely for Bahá'ís. The journal welcomes submissions that are relevant to Bahá'í Studies as defined in the widest sense. And as a serious academic publication, the journal submits all articles to a rigorous, blind peer review process by scholars in the field, even though we strive to make them accessible to a wide, multidisciplinary audience. In addition, we require articles to demonstrate original thinking, present new information, open up new avenues of thought, or cast new light on long-standing problems.

