



## MEDIA GUIDE

### Key facts and information about the Bahá'í Faith

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#### Name of the religion – the Bahá'í Faith

The Bahá'í Faith is an independent world religion. It is an independent, monotheistic religion established in virtually every country of the world. It is not a sect of another religion. In a list of major religions, it would look like this: Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, the Bahá'í Faith.

A member is called a Bahá'í (plural: Bahá'ís). It is also correct to say that someone is a “member of the Bahá'í Faith,” a “follower of the Bahá'í Faith,” or a member of the Bahá'í community of Canada.

#### Founder of the Bahá'í Faith – Bahá'u'lláh

Bahá'ís believe God has sent to humanity a series of divine Educators—known as Manifestations of God—whose teachings have provided the basis for the advancement of civilization.

Bahá'u'lláh is the most recent in a line of these Messengers that includes Abraham, Buddha, Jesus Christ, Krishna, Muhammad, Moses, Zoroaster. Bahá'u'lláh – the name is Arabic for “Glory of God” – was born in 1817 in Tehran, Iran, and passed away in 1892 in Acre (now in Israel).

#### Year of founding – 1844

There are several important dates in the establishment of the Bahá'í Faith, but the first announcement the new religion came in 1844.

#### Canadian origins – 1898

The Bahá'í Faith has flourished in Canada since arriving in 1898. There has been an intimate relationship between Canada and the Bahá'í Faith for more than a century. In 1912, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá – the son of Bahá'u'lláh and head of the Bahá'í Faith from 1893 to 1921 – visited Montreal for nine days, speaking to thousands of people of all backgrounds, on subjects ranging from economics to the oneness of religion.

#### Bahá'í administration

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada is the national governing council of the Bahá'í community, an elected body of nine men and women.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Canada and the United States, a joint body, was first elected in 1925. In 1948, Canada formed its own National Assembly, and the following year it was legally incorporated by an Act of Parliament. By 1973, a Spiritual Assembly had been established

in every provincial and territorial capital city of Canada. There are now elected Local Assemblies in more than 200 localities across the country.

### **Statistics**

There are more than 35,000 Bahá'ís in Canada in more than 1000 localities, who together reflect Canada's rich cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity.

There are more than 5 million Bahá'ís in the world. The Bahá'í Faith is established in more than 100,000 localities in virtually every country and territory around the world.

### **Description of the religion and key beliefs**

Throughout history, God has sent to humanity a series of divine Educators—known as Manifestations of God—whose teachings have provided the basis for the advancement of civilization. These Manifestations have included Abraham, Krishna, Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad. Bahá'u'lláh, the latest of these Messengers, explained that the religions of the world come from the same Source and are in essence successive chapters of one religion from God.

Bahá'ís believe the crucial need facing humanity is to find a unifying vision of the future of society and of the nature and purpose of life.

The teachings of the Bahá'í Faith inspire individuals and communities as they work to improve their own lives and contribute to the advancement of civilization. Bahá'í beliefs address such essential themes as the oneness of God and religion, the oneness of humanity and freedom from prejudice, the inherent nobility of the human being, the progressive revelation of religious truth, the development of spiritual qualities, the integration of worship and service, the fundamental equality of the sexes, the harmony between religion and science, the centrality of justice to all human endeavours, the importance of education, and the dynamics of the relationships that are to bind together individuals, communities, and institutions as humanity advances towards its collective maturity.