



**National Spiritual Assembly
of the Bahá'ís of New Zealand**

Te Rūnanga Wairua Tapu o nga Bahá'í o Aotearoa

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To the friends in Aotearoa

Tēnā koutou beloved co-workers,

Our long white cloud was darkened by yesterday's tragic events, but already we can discern signs that this dark cloud is being lifted by the penetrating rays of light from love, solidarity, prayer, support, fellowship, and oneness emerging from acts of kindness, condolence and companionship by the people of this land, and indeed from around the world.

As a nation, we were collectively in a state of deep shock and disbelief at the scale of this horrific act of brutality, and at the tragic loss of so many innocent lives. However, we are reminded of the letter from the Universal House of Justice, dated 18 January 2019, which spoke of the long journey towards peace, proceeding in fits and starts, with many setbacks along the way, and about the contribution to its attainment that Bahá'ís are called to make. Hearing in mainstream media over the last 24 hours the frequent reference to the concept of prayer is a timely reminder to us all that our devotional gatherings can surely be drawn upon as sources of spiritual strength over the coming weeks and months for thousands of New Zealanders. Indeed, we are told that all the devoted efforts made with like-minded collaborators to build communities founded on spiritual principles, to apply those principles for the betterment of society, and to offer the insights arising, are the surest ways to hasten the fulfilment of the promise of world peace. We can aspire to be beacons of hope through our words and actions, through clasping each other's hands, and desiring with all our hearts friendship with others, that our positive, spiritual thoughts will spread. We must not despair but work steadily and show love to all.

“No matter how bleak conditions may appear at any given time, no matter how dismal the immediate prospects for bringing about unity, there is no cause for despair. The distressing state of the world can only spur us to redouble our commitment to constructive action.”

(From the 18 January 2019 letter of the House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the world)

In our private discussions with friends and colleagues, what better time is there than now to share with them Bahá'u'lláh's vision of a wider, more inclusive loyalty to which all on the planet are called, by subordinating lesser loyalties to the best interests of humankind.

“As the process of the disintegration of a lamentably defective world order gathers momentum in all parts of the planet, engendering hopelessness, confusion, hostility, and insecurity, the hearts of the friends everywhere must be assured, their eyes clear-sighted, their feet firm, as they work patiently and sacrificially to raise a new order in its stead. The guidance of Bahá'u'lláh is the foundation upon which you build. His instruction is clear:



‘This servant appealeth to every diligent and enterprising soul to exert his utmost endeavour and arise to rehabilitate the conditions in all regions and to quicken the dead with the living waters of wisdom and utterance, by virtue of the love he cherisheth for God, the One, the Peerless, the Almighty, the Beneficent.’ His divine remedy has been prescribed: ‘God, the True One, beareth Me witness, and every atom in existence is moved to testify that such means as lead to the elevation, the advancement, the education, the protection and the regeneration of the peoples of the earth have been clearly set forth by Us and are revealed in the Holy Books and Tablets by the Pen of Glory.’ And His assurance is engraved on every faithful heart: ‘The betterment of the world can be accomplished through pure and goodly deeds, through commendable and seemly conduct.’”

(From the 9 November 2018 letter of the House of Justice to the Bahá’ís of the world)

The National Spiritual Assembly is especially thinking of the dear friends in Christchurch whose city has already suffered so much heartache over recent years. We know that you and your Local Assembly will be thinking of ways and means to reach out with love and support to all the people of your city, especially your Muslim brothers and sisters. A message of condolence from the New Zealand Bahá’í community is being prepared for sending to the Muslim community of New Zealand via the President of the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ), Dr Mustafa Farouk.

Dear friends, our mutual support of one another, including our compatriots of different faiths, particularly, at this time, those of Muslim faith, is a source of comfort, strength and encouragement.

With much love to each and every one of you,

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of New Zealand

Suzanne Mahon
Secretary

cc Counsellor Tessa Scrine