

Association for Bahá'í Studies–North America  
33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference  
“Environments”

13 – 16 August 2009  
Marriott Wardman Park Hotel  
Washington, District of Columbia, United States

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***Important Information***

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

***Security*** The security personnel 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 in “silent” mode while you are in the conference sessions.

***The Children’s and Junior Youth Program*** The Children’s Program, for ages 5 to 15, is being held in the **Nathan Hale, Ethan Allen** and **Thomas Paine** rooms in the **Wardman Tower**. Parents may drop off children at their program 15 minutes before the adult session starting time. Parents are asked to pick up their children promptly at the close of each session and for the lunch breaks. (Meals are not included in the children’s program.) The times for Children/Junior Youth sessions are

Thursday, 13 August	9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Friday, 14 August	9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Saturday, 15 August	9:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Sunday, 16 August	9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

The program of children's activities is available at the Conference Registration Table. Parents are required to sign a Medical Information and Emergency Health Care Release form and return it to the Children's Program coordinators.

*The Conference Bookstore* is operated by the Bahá'í Distribution Service of the United States. The bookstore is located in the **Delaware** room on the **Lobby level** and offers a wide selection of books and materials, including books and CDs by authors and artists presenting at the conference, and Bahá'í jewelry. Hours of operation are

Thursday, 13 August	2:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Friday, 14 August	9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, 15 August	9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, 16 August	9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

*Evaluation Forms* The ABS Executive Committee asks for your assistance and cooperation in filling out the conference evaluation forms provided in your conference kit. Your feedback is very valuable to us in our continuing efforts to improve the Conference.

*Membership* In support of the Association's membership drive, we ask you to encourage your friends and Spiritual Assemblies to join the Association. Please use the membership form enclosed in your conference kit. More forms are available at the Conference Information Table.

*Audio Recordings* Conference plenary sessions will be recorded and will be available for purchase on audio CD. An order form is included in your conference kit and additional forms are available at the Conference Information Desk. Please fill out the form with your credit card number and the CDs will be mailed to you after the conference.

*Lost and Found* Lost and found articles should be reported to the Conference Registration Table. After the close of the conference, any items not picked up will be turned over to the hotel.

*Prayer Room* The **Tyler** room on the **Mezzanine level** has been set aside for prayer and meditation from Thursday to Saturday, 8:00 a.m.–10:00 p.m. Please check the Bulletin Board at the registration area for the room number.

*"After Hours" Arts* After each evening's program there will be an arts program held in the **Marriott Ballrooms** where conference attendees can socialize and enjoy listening to live music until midnight. Performing artists at the conference are encouraged to sign up to perform at these events. A sign-up sheet will be available near the Conference Registration Table.

*SIG Business Meetings* Check the sheet in your conference package for time and locations.

*Office Hours* Meet presenters during set office hours. Please check the sheet in your conference package for time and locations.

**Thursday, 13 August 2009**

**10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Special Simultaneous Sessions**

*Thurgood Marshall Ballroom North/West*

10:00 - 12:00 **Perspectives from the Writings on Scholarship: Broad Paths for Service**

Convener: ASSOCIATION FOR BAHÁ'Í STUDIES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair: SHARONA SHUSTER

12:00 - 1:30 *Lunch Break*

1:30 - 5:00 **Some Explorations in Applying Bahá'í Scholarship**

Convener: ASSOCIATION FOR BAHÁ'Í STUDIES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PETER ENGSTROM, DOROTHY MARCIC and JOHANN WONG

*Wilson A/B/C* **Faculty / Student Workshop Program – Scholarship in the context of the Plans**

Convener: PIERRE-YVES MOCQUAIS, Academic Director, Association for Bahá'í Studies

Facilitators: ANN BOYLES, VALERIE DAVIS, PIERRE-YVES MOCQUAIS, DAVID SMITH

9:30 - 10:30 **Session I (joint Faculty/Students session)**

Scholarship and the Mission of the Association for Bahá'í Studies in the Context of the Plans: An Overview

10:45 - 12:00 **Session II (small group breakout study sessions)**

The Role and Place of Scholarship in the Context of the Global Plans of the Faith

12:00 - 1:30 *Lunch Break*

1:30 – 3:00 **Session III (separate sessions for faculty and students)**

Contributing to contemporary thought and engaging in discourse and practice in academic fields; Mentoring of students and young adults; Creating dynamic campus associations and clubs; Scholarship and social action: raising awareness about the situation of the Bahá'ís in Iran being denied access to post-secondary education

3:15 - 3:45 **Session IV (joint Faculty/Student session):** Brief summary presentations on the salient points raised during the separate sessions

3:45 - 4:15 **Session V (joint Faculty/Student session):** Special Session – Details to be Announced

4:15 - 5:30 **Session VI (joint Faculty/Student session)**

Scholarship and the Covenant DAVID SMITH

The Process of Growth and Contributing to Society's Discourse - Two Coherent Processes  
ANN BOYLES

*Hoover* **International Environment Forum**

2:00 - 4:00 **Workshop on Values-based Indicators of Sustainable Development**

ARTHUR LYON DAHL

5:00 - 7:00 *Dinner Break*

## ***Thursday Evening***

### *Thurgood Marshall Ballroom*

7:00      **Plenary Session**  
Chair: MARTHA SCHWEITZ  
Devotions  
Official Conference Welcome

**Transforming Environments from the Inside Out**    ARTHUR LYON DAHL

### *Thurgood Marshall Ballroom*

9:30      “After Hours” Arts  
Masters of Ceremonies: GOLRIZ LUCINA and DAMIAN ODESS-GILLET

## ***Friday, 14 August 2009***

### *Marriott Ballroom*

9:00      **Plenary Session**  
Devotions

**Collective Consciousness, Human Maturity, and the Challenge of Sustainability**  
The Essential Role of Religion in Fostering a Sustainable World    PETER ADRIANCE  
Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy    PETER BROWN  
Response and Dialogue    ARTHUR LYON DAHL, Responder  
Moderator, TÁHIRIH NAYLOR

12:00 - 2:00 *Lunch Break*

### **2:00 - 5:30 p.m. Simultaneous Breakout Sessions**

#### *Hoover*

##### **Arts I**

Convener: ANNE PERRY

2:00 - 3:00 The Casting Down of Turquoise [Poems on Prophets, saints, and ordinary angels]  
ROBERT MICHELL  
3:15 - 4:15 Gerard Manley Hopkins and the ‘Nature’ of the Environment    BRET BRENEMAN  
4:30 – 5:30 Figures of Speech and Thought: Implications of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation for  
Contemporary Art and its Relation to the Community of the Greatest Name  
DARIUS HIMES

#### *Coolidge*

##### **Bahá’í History & Biography**

Convener: SUSAN MANECK

2:00 - 3:00 “Bahá’í Elitism” and the Class-Based Dynamics of the “New Anti-Bahá’ism” in Iran  
POOYA SHOGHI  
3:15 - 4:15 Scapegoating Bahá’í: The Clergy, the State, and Mob Violence in Twentieth Century Iran  
MINA YAZDANI  
4:30 - 5:30 Accusations against Bahá’ís within the Context of Islamic Heresiography    SUSAN MANECK

- Wilson A*      **Business, Ethics & Management Science**  
 Convener: NOUSHA RAM  
 2:00 - 3:00 Grab the Future: The Innovation Imperative MICHAEL WINGER-BEARSKIN  
 3:15 - 4:15 Principle Based Leadership in Turbulent Times NOUSHA RAM  
 4:30 - 5:30 Seeking a Work Environment Conducive to the Development of Human Potential  
 CAMILLE N. KHODADAD
- Wilson B*      **Education I**  
 Conveners: KAMILLA BAHBAHANI and MARIE GERVAIS  
 2:00 - 3:00 Translating Values into Practices: Exploring a New Framework for Positive Change in  
 Prince Edward Island's Farming Community ARIANA SALVO  
 3:15 - 4:15 The Historiography on Modern Iran: A Critique on Its Continued Failure to Use Bahá'í  
 Sources SOLI SHAHVAR  
 4:30 - 5:30 The Bahá'í community as a Learning Organisation FAZEL NAGHDY
- Wilson C*      **Philosophy**  
 Convener: IAN KLUGE  
 2:00 - 3:00 The Writings, Philosophy and the Human Environment IAN KLUGE  
 3:15 - 4:15 Epistemological Views of 'Abdu'l-Bahá MIKHAIL SERGEEV  
 4:30 - 5:30 Environment and Economics: More than Meets the Eye JAMES P. WEST and MARZIEH WEST
- Marriott*      **Peace and Conflict Studies**  
*Balcony A*      Convener: TRIP BARTHEL  
 2:00 - 3:00 Human Rights for the Entire Bahá'í Community: Using a Group-Oriented Minority Rights  
 Framework to Advocate for the Bahá'í Community IAN HARRIS
- Marriott*      **Study of Religion**  
*Balcony A*      Convener: PETER TERRY  
 3:15 - 4:15 Thoughts on Water BRIAN GUEQUIERRE  
 4:30 - 5:30 Scriptural Reasoning and the Bahá'í Faith BEN SCHEWEL
- Marriott*      **Bioethics and Health Sciences**  
*Balcony B*      Convener: ELIZABETH BOWEN  
 2:00 - 3:00 Materialism & Health: A Bahá'í Perspective PAYAM SAZEGAR  
 3:15 - 4:15 The Old World Order, the New World Order, and Ending HIV/AIDS KATHARINE KRIPKE  
 4:30 - 5:30 Extremes of Wealth and Poverty: What Is the Impact of Well-Meant Economic Policies on  
 Health and Well-Being in Developing Countries? SANDRA J. BEAN
- Maryland*      **Human and Natural Environment I**  
*Suite C*      Convener: JOHN STEERE  
 2:00 - 3:00 Are Allusions to Global Warming Present in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh?  
 NATHALIE AUGER  
 3:15 - 4:15 Building within Our Means NASEEM ALIZADEH  
 4:30 - 5:30 Bahá'í Gardens as Catalysts for Neighborhood Transformation WILLIAM P. GREGG
- Maryland*      **Science and Religion I**  
*Suite B*      Conveners: STEPHEN FRIBERG and RON SHIGETA  
 2:00 - 3:00 Concepts of Space, Time, and Causality in Relation to the Bahá'í Writings DINESH SINGH  
 3:15 - 4:15 Providing an Environment for a Constructive Discussion between Science and Religion

FAHDAD FANI, AMANDA HENCK SCHMIDT and JOSHUA PAUL SCHMIDT

4:30 – 5:30 What Bahá'ís Think about Science and Religion DALE E. LEHMAN

*Maryland* **International Environment Forum I**

*Suite A* Convener: PETER ADRIANCE

2:00 - 3:00 Restoring the Earth's Resources: A Bahá'í Perspective – Where the Land is Hurting, the People are Hurting BRETT D. HARTMAN

3:15 - 4:15 "Green" Starts With the Letter "S" ROBERT L. ROGERS

4:30 - 5:30 Environment and Its Effects on the Spiritual Life of Man  
HAMID FARABI and RUHIYYIH FARABI

5:30 - 7:30 *Dinner Break*

## ***Friday Evening***

*Marriott Ballroom*

7:30 **Plenary Session**

Presentation of Awards for Distinguished Scholarship to DONNA HAKIMIAN, JOHN S. HATCHER and AMROLLAH HEMMAT by the Association for Bahá'í Studies Executive Committee

**Musical Environments**

Master of Ceremonies: DAMIAN ODESS-GILLETT

KATHARINE KEY, Jazz vocal delights

NIMA MOAINI, Classical piano

ALI YOUSSEFI, A unique blend of world, rock, New Age, and folk music

CHRISTINE MULLER and ROYA BAUMAN, A musical journey through spiritual environments in a classical style

NABIL and KARIM, Healing and uplifting hip-hop with a twist

EAST COAST MUSIC COLLECTIVE, New music that will stick to your soul and may even make you want to dance: MJ CYR, SCOTT EDWARD, DEVON GUNDRY, KATHARINE KEY, CAELI

LOHR, GOLRIZ LUCINA, IAN RAFALAK, JASON RAFALAK, ADAM SIEGEL, KELLY SNOOK, LUKE SLOTT

*Marriott Ballroom*

10:00 "After Hours" Arts

Masters of Ceremonies: GOLRIZ LUCINA and DAMIAN ODESS-GILLETT

## *Saturday, August 15, 2009*

### *Marriott Ballroom*

9:00

#### **Plenary Session**

Chair: Sovaida Ma'ani-Ewing

Devotions

#### **Opening and Closing the Door: The State and the Bahá'í Schools in Iran**

SOLI SHAHVAR

#### **Social Environment and Building Bahá'í Community Identity**

Annulling Differences of Race: The American Bahá'í Experience  
and Beyond MARK PERRY

Beyond Persecution: Bahá'í Identity in the New Iran PAYAM AKHAVAN

We Create What We State KIT BIGELOW

Moderator, GWEN ETTER-LEWIS

12:00 - 2:30

*Lunch Break*

### *Maryland*

#### *Suite A*

12:45 - 2:15

#### **Consultative session on the vision and activities of the Association for Bahá'í Studies – North America**

In lieu of the Annual General Meeting of past years, all are invited to an open consultation chaired by the ABS Executive Committee. How can ABS most effectively, in the words of the Universal House of Justice, “stimulate scholarly study of the Faith and its teachings, promote a sound understanding of the Cause in academic circles and demonstrate its relevance to the study of social issues”? Grab your lunch and come reflect on learning to date, consult about how you would like to see ABS develop, and suggest initiatives you might take to help make this possible.

## **2:30 - 6:30 p.m. Simultaneous Breakout Sessions**

### *Hoover*

#### **Arts II**

Convener: ANNE PERRY

2:30 - 3:30

Saving Sohrab: Tracing the Bahá'í Faith in Contemporary Persian Fiction PEJMAN MOSLEH

3:45 - 4:45

Approaching the Centenary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's 1912 Visit to America: Preparation, Research, Commemorative Projects ANNE GORDON PERRY

### *Hoover*

5:00 - 6:30

#### **Fostering the Creation and Delivery of Courses on the Bahá'í Faith at Universities and Colleges**

Chair: PIERRE-YVES MOCQUAIS

Presentation and review of the guidelines prepared by the Executive Committee of the Association for Bahá'í Studies; sharing experiences, planning and discussion.

### *Coolidge*

#### **Communication**

Convener: AMROLLAH HEMMAT

2:30 - 3:30

Naming Names: The Power to Control the Meaning of Media Symbols  
DEBORAH CLARK VANCE

- 3:45 - 4:45 Beyond Feminism, Táhirih's Life and Writings AMROLLAH HEMMAT  
 5:00 - 6:30 The Wisdom of Crowds: Unexpected Realities of Consultation and Groups  
 DAN ENSLOW and JENNIFER PHILLIPS, with moderator DAVID KALIM DIEHL

*Marriott* **Race Unity and Intercultural Issues I**

- Balcony A* Chair: ÉLIZABETH WRIGHT  
 2:30 - 3:30 Transforming African-Descent Environments through Museums LEX MUSTA  
 3:45 - 4:45 "Eat ye, O people": The Role of Food and Hospitality in Bahá'í Intercultural Relations  
 MARIE GERVAIS  
 5:00 - 6:30 Bahá'ís Grapple with Racism PETER CROMWELL and MARIE GERVAIS

*Marriott* **Education II**

- Balcony B* Conveners: KAMILA BAHBAHANI and MARIE GERVAIS  
 2:30 - 3:30 Getting Noticed and Making a Mark: The Challenges of Interdisciplinarity for Bahá'í  
 Studies DAVID KALIM DIEHL

*Wilson C* **Bahá'í Language Educators**

- Conveners: SANDRA FOTOS and NANCY JOY ALLCHIN  
 Chairs: NANCY JOY ALLCHIN and DARA GAY SHAW  
 2:30 - 3:30 On Track With Marco, a Computerized High Beginner English Program  
 NANCY MCKEAND and DEBBIE WILKE  
 3:45 - 4:45 Teaching Oral English Online Through SKYPE (VOIP) NAOMI ROHRER  
 5:00 - 6:00 Online English Teacher Roundtable  
 NANCY JOY ALLCHIN, REHEMA CLARKEN and DARA GAY SHAW

*Wilson B* **Apologetics Program**

- Convener: PETER TERRY  
 2:30 - 4:30 Answering Muslim Critics  
 HOSSEIN ASHCHI, KAVIAN MILANI and GLORIA YAZDANI, with moderator SUSAN MANECK  
 5:00 - 6:30 Answering Irreligion  
 IAN KLUGE, COUROSH MEHANIAN and DINESH SINGH, with moderator ROBERT STOCKMAN

*Wilson A* **Psychology**

- Convener: ELENA MUSTAKOVA-POSSARDT  
 2:30 - 3:30 Raising a Child as the Creator of Light, not a Subject to the Dark Side of the Environment  
 MARJAN DAVOUDI  
 3:45 - 6:30 Creating Healthy Social Environments: Positive and Sustainable Communities  
 PATRICIA MCGRAW, ELENA MUSTAKOVA-POSSARDT AND MICHAEL PENN

*Maryland* **Human and Natural Environment II**

- Suite C* Convener: JOHN STEERE  
 2:30 - 3:30 Creating Sacred Spaces: A Bahá'í Perspective on Feng Shui INGRID HAUCK  
 3:45 - 4:45 In Search of a Balanced, Generative, Emergent and Environmentally Responsive  
 Architecture/ Construction Curriculum MEHRZAD KHORSANDI  
 5:00 - 6:00 The Effect of Environment and Nature in Architecture KAYHAN NADJI

*Maryland* **Science & Religion II**

- Suite B* Conveners: STEPHEN FRIBERG and RON SHIGETA  
 2:30 - 3:30 Progressive Revelation as the Bahá'í Answer to New Atheism  
 MAYA BOHNHOFF and STEPHEN FRIBERG

- 3:45 - 4:45 Organic Unity and the Second Law of Thermodynamics KHOSROW FARAHBAKHSI  
 5:00 - 6:30 Footprints of the Future: Visions of Human Civilization a Century from now (and how to get there) SAMIR KOIRALA, MITRA SOLOMON and DAVE WELLMAN

- Maryland Suite A* **International Environment Forum II**  
 Convener: PETER ADRIANCE  
 2:30 - 3:30 Assisting the World's Transition to a Sustainable Energy Future  
 ANNE GILLETTE and LAWRENCE STAUDT  
 3:45 - 4:45 Faith and Hope in Environmentalism in the Face of Climate Change SAMUEL BENOIT  
 5:00 - 6:30 Climate Ethics  
 CAROL CURTIS and TAHIRIH NAYLOR, with facilitators PETER ADRIANCE and DUNCAN HANKS  
 6:30 - 8:00 *Dinner Break*

## ***Saturday Evening***

### *Marriott Ballroom*

- 8:00 **Plenary Session**  
 Devotions

**The 27<sup>th</sup> Hasan M. Balyuzi Memorial Lecture**

**The Artist and the Grammarian**  
 OTTO DON ROGERS

### *Marriott Ballroom*

- 10:00 "After Hours" Arts  
 Masters of Ceremonies: GOLRIZ LUCINA and DAMIAN ODESS-GILLETT

## ***Sunday, August 16, 2009***

### *Marriott Ballroom*

- 9:00 **Plenary Session**  
 Devotions

Presentation by Member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for the Americas,  
 ANN BOYLES

Young Scholars Panel: Environments: Perspective from Young Scholars  
 JIAN KHODADAD (chair), ADAM LUDWIN, MAAME NKETSIAH AND ANISA KHADEM  
 NWACHUKU

Closing musical presentation

- 12:30 Closing remarks: Association for Bahá'í Studies Executive Committee

## *Abstracts and Autobiographical Notes*

### **Peter Adriance, Peter Brown and Arthur Lyon Dahl, with moderator Táhirih Naylor • Collective Consciousness, Human Maturity, and the Challenge of Sustainability**

The upsurge in environmental, social and economic challenges confronting humanity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century -- climate change, species extinctions, deforestation, food security, inequality, growing extremes of wealth and poverty, and an unstable world financial system, to name but a few – are forcing the collective consciousness of humankind to evolve. These challenges are ever-present reminders of humanity's essential oneness and the interconnectedness of all life systems. Learning to successfully grapple with them will require new levels of human maturity and narrow self interest will have to give way to a wider concern for the well-being of the planet.

### **The Essential Role of Religion in Fostering a Sustainable World**

A reflective multimedia presentation on environmental stewardship from a faith perspective introduces this talk on the essential role of religion in advancing a sustainable world. Religious communities are experiencing a vital reawakening to the moral imperatives that ensure sustainability including the recognition that religion and science must work harmoniously to resolve pressing environmental problems. A variety of responses are evident, including examples from the Bahá'í community. The processes of expansion and consolidation, currently the major focus of the community, lay the essential foundation for even greater levels of social action.

### **Peter Adriance, facilitator • Climate Ethics (panel)**

The search for solutions to both mitigate and adapt to climate change has raised difficult ethical questions about justice, equity, responsibility and obligation. This session begins with an overview of the Bahá'í International Community's initial considerations on the challenge of climate change and its ethical dimensions. It then looks at the Marshall Islands and specific threats posed to residents of atoll nations, whose very existence may be at stake, and draws from the Bahá'í writings for guidance on appropriate responses. It concludes with small group exploration of specific case studies highlighting a range of ethical dimensions of climate change.

PETER ADRIANCE has served as NGO (non-governmental organization) liaison for the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the U.S. since 1990, focusing primarily on issues of environment and sustainable development. He serves on the boards of the U.S. Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development and the International Environment Forum.

### **Payam Akhavan, Kit Bigelow and Mark Perry • Social Environment and Building Bahá'í Community Identity (panel) "Beyond Persecution: Bahá'í Identity in the New Iran"**

This presentation considers Bahá'í identity amidst the transformation of Iranian society. The persecution of Iranian Bahá'ís has profoundly shaped global Bahá'í identity. It is a misconception however, to identify this community merely as victims of religious fanaticism. Their historical scapegoating is a justification for authoritarian rule and not about religious differences. As a democratic space emerges in Iran, there is unprecedented support from notable reformist figures and a significant growth in the community's population. Emancipation of Bahá'ís has become the litmus test for human rights and they are now poised

to make significant contributions to Iranian society as it struggles to find a new pluralistic identity.

PAYAM AKHAVAN is Professor of International Law at McGill University and former UN war crimes prosecutor at The Hague. He received a Doctorate from Harvard, was Senior Fellow at Yale, and counsel before the World Court. He Co-Founded the Iran Human Rights Documentation Centre. His work has been featured in the New York Times.

**Naseem Alizadeh • Building within Our Means**

The presentation focuses on the topic of sustainability in architecture and urbanism through the lens of applicable Bahá'í principles. Sustainability involves not only a systematic process of environmental protection, rather it suggests a holistic strategy to how, where, and what we build; a strategy which addresses racial and gender inequality, extremes of poverty and wealth, and the perpetuation of materialism, all issues which have led to decades of unsustainable development. The environmental disregard propagated in the built environment is one link in a chain of crises reflecting a lack of moral guidance currently afflicting humanity.

NASEEM ALIZADEH is an architect and urban designer currently situated in Boston, Massachusetts.

**Nancy Joy Allchin, Rehema Clarken and Dara Gay Shaw • Online English Teacher Roundtable (panel)**

Roundtable panelists will share their experiences teaching and tutoring English as a foreign language in a Bahá'í-inspired international online program. The unique challenges of the online setting will be discussed, and sample lessons will be presented. Those attending will have an opportunity to ask questions and join the discussion.

NANCY JOY ALLCHIN teaches ESL (English as a Second Language) in a Washington D.C. area high school. She holds an M.A. in TESOL/Linguistics from West Virginia University and a B.A. in Spanish Education. She has taught EFL in Mexico and China, and currently tutors in an international online EFL program.

**Hossein Ashchi, Kavian Milani and Gloria Yazdani, with moderator Susan Maneck • Apologetics Program - Answering Muslim Critics (panel)**

This panel discussion will consider responses to Muslim anti-Bahá'í polemics in print and online. The session will include dynamic discussion among the panelists and interaction with the audience.

HOSSEIN ASHCHI, a biologist and an educator by profession with educational background from Aston, Florida State and Southern California universities. Currently, semi retired, involved in teaching efforts directed at the Arab world, the Wilmette Institute and the BIHE via internet, with present interests in Islam from a Bahá'í perspective.

**Association for Bahá'í Studies • Perspectives from the Writings on Scholarship: Broad Paths for Service**

To strengthen the link between active service and scholarship, this workshop engages in the analysis and study of select Holy Writings on the theme of the broad and diverse nature of Bahá'í Studies. Participants

are invited to examine excerpts from the Creative Word and identify insights regarding how to engage in and develop new approaches toward scholarship that advance Bahá'í Studies in areas such as global social and economic prosperity, defense of the Faith and the explanation of its teachings, and correlation of the teachings with various disciplines. The use of creative expression (music, drama, writing, dance, etc.) will be incorporated as participants share their reflections.

### **Association for Bahá'í Studies • Some Explorations in Applying Bahá'í Scholarship**

The afternoon program seeks to connect knowledge with a cycle of learning, reflection and action with an emphasis on making a positive contribution to improving society. This year's presenters are from the arts, business and social development arenas and exemplify a strong commitment to putting principles into action. Participants who want to commit themselves to initiating, sharing, and carrying out study projects in the following year are encouraged to join follow-up development teams. The program organizers are Robert Rosenfeld, Jack Thatcher, and Stephen Friberg.

### **Nathalie Auger • Are Allusions to Global Warming Present in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh?**

Global warming presents an unparalleled challenge to humanity. If scientists are correct about the seriousness of rising planetary temperature, references to global warming should be present in the Writings of the Manifestation of God for this Day. This presentation will explore possible allusions to global warming in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, specifically in the ninth leaf of the Words of Paradise (Kalimat-i-Firdawsiiyih). The ninth leaf has been considered a prophecy of the development of nuclear power, at a time when global warming was not yet discovered. The ninth leaf will be explored in light of the world's current environmental situation.

NATHALIE AUGER is a physician-epidemiologist with the Québec Public Health Institute and the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, University of Montreal.

### **Sandra J. Bean • Extremes of Wealth and Poverty: What Is the Impact of Well-Meant Economic Policies on Health and Well-Being in Developing Countries?**

How do free-market-driven economic policies negatively impact populations? This presentation will examine this question from the standpoint of three cases: farmers in India accused of intellectual property rights violations, shanty-dwellers denied safe drinking water leading to a cholera outbreak in South Africa, and malaria in malaria-endemic countries. Redressing the extremes of wealth and poverty in health must be systemic, at the policy-level, if the goals of the World Health Organization for making health systems "more equitable, inclusive, and fair"<sup>1</sup> are to be realized.

1. *The World Health Report 2008*, "Primary Health Care: Now More Than Ever," p. 2

SANDRA J. BEAN, MPH, is a doctoral student in public health at Oregon State University. Her doctoral research focus is on immunization opposition as a new social movement. She has also studied the ways that neoliberal policies impact the health of vulnerable populations, primarily in the developing world.

### **Samuel Benoit • Faith and Hope in Environmentalism in the Face of Climate Change**

This presentation will review the findings of an honors thesis in Environmental Studies that explores the role that the faculties of faith and hope may play in the modern environmental movement in the face of

catastrophic climate change. What motivates activists to practice and advocate environmental stewardship in the face of the looming thresholds for runaway climate change? This interplay between faith, hope, reason and rationality is paralleled to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's teachings on science and religion as the role of religion in the history and thinking of the modern environmental movement is explored.

SAMUEL BENOIT recently graduated from the Environmental Studies program at Carleton University and has worked as a field researcher for the Olinga Foundation in Ghana and at the University of Agricultural Sciences in Dharwad, India. He is currently a Programs Director at the Otesha Project, a youth-run environmental organization. He blogs at [samuelbenoit.wordpress.com](http://samuelbenoit.wordpress.com).

**Kit Bigelow • Social Environment and Building Bahá'í Community Identity (panel) "We Create What We State"**

The Bahá'í Writings speak to the power and influence of human utterance. Not only do actual words themselves affect our environment but their delivery and manner have a direct impact on the creation of our social and cultural environments. Bahá'í teachings mention "moderation," "refinement," "tact" and "wisdom" as among those essential aspects of speech that create and define positive influence and environment. Ms. Bigelow will briefly explore the Bahá'í teachings on the important role language and speech play and their relevance for changing our current cultural, social and human environments.

As director of external affairs for the US National Spiritual Assembly, Ms BIGELOW advocates on behalf of the persecuted Bahá'ís in Iran, Egypt and other Muslim countries to the US government. Her work also includes broader human rights and religious freedom issues as well as oversight of two offices.

**Maya Bohnhoff and Stephen Friberg • Progressive Revelation as the Bahá'í Answer to New Atheism**

The New Atheists describe religion as illogical, superstitious, a cause of warfare and violence, and an impediment to progress. 'Abdu'l-Bahá agrees - in part. True religion, 'Abdu'l-Bahá teaches, is not dogmatic but is progressive and in keeping with the scientific principles of the time. In this talk we show that the Bahá'í principle of Progressive Revelation far better captures the dynamics of religion, its modes of decay, and its renewal. This principle does not deny the critical findings of the new atheists, but portrays them as part of the larger picture of religious evolution and progress.

MAYA BOHNHOFF is a writer/editor/musician and the author of novels and short fiction—some of which is collected in *I Loved Thy Creation* (Juxta). A member of Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, her short fiction has been nominated for the Nebula, British Science Fiction and Sidewise awards.

**Ann Boyles • Presentation by Member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for the Americas**

ANN BOYLES has a PhD in modern American poetry, teaches part-time at the University of Prince Edward Island, and writes poetry, short fiction, drama, and nonfiction. She serves as member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for the Americas.

### **Bret Breneman • Gerard Manley Hopkins and the ‘Nature’ of the Environment**

A paper on this Victorian religious poet provides a literary/aesthetic lens on the environment. Though in the Romantic tradition, two aspects of Hopkins’ vision place him in the era inaugurated by the Báb: precise observation and his non-pantheistic theology. The paper examines a handful of his poems from Bahá’í perspectives on nature. These poems are a summons to a fresh, spiritualized view of nature with implications as to how humanity should relate to the environment.

BRET BRENEMAN, BA American literature, Stanford, MA English literature, U. of Sussex. English teacher in several countries on all levels. Publications: poems, a few articles, a children’s novel, an epic poem based on *The Dawn-Breakers*.

**Peter Brown • Collective Consciousness, Human Maturity, and the Challenge of Sustainability** (see ADRIANCE for abstract)

### **Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy**

The book, *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*, co-authored by Peter Brown in 2009, begins with the idea that human well-being is entirely dependent on the well-being of the whole commonwealth of life. “Right relationship,” “commonwealth of life,” and “whole earth economy” are defined. Answers to five key questions further illuminate these concepts: *What is the economy for? How does it work? How big should it be? What is a fair distribution of its benefits and burdens? How should it be governed?* The answers offered provide a fresh perspective and hopeful guide that resonates well with diverse faith traditions.

PETER G. BROWN is a professor in the School of Environment at McGill University. He graduated from Haverford College, holds a Master’s Degree in the Philosophy of Religion from Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University, and a PhD from Columbia in Philosophy. His most recent book is *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*. He is a Certified Quebec Forest Producer, and a Tree Farmer of the Year in Garrett County, Maryland. He is a member of the Religious Society of Friends.

**Rehema Clarken • Online English Teacher Roundtable** (panel, see ALLCHIN for abstract)

REHEMA CLARKEN is an International Program Specialist at Northern Michigan University and PhD student of Rhetoric and Technical Communication at Michigan Technological University. Her interests include composition studies, adult education, and cross-cultural communication. She taught EFL and environmental education in Sichuan for five years, and currently volunteers tutoring EFL online.

### **Peter Cromwell and Marie Gervais • Bahá’ís Grapple with Racism**

The presenters grapple with the presence of racism in the Bahá’í community and the process of working through racism as a prerequisite for unity. The session will explore initiatives to educate for a true understanding of unity in diversity, and the obstacles to addressing systemic and unconscious attitudes of racism. The presenters will draw on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s and Shoghi Effendi’s powerful Writings to the Bahá’ís of the West about race unity and the importance of Aboriginal and minority peoples to the advancement of the Faith.

PETER CROMWELL is an African Nova Scotian currently serving as Board Member on the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board. He works for the Canadian Department of the Environment as a meteorologist. He has served in the US Armed Forces and is a founding member of the Ottawa Unity Institute.

**Carol Curtis • Climate Ethics** (panel, see ADRIANCE for abstract)

CAROL CURTIS has had intimate contact with life in the Marshall Islands during the last 40 years. Fluent in the language and culture, she was adopted into and lived with a large family on Lae atoll. She currently serves as an interpreter for the Marshallese community in the United States.

**Arthur Lyon Dahl • Transforming Environments from the Inside Out**

Climate change and the financial crisis are symptoms of an unsustainable world economy hitting planetary limits. The necessary rapid transformation faces barriers deeply rooted in our psyche, values and institutions, requiring spiritual as well as scientific solutions. The Bahá'í concept of oneness requires an integrated perspective and a profound reconsideration of every dimension of our lives, society and environment. Rather than falling into a doomsday depression, we need to see the present chaos as an opportunity to provide spiritual and intellectual leadership to transform our personal lives, families, communities, nations and the emerging world society from the inside out.

**Arthur Lyon Dahl • Workshop on Values-Based Indicators of Sustainable Development**

This workshop welcomes participation by anyone wishing to learn about and contribute thoughts to an EU-funded project to develop values-based indicators of sustainable development. Inspired in part by the Bahá'í International Community's statement, "Valuing Spirituality in Development", the project focuses on several European-based organizations that strive to apply spiritual principles and values in their work. Academic researchers are helping the Earth Charter Initiative, the Alliance on Religions and Conservation, Peoples' Theatre, and the European Bahá'í Business Forum to develop indicators of these important but intangible factors. Participants will learn of progress to date and generate ideas for advancing the work.

**Arthur Lyon Dahl, Respondent • Collective Consciousness, Human Maturity, and the Challenge of Sustainability** (see ADRIANCE for abstract)

**Response and Dialogue**

Reflections will be offered from a Bahá'í perspective on the themes and ideas presented in Dr. Brown's talk, followed by moderated discussion. The audience will be invited to interact with the presenters via questions submitted through the moderator.

DR. ARTHUR LYON DAHL of Geneva, Switzerland, is President of the International Environment Forum and Coordinator of the UNEP/University of Geneva Environmental Diplomacy Program. He is a retired Deputy Assistant Executive Director of UNEP with 40 year's experience in ecology, environment, and sustainability, and author of over 100 publications.

**Marjan Davoudi • Raising a Child as the Creator of Light, not a Subject to the Dark Side of the Environment**

The entire body of what we know as developmental psychology contains numerous articles on the interplay of the influence of gene, nature and environment. It does consider a human being as an object being constantly influenced by the interaction of all these forces. Inspired from humanistic/existential view point and beyond and, above that, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's spiritual guidelines, this presentation emphasizes the unique power of human being's child, to influence and to create changes. It intends to bring hope which is so much needed in the world of today's psychology, families and communities.

MARJAN DAVOUDI is a Clinical Psychologist who has completed her Psychology Doctorate Degree in Chicago, after being deprived of education for 18 years in her birth country Iran due to the religious persecution. She mainly works with families and her research concentration is trauma and crisis intervention.

**David Kalim Diehl • Getting Noticed and Making a Mark: The Challenges of Interdisciplinarity for Bahá'í Studies**

Interest in interdisciplinary approaches to social problems is growing in academia, as is the study of associated challenges. I argue that Bahá'í Studies resembles these attempts to create shared knowledge across disciplines and as such faces the same difficulties. More specifically, a vision for Bahá'í Studies of contributing to academic discourse faces significant hurdles, both in terms of getting noticed in an arena that links legitimacy with the easy location of work within specific disciplinary boundaries and in making a mark by defining a specific problem area of interest to the academy around which shared work coalesces and contributes.

**David Kalim Diehl, moderator • The Wisdom of Crowds: Unexpected Realities of Consultation and Groups** (panel, see ENSLOW for abstract)

DAVID DIEHL is in his final year as a doctoral student in the sociology of education at Stanford University. His work centers on how people use their social relationships to make sense and meaning out of the world.

**Peter Engstrom • Some Explorations in Applying Bahá'í Scholarship** (see ASSOCIATION FOR BAHÁ'Í STUDIES for abstract)

PETER ENGSTROM, a former Air Force Colonel has held senior leadership positions in the government and has extensive experience in the areas of organizational creation and transformation, knowledge architecture, long-range planning, and top-level systems analysis. He currently serves as the board president and founding member of a non-profit dedicated to pioneering "Aging-in-Place" solutions for the aging population.

**Dan Enslow and Jennifer Phillips, with moderator David Kalim Diehl • The Wisdom of Crowds: Unexpected Realities of Consultation and Groups** (panel)

James Surowiecki's book *Wisdom of Crowds* envisions some surprising ways groups of people can make more effective and successful decisions than even trained experts. Surowiecki's research describes the

mechanisms by which we may “collectively advance” and see communities as a living organism. The session reflects on the core concepts of the book and their implications for the Bahá’í Community in understanding how working together in Assembly meetings, Feasts, the Ruhi process and in clusters can be more effective.

DAN ENSLOW is trained in Manufacturing Technology, Industrial Engineering and Organizational Design. He has consulted in industrial change and Self Directed Work Teams, and helped develop “www.bahaiorgdesign.org” to translate Bahá’í Administrative principles to a corporate environment. He is interested in how the Wisdom of Crowd assists a “Science of Unity”.

### **Fahdad Fani, Amanda Henck Schmidt and Joshua Paul Schmidt • Providing an Environment for a Constructive Discussion between Science and Religion**

The current dialogue between science and religion seems dominated and driven by strong explicit atheists who attack religion and faith with scientific findings on one side and religious leaders who retaliate by attacking science in addition to atheism on the other side. This debate is ingraining an atheist bias within the scientific community and mistrust for scientific method and findings in the religious community. The intent of this presentation is to explore more constructive topics of discussion between the “two” communities. This will be a dialogue based presentation where input from the audience will be used to further develop a framework of discussion between science and religion.

FAHDAD FANI graduated from the University of Washington with a BS in physics in 2007. He currently works in the software industry. His academic interests are in the field of renewable energy.

### **Hamid and Ruhiiyyih Farabi • Environment and Its Effects on the Spiritual Life of Man**

Mankind has been created with a spiritual and material nature, which is designed to exist in harmony with the environment. When an imbalance occurs and material greed increases, this is reflected in the environment, which is gradually destroyed. The spiritual nature is also weakened and the overall effect is a further increase in selfishness and greed, as individuals seek to acquire for themselves the ever decreasing resources of the environment, which consequently undergoes further destruction. The balance must be rectified by developing mankind’s spiritual qualities.

DR. HAMID FARABI, Director, Centre for Environmental Studies, University of the West Indies, Trinidad. Specialist in Environment Engineering and Management, Toxic and Hazardous Wastes, Health and Safety issues in the Caribbean and Latin America, having 31 years experience and a thorough understanding of the special problems and requirements of the region.

RUHIYYIH FARABI has a Bachelor’s in Chemical and Process Engineering from the University of South Florida, Tampa and a Master’s in Environmental Engineering from the University of the West Indies, Trinidad. She has been working at the Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago, Petrotrin, for the past two and a half years as a Process Engineer.

## **Khosrow Farahbakhsh • Organic Unity and the Second Law of Thermodynamics**

The concept of 'organic unity' has been repeatedly introduced in the Bahá'í writings as the focal point for the divine revelation. What distinguishes 'organic unity' from mere 'unity'? The answer to this question may be found through exploration of nature and, more specifically, through the application of the Second Law of Thermodynamics to understanding the principal of unity in nature and the concept of 'mature ecosystems'. Examining 'mature ecosystems' through the lens of the Second Law may provide us with insights to better understand the concept of organic unity which is to be the hallmark of a 'mature humanity'.

KHOSROW FARAHBAKHS is an environmental engineer and a professor of Engineering at the University of Guelph. He has extensive experience in integrated water management, appropriate technologies and sustainable infrastructure. His current work partly focuses on participatory innovation and learning alliances, sustainable innovation and the Second Law of Thermodynamics and sustainability.

## **Stephen Friberg • Progressive Revelation as the Bahá'í Answer to New Atheism** (see BOHNHOFF for abstract)

STEPHEN FRIBERG is a physicist interested in science and religion. A long time member of the ABS Science and Religion SIG, he currently serves on the ABS Executive Committee.

## **Marie Gervais • Bahá'ís Grapple with Racism** (see CROMWELL for abstract)

## **Marie Gervais • "Eat ye, O people": The Role of Food and Hospitality in Bahá'í Intercultural Relations**

This presentation explores how intercultural bonds are initiated, sustained and deepened through the intertwined roles of food preparation, food offering, food sharing and hospitality at Bahá'í events. It uses the Bahá'í Writings, current research surrounding the role of food in intercultural relations, and the author's own experience with food in various cultures, to demonstrate the very real presence of love and friendship across difference, through that most social of human events: eating together.

DR. MARIE GERVAIS received her Doctorate in Secondary Education at the University of Alberta, focusing on culture and learning. She provides training and consultation in cultural competency in the workplace through her consulting business, Global Leadership Associates, and is a practicing visual artist, choral and theatre director and writer.

## **Anne Gillette and Lawrence Staudt • Assisting the World's Transition to a Sustainable Energy Future**

This paper seeks to create a vision for a sustainable energy future based on Bahá'í teachings. It then looks at some of the practical steps and processes required on the way to achieving that vision, considering a stakeholder-driven California initiative as a case study.

ANNE GILLETTE is a Policy Analyst for the California Public Utilities Commission. She received a M.A. from the University of San Francisco, and a B.A. from Mount Holyoke College. Anne has served in the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly's Office of External Affairs and as a consultant to the World Bank.

## **William P. Gregg • Bahá'í Gardens as Catalysts for Neighborhood Transformation**

I hypothesize that religious organizations have important opportunities to create gardens for spiritual inspiration and to partner with others to demonstrate the potential of gardens to enhance the spiritual life and foster harmonious development of their neighborhoods. As an example of this approach, I review efforts of a Bahá'í community in West Virginia to create gardens at their new Bahá'í Center and encourage integration of gardens in the surrounding landscape. Relevant experience at other Bahá'í Centers in North America is discussed.

BILL GREGG is an ecologist and an avid gardener. Before retiring in 2004, he worked for 33 years at the U.S. Department of the Interior, where he coordinated research on environmental issues, and participated in international scientific activities in many countries. He became a Bahá'í in 1979.

## **Brian Guequierre • Thoughts on Water**

Water, the fundamental building block and sustainer of life, enjoys a preeminent metaphorical role in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, and in the teachings and practice of all past religions. But is it possible to glean further insights into a spiritual metaphor by examining and experiencing the underlying physical phenomenon? Understanding nature as an expression of the Divine, what can we learn from water itself, and our immersion therein? This paper will explore the metaphysical ramifications of physical immersion of oneself in water, including a contextual overview of the universality and centrality of the role of water in all religions.

BRIAN GUEQUIERRE is a consumer-protection attorney in Austin, Texas, where he received his JD in Law and BA in Literature from UT, and lives with his beautiful wife and children. An avid surfer, waterman, and naturalist, he has been a pioneer and travel-teacher throughout parts of Africa, Europe, and the Americas.

## **Duncan Hanks, facilitator • Climate Ethics (panel, see ADRIANCE for abstract)**

DUNCAN HANKS is the Executive Director of the Canadian Bahá'í International Development Agency ([www.cbida.ca](http://www.cbida.ca)), and representative of the Bahá'í Community of Canada in the areas of environment, sustainable development and climate change. He has a Master's degree in International Development and has lived and worked internationally for over twenty years.

## **Ian Harris • Human Rights for the Entire Bahá'í Community: Using a Group-Oriented Minority Rights Framework to Advocate for the Bahá'í Community**

Bahá'í rights advocates have effectively used individual human rights norms to campaign against widespread abuse of Bahá'ís in Iran and Egypt. Unfortunately, individual human rights norms may be insufficient to protect Bahá'í administrative structures, service projects, or educational activities, which require the practice of religion in community. In this paper, I am advocating for an increased role for group-oriented rights under the minority rights framework in future advocacy. Specifically, I will examine the potential for using a group-oriented minority rights framework under article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in advocating for Bahá'í community rights.

IAN HARRIS recently graduated from the American University Washington College of Law, where he pursued a joint J.D. and M.A. in International Peace and Conflict Resolution. As a law student he worked for several years advocating for immigrant women fleeing gender-based violence and refugee rights.

**Brett D. Hartman • Restoring the Earth’s Resources: A Bahá’í Perspective - Where the Land is Hurting, the People are Hurting**

Where the land is hurting, the people are hurting – healing the land and healing the people are one and the same. I will present preliminary results from my dissertation research, including a socio-ecological model of land restoration in developing nations and empirical results from a project in gully rehabilitation, wet-land restoration and community development in the Bolivian Andes. These results will then be related back to quotes from the Bahá’í writings in a group discussion format to come to an understanding of the very clear guidance the scriptures have given us on how to best restore our environment.

BRETT HARTMAN has over twelve years of experience as a restoration ecologist. Trained at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies and the recipient of a Fulbright Scholarship, he is now pursuing doctoral studies at U.C. Santa Barbara after which he plans on pursuing a career in teaching and research.

**Ingrid Hauck • Creating Sacred Spaces: A Bahá’í Perspective on Feng Shui**

This presentation personalizes the conference theme for you and your own surroundings. Feng Shui coach Ingrid Hauck looks at ancient eastern teachings regarding the design of our built environment in light of the Bahá’í Writings and emerging scientific findings. You’ll probe Feng Shui’s root principles: the nature of reality; symbolism; physical and metaphysical treatments; relationships between nature’s building blocks; and certain inherent virtues such as cleanliness and beauty. These aspects are considered in light of the Faith’s teachings, especially the Writings of the Báb, along with emerging scientific evidence that supports these tried and true environmental design principles.

Former executive INGRID HAUCK now transforms lives through her environmental well-being practice. A Bahá’í since 1995, a member of the International Feng Shui Guild and a trained Virtues Project facilitator, Ingrid delights in connecting you to your true self through the spirit of place and the language of the spirit.

**Amrollah Hemmat • Beyond Feminism, Táhirih’s Life and Writings**

Tahirih’s life and spoken words have been an emblem for the struggle to achieve equality between men and women. Reading her prose and poetry, however, one observes that she is concerned with a broad fundamental social and spiritual transformation. At the same time her theological and philosophical perspective, along with the metaphors and allusion she employed in her poetry and prose inform a fundamental change in the perspective on women. Metaphors of silence, the veil, beauty, and Táhirih’s interpretation of the myth of Adam and Eve will be among those addressed in this presentation.

AMROLLAH HEMMAT is the coauthor of four volumes of poetry translated from Persian and Arabic into English, and books and educational material on Arabic grammar. He received an M.S. degree in Applied Behavioral Science from the Johns Hopkins University and a PhD. in Communication from the University of South Florida. Currently, he is a graduate faculty of Central Michigan University and very active and interested in distance higher education.

## **Darius Himes • Figures of Speech and Thought: Implications of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation for Contemporary Art and its Relation to the Community of the Greatest Name**

Much contemporary art is rooted in abstraction but excursions to galleries and museums often end in confusion and bewilderment rather than the upliftment and edification that Bahá'u'lláh has reassured us can come from an engagement with the arts. In this talk, I draw the audience into a fresh approach to contemporary visual arts. I ask the audience to entertain a close reading of key statements from the Master. I then lead the audience through a discussion of the importance of abstract thought in conveying spiritual concepts and their application and use in understanding the history of 20th century art.

DARIUS HIMES founded Radius Books with three colleagues in 2007, and works as an acquiring editor in photography. Prior to that he was the founding editor of *photo-eye Booklist*, a quarterly magazine devoted to photography books. He writes and lectures on, as well as loves, photography and books.

## **Camille N. Khodadad • Seeking a Work Environment Conducive to the Development of Human Potential**

By equating work with worship, Bahá'u'lláh has opened new vistas in our understanding of both. Ensuring that all can work in an environment that fosters the full development of their potential becomes a principal task of education, government, and business. This workshop will analyze the extent to which Bahá'u'lláh's redefinition of work has been actualized through employment laws enacted in the last century. Lacking a vision of humanity that includes our spiritual nature, these well-intentioned measures have only partially succeeded. A future workplace imbued with Bahá'í values will be envisioned.

CAMILLE KHODADAD, J.D., has practiced in the area of employment law for the last 18 years. She is currently head of the employment law department of Hall, Prangle & Schoonveld in Chicago. Prior to joining HPS, Camille was a partner in the employment law department of Lord, Bissell & Brook.

## **Jian Khodadad, Chair • Environments: Perspective from Young Scholars (panel)**

This year's Young Scholar Plenary Panel will focus on the theme of Environments and how reason and spiritual principles, when effectively applied, can lead to the preservation, refinement, and improvement of the diverse types of social, cultural, and natural environments. Participants include students and young professionals whose studies span an array of disciplines including business, public health, and development. Panelists will also share their experience relating Bahá'í principles and Faith in an academic environment.

JIAN KHODADAD is the director of market development at Clearwire, where he has business development and marketing responsibilities. His professional experience has primarily been focused in the wireless industry. He received his MBA at Georgetown.

## **Mehrzad Khorsandi • In Search of a Balanced, Generative, Emergent & Environmentally Responsive Architecture / Construction Curriculum**

Developing a sustainable curriculum for architecture and construction programs can be very challenging. It is done by considering the current economic crises, recognizing the needs of the community and

industry at large, valuing academicians' rising awareness of environmental issues, while incorporating and demonstrating the great relevance of the Bahá'í teachings to the whole of the process. I will explore the nature of current sustainable curriculum development efforts and argue that most are materially based and not spiritual, therefore true progress has not taken place and will not, until a genuine and spiritually based model is devised.

MEHRZAD KHORSANDI, PHD., Architecture, Director of Architecture and Construction Programs at Mesa Community College, Mesa Arizona. Interests include Building Design, Computer Aided Design & Drafting (CADD), Curriculum Development, Structural Calculation & Design, and the Art of Painting.

### **Ian Kluge • The Writings, Philosophy and the Human Environment**

Drawing on decades of high school teaching experience using philosophical inquiry as a teaching tool, this paper explores how philosophy, which Shoghi Effendi describes as a "sound branch of learning," contributes to a better inner environment thereby improving the external environment. Among other things, philosophy encourages thoughtfulness, reflection, self-evaluation, self-critique, objectivity, understanding and empathy for new viewpoints, clear questioning and analysis: it helps us reach our maximum potential as "rational souls"; (SAQ, 151). It also improves our social environment by fostering mental habits that encourage more thoughtful dialogue and action.

### **Ian Kluge, Courosh Mehanian and Dinesh Singh, with moderator Robert Stockman • Apologetics Program - Answering Irreligion (panel)**

This panel discussion will consider responses to recent attacks on religion in general and theism in particular. The session will include dynamic discussion among the panelists and interaction with the audience.

IAN KLUGE lives in British Columbia. He is a poet, playwright and independent philosophy scholar. He has published numerous articles on the Bahá'í Writings and philosophy in the *Lights of Irfan* series, presented philosophical papers at ABS conferences and published two books on the American philosophical poet Conrad Aiken.

### **Samir Koirala, Mitra Solomon and Dave Wellman • Footprints of the Future: Visions of Human Civilization a Century from now (and how to get there) (panel)**

New evidence suggests that 1.5 million years ago, human ancestors walked the African landscape with footprints and strides like our own. We come from this distant past and look to a distant future, despite hurdles ahead. A long vision of the future is at the very core of the Bahá'í Faith. So come let your imagination wander: what shape will this future take? Not just five years from now but fifty or five hundred. What economic systems, technological and medical advances, environmental innovations, and spiritual transformations will sustain us? How will our footprints look, just over the horizon of time?

SAMIR KOIRALA, PhD, is a neuroscientist at the Children's Hospital at Harvard Medical School in Boston. Originally from Nepal, he did his graduate work at USC in Los Angeles. His current research focuses on the biology of brain development as well as neurodevelopmental disorders.

## **Katharine Kripke • The Old World Order, the New World Order, and Ending HIV/AIDS**

As treatment of people living with HIV scales up worldwide, it is becoming increasingly clear that prevention of new infections urgently needs increased focus as well. The current environment of HIV prevention in the secular world could benefit from further application of Bahá'í principles. We suggest, however, that the obvious principles such as chastity, avoidance of drugs and alcohol, and equality of women and men cannot be effectively applied until a foundation is established based on several more fundamental Bahá'í principles. We will discuss some of these foundational principles and some of the challenges involved in implementing them.

DR. KRIPKE has worked on HIV/AIDS for 15 years. After completing a PhD. in Immunology and a post-doctoral fellowship, she worked in the Office of HIV/AIDS at the U.S. Agency for International Development. She is currently Assistant Director of the HIV Vaccine Research Program at the National Institutes of Health.

## **Dale E. Lehman • What Bahá'ís Think about Science and Religion**

The harmony of science and religion is a key Bahá'í teaching, but what do individual Bahá'ís think this teaching means? Is a distinctively Bahá'í outlook on the subject emerging? Internet discussions among a diverse group of Bahá'ís suggest that little unity of thought on these subjects currently exists within the Bahá'í community. As a first cut at understanding such issues, an internet-based survey has been conducted. It suggests that Bahá'ís do share a common view of some aspects of the relationship between science and religion, yet are quite diverse where other aspects are concerned.

DALE E. LEHMAN is a software developer, amateur astronomer, and bonsai-artist-in-training. He is a member of the Association for Bahá'í Studies Science and Religion Special Interest Group and has given several ABS conference presentations. With his wife Kathleen, he publishes Planet Bahá'í (<http://www.planetbahai.org>).

## **Adam Ludwin • Environments: Perspective from Young Scholars** (panel, see JIAN KHODADAD for abstract)

ADAM LUDWIN is an MBA student at Harvard. His passion is entrepreneurship because of its power to bring meaningful new things into the world. He interned this summer with IDEO, the innovation firm. Prior to Harvard, Adam volunteered at the Bahá'í World Centre and worked for The Boston Consulting Group.

## **Susan Maneck, moderator • Apologetics Program - Answering Muslim Critics** (panel, see ASHCHI for abstract)

## **Susan Maneck • Accusations against Bahá'ís within the Context of Islamic Heresiography**

In countries like Iran where Bahá'ís face severe persecution fantastic charges are made against Bahá'ís many of which are reminiscent of the kinds of tales told about the Jewish people not so long ago. Chief among these charges is the notion that the Bahá'í Faith constitutes a foreign conspiracy to destroy the unity of Islam. Other charges center around accusations of sexual promiscuity, the most scurrilous among them

involving incest. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the background and significance of such stories as they have appeared in relationship to other 'heresies' within Islamic heresiography.

DR. SUSAN MANECK is an Associate at Jackson State University where she teaches courses in the Middle East and South Asian History. She conducts research in Bahá'í and Zoroastrian history and published numerous articles on these topics as well as a book on the history of the Parsis entitled *The Death of Ahriman*.

**Dorothy Marcic • Some Explorations in Applying Bahá'í Scholarship** (see ASSOCIATION FOR BAHÁ'Í STUDIES for abstract)

DOROTHY MARCIC started her artistic career working on Mister Rogers Neighborhood, the renowned TV program for children. Her recent work in the arts includes RESPECT: Women and Popular Music, which traces Top 40-songs with women's development in the 20th century. Her academic honors and consulting activities in management and human resources areas have been wide and varied.

**Patricia McGraw, Elena Mustakova-Possardt and Michael Penn • Creating Healthy Social Environments: Positive and Sustainable Communities** (panel)

We are in a time of severe and pervasive mental tests afflicting the whole world. In these times, how do we better understand social health? What psychological factors play out in efforts to create genuinely sustainable communities? How do we re-think our Western lifestyles and live more interdependently? This panel, organized by Dr. Mustakova-Possardt and Dr. McGraw, explores the psychological characteristics and the intra- and interpersonal dynamics of creating genuine communities that are models for interdependent sustainable living in times of severe global crisis. The presentations and discussions draw from neurobiology, clinical, positive psychology, and the Bahá'í Teachings.

DR. MCGRAW has 35 years of experience in psychology. A forensic expert and consultant to the Institute for Defense Analysis, VA, for Providence House of Catholic Charities, a Battered Woman's program, she has worked for Johns Hopkins Hospital, the Veterans Administration Hospital, has taught undergraduate psychology and published two books.

**Nancy McKeand and Debbie Wilke • On Track With Marco, a Computerized High Beginner English Program**

Come with us as we explore the development of EFL 100, a purely computerized high beginner online course for use by both high school and university students in Iran. This story driven course was designed to provide an environment that is controlled yet language rich where students would learn grammar through usage and develop a solid foundation that would support the goal of learning academic English. The presentation will be an examination of the importance of context and practice for mastery in language learning. Some discussion of education theory in course design and finished product will be included.

NANCY MCKEAND has taught English for many years and in many parts of the world. She has been involved with BIHE since 2005, working on EFL course development and as a course instructor. She is currently Director of the ESL Institute at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, New Mexico.

**Courosch Mehanian • Apologetics Program - Answering Irreligion** (panel, see KLUGE for abstract)

DR. MEHANIAN earned a PhD in physics from Cornell University. He co-authored, with Stephen Friberg, "Religion and Evolution Reconciled: 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Comments on Evolution", *Journal of Bahá'í Studies*, Volume 13 n. 1-4 (2003). He is currently doing research in computer vision related to automated interpretation of medical images.

**Robert Michell • The Casting Down of Turquoise [Poems on Prophets, saints, and ordinary angels]**

Who was the Most Holy Prisoner? What innocent face burst through daisies? What horror happened at Ilkhani? Who cast down turquoise in obedience to the Báb? What people sitting beneath His candle knew it not? Who stepped up on the Podium of Hearts? "In the midst of her dollhouse fancies/ Did she dream of humble huts,/ And did her Sunday hats/ Include mosquito netting?" "The Casting Down of Turquoise" is a poetry reading that ranges from otherworldly to the utterly tragic. It is a celebration of the spiritual over the material. Come, feast with Prophets, saints and ordinary angels.

ROBERT JAMES MICHELL is an author, poet, playwright living in Montreal with his Chinese wife, Jenny, and three of four bouncing boys (the last one, a-field, clawing through his Master's). He has read poetry mainstage, and given several talks at previous ABS conferences.

**Kavian Milani • Apologetics Program - Answering Muslim Critics** (panel, see ASHCHI for abstract)

KAVIAN MILANI is the founder goftman-iran and negah websites. He is also a human rights activist working with human rights activists in Iran. He has authored many articles in English and Persian, including in *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies*, *Bahá'í Studies Review*, *World Order*, *Lights of Irfan*, *Iranian Studies* and *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

**Pierre-Yves Mocquais • Fostering the Creation and Delivery of Courses on the Bahá'í Faith at Universities and Colleges**

In 1974, the Universal House of Justice called on the Association for Bahá'í Studies to "cultivate opportunities for formal presentations, courses and lectureships on the Bahá'í Faith in Canadian universities and other institutions of higher learning." In this workshop, participants will review the guidelines prepared by the Executive Committee of ABS, share their experiences with mounting or attempting to mount such courses, address challenges and opportunities related to such efforts, reflect on questions of content and methodology, as well as on lessons learned. The main focus of the discussion will be on ways to enhance the development of such courses in "universities and other institutions of higher learning" with a view to further develop guidelines and support the mandate given to the Association for Bahá'í Studies.

PIERRE-YVES MOCQUAIS, PhD, is Full Professor in the Department of French, Italian and Spanish Faculty of Humanities of the University of Calgary. Author or co-author of five books and Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques, he is currently the Academic Director of the Association for Bahá'í Studies.

### **Pejman Mosleh • Saving Sohrab: Tracing the Bahá'í Faith in Contemporary Persian Fiction**

This presentation surveys Persian fiction for the influence of the Bahá'í Faith. Iranian novelists create in an environment some claim to be afflicted with the "Reversed Oedipus Complex", a term denoting cultural filicide, first coined by Fereydoon Hoveyda. Whereas a strong poet strives to "swerve away" from his/her predecessor according to Harold Bloom in *The Anxiety of Influence*, Iranian writers may find their creativity stymied by predecessors or patriarchs. By engaging the Faith, some, especially female, novelists refashion their literary environment often by drawing upon Táhirih's iconoclastic story with its anticipated societal impact.

PEJMAN MOSLEH works in the high tech sector. His academic interests include Persian literature in diaspora and bioinformatics. He holds a B.Sc. and M.Sc. in molecular biology, B.Sc. in computer science, and is completing his B.A. in English at the University of Ottawa. His creative writing has won literary awards.

### **Lex Musta • Transforming African-Descent Environments through Museums**

Shoghi Effendi teaches that Bahá'í Archives can be understood as a space which promotes self-reflection and inquiry providing a deeper understanding of inner, inter-personal and collective unity. Through a brief discussion of Shoghi Effendi's model of the Bahá'í Archives, models of spaces that promote understandings of oneness will be explored. A particular focus will be how museums might promote racial unity. This research examines how museums can encourage a consciousness of oneness in African-Descent environments in light of the Bahá'í Teachings that European-Descent Americans shall be "loving toward you, and endeavor to promote your advancement and enhance your honor."

LEX MUSTA is a Human Amity Worker. He has received his Masters in Business Administration from Schiller International University and currently works for the African American Civil War Museum. His research interest lies in the glorification and emulation of the Hand of the Cause of God Mr. Louis George Gregory.

### **Elena Mustakova-Possardt • Creating Healthy Social Environments: Positive and Sustainable Communities** (panel, see MCGRAW for abstract)

DR. MUSTAKOVA-POSSARDT, individual and family psychotherapist and former professor in developmental, clinical and critical social and community psychology, studies the historical and contextual intersection between individual and collective consciousness. She is a lifelong educator, and author of *Critical Consciousness: A Study of Morality in a Global Historical Context*.

### **Kayhan Nadji • The Effect of Environment and Nature in Architecture**

The intent of this study is to analyze 'Abdu'l-Bahá's statement "Nature is the essential connection which proceeds from the realities of things." This paper first deals with the definitions of Arctic, Permafrost, Snowdrifting and then it will offer an explanation of the influence of these natural conditions in shaping the form and buildings of communities in traditional societies. The study examines the ability of traditional and indigenous architecture to respond to severe natural and environmental conditions. Included are some scientific researches on the design methodologies of the vernacular architecture. This research has been conducted in some traditional communities of Canadian Arctic.

KAYHAN NADJI holds a Master of Architectural and Urban Planning degrees. His sensitivity to Northern Environment /Culture has contributed to a high standard of design for northern communities. Kayhan is the winner of the 2000 National Post Design Exchange Awards in Architecture for the design of Unique Northern Housing in Yellowknife.

### **Fazel Naghdy • The Bahá'í community as a Learning Organisation**

As early as 1992, the Bahá'í community worldwide was guided to deploy a posture of learning in undertaking its plans at all levels. The global Five Year Plans introduced in 2002 by the Universal House of Justice have emphatically highlighted the necessity and importance of adopting the culture of learning in developing and implementing the new paradigms of growth. This paper will explore how much the culture of learning has permeated the Bahá'í community so far and to what extent the community has become a learning organisation. A conceptual model of a learning Bahá'í community will be developed first. Some 'A' clusters in Australia will be assessed against this model and a response to the question asked will be developed.

FAZEL NAGHDY is Professor of Computer Engineering at University of Wollongong, Australia. He has extensive experience in developing spiritual development curriculum for junior youth, youth and adults over the last 20 years. He has carried out Bahá'í scholarship as a natural extension of his academic work.

### **Táhirih Naylor, moderator • Collective Consciousness, Human Maturity, and the Challenge of Sustainability** (panel, see ADRIANCE for abstract)

#### **Táhirih Naylor • Climate Ethics** (panel, see ADRIANCE for abstract)

TÁHIRIH NAYLOR serves as a representative of the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations in the areas of social and sustainable development and human rights. She graduated from Osgoode Hall Law School having specialized in international, comparative and transnational law and has participated in volunteer service in over twenty-five countries.

### **Maame Nketsiah • Environments: Perspective from Young Scholars** (panel, see JIAN KHODADAD for abstract)

MAAME NKETSIAH is at Columbia University's Earth Institute and working on the Millennium Villages project. She has also received a Masters in Population and Health Development at Harvard and has served at the Bahá'í World Centre and worked for International Planned Parenthood in Ghana and Kenya.

### **Anisa Khadem Nwachuku • Environments: Perspective from Young Scholars** ((panel, see JIAN KHODADAD for abstract)

ANISA KHADEM NWACHUKU is a 4th-year PhD. Student in Sustainable Development at Columbia University's Earth Institute and an NSF fellow in International Development and Globalization. Her research interests include health equity and materialism as a threat to sustainability.

**Michael Penn • Creating Healthy Social Environments: Positive and Sustainable Communities** (panel, see MCGRAW for abstract)

DR. MICHAEL PENN is a Professor of Psychology at Franklin & Marshall College and a Clinical Psychologist. His research interests and publications include works in the pathogenesis of hope and hopelessness, adolescent psychopathology, the relationship between culture and psychopathology, ethics and mental health, and the epidemiology of gender-based violence.

**Anne Gordon Perry • Approaching the Centenary of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s 1912 Visit to America: Preparation, Research, Commemorative Projects**

The environment of America in 1912 significantly differed from that of today. Preparing for the 2012 anniversary of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s journey to America and responding creatively requires inner preparation, historic research, gathering stories and visual artifacts, and use of the imagination in recreating a sense of the profound significance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s station, person, attributes, influence, vision, teachings, and impact. Writer, dramatist, and producer Anne Gordon Perry will share part of her individual initiative and that of filmmaker/director Tim Perry as they visualize and actualize projects that they hope will serve the commemoration.

ANNE GORDON PERRY, PhD Aesthetic Studies, teaches at the Art Institute of Dallas. The lead instructor for a Wilmette Institute course on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, she also served as primary author of *Green Acre on the Piscataqua*, writer/researcher for other historic projects, and performer of dramatic monologues about the influence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

**Mark Perry • Social Environment and Building Bahá’í Community Identity** (panel) **“Annulling Differences of Race: The American Bahá’í Experience and Beyond”**

The early American Bahá’í community had to learn to practice racial integration within a society which not only practised segregation, but often saw it as both morally and scientifically sound. Dr. Perry will trace the processes of change in the Bahá’í community of the time, and consider their implications both for the development of early Bahá’í identity and for ongoing processes of change

MARK PERRY grew up in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. He earned a BA in music and physics at Haverford College and a MA in anthropology and a PhD in the history of culture at the University of Chicago. He is the author of *The Last War – Racism, Spirituality and the Future of Civilization* (George Ronald, publisher).

**Jennifer Phillips • The Wisdom of Crowds: Unexpected Realities of Consultation and Groups** (panel, see ENSLOW for abstract)

JENNIFER PHILLIPS holds Master’s degrees in Urban and Regional Planning (Queen’s University) and Public Administration (Dalhousie University). She has worked for over 30 years, mainly for municipal government, in diverse areas such as neighbourhood planning, heritage preservation, corporate and strategic planning and infrastructure renewal. She is currently a private consultant.

## **Nousha Ram • Principle Based Leadership in Turbulent Times**

Leadership in the workplace can be challenging, even when times are good. When times are volatile, it is even more important to ensure that there is no disconnect from values and principles. Principle-based leadership can come from anywhere in the organization, whether we are business leaders, entrepreneurs, managers or employees, and each of us can be a leader within our own sphere of influence. We will have the opportunity to reflect on, and explore, how the practical application of principles outlined in the Bahá'í Writings enables us to make a significant contribution to our workplace.

NOUSHA RAM is a Senior Manager at Deloitte Consulting in Ottawa. Her educational background is in Mathematics and Mechanical Engineering. Nousha has developed training materials and facilitated sessions on topics such as "Improving Employee-Employer Relationships: Motivation, Compensation & Benefits", "Beyond Servant Leadership", and "Redefining Success: Applying Spiritual Values in Business".

## **Lev Rickards • The Wisdom of Crowds: Unexpected Realities of Consultation and Groups** (panel, see ENSLOW for abstract)

LEV RICKARDS has an M.S. in Information Economics and Policy from the University of Michigan. As a web developer at Harvard's Office for Sustainability, he applies information solutions to environmental challenges.

## **Otto Don Rogers • The Artist and the Grammarian – The 27<sup>th</sup> Hasan M. Balyuzi Memorial Lecture**

The intent of this presentation is to comment on the affirmation experienced in the art of painting, and to reflect on the nature of creative action. To refer to the human spirit, mind being its essential quality, and give consideration to the following: Artistic form is at once ordered composition, and the mysterious infusion of the soul's yearning. The artist stands before a vast opening, hearing the call of the mystic knower to the Grammarian, "Be nothing then, and walk upon the waves." Such an act of faith is our common charge. Further, poetic drama is elevated by the necessity for the invisible to be at one with the structural framework.

OTTO DON ROGERS, MS Fine Art, Wisconsin; University of Saskatchewan (1959-1988); Department Head (1973-1978), was born in Kerrobert, Saskatchewan. He has held solo exhibitions for 56 years, has works in over 1500 public, corporate, and private collections, and has served as Auxiliary Board member, Continental Counsellor, International Teaching Centre member, and Canadian National Spiritual Assembly member.

## **Robert L. Rogers • "Green" Starts With the Letter "S"**

Are there methodologies of building and site design based in nature which can utilize Bahá'í principles for their implementation, and go beyond current methodologies such as LEED? This presentation says "yes", combining visuals, poetry and interaction to focus on six elements of sustainability: spirit, seed, sky, soil, skin and systems. These elements are broken into major aspects of project design and construction, and follow up use by "sustainers" (owners and users of space). Bahá'í principles such as honesty, justice, and oneness are added to help ensure a project is successful with commitments to overall goals of sustainable living.

ROBERT L. ROGERS, RA, is the owner of Architectural Alternatives, located in Blacksburg, VA, whose mission is "Architecture + Planning for Sustainable Living". Bob's 38 years as an Architect and 9 years as a Bahá'í include exploring ways the Faith can help create sustainably-based built environments.

### **Naomi Rohrer • Teaching Oral English Online Through SKYPE (VOIP)**

James N. Coburn's research study focuses on the online teaching of English conversation using VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) in an unusual and challenging international online context. Interviews with Conversation Facilitators led to the redesign of existing assignments in order to encourage better interaction patterns with students. "Best practice" skills and attitudes emerged from the interviews which are analysed in more detail. The paper will be followed by audio examples of conversations and comments by experienced Conversation Facilitators.

JAMES N. COBURN is working towards a Masters in English Didactics at the University of Oslo, Norway, with a dissertation based on his current work coordinating an online conversation program. He holds degrees in Management Science and English, and has taught English and coordinated International educational exchange projects since 1996.

NAOMI ROHRER teaches English as a Second Language at Mountain State University in Martinsburg, West Virginia. She is a conversation facilitator and team-teacher of English with an online university. She holds a BA in Spanish, and an MS in Education with a concentration in TESOL from Shenandoah University in Virginia.

### **Ariana Salvo • Translating Values into Practices: Exploring a New Framework for Positive Change in Prince Edward Island's Farming Community**

Finding ways to bring academic research to bear on the needs of our communities is a fundamental challenge of Bahá'í scholarship. This presentation considers challenges faced by the agricultural community of Prince Edward Island, Canada and explores a promising action-based, spiritually-rooted framework to address them. I describe, from a Bahá'í perspective, a Value Chain (VC) initiative being developed by a group of entrepreneurial farmers, researchers, business people and government representatives; the collaborative spirit inherent in the VC model; the values it nurtures; and the potential it has for empowering other communities to improve their social, cultural, ecological and economic environments.

ARIANA SALVO was raised in Cyprus. She completed her BA in Environmental Law and Creative Writing at Prescott College; and her M.A. in Island Studies at the University of Prince Edward Island. She coordinates a Value Chain initiative on Prince Edward Island, to facilitate the development of the organic farming industry.

### **Payam Sazegar • Materialism & Health: A Bahá'í perspective**

The Bahá'í Writings support the view that an individual's biological, social, psychological and spiritual nature must be developed in a unified manner in order to achieve optimum physical and mental health. The disease of materialism is, according to the Bahá'í teachings, one of the most insidious and destructive processes preventing a human soul from achieving optimum health. This paper explores how several medical and health challenges have materialism as a root cause and can be remedied through the direct

application of Bahá'í principles. We also discuss how the pattern of Bahá'í community life being established worldwide effects a 'fundamental change of consciousness' regarding the *principle of appropriate use* as it pertains to issues of materialism in medicine.

PAYAM SAZEGAR, is a member of the Bahá'í Community of Vancouver, Canada. He is also a member of the Department of Family Practice at the University of British Columbia and works as a community family physician.

### **Ben Schewel • Scriptural Reasoning and the Bahá'í Faith**

Responding to the Supreme Body's injunction to extend the systematic learning process currently characterizing our teaching efforts to all aspects of Bahá'í life, this presentation reconceptualizes Bahá'í scholarship as a dynamic process animated by both internal endeavours directly serving the interests of the Faith, and external endeavors advancing general knowledge, and develops a plan for actualizing this vision. The two elements of this plan are Scriptural Reasoning, a new and increasingly important scholarly interfaith movement open to Bahá'í participation, and the development of an online forum to systematically pursue the theoretical needs of the community.

BEN SCHEWEL is a master's student at the University of Virginia studying philosophy of religion. He focuses primarily on the philosophical schools of phenomenology and American pragmatism. He plans to continue his studies at PhD level following the completion of his master's degree.

### **Amanda Henck Schmidt • Providing an Environment for a Constructive Discussion between Science and Religion** (see FANI for abstract)

AMANDA HENCK SCHMIDT is a PhD candidate in geosciences at the University of Washington. She studies erosion in SW China and eastern Tibet and also is a member of interdisciplinary teams working on human-landuse interactions and social and ecosystem resilience in minority communities in Sichuan Province.

### **Joshua Paul Schmidt • Providing an Environment for a Constructive Discussion between Science and Religion** (see FANI for abstract)

JOSHUA PAUL SCHMIDT graduated from the University of Washington with a BS in physics and a minor in materials science in 2007. He currently works as a technical analyst for Boeing Commercial Airlines. As an undergraduate, his interest in material science led him to conduct research in a lab studying the velocity of magnetic microparticles in an induced magnetic gradient.

### **Mikhail Sergeev • Epistemological Views of 'Abdu'l-Bahá**

It became a tradition in modern philosophy to begin the exposition of any philosophical system with a thinker's stand on epistemological issues. In my paper I attempt at a comprehensive reconstruction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's epistemological views that are scattered throughout many of His Writings and utterances. I focus on the distinction that is made in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Writings between objective vs. subjective and human vs. divine cognition. In conclusion, parallels are made between 'Abdu'l-Bahá's epistemological views and the practical need for inter-religious dialogue and cooperation.

MIKHAIL SERGEEV holds a doctorate in religious studies from Temple University. He teaches courses in philosophy and religion at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. He is the author of two books—*The Project of the Enlightenment: Essays on Religion, Philosophy and Art* and *Sophiology in Russian Orthodoxy*.

### **Soli Shahvar • Opening and Closing the Door: The State and the Bahá'í Schools in Iran**

At the close of the nineteenth century, to the amazement of many Iranians, modern Bahá'í schools emerged, first in Tehran then in cities, towns and villages with numerous Bahá'ís. By the 1930s there were dozens of Bahá'í schools. Surprisingly, the secular and reform-minded Pahlavi state (which shared some central Bahá'í principles, such as education and women's emancipation), closed them in the mid 1930s. Why did the Qajar rulers, persecuting the Bábís-Bahá'ís since the mid-1840s, allow such schools to open? And what could have stood behind Reza Shah's decision to close them? This paper attempts to answer those crucial questions.

### **The Historiography on Modern Iran: A Critique on Its Continued Failure to Use Bahá'í Sources**

The lion's share of the historiography on modern Iran, especially that written by the majority of non-Bahá'í scholars of Iran, continuously fails to do justice to the important role played by the Bahá'ís in the process of Iran's modernization. Furthermore, Bahá'í sources, many of which are in Persian or translated into English, are rarely, if at all, used by the above-mentioned scholars. This paper attempts to determine the main causes for this failure and, at the same time, endeavours to offer ways to remedy the situation.

DR. SHAHVAR teaches in the Department of History of the Middle East, and is Director of the Ezri Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies at the University of Haifa. He holds a PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He is the author of *The Forgotten Schools: The Baha'is and Modern Education in Iran, 1899–1934* (IB Tauris International Library of Iranian Studies, 2009).

### **Dara Shaw • Online English Teacher Roundtable** (panel, see ALLCHIN for abstract)

DARA GAY SHAW, Ed.D., teaches Master's courses in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) at the Escuela Politécnica del Litoral in Guayaquil, Ecuador, where she also carried out a Fulbright grant. Her new consulting business, Intercultural Language and Education Resources, specializes in EFL curriculum design and evaluation.

### **Pooya Shoghi • “Bahá'í Elitism” and the Class-Based Dynamics of the “New Anti-Bahá'ism” in Iran**

I am arguing that the Anti-Bahá'ism that emerged in Iran with the dominance of the Marxist-Islamic discourse after World War II is to a great extent a class-based phenomenon that developed in response to a mainstream perception of Bahá'ís having an “elite” social status. This “New Anti-Bahá'ism” should be analyzed in light of the pro-lower class ideological context of post-World War II political movements in Iran.

A Political Science student from Georgia State University, POOYA SHOGHI has scholarly interest in studying the situation of the Iranian Bahá'í community, on which his to-be-presented paper has been written.

**Sharona Shuster • Perspectives from the Writings on Scholarship: Broad Paths for Service** (see ASSOCIATION FOR BAHÁ'Í STUDIES for abstract)

Most recently, SHARONA SHUSTER served for 3 years as the Representative for the Advancement of Women for the N.S.A. of the Bahá'ís of the United States, where she worked to influence U.S. policy pertaining to gender equality. She holds a Master's degree in education from Harvard University and lives in DC with her husband and one year old daughter.

**Dinesh Singh • Apologetics Program - Answering Irreligion** (panel, see KLUGE for abstract)

**Dinesh Singh • Concepts of Space, Time, and Causality in Relation to the Bahá'í Writings**

Albert Einstein's theories of relativity state that every physical event in the Universe occurs uniquely in space and time, subject to universal physical laws independent of anyone's frame of reference. This leads to the unification of space and time to become space-time, a fundamental property of the Universe. Does this modern-day concept offer any insights into how we can understand the Bahá'í Writings in reference to past, present, and future? My personal answer is a resounding "yes" with numerous examples in the Writings that can be thoughtfully examined within the framework of Einstein's space-time description.

DINESH SINGH is a University of Regina postdoctoral researcher in theoretical physics specializing in gravitation and cosmology based on Einstein's theory of general relativity. His current research is to better understand the interface between gravitation and quantum mechanics as a data-driven approach towards finding a quantum theory of gravity.

**Mitra Solomon • Footprints of the Future: Visions of Human Civilization a Century from now (and how to get there)** (panel, see KOIRALA for abstract)

MITRA SOLOMON has been delivering technology at the world's largest internet companies for the last 14 years. Her areas of specialty include online search and advertising technologies, social networks and analytics. She lives with her family in the San Francisco, Bay Area.

**Lawrence Staudt • Assisting the World's Transition to a Sustainable Energy Future** (see GILLETTE for abstract)

LAWRENCE STAUDT is the Director of the Centre for Renewable Energy at Dundalk Institute of Technology, Ireland. He received his BSc and MEng from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He has been involved in renewable energy since 1978. He and his family pioneered to Ireland from the USA in 1985.

**Robert Stockman (moderator) • Apologetics Program - Answering Irreligion** (panel, see KLUGE for abstract)

DR. ROBERT H. STOCKMAN received his doctorate in the history of religion in the United States from Harvard University in 1990. He is an instructor of religious studies at DePaul University, Chicago, IL, where he teaches world religions, and is Director of the Wilmette Institute in Wilmette, IL.

**Deborah Clark Vance • Naming Names: The Power to Control the Meaning of Media Symbols**

Bahá'u'lláh says God's name is the "spirit of all names that exist in the kingdom of names." Cultures attach meaning to names, creating a system of symbols that contains the means to decode its signs, from obvious ones like alphabets and flags, to less obvious ones like stories and myth. I will relate Bahá'u'lláh's Writings about the kingdom of names and the world of thought to semiotic and structural theories of culture in order to examine the role media play in informing individual and group identities, and the prescription Bahá'u'lláh provides for detaching ourselves from the kingdom of names.

DEBORAH CLARK VANCE, PhD, is associate professor in and chair of the Dept of Communication at McDaniel College. She earned her Ph. D. in Intercultural Communication at Howard University in 2002 and her undergraduate degree at Northwestern University. Her research interests include the interplay of media, culture and identity.

**Dave Wellman • Footprints of the Future: Visions of Human Civilization a Century from now (and how to get there)** (panel, see KOIRALA for abstract)

DAVE WELLMAN is retired from teaching high school sciences in rural Alaska. He owns a bed and breakfast and nature center. Dave works with community organizations to provide science education and address environmental issues. He and his wife sponsor camp programs focused on building a better world for the future.

**James P. West and Marzieh West • Environment and Economics: More than Meets the Eye**

Economics, both of the market and command type, assumes a materialist perspective of the environment as the drive from 'scarcity' to 'plenty'. Re-envisioning the environment from a moral perspective transforms both the ends and methodology of economics and indicates that scarcity and plenty are, in and of themselves, insufficient for human happiness and fulfillment. This presentation will explore modern economic concepts and theories in light of Bahá'í Teachings (including "The Right of God") and develop a model of environmental engagement that illuminates a path between highly problematic market and command systems.

DR. JAMES WEST is Professor and Chair of Economics at Moravian College in Bethlehem, PA. His research areas are international development economics and the relationship of religion to contemporary economic issues. He served at the New Era School in India, as a Fulbright scholar to Slovakia and Representative for Huqúqu'lláh.

MS. MARZI WEST is a senior IT auditor for Adobe Corporation. She formerly worked for DuPont Corporation and has an MBA from the University of Delaware. Marzi has travelled extensively for business and Bahá'í service, particularly in India where she served at the Bahá'í Temple and at the Barli Women's Institute.

**Debbie Wilke • On Track With Marco, a Computerized High Beginner English Program** (see MCKEAND for abstract)

DEBBIE WILKE, with a M.S. in TESOL, has taught English at all levels and grades. Also involved with BIHE since 2005 with course development and tutoring, she currently is an Associate Professor at Daytona State College in Daytona Beach Florida.

**Michael Winger-Bearskin • Grab the Future: The Innovation Imperative**

The world is engaged in the greatest transformation in its history. At no time in the past has advancement and change been so pervasive, so scary, so fast and so unpredictable. It appears that the world's equilibrium has been upset and no ground is sacred from upheaval. Executives and managers cannot control the unfoldment of the future. However, it is the responsibility of executive leadership to find the future, inspire the organization to anticipate and respond to the future, and, to innovate for the future. During this workshop participants will discover a model for innovation and transformation derived from a statement by Shoghi Effendi and adapted for a business community.

Following his career at Kodak, MICHAEL WINGER-BEARSKIN began consulting in strategic planning, management leadership, new business development and enterprise leadership. His clients include Amoco Corporation, Bausch & Lomb, Eastman Kodak, Hallmark Cards, Freddie Mac, Mobil Chemical, SAIC, Xerox Corporation, US Air Force, US Navy, US Bureau of Prisons, Department of Energy.

**Johann Wong • Some Explorations in Applying Bahá'í Scholarship** (see ASSOCIATION FOR BAHÁ'Í STUDIES for abstract)

JOHANN WONG, a Bahá'í, is the founder and executive director of Hybridnator, a not-for profit incubator focused on creating meaningful work and wealth using human, financial, intellectual, social and spiritual capital. He has been an officer, director and founding investor of several investment and financial advisory firms, private investment funds and private and public companies.

**Gloria Yazdani • Apologetics Program - Answering Muslim Critics** (panel, see ASHCHI for abstract)

GLORIA YAZDANI has performed dance and theatre around the world and staged a number of performances at the Bahá'í World Centre. She is also keenly interested in the study of the Iranian culture, and contributes articles to international panels hoping to help foster understanding between Islamic nations and the Western world.

**Mina Yazdani • Scapegoating Bahá'í: The Clergy, the State, and Mob Violence in Twentieth Century Iran**

This paper focuses on three episodes of mob violence against the Bahá'ís of Iran that transpired in 1924, 1955 and 1979 near the inception of the Pahlavi dynasty and during the middle and final phase of the reign of Muhammad Reza Shah. These three seemingly isolated episodes featured collaboration between the 'ulama and the state, both relying on incited mobs. They exploited Bahá'ís as a scapegoat to advance their

own socio-political agendas. I will demonstrate that while the conditions were different in each incident, the plot developments bore similarities that suggest an intricate relationship between the clergy and the state.

MINA YAZDANI is a PhD candidate at the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations of the University of Toronto. Her publications include the monograph, *Iran at the Time of the Qájár Dynasty: A Perspective from the Bahá'í Sacred Writings*, and articles published in *Khushihá'í az Kharman-i Adab va Hunar*.

## *Artists Performing*

ROYA BAUMAN ([www.divinenotes.com](http://www.divinenotes.com)) works for the Rabbani Charitable Trust as a conference planner for the annual Bahá'í Social and Economic Development Conference. She has a PhD in Organizational Psychology and is a trained singer. Her first CD of Bahá'í material, "Love Setteth the World Aflame", is available at [www.divinenotes.com](http://www.divinenotes.com). She is working on her second CD. Roya is married and has two daughters.

MJ CYR ([www.myspace.com/mjcyr](http://www.myspace.com/mjcyr)) At the age of 8, MJ Cyr once argued with her father that 'New Kids on the Block' were bigger than the Beatles. She's smartened up since then...

SCOTT EDWARD One day while working odd jobs in Brooklyn, guitarist Scott Edward met Appalachian banjo picker Steve Pauley. The next day they played at lunch and began a journey. Their music is like a kid figuring out Stairway to Heaven, or the violin under the bed, and like coal miners who discover riffs in the heart of true American folk music.

DEVON GUNDRY ([www.devongundry.com](http://www.devongundry.com); [www.soulpancake.com](http://www.soulpancake.com)) In Devon's own words, "i love the Bahá'í Faith. i love music. and i love what happens when you run them into each other at high speeds."

KATHARINE KEY ([www.justkat.com](http://www.justkat.com)) is a singer-songwriter living in Washington, DC. She focuses her musical endeavors on serving the Faith, but she has been known to break out 80s covers and jazz standards on occasion. Her CD, "Intone," contains several songs based on quotations for memorization in Ruhi Books 1 and 2.

CAELI LOHR (<http://www.tinyplanet.org>) Born in British Columbia and raised in England, Caeli is a professional musician/producer living in Washington DC. He received his first bass at age 15 and borrowed his first 4-track a few years later, and he specializes in electronic music. He can also bring the funk. Caeli enjoys pushing musical boundaries and breaking down stereotypes.

GOLRIZ LUCINA ([www.soulpancake.com](http://www.soulpancake.com)) has lived in eight different countries but she's never met another 'Golriz'. She is a senior editor and content developer at SoulPancake.com—an exciting space on the web that encourages spiritual discussions and artistic pursuits. Some of her favorite pastimes include sitting in a corner with Kelly Snook's magic Tenori machine, or singing with the lovely Devon Gundry.

NIMA MOAINI is a Bahá'í from Arlington, VA. Word on the street is he is a good guy. He grew up in Cumberland, MD. He is a doctor doing his surgery residency at Georgetown University.

CHRISTINE MULLER studied piano and early music education at the Conservatory Basel, Switzerland. She has been a life long student of environmental issues and the Bahá'í Faith. She wrote an interfaith study course on climate change and gives various presentations on the science of climate change and its spiritual and ethical implications. Currently, she teaches piano in Rhode Island.

NABIL and KARIM ([youtube.com/nabilandkarim](https://www.youtube.com/nabilandkarim)) Springing forth from pioneering families, both Nabil and Karim have a keen sense for the universality of humankind. Their goal in putting the Bahá'í Writings to modern music is undoubtedly to inspire those souls who chose to listen. This year marked the release of their first self titled album - *Nabil and Karim*

DAMIAN ODESS-GILLETT ([www.damianmagic.com](http://www.damianmagic.com)) has been involved in acting and performing since childhood. He has been featured in about a dozen television commercials, and performs magic on a regular basis in restaurants and at private parties. He recently spent 5 years in the Czech Republic as a professional actor and is currently living in Maine at Green Acre Bahá'í School.

IAN RAFALAK ([www.myspace.com/ianrafalak](http://www.myspace.com/ianrafalak)) works professionally playing upright and electric bass and producing music. Originally from Scotia, NY, he attended Ithaca College for music education and now resides in Philadelphia where he attended the University of the Arts, receiving his masters degree in jazz studies. His favorite activities include working with junior youth and playing music for devotional gatherings.

JASON RAFALAK (<http://www.wildwood.edu/employees/jrafalak/jason.html>) plays a variety of instruments (upright/electric bass, guitar, mandolin), backing up artists in a number of different styles ranging from folk to hip-hop to gypsy swing. He studied music therapy and worked with children with autism for a number of years. He currently lives in Pittsburgh and works at a school for at-risk youth, helping them to express themselves through producing their own music.

ADAM SIEGEL is a jazz saxophonist in high demand. He lives and studies music in Philadelphia, PA.

LUKE SLOTT ([www.lukeslot.com](http://www.lukeslot.com)) Born in Dublin, Ireland to a musical family, 26-year-old multi-instrumentalist Luke Slott, collaborates with musicians from both sides of the Atlantic. Luke spent several years as lead singer with Irish rock band Melaton and now performs as a solo artist. He recently toured Ireland giving musical firesides and he is currently working on two new CDs of solo piano and devotional music.

KELLY SNOOK (<http://www.tinyplanet.org>) Verily, Dr. K. Snook is a geek. As a music producer and a scientist, she pursues Truth through the art of sound. She is currently at the MIT Media Lab working on new ways of enhancing visualization of NASA data using sound and music. She loves working with talented Bahá'í musicians and artists, many of whom have been here amongst you, did ye but know it.

ALI YOUSSEFI ([www.myspace.com/ayoussefi](http://www.myspace.com/ayoussefi)) Growing up in Chile and traveling around South America and the Caribbean, Ali has always been surrounded by a wide variety of musical expressions, many of which find a place in his music. He studied classical guitar in Chile before moving to Argentina to pursue a degree in music therapy. His love for diversity and musical curiosity combine to make a versatile and original composer and performer, blending genres, instruments, and cultures into a unique sound.

## Conference Organization

<i>Conference Task Force</i>	Lisa Dufraimont, Stephen Friberg, Mehrzad Khorsandi, Kim Naqvi, Parvin Rowhani
<i>Arts Program</i>	Kelly Snook
<i>Children/Junior Youth Program</i>	Yasi Sutton, Gisou Haghighat Eskandarian, Irwin Anolik
<i>Devotions</i>	Luke Slott
<i>Hospitality</i>	Jamshid Amini
<i>Logistics</i>	Soroosh Rahmani
<i>Photography</i>	Evan Wilder, Jack Gordon, Debbie Jerome
<i>Program</i>	Lisa Dufraimont, Mehrzad Khorsandi, Kim Naqvi
<i>Public Relations/Publicity</i>	Shamim Ahmadzadegan
<i>Registration</i>	Nilufar Gordon, Roxana Afiatpour
<i>Security/Ushers</i>	Sahba Sanami
<i>Stage Manager</i>	MJ Cyr
<i>Technical Director</i>	Geoff Cohen
<i>Volunteers</i>	Laila Milani

The ABS Executive Committee extends its deep appreciation to all those who have assisted in the preparation and running of this conference. Our heartfelt thanks are also due to the many volunteers who contributed their service and have worked so hard to make this conference a success.

**With special thanks to the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Washington, D.C.**