

# Why Baha'i?



## How Do We **NOT** Go Back to Normal?

**Part 2**

**Drs. June & Richard Thomas**



**Rainn Wilson**



**Wilmette Institute**

Start your journey of  
personal & social change

What is the role of faith communities in removing the barriers that keep minorities from fully realizing all that America has to offer? –Bradley Wright-Hulett

The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light is these words: Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship. --Baha'u'llah, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*

**The purpose of all the divine religions is the establishment of the bonds of love and fellowship among men.**

--'Abdu'l-Baha, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, address given in 1912



Do you have recommendations for concrete actions urban planners can take to begin the process of dismantling racism in our communities, besides through zoning codes, general plans, and other planning documents? –Yassi Sarvian

“O children of men! Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one



soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest.” --Baha’u’llah, Arabic Hidden Words number 68

“ . . . man’s glory and greatness do not consist in his being avid for blood and sharp of claw, in tearing down cities and spreading havoc, in butchering armed forces and civilians. What would mean a bright future for him would be his reputation for justice, his kindness to the entire population whether high or low, his building up countries and cities, villages and districts, his making life easy, peaceful and happy for his fellow beings, his laying down fundamental principles for | progress, his raising the standards and increasing the wealth of the entire population.”



-- ‘Abdu’l-Baha, *Secret of Divine Civilization*

With the understanding that recognizing a problem is necessary to solve it, how would you advise Bahá'ís who have witnessed anti-black racism w/n the Bahá'í community to speak/write about what they have learned w/o it being a source of conflict/disunity? –Samaneh Rodarte

“If we allow prejudice of any kind to manifest itself in us, we shall be guilty before God of causing a setback to the progress and real growth of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. It is incumbent upon every believer to endeavor with a fierce determination to eliminate this defect from his thoughts and acts. It is the duty of the institutions of the Faith to inculcate this principle in the hearts of the friends through every means at their disposal including summer schools, conferences, institutes and study classes.”

--The Universal House of Justice, letter dated 13 July 1972.



“He does not doubt – though it grieves him to have to admit it – that there are believers who have not overcome their racial prejudices. The Bahá’ís are not perfect, but they have made a great step forward by embracing the Faith of God. We must be patient with each other, and realize that each one of us has some faults to overcome, of one kind or another. You he feels need to use greater wisdom and forbearance and dealing with your fellow Bahá’ís and with difficult situations. To be courageous – as you evidently are – to rebel against the injustices of race prejudice and fight them, is not enough. You must also show some patience for those who suffer from this terrible American ailment of Negro prejudice and act with wisdom in overcoming it instead of going at it so vehemently that you alienate the Bahá’ís instead of leading them to greater manifestations of the Bahá’í spirit of brotherhood and racial amity.”

--On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, letter dated 1949, to an individual believer, in lights of guidance, #1801

What specific "micro steps" can we take to heal racism? We CAN'T go backwards! –Gwen Ellis-Cotton

“Redouble your efforts in connection with the promotion of interracial amity and understanding. Urge the believers to show more affection, confidence, fellowship and loving kindness to the colored believers. No trace of mistrust, no sense of superiority, no mark of discord and aloofness should characterize the relations of the white and colored believers. They should openly, bravely and sincerely follow the example of our Beloved and banish prejudice from their hearts. May He reinforce and bless your efforts in such an important field of work.”

--Shoghi Effendi, letter dated June 1927, addressed to Dr. Zia Bagdadi



What would be the most productive thing Baha'is can do to promote race unity? Thoughts from each of the panelists would be appreciated.

– Stephen Scotti

“Nothing will so deeply affect the hearts of people who have been hurt and offended by the attitude of white supremacy as to consort with them as full equals – as indeed they are . . . .”



(On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, letter dated February 1956, to an individual believer)

“Another lesson is how to approach the development of human resources in a manner that can efficiently multiply efforts and empower those who were previously left on the margins, or were otherwise unengaged, to become protagonists of a process of community building and social change. Therefore, it is not necessary at this time to propagate in the community a separate program centered on addressing racial prejudice before progress is possible, nor is there a need to remove one by one all the obstacles you describe before dynamic efforts can be established in a single community or neighborhood that can, once proven to be effective, be widely replicated. Consider, for example, the development of the junior youth spiritual empowerment program.

. . . This capacity for social transformation, increasingly being realized in the most advanced clusters, encompasses not just the work of community building but also the engagement of the believers, both in the discourses of society and all accessible social spaces as well as in projects of social and economic development.”

-- Universal House of Justice, letter dated February 2018

[www.youtube.com/user/WilmetteInstitute/](https://www.youtube.com/user/WilmetteInstitute/)

[www.facebook.com/WilmetteInstitute/Live](https://www.facebook.com/WilmetteInstitute/Live)

Replay WI webinars  
any time, and invite  
your friends to watch

