



## 2008 NATIONAL SURVEY OF CONGREGATIONS

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Your Bahá'í community has been randomly selected to participate in a national study of religious life in America. This is not a commercial study and your responses are confidential. Participation in this survey is approved by the National Spiritual Assembly. In order to help create a complete picture of religious congregations in America we need to hear from you. Please complete the survey by October 21, 2008 either by mail to the address at the very end, or online at <http://awd.ci.uh.edu/Courses/surveys/congregations/index.asp>.

This survey does not need to be completed by your Local Spiritual Assembly as a body if there is someone you can appoint to answer the questions that is familiar with the information requested. Exact numbers are not required but should be a best estimate. You will note that some questions are not totally suited to the Bahá'í community, but were maintained from the national survey so that our data can be merged with national results. Please answer as best you can.

Thank you for your willingness to be included in this important national study. Please first fill in your Assembly's Bahá'í Locality Code (BLC) below so we can track respondents. (This is the six digit code assigned to your Assembly by the National Assembly) Your community's answers will be kept strictly confidential and will never be analyzed individually.

### A. Your Community's Worship

1. Over the last year, how many times has your community held Feast?  
80.8% 19 times    17.8% 12-18 times    1.4% 6-11 times    0.0 0-5 times
2. How many of these Feasts in the last year were held jointly with another Spiritual Assembly or group (i.e., a "unity Feast")?  
1.5 times on average
3. Is your community divided into more than one neighborhood/sector for holding some or all of your Feasts?  
10 Yes    213 No (if "no," skip to Q. 4)
  - a. How many neighborhoods/sectors is your community divided into? 1-15 range neighborhood/sectors
  - b. About how many times does you community hold neighborhood/sector Feasts per year? 1-19 range times per year
4. At a typical Feast in the past year (one for the entire community vs. neighborhood or sector Feasts, if you have them):
  - a. Are one or more languages other than English used at Feast regularly during the administrative portion?  
82.2% No  
17.8% Yes. If yes, what language(s), and how are they used (e.g., to translate Feast letter, to translate consultation, verbally or on an overhead projector, etc.)?  
Majority of the answers: Farsi, Spanish, Vietnamese
  - b. How many attend?  
16.1 average Adults  
2.5 average Youth  
3.4 average Children (even if they only attend part of the Feast before leaving for Children's classes or other activity)

5. For each of the previous 6 years, what is your best estimate of the average attendance at your community Feasts?

<u>Year</u>	<u>Average Attendance at Feast</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Average Attendance at Feast</u>
2007	19.1	2004	17.2
2006	18.5	2003	16.6
2005	17.4	2002	15.9

As the above data show, 4 out of 5 Bahá'í communities hold Feast 19 times out of the year. Very few Bahá'ís communities are divided into more than one neighborhood for Feast, given that only a few are numerically large enough or geographically spread out enough. Nearly 1 out of 5 communities at least partially use a language other than English during Feasts to translate letters or consultation (most in Persian). Normally, in 2008, about 22 people attended the average Feast (16 adults, 3 youth, and 3 children). The average attendance at feast has risen steadily over the last 6 years, resulting in a statistically significant increase between 2002 and 2008.

6. How well do the following describe your community's Feast?

<i>✓ ONE ON EACH LINE</i>	NOT AT ALL	SLIGHTLY	SOMEWHAT	QUITE WELL	VERY WELL
Reverent.....	6.3%	2.7%	15.2%	46.6%	29.1%
Contemporary.....	3.5	13.0	48.4	17.9	7.2
Filled with a sense of God's presence .....	5.8	7.6	20.2	43.9	22.4
Joyful .....	5.4	8.5	19.2	43.3	23.7
Thought-provoking .....	5.8	12.1	42.0	29.9	10.3
Welcoming to newcomers .....	5.8	2.2	10.7	42.0	39.3
Predictable .....	5.8	4.5	31.4	30.9	27.4

As the above data show, the majority of Bahá'í respondents use “quite well” or “very well” to describe their Feast as Reverent (76%), Filled with the sense of God's presence (66%), Joyful (67%), and Welcoming to newcomers (81%). Nearly 6 out of 10 also said Feast was “Predictable.”

7. How often are the following a part of your community's Feast?

✓ ONE ON EACH LINE	NEVER	SELDOM	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS
Choir .....	81.2%	11.0%	5.5%	1.8%	0.5%
Organ or piano music .....	63.1	22.7	8.4	3.1	0
Drums or other percussion instruments .....	71.1	17.3	7.6	0.9	0
Visual projection equipment .....	35.9	26.4	27.3	9.5	0.9
Incense .....	79.1	13.8	3.6	0	0.4
Reading or performing by children or youth .....	17.5	16.6	22.6	19.4	24.0
A printed order of Feast/devotionals .....	32.0	16.9	15.5	21.9	13.7
Prayers for healing .....	6.4	5.0	19.1	40.0	29.5
Recorded music .....	7.1	4.9	28.4	36.0	20.9

As the above data show, few Bahá'í Feasts use live music, instruments, or incense. Less than half (43%) have children participating actively in Feast "often" or "always." The majority of communities use Prayers for healing (70%) or Recorded music (57%) "often" or "always."

**B. Your Community's Programs**

1. **During the past 12 months**, did your community conduct any of the following programs or activities (either just as your community, jointly with another community, or through individual initiative under the guidance of the local or regional Bahá'í administration)?

**If yes**, how much emphasis or attention is given to the activity? Was it some emphasis, a lot of emphasis, or is the activity a specialty of your community (something you are known for)?

✓ ONE ON EACH LINE	DO NOT HAVE	SOME EMPHASIS	A LOT OF EMPHASIS	SPECIALTY OF CONGREGATION
Children's classes (neighborhood and/or centralized)	29.5%	19.6%	44.2%	6.7%
Prayer, meditation, or devotional gatherings	9.8	34.8	48.7	6.7
Deepenings	30.6	49.5	19.4	0.5
Fellowships, trips and other social activities	28.3	63.2	7.2	1.3
Support groups (such as bereavement, divorce, 12-step, etc.)	87.4	11.7	0.9	0
Teaching activities	9.3	41.8	46.7	1.8
Community service activities	33.6	57.8	7.2	1.3

<b>Q. B1. CONTINUED</b> ✓ ONE ON EACH LINE	<b>Do NOT HAVE</b>	<b>SOME EMPHASIS</b>	<b>A LOT OF EMPHASIS</b>	<b>SPECIALTY OF CONGREGATION</b>
Music program .....	64.7%	27.7%	4.9%	2.7%
Parenting or marriage enrichment activities.....	89.7%	9.8	0.4	0
Young, single adult activities.....	85.1	10.8	4.1	0
Sports activities (teams, tournaments, recreation centers, etc.) .....	90.1	7.2	2.2	0.4
Ruhi Study Circles.....	11.1	19.6	60.9	7.1

As the above data show, about half of responding Bahá'í communities say that Children's classes, Devotional gatherings, and Teaching activities are given "a lot of emphasis" or are a "specialty of our community." Nearly 7 out of 10 of communities say that about Ruhi classes. Thus, we can conclude that the majority of Bahá'í communities emphasize Core Activities and teaching as part of their community outreach activities.

2. **During the past 12 months**, did you establish or update a web site for your community?
  - 30.6% Yes
  - 5.4% No, but we plan to establish a web site soon
  - 52.7% No
  - 11.3% We have a web site, but it has not been updated in over a year
  
3. **During the past 12 months**, did your Bahá'í community conduct special events or programs to attract people from the larger community? (such as concerts, fairs, seminars, classes, plays, proclamation events, etc.)
  - 53.6% Yes
  - 46.4% No
  
4. How are inquirers/seekers contacted after they express initial interest in the Faith?
  - ✓ ALL THAT APPLY
  - 18.5% We rarely, if ever, have any seekers
  - 0% We rarely, if ever, contact our seekers
  - 36.8% We contact seekers by mail
  - 80.7% We contact seekers by phone
  - 42.6% We contact seekers by e-mail
  - 55.2% We contact seekers by personal visit
  - 58.1% We send materials about the Bahá'í community to our seekers
  
5. Once a person has expressed interest in knowing more about your Bahá'í community, what procedures are used to help that person become integrated and accepted into the life of the community?
  - ✓ ALL THAT APPLY
  - 4.9% Planned procedures for integrating new people are not necessary in our community
  - 59.6% Newcomers are asked to participate in a class for new members or participants (such as a study circle)
  - 37.9 Invitation to join another small group (such as a deepening class)
  - 77.6% Invitation to participate in a devotional gathering (attending, reading, singing, praying, etc.)
  - 18.3% Regular fellowship activities (group trips, meals, concerts, plays, sports events)
  - 11.6% Invitation to participate in community service (such as SED projects)
  - 16.5% Invitation for service to the community (serving on committees, task forces, etc.)
  
6. If an active participant in your community stopped attending, would that person be contacted to find out why?
  - 50.9% Yes, definitely

- 21.0% Probably
- 8.5% Maybe
- 17.4% Probably not
- 2.2% Only if the person is well-known

7. Overall, to what extent are your community's active participants involved in teaching the Faith?

<i>✓ ONE ON EACH LINE</i>	NOT AT ALL	A LITTLE	SOME	QUITE A BIT	A LOT
A. Adults .....	16.4	11.6	32.0	32.0	5.8
B. Youth.....	35.1	10.2	24.9	16.4	4.9
C. Children.....	35.6	20.0	19.6	13.8	2.2

As the above data show, about 1/3 of Bahá'í communities have an active, updated website. Over half (54%) conducted special events or programs to attract people from the larger community. Most communities overwhelmingly contact seekers by phone (81%), but the majority also use personal visits (55%) and mail out materials about the Faith (58%). The majority of communities also invite seekers interested in the Faith to join one of the Core Activities (study circles and devotional gatherings). A little over 1/3 of respondents (38%) said that "quite a bit" or "a lot" of active participants were involved in teaching, and a little over 1/5 of youth were (21%).

8. How much do the following make it more difficult for people to participate regularly in Bahá'í activities in your community?

✓ ONE ON EACH LINE	NOT AT ALL	A LITTLE	SOMEWHAT	QUITE A BIT
Parking problems .....	92.4%	5.8%	1.3%	0.4%
Driving distance to Feast .....	66.4	19.3	7.6	6.7
Fear of crime .....	91.0	5.8	3.1	0
Conflict with work schedules .....	25.7	26.1	32.4	15.8
Conflict with school-related/sports-related activities .....	33.5	37.5	23.2	5.8
Child care issues .....	56.0	26.7	12.4	2.7
Busy with life's other commitments .....	18.7	23.6	36.9	19.6
Health issues .....	14.9	53.5	28.7	3.0

9. How much do the following make it more difficult to attract new people to your community?

✓ ONE ON EACH LINE	NOT AT ALL	A LITTLE	SOMEWHAT	QUITE A BIT
Changing neighborhood .....	71.2%	14.9%	7.7%	6.3%
Competition with nearby religious groups .....	50.2	20.2	20.2	9.4
A mobile population .....	58.0	23.2	14.7	4.0
Low level of interest in religion in the area .....	43.7	24.8	25.2	6.3
Population of the area is stable or declining .....	70.2	11.6	14.2	1.3
Busy with work commitments .....	24.0	21.8	32.0	21.3
Long commutes to Bahá'í activities .....	68.9	20.9	7.1	2.2

As the above data show, the greatest obstacles to getting people to participate regularly in Bahá'í activities are “conflict with work schedules” (48% of respondents indicated “somewhat” or “quite a bit”), and “Busy with life's other commitments” (57%). The biggest obstacle to attracting new people to the community was by far “Busy with work commitments” (53% of respondents indicated “somewhat” or “quite a bit”).

10. Does your community have the following activities for youth?

	NO	YES
Youth leader who coordinates activities for youth .....	82.1%	17.9%
Organized youth group .....	80.7	19.3
Choirs or other musical groups for youth .....	81.6	18.4
Youth retreats, conferences or camps (summer/winter schools) .....	80.6	19.4
Community events planned or led by youth .....	81.1	18.9
Counseling for youth (e.g. sex education, substance abuse) .....	81.4	18.6
Youth Animator training .....	79.6	20.4
Youth serving on community's governing committees or boards .....	80.6	19.4

As can be seen from the above data, only about 1 in 5 communities have any of the listed activities for youth, with the greatest percentage listed under “Youth Animator training” at only 20.4%.

**C. Your Community’s Mission and Identity**

1. How well does each of the following describe your community’s approach to service?

<i>✓ ONE ON EACH LINE</i>	NOT AT ALL	SLIGHTLY	SOME- WHAT	QUITE WELL	VERY WELL
A. This is an exciting community where people can get involved in a variety of meaningful activities.....	31.3%	23.7%	29.5%	11.6%	4.0%
B. We encourage and foster intense, intimate experiences with God.....	28.7	20.2	27.8	17.0	6.3
C. We are engaged in and energized by the serious study and discussion of Bahá’í Writings .....	25.9	15.6	30.4	19.6	8.5
D. We hold and teach strong beliefs and moral values .....	20.5	6.3	20.5	33.0	19.6

As can be seen from the data above, the only statement that describes “quite well” or “very well” a majority of Bahá’í communities is “We hold and teach strong beliefs and moral values” (53%).

2. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

✓ ONE ON EACH LINE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	NEUTRAL/ UNSURE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
<b>Our Bahá'í community:</b>					
A. Is like a close-knit family .....	20.2%	5.8%	12.0%	38.7%	23.6%
B. Is spiritually vital and alive .....	18.8	5.8	17.4	39.3	18.8
C. Has a clear mission and purpose .....	20.1	8.0	17.4	33.0	21.4
D. Is a force for positive change in our community .....	21.9	11.2	17.0	37.9	12.1
E. Is willing to change to meet new challenges .....	20.4	7.6	11.6	42.2	18.2
F. Is not that different from other Bahá'í communities in our area .....	23.8	39.3	56.7	32.1	11.2
G. Has a hard time accepting newcomers.....	70.1	21.0	5.4	2.7	0.9

As the above data show, the majority of Bahá'í communities report that they “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” to the following statements about community life—Our Bahá'í community: is a close-knit family (62%), is spiritually vital and alive (58%), has a clear mission/purpose (54%), is a force for positive change in the community (50%), and is willing to meet new challenges (60%). Over 91% also “strongly disagreed” or “somewhat disagreed” that their local community has a hard time accepting new members.

3. Compared to other Bahá'í communities in the US, how would you describe the *theological outlook of the majority* of your local Bahá'í community's active participants?

- 1.1% Considerably more conservative than most other communities
- 15.1% Somewhat more conservative
- 57.3% Right in the middle
- 22.2% Somewhat more liberal
- 1.6% Considerably more liberal than most other communities

As the above data show, the respondents of the majority of Bahá'í communities (57%) think that their community is theologically moderate or in the middle compared to other communities. Only 16% said they were more conservative than most, and only 24% said they were more liberal than most.

## D. Your Community's Active Participants

1. How many people (including children) actively participate in the life of your local community? Average: 29.0, (median: 16)

2. Of your total number of active participants (the number given above), how many would you estimate are:

0.7 (0)	American Indian/Alaska Native	3.9 (1)	Black or African American
1.6 (0)	Asian	2.8 (1)	Hispanic or Latino/a
0.7 (0)	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	19.4 (11)	White
		3.2 (2)	Biracial/multiracial

3. Of your total number of active participants, about what percentage are female?

Average: 56.4%

4. Of your total number of active participants, estimate the percent in each of the following age groups. ***The total for all age groups should add to 100%.***

17.3%	Senior adults (age 65 or older)
31.2%	Pre-retirement adults (age 50 – 64)
22.9%	Median adults (age 35 – 49)
13.0%	Younger adults (age 18 – 34)
15.9%	Children and Youth (age 0 – 17)
<b>100%</b>	<b>Total</b>

As the above data show, the average community has nearly 30 active participants, and 1 out of every 3 Bahá'ís in an average community are non-white. Over 56% of Bahá'ís are female, and the median age for the typical Bahá'í community is between 50-64. This means that Bahá'í communities are similar to average churches with respect to gender and age composition. However, Bahá'í communities are far more ethnically and racially diverse than most churches. Recent data show that only 4-7% of churches at most are "racially mixed" (meaning that 20% of the congregation are non-majority). The above data suggest that *most* Bahá'í communities are racially or ethnically mixed, with nearly 1/3 of members being non-white.

## E. Your Community's Leadership

1. How much time and attention does your Local Spiritual Assembly spend on the areas listed below, either doing the following or encouraging individuals to do them?

✓ ONE ON EACH LINE	VERY LITTLE	SOME	QUITE A BIT	A GREAT DEAL
Planning and leading Feast.....	33.1%	28.9%	23.1%	14.7%
Developing and promoting a vision & purpose for the community.....	33.0	28.1	30.4	8.5
Teaching the Faith .....	35.0	31.8	27.6	5.5
Recruiting and training leaders .....	65.8	24.8	8.1	0.9
Visiting the sick and/or counseling people .....	46.4	40.6	12.1	0.9
Teaching people about the Faith .....	34.6	31.8	27.6	6.0
Contacting inactive persons in the community.....	34.2	42.3	19.4	4.1
Organizing/leading small groups for sharing, support and spiritual growth .....	50.9	34.7	11.7	2.7
Representing the Bahá'ís in the wider community.....	43.0	38.6	12.6	5.8
Administration, supervision and committee meetings.....	36.5	31.1	22.5	9.9
Dealing with conflict and disagreements.....	48.6	33.8	15.3	2.3

As the above data show, 1 out of 3 respondents said that their LSA spent “quite a bit” or “a great deal” of time on the following tasks: planning and leading Feast (38%), developing and promoting a vision and purpose for the community (39%), teaching the Faith (33%), and administration, supervision and committee meetings (32%).

2. How many committees or task forces does this community have at the present time? Average: 2.7 (median: 1)
3. How easy or difficult is it for your Assembly to recruit people for volunteer roles? (for example, serving on committees or task forces such as for Feast, teaching children's classes, or tutoring a Ruhi class).
- 37.9% We have no problem recruiting volunteers  
 36.8% Recruiting volunteer leaders is a continual challenge, but we eventually find enough people to serve  
 35.3% We often can't find enough people who are willing to serve
4. Do the same people tend to serve in volunteer roles year after year or does your Assembly encourage volunteer service among a larger number of people?
- 41.2% The same people tend to serve  
 45.6% Although there is some rotation, it tends to be among a limited group of people  
 13.2% We have a lot of rotation among persons in volunteer leadership roles
5. How well do the volunteers of your community represent the diversity of your active participants in terms of age, race and gender?
- 48.6% Very well  
 31.8% Somewhat well  
 19.6% Not so well; not all participant groups are adequately represented
6. Do volunteers (including teachers) receive recognition for their service on a regular basis?
- 30.7% Yes, they are publicly recognized and thanked on a regular basis  
 49.2% Yes, but not on a regular basis  
 20.1% No

7. Do new volunteers receive any training for their roles or assignments?

✓ ALL THAT APPLY

6.7% Yes, regular training sessions are held for new leaders

21.5% Yes, through mentoring or one-on-one training

38.5% Some leaders have received training and others have not

33.3% Not usually

As the above data show, only 1 out of 3 Bahá'í communities have no problems recruiting volunteers for various community responsibilities. An amazing 87% of communities report that either the same people serve, or the same limited group rotates service duties. On a bright note, more than 80% of respondents indicated that community volunteers either "very well" or "somewhat well" represent the diversity of active participants. However, 1 out of 3 communities report that volunteers receive no training for their roles. These statistics are comparable to data from small churches, temples and mosques. In other words, small religious congregations, of any faith tradition, struggle to recruit volunteer workers and leaders. This is the challenge for *all small organizations*.

8. During the last **five years** has your community experienced any conflict or disagreement in the following areas?

<i>✓ ALL THAT APPLY ON EACH LINE</i>	NO	YES, BUT THE CONFLICT WAS NOT SERIOUS	YES, AND SOME PEOPLE LEFT	YES, AND SOME PEOPLE WITHHELD FUNDS	YES, AND A STAFF MEMBER WAS DISMISSED OR REASSIGNED
Finances, budget.....	32.9%	19.6%	1.4%	0.9%	0.9%
How Feast is conducted.....	28.2	26.7	4.4	1.4	0.5
Assembly leadership.....	31.7	18.0	7.2	0.9	0
Program priorities.....	26.7	27.7	3.2	1.4	0
Use of facilities.....	74.2	19.8	3.1	1.0	0
Implementation of the 5 Year Plan.....	27.6	24.4	3.1	0	0
Actions of the National Spiritual Assembly.....	36.4	18.7	2.2	0	0
Other.....	17.7	15.9	4.2	1.2	0.6

9. Which of the following were important issues or challenges facing your community during the previous year?  
(✓ all that apply)

a. Unity.....	18.7%
b. Universal participation.....	57.8
c. Aligning with guidance.....	21.3
d. Core activity multiplication.....	51.6
e. Lack of growth/outward-looking orientation.....	51.6
f. Adapting to change.....	24.9
g. Involvement/commitment of Local Spiritual Assembly to growth.....	9.3
h. None of the above.....	2.7

10. What is the **most** important issue or challenge currently facing your community (either from the ones listed in the question above, or some other issue)?

11. Which of the following were your community's greatest strengths during the previous year?  
(✓ all that apply)

a. Unity.....	48.9%
b. Universal participation.....	12.0
c. Aligning with Guidance.....	36.0
d. Core activity multiplication.....	23.6
e. Growth/outward-looking orientation.....	14.7
f. Adapting to change.....	23.1
g. Involvement/commitment of Local Spiritual Assembly to growth.....	36.9
h. None of the above.....	8.4

As the above data show, the most challenging issues facing the majority of Bahá'í communities were: universal participation (57% of respondents indicated this issue), core activity multiplication (52%) and lack of growth (52%). Moderate levels of conflict were reported in all survey categories with the exception of very low levels of conflict for the use of facilities (reflecting the fact that so few Bahá'í communities at this time own or

even rent permanent physical space). This issue, of conflict and unity, was where Bahá'ís compared most favorably with churches, temples and mosques. Bahá'í communities had far fewer reported conflicts on average than other small congregations. The greatest strengths of Bahá'í communities indicated by respondents were unity (49%), aligning with Guidance (36%), and the commitment of the LSA for community growth (37%).

12. How many times did your Local Spiritual Assembly meet last year? Average: 17.1 (median: 16) times
13. How many of your current Local Spiritual Assembly members were members of the Assembly five years ago (as of Ridvan 2003)?  
Average: 5.3 (median: 5) members
14. How many times in the last year has your Local Spiritual Assembly met with an Auxiliary Board member or assistant?  
Average: 1.7 (median: 1) times

15. What has your Assembly's role in the Institute Process been? (✓ All that apply)	Ridván '05-Ridván '06	Currently
a. Our Assembly was/is committed to going through the sequence of courses (Ruhi) as an institution.....	22.7%	24.4%
b. Our Assembly members were/are committed to going through the sequence of courses (Ruhi) as individuals .....	48.9	56.0
c. Assembly members hosted/host regular devotional meetings .....	47.1	55.6
d. Assembly members were/are personally involved in children's classes .....	44.4	45.3
e. Assembly members were/are personally involved in spiritual education programs for jr. youth.....	29.8	29.3
f. Assembly members were/are personally involved in collecting statistics on 5 Year Plan goals .....	34.2	45.8

As the above data show, the average LSA met 17 times in the previous year, and over a 5 year period, there was an average 44% turnover. The LSA's role in the Institute process (question 15) has improved in all cases, although in some cases only in small amounts. Only in three of these cases was there a statistically significant improvement: reporting that LSA members were committed to having all member go through the series of Ruhi courses (from 49% to 56%), reporting that LSA members hosted regular devotional meetings (from 47% to 56%), and reporting that LSA members were personally involved in collecting statistics for the 5 Year Plan goals (from 34% to 46%).

**F. Your Community's Finances**

1. How would you describe your congregation's financial health today and 5 years ago?

<b>Today</b>	4.4% In serious difficulty	<b>5 Years Ago</b>	4.1% In serious difficulty
	3.9% In some difficulty		1.7% In some difficulty
	30.4% Tight, but we manage		26.2% Tight, but we managed
	43.1% Good		54.7% Good
	18.2% Excellent		13.4% Excellent

2. Approximately what percent of your community's total expenditures were spent on the following in **2007/08?** (May 1, 07 to April 30, 08) **Total should add to 100%.**

All staff salaries and benefits .....	1.3 %
Buildings and operations (utilities, mortgage, insurance, equipment, maintenance, etc.).....	11.5%
Program support and materials (for children's classes, devotions, study circles, etc.) .....	14.5%
Service to humanity .....	15.4%
All other expenditures .....	58.0%
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>100%</b>

3. What is the approximate dollar amount of your total community budget for **2007/2008?** Average: \$26,362 (median: \$8,088)

As the above data show, more Bahá'í communities today are struggling financially than 5 years ago (although a slightly larger percentage report having “excellent financial health” in 2008 than 2003). Average community budgets are slightly lower in 2007/2008 than they were the previous FACT survey in 2005 (average \$29,334).

**G. Your Congregation's History and Location**

1. In what year was your Assembly first elected? Average: 1974,

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Median: 1977

2. How would you describe the place where your Bahá'í community is located?

- 13.4% **Rural** area or open country
- 3.7% **Village** or a **town** of less than 10,000
- 23.5% **Larger town** or a **small city** with a population between 10,000 and 50,000
- 15.0% A **newer suburb** around a city with a population of 50,000 or more
- 19.8% An **older suburb** around a city with a population of 50,000 or more
- 11.8% An **older residential area** in a city with a population of 50,000 or more
- 12.8% A **downtown** or **central area** of a city with a population of 50,000 or more

As was true in previous FACT surveys, over half of all US Bahá'í communities (58%) are located either in small cities or suburbs of larger metropolitan centers.

Overall Summary

Overall, the Bahá'í Faith has seen small but statistically significant growth in the last 5 years (contrary to most other small churches, but similar to temples and mosques). Nineteen Day Feast attendance continues to rise, and while surveys show more recorded music being used at Feast, most Bahá'ís say Feast is still predictable (although reverent and joyful). Bahá'ís have a much lower level of reported conflict than other small congregations (no matter what religious faith background) and much higher measures of unity and vision or purpose. Much of the outreach activity in Bahá'í communities revolves around Core Activities, including children's classes, devotional meetings, and study circles. However, two less encouraging trends seem to emerge from this data: first, reported teaching activity is down compared to previous FACT surveys (As stated above, a little over 1/3 of respondents (38%) said that “quite a bit” or “a lot” of active participants were involved in teaching, and a little over 1/5

of youth were (21%). Second, compared to churches, Bahá'ís have much lower levels of youth activity. At most, only about 20% of Bahá'í communities have regular programs for youth involvement. This contributes to the rising average age of active Bahá'ís.

Respectfully Submitted,

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