

one's own life. The issue of poverty is complex and, while sensible government legislation will make an impact, applying key principles in various branches of social life such as the workplace, families, and communities is needed, too. On March 7 and 8, representatives of the Bahá'í Community of Canada joined those of other Canadian religious organizations for discussions in Ottawa with members of Parliament from different political parties. National poverty organizations were with them, all consulting together on promoting a more effective national conversation on poverty. A report on the meeting can be found on the Canadian Bahá'í News Service website, www.bahainews.ca.

I recall a lecture (many years ago) from one of my favourite communication professors at Brock University stating that humanity could collectively end world poverty in a day, if we wanted to. While I agree with that point of view, I would take it one step further to say that poverty would return the next day. Why? The prejudicial habits of the human race are to blame.

As pointed out in the aforementioned report, we are stuck on dividing people up. We tend to categorize each other in groups that have insignificant or no basis in reality. The poor are often labelled disparagingly as 'lazy' or 'a burden on society', somehow separate and isolated from humanity as a whole. On the contrary, the truth is that humanity is only as wealthy as its poorest members.

Bahá'ís are beginning to learn how communities can come together and see beyond our deep-seated prejudices associated with have and have-not, educated and uneducated, and removing the discouragement that disempowers us. We must drop the prejudices and acknowledge that the well-being and advancement of the entire human race will bring about a prosperity we've not yet realized. In light of our present state, we have nothing to lose.

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