

**“As ye have faith so shall your powers and blessings be”:
The Aboriginal-Bahá’í Encounter in British Columbia**

by

Chelsea Dawn Horton
Bachelor of Arts, Simon Fraser University, 2003

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

In the
Department
of
History

© Chelsea Dawn Horton 2005

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Summer 2005

All rights reserved. This work may not be
reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy
or other means, without permission of the author.

APPROVAL

Name: Chelsea Dawn Horton
Degree: Master of Arts
Title of Thesis: “As ye have faith so shall your powers and blessings be”:
The Aboriginal-Bahá’í Encounter in British Columbia

Examining Committee:

Chair:

Dr. Mark Leier

Associate Professor, Department of History
Simon Fraser University

Dr. Paige Raibmon

Senior Supervisor
Assistant Professor, Department of History
University of British Columbia

Dr. Derryl MacLean

Supervisor
Associate Professor, Department of History
Simon Fraser University

Dr. Pauline Tuttle

Supervisor
Adjunct Associate Professor, Faculty of Fine Arts
University of Victoria

Dr. Susan Neylan

External Examiner
Associate Professor, Department of History
Wilfrid Laurier University

Date Defended:

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY



PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENCE

The author, whose copyright is declared on the title page of this work, has granted to Simon Fraser University the right to lend this thesis, project or extended essay to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users.

The author has further granted permission to Simon Fraser University to keep or make a digital copy for use in its circulating collection.

The author has further agreed that permission for multiple copying of this work for scholarly purposes may be granted by either the author or the Dean of Graduate Studies.

It is understood that copying or publication of this work for financial gain shall not be allowed without the author's written permission.

Permission for public performance, or limited permission for private scholarly use, of any multimedia materials forming part of this work, may have been granted by the author. This information may be found on the separately catalogued multimedia material and in the signed Partial Copyright Licence.

The original Partial Copyright Licence attesting to these terms, and signed by this author, may be found in the original bound copy of this work, retained in the Simon Fraser University Archive.

W. A. C. Bennett Library
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, BC, Canada

Simon Fraser University



Ethics Approval

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this work, has obtained human research ethics approval from the Simon Fraser University Office of Research Ethics for the research described in this work, or has conducted the research as a member of a project or course approved by the Ethics Office.

A copy of the approval letter has been filed at the Theses Office of the University Library at the time of submission of this thesis or project.

The original application for ethics approval and letter of approval is filed with the Office of Research Ethics. Inquiries may be directed to that Office.

Bennett Library
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, BC, Canada

ABSTRACT

During the mid-twentieth century, the Bahá'í community of British Columbia launched teaching efforts within Aboriginal communities throughout the province. Although relatively few of the over nine hundred Aboriginal people who enrolled in the Bahá'í Faith between 1948 and 1992 ultimately became active adherents, the Aboriginal-Bahá'í encounter is nevertheless of profound significance.

The subtlety with which Bahá'ís presented the Faith to Aboriginal people challenges static conceptions of religious teaching and reveals a key disjuncture between rhetoric and practice. The experiences of Aboriginal Bahá'ís themselves highlight fluid processes of religious change and, coupled with Bahá'í social activism, underscore the considerable role of the Bahá'í Faith in encouraging processes of Aboriginal cultural regeneration. Despite such empowering impact, however, patterns of non-Aboriginal cultural dominance encountered within the Bahá'í community simultaneously suggest the pervasiveness of the colonial legacy and the potency of contemporary social context; good intentions proved insufficient to fully transform intercultural interactions.

*To the memories of Dorothy Maquabeak Francis
and my grandfather,
Jack Horton*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to offer my deep thanks to all of those within the Bahá'í community who opened themselves so generously to this “non-non.” Your contributions have not only rendered this thesis a concrete reality, but have powerfully enriched my life on a personal and direct level. I recognize that this thesis is perhaps a different one than you yourselves would have written. I sincerely hope, in the end, that you find what follows to be, in the words of Lakota Bahá'í Jacob Bighorn, an appropriate contribution.

I would also like to give specific thanks to Ella Benndorf, Dr. Will van den Hoonaard, Sonny Voyageur, Fletcher and Elinor Bennett, and Gretchen Jordan-Bastow for their support, encouragement, and generosity with primary source material of manifold varieties. Dr. Pauline Tuttle has served as a key guide throughout, providing direction and insight grounded in personal and professional experience alike. Thanks also to Dr. Derryl MacLean for our ever-enjoyable and enlightening conversations, both formal and informal. My greatest debt is, of course, to my supervisor and mentor Dr. Paige Raibmon. Your inspiring scholarship, insightful guidance, and incisive feedback have shaped my intellectual growth immeasurably. Thank you.

My fellow graduate students in the History Department at SFU have rendered the past two years at once stimulating and enjoyable. Special thanks go to Cathy Hilton, Chris Herbert, and Matt Scalena for their invaluable commentary on more incarnations of this work than they likely care to remember. I also gratefully acknowledge financial

support from the SFU History Department and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Ultimate love and appreciation go to my family, in particular Mom, Dad, and Brie. Your unflagging faith and support are a constant source of inspiration and encouragement. To Rowan, my boundless gratitude for sustaining me on every level and reminding me, at key junctures, to actually get out there and enjoy some of that life I so enjoy writing papers about.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval	ii
Abstract	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vii
List of Figures	viii
BEGINNINGS: TOWARDS POINTS OF KNOWING	1
PROPHECY	20
Stereotype and Rhetoric	22
Subtlety and Discretion: Friendship-Building.....	26
Entry (and Exit) by Troops: Direct Teaching.....	38
Culture and Consolidation: The Cariboo	46
Resistance and Reception: Alert Bay	55
Practice and Rhetoric	62
UNITY IN DIVERSITY	63
The Nuance of Change: Dreams and Visions	64
The Potency of Change: Confirmation and Empowerment	72
The Challenge of Change: Context and Power	79
The Complexity of Change	85
SERVICE	87
The National Stage: Politics as Activism	89
The Western Front: Service as Activism.....	92
The Politics of Culture and Spirituality.....	104
The Power and Potential of the Bahá'í Spirit Path.....	112
CONCLUSIONS: FULL CIRCLE	114
APPENDIX: GLOSSARY OF BAHÁ'Í TERMS	119
BIBLIOGRAPHY	121
Interviews and Personal Communications	121
Personal Collections	122
Unpublished Primary Sources.....	123
Published Primary Sources.....	124
Unpublished Secondary Sources	125
Published Secondary Sources.....	126

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Alice Duguqua, Fletcher Bennett, Laretta King, and Farokh Rohani on a 1974 West Coast consolidation trip	32
Figure 2: Drum Circle at a 1981 Unity Gathering held on the Thunderbird Reserve near Lillooet	52
Figure 3: Prayer Circle at a 1981 Unity Gathering held on the Thunderbird Reserve near Lillooet	53
Figure 4: Dorothy Maquabeak Francis	99
Figure 5: John Thomas conversing with an attentive multicultural audience	102

BEGINNINGS: TOWARDS POINTS OF KNOWING

When you see a track or a footprint that you do not know,
follow it to the point of knowing.¹

The drum beat relaxes, the dances cease, and James Sewid approaches the microphone. On this early spring evening in March 1969, the Kwakwaka'wakw chief offers a formal address of welcome to three guests of honour attending a local dance practice in Alert Bay. These guests, one Aboriginal and two non-Aboriginal, are neither tourists nor local residents, but rather members of the Bahá'í Faith on a religious teaching trip along the stretch of British Columbia's West Coast. They were invited to the dance practice by one of Chief Sewid's daughters, who was deeply moved by a presentation on Aboriginal culture she had seen delivered by Sauteaux Bahá'í Dorothy Maquabeak Francis in Vancouver; Sewid's daughter had promised herself that if Francis ever visited Alert Bay, she would be honoured in the community's new big house. She kept her word. Following Chief Sewid's greeting, Dorothy Francis presented him with a brief concerning the issue of "human rights as God-given rights" and the Aboriginal "right to an identity" prepared by the Canadian Bahá'í administration. The group then retired to the chief's home where his family was assembled and, in response to a query from an

¹ "Old Indian saying" cited in "Bahá'í Faith: The Spirit Way" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, n.d.), 3.

interested family member, Dorothy Francis introduced the Bahá'í Faith to the Kwakwaka'wakw community of Alert Bay.²

That an Ojibwa woman and two non-Aboriginal brethren were visiting this coastal Aboriginal community as emissaries of an Eastern religion originating out of mid-nineteenth century Persia is surprising indeed. The history of religious encounter within the field of Aboriginal history in North America has long been cast in overwhelmingly Christian terms. In the latter half of the twentieth century, however, the Bahá'í community of Canada set about realizing a specific racial prophecy concerning the Aboriginal inhabitants of North America revealed in 1916 by then-leader of the Faith, 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Sensing, by mid-century, that the Canadian Bahá'í community was sufficiently established to undertake concerted teaching efforts, the international and national Bahá'í administrations launched calls for a variety of teaching programs within Aboriginal communities that resulted in over fifty-four hundred declarations in Canada, over nine hundred of them in British Columbia, between the years 1948 and 1992.³

Many, perhaps most, of these Aboriginal enrolments did not translate into active participation in the Bahá'í Faith. Lacking in resources and maintenance procedures, the British Columbian Bahá'í community proved hard-pressed to consolidate new Aboriginal membership, resulting in large-scale drop-off. The significance, however, of the Aboriginal-Bahá'í encounter in the province lies beyond statistics. In addition to

² See *Canadian Bahá'í News* (hereafter *CBN*), no.231 (July 1969), 3; Report from 1969 West Coast Teaching Trip, Records of the Pacific Indian Branch of the National Teaching Committee (hereafter PIB records), personal papers of Fletcher and Elinor Bennett (hereafter Bennett papers); Fletcher and Elinor Bennett, interview with the author, 21 July 2004, Saanich, British Columbia, tape recording (note that except where specified otherwise, all interviews were conducted in British Columbia and are tape recordings). For background on James Sewid and family see James P. Spradley, with James Sewid, *Guests Never Leave Hungry: The Autobiography of James Sewid, A Kwakiutl Indian* (London: Yale University Press, 1969).

³ Statistics supplied by Lindsay Slavin (Department of Archives, Bahá'í National Centre), email to the author, 15 Sept 2004.

inserting Bahá'í experiences into the historiography on religious encounter in Aboriginal North America, it speaks to conceptual issues of broader application. The intense subtlety and discretion with which Bahá'ís engaged in teaching the Bahá'í Faith to Aboriginal people approached this task challenges static conceptions of religious teaching. The clear disjuncture between these concrete teaching experiences and stereotypic imagery concerning Aboriginal people that surfaced within official Bahá'í discourse reveals also a profound gap between rhetoric and practice. The fluid nature of religious change witnessed amongst Aboriginal Bahá'ís, together with Bahá'í social activism, speaks further to contemporary processes of Aboriginal cultural regeneration and, more abstractly, to the issues of language and theoretical frameworks deployed in the analysis of religion. Simultaneous to this, entrenched power dynamics encountered within the Bahá'í community highlight the residual effects of colonialism and the powerful impact of contemporary social context. These elements suggest, in the end, that good intentions alone were not enough to fully alter intercultural interactions.

In contrast to the mainline Christian denominations traditionally associated with Aboriginal missionization in North America, there exists little awareness of the Bahá'í Faith, much less its relations with Aboriginal people, outside of the small field of Bahá'í scholarship.⁴ An outgrowth of Shiite Islam and the Bábí movement, the religion was

⁴ This is reflected, for example, in both the lack of and the limited level of discussion of the Bahá'í Faith in such sources as William Kilbourn, ed., *Religion in Canada: The Spiritual Development of a Nation* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968); Reginald W. Bibby, *Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1987); Reginald W. Bibby, *Unknown Gods: The Ongoing Story of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1993); Reginald W. Bibby, *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Stoddart, 2002); Hans Mol, *Faith and Fragility: Religion and Identity in Canada* (Burlington, ON: Trinity Press, 1985). The field of Bahá'í scholarship is populated primarily by members of the Faith who are required to have their work approved by Bahá'í review boards prior to publication. For critiques of what some characterize as censorship practices see Juan Cole, "The Bahá'í Faith in America as Panopticon, 1963-1997," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37, no.2 (1998): 244-247; Denis MacEoin, "Bahá'í Fundamentalism and the Academic Study of the Bábí

established by prophet-founder Bahá'u'lláh in mid-nineteenth century Persia. Upon his death in 1892, leadership of the Faith passed to his son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who in turn appointed his grandson, Shoghi Effendi, "The Guardian" of the Bahá'í Faith following his death in 1921. Administrative powers now reside in the institution of the Universal House of Justice (UHJ), first elected in 1963. Composed of nine members from throughout the Bahá'í world, the UHJ is elected every five years and operates from its permanent seat located on Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel, considered the spiritual heart of the Bahá'í Faith.

Founded upon principles of the oneness of religion, the oneness of mankind, and unity in diversity, the Bahá'í Faith was introduced to North America during the waning years of the nineteenth century. After this time, the Canadian community grew slowly through the enrolment of members of predominantly White middle-class origin. A demographic boom during the 1960s and 1970s resulted from the entry of relatively large numbers of youth and Aboriginal people from across Canada; Persian immigrants fleeing religious persecution in the wake of the 1979 Iranian Revolution further amplified these numbers.⁵ The Bahá'í Faith has been characterized as the second most geographically-widespread religion in the world and is said to possess over five million adherents

Movement," *Religion* 16 (1986): 57-84. For an expression in support of this review process see Pauline Tuttle, "The Hoop of Many Hoops: The Integration of Lakota Ancestral Knowledge and Bahá'í Teachings in the Performative Practices of Kevin Locke" (PhD dissertation, University of Washington, 2002), 228.

⁵ On the history of the early Canadian Bahá'í community see Will C. van den Hoonaard, *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada, 1898-1948* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996). For introductions to the Bahá'í Faith more broadly see William S. Hatcher and J. Douglas Martin, *The Bahá'í Faith: The Emerging Global Religion* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984); Richard Hollinger, "Introduction: Bahá'í Communities in the West, 1982-1992," in *Community Histories: Studies in the Babí and Bahá'í Religions*, vol. 6 (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 1992), vii-xlix; Peter Smith, *A Short History of the Bahá'í Faith* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1995).

worldwide; it has long figured, however, as a minority religion within the Canadian context.⁶

The Bahá'í Faith was not the sole minority religious group present within British Columbian Aboriginal communities during the latter half of the twentieth century. In addition to the historically-entrenched Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches, more recent evangelical Christian groups such as Pentecostals, Seventh Day Adventists, Latter Day Saints, and Jehovah's Witnesses all made inroads within Aboriginal communities from mid-century on.⁷ The Bahá'í Faith, however, differed from these other religions in some significant ways.⁸ As a lay religion, the Faith possessed neither a clergy nor a paid missionary force. Individual Bahá'í teachers and pioneers, adherents who moved to another geographic locale for the purpose of expanding the territorial reach of the Bahá'í Faith, held the responsibility to bring the message of Bahá'u'lláh to Aboriginal Canada.

Bahá'ís were encouraged to fulfil this responsibility by their international and national administrations by way of official discourse that at times invoked stereotypic and essentialized imagery of Aboriginal people. However, while notions of heathen and

⁶ See Carolyn Patterson Sawin, "Native Conversion, Native Identity: An Oral History of the Bahá'í Faith among First Nations People in the Southern Central Yukon Territory, Canada" (PhD dissertation, University of Washington, 2000), 28. Sawin notes that global Bahá'í population estimates range as high as seven million; like her, however, I have cited the most conservative figure. For discussion of the problematic nature of Bahá'í statistics see 13 below.

⁷ On heightened religious competition within Aboriginal communities see, for example, John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 190-214; John A. Price, "Mormon Missions to the Indians," in Wilcomb E. Washburn, vol. ed., *Handbook of North American Indians: History of Indian-White Relations*, vol.4 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1988), 459-463; Pamela Amoss, *Coast Salish Spirit Dancing: The Survival of an Ancestral Religion* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978), vii, 22, 46-47, 163; Kirk Dombrowski, *Against Culture: Development, Politics, and Religion in Indian Alaska* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001); Robert George, interview with the author, 5 Oct 2004, Duncan.

⁸ The lack of scholarly treatment concerning the interactions of these new religious groups with Aboriginal people unfortunately limits the opportunity for sustained comparisons and contrasts with the contemporary activities of the Bahá'í Faith in the province.

noble savagery alike figured within official Bahá'í sources, as well as the original 1916 prophecy of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, they did not translate on the ground into forceful methods of proselytization nor rigid expectations for Aboriginal people. The epigraph at the start of this chapter, for example, speaks implicitly to this issue. That the proverb was labelled an "old Indian saying" in a Bahá'í teaching booklet developed specifically for the field of Aboriginal Bahá'í teaching summons stereotypical representations of "Indianness." At the same time, the sentiment of the proverb itself represents an attitude that Bahá'í teachers and pioneers strove sincerely to realize and a principle according to which they themselves lived and operated.

Given the myriad horrors historically committed in the name of religion within Aboriginal North America, discourse surrounding Christian missionization and colonization has come to be framed in highly polarized terms.⁹ The experiences of Bahá'ís actually engaged in the task of teaching the Bahá'í Faith to Aboriginal people, however, underscore that the concept of religious teaching cannot be reduced to predetermined polarities concerning missionary aims to convert and subvert. They also highlight a significant distinction between rhetoric and practice.¹⁰ The essentialized images of Aboriginal people that surfaced within official Bahá'í discourse did not figure

⁹ Consider, for example, discourse surrounding the contentious issue of Christian residential schooling in Canada. See, for example, J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); John S. Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879-1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999); Celia Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School* (Vancouver: Tillacum Library, 1988); Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, *Indian Residential Schools: The Nuu-chah-nulth Experience* (Canada: Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, 1996). Paige Raibmon argues convincingly for the need to move beyond inherently polarized discussions of residential schooling in her article, "'A New Understanding of Things Indian': George Raley's Negotiation of the Residential School Experience," *BC Studies* 110 (Summer 1996): 69-96.

¹⁰ On the importance of subjecting the discursive nature of religious rhetoric to critical analysis see Stephen D. O'Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse: A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

at the level of practical application. This is not to suggest, of course, that such imagery, and the ethnocentric ideologies from which it spawned, could not, and did not, manifest itself at the local level within alternative contexts of religious teaching. In *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Missions and Tsimshian Christianity*, for example, Susan Neylan outlines an inverse pattern whereby Anglican Church Missionary Society official Henry Venn advocated the establishment of a localized Aboriginal pastorate and grassroots Aboriginal churches; meanwhile, locally-grounded missionaries such as William Duncan maintained stiff control and proved exceedingly reticent to abandon their patriarchal positions of authority.¹¹ The disjuncture between this case and that of the Aboriginal-Bahá'í encounter suggests the importance of exploring potential gaps between rhetoric and practice within all contexts.

As a world religion, studies of the Bahá'í Faith belong to the literatures on the history of religion and religious studies. As such, the teaching and outreach practices of the Bahá'í Faith can be compared to that of Christianity, the other major religion to interact with Aboriginal communities in Canada. The terms of such interaction, however, differed dramatically and demand different language. In light of clear distinctions between Bahá'í approaches to religious teaching and those of many earlier Christian missionaries, I have consciously adopted Bahá'í terminology throughout the course of this thesis. Language is inextricably tied to history, action, and experience; terms such as “missionization,” “missionary,” and “conversion” are laden with historical baggage in

¹¹ Susan Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 69-71. See also David A. Nock, ed., *A Victorian Missionary and Canadian Indian Policy: Cultural Synthesis vs. Cultural Replacement* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, published for the Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, 1980). On William Duncan see Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*; Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*, 2nd ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992), 119-145; Jean Usher, *William Duncan of Metlakatla: A Victorian Missionary in British Columbia*, Publications in History, no.5 (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1974).

many ways inappropriate to the Bahá'í context. As such, I refer to processes of religious teaching rather than missionization, to teachers and pioneers rather than missionaries, and to religious change rather than conversion. Declaration denotes the act of officially becoming a member of the Bahá'í Faith, the “statement of belief made by one who wishes to become a Bahá'í.”¹² Subsequent to declaration, consolidation refers to the process of strengthening Bahá'í adherence, of translating official membership into more practical and sustained forms of observance; deepening is a constant process of Bahá'í learning consisting of the “study of the Bahá'í Faith in all its aspects.”¹³ A more comprehensive catalogue of Bahá'í terms used in the thesis is available in the appended glossary.

Intimately tied to the issue of language are theoretical constructs and explanatory models deployed in the analysis of religion. Scholars in a variety of fields have recently advanced more nuanced treatments of religious encounter, casting religious change as process, not event.¹⁴ Decades before this, however, members of the Bahá'í Faith active in the field of Aboriginal teaching were aware of and consciously fostered such fluid methods. The experiences of those Aboriginal Bahá'ís in British Columbia who overcame challenges in consolidation to become active members in the Faith underscore

¹² Wendi Momen, ed., *A Basic Bahá'í Dictionary* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1989), 66.

¹³ Momen, *A Basic Bahá'í Dictionary*, 68. For more on deepening see also Michael McMullen, *The Bahá'í: The Religious Construction of a Global Identity* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 19; Lynn Echevarria, “Working Through the Vision: Religion and Identity in the Life Histories of Bahá'í Women in Canada” (PhD dissertation, University of Essex, 2000), 115-116.

¹⁴ For discussion of religious change as process, not event see, for example, Derryl MacLean, *Religion and Society in Arab Sind*, (New York: E.J. Brill, 1989); Lewis Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Gauri Viswanathan, *Outside the Fold: Conversion, Modernity, and Belief* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Peter van der Veer, “Introduction,” in *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalization of Christianity* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 1-22; Talal Asad, “Comments on Conversion,” in Peter van der Veer, ed., *Conversion to Modernities*, 263-274; Robert W. Hefner, ed., *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

that entry into a new religion did not result in wholesale rejection of preexisting forms of belief, practice, and identity. Rather, as a growing body of historians and anthropologists of religion have recently suggested, it represented a discursive negotiation shaped through the interests and intentions of religious teachers and potential adherents alike.¹⁵ Far from the assimilative aims of Christian colonialist programs, Bahá'í principles such as unity in diversity reinforced the validity of Aboriginal heritage and traditions and encouraged Aboriginal Bahá'ís to connect with their respective cultures through deepening in the Bahá'í Faith.

Despite growing recognition of the discursive nature of religious encounter, studies of religion have frequently been framed in overtly instrumentalist terms. The experiences of Aboriginal Bahá'ís in British Columbia, however, suggest that factors of material, social, and political strategy alone do not determine the “realm of the possible.”¹⁶ While contemporary scholars have exhibited a growing desire and tendency

¹⁵ See, for example, Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*; Michael E. Harkin, *The Heiltsuks: Dialogues of Culture and History on the Northwest Coast* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); James P. Ronda, “Generations of Faith: The Christian Indians of Martha’s Vineyard,” in Albert Hurtado and Peter Iverson, eds., *Major Problems in American Indian History* (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1994), 117-137; James Axtell, “Some Thoughts on the Ethnohistory of Missions,” *Ethnohistory* 29, no.1 (1982): 35-41; Peggy Brock, “Building Bridges: Politics and Religion in a First Nations Community,” *Canadian Historical Review* 81, no.1 (March 2000): 67-97; Sergei Kan, *Memory Eternal: Tlingit Culture and Russian Orthodox Christianity Through Two Cultures* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999); Nicholas Griffiths and Fernando Cervantes, eds., *Spiritual Encounters: Interactions Between Christianity and Native Religions in Colonial America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999); E. Palmer Patterson, “Native Missionaries of the North Pacific Coast: Philip McKay and Others,” *The Pacific Historian*, 30, no.1 (Spring 1986): 23-37.

¹⁶ On the importance of opening scholarship to considerations of genuine spiritual commitment and experience see Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Kenelm Burridge, *New Heaven, New Earth: A Study of Millenarian Activities* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969); Kenneth Morrison, *The Solidarity of Kin: Ethnohistory, Religious Studies, and the Algonquian-French Religious Encounter* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002); Tuttle, “The Hoop of Many Hoops”; James Treat, *Around the Sacred Fire: Native Religious Activism in the Red Power Era: A Narrative Map of the Indian Ecumenical Conference* (New York: Palgrave, 2003); Lee Irwin, “Native American Spirituality: An Introduction,” in *Native American Spirituality: A Critical Reader* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 1-8; Christopher Ronwanièn:te Jocks, “Spirituality for Sale: Sacred Knowledge in the Consumer Age,” in Irwin, *Native American Spirituality*, 61-77; Robin Ridington, “Voice, Representation, and Dialogue: The Poetics

to explore the experiential nature of religious encounter, there remains within the field of Aboriginal history an unwillingness to fully engage questions of spirituality. In deploying theoretical models such as the “deprivation thesis” and “revitalization theory,” frameworks that cast religion as rationalist or psychological coping mechanisms invoked in response to contemporary conditions of crisis or stress, scholars firmly grounded in secular humanist principles allow little room for genuine spiritual commitment, experience, and action.¹⁷ Dreams, visions, and rituals of song, dance, and prayer, however, were potent elements central to Aboriginal Bahá’í experiences in British Columbia.

Such elements were integral not only to individual Bahá’í experiences, but also to the broader field of Bahá’í activism. Motivated by the principle of service, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Bahá’ís in British Columbia pursued a dynamic activist agenda that was grounded in spiritual rather than material and political impulses. They largely

of Native American Spiritual Traditions,” in Irwin, *Native American Spirituality*, 97-120.

¹⁷ On the “deprivation thesis” see David Aberle, “A Note on Relative Deprivation Theory As Applied to Millenarian and Other Cult Movements,” in William Less and Evon Z. Vogt, eds., *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 537-541. On “revitalization theory” see Anthony Wallace, “Revitalization Movements,” *American Anthropologist* 58, no.2 (1956): 264-281. On the problematic nature of such reductionist stances see footnote 15 above; O’Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse*, 10; Tuttle, “The Hoop of Many Hoops,” 194-204; Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, 3-26. For examples of the application of such reductionist methodology within the field of North American Aboriginal history see Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 63, 88-90, 116, 137, 174, 244-246, 250-251; Amoss, *Coast Salish Spirit Dancing*, vii, 163,-164; Harkin, *The Heiltsuks*, 109-114, 157; Sergei Kan, “Russian Orthodox Brotherhoods Among the Tlingit: Missionary Goals and Native Response,” *Ethnohistory* 32 (1985): 196-223; John Edward Michael Kew, “Coast Salish Ceremonial Life: Status and Identity in a Modern Village” (PhD Dissertation, University of Washington, 1970), 311-351; Susan Sleeper Smith, “Women, Kin, and Catholicism: New Perspectives on the Fur Trade,” *Ethnohistory* 47, no.2 (2000): 423-452; Clarence Bolt, *Thomas Crosby and the Tshimshian: Small Shoes for Feet too Large* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992); Kan, *Memory Eternal*; Carol Devens, *Countering Colonization: Native American Women and Great Lakes Missions, 1630-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Clifford E. Trafzer, ed., “American Indian Prophets: Religious Leaders and Revitalization Movements,” special issue of *American Indian Quarterly* 9, no.3 (Summer 1985). For expressions in support of the continued applicability of the “revitalization theory” see Robert S. Grumet, ed., *Revitalization and Mazeways: Essays on Culture Change*, vol.1 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003); Michael Harkin, ed., *Reassessing Revitalization Movements: Perspectives from North America and the Pacific Islands* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).

abstained from contemporary Aboriginal political activity in favour of more subtle spiritual initiatives including healing and cultural education and regeneration efforts. Through these contributions they underscored the powerful potential of spiritual approaches to social change.

These forms of Bahá'í service blurred the boundary between religious teaching and activism and contributed to contemporary processes of cultural revival within Aboriginal communities.¹⁸ Bahá'í activism did not require an overt point of connection with the Faith in order to qualify as Bahá'í forms of service. In promoting Aboriginal cultural and spiritual practices, and attendant pride in Aboriginal heritage, Bahá'ís worked towards the fulfilment of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. Programs of cultural education and encouragement, coupled with culturally-specific forms of Bahá'í deepening, suggest that processes of Aboriginal cultural regeneration were not limited to distinctly Aboriginal spheres. Rather, they could also be promoted through alternative religious frameworks.

Aboriginal Bahá'ís, for their part, were greatly empowered by such processes. However, they faced simultaneous challenges in their interactions with the broader Bahá'í community. The Aboriginal-Bahá'í encounter in British Columbia in many ways destabilized the polarized dichotomy of blanket romanticization versus violent confrontation historically characterizing relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in North America.¹⁹ It did not, however, wholly neutralize power

¹⁸ In employing terms such as cultural “revival” and “regeneration,” I do not mean to imply that Aboriginal cultures were ever in any way “dead,” but rather aim to highlight contemporary restorative efforts.

¹⁹ This dichotomy is reflected, for example, in such romantic constructions as the myths of the “noble savage” and the “ecological Indian,” manifold strains of “Aboriginal antimodernism,” as well as the political radicalism and confrontation of the Red Power era. On the origins of the myth of the “noble savage” see Olive Patricia Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in*

dynamics inherent to such relations in postcolonial Canadian society. Patterns of paternalism and non-Aboriginal cultural dominance persisted within the Bahá'í community regardless of intense commitment to the overarching principle of unity in diversity. This suggests both the pervasiveness of the colonial legacy and the potency of contemporary social context. Like religious change, the transformation of intercultural interactions represents a process as opposed to event alone. Throughout the specific time period under consideration, however, good intentions, it seems, proved insufficient to fully achieve this goal.

While the implications of the Aboriginal-Bahá'í encounter are of wide-ranging significance, this subject has until now not received the scholarly attention that it merits. This is related to the low public profile that the Bahá'í Faith has historically maintained as well as a profound dearth in both primary and secondary source material.²⁰ Those secondary sources that reference Aboriginal Bahá'ís do so generally in the context of demographic discussions and provide little in the way of sustained analytic treatment.²¹ The availability of primary source material is severely constrained by the nature of

the Americas (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1984); on the myth of the “ecological Indian” see Shepard Krech III, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999); on antimodernism see discussion in Chapter One; on Red Power see discussion in Chapter Three.

²⁰ The limited public profile of the Bahá'í Faith derives from a number of factors, including relatively low numbers of adherents, a lack of widespread and publicly-visible places of worship, and prohibitions against proselytization and engagement in partisan political contest and confrontation.

²¹ See, for example, Hollinger, “Introduction,” xxxii; Smith, *A Short History of the Bahá'í Faith*, 139; Peter Smith, *The Babi and Bahá'í Religions: From Messianic Shi'ism to a World Religion* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 144, 151; Richard W. Thomas, *Racial Unity: An Imperative for Social Progress* (Ottawa: Bahá'í Studies Publications, 1993), 154-159; Will C. van den Hoonaard, “Native Teaching,” in “Canada and the Ten-Year Crusade (1953-1963): An Early Draft,” 20 Dec 1991, 12-14; William Wuttunee, *Ruffled Feathers: Indians in Canadian Society* (Calgary: Bell Books, 1971), 138. John Webster Grant and Kirk Dombrowski briefly discuss the Bahá'í Faith within the context of Aboriginal religious teaching, however, they both provide limited and somewhat skewed characterizations. See Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 201; Dombrowski, *Against Culture*, 166. That John Price asserts in his article “Mormon Missions to the Indians” that the Mormon religion is the only one to feature North American Aboriginal people in its holy scripture suggests that he was unaware of the Bahá'í Faith and the prophecy of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Price, “Mormon Missions to the Indians,” 461.

Bahá'í administrative structure. As Carolyn Sawin has noted, the lack of paid Bahá'í administrators and teachers and the frequent rate of administrative turn-over within the Bahá'í Faith has resulted in little systematized record-keeping; documentation and archival practices vary widely both “among and between” Bahá'í communities.²²

Such challenges are reflected, for example, in the problematic nature of Bahá'í statistics, which are almost exclusively self-generated. While Bahá'ís were required to sign a declaration card upon officially enrolling in the Bahá'í Faith, Director of External Affairs for the Bahá'í Community of Canada, Gerald Filson, notes that Canadian Bahá'ís are a geographically-mobile population and that numbers held by the Bahá'í National Centre do not account for those Bahá'ís who did not record address changes. Neither do Bahá'í statistics account for drop-off, for those who did not become practicing Bahá'ís and did not formally register their withdrawal from the Faith. In addition, Filson notes that when the records at the Bahá'í National Centre were transferred to computer in the early 1980s, not all enrolments between 1948 and 1986 were included.²³ Moreover, in the case of Aboriginal Bahá'ís, only those who self-identified as such on their declaration cards were categorized accordingly.²⁴ Therefore, while Bahá'í statistics provide a sense of historical enrolment trends, they are by no means definitive indicators.

²² Sawin, “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” 4; see also 3.

²³ Gerald Filson (Director of External Affairs for the Bahá'í Community of Canada), email to the author, 24 Oct 2002. For more on the problematic nature of Bahá'í statistics see Will C. van den Hoonaard, “Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Canadian Bahá'í Community,” June 1991, http://bahai-library.com/?file=hoonaard_socio-demographics_canadian_bahais (accessed 11 July 2005); Cole, “The Bahá'í Faith in America as Panopticon,” 236; Sawin, “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” 38. Note that the challenge of quantifying membership numbers is not unique to the Bahá'í Faith. In his register, *The Native American Christian Community: A Directory of Indian, Aleut, and Eskimo Churches*, R. Pierce Beaver similarly notes the difficulty of definitively assessing the character and makeup of various Aboriginal Christian organizations. See Beaver, ed., *The Native American Christian Community: A Directory of Indian, Aleut, and Eskimo Churches* (Monrovia, CA: Missions Advanced Research and Communication Center, 1979), 15-16.

²⁴ Slavin, email.

The few secondary sources that engage historical Aboriginal-Bahá'í relations in direct terms are also characterized by their own sets of analytical constraints. Patricia Verge's biography of prominent Bahá'í Angus Cowan, for example, proves useful in establishing the timeline and broad contours of Aboriginal teaching work on the Prairies, yet provides limited critical analysis.²⁵ The highly empirical format of Verge's text similarly extends to Carolyn Sawin's doctoral dissertation, "Native Conversion, Native Identity: An Oral History of the Bahá'í Faith among First Nations People in the Southern Central Yukon Territory, Canada," and Andrew Pemberton-Piggot's masters thesis, "The Bahá'í Faith in Alberta; 1942-1992: The Ethic of Dispersion."²⁶ While both pieces provide a decidedly more analytical treatment of Bahá'í teaching work than does Verge's popular account, they do not sufficiently probe the implications of the Aboriginal-Bahá'í encounter. They do, however, prove valuable for their discussions of the concrete features of Bahá'í teaching work and motivation, the challenges faced in the consolidation of Aboriginal Bahá'í membership, and, in Sawin's case, the role of traditional oral narrative in the construction and articulation of Aboriginal Bahá'í identities.²⁷

The limited scope of primary and secondary source material relating to Aboriginal religious encounter in British Columbia extends beyond the Bahá'í Faith alone. Compared with Eastern North America, where scholars have such voluminous references

²⁵ Patricia Verge, *Angus: From the Heart* (Cochrane, AB: Springtide Publishing, 1999).

²⁶ Sawin, "Native Conversion, Native Identity"; Andrew Pemberton-Piggot, "The Bahá'í Faith in Alberta; 1942-1992: The Ethic of Dispersion" (MA thesis, University of Alberta, 1992).

²⁷ Although it does not deal directly with the Aboriginal-Bahá'í encounter, Pauline Tuttle's work with Lakota Bahá'í artist Kevin Locke has also proved very useful. See Tuttle, "The Hoop of Many Hoops"; Tuttle, "Beyond Feathers and Beads: Interlocking Narratives in the Music and Dance of Tokeya Inajin (Kevin Locke)," in Carter Jones Meyer and Diana Royer, eds., *Selling the Indian: Commercializing and Appropriating American Indian Cultures* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001), 99-156.

as the *Jesuit Relations* to draw upon, there has been relatively little analysis of historic Aboriginal religious encounter in the province.²⁸ This is particularly true in the case of more recent encounters with evangelical and minority Christian groups during the latter half of the twentieth century.²⁹ Exploration of Aboriginal-Bahá'í relations in the province thus contributes to the general historiography on Aboriginal religious encounter in British Columbia. It also provides the opportunity to explore to what degree the teaching patterns and enrolment trends outlined by Verge, Sawin, and Pemberton-Piggot apply beyond the Prairie and the Yukon regions. The timeframe of 1948-1992 is an admittedly broad one that I determined according to contemporary Bahá'í plans of teaching activity.³⁰ While expansive, this timeframe nevertheless grants the opportunity to trace both continuities and changes in Bahá'í teaching culture and experience over time.

The boundaries of this timeframe, however, are not entirely fixed. This fluidity, and this thesis itself, are products of oral history, a methodology in many ways impervious and resistant to the imposition of discretionary starting and ending points. Given the limitations of Bahá'í documentary records as well as the vital import of probing the experiential nature of Aboriginal-Bahá'í relations, oral history is an appropriate and effective methodology.³¹ It lends itself well to such ethnohistorical

²⁸ On this issue see Morrison, *The Solidarity of Kin*, 147; Kan, *Memory Eternal*, xxv. For a somewhat dated bibliography on religious encounter in the Northwest Coast region see John Barker, "Bibliography of Missionary Activity and Religious Change in Northwest Coast Societies," *Northwest Anthropological Research Notes* 22, no.1 (Spring 1988): 13-58.

²⁹ See footnote 8 above.

³⁰ For an outline of the temporal breakdown and major aims of Bahá'í expansion plans see Appendix 1 in Pemberton-Piggot, "The Bahá'í Faith in Alberta," 96-97.

³¹ On the importance of moving beyond the false dichotomy of "success" versus "failure" to exploration of the experiential nature of religious change and encounter see, for example, Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*; Morrison, *The Solidarity of Kin*; Rustom Bharucha, *The Question of Faith*, Tracts for the Times, no.3 (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1993), 2; E. Palmer Patterson, "Native Missionaries," 35; Brock,

techniques as thick description and offers the opportunity to open the historical record to voices, perspectives, and experiences previously absent.³² This is a timely endeavour. Given the timeframe of Bahá'í teaching activity, many participants are advancing in age. Beyond this thesis itself, I hope that the interviews upon which it is based, copies and transcripts of which will be deposited in the Kalakwáhti Studies Centre Audio-Visual Archives located in Youbou on Vancouver Island will prove of future benefit to the Bahá'í, Aboriginal, and academic communities alike.³³

Despite this “redemptive” potential, however, oral history does not grant unfettered access to pure subaltern “lived experiences.”³⁴ Rather, it raises significant questions concerning narrative constructions, concerning the manner in which consultants narrate their stories and reconstruct their pasts in selective and legitimizing ways. There is a clear distinction between deploying interviews simply as sources of empirical evidence versus taking into full account the broader context of interviews and such elements as the “velocity” of narration, “the ratio between the events described and the duration of the narration.”³⁵ In the case of Aboriginal Bahá'ís in British Columbia, this

“Building Bridges,” 68.

³² On the technique of thick description see Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 3-30. For more on ethnohistorical method see Hans Medick, “‘Missionaries in the Row Boat?’ Ethnological Ways of Knowing as a Challenge to Social History,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29, no.1 (Jan. 1987): 76-98; C. Jason Throop, “Articulating Experience,” *Anthropological Theory* 3, no.2 (2003): 219-241. On oral history see Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson, eds., *The Oral History Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1998); David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum, eds., *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Reader*, 2nd ed. (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 1996).

³³ Note that those interviews conducted in 2002 for the purposes of earlier research will not be included in this collection.

³⁴ On the profound “redemptive urge” underlining oral history see Daniel James, “Listening in the Cold: The Practice of Oral History in an Argentinean Meatpacking Community,” in *Doña María’s Story: Life History, Memory, and Political Community* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 138.

³⁵ Alessandro Portelli, “What Makes Oral History Different,” in Perks and Thompson, *The Oral History Reader*, 66. On the significance of oral histories as narrative constructions see Portelli, “What Makes Oral History Different”; James, “Listening in the Cold”; Alessandro Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral*

means paying particular attention to the prominence of dreams and visions throughout their narratives and exploring the profound degree to which these elements reflect culturally-specific understandings of Aboriginal Bahá'í history, experience, and identity.³⁶

The process of oral history also demands sensitivity to the significance of silence as well as verbal articulation.³⁷ Given Bahá'u'lláh's prohibition against "backbiting," which Bahá'ís take very seriously, a number of the consultants that I interviewed proved reticent to discuss potentially controversial issues or engage in critique of past people and events.³⁸ Such reservation demanded that I reflect upon the root of such silence and reinforced the importance of respectful and responsive listening to the interview process.³⁹ Indeed, interviews are forms of discourse unto themselves, shaped through the collaborative production of consultant and scholar alike.⁴⁰

History and the Art of Dialogue (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997); Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991); Anna Green and Kathleen Troup, "Oral History," in *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth-Century History and Theory* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 232.

³⁶ On the significance of Aboriginal oral tradition as narrative construction see Julie Cruikshank, "Claiming Legitimacy: Prophecy Narratives from Northern Aboriginal Women," *American Indian Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Spring 1994): 147; Julie Cruikshank, "Myth and Tradition as Narrative Framework: Oral Histories from Northern Canada," *International Journal of Oral History* 9, no.3 (1988): 198-214; Julie Cruikshank, in collaboration with Angela Sidney, Kitty Smith, and Annie Ned, *Life Lived Like a Story – Life Stories of Three Yukon Native Elders* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990); Julie Cruikshank, *The Social Life of Stories: Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998); Julie Cruikshank, "Negotiating with Narrative: Establishing Cultural Identity at the Yukon International Storytelling Festival," *American Anthropologist* 99, no.1 (1997): 56-69; Sawin, "Native Conversion, Native Identity," 13, 40, 157, 162, 164.

³⁷ On the significance of silence see Green and Troup, "Oral History," 233; Sawin, "Native Conversion, Native Identity," 5-6.

³⁸ On the Bahá'í prohibition against backbiting see *CBN*, no.195 (April 1966), 2; Jack Bastow, interview with the author, 29 July 2004, Vancouver; Hatcher and Martin, *The Bahá'í Faith*, 158, 164. Carolyn Sawin encountered a similar challenge during her fieldwork with Aboriginal Bahá'ís in the Yukon as did Pauline Tuttle in her work with Kevin Locke. See Sawin, "Native Conversion, Native Identity," 20; Tuttle, "Beyond Feathers and Beads," 115.

³⁹ On the importance of engaged listening see, for example, James, "Listening in the Cold," 125, 130; Portelli, "Why Oral History is Different," 70.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, 280; James, "Listening in the Cold"; Portelli, "Why

While the methodology of oral history allows for the vital exploration of experience rather than fact alone, it does not guarantee fully comprehensive analytic treatment. Due to time, resource, and space constraints, for example, I limited the geographic reach of interviews for this thesis to the southern regions of the province; the northern context was reconstructed primarily through available documentary material. The elements of time, resources, and space similarly influenced my decision to limit interviews to Bahá'ís alone. Clearly, interviews with Aboriginal people who did not join the Bahá'í Faith, as well as those who enrolled and subsequently left the religion, would have proved of immeasurable benefit to my analysis. However, as Carolyn Sawin discovered through the course of her fieldwork in the Yukon, such potential consultants are extremely difficult to locate; of those identified with previous connections to the Bahá'í Faith, many declined to participate.⁴¹ Beyond the issues of geography and religious affiliation, the interviews that I have conducted do not reflect an equal enough balance between men and women to explore the gendered nature of Aboriginal-Bahá'í experiences with any precision.⁴² In addition, as the Aboriginal Bahá'ís that I interviewed do not hail from a single community, but are rather members of a diverse number of First Nations from British Columbia and beyond, I do not explore in depth the relations between any one specific Aboriginal culture and the Bahá'í Faith.⁴³

Oral History is Different"; Kathryn Borland, "'That's Not What I Said': Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research" in Perks and Thompson, *The Oral History Reader*, 320-332.

⁴¹ Sawin, "Native Conversion, Native Identity," 23-24.

⁴² On the importance of gender to questions of religious teaching and encounter see, for example, Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy C. Lutkehaus, eds., *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999); Myra Rutherdale, *Women and the White Man's God: Gender and Race in the Canadian Mission Field* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002).

⁴³ This contrasts, for example, with Pauline Tuttle's work with Lakota Bahá'í Kevin Locke, which explores in detail the points of connection Locke perceives between the Bahá'í Faith and his ancestral Lakota traditions. See Tuttle, "'Beyond Feathers and Beads'" and "The Hoop of Many Hoops."

In keeping with my conscious decision to employ Bahá'í concepts and terminology, I have organized the chapters of this thesis according to the central Bahá'í themes of prophecy, unity in diversity, and service. In Chapter One, I use the prophecy of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to examine Bahá'í religious teaching and the gap between rhetoric and practice. Moving deeper into the experiential nature of Bahá'í adherence, in Chapter Two I employ the principle of unity in diversity to probe processes of Aboriginal religious change, empowerment, and cultural resurgence, and the allied social context and power dynamics shaping Aboriginal-Bahá'í interactions. In Chapter Three, I utilize the principle of service to explore Bahá'í social activism, its parallels and divergences from contemporary Aboriginal political activism, and the power and potential of spiritual approaches to the pursuit of social change.

Mine is in no way the definitive or conclusive voice on the history of the Aboriginal-Bahá'í encounter in British Columbia. Indeed, this research represents in many ways a beginning. It represents the beginning of ongoing relationships between a non-Aboriginal, non-Bahá'í scholar and the Bahá'í community. It represents the beginning of efforts to produce a scholarship with resonance within the Aboriginal, Bahá'í, and academic communities alike.⁴⁴ It represents the beginning of attempts to insert Bahá'í experiences into the historiography on Aboriginal religious encounter and carve out a space within scholarship for the elements of genuine spiritual commitment, experience, and action. These are all beginnings with profound implications.

⁴⁴ On the importance of such efforts see, for example, Irwin, "Native American Spirituality: An Introduction"; Ronwanièn:te Jocks, "Spirituality for Sale"; Ridington, "Voice, Representation, and Dialogue"; Eva Marie Garroutte, *Real Indians: Identity and the Survival of Native America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 143-144.

PROPHECY

Attach great importance to the indigenous population of America. For these souls may be likened unto the ancient inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula, who, prior to the Mission of Muhammad, were like unto savages. When the light of Muhammad shone forth in their midst, however, they became so radiant as to illumine the world. Likewise, these Indians, should they be educated and guided, there can be no doubt that they will become so illumined as to enlighten the whole world.¹

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s prophecy concerning the indigenous population of North America underwrote Bahá’í teaching efforts amongst Aboriginal people throughout the continent.² Characterized as the sole explicit racial prophecy within Bahá’í scripture, the 1916 directive functioned as an “Ur-text,” as historical authority and contemporary guide, for the North American Bahá’í community.³ The British Columbian context, however,

¹ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Tablets of the Divine Plan* (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1993), 33 (revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in 1916).

² For the reflections of British Columbian Bahá’í teachers on the prophecy see Fletcher and Elinor Bennett, interview with the author, 21 July 2004, Saanich; Patrick and Sandra Slobodian, interview with the author, 20 July 2004, Victoria; Raudger Nygaard, interview with the author, 12 Aug 2004, Chemainus; Lida Synders Blok interview with the author, 13 Aug 2004, Mill Bay; Jack Bastow, interview with the author, 29 July 2004, Vancouver; Gretchen Jordan-Bastow, interview with the author, 26 Sept 2004, Vancouver (hereafter referred to as “interview”). For references to the prophecy within Bahá’í sources more broadly see, for example, *Bahá’í News* (hereafter *BN*), nos.59 (Dec 1954), 6; 127 (Aug 1960), 4; 130 (Nov 1960), 1; *Canadian Bahá’í News* (hereafter *CBN*), nos.157 (Feb 1963), 8; 166 (Nov 1963), 3; 204 (Jan 1967), 2; 216 (Jan-Feb 1968), 7; 219 (May 1968), 10; 237 (March 1970), 4; 246 (Jan 1971), 5; 250 (April 1971), 6; *Bahá’í Canada* (hereafter *BC*), nos.295 (July-Aug 1976), 2; 302 (April 1977), 6; 2, no.8 (Feb 1980), 3; 3, no.4 (May-June 1981), 23-26; 3, no.7 (Nov 1981-Jan 1982), 18; 4, no.1 (March-May 1982), 37; 5, no.1 (March-April 1983), 3-4; 9, no.7 (Sept 1987), 1; 10, no.4 (June 1988), 3; 10, no.6 (Aug 1988), 8; 10, no.9 (Nov 1988), 1-2.

³ Andrew Pemberton-Piggot, “The Bahá’í Faith in Alberta; 1942-1992: The Ethic of Dispersion” (MA thesis, University of Alberta, 1992), 34; Littlebrave Beaston, “American Indians and the Bahá’í Faith – Teaching Indians in the City,” paper presented at the Association for Bahá’í Studies Conference, Calgary,

reveals a firm distinction between rhetoric and practice. The prophecy of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, coupled with official discourse surrounding the field of Aboriginal Bahá’í teaching, invoked stereotypic imagery of Aboriginal people, both romantic and derogatory. In practice, however, those concretely engaged in teaching the Bahá’í Faith to Aboriginal people illustrated that far from a stark colonial imposition or wholesale romanticized appropriation of “imaginary Indians,” the process of Aboriginal teaching was an organic one grounded in the negotiated terrain of relationship-building and cultural exchange.⁴

Bahá’í teaching took surprising forms. Bahá’ís were simultaneously forbidden from proselytizing, yet encouraged to embrace the teaching task. Lay teachers and pioneers fulfilled their responsibilities to spread the Bahá’í message through such subtle mechanisms as friendship-building and “living the Bahá’í life.” Rather than imposing a stern “saved/unsaved duality” as had so many Christian missionaries before them, Bahá’ís accepted and affirmed the fundamental truths of Aboriginal spiritual forms.⁵ They recognized Aboriginal prophets as legitimate, urging Aboriginal people to accept Bahá’u’lláh as the most recent in a long series of Manifestations of God. Teachers and pioneers did not forcefully impose the Bahá’í Faith onto Aboriginal communities, but rather introduced it in a fluid manner that stressed confirmation of existing beliefs and practices over strict conversion away from them.

Alberta, Sept 2004.

⁴ On the concept of “imaginary Indians” see Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canada* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992).

⁵ Pemberton-Piggot, “The Bahá’í Faith in Alberta,” 77. This is not, of course, to suggest that Christianity was swallowed wholesale by Aboriginal converts; much recent scholarship has highlighted the creative methods through which Christianity was adopted and adapted by Aboriginal adherents. See, for example, Susan Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003); Michael E. Harkin, *The Heiltsuks: Dialogues of Culture and History on the Northwest Coast* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); Peggy Brock, “Building Bridges: Politics and Religion in a First Nations Community,” *Canadian Historical Review* 81, no.1 (March 2000): 67-97; Sergei Kan., *Memory Eternal: Tlingit Culture and Russian Orthodox Christianity Through Two Cultures* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999).

These teaching methods were in evidence across time and place in British Columbia. The friendship-building period of the 1960s and early 1970s, for example, illustrates the highly grassroots nature of Bahá'í teaching efforts and the firm sense of discretion underlining them. It also highlights the central, if constrained, roles of Aboriginal Bahá'í teachers. The subsequent period of direct teaching activity during the late 1970s and early 1980s foregrounds, for its part, a contentious era of experimentation in Bahá'í teaching and reveals significant challenges faced by the Bahá'í community in consolidating Aboriginal membership.⁶ The more geographically-specific and applied context of the Cariboo speaks further to issues of Aboriginal-Bahá'í consolidation and the significant impact of culturally-specific teaching and deepening mechanisms. Pioneer experiences in the coastal community of Alert Bay, in turn, poignantly highlight conditions influencing Aboriginal reactions to the Bahá'í Faith, both receptive and resistant. Together, these concrete episodes of Bahá'í teaching activity underscore a profound gap between rhetoric and practice. While the prophecy of 'Abdu'l-Bahá underwrote teaching efforts throughout British Columbia, faith in His vision and intense commitment to its practical realization did not translate into rigid expectations for Aboriginal people to conduct themselves as befitting either "heathen" or "noble savages."

Stereotype and Rhetoric

The themes of heathen and noble savagery have long histories in North America. From the time of earliest contact, European colonists projected onto Aboriginal people

⁶ Such shifts in Bahá'í teaching culture are not unique to the British Columbian Bahá'í community, but speak rather to processes of experimentation undertaken throughout broader Bahá'í world. See, for example, Universal House of Justice, *Century of Light* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 2001).

ethnocentric essentialisms at once reproachful and romantic.⁷ Christian missionaries the continent over founded their civilizing and salvationist programs upon the goals of extirpating pagan practice and belief. On the nineteenth-century Northwest Coast, for example, Anglican missionary William Duncan established his utopian community of Metlakatla, an isolated industrial village aimed to enforce stiff codes of Victorian conduct, morality, and progress amongst its Aboriginal residents.⁸ Meanwhile, antimodernists of various ilk grounded their quests for intense experience and “real life” upon Aboriginal people and lifeways, both real and imagined.⁹ During the latter half of the twentieth century, lore hobbyists of the 1950s, countercultural hippies and revolutionaries of the 1960s and 1970s, and New Age seekers of the 1980s and beyond all appropriated images of “Indianness” as attractive symbols and sites of “otherness” through which to pursue transcendence and self-fulfilment in “recoil from an ‘overcivilized’ modern existence.”¹⁰

⁷ See, for example, Arthur J. Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began: An Illustrated History of Canada's Native Peoples* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1996); Olive Patricia Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1984); Shepard Krech III, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999).

⁸ See, for example, Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*; Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*, 2nd ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992), 119-145; Jean Usher, *William Duncan of Metlakatla: A Victorian Missionary in British Columbia*, Publications in History, no.5 (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1974).

⁹ T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), xiii, 5. On the concept of antimodernism in general see also Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994). On “Aboriginal antimodernists” see Philip Deloria, “Counterculture Indians and the New Age” in Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle, eds., *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and 70s* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 159-188; Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Francis, *The Imaginary Indian*; Philip Jenkins, *Dream Catchers: How Mainstream America Discovered Native Spirituality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Stewart Brand, “Indians and the Counterculture, 1960s-1970s,” in Wilcomb E. Washburn, vol. ed., *Handbook of North American Indians: History of Indian-White Relations*, vol.4 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1988), 571-572; Carter Jones Meyer and Diana Royer, “Introduction” in *Selling the Indian: Commercializing and Appropriating American Indian Cultures* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001), xi-xix.

¹⁰ Lears, *No Place of Grace*, xiii; see also 306 and 309.

Both “heathen” and “noble” imagery figure within the prophecy of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. In casting Aboriginal people as “savages” enlightened by virtue of an external religious force, the prophecy readily summons the familiar discourse of Christian colonization. Conversely, in intimating that Aboriginal people, and the unique spiritual capacities they possess, have the potential to “enlighten the whole world,” the prophecy strikes a distinctly antimodernist tone. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s prophecy does not explicitly specify the forms of education and guidance necessary in order for Aboriginal people to achieve their full spiritual potential. It implies, however, that the Bahá’í Faith is to play a key role in facilitating such processes, leading, in turn, to the universal spread of the religion.

Beyond ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s prophecy itself, stereotypes both romantic and derogatory surface also within official Bahá’í discourse. Steeped in the racialized language of the era, for example, teaching guides and issues of the national newsletter *Canadian Bahá’í News* dating from the 1960s characterize Aboriginal Canada according to entrenched myths of “sloth,” “laziness,” “simple-mindedness,” and “primitivism.”¹¹ “Noble savage” overtones similarly figure within these sources. Considered inherently “devout and prayerful,” Aboriginal people are said throughout history to have “provided heroes, models of noble, sacrificing and courageous deeds, that have become part of the folklore, the inspiration of many races”; “[w]e detect [in Aboriginal people] qualities which surpass ours; their humility, sense of courtesy, generosity, respect for the individual, and their basically spiritual nature.”¹² Characterized as the “standard bearers of the Faith”

¹¹ *CBN*, no.169 (Feb.1964), 4 and National Indian Reserves Teaching Committee, “Indians of Canada: A Guide for Teaching,” n.d. [1965?]. See also *BN*, no.62 (March 1955), 3.

¹² *CBN*, nos.132 (Jan.1961), insert (“The Promised Letter,” by Rúhiyyih Khánun); 129 (Oct.1960), 2; and “Indians of Canada: A Guide to Teaching” respectively. “Noble savage” overtones also figure within the following sources: *BN*, no.138 (July 1961), 4; *CBN*, nos.158 (March 1963), 3; 164 (Sept 1963), 4; 176 (Sept 1964), 2, 8; 204 (Jan 1967), 2; 244 (Nov 1970), 1; 245 (Dec 1970), 2; *BC*, 295 (July-Aug 1976), 2; 3,

and “heirs of the ancient blood and promise,” mass enrolment of Aboriginal people in the Bahá’í Faith was considered “the lever that will release mass conversion among the white community.”¹³ This community, the May 1968 issue of *Canadian Bahá’í News* reported, “is starving for the spiritual qualities that the Indian believers will bring them.”¹⁴

Romantic elements are further reflected in the selection of background reading material recommended for Bahá’í teachers and pioneers.¹⁵ The 1965 “Indians of Canada: A Guide for Teaching,” for example, urges Bahá’ís to read Ernest Thompson Seton’s *The Gospel of the Redman* “over and over until you become steeped in the religious attitudes of the Indian.”¹⁶ This quintessential antimodernist text, however, advances a highly reductionist, romanticized, stereotyped portrayal of Aboriginal forms of spirituality. In addition to casting “the” Indian religion as “universal, basic, and fundamental,” Seton similarly upholds “the most heroic race the world has ever seen, the most physically perfect race the world has ever seen, the most spiritual civilization the world has ever seen” as a model for non-Aboriginal society.¹⁷

no.4 (May-June 1981), 23.

¹³ “Indians of Canada: A Guide to Teaching”; *CBN*, nos.216 (Jan-Feb 1968), 7; and 142 (Nov.1961), 3 respectively.

¹⁴ *CBN*, no.219 (May 1968), 10.

¹⁵ John Collier’s *Indians of the Americas* (New York: Norton, 1947) and Ernest Thompson Seton’s *Gospel of the Redman: A Way of Life*, for example, are recommended to Bahá’í readers through the pages of *Canadian Bahá’í News* beginning in 1952 and 1967 respectively. See *CBN*, nos.27 (March 1952), 7; 40, (April 1953), 6; 204 (Jan 1967), 2; 211 (Aug 1967), 5; 221 (July 1968), 10; 225 (Dec 1968), 9; 244 (Nov 1970), insert; 246 (Jan 1971), 11; 251 (May 1971), 5; 254 (Oct-Nov 1971), 4; 260 (Aug 1972), 5; 276 (Jan-Feb 1974), 8; “Indians of Canada: A Guide for Teaching.” For discussion of Collier and his antimodern leanings see Jenkins, *Dream Catchers*, 18, 44, 65, 87-91, 98-99, 103, 110-117, 129, 131, 139, 139, 153, 227, 243.

¹⁶ “Indians of Canada: A Guide for Teaching.” For background on Seton see Francis, *The Imaginary Indian*, 144-168.

¹⁷ Ernest Thompson Seton and Julia M. Seton, comps., *The Gospel of the Redman: A Way of Life* (Santa Fe: Seton Village, 1966) (first published 1936), vii, 107-108.

Such essentialisms serve, in the words of historian Paige Raibmon, to “invoke static categories of authentic and traditional ‘Indian-ness.’”¹⁸ They speak implicitly to a false dichotomy of tradition versus modernity, a powerful construct that threatens “to delimit Aboriginal peoples’ possibilities and straightjacket their autonomy.”¹⁹ Well-intentioned or otherwise, such “positive” stereotypes are nevertheless rooted in relations of power that serve to objectify and impose prescribed expectations upon Aboriginal people. As the episodes of friendship-building and direct teaching and the contexts of the Cariboo and Alert Bay forcefully illustrate, however, it would be misleading to assume that such discourse was carried out in practice in an entirely straightforward manner.

Subtlety and Discretion: Friendship-Building

Official Bahá’í sources such as *Canadian Bahá’í News* and the messages of Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice cast Aboriginal teaching as a decidedly systematic endeavour.²⁰ The amount of attention lavished upon the issue from the time of the establishment of the Canadian Bahá’í community in 1948 is striking when considered in view of the small size of the contemporary Bahá’í population.²¹ However,

¹⁸ Paige Raibmon, “Theatres of Contact: The Kwakwaka’wakw Meet Colonialism in British Columbia and at the Chicago World’s Fair,” *Canadian Historical Review* 81 (June 2000), 190.

¹⁹ Raibmon, “Theatres of Contact,” 190. Note that the essentialist tone of Seton’s piece does not, of course, preclude the possibility that Aboriginal people may have identified with this text, which includes prayers from a number of Aboriginal cultures. Indeed, a prayer included in Seton’s *Gospel* is cited in a 1987 issue of *Visions*, an Aboriginal Bahá’í newsletter distributed for a short period during the late 1980s with *Bahá’í Canada*. See *BC* 9, no.9 (Nov 1987), 3.

²⁰ For a sampling of the voluminous references to Aboriginal teaching see, for example, *BN*, nos.103 (Aug 1958), 8; 119 (Dec 1959), 6-7; 126 (July 1960), 5; 132 (Jan 1961), insert; 137 (June 1961), 7; 241 (July-Aug 1970), 1; *CBN*, nos.251 (May 1971), 1; 252 (June-July 1971), 2; *Bulletin*, no.5 (Jan 1979), 5; *BC* 2, no.8 (Feb 1980), 3-4; 3, no.4 (May-June 1981), 23; 5, no.1 (March-April 1983), 3-5; Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to Canada* (Thornhill, ON: Bahá’í Canada Publications, 1999); Universal House of Justice, comp., *The Importance of Teaching Indigenous People* (Toronto: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Canada, 1968); Shoghi Effendi and Universal House of Justice, *A Special Measure of Love: The Importance and Nature of the Teaching Work Among the Masses* (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1974).

²¹ At the time of the establishment of the Canadian Bahá’í community in 1948, for example, there were but

teaching was more an issue of contemplation than concrete action during the 1950s and early 1960s in British Columbia. Modest early efforts did result in contact with Aboriginal people in such communities as North Vancouver, Vancouver, Nanaimo, and Vernon, however, few Aboriginal people declared.²²

Early Bahá'í teaching efforts in British Columbia were highly grassroots initiatives. While the Pacific Indian Branch of the National Teaching Committee (PIB), for example, was established by the national administration in 1967 for the purpose of consolidating and coordinating teaching amongst Aboriginal people in British Columbia, the committee was composed of local Bahá'ís and firmly grounded in local realities.²³ Its goal was to establish contact with Aboriginal communities and help foster mutual understanding and awareness. Committee members shared such Bahá'í principles as “One God,” “One Humanity,” “Unity in Diversity,” and “Progressive Revelation” where appropriate through action as opposed to words alone.²⁴

four Local Spiritual Assemblies (LSAs) and three “groups” in British Columbia, a total of under sixty Bahá'ís. *CBN*, no.3 (Aug 1948), 6 and 8. Of these four LSAs, one had reverted to “Disbanded or Weak” status by the following year (*CBN*, no.5 (Feb 1949), 2). The term “group” refers to an assemblage of Bahá'ís who do not meet the minimum requirement of nine members to form an LSA.

²² See, for example, *CBN*, nos.4 (Nov 1948), 8; 6 (April 1949), 9; 12 (March 1950), 12; 44 (Sept 1953), 3; 95 (Dec 1957), 4; 103 (Aug 1958), 9; 105 (Oct 1958), 4; 106 (Nov 1958), 4; 108 (Jan 1959), 5; 113 (June 1959), 11; 114 (July 1959), 6; 115 (Aug 1959), 4; 116 (Sept 1959), 4; 118 (Nov 1959), 4; 122 (March 1960), 7; 129 (Oct 1960), 5; 131 (Dec 1960), 11; 132 (Jan 1961), 3-4; 133 (Feb 1961), 4; 138 (July 1961), 7; 143 (Dec 1961), 9; 145 (Feb 1962), 5; 148 (May 1962), 11; 149 (June 1962), 5; 150 (July 1962), 3; 151 (Aug 1962), 3; 157 (Feb 1963), 4; 171 (April 1964), 3; 182 (March 1965), 5. While official statistics from the Canadian Bahá'í Centre list 12 Aboriginal declarations in the province up to and including 1963, it is unlikely that these declarants remained active in the Faith as Bahá'í teachers active during the 1960s seemingly had no awareness of them. For official statistics see Lindsay Slavin (Department of Archives, Bahá'í National Centre), email to the author, 15 Sept 2004. For the reflections of contemporary Bahá'í teachers see Bennett interview.

²³ *CBN*, no.212 (Sept 1967), insert. While Aboriginal teaching was a field of particular interest within the Canadian Bahá'í community, concrete plans for effectuating this work remained decidedly patchwork. As is reflected throughout the pages of *Canadian Bahá'í News*, numerous committees such as the PIB were established throughout the country from mid-century, however, there was little in the way of institutional continuity linking these various endeavours. The PIB itself, for example, maintained official committee status for but a few years.

²⁴ On the tenets of the Bahá'í Faith see Will C. van den Hoonaard, *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada, 1898-1948* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996), 203. On the goals and

Such organic teaching efforts in many ways defy the label missionization.²⁵ Jim Kelly, for example, a non-Aboriginal Bahá'í from Vancouver Island who lived for a time on the Pauquachin Reserve on the Saanich Peninsula, notes that even the term teaching “almost always seemed like a misnomer.”²⁶ Jim had not made explicit plans to move to Pauquachin, but rather did so after the band manager, whom he had befriended during visits to the reserve, offered a rental property to him and his wife. As Jim explains, “the opportunity was presented and it came and so it was an openness and a giving and a response, a giving and a response, back and forth, both ways.”²⁷ Drawing an implicit contrast between the Bahá'í approach and that of other more forcefully-proselytizing religions, Jim notes that he and his contemporaries sought to confirm, not convert; they sought to reinforce the validity of Aboriginal tradition, not demand its renunciation.²⁸

Speaking to the Bahá'í prohibition on proselytization, Jim explains that:

that's more like arm wrestling or twisting somebody's arm and there's always a regret that's hidden some place. There's always something that's unhealed or opened. And so it can't be that way, it's got to be where you take the ingredient you're presented with and accept it and love it and work with it.²⁹

activities of the PIB see Pacific Indian Branch of the National Teaching Committee Records (hereafter PIB Records), personal papers of Fletcher and Elinor Bennett (hereafter Bennett papers).

²⁵ Despite this, the term has nevertheless been applied by some scholars to describe Bahá'í teaching work. See, for example, Margit Warburg, *Baha'i* (Utah: Signature Books, 2003), 53-57; Carolyn Patterson Sawin, “Native Conversion, Native Identity: An Oral History of the Bahá'í Faith among First Nations People in the Southern Central Yukon Territory, Canada” (PhD dissertation, University of Washington, 2000), 36-37.

²⁶ Jim Kelly, interview with the author, 6 Oct 2004, Shawnigan Lake. Note that where cited in the text, some interview sources have been edited for clarity of reading; original meanings, however, have been strictly maintained.

²⁷ Interview.

²⁸ Interview and Jim Kelly, conversation with the author, 7 Aug 2004, by telephone.

²⁹ Interview. See also Lida Synders Blok interview and Raudger Nygaard interview. For official expressions on the Bahá'í prohibition on proselytization see, for example, *CBN*, no.191 (March 1966), 7.

As Jim stresses, “I think, if we can do any worthy service to anyone, it’s to try and understand them. And not to feel in any sense that part of that is to change them.”³⁰

Such sentiments are echoed by non-Aboriginal Bahá’í teacher and pioneer Fletcher Bennett. Known as “The Flying Bahá’í,” Fletcher used his personal seaplane to facilitate visits to remote Aboriginal communities along the stretch of British Columbia’s West Coast and beyond.³¹ He took pains, however, to explain to contemporary observers that he did not consider himself a missionary. As he noted in a 1969 newspaper article, he deemed himself “merely a communications facility” for Aboriginal Bahá’ís such as Ditidaht member John Thomas and Saulteaux adherents Dorothy Maquabeak Francis and Thomas Anaquod whom he shuttled throughout the province.³² While motivated by an overarching desire to open new regions to the Bahá’í message, these visits remained organic and oftentimes spontaneous.³³ Once arrived in Aboriginal communities, from Ahousat to Alert Bay and Masset to Bella Coola, Bahá’í travel teachers made efforts to connect with local residents and, where possible, host “firesides,” informal gatherings during which Bahá’ís spoke of the Faith, shared locally-developed teaching aids such as slides and films, and fielded questions from interested parties.³⁴ Firesides were not static

³⁰ Interview.

³¹ While Fletcher was the public face of such activity, the entire Bennett family – in particular, his wife, Elinor – contributed to and made sacrifices towards the goal of Aboriginal teaching. Bennett interview.

³² “Bennett is Flying Baha’i,” *Victoria Times*, 14 Dec 1968, 10. The same article also appeared in the *Vancouver Sun*, 4 Jan 1969, 4. See also “Indian missionary: Flying Baha’i rates high,” [Dawson Creek newspaper], 9 Oct 1968.

³³ Bennett interview. For the reflections of Quw’utsun’ Bahá’í Robert George upon such friendship-building endeavours see interview with the author, 5 Oct 2004, Duncan.

³⁴ Bennett interview; PIB Records; *CBN*, no.231 (July 1969), 3. On the origin of the term “fireside” see William S. Hatcher and J. Douglas Martin, *The Bahá’í Faith: The Emerging Global Religion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 175. Locally-developed and culturally-specific teaching aids included slides from the Neah Bay Council Fire, held annually on the Makah Reservation in Washington State since the early 1960s, and a film documenting the 1974-75 travels of the Alaskan Aboriginal Bahá’í Friendship Teams. See Bennett interview; Newsletter, 27 Nov 1967, PIB Records; Letter from Fletcher Bennett to Vera Butterfield, 22 Feb 1969, PIB Records; Letter from Fletcher Bennett to Patricia Treadwell, 14 April 1969, PIB Records; Letter from Fletcher Bennett to LSA of Comox, 18 Jan 1970, Bennett papers; Fletcher

instruments or strict tools of proselytization; rather, Bahá'í teachers shaped them according to the interests of participants.

Aboriginal Bahá'ís from British Columbia and beyond were central to such contact and friendship-building initiatives. As in the case of other religious organizations initiating teaching efforts amongst Aboriginal people in this period, the active participation of Aboriginal adherents stands as one of the marked features of Bahá'í teaching work.³⁵ The Pacific Indian Branch of the National Teaching Committee (PIB), for example, was, with the exception of Fletcher Bennett, composed of Aboriginal members John Thomas, Dorothy Francis, and Thomas Anaquod. The committee focused heavily upon coordinating visits by local and international Aboriginal travel teachers to Aboriginal communities throughout the province. Grounded as they were in personal experience and sentiment, visits by Aboriginal adherents such as John, Dorothy, Thomas, and Modelle Mudd were cited by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Bahá'ís alike as the most effective teaching method.³⁶ The 1974 tour of the Alaskan “Bahá'í Friendship

Bennett Teaching Report, April 1970, Bennett papers; Letter from Fletcher Bennett to Baha'í Friends, 30 Nov 1974, Bennett papers; *BC*, no.300 (Feb 1977), 6. On the use of locally-developed teaching aids in the Cariboo region see Lida Snyders Blok interview.

³⁵ On the Prairie Bahá'í context see Patricia Verge, *Angus: From the Heart* (Cochrane, AB: Springtide Publishing, 1999), 194, 235-236. John Webster Grant notes that evangelical Christian denominations that initiated mission work during the mid-twentieth century recruited and incorporated Aboriginal teachers, preachers, and pastors much more readily than did their colonial predecessors. *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 202; see also Kirk Dombrowski, *Against Culture: Development, Politics, and Religion in Indian Alaska* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 116-117, 120. This is not, of course, to suggest that Aboriginal people did not also participate in religious teaching during the colonial period. See, for example, Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*; E. Palmer Patterson, “Native Missionaries of the North Pacific Coast: Philip McKay and Others,” *The Pacific Historian* 30, no.1 (Spring 1986), 23-37; Winona Stevenson, “The Journals and Voices of a Church of England Native Catechist: Askenootow (Charles Pratt), 1851-1884,” in Jennifer S.H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert, eds., *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1996), 304-329.

³⁶ See Bennett interview; PIB Records; Letter from Fletcher Bennett to LSA of Comox. Carolyn Sawin makes a parallel observation concerning Aboriginal Bahá'í teaching in the Yukon, “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” 174. Modelle Mudd was a Bahá'í of Cherokee heritage who served for many years, with her husband Foster, as a pioneer to the Makah Reservation in Neah Bay, Washington. On her participation in British Columbia see, for example, PIB Records; Raudger Nygaard interview; Bennett interview.

Team,” for example, sparked lasting relationships.³⁷ In villages up and down the British Columbian coast, team members – four Aboriginal and one Hawaiian – demonstrated through song and dance “their belief that the dancing and culture of the Native people were valuable expressions of their religious past and that the cultures of people throughout the world form an indispensable part of the Bahá’í way of life.”³⁸ Fletcher, who served as pilot for the team, and his wife, Elinor, explain that the group received a “wonderful reception”; in most villages, residents reciprocated with local cultural expressions.³⁹

³⁷ *CBN*, no.279 (July-Aug 1974), 2; *BC*, no.301 (March 1977), 6; Bennett interview; Letter from Fletcher Bennett to Baha’i Friends, 30 Nov 1974; Letter from Fletcher Bennett to Baha’i Friends, 4 April 1975, Bennett papers; Peggy Ross, Report to Continental Board of Counsellors for North America, 14 June-6 July 1975, Bennett papers.

³⁸ “Baha’i team coming here,” [Prince Rupert newspaper], 12 March 1974, included in Bennett papers.

³⁹ Bennett interview. By this point in time the Bennetts had pioneered to Prince Rupert and were engaging in much cross-border activity in Alaska and the Yukon, while maintaining connections with Aboriginal communities in the more southern reaches of the province.

Figure 1: (from left) Alice Duguqua (Tlingit), Fletcher Bennett (White), Laretta King (Tlingit), and Farokh Rohani (Persian) on a 1974 West Coast consolidation trip. This trip was a follow-up to the February “Friendship Team” tour. Multicultural teaching teams such as this one, representing the Bahá’í principle of unity in diversity in action, were also considered particularly effective by contemporary Bahá’ís.



© Fletcher Bennett, by permission.

While British Columbia was a frequent host to Aboriginal travel teachers from outside the province, it was also a more permanent home to Aboriginal Bahá’ís who migrated from other regions of Canada. Both Dorothy Francis and Thomas Anaquod, for example, hailed originally from the Prairie Saulteaux Nation. Their respective moves to the Vancouver area during the 1960s speak simultaneously to contemporary trends of urban migration on the part of Aboriginal people across Canada as well as the mobility

encouraged by the Bahá'í Writings and contemporary Bahá'í administration.⁴⁰ Their vigorous teaching activity in the province no doubt contributed, in addition to the spread of the Bahá'í Faith itself, to the development of contemporary pan-Indigenous links across Canada.⁴¹ It similarly presaged continued trends in Aboriginal Bahá'í composition in British Columbia; Aboriginal members from outside the province figured, and continue to figure, among the most prominent adherents.⁴²

Thomas Anaquod and Dorothy Francis, for their part, numbered amongst the first twenty Aboriginal Bahá'ís in all of Canada and became immediately active in the Faith upon their respective enrolments in 1959 and 1960.⁴³ Beyond contributing to the PIB and localized teaching initiatives in British Columbia, for example, Dorothy served, at various points, on the National Teaching Committee, the Continental Indigenous Council, and several Local Spiritual Assemblies. She also attended events and conferences

⁴⁰ On the issue of urban Aboriginal migration see Edgar Dosman, *Indians: The Urban Dilemma* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972); J. Rick and Roger Gibbins, *Out of Irrelevance: A Socio-Political Introduction to Indian Affairs in Canada* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1980), 44-47; W.T. Stanbury, *Success and Failure: Indians in Urban Society* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1975); George A. Lindsay, "A History of the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre in an Age of Aboriginal Migration and Urbanization" (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1998). On the issue of mobility in the Bahá'í Faith see Pauline Tuttle, "The Hoop of Many Hoops: The Integration of Lakota Ancestral Knowledge and Bahá'í Teachings in the Performative Practices of Kevin Locke" (PhD dissertation, University of Washington, 2002), 86-91; Pemberton-Pigott, "The Bahá'í Faith in Alberta"; Jim Kelly interview; Jack Bastow interview; *BC*, no.308 (Oct 1977), 4.

⁴¹ On pan-Indigenization see Troy Johnson, Duane Champagne, and Joane Nagel, "American Indian Activism and Transformation: Lessons from Alcatraz," in Troy R. Johnson, ed., *Contemporary Native American Political Issues* (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 1999), 292 and 305; David E. Wilkins, *American Indian Politics and the American Political System* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 208; Hazel Hertzberg, *The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1971); Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990), 68-69, 71, 81-82, 85, 116, 137-138, 152, 163, 165, 172, 250.

⁴² Beyond Francis and Anaquod, consider also British Columbia residents Linda Loft Pappenberger (Mohawk granddaughter of the first Canadian Aboriginal Bahá'ís, Jim and Melba Loft) and Jacob and Deloria Bighorn (Lakota Bahá'ís who pioneered from Washington state to work at the Maxwell International Bahá'í School at Shawnigan Lake), who moved to the province in 1974 and 1991 respectively.

⁴³ On Thomas's enrolment see Verge, *Angus: From the Heart*, 49-51; on Dorothy's enrolment see Chelsea Horton, "Beyond Red Power: The Alternative Activism of Dorothy Maquabeak Francis," *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies*, in press.

throughout Canada, the United States, and Mexico in her capacity as an elected Bahá'í representative.⁴⁴ Thomas was elected in 1968 as the first Aboriginal member of the Canadian National Spiritual Assembly (NSA).⁴⁵ Like Dorothy, he travelled extensively at the local, national, and international levels.⁴⁶ Although he was not the first Aboriginal person to officially declare in the Faith in British Columbia, Ditidaht Bahá'í John Thomas is frequently remembered as such.⁴⁷ Like Dorothy and Thomas, he too became active in Bahá'í teaching immediately upon his enrolment in 1967.⁴⁸

While such early Aboriginal Bahá'ís were central participants in the teaching process, their participation was nevertheless constrained by their limited numbers. Elinor Bennett speaks to this issue as she reflects on the vast extent to which the Bahá'í community made demands on early adherents such as John, Dorothy, and Thomas. She notes that this was:

to the detriment, really, of their families, because the Bahá'í community used them a lot. And so, it was very hard. Maybe not on them but on their families. And so, in retrospect, and even at the time, I personally was aware of the sacrifices that they were making.⁴⁹

Such sacrifices were not entirely unique to Aboriginal Bahá'ís. Intensive teaching and pioneering activity frequently came at extreme personal expense – physical, emotional,

⁴⁴ See Horton, “Beyond Red Power.”

⁴⁵ During the election through which Thomas was elected, there was a tie for the ninth seat on the NSA. After consulting the Bahá'í Writings, the outgoing NSA turned the issue over to the National Convention where the election was taking place; after further consultation, Thomas was selected by virtue of a provision in the Bahá'í Writings that stipulates that in the case of a tied election, preference be given to “the member of the minority race.” *CBN*, no.221 (July 1968), 3; Verge, *Angus: From the Heart*, 130-131; Jack Bastow interview. Thomas was also elected to the NSA in 1969; see *CBN*, no.230 (June 1969), 9.

⁴⁶ See, for example, *CBN*, nos.217 (Feb-March 1968), 3; 223 (Sept 1968), insert (“Report on Mediterranean Conference at Palermo, Sicily, First Oceanic Bahá'í Conference, Sept 1968); 230 (June 1969), 7-8; 227 (Feb-March 1969), 9.

⁴⁷ Youth Josie Mathias of the Capilano Reserve is listed in the May 1962 issue of *Canadian Bahá'í News* (no.148, 11) as the first Aboriginal Bahá'í in the province; see also footnote 22 above. For references granting this designation to John Thomas see Bennett interview; PIB Records.

⁴⁸ *CBN*, no.208 (May 1967), 7; Bennett interview; PIB records.

⁴⁹ Bennett interview.

and material – for all those committed to the teaching task.⁵⁰ That there was but a handful of well-deepened Aboriginal Bahá'ís in the province during this early period, however, rendered them in particularly high demand.⁵¹

The so-called “white-middle-class Presbyterian” character of the broader Bahá'í community further amplified the sacrifices required of Aboriginal Bahá'í teachers.⁵² From the outset, Bahá'í teaching amongst Aboriginal people was not carried out by the British Columbian Bahá'í community as a whole, but rather by key individuals willing to step out of the bounds of the “rather waspish” Bahá'í mainstream.⁵³ Despite the commitment of key non-Aboriginal Bahá'ís such as the Bennetts to foster distinct Aboriginal spaces within the Bahá'í community, Aboriginal teachers such as John, Dorothy, and Thomas were undoubtedly required to cross the cultural divide to the non-Aboriginal world during their interactions with the larger Bahá'í community.⁵⁴

Given the limited numbers of Bahá'ís engaged in the Aboriginal teaching task, coupled with the short-term and geographically-widespread nature of friendship-building

⁵⁰ On such challenges see Bennett interview; Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interview; Letter from Fletcher to Elinor Bennett, 1971, Bennett papers; Letter from Fletcher to Elinor Bennett, 20 July 1973, Bennett papers; *BN*, no.133 (Feb 1961), 5; *CBN*, no.206 (March 1967), insert.

⁵¹ Linda Loft Pappenberger, for example, notes that upon her move to British Columbia in 1974, she, John Thomas, and Kwakwaka'wakw Bahá'í Debbie Bell were the only three active Aboriginal Bahá'ís on Vancouver Island. Interview with the author, 16 Aug 2004, Meades Creek.

⁵² The label “white-middle-class Presbyterian Bahá'ís” was applied by pioneer John Sargent, *CBN*, no.166 (Nov 1963), 3 (Sargent seemingly deployed the term “Presbyterian” in place of the label “Protestant” typically applied to so-called WASPs). See also *CBN*, no.187 (Aug 1965), 4; Carolyn Sawin, “Recognizing Whiteness: Cultural Difference and Cultural Dominance in North American Bahá'í Communities,” unpublished manuscript, n.d. (an earlier version of this paper was presented at the Association for Bahá'í Studies Conference, Mississauga, Ontario, Aug 2002).

⁵³ Quote from Verge, *Angus: From the Heart*, 73. John Sargent, conversation with the author, 16 Feb 2005, by telephone; Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interview; Bennett interview; Slobodian interview; Raudger Nygaard interview; Lida Snyders Blok interview; Jack Bastow interview. On parallel developments within the Prairie context see Verge, *Angus: From the Heart*, 72, 88, 95-96, 115; Arthur Irwin, “Early Native Teaching in Canada,” unpublished memoir, 1983, 10, 13-14.

⁵⁴ See Pemberton-Piggot, “The Bahá'í Faith in Alberta,” 71-72; John Sargent conversation; Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interview; Sawin, “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” 113; Sawin, “Recognizing Whiteness.”

endeavours, it is perhaps not surprising that they resulted in low numbers of Aboriginal enrolments. Fletcher Bennett notes of these “friendship builders” that “[n]ot many people declared actually what with us coming out and in only for a short time.”⁵⁵ From the 18,000 miles travelled throughout the course of the 1974 Friendship Team tour and subsequent follow-up visits, for example, only eleven declarations flowed.⁵⁶

The Bahá’í Faith inserted itself into a firm tradition of spiritual development in British Columbia. Traditional Aboriginal practices, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian Christianity, overtly syncretistic movements such as the Native American and Shaker Churches, as well as more recent evangelical bible missions had all generated followings over the previous century.⁵⁷ The Aboriginal communities where the Bahá’í Faith was introduced were well-versed in the adoption and incorporation of new spiritual forms. Despite limited enrolment numbers, it nevertheless appears that numerous Aboriginal people in British Columbia were sympathetic to the Bahá’í message acknowledging the legitimacy of their existing beliefs.⁵⁸ As Dorothy Francis expressed in the March 1964 issue of *Canadian Bahá’í News*, “Indians ... realize that they are mixed up because they have been led to believe they are pagan and their

⁵⁵ Interview.

⁵⁶ *BC*, no.301 (March 1977), 6.

⁵⁷ See footnote 7, Introduction, 5; R. Pierce Beaver, “Protestant Churches and the Indians,” 430-458 and Robert I. Burns, “Roman Catholic Missions in the Northwest,” 494-500 in Washburn, *Handbook*; J.E. Michael Kew, “History of Coastal British Columbia Since 1846,” 159-168 and J.E. Michael Kew, “Central and Coast Salish Ceremonies Since 1900,” 476-480 in Wayne Suttles, vol. ed., *Handbook of North American Indians: Northwest Coast*, vol.7 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1990); Wayne Suttles, “The Plateau Prophet Dance among the Coast Salish,” in *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987), 152-198; J.E. Michael Kew, “Coast Salish Ceremonial Life: Status and Identity in a Modern Village” (PhD dissertation, University of Washington, 1970); William Wuttunee, *Ruffled Feathers: Indians in Canadian Society* (Calgary: Bell Books, 1971), 138; Claudia Lewis, *Indian Families on the Northwest Coast* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 150-157, 199.

⁵⁸ See, for example, Bennett interview; PIB Records; Letter from Fletcher Bennett to Baha’i Friends, 30 Nov 1974; Letter from Fletcher Bennett to Bahai Friends, 4 April 1975; Horton, “Beyond Red Power”; Robert George interview; John Sargent conversation.

prayers and worship patterns are not of God. But Bahá'u'lláh has said 'According to your faith so shall your blessings be.'"⁵⁹ In reinforcing the validity of Aboriginal song, dance, and prayer – rituals long denounced by both church and state as the epitome of heathen savagery – Bahá'is presented an alternative to “the either/or dichotomy.”⁶⁰ They similarly displayed sensitivity towards local contexts through their observation of such Aboriginal protocol as requesting the permission of hereditary chiefs to enter their territories and speak of the Bahá'í Faith.⁶¹ In a period of rising competition over Aboriginal souls, such gestures of respect were particularly well-received by Aboriginal elders.⁶²

The period of friendship-building activity during the 1960s and 1970s was also one of sharp politicization within Aboriginal communities throughout British Columbia. Younger generations, in particular, turned an increasingly critical eye to the “spiritual arm of conquest” and the entrenched Christian institutions facilitating the continued marginalization of Aboriginal people in the province. This atmosphere, coupled with the penetration of Aboriginal communities by a rising variety of competing religious organizations, undoubtedly contributed to the “guarded” reactions sometimes met by Bahá'í teachers.⁶³ Aboriginal Christians may similarly have opposed, or not identified

⁵⁹ Cited in *CBN*, no.170 (March 1964), 2. The statement to which Dorothy was referring was likely, in fact, that of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: “As ye have faith so shall your powers and blessings be.” Cited in Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh*, vol.4 (Oxford: George Ronald, 1987), 217.

⁶⁰ Neylan, *The Heavens Are Changing*, 16.

⁶¹ Bennett interview; PIB Records; *BN*, no.94 (Nov 1957), 5; *CBN*, nos.185 (June 1965), 3; 204 (Jan 1967), 2; 298 (Dec1976), 9; *Bulletin*, no.6 (Feb 1979), 5; Sawin, “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” 174. Such discretion and observation of Aboriginal custom persists within contemporary Bahá'í teaching efforts. See, for example, Myra McGregor, interview with the author, 30 June 2004, Cultus Lake.

⁶² On heightened religious competition see footnote 7, Introduction, 5. For references to elders' interest in the Faith see Bennett interview; Jack Bastow interview; Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interview; PIB Records; Letter from Fletcher Bennett to Baha'i Friends, 30 Nov 1974; Letter from Fletcher Bennett to Bahai Friends, 4 April 1975; Sawin, “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” 139, 145.

⁶³ On the context of politicization see, for example, Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began*, 330-

with, the Bahá'ís' predominant appeal to traditional elements of Aboriginal spirituality.⁶⁴ Not surprisingly, it was from non-Aboriginal Christian clerics opposed to the presence of alternative denominations within Aboriginal communities that Bahá'í teachers faced the most overt and vocal resistance.⁶⁵

Entry (and Exit) by Troops: Direct Teaching

While the aim of teaching the Bahá'í Faith to Aboriginal people may have been to confirm, not convert, numeric and spatial target goals for Aboriginal declarations were nevertheless established by the international and Canadian Bahá'í administrations.⁶⁶ During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Bahá'í community of British Columbia consciously set about realizing these objectives. Through this period, Bahá'ís participated in controversial experiments in more systematic and direct forms of teaching

335; Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*; Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 202-205. On rising generational divisions within Aboriginal communities see H.R. Hays, *Children of the Raven: The Seven Indian Nations of the Northwest Coast* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1975), 233; Joan Ryan, *Wall of Words: The Betrayal of the Urban Indian* (Toronto: Peter Martin, 1978), xvi; James Treat, *Around the Sacred Fire: Native Religious Activism in the Red Power Era: A Narrative Map of the Indian Ecumenical Conference* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 38, 62, 201-202, 208-209, 218, 226, 274. On the guarded reactions of some Aboriginal people to the Bahá'í Faith see Letter from Fletcher Bennett to Baha'í Friends, 30 Nov 1974; Letter from Fletcher Bennett to Bahai Friends, 4 April 1975.

⁶⁴ While Bahá'í teaching efforts were cast predominantly in terms of traditional Aboriginal spirituality, Bahá'í teachers and pioneers were nevertheless aware of the entrenched Christian element within Aboriginal communities. See "Indians of Canada: A Guide for Teaching"; Bennett papers; Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interview. While the vast majority of teaching aids such as the pamphlet "God Speaks Again" presented the Bahá'í Faith through its relation to such traditional elements as Aboriginal prophecy, the booklet "Baha'í Faith: The Spirit Way," introduced in 1973, was designed to lead "[the] seeker through Indian and Christian ways to [the] Bahá'í way." *CBN*, no.264 (Jan 1973), 10. See also *BN*, no.120 (Jan 1960), 4; *CBN*, no.230 (June 1969), 10; *BC*, no.304 (June, 1977), 12; "Bahá'í Faith: The Spirit Way," Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, n.d. (1973?). For other Aboriginal-specific teaching aids see "A Message to the Indians," Toronto: National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Canada, n.d.; Audrie Reynolds, "A Mighty River: Selections from the Bahá'í Writings," Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1977. Christianity was, of course, an "authentic native experience"; Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, 26.

⁶⁵ *BN*, no.67 (Aug 1955), 4; *BC* 6, no.2 (June-Sept 1984), 47; PIB Records; Raudger Nygaard interview; Jack Bastow interview; Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interview; Linda Loft Pappenberger interview. For discussion of parallel trends in the Yukon see Sawin, "Native Conversion, Native Identity," 12, 99-101, 150.

⁶⁶ For an outline of these plans see Appendix 1 in Pemberton-Piggot, "The Bahá'í Faith in Alberta," 96-97.

that resulted in both higher numbers of Aboriginal declarations and great challenges in consolidation.

Although locally grounded, Bahá'ís in British Columbia have remained at all points intimately connected to the broader national and international Bahá'í communities. The first experiment in direct teaching in the province, for example, was not an autonomous endeavour, but rather branched from the 1971-72 “Mass Proclamation” and “Massive Encounter” initiatives undertaken in Alaska and the Yukon.⁶⁷ These efforts sought to promote so-called “entry by troops” and included travel teaching trips and door-to-door visits by large teams of “foot-slogging soldiers of Bahá'u'lláh” and public programs during which Bahá'ís “really ‘laid it on heavy.’”⁶⁸ Spilling over the border to Northern British Columbia, these initiatives contributed in significant part to the 106 Aboriginal enrolments registered in the province between 1964 and 1973.⁶⁹

This pattern of cross-border collaboration was echoed during the closing years of the decade with the launch of direct teaching initiatives throughout the broader reaches of the province. Teams organized at the October 1978 North American Bahá'í Native Council in Yakima, Washington, set out for Vancouver Island and the Skeena region.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, Counsellor Dr. Hedi Ahmadiyyih trained Bahá'ís at a January 1979 meeting in Vancouver in the effective use of the illustrated teaching booklet, “The Bahá'í Faith,” developed in South America.⁷¹ The national Bahá'í newsletter quickly announced a

⁶⁷ *CBN*, no.245 (Dec 1970), 2-3, 6, 8.

⁶⁸ *CBN*, nos.255 (Dec 71-Jan 72), 6; 248 (Feb 1971), 6, respectively.

⁶⁹ For statistics see Slavin, email to the author. See also *CBN*, nos.250 (April 1971), 6; 257 (April 1972), 6-7; 271 (July 1973), 7; Bennett interview; “Massive Encounter Fact Sheet,” Jan 1972, Bennett papers; Teaching report, Jan 1972 “Army of Light” proclamation initiative on the Queen Charlotte Islands, Bennett papers.

⁷⁰ *Bulletin*, nos.1 (Sept 1978), 2; 4 (Dec 1978), 1, 4.

⁷¹ *Bulletin*, nos.5 (Jan 1979), 4; 6 (Feb 1979), 3, 5, 15; Jack Bastow interview; Gretchen Jordan-Bastow

“Wave of Victories on [the] West Coast”; localities were further opened to the Faith in the Skeena, Okanagan, Cariboo, Kootenay, and Fraser Valley regions.⁷² This flurry of teaching activity accompanying the waning months of the Five Year Plan (1974-1979) is said to have opened 194 Aboriginal localities to the Faith and resulted in the establishment of Local Spiritual Assemblies (LSAs) on the Ahousat, Gold River, Dead Man’s Creek, and Stone Reserves; 337 Aboriginal declarations were logged for the period of the Plan as a whole.⁷³

Although successful in terms of numbers of declarations, the direct teaching method proved contentious within the contemporary Bahá’í community. The principles and aims underlying such endeavours remained consistent with those during the friendship-building period, however, some Bahá’ís felt that the method itself betrayed the organic nature of Bahá’í teaching characteristically represented in such instruments as the fireside. Non-Aboriginal Bahá’ís Patrick and Sandra Slobodian, for example, shared such concerns. Although they lived in Alberta at the time, their experiences nevertheless speak to experiments in direct teaching undertaken throughout Canada as a whole. As Patrick reflects:

the way that we did it back then was ... go to the reserves, right? And teach. And sign up. And people would sign up and then you got your [Local Spiritual] Assembly. And you go to them and say, you know, “elect your Assembly.” And then you leave and people say, “Holy, geez, what was that all about?” But, I was involved in those, Sandy was as well,

interview. The application of teaching methods and materials from alternative fields of Bahá’í teaching activity was a common pattern within the Canadian Bahá’í community. See, for example, *CBN*, nos.203 (Dec 1966), 5; 254 (Oct-Nov 1971), 14; 208 (Oct 1975), 12; *Bulletin*, no.4 (Dec 1978), 1.

⁷² *Bulletin*, no.3 (Nov 1978), 4. The expression “localities opened to the Faith” is applied to all locations visited by Bahá’í teachers and pioneers and does not necessarily denote declarations in the Faith.

⁷³ *BC 2*, no.1 (May 1979), 8-9. For statistics see Slavin, email to the author. Such bursts of intensive teaching activity towards the close of temporal plans of action were, and remain, a common pattern throughout the Canadian Bahá’í community as a whole. See, for example, Verge, *Angus: From the Heart*, 80-90, 219-222; Pemberton-Piggot, “The Bahá’í Faith in Alberta,” 46; Irwin, “Early Native Teaching”; John Sargent conversation.

and they were quite exciting because there was a real, you know, when you focus like that there's a real passion. And you just kind of, you know, it's simple then, right?, it's not complicated like real community development because you just kind of fly in and ... we had these teaching books, we'd kind of go through the teaching books, and they outline the basic principles of the Bahá'í Faith. So, you know, "Is this consistent with the way you feel and if so, if you'd just sign this card" and, you know, it was a bit manipulative, I think, in retrospect, but it was well-intentioned. And would have been fine had there been all of that follow-up. Anyways, that was that experience. And that happened all across Canada and, you know, lots of people were uncomfortable with it and there was this talk about "paper Assemblies" ... I know for myself personally and certainly there was a sense amongst many other people, that that was just not the way to do it.⁷⁴

These sentiments are echoed by his wife, Sandra, who explains:

we were trying to be obedient to the institution [the NSA], but it was so against our nature to just go to people who we had no connection, no heart connection with. And I continue to have that hesitation. I mean, how can I, I can't, I have to have a heart connection with someone before I can exchange anything. Not teach anyone anything, just exchange.⁷⁵

Over two decades later, experiments in direct teaching remain a source of contention, as these reflections make clear.⁷⁶

Bahá'ís were not alone in their discomfort with direct teaching. The more invasive nature of such initiatives also generated resistance on the part of some Aboriginal people who were, in the words of a Haida council spokesman, "sick and tired of people coming in to try and shove more religion down their throats."⁷⁷ However, while the technique of direct teaching did indeed possess more imperialist overtones than earlier teaching methods, the motifs of universalism and liberalism – principles that

⁷⁴ Interview.

⁷⁵ Interview.

⁷⁶ For more reflections on direct teaching see also John Sargent conversation; Bennett interview; Linda Loft Pappenberger interview; Verge, *Angus: From the Heart*, 219-222, 224, 226.

⁷⁷ Teaching report, Jan 1972 "Army of Light" proclamation initiative on the Queen Charlotte Islands. On resistance to the Bahá'í Faith more generally see also Bennett interview; John Sargent conversation; J.C. Lucas, interview with the author, 6 Oct 2004, Nanaimo; Steve Cook, conversation with the author, 31 July 2004, Alert Bay, British Columbia; Lida Synders Blok interview; Robert George interview.

stressed tolerance for all religions and promoted the Bahá'í Faith as the fulfilment of the millenarian expectations of all faith systems – continued to underpin these efforts and, it appears, attract new Aboriginal members.⁷⁸

While direct teaching activity succeeded in securing official target goals, it did not, as Patrick suggested, provide for the deepening of new members and resulted in profound challenges of consolidation. Follow-up visits with new Bahá'ís were constrained by “problems of cultural differences, physical distance, apathy and exhaustion” experienced by travel teachers and pioneers.⁷⁹ The experiential nature of entry requirements to the Faith, together with minimalist commitment ritual, no doubt contributed to Aboriginal enrolment and further complicated consolidation efforts.⁸⁰ In response to contemporary teaching developments in the Prairie region, the National Spiritual Assembly had, in 1958, officially relaxed entry requirements to the Faith for Aboriginal adherents.⁸¹ More important than intellectual study of scripture was assurance that “the heart of the applicant has been touched with the spirit of the Faith.”⁸² As for all new Bahá'ís, formal enrolment was achieved by signing a declaration card. These relaxed entry requirements, coupled with resource constraints and a lack of developed

⁷⁸ On the Bahá'í motifs of universalism and liberalism see Peter Smith, *The Babi and Bahá'í Religions: From Messianic Shi'ism to a World Religion* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 144-145.

⁷⁹ Pemberton-Piggot, “The Bahá'í Faith in Alberta,” 44.

⁸⁰ On experiential entry requirements see Smith, *The Babi and Baha'i Religions*, 139-140; Hatcher and Martin, *The Bahá'í Faith*, 154. On the concept of commitment ritual see Lewis Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 128. For the Yukon context see Sawin, “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” 102-103.

⁸¹ Irwin, “Early Native Teaching,” 5; Verge, *Angus: From the Heart*, 61. Not all non-Aboriginal Bahá'ís in Canada embraced this shift towards a more holistic experiential declaration motif; indeed, many were uncomfortable with the move away from intellectual proscriptions demanding rigorous scriptural engagement and were unsettled by the new multicultural demographic in the Faith. See Verge, *Angus: From the Heart*, 162; Bennett interview.

⁸² *CBN*, no.144 (Jan 1962), 2. See also *CBN*, no.130 (Nov 1960),4; 154 (Nov.1962), 3; 198 (July 1966), 5; *Bulletin*, nos.2 (Oct 1978), 15; 5 (Jan 1979), 5; “Bahá'í Faith: The Spirit Way,” 29; “Indians of Canada: A Guide for Teaching”; Pemberton-Piggot, “The Bahá'í Faith in Alberta,” 39.

deepening procedure,⁸³ likely generated “adhesive” forms of adherence on the part of Aboriginal Bahá’ís.⁸⁴ As the Bahá’í community struggled to provide sustained guidance and instruction to new members, Bahá’í principles were liked affixed, rather than fully integrated, to preexisting spiritual systems, be they “traditionally” Aboriginal, Christian, or some variant therein. Such constraints, in the end, constricted the ability of the vast majority of Aboriginal Bahá’ís in the province to translate an “adhesive adherence” into more practical and lasting forms of observance and activity.⁸⁵

The experience of Quw’utsun’ Bahá’í Robert George throws such challenges into particularly sharp relief. Robert was informally exposed to the Faith as a child through the friendship of his parents, Ben and Violet George, with Fletcher and Elinor Bennett. It was at the height of direct teaching activity in the province in January 1979, however, that he formally declared as a Bahá’í.⁸⁶ As Robert reflects, he returned home one day to find his parents conversing with a number of Bahá’ís, including Kwakwaka’wakw member Debbie Bell:

I was only nineteen then, and I walked in the door and they were sittin’ there talkin’ with Dad and Mom and they started talkin’ about the Faith and Mom and Dad said they were content with what they had, with our culture, and I just sat down and said, “I’ll become a Bahá’í.” So I signed

⁸³ Bennett interview; John Sargent conversation. While “deepening institutes” were held for new Aboriginal members in some regions, these efforts were not far-enough reaching or long-enough lasting to provide for wide scale and permanent consolidation. See “Massive Encounter Fact Sheet,” Jan 1972, Bennett papers; *BC 2*, no.3 (July-Aug 1979), 16.

⁸⁴ On the concept of adhesion see Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, 5 and 94; Derryl MacLean, *Religion and Society in Arab Sind*, (New York: E.J. Brill, 1989), 36, 81, 149-50, 151-152; William C. Shepherd, “Conversion and Adhesion,” in Harry M. Johnson, ed., *Religious Change and Continuity* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1979), 251-263.

⁸⁵ See John Sargent conversation; Jim Kelly interview; Bennett interview. Challenges in consolidation were not unique to the field of Aboriginal Bahá’í teaching. Juan Cole, for example, similarly highlights complications following the entry of vast numbers of African Americans into the Faith in the Southern United States during the early 1970s. Juan Cole, “The Bahá’í Faith in America as Panopticon, 1963-1997,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37, no.2 (1998): 236-237.

⁸⁶ *Bulletin*, no.5 (Jan 1979), 12.

the paper, then I left. And then I never ever did see them for years after that.

Robert explains that it was not until approximately eight years later, while working with a woman named Charlene Antonic at the Friendship Centre in Duncan, that he came into further contact with the Faith:

I guess we were working together for about a year, I happened to see somethin' on her desk that was relating to that, the Faith and I said, "Oh, you're a Bahá'í too?" She says, "Yeah." I said, "I'm a Bahá'í too." Then she says, "What?!" She got all excited. She made sure that I was a Bahá'í. I said, "Yeah. I've been a Bahá'í for a number of years." She just asked me how it went. I said, "Well, I haven't seen any Bahá'ís around for years. They just came in and were gone, kind of." And I didn't really pursue any of the firesides ... And I think I just took it as it was another religion comin' in to the reserve, not gonna do anything. So that's how I took that Faith, I said, "Oh well, it's just another religion trying to convert Indians, eh?" So that's kind of how I saw it. So I didn't take it too seriously. So it was through Charlene that I really started to learn a bit more about it. Realized that it's true.⁸⁷

In addition to highlighting the contemporary atmosphere of religious competition characterizing life on Aboriginal reserves, Robert speaks also to profound challenges in consolidating Aboriginal Bahá'í membership. Although his words suggest that he considered himself an active Bahá'í upon meeting Charlene, this is perhaps more a function of memory and subsequent reflection than contemporary reality. Robert enrolled in the Bahá'í Faith on a whim and, prior to meeting Charlene, had little to no opportunity for deepening in the Faith. In this, he was undoubtedly not alone.

Robert's experience underscores the vitality of strong social networks and support systems to the ability of Aboriginal Bahá'í declarants to maintain continued activity in the Faith.⁸⁸ Through the guidance and support of Charlene and her husband Gary and, in

⁸⁷ Interview.

⁸⁸ Carolyn Sawin argues that such ties have similarly played a central role within Aboriginal Bahá'í declaration and activity in the Yukon. See "Native Conversion, Native Identity," 25-27. See also Verge,

more recent years, Fletcher and Elinor Bennett, Robert has come to explore Bahá'í history and theology in further depth. His parents, who Robert believes “are really Bahá'ís inside,” have also served as key inspirations, particularly within the context of their reserve, and even his nuclear family, where sentiments of apprehension, suspicion, and hostility towards outside religious groups are common.⁸⁹

Robert is, in fact, somewhat anomalous in his status as an isolated on-reserve adherent. As opposed to regions such as the Yukon where the vast majority of Aboriginal members hail from a single extended family group, the British Columbian Aboriginal Bahá'í community remains largely composed of scattered individuals.⁹⁰ Of those, it appears to have been those Aboriginal Bahá'ís living off-reserve who became, and remained, most active in the Faith.⁹¹ While entrenched prejudices and stereotypes concerning Aboriginal people figured within urban Bahá'í communities such as that of Vancouver, residence in areas of more concentrated Bahá'í population nevertheless provided more sustained opportunities for contact and deepening.⁹² Enrolment in a minority or “deviant” religion such as the Bahá'í Faith demanded a marked sense of stepping outside of the mainstream for all declarants, regardless of ethnicity; the off-reserve context may also have diluted such pressure for Aboriginal people.⁹³ In addition,

Angus: From the Heart, for similar discussion within the Prairie context.

⁸⁹ Interview. On persecution that Robert has faced within the Quw'utsun' community as a result of his Bahá'í beliefs see interview. For further references to the vitality of strong support systems to Aboriginal consolidation and deepening see Bennett interview; J.C. Lucas interview; Carol Anne Hilton, interview with the author, 7 Oct 2004, Nanaimo; Chris Cook Jr., interview with the author, 7 June 2004, West Vancouver; Sonny Voyageur, interview with the author, 12 Nov 2004, North Vancouver.

⁹⁰ On the Yukon context see Carolyn Sawin, “Native Identity, Native Conversion.”

⁹¹ Of the nine Aboriginal Bahá'ís that I interviewed, for example, six live off-reserve. Consider also the experiences of Dorothy Maquabeak Francis and Thomas Anaquod, discussed above.

⁹² Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interview; Jack Bastow interview; John Sargent conversation; Pemberton-Piggot, “The Bahá'í Faith in Alberta,” 72; Horton, “Beyond Red Power,” 10.

⁹³ On the sense of stepping outside of the mainstream that enrolment in the Bahá'í Faith demanded see Jim Kelly interview; Patrick Slobodian interview; Bennett interview; Letter from Fletcher Bennett to Elinor

the Bahá'í Faith may have served, for off-reserve residents, as a legitimate vehicle through which to connect with Aboriginal forms of spirituality, a medium that on-reserve occupants may not have required.⁹⁴

Culture and Consolidation: The Cariboo

The significance of Aboriginal spiritual forms to Bahá'í teaching is dramatically illustrated within the Cariboo context.⁹⁵ While substantial numbers of Aboriginal people declared in this region during the late 1970s and early 1980s, these initiatives were accompanied by localized and culturally-specific teaching and consolidation efforts that fostered a level of connection and deepening absent in many regions of the province. However, these efforts, too, ultimately proved relatively short-lived, reinforcing once more the depth of challenges in consolidation faced by the Bahá'í community.

One major factor distinguishing direct teaching activity in the Cariboo from that in many other regions was its direction by local residents. Travel teaching teams from Alaska and South Carolina did assist with intensive campaigns at the close of the Five Year Plan, however, teaching work in the region was spearheaded by local Ashcroft pioneers, non-Aboriginal Bahá'ís Jack Bastow and Gretchen Jordan-Bastow.⁹⁶ Through his work as a high school teacher and frequent visitor to area reserves, Jack was, by the late 1970s, deeply entrenched within local Aboriginal communities. Encouraged by her close friend and mentor Dorothy Maquabeak Francis, Gretchen began to foster similar

Bennett, 20 July 1973; Letter from Fletcher Bennett to Bahai Friends, 4 April 1975; Letter from Fletcher Bennett to Bahai Friends, 30 Nov 1975; Peggy Ross, Report.

⁹⁴ Consider, for example, the experiences of Sonny Voyageur, Myra McGregor, and Carol Anne Hilton. See interviews and discussion in Chapter Two.

⁹⁵ Gretchen Jordan-Bastow defines this region as stretching from “Kamloops, to the Okanagan, to Williams Lake”; interview.

⁹⁶ Jack Bastow and Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interviews.

links following her and Jack's marriage in 1976. Although they were trained in and employed the same direct teaching methods and materials applied province-wide, the Bastows' associations with local Aboriginal communities allowed for deeper and more personal connection and greater follow-up opportunities than in many other British Columbian locations.⁹⁷

Both Jack and Gretchen underscore the vitality of spiritual preparedness and connection to the outcome of direct teaching work. As Jack explains:

We found early on that, in order to be effective you had to be spiritually prepared. So we would spend an hour in the morning praying, reading the Writings, getting ourselves in the right frame of mind to go out and share the Faith. If we failed to do that, we had no results. It's only when the team went out that was spiritually motivated and prepared that they invariably came back with new believers from the Native community.⁹⁸

Gretchen elaborates, explaining that:

we had nothing to do with it. But how could anyone know the greatest mystery of the age, they had to find out somehow. And so we were just the vehicles for saying, "Here, there's a new messenger of God for this age" ... And we found a tremendous openness, because of the relationship of the principles of the Faith to traditional ways of doing things in the Native community. And because of the recognition and respect that we showed to that culture. And the appreciation and the understanding that they had their own prophets, for millennia. They had their own prophets and had been guided with really deep spiritual teachings. So there was a natural kind of sense of coming together.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Jack Bastow and Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interviews.

⁹⁸ Interview. For references to the importance of prayer within other teaching contexts in British Columbia see *BN*, nos.93 (Oct 1957), insert; 124 (May 1960), 4; *CBN*, nos.170 (March 1964), 2; 200 (Sept 1966), 2; 286 (July 1957), 5; 291 (Feb 1976), 2; 296 (Sept-Oct 1976), 1; 298 (Dec 1976), 6; 293 (April-May 1976), 4; 299 (Jan 1977), 2; *BC*, nos.302 (April 1977), 8; 309 (Nov 1977), 2; Linda Loft Pappenberger interview, 41-42; Jim Kelly interview; Bennett interview.

⁹⁹ Interview.

Speaking of Aboriginal declarations in the Faith, Gretchen underscores that such spiritual choices had to do not with “money or status or class or race,” but “with [an] individual’s will and what they choose.”¹⁰⁰

Colonial legacies, in addition to individual will, also influenced Aboriginal reactions to the Bahá’í Faith. In reflecting upon Aboriginal enrolments in the Cariboo, for example, Jack himself determined that:

one reason first of all is that most Natives at that time felt they had nothing to lose, I mean, religion could do no more harm to them than it had already. But also, they sensed in the Faith a very pure, very clean, sort of approach to spirituality, which they readily accepted. I mean, they didn’t feel it could do any harm, it might do some good.¹⁰¹

Citing as an example one of the Cariboo reserves where a Bahá’í LSA was established, Jack explains that at the time direct teaching initiatives were being launched, “this was considered the most terrible reserve in the area. Murders frequently happened, abuse, you know, everything, you name it. Social workers are terrified to go in there, even the police tried to avoid it.” These conditions, he notes, derived in large part from the recent actions of the Catholic Church. Requiring “through economic necessity to pull the [local] priest,” Jack explains that “they told the people ... the priest was leaving because they were bad people. They had not lived up to their religious obligations and, therefore, the church was pulling the plug.” “Can you imagine,” he asks, “what that did to their sense of worth?”¹⁰² In light of such conditions, a number of residents turned a welcome ear to

¹⁰⁰ Interview.

¹⁰¹ Interview.

¹⁰² Interview. On the contemporary Christian missionary context see Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 199-201.

the Bahá'í message of community development and pride in Aboriginal heritage; approximately twenty-five people from the reserve declared.¹⁰³

Not all communities in the Cariboo shared or necessarily maintained this “nothing to lose” attitude. Non-Aboriginal Bahá'í Lida Synders Blok, for example, encountered firm resentment on a reserve where an LSA had been formed in 1981, sentiments which likely stemmed from similar colonial legacies and contemporary social conditions as those outlined by Jack.¹⁰⁴ Reactions to the Bahá'í Faith also varied within as well as between Aboriginal communities. Speaking of his experiences teaching on the Pavilion Reserve, Jack notes that the economic standing of community members influenced their reactions to the Faith. Families with members securing a “good industrial wage” at the nearby lime plant, he explains, were “totally uninterested,” while “the poor houses on the reserve, the people who hadn't got a job at the lime plant, who weren't benefiting economically and were living at the subsistence level were very open to the Faith, very willing to listen, very willing to become Bahá'ís.”¹⁰⁵ The Bahá'í Faith offered little material advantage to such seekers; Bahá'ís both lacked the resources to supply such support and were discouraged from serving a charity role.¹⁰⁶ The more marginalized members of this community, however, may nevertheless have interpreted association

¹⁰³ Jack Bastow interview; *BC* 2, no.1 (May 1979), 8.

¹⁰⁴ On the formation of this LSA see *BC* 3, no.4 (May-June 1981), 27. On the experiences of Lida Snyders Blok see interview. On broader colonial legacies and contemporary conditions within Aboriginal communities see George Manuel and Michael Posluns, *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1974); Howard Adams, *Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1989); Ponting and Gibbins, *Out of Irrelevance*; Andrew Siggner and Chantal Locatelli, “An Overview of Demographic, Social and Economic Conditions Among British Columbia's Registered Indian Population,” Research Branch, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program, 20 Oct 1980; W.T. Stanbury, “The Social and Economic Conditions of Indian Families in British Columbia,” Nov 1974.

¹⁰⁵ Interview.

¹⁰⁶ Jack Bastow interview; “Indians of Canada: A Guide for Teaching”; *CBN*, no.169 (Feb 1964), 4; *BC* 7, no.5 (Nov 1985), 10.

with the Bahá'í Faith as a potential alternative path to material improvement.¹⁰⁷ It is difficult to definitively assess to what extent this pattern extended throughout the rest of British Columbia. Kirk Dombrowski, however, has documented a parallel trend in the case of Tlingit Pentecostal conversion in Alaska, suggesting that power dynamics internal to Aboriginal communities do much to shape reactions to new religious movements.¹⁰⁸

Overall, intensive teaching activity in the Cariboo resulted in the establishment of four Aboriginal LSAs and the opening of approximately fifty Aboriginal localities in the region between 1979 and 1981.¹⁰⁹ As throughout the rest of the province, the challenge quickly became that of consolidation. Gretchen explains that there were but approximately fifteen well-deepened members of the Faith in the Cariboo at this time. Once the direct teaching project was over, she explains, this “little handful of Bahá'ís was left trying to figure out how we were going to hold this all together.”¹¹⁰ The Bastows hosted weekly firesides, maintained an “open house policy,” and supported initiatives such as children’s classes on reserves; these efforts, however, were “really stretched.”¹¹¹ Well aware that, in Gretchen’s words, “you cannot develop any kind of community unless there’s participation in everyone’s real life,” this small cadre of active Bahá'ís, which included both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members, struggled to foster reciprocal participation between local Aboriginal and Bahá'í communities.¹¹²

Out of such struggle emerged the idea of Unity Gatherings, a locally-developed,

¹⁰⁷ This is not, of course, to suggest that these declarants may not also have sincerely identified with the Bahá'í teachings. See Jack Bastow interview.

¹⁰⁸ *Against Culture*, 7, 15, 120, 139, 146.

¹⁰⁹ These LSAs were located on the Deadman’s Creek, Bonaparte, Lytton, and Seton Lake Reserves. See Jack Bastow interview; *BC* 2, nos.1 (May 1979), 8; 3, no.4 (May-June 1981), 27.

¹¹⁰ Interview.

¹¹¹ Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interview.

¹¹² Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interview. On Aboriginal participation in teaching work in the Cariboo see, for example, *BC* 12, nos.6 (Nov-Dec 1979), 5; 6, no.4 (Feb-March 1985), 25.

culturally-specific teaching, consolidation, and deepening mechanism aimed to cultivate heightened awareness and connection with local Aboriginal populations. Held on reserves throughout the Cariboo over a two-year period during the early 1980s, Gretchen explains that the weekend-long events consisted of “two or three days of eating together, praying together, talking, and studying the [Bahá’í] Writings, studying spirituality.”¹¹³ Sponsored by the Bahá’ís of the Cariboo, the events were open to all. Central to these gatherings were Aboriginal forms of worship, including prayer and drum circles and pipe ceremonies, as well as Aboriginal Bahá’í speakers who shared of the Faith and “its relation to Native spirituality and Native traditions.”¹¹⁴ Aboriginal Bahá’ís Lee Brown, Dorothy Maquabeak Francis, Phil Lane Jr., and Noni Nelson were all vital participants.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interview. While there were Unity Gatherings held beyond 1981-1983, this was the period of most concentrated activity. See also Jack Bastow interview; *BC* 3, nos.1 (Dec 1980-Jan 1981), 16; 3, no.4 (May-June 1981); 4, no.6 (Jan-Feb 1983), 47; 5, no.1 (March-April 1983), 33; 5, no.3 (July-Aug 1983), 38; 6, no.3 (Oct 1984-Jan 1985), 77; 7, no.2 (June-July 1985), 58.

¹¹⁴ Jack Bastow interview. See footnote 113 above.

¹¹⁵ Jack Bastow interview; Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interview; *BC* 5, no.1 (March-April 1983), 23 and 33; 5, no.3 (July-Aug 1983), 38.

Figure 2: Drum Circle at a 1981 Unity Gathering held on the Thunderbird Reserve near Lillooet.



© Gretchen Jordan-Bastow, by permission.

While they were conceived primarily to aid consolidation efforts, Unity Gatherings also sparked further Aboriginal declarations. As in other regions of the province, it was, in particular, elders and medicine people who enrolled. Jack notes that such declarations “firmed up the respect that the Faith had” and helped facilitate Aboriginal deepening, as “these are the people who guide others,” “who have to share by their very natures.”¹¹⁶ The culturally-specific character of such gatherings and the emphasis upon prayer rather than forceful proselytization no doubt helped generate such positive responses. As Gretchen explains, prayer and the drum “became the centre of everything we did”; “[e]verything else was kind of peripheral to that.”¹¹⁷ The highlight of this period of activity, Jack explains, came for him and Gretchen with the visit of Hand

¹¹⁶ Interview. See also Jack Bastow interview; Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interview; *BC 3*, no.1 (Dec 1980-Jan 1981), 16.

¹¹⁷ Interview.

of the Cause Rúhíyyih Khánum, wife of Shoghi Effendi, to the Thunderbird Reserve near Lillooet in 1981.¹¹⁸

Figure 3: Prayer Circle at a 1981 Unity Gathering held on the Thunderbird Reserve near Lillooet.



© Gretchen Jordan-Bastow, by permission.

The period of Unity Gathering activity was a powerful one, however, Gretchen explains that “it was a time of change and a time of transition and it weighed very heavily

¹¹⁸ Interview. See also *BC* 5, no.3 (July-Aug 1983), 38. Visits and messages sent by prominent Bahá’í figures such as Khánum served as a central technique within the field of Aboriginal teaching across Canada. See, for example, *BN*, nos.103 (Aug 1958), 8; 119 (Dec 1959), 6-7; *CBN*, nos.231 (July 1969), 8; 244 (Nov 1970), 1; *Bulletin*, no.6 (Feb 1979), 15; footnote 20 above. Khánum, for her part, held a particular interest in the Aboriginal people of the Americas, as is reflected by her numerous visits to Aboriginal communities stretching from the Arctic to South America as well as specific messages such as her 1961 “Promised Letter” and 1969 “Message to the Indian and Eskimo Bahá’ís of the Western Hemisphere.” Jack notes that in the case of her visit to the Cariboo, she agreed to come only “if she was invited by any of the chiefs on a reserve,” not the Bahá’ís (interview). For a sampling of the voluminous references to Khánum’s Aboriginal teaching work see *BN*, nos.125 (July 1960), 5; 132 (Jan 1961), insert (“The Promised Letter”); 137 (June 1961), 7; ‘Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, “Message to the Indian and Eskimo Bahá’ís of the Western Hemisphere,” Toronto: Bahá’í Canada Publications, Aug 1969 (reprinted by the Native American Bahá’í Institute, 2000); *CBN*, no.241 (July-Aug 1970), 1; *BC* 5, nos.1 (March-April 1983), 3; 5, no.3 (July-Aug 1983), 38; 8, no.7 (Sept 1986), 1, 9-14, 16-17; 10, no.6 (Aug 1988), 3. For the reflections of two Aboriginal Bahá’ís on the significance of Rúhíyyih Khánum see Carol Anne Hilton interview; Linda Loft Pappenberger interview.

on my heart, how to fully educate these brand new Bahá'ís.”¹¹⁹ After much reflection, she made the decision to return to art school and complete a major in film, a medium through which she hoped to share the Bahá'í message with a broader audience than that she was able to reach through more conventional forms of teaching. This move eventually brought the Bastow family to Vancouver, where they continue with subtle forms of urban outreach. While Gretchen notes that there were other Bahá'ís in the Cariboo who carried on with Aboriginal consolidation efforts, Jack explains that “a lot of the impetus” was lost following their move to the city.¹²⁰

As elsewhere in the province, it is difficult to definitively determine the long-range impact of Cariboo teaching efforts. Jack explains that:

even though many of them [Aboriginal Bahá'ís] have lost contact, like we don't have the personnel and the manpower to go to these reserves, nevertheless, they regularly get our magazine, *Bahá'í Canada*, and even Native groups who've been brought into the Faith twenty years ago and lost contact, when people have gone in there and asked, you know, “Are you still Bahá'ís?” “Oh yeah, we're still Bahá'ís,” so they still accept and believe in it and that's important 'cause the only way all these things can happen is if gradually, enough people in the world begin to accept this as the ideal.¹²¹

While Aboriginal people in the Cariboo may continue to accept overarching Bahá'í principles, few of those who declared during the late 1970s and early 1980s remain active in the Faith.¹²² This downturn in participation suggests that while subtle, the presence of active well-deepened Bahá'ís such as the Bastows was nevertheless essential to the establishment of functioning Aboriginal Bahá'í communities.

¹¹⁹ Interview.

¹²⁰ Interview; Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interview.

¹²¹ Interview. See also Lida Synders Blok interview on this issue.

¹²² Jack Bastow notes that the community of Lytton maintains an LSA and that there are “some really deepened dedicated Bahá'ís there” (interview).

Resistance and Reception: Alert Bay

The importance of sustained contact to the development of active Bahá'í communities is further highlighted in the case of Alert Bay. Unlike the Cariboo, however, which witnessed relatively large numbers of official declarations in the early 1980s, few Aboriginal people enrolled in the Bahá'í Faith in Alert Bay during this period. It is only in subsequent decades, through continued contact precipitated by pioneers Patrick and Sandra Slobodian, that a small but dynamic Aboriginal Bahá'í community has emerged. The experiences of the Slobodians speak poignantly not only to questions of contact and consolidation, but also to the conditions that worked simultaneously to foster Aboriginal interest in and resistance towards the Bahá'í Faith.

Patrick and Sandra arrived in Alert Bay, located off the northeastern tip of Vancouver Island, with their young children in 1982. Recently graduated from medical school and employed as the town's new physician, Patrick had fulfilled his goal of securing a career that would grant he and his family the flexibility to serve as Bahá'í pioneers.¹²³ Although the Bahá'í Faith was first introduced to Alert Bay by Dorothy Francis, Fletcher Bennett, and Connie Demers in the late 1960s, it was the Slobodians who initiated the more sustained contact with the community that persists to this day.¹²⁴ As pioneers, the couple moved to Alert Bay for the explicit purpose of expanding the

¹²³ Patrick and Sandra Slobodian interview. The pursuit of employment well-suited to pioneering is a strategy that was encouraged by the international and national Bahá'í administrations from the time of the earliest calls for Aboriginal teaching. See, for example, *CBN*, nos.10 (May 1949), 8; 12 (March 1950), 11; 16 (Nov 1950), 12; 17 (Jan 1951), 6-7; 18 (March 1951), 10; 24 (Dec 1951), 3-5; 51 (April, 1954), 5; 60 (Jan 1955), 3; 93 (Oct 1957), 3; 114 (July 1959), 5.

¹²⁴ On early Bahá'í connections with Alert Bay see Introduction, 1; *CBN*, no.231 (July 1969), 3; PIB Records; Letter from Fletcher Bennett to Baha'i Friends, 30 Nov 1974; Letter from Fletcher Bennett to Bahai Friends, 4 April, 1975; Bennett interview.

reach of the Faith. As opposed to strict preaching and proselytization, however, their experiences were grounded in processes of relationship-building and cultural exchange.

The town of Alert Bay was composed, in the early 1980s, of a population of approximately nine hundred Kwakwaka'wakw people and six hundred non-Aboriginals of predominantly Euro-Canadian heritage.¹²⁵ Upon their arrival in the community, both Sandra and Patrick strove to engage beyond the “White End” of town alone.¹²⁶ As Sandra explains:

when we went to Alert Bay I can remember consciously thinking, you know, this island has got almost a dividing line, well, literally a dividing line. There's, on the left, of the ferry, is the reserve, and on the right is the town. And I didn't know that there is a lot of back and forth on that island. There's a lot of intermarriage and all of that, you know, it isn't black and white. But I remember thinking, “When I come out of my door, I want to go in that direction. I know I can find friends in the village, you know, who are like me, you know, moms with little kids. But I wanna be involved with people who live here, whose island this is.” So, because Pat's involvement as a doctor just, as a doctor you go right to the heart of a community, you really see everything. So, that naturally was going to pull him right to that level of where people would trust and share, you know, what's going on in their lives. For me, I had to do it really consciously. Take the kids to the school, visit, and go to birthday parties, and all the things you [do], down there and not in the town. So it was what I wanted but, at the same time, it was quite a challenge, to begin with. Because it was going against what would come very naturally. To be invited out with, you know, people in the village, it would always happen. But, it's what we wanted, was to build those bridges between ourselves and the First Nations community. So, that's just the way you do it, you know, you share your kids with them, you work in the kitchen together, pick berries, whatever you do.¹²⁷

Over a decade after the initial introduction of the Bahá'í Faith to Alert Bay in March 1969, the theme of friendship-building remained a prominent one.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Dara Culhane Speck, *An Error in Judgement: The Politics of Medical Care in an Indian-White Community* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987), 13.

¹²⁶ On the label “the White End” see Culhane Speck, *An Error in Judgement*, 65.

¹²⁷ Interview.

¹²⁸ See footnote 124 above. The theme of friendship building remains prominent within current Aboriginal

As other teachers and pioneers throughout the province, the Slobodians demonstrated a profound sensitivity towards the Bahá'í prohibition against proselytization. As Sandra explains, “we’re always very cautious because as Bahá’ís, it’s really against our faith to force our beliefs on anyone, and certainly to argue about religion is really contrary to our beliefs.”¹²⁹ In spite of this discretion, the Slobodians nevertheless encountered resistance towards their status as representatives of an outside religious group. Sandra recalls, for example, one evening when a community member she describes as being “pretty on-guard” during their time in Alert Bay came to their home and expressed bluntly:

“You know, we’ve had the church come here and they’ve just done nothing but bad things,” essentially, and just, “Don’t do this.” You know, seeing us as in the same mold, just like, “Don’t do this.” And others too, you know. Like, “No. Never mind. Don’t talk about that.” When we were there, there were, sure, there were people who actively, maybe because they were friends of ours and because they maybe saw that there would be, you know, trouble or unwelcomeness if we were to proclaim or to attempt to convert people ... And others, I think, made pretty clear, you know, “Not Bahá’í.”¹³⁰

In addition to opposition from individual community members, the Slobodians also faced moments of stark resistance from local church representatives.¹³¹

Given the long history of abuses committed in Alert Bay in the name of religion, it is not surprising that some Kwakwaka'wakw community members would have interpreted the Slobodians' actions, however subtle and well-intentioned, with such sentiments of suspicion and apprehension. Indeed, the legacies of Anglican programs of civilization, manifested in such campaigns as the suppression of the potlatch and the

Bahá'í teaching efforts. See, for example, Carol Anne Hilton interview.

¹²⁹ Interview. For the reflections of a local Aboriginal resident, who later declared in the Faith, on the profound discretion that the Slobodians displayed in discussing the religion, see Chris Cook Jr. interview.

¹³⁰ Interview.

¹³¹ Interview. See also *BC* 6, no.2 (June-Sept 1984), 47.

seizure of ceremonial goods and institutions such as St. Michael's Residential School, remained ripe well into the 1980s and beyond.¹³² The presence of alternative Christian denominations such as the Pentecostal Church, as well as the Bahá'ís themselves, may similarly have contributed to an atmosphere of religious competition ill-received by community members long-versed in the potentially divisive nature of religious allegiance.¹³³ As Patrick notes, his close friend Chris Cook Jr. explained to he and Sandra that Aboriginal residents of Alert Bay are not only “tired of words, they're wary, they're wary of words.”¹³⁴ Speaking to the need for discretion that he and Sandra have attempted to impress upon travel teaching groups prior to visits to Alert Bay, Patrick further stresses, “[t]his is a community and this is a community that wants to feel things, they don't want to hear things, and they're tired of people coming up and telling them things and they're distrustful of that.”¹³⁵

Not all Aboriginal reactions to the Bahá'í Faith manifested themselves in the form of overt resistance. Indeed, the most characteristic response appears to have been that of no response at all. As Patrick notes, “I can hardly think of a situation, an interaction where someone would have said, you know, ‘Tell me what the Bahá'í Faith is.’ You know, ‘What does the Bahá'í Faith believe.’ I mean it wouldn't surprise me if that never

¹³² See, for example, Hays, *Children of the Raven*; Culhane Speck, *An Error in Judgement*; Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1990).

¹³³ See Culhane Speck, *An Error in Judgement*, 231; Harry F. Wolcott, *A Kwakiutl Village and School*, updated ed. (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2003), 60-62. Kwakwaka'wakw Anglicans such as Jane and Stephen Cook, for example, played an active role in the suppression of the potlatch in Alert Bay and neighbouring villages. See Cole and Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People*, 117, 132, 139, 142, 161; Chris Cook Jr. interview. On religious division within Aboriginal communities more generally see Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 250; Treat, *Around the Sacred Fire*, 59.

¹³⁴ Interview.

¹³⁵ Interview. This sentiment is echoed by both Chris and Steve Cook, local 'Namgis residents who declared in the Bahá'í Faith during the 1990s. See Chris Cook Jr. interview and Steve Cook conversation.

happened the whole time that I was in Alert Bay.”¹³⁶ He recalls with a chuckle one particularly ineffective teaching effort planned in response to the visit of two Bahá’ís from Port Alberni. Thinking the two would make interesting guest speakers, the Slobodians organized for a local information meeting. As Patrick explains, “we put up some posters and we arranged for a talk in the council hall. And it was, ‘Everything you wanted to know about the Bahá’í Faith but were afraid to ask.’ Nobody came. Because nobody wanted to know anything. In reality.”¹³⁷ Bahá’í teaching, it appears, was subtle of necessity as well as principle.

Despite this general lack of interest, occasions for sharing the Faith nevertheless stemmed from the local relationships established by the Slobodians. Reflecting, for example, upon a Naw Rúz (Bahá’í New Year) celebration hosted by the family at the local band council hall, Patrick notes:

The place was full and it was decorated and it was fun, there was no alcohol and lots of First Nations friends came to that. And there was great music and I remember Harry Alfred danced the hamat’sa dance. And, you know, back then that was a pretty big deal, you’re not supposed to dance that dance outside of the big house. So it was a big deal that he did that, big honour and the most respected elders there ... they were there, so it was, really, I mean we talk about, and other people talk about that party, fifteen or twenty years later. Great party. And it was Naw Rúz, and, you know, big sign up there, “Happy Naw Rúz” and so it was Bahá’í. We had opportunities, not opportunities, I mean, these were just situations where what was meaningful to us we, it almost seems solicitous, I guess, to say we had the opportunity to share. I mean, it was just appropriate to share.

Sandra interjects, “It was our culture.” “It was our culture,” echoes Patrick.¹³⁸ As is clear from the respect accorded the Slobodians through the attendance and mutual cultural exchange that characterized this event, not to mention their ability to host such a

¹³⁶ Interview.

¹³⁷ Interview.

¹³⁸ Interview. Steve Cook also reflected upon this event during my conversation with him.

gathering in the band council hall, the couple did indeed foster deep and meaningful links with the local Aboriginal community.¹³⁹

Such links were undoubtedly shaped by the Slobodians' profound sense of discretion in sharing the Bahá'í Faith. However, they were also influenced by local conditions specific to Alert Bay. In addition to such overarching social and economic challenges as drug and alcohol abuse, poverty, and unemployment, the Aboriginal community of the early 1980s was still reeling from the 1979 death of eleven-year-old Renee Bernice Smith from a misdiagnosed case of appendicitis. This death, brought about through negligent treatment by the town's resident non-Aboriginal doctor, ignited vigorous political debate and division concerning issues of Aboriginal health care and autonomy within the community and beyond.¹⁴⁰ Sandra speaks to such conditions as she continues Patrick's discussion of the Naw Rúz party and the process of cultural exchange:

It was kind of like we were giving them back, you know, our culture was to have parties without alcohol, to have parties where adults and kids play together and men are there. You know, and there were not very many men. And I remember that was where Vera drummed. And she said, "You know that it's not supposed to be the women who are drumming." She said, "But until the men come back, we're gonna drum." I can remember that very clearly. Because I thought that was interesting, I didn't realize that it was all men that would drum. And now I see, it's only men at the drum. And at that point I didn't know that. So, yeah, it was, we were just being friends, you know, and sharing our culture. And I think that made such a difference because some of those people have come to us later and said that that was kind of a turn-around time. We seem to have come coincidentally with the community coming to kind of a position of activism, in a positive way. Not reacting. But they were saying, "Okay. Now, we're gonna get our own clinic. We're gonna have our school and we're gonna do this," you know, and what it was brought

¹³⁹ On the significance of the hosting of Bahá'í events on reserves more broadly see Linda Loft Pappenberger interview.

¹⁴⁰ Culhane Speck, *An Error in Judgement*. See also Wolcott, *A Kwakiutl Village and School*; W.G. Goldthorpe, "Report to the Minister, Indian Health and Health Care, Alert Bay, B.C.," April 1980.

about [by] was the death of a little girl. But we kind of came there very shortly after that and so I think there was a population of people, a lot of them women I think, who really wanted to have alternative ways of being, you know. And I think, well I sort of did that a lot, women and parties with no alcohol and I think that was a big thing for them. That small group of people.¹⁴¹

While Patrick's status as a non-Aboriginal doctor no doubt rendered him the subject of contemporary political debate, the conscious efforts he and Sandra made to engage with the Kwakwaka'wakw community on mutual terms seemingly meshed with local interests and helped to foster positive and lasting relations.¹⁴²

These relations, however, did not translate into immediate Aboriginal declarations in the Faith. Indeed, Patrick notes that while "many times the larger community around us participated," he underscores that this was, in essence, "our thing."¹⁴³ The Bahá'í community of Alert Bay during the 1980s was composed of but a handful of non-Aboriginal travel teachers and pioneers; it is only in subsequent decades that an equally small number of Aboriginal Bahá'ís have begun to augment such numbers.¹⁴⁴ Despite limited enrolments, however, Alert Bay has remained a major site of Aboriginal contact and activity for the Faith in British Columbia.¹⁴⁵ Such contact has been greatly facilitated by the Slobodians, who have maintained lasting relationships with the community since their departure in 1985. Had their goal been that of strict conversion, they would perhaps

¹⁴¹ Interview.

¹⁴² See Culhane Speck, *An Error in Judgement*, 271 for an apparent reference to (and positive evaluation of) Patrick's skills and approach as a doctor in Alert Bay. On the Slobodians' positive and lasting relationships with the Aboriginal community in Alert Bay see Bennett interview; Chris Cook Jr. interview; Chelsea Horton, Fieldnotes, Hanuse Potlatch, Alert Bay, May 2004; Chelsea Horton, Fieldnotes, Bahá'í Feast, Vancouver, April 2005.

¹⁴³ Interview.

¹⁴⁴ For example, it was not until 1991 that Patrick's good friend Chris Cook Jr. declared in the Faith. Chris's cousin, Steve Cook, declared in 1995. For discussion of Brian Maloney, another non-Aboriginal Bahá'í pioneer who spent time in Alert Bay during the 1980s, see Slobodian interview.

¹⁴⁵ See, for example, Slobodian interview; Chris Cook Jr. interview; Sonny Voyageur interview; Steve Cook conversation.

have abandoned such links long ago. Based as they are, however, in concepts of service, relationship-building, and cultural exchange, these processes persist to the present day.

Practice and Rhetoric

On the ground Bahá'í teaching experiences, from friendship-building to direct teaching and the Cariboo to Alert Bay, illustrate a clear distinction between rhetoric and its practical application. While stereotypic and essentialist images of Aboriginal people surfaced within official Bahá'í discourse, they did not manifest themselves in practice. Far from many missionaries of the colonial era as well as twentieth-century antimodernists of hobby, counterculture, and New Age, Bahá'ís engaged in the teaching task were committed to relationship-building and consultative processes with Aboriginal people. Grounded in concrete experience, they sought not to impose strict, pre-determined, and self-reflexive definitions of "Indianness," but rather to engage in cultural exchange and foster mutual understanding. While the prophecy of 'Abdu'l-Bahá underwrote teaching efforts throughout the province, teachers and pioneers displayed a profound sense of discretion concerning its application. To be sure, these Bahá'ís remained representatives of a religion ultimately intent upon disseminating, however subtly, its own version of truth to Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal people, it appears, were to play a significant role in the process of global spiritual enlightenment. They were to do so, however, on their own terms.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Let there be no misgivings as to the animating purpose of the world-wide Law of Bahá'u'lláh. Far from aiming at the subversion of the existing foundations of society, it seeks to broaden its basis, to remold its institutions in a manner consonant with the needs of an ever-changing world. It can conflict with no legitimate allegiances, nor can it undermine essential loyalties. Its purpose is neither to stifle the flame of a sane and intelligent patriotism in men's hearts, nor to abolish the system of national autonomy so essential if the evils of excessive centralization are to be avoided. It does not ignore, nor does it attempt to suppress, the diversity of ethnical origins, of climate, of history, of language and tradition, of thought and habit, that differentiate the peoples and nations of the world. It calls for a wider loyalty, for a larger aspiration than any that has animated the human race. It insists upon the subordination of national impulses and interests to the imperative claims of a unified world. It repudiates excessive centralization on one hand, and disclaims all attempts at uniformity on the other. Its watchword is unity in diversity such as 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself has explained.¹

Shoghi Effendi

The Bahá'í concept of unity in diversity powerfully shaped the experiences of Aboriginal Bahá'ís in British Columbia. It served as a potent source of empowerment, acknowledging the validity of Aboriginal traditions and encouraging Aboriginal members to explore their cultural heritage through deepening in the Bahá'í Faith itself. Listening to the manner in which Aboriginal members of the Faith frame their Bahá'í experiences reinforces the centrality of this principle. In highlighting the powerful role of dreams and

¹ Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Selected Letters* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1991), 41-42 (first published 1938). Portion also cited in Pauline Tuttle, "Beyond Feathers and Beads': Interlocking Narratives in the Music and Dance of Tokeya Inajin (Kevin Locke)," in Carter Jones Meyer and Diana Royer, eds., *Selling the Indian: Commercializing and Appropriating American Indian Cultures* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001), 107.

visions in shaping their experiences, Aboriginal Bahá'ís illustrate their own culturally-specific understandings of the Bahá'í Faith and, by extension, their own identities. However, while unity in diversity provided space for difference, the ideal of equality remained set within a broader social context, born of colonialism, that imbued non-Aboriginal Bahá'ís with greater social capital than their Aboriginal brethren. This context contributed to power dynamics characterized by overt racism as well as more subtle patterns of paternalism and cultural dominance. These have vastly complicated the practical and lasting realization of unity in diversity within the British Columbian Bahá'í community.

The Nuance of Change: Dreams and Visions

The experiences of Aboriginal Bahá'ís in British Columbia who overcame challenges in consolidation to become active members in the Faith underscore that entry into a new religion does not signal a strict and necessarily assimilative break from preexisting belief and identity. It represents, rather, an active negotiation, a process as opposed to event alone.² Although the term “conversion” has been applied to the Aboriginal Bahá'í context by historical actors and contemporary scholars alike, the experiences of Aboriginal members of the Faith in British Columbia suggest that the expression “religious change” is perhaps a more appropriate descriptor.³ As historian and

² See footnote 14, Introduction, 8.

³ The term “religious change” is Kenneth Morrison’s. See *The Solidarity of Kin: Ethnohistory, Religious Studies, and the Algonquian-French Religious Encounter* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 161. On the use of the term conversion within the Bahá'í context see, for example, *Bahá'í News* (hereafter *BN*), nos.92 (Sept 1957), 1; 103 (Aug 1958), 8; 113 (June 1959), 11; 132 (Jan 1961), insert (“The Promised Letter,” by Rúhíyyih Khánúm); 135 (April 1961), 5-6; *BN* special issue (June 1961), 1, 4; *Canadian Bahá'í News* (hereafter *CBN*) nos.154 (Nov 1962), 3; 172 (May 1964), 8; 188 (Sept 1965), 8; 245 (Dec 1970), 2; 289 (Nov 1975), 9; Margit Warburg, *Baha'i* (Utah: Signature Books, 2003). Although Carolyn Sawin notes in her doctoral dissertation that the concept conversion is in many ways problematic within the Bahá'í context, she nevertheless goes on to apply the term throughout. See, for example,

religious studies scholar Kenneth Morrison asserts, the concept of conversion is in many ways a “dehumanizing reification” that denies Aboriginal agency and assumes, in ethnocentric fashion, “a particular and singular outcome to religious encounter.”⁴ While recent scholars have come to counteract such entrenched analytic tendencies, advancing more nuanced treatments of the dialogic conversion process, the highly fluid nature of religious change witnessed amongst Aboriginal Bahá’ís nevertheless supports Morrison’s proposed semantic shift.⁵

Conversion is not the only commonly-deployed analytic construct inappropriate to the Bahá’í context. The concept of syncretism is similarly problematic. Illustrating creative processes of religious synthesis, the blending of “beliefs, symbols, rituals, and cultural expressions,” historians and anthropologists of alternative religious encounters have convincingly foregrounded significant instances of Aboriginal agency.⁶ While analysis of such syncretic processes has helped to destabilize entrenched narratives of victimization traditionally featured within the historiography on Christian missionization in Aboriginal North America, the Bahá’í case presents an alternative development.⁷

“Native Conversion, Native Identity: An Oral History of the Bahá’í Faith among First Nations People in the Southern Central Yukon Territory, Canada” (PhD dissertation, University of Washington, 2000), 6, 130, 177.

⁴ Morrison, *The Solidarity of Kin*, 161; see also 115.

⁵ For references to recent analyses of the discursive conversion process see footnote 15, Introduction, 9.

⁶ Susan Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), 15. For samples of such analyses see Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*; Michael E. Harkin, *The Heiltsuks: Dialogues of Culture and History on the Northwest Coast* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); James P. Ronda, “Generations of Faith: The Christian Indians of Martha’s Vineyard,” in Albert Hurtado and Peter Iverson, eds., *Major Problems in American Indian History* (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1994), 117-137; Kenneth Morrison, “Baptism and Alliance: The Symbolic Mediations of Religious Syncretism,” *Ethnohistory* 37 (1990): 416-437; Laura Peers, “‘The Guardian of All’: Jesuit Missionary and Salish Perceptions of the Virgin Mary,” in Jennifer S.H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert, eds., *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1996), 284-303.

⁷ For sources reflective of the traditional “Natives as passive victim” approach see Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*, 2nd ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992); Jean Usher, *William Duncan of Metlakatla: A Victorian Missionary in British Columbia*,

Indeed, the experiences of Aboriginal Bahá'ís in British Columbia suggest that these processes of religious change did not entail syncretism. This was not a strategic fusion of Aboriginal and Bahá'í rituals, or the persistence of Aboriginal customs under a Bahá'í guise, but rather the validation of Aboriginal practices such as drumming, singing, smudges, and sweats as legitimate ways to know and worship God unto themselves.⁸

This process of validation and the fluidity of religious change is reflected in the prominence of dreams and visions within Aboriginal Bahá'í narratives. As Mohawk Bahá'í Linda Loft Pappenberger explains, “Native people are very, they believe in their dreams, their visions.”⁹ Lakota Bahá'í Jacob Bighorn observes, however, that such “capacity for spiritual appreciation” is oftentimes denied by a dominant society firmly grounded in secular humanist principles. This, he explains with emotion, contributes to:

individuals, who will keep their dreams personal, who will keep their visions personal, because for the most part, non-Native communities are left-brain thinkers, who dominate social scenes or processes, even in the Bahá'í Faith, they tend to diminish or belittle, unconsciously, belittle the existence of such experiences held by Native people who have these dreams. So sometimes these unique experiences, experiences unique to the Native way of thinking, are discounted as meaningless, because nobody else, especially the people in authority, the legitimizers, if they

Publications in History, no.5 (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1974); Margaret Whitehead, *The Cariboo Mission: A History of the Oblates* (Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1981). Note that while deployed by many scholars of Aboriginal history to good effect, the concept of syncretism is problematic and contentious unto itself. See, for example, Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw, “Introduction: Problematizing Syncretism,” in *Syncretism/Antisyncretism: The Politics of Religious Synthesis* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 1-26; Gauri Viswanathan, “Beyond Orientalism: Syncretism and the Politics of Knowledge,” *Stanford Humanities Review* 1 (1995): 19-34.

⁸ Note that while Carolyn Sawin employs the concept of syncretism in her dissertation, she does so uncritically. See, for example, “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” 8-9. Christopher Buck labels this process “transconfessionalism” in his article “Native Messengers of God in Canada? A Test Case for Bahá'í Universalism,” *Bahá'í Studies Review* 6 (1996); http://www.breacais.demon.co.uk/abs/bsr06/66_buck_messengers.htm (accessed 11 July 2005).

⁹ Linda Loft Pappenberger, interview with the author, 16 Aug 2004, Meades Creek. For dreams and visions that Linda has personally experienced, including a dream foretelling her encounter with friend Gaylia Nelson and a near-death experience during which she connected with relatives in the next world, see interview. For discussion of visions experienced by Dítidaht Bahá'í John Thomas see Jim Kelly, interview with the author, 6 Oct 2004, Shawnigan Lake. Note also the title of the Aboriginal Bahá'í newsletter, *Visions*, distributed with the national publication *Bahá'í Canada* for a short period during the late 1980s.

don't have these dreams, if they don't think they're important, then apparently, in my experience, my unique experience, [it's] not significant, it's not valuable. So it could be sometimes a daily battle, a daily process against energy to maintain a sense of value, of what one sees in your mind, or imagination, or a spiritual definition, is worth something. When all around, the social standards, the cultural values surrounding you do not acknowledge your existence. Or the existence of your unique way of seeing things.¹⁰

Despite the vitality of dreams and visions to Aboriginal people, non-Aboriginal society has largely denied their salience, and even existence, thus perpetuating long-engrained colonialist tendencies. Dreams and visions, however, are of profound significance. In addition to potent spiritual experiences in and of themselves, their presence within Aboriginal Bahá'í narratives suggests that these members of the Faith are actively articulating their own religious experiences and identities according to familiar Aboriginal idioms.¹¹

Aboriginal Bahá'ís from regions as various as the Yukon, the Canadian Prairies, and the American Plains have all stressed the significance of dreams in shaping their original decisions to declare as Bahá'ís.¹² More prominent, however, within the narratives of Aboriginal Bahá'ís that I interviewed in British Columbia are local oral traditions and the roles of dreams and visions subsequent to enrolment.¹³ Hesquiaht

¹⁰ Jacob Bighorn, interview with the author, 11 Aug 2004, Duncan.

¹¹ Aboriginal Bahá'ís are not the only members of the Faith to discuss the significance of dreams; non-Aboriginal Bahá'ís Raudger Nygaard and Gretchen Jordan-Bastow also highlight the importance of dreams to their declaration in the Faith. See Raudger Nygaard, interview with the author, 12 Aug 2004, Chemainus; Gretchen Jordan-Bastow, interview with the author, 26 Sept 2004, Vancouver, (hereafter referred to as "interview"). Despite this, however, the significance of dreams and visions is not as recurrent a theme within non-Aboriginal narratives as within Aboriginal ones.

¹² On the significance of dreams to Aboriginal enrolment in the Yukon see Sawin, "Native Conversion, Native Identity," 16, 131-135. On the Prairies see Patricia Verge, *Angus: From the Heart* (Cochrane, AB: Springtide Publishing, 1999), 77, 86. On the Plains see Jacob Bighorn interview; Jacob Bighorn, conversation with the author, 22 July 2004, Youbou, British Columbia (note that while Jacob is originally from Montana, he was living in the Pacific Northwest at the time of his dream in June 1989). See also *BN*, no.81 (Oct 1956), 3-4.

¹³ This is not, of course, to suggest that dreams and visions may not similarly have influenced the initial entry of Aboriginal Bahá'ís in British Columbia into the Faith, but simply to state that such discussion did

Bahá'í J.C. Lucas, for example, states that “dreams help me a lot. Really a lot.”¹⁴ While he does not elaborate upon specific personal dreams in detail, he draws upon Nuuchahnulth oral tradition, shared with him by his late Bahá'í brother-in-law, in discussing the profound impact of numerous Persian Bahá'ís upon his life.¹⁵ Speaking with great feeling, J.C. relates:

one of the things that the medicine people on the West Coast used to do they would all gather and talk about their visions. And one year they realized they were all having the same vision. And that was a huge house like thing coming over the water with a cloud above it, and it reached, it got off and got ashore and they were really light-skinned people. And just when they came ashore, a huge storm began to blow. And it kept blowing and blowing and blowing and destroying the people, their homes, destroying everything, the water, the air. And, 'till another people arrived, sort of similar skin colour to us, and they had a nine-pointed star. When they arrived the storm stopped.

Overcome with emotion, J.C. pauses at this point, uttering quietly after a few moments, “I gotta stop for awhile.”¹⁶ His reference to those of a similar skin colour to the Nuuchahnulth people and the nine-pointed star, a key symbol in the Bahá'í Faith, speaks to the profound impact of Persian Bahá'ís in J.C.'s life. J.C. is not the only one to draw this particular point of connection between Aboriginal and Persian Bahá'ís. Others, too, have commented on the sense of connection that these Bahá'ís have seemingly shared on the basis of common histories of oppression. While Aboriginal Bahá'ís such as J.C. are continually confronted with the legacies of the devastating storm wrought by the “light-

not figure within the specific interviews upon which this discussion is based.

¹⁴ J.C. Lucas, interview with the author, 6 Oct 2004, Nanaimo.

¹⁵ J.C. notes at several points throughout the interview that he values simplicity and does not like “to use too many words” (interview). For discussion of the significance of dreams and visions within Nuuchahnulth culture more generally see E. Richard Atleo (Umeek), *Tsawalk: A Nuuchahnulth Worldview* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 17, 37, 53, 72-74, 84-85, 94.

¹⁶ Interview.

skinned people,” many Persian Bahá’ís migrated to Canada as a result of religious persecution experienced in the wake of the 1979 Iranian Revolution.¹⁷

Like J.C., Quw’utsun’ Bahá’í Robert George also underscores the powerful impact of dreams and visions. He recounts, for example, one particularly potent dream which led to the formulation of a song to accompany the Bahá’í children’s prayer that his mother, Violet, had translated into their native Hul’qumi’num.¹⁸ Robert explains that he struggled for a number of years to put this prayer to the drum until he experienced a dream in which a number of children, “dressed in tattered old twisted rags,” were lined up across from the couch upon which he was stretched out. Although the song came to him immediately subsequent to the dream, it was not for a number of years more that Robert came to fully appreciate the significance of this vision. In his culture, Robert explains, the Quw’utsun’ people historically wrapped fabric around the head of speakers in recognition of their knowledge and wisdom; he came to interpret the shrouds in which the children were adorned in his dream as symbolic of spiritual reawakening and the need to better value the contributions of youth, so often dismissed within contemporary society.¹⁹

¹⁷ For references to this point of connection see *Bahá’í Canada* (hereafter *BC*) 2, nos.8 (Feb 1980), 24; 5, no.1 (March-April 1983), 5; 6, no.2 (June-Sept 1984), 25; 6, no.3 (Oct 1984-Jan 1985), 77; 7, no.2 (June-July 1985), 58; 9, no.10 (Dec 1987), 8; Patrick and Sandra Slobodian, interview with the author, 20 July 2004, Victoria; Jack Bastow, interview with the author, 29 July 2004, Vancouver; Verge, *Angus: From the Heart*, 237; Chelsea Horton, Fieldnotes, Hanuse Potlatch, Alert Bay, May 2004; Chelsea Horton, Fieldnotes, Bahá’í Centre, Vancouver, Feb 2004.

¹⁸ Robert’s mother, Violet, has since said that she will not translate any further Bahá’í Writings into Hul’qumi’num until all the children from the Quw’utsun’ community have learned the song that Robert received through this dream.

¹⁹ Due to technical difficulties experienced during the recording of this interview, discussion of Robert’s dream is unfortunately not quoted verbatim, but rather reconstructed from the transcript as well as notes taken subsequent to the interview. Robert George, interview with the author, 5 Oct 2004, Duncan; Chelsea Horton, Fieldnotes, Interview with Robert George, 5 Oct 2004. For discussion of another key dream of Robert’s concerning the theme of spiritual reawakening which led to an eventual live reinterpretation in his community see interview and Horton, Fieldnotes.

As Robert and J.C.'s narratives demonstrate, dreams and visions are key to the way in which Aboriginal members of the Faith shape their own Bahá'í experiences and identities.²⁰ Following the principle of unity in diversity, they are making sense of their Bahá'í experiences within culturally-specific frameworks; they are asserting the complementarity of their Aboriginal and their Bahá'í selves. As Carolyn Sawin has noted of the deployment of local oral tradition within the narratives of Tagish and Tlingit Bahá'ís in the Yukon, "[t]hrough these narratives, these individuals sought to simultaneously assert their identity as First Nations people and legitimize, within a traditional First Nations framework, their identity as Bahá'ís."²¹ Furthermore, in drawing upon Nuu-chah-nulth oral tradition in his discussion of the significance of Persian Bahá'ís, J.C. Lucas offers an example of what Julie Cruikshank calls "a competing form of historical consciousness that deserves to be taken seriously."²² He is asserting his own culturally-specific understandings of history and identity and advancing oral tradition as a legitimate form of narrative construction and historical evidence unto itself.²³

It is only recently that scholarship has begun to open itself to such alternative forms of historical consciousness and evidence.²⁴ However, oral tradition and such elements as dreams and visions have long been employed by Aboriginal people to discuss religious experience and encounter. Indeed, prophecy narratives and oral traditions have

²⁰ On the significance of narrative construction within oral history see footnote 15, Introduction, 17.

²¹ "Native Conversion, Native Identity," 13. See also 40, 157, 162, 164.

²² Julie Cruikshank, "Claiming Legitimacy: Prophecy Narratives from Northern Aboriginal Women," *American Indian Quarterly* 18, no.2 (Spring 1994): [no specific page number as accessed from the Academic Search Elite database, 6 April 2004].

²³ On the significance of Aboriginal oral tradition as narrative construction see references to the work of Julie Cruikshank in footnote 36, Introduction, 17.

²⁴ In addition to the pioneering work of Julie Cruikshank, see also the work of anthropologist Robin Ridington. For example, *Trail to Heaven: Knowledge and Narrative in a Northern Native Community* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988); *Little Bit Know Something: Stories in a Language of Anthropology* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1990).

similarly been applied to legitimize Christian conversion and experience.²⁵ Numerous Aboriginal Christians are also engaged in contemporary efforts to articulate distinct Aboriginal Christian narrative discourses.²⁶

Not all Aboriginal people who have adopted new religions, however, have chosen to maintain such firm connections with Aboriginal tradition. As Kirk Dombrowski illustrates in his study of Pentecostalism amongst the Tlingit in Alaska, for example, those Aboriginal people who have adopted this new faith have turned, to an overwhelming extent, sharply “against culture,” positioning themselves in opposition to local Aboriginal contexts, both spiritual and political.²⁷ This distinction underscores the highly contingent and negotiated nature of Aboriginal identity. As Aboriginal Bahá’ís and select Aboriginal Christians have asserted their identities by foregrounding such elements as dreams, visions, and oral traditions, Pentecostal Christians have alternatively illustrated that Aboriginal identity is not predicated solely upon such traditional markers of “Indianness.”²⁸

²⁵ See, for example, Sawin, “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” 139; Cruikshank, “Claiming Legitimacy”; John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 241; James Treat, ed., *Native and Christian: Indigenous Voices on Religious Identity in the United States and Canada* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

²⁶ See, for example, Clara Sue Kidwell, Homer Noley, and George E. ‘Tink’ Tinker, *A Native American Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2001); Jace Weaver, ed., *Native American Religious Identity: Unforgotten Gods* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1998); Treat, *Native and Christian*.

²⁷ Kirk Dombrowski, *Against Culture: Development, Politics, and Religion in Indian Alaska* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001). On the process of Aboriginal Pentecostals turning “against culture” see also Inés Hernández-Ávila, “Mediations of the Spirit: Native American Religious Traditions and the Ethics of Representation,” in Lee Irwin, ed., *Native American Spirituality: A Critical Reader* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 24; Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1990), 161; Pamela Amoss, *Coast Salish Spirit Dancing: The Survival of an Ancestral Religion* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978), 163-164.

²⁸ For a succinct overview of issues pertaining to the study of Aboriginal identity see Alexandra Harmon, “Wanted: More Histories of Indian Identity,” in Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury, eds., *A Companion to American Indian History* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 248-265.

The Potency of Change: Confirmation and Empowerment

Aboriginal Bahá'ís were, for their part, encouraged to maintain firm links with their cultural and spiritual heritage through the principle of unity in diversity. The concept of progressive revelation, a Bahá'í tenet which places all religions on an evolutionary scale of unity, acknowledging the validity of preexisting prophets while embracing Bahá'u'lláh as the Manifestation of God for this era, also cultivated such bonds. As Shoghi Effendi explains in the compilation *Guidance for Today and Tomorrow*:

it should be stated that the Revelation identified with Bahá'u'lláh abrogates unconditionally all the Dispensations gone before it, upholds uncompromisingly the eternal verities they enshrine, recognizes firmly and absolutely the Divine origin of their Authors, preserves inviolate the sanctity of their authentic Scriptures, disclaims any intention of lowering the status of their Founders or of abating the spiritual ideals they inculcate, clarifies and correlates their functions, reaffirms their common, their unchangeable and fundamental purpose, reconciles their seemingly divergent claims and doctrines, readily and gratefully acknowledges their respective contributions to the gradual unfoldment of one Divine Revelation, unhesitatingly acknowledges itself to be but one link in the chain of continually progressive Revelations.²⁹

Although there is debate, from an official Bahá'í perspective, as to whether Aboriginal prophets occupy an equal station with such figures as Jesus, Buddha, and Mohammed or are, rather, “lesser Prophets,” more significant here are the interpretations of Aboriginal Bahá'ís themselves.³⁰ In the words of Linda Loft Pappenberger, progressive revelation is

²⁹ Shoghi Effendi, *Guidance for Today and Tomorrow* (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1953), 21-22 (this passage first appeared in Shoghi Effendi's text *God Passes By*, Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1944). My deep thanks to Auxiliary Board Member Ferris Paisano for sharing these words and this book with me at the Makah Council Fire, Neah Bay, Washington, Aug 2004.

³⁰ On the debate over the station of Aboriginal prophets see Pauline Tuttle, “The Hoop of Many Hoops: The Integration of Lakota Ancestral Knowledge and Bahá'í Teachings in the Performative Practices of Kevin Locke” (PhD dissertation, University of Washington, 2002), 188. While Tuttle elects not to take a stance on the issue, citing the need for further research and consultation, Christopher Buck, for his part, does so in his article “Native Messengers of God in Canada?”

not, for many Aboriginal people, “a taking away of anything that they didn’t believe before”; “in fact,” she continues, “it’s even enhanced.”³¹

Many Aboriginal Bahá’ís from across North America have interpreted the Bahá’í Faith as the fulfilment of prophecies from their respective Aboriginal cultures.³² Lakota Bahá’ís Kevin Locke and Jacqueline Left Hand Bull, for example, consider Bahá’u’lláh the fulfilment “of White Buffalo Calf Woman’s promise to return”; they perceive Him as “the embodiment of the spirit of Ptehiŋcala Ska Wiŋ” and the fulfilment of “Her prophecies and those of Hunkpapa and Oglala visionaries such as Sitting Bull, Black Elk, and Crazy Horse.”³³ Although discussion of the fulfilment of specific prophecies does not figure within the interviews I conducted with Aboriginal Bahá’ís in British Columbia, links between such principles as progressive revelation and unity in diversity and Aboriginal cultures more generally are nevertheless a common theme.³⁴ Speaking to the sense of freedom that the Faith has granted him, for example, ‘Namgis Bahá’í Chris Cook Jr. explains that, “I understand more about my grandfather saying now, ‘It doesn’t matter if we’re in fifty rooms and that we’re all praying [in] different tongues, or different

³¹ Interview.

³² For references to discussion of the Bahá’í Faith as the fulfilment of Aboriginal prophecy in British Columbia see *CBN*, no.273 (Sept-Oct 1973), 6; *BC*, no.305 (July 1977), 9; “Indian fire warms,” [Victoria newspaper], 1977. For discussion from outside the province see *BN*, no.148 (May 1962), 11 [Blackfoot]; *CBN*, no.205 (Feb 1967), 1, 7 [Navajo]; *BC* 2, no.3 (July-Aug 1979), 12 [Tejas]; *Visions* in *BC* 9, no.8 (Oct 1987), 3 [Navajo]; *Visions* in *BC* 10, no.4 (June 1988), 3; *Visions* in *BC* 10, no.5 (July 1988), 4; Joseph O. Weixelman, “The Traditional Navajo Religion and the Bahá’í Faith,” *World Order* (1987): 31-51; Sawin, “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” 9-11, 130-138; Tuttle, “Beyond Feathers and Beads,” 108, 124-125, 127, 129-130 [Lakota]; Tuttle, “The Hoop of Many Hoops,” 78, 318, 325 [Lakota]; William Willoya and Vinson Brown, *Warriors of the Rainbow: Strange and Prophetic Dreams of the Indian Peoples* (Happy Camp, CA: Naturegraph, 1962); Annie Kahn, Olin Karch, and Blu Mundy, *Four Remarkable Indian Prophecies of the Navajos, Toltecs, Mayas and Indians of Idaho* (Happy Camp, CA: Naturegraph, 1963).

³³ Tuttle, “The Hoop of Many Hoops,” 191. See also Jacqueline Left Hand Bull, “The Return of the ‘White Buffalo Calf Woman’: Prophecy of the Lakota,” interview with Patricia Locke, 1989. Lakota Bahá’í Jacob Bighorn similarly interprets the Bahá’í Faith as the fulfilment of Black Elk’s prophecies. Jacob Bighorn interview; Jacob Bighorn conversation.

³⁴ As with earlier discussion of dreams and visions, this is not to suggest that Aboriginal Bahá’ís from British Columbia may not have interpreted the Bahá’í Faith as the fulfilment of specific prophecy, but simply to state that this issue did not emerge in the specific interviews upon which this discussion is based.

beliefs, because we're all talking to the same God."³⁵ Echoing this sentiment, J.C. Lucas notes that his subtle forms of Bahá'í teaching involve "telling people about, there's only one God, like my father believed, who wasn't a Bahá'í. That there's only one God. Pray wherever you wanna to pray, it only goes to one place."³⁶

Ditidaht Bahá'í John Thomas, for his part, came into the Bahá'í Faith in 1967 through the confluence that he perceived between his traditional teachings and such principles as progressive revelation.³⁷ As Jim Kelly explains:

John Thomas told me, what convinced him was that, the sun comes up on the horizon and they counted the seasons by a log and a stick. And where the stick cast its shadow on the log, they would mark the day or the season. And a Writing of Bahá'u'lláh talked about the Manifestations. It's the same sun, but it's a new sun each day, you know, and it's a new season in the Manifestation. And he was able to connect that with that, and that was proof for him.³⁸

While, as Jim notes, we can in no way fully appreciate "what went off in John's mind and fired that allowed him to invest a whole life in it [the Faith],"³⁹ he seemingly perceived the Bahá'í Faith as a confirmation of his Aboriginal tradition. As a hereditary chief

³⁵ Interview. That one of Chris' grandfathers, Stephen Cook, was a prominent Kwakwaka'wakw member of the Anglican Church in Alert Bay reinforces the fluid and shifting base of Aboriginal knowledge and experience from which such insight potentially stemmed. On the involvement of Stephen Cook and his wife Jane with the Anglican Church see Cole and Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People*, 117, 132, 139, 142, 161.

³⁶ Interview.

³⁷ John is listed in the "We Welcome" section of the May 1967 issue of *Canadian Bahá'í News*, no.208, 7.

³⁸ Jim Kelly interview. While Jim was unable to locate the specific Bahá'í Writing with which John Thomas so powerfully connected, he directed my attention during follow-up consultation to the following references: H.M. Balyuzi, *Bahá'u'lláh: The King of Glory* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1980), 3; Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-I-Íqán: The Book of Certitude*, Shoghi Effendi, trans. (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1946), 33 (first translated 1931); Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh*, vol.1 (Oxford: George Ronald, 1974), 167; 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *'Abdu'l-Bahá on Divine Philosophy*, Elizabeth Fraser Chamberlain, comp. (Boston: Tudor Press, 1918), 59; Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í Scriptures*, 2nd ed., Horace Holley, ed. (New York: Brentano's, 1923), 41-42. Note that this is not the only narrative concerning John Thomas's entry into and connection with the Bahá'í Faith. See also Pauline Tuttle, Video of Spencer McCarty speaking at the Neah Bay Council Fire, 23 Aug 1998, 98.9-HT, Tuttle Collection.

³⁹ Interview.

raised in traditional Ditidaht fashion, this was something with which John was well familiar.⁴⁰

This sense of confirmation was not unique to John and served as a potent source of empowerment for numerous Aboriginal Bahá'ís throughout the province. In a context of entrenched social, political, economic, and spiritual marginalization, one can readily imagine the appeal of the Bahá'í message of the oneness of mankind, the oneness of religion, and unity in diversity.⁴¹ Speaking to the inclusive nature of the Bahá'í Faith, Algonquian adherent Myra McGregor notes that “the native people are very, we find we’re very honoured in this Faith”; this sense of belonging, she explains, is “very dear to my heart.”⁴² Robert George explains of his own personal experience that:

with the Faith, the Bahá'í Faith, what I've come to understand is that I can be a Bahá'í and still belong to the culture, my culture. So that's what I really like, it's up to you, it doesn't matter what culture you come from, your background. So that's what I like about it. You know, if I'm drummin', nobody will say, “that's not right.” ‘Cause I've experienced that through religions, other religions ... I've experienced that with other religions, “that's not the way we do it.”⁴³

⁴⁰ I was unable to confirm whether John served as an elected as well as hereditary chief as some documentary sources suggest. See “Indian Brief Prods Canada,” *Victoria Colonist*, 30 March 1969, 47; “Communication Gap Widening,” *Victoria Daily Times*, 31 March 1969; “Baha’is hold meeting to make people aware of native plight,” [Oakville newspaper], 1969. Close friends of John’s confirm that he (born 25 Dec 1913; died 24 April 1990) maintained a firm connection with his culture and language despite time spent away from Nitnaht Lake due to residential schooling and later employment. See Jim Kelly interview; Fletcher and Elinor Bennett, interview with the author, 21 July 2004, Saanich; Thom Hess, conversation with the author, 25 Nov 2004, by telephone; Nancy Turner, conversation with the author, 9 Feb 2005, by telephone; Barry Carlson, conversation with the author, 2 March 2005, by telephone; *CBN*, no.272 (Aug 1973), 6; “Woman Writing Book on Chief,” [Victoria newspaper], n.d.; Ruth Kirk, *Tradition and Change on the Northwest Coast: The Makah, Nuu-chah-nulth, Southern Kwakiutl and Nuxalk* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986), 22-25, 43-44, 125, 152-153, 155-156.

⁴¹ Sawin makes a similar point in “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” 174.

⁴² Myra McGregor, interview with the author, 30 June 2004, Cultus Lake. Myra declared in the Faith while living on Vancouver Island and notes that she has been elected to an LSA every year since her enrolment in 1984. For further references to the sense of welcome, openness, and tolerance encountered in the Faith see, for example, *CBN*, nos.208 (May 1967), 5; 252 (June-July 1971), 4; *BC* 9, no.10 (Dec 1987), 8; *Visions in BC* 10, no.7 (Sept 1988), 3; J.C. Lucas interview; Linda Loft Pappenberger interview; Chris Cook Jr., interview with the author, 7 June 2004, West Vancouver; Carol Anne Hilton, interview with the author, 7 Oct 2004, Nanaimo; Sonny Voyageur, interview with the author, 12 Nov 2004, North Vancouver.

⁴³ Interview.

Asked about the relationship between his Kwakwaka'wakw culture and the Bahá'í Faith, Steve Cook responded poignantly simply by holding his two hands in balance, like a scale, a silent expression of their complementary nature.⁴⁴

While for some Aboriginal members the Bahá'í Faith served to reinforce the validity of their spiritual practices, for others it was through the Faith that they came to investigate and embrace their respective cultures.⁴⁵ Like many other Aboriginal people throughout Canada, for example, Sonny Voyageur was heavily influenced by the “residual effects” of residential schooling within his family as well as the stern Christian context in which he was raised.⁴⁶ He explains that prior to declaring in the Bahá'í Faith in 1988:

I wasn't involved in my culture, really didn't take an active role in my culture at that time ... I remember that time, before I chose the Faith, being Native wasn't really a good thing. It wasn't really, there was no spiritual dimension to our culture. Well, from my own experience. It seemed like, I don't like to say dominant culture, but the culture here, Western culture, that everyone seemed to have adopted, really prevailed at that time ... I mean, it [Native culture] just didn't grab me, you know? It didn't grab my heart, right? Or my imagination, mainly. If anything, it seemed like a real burden. And at that, I'm gonna be upfront, I mean, before I became a Bahá'í, culture, I was sort of, I was ashamed of it, you

⁴⁴ Steve Cook, conversation with the author, 31 July 2004, Alert Bay, British Columbia. On the complementary nature of Aboriginal cultures and the Bahá'í Faith see also “Indian fire warms”; Chris Cook Jr. interview; John Sargent, conversation with the author, 16 Feb 2005, by telephone; Sawin, “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” 166, 168; Dorothy Maquabeak Francis in Chelsea Horton, “Beyond Red Power: The Alternative Activism of Dorothy Maquabeak Francis,” *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies*, in press, 12.

⁴⁵ This process is not unique to British Columbia; for the Yukon context see Sawin, “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” 10, 166.

⁴⁶ See interview. Sonny notes that his father (from Fort Chipewan in Northern Alberta) was raised Roman Catholic and that his mother (from Kingcome Inlet, located forty miles east of Alert Bay), was very active in the Anglican Church at the time of his declaration in the Bahá'í Faith. He also notes that his brief exposure to the Mormon Church as a young boy made a sharp impression on him and, he believes, “[p]lanted a really positive seed” in terms of his ability to interact with non-Aboriginal people, leading him eventually to the Bahá'í Faith (interview). On residential schooling in Canada see J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); John S. Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879-1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999).

know? I really didn't like the social or the economic conditions, you know? But, because I was Native I still did my rounds. Meaning rounds as just, I still connected with Native people, but I wasn't fully engaged in the cultural aspects of the culture, the traditions, right? Just something to do. I hate to say it, get a free meal, and then go. But there was really no, there was no backdrop, there was really no event that really, I wanted to be a part of.⁴⁷

Sonny first came to connect with Aboriginal forms of spirituality and the concept of the Creator through his “own personal healing journey” initiated during drug and alcohol treatment at the Round Lake Treatment Centre located on the Okanagan Indian Reserve near Vernon.⁴⁸ Subsequent to declaring in the Bahá'í Faith, Sonny became, through the guidance of mentors such as Aboriginal Bahá'í Lee Brown, active for a number of years in Prairie Aboriginal ceremonies. Since the mid-1990s, he has become increasingly involved with the potlatch in his mother's traditional Kwakwaka'wakw territory, helping foster expanding Bahá'í links with the Aboriginal community of Alert Bay and surrounding villages such as that at Kingcome Inlet.⁴⁹

In his travels throughout Western North America, Sonny contributed on a personal level to the development of contemporary pan-Indigenous links throughout the continent.⁵⁰ In this he was not alone. Bahá'ís such as Dorothy Maquabeak Francis, Thomas Anaquod, Linda Loft Pappenberger, and Jacob and Deloria Bighorn migrated to British Columbia from their respective native regions. Aboriginal Bahá'ís also participated in travel teaching trips, exchanges, and gatherings throughout North America

⁴⁷ Interview.

⁴⁸ Interview. On the Round Lake Treatment Centre see www.roundlake.bc.ca (accessed 11 July 2005).

⁴⁹ See interview. For further discussion of the process of heightened involvement in Aboriginal culture subsequent to Bahá'í declaration see Myra McGregor interview; Jacob Bighorn interview; Carol Anne Hilton interview.

⁵⁰ On pan-Indigenization see footnote 41, Chapter One, 33.

and beyond.⁵¹ Like Sonny, J.C. Lucas travelled extensively following his declaration in the Faith in 1982.⁵² While J.C. was connected with his Hesquiaht traditions from childhood, he, too, had declared after achieving sobriety and explains:

I went kinda insane when I sobered up, I prayed and fasted everywhere I went. In Vernon area, up in the Interior, on the Island, on the Prairies. I got a pipe from a Sioux friend 'cause I was having intense spiritual experiences and visions. Yeah, he said he would sponsor me at the Sun Dance in Sioux Valley, Manitoba. So I went to my father and asked for his blessing to go, you know, kinda asked permission. "I'd really like your blessing, permission to go." And I thought he was gonna say, "Son, that's not our way." 'Cause we're from the West Coast, we don't have the Sun Dance. But all he said was, "Oh, good son, good!" And he lit up like a Christmas tree. And he said, "There's only one God, it doesn't matter how you find him. There's lots of ways in the world we don't know about, but only one God." He said, "You go, you find out, you're young." And there went all my reasons I had lined up mentally, you know, all this and this.

J.C. underscores the extent to which pan-Indigenization is not, as some have argued, merely a political process, but also a spiritual one.⁵³ He continues, highlighting the potent spiritual context in which he was operating:

So I really went insane. I wanted to save the whole world in five minutes or less and the energy was just there even though I was still really ill physically from all those years of drinkin' and druggin'. They used to flash on all those people I met. Things began to happen in such a great way. Like, ending up exactly where I'm supposed to be ... So many incredible things, like spiritual things, happened. Not from this world,

⁵¹ See Chapter One, 30-34. For a sampling of the voluminous references to such processes see also Jacob Bighorn interview; J.C. Lucas interview; Linda Loft Pappenberger interview; Bennett interview; Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interview; Slobodian interview; Chris Cook Jr. interview; Myra McGregor interview; Steve Cook conversation; *CBN*, nos.200 (Sept 1966), 6; 223 (Sept-Oct 1968), 8; (Jan-Feb 1970), 7; 239 (May 1970), 12; 243 (Oct 1970), 10; 252 (June-July 1971), 9; 285 (June 1975), 10; 289 (Nov 1975), 5; *BC*, nos.294 (June 1976), 10-11; 302 (April 1977), 5-6; 303 (May 1977), 8; *Bulletin*, no.2 (Oct 1978), 11; *BC* 4, nos.1 (March-May 1982), 27; 5, no.1 (March-April 1983), 25; 5, no.5 (Nov-Dec 1983), 25-29; 6, no.4 (Feb-March 1985), 38; 7, no.6 (Dec 1985-Jan 1986), 21; 9, no.11 (Jan 1988), 9; *Visions* in *BC* 9, no.11 (Jan 1988), 1-3; *Visions* in *BC* 10, no.5 (July 1988), 4; "Recorriendo: El Camino del Sol," personal papers of Fletcher and Elinor Bennett (hereafter Bennett papers); Verge, *Angus: From the Heart*, 238-9, 242, 255-6.

⁵² J.C. Lucas interview; *BC* 7, nos.6 (Dec 1985-Jan 1986), 21; 9, no.5 (n.d.), 6.

⁵³ On pan-Indigenization as political process see David E. Wilkins, *American Indian Politics and the American Political System* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 208. For more on the cultural and spiritual aspects of pan-Indigenization see Horton, "Beyond Red Power," 24-25.

definitely, because we couldn't explain how all these things were happening. And I needed a lot of confirmation in those days. Just all the fasting, the praying, the constant praying, and bathing in cold water, and sweat lodge, I was just totally into it like that.⁵⁴

Beyond the issue of pan-Indigenization, J.C.'s experiences illustrate the principle of unity in diversity in action; his deepening and activity in the Bahá'í Faith was firmly centred within Aboriginal spiritual frameworks. His words similarly reinforce the centrality of the spiritual realm to questions of religious change.⁵⁵ Although J.C. declared as a Bahá'í following drug and alcohol treatment, the religion was not simply a "technique for living," a coping mechanism or rationalist posture that he adopted in reaction to conditions of crisis or stress in his life.⁵⁶ Rather, as his reflections make clear, he was deeply impacted by powers and practices grounded within the non-quantifiable realm of the sacred.

The Challenge of Change: Context and Power

Aboriginal Bahá'ís in British Columbia were greatly empowered by such spiritual processes and the sense of identification with Aboriginal heritage that the Bahá'í Faith encouraged. Their experiences, however, simultaneously demonstrate profound

⁵⁴ Interview. For further reflections by Aboriginal Bahá'ís on the spiritual contexts surrounding their entry to the Bahá'í Faith see, for example, Myra McGregor interview; Jacob Bighorn interview; Carol Anne Hilton interview; Chris Cook Jr. interview; Sonny Voyageur interview.

⁵⁵ Many Aboriginal cultures possess holistic understandings of relations between the physical and the spiritual worlds and do not draw the sharp distinction between the sacred and the profane so prominent within Western society. See Treat, *Around the Sacred Fire*, 90; Morrison, *The Solidarity of Kin*, 23, 29-36, 38, 56-57, 59, 79, 159, 164; Graham Harvey, "Introduction," in *Readings in Indigenous Religions* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 3; Tuttle, "The Hoop of Many Hoops," (I do not cite a specific page number as the concept of "placing the sacred at the centre" underlines the dissertation as a whole); Lee Irwin, "Native American Spirituality: An Introduction," in *Native American Spirituality: A Critical Reader* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 3. On the importance of opening scholarship to considerations of genuine spiritual commitment and experience see footnote 16, Introduction, 10.

⁵⁶ On "techniques for living" see Lewis Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 84. On reductionist theoretical frameworks such as the "deprivation thesis" and "revitalization theory" see footnote 17, Introduction, 10.

challenges in the practical implementation of unity in diversity. Grounded in a social context where power dynamics both internal and external to the Bahá'í Faith have powerfully complicated the participation and place of Aboriginal members in the British Columbian Bahá'í community, the ideal of equality has yet to be fully realized.

The so-called “white-middle-class Presbyterian” character of the Bahá'í community has complicated both initial Aboriginal enrolment in the Bahá'í Faith as well as subsequent participation.⁵⁷ The perspectives and practices of non-Aboriginal – specifically, White – Bahá'ís have, consciously or otherwise, historically dominated the North American Bahá'í community.⁵⁸ The normative patterns constructed by the White majority have led, in turn, to damaging instances of paternalism and marginalization as well as the sometimes token inclusion of Aboriginal Bahá'ís within the religious community.⁵⁹ Although such issues do not emerge in the narratives of the Aboriginal Bahá'ís that I interviewed, Carolyn Sawin notes that the place of Aboriginal traditions and forms of spiritual expression within the North American Bahá'í community more broadly have at times been devalued as “alien, superstitious, or simply ‘undignified’” and dismissed as “peripheral to Bahá'í religious expression or, even worse, as mere entertainment.”⁶⁰ Within the Canadian national context, support for such Aboriginal

⁵⁷ The label “white-middle-class Presbyterian Bahá'ís” was applied by pioneer John Sargent, *CBN*, no.166 (Nov. 1963). See also *CBN*, no.187 (Aug 1965), 4.

⁵⁸ See Carolyn Sawin, “Recognizing Whiteness: Cultural Difference and Cultural Dominance in North American Bahá'í Communities,” unpublished manuscript, n.d. (an earlier version of this paper was presented at the Association for Bahá'í Studies Conference, Mississauga, Ontario, Aug 2002); Juan Cole, “The Bahá'í Faith in America as Panopticon, 1963-1997,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37, no.2 (1998): 234-248.

⁵⁹ See, for example, Sawin, “Recognizing Whiteness”; Sawin, “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” 118, 170; Littlebrave Beaston, “American Indians and the Bahá'í Faith – Teaching Indians in the City,” paper presented at the Association for Bahá'í Studies Conference, Calgary, Alberta, Sept 2004; *BC* 13, no.4 (May-June 1981), 38.

⁶⁰ “Recognizing Whiteness,” 8 and 7 respectively. On the debated issue of the place of Aboriginal and other traditional and tribal rituals within the Bahá'í Faith see *CBN*, no.156 (Jan 1963), 2; *BC* 9, no.10 (Dec

endeavours as Native Councils and the short-lived institution of the Native Desk and its affiliated newsletter, *Visions*, proved uneven.⁶¹ While Aboriginal Bahá'ís, for example, embraced the opportunities for consultation within culturally-appropriate frameworks that the Native Councils represented, a number of non-Aboriginal members rejected the need for distinct Aboriginal spaces within the Faith and opposed that which they perceived as exclusive and divisive events working against the principle of unity in diversity.⁶²

Within British Columbia, patterns of paternalism and cultural dominance sometimes manifested themselves in the form of overt racism. Linda Loft Pappenberger, for example, highlights a particularly challenging trial she faced shortly after moving to the Cowichan Lake area on Vancouver Island. Eager to contribute to the local Bahá'í community, Linda responded to the Chairman of the LSA's request for volunteers to assist with preparation for an upcoming gathering. Following her offer, Linda reports that:

the next thing was, well, “We gotta really sit down and discuss this because we don't, this is such an important occasion, we don't want daffodils. We do have to really know here that roses is gonna be needed.”

1987), 17; Weixelman, “The Traditional Navajo Religion and the Bahá'í Faith,” 49; Sawin, “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” 9; Universal House of Justice, *Aspects of Traditional African Culture*, Aug 1998 (accessed from the Ocean database, 23 July 2004); Linda Walbridge, “Rituals: An American Bahá'í Dilemma,” *Bahá'í Studies Review* 5, no.1 (1995): 1-3.

⁶¹ On Native Councils see footnote 62 below. On the Native Desk and *Visions* see John Sargent conversation; Linda Loft Pappenberger interview; *BC* 9, no.7 (Sept 1987), 10; *Visions* in *BC* 9, no.8 (Oct 1987); 9, no.9 (Nov 1987); 9, no.10 (Dec 1987); 10, no.4 (June 1988); 10, no.5 (July 1988); *BC* 10, no.6 (Aug 1988), 8; *Visions* in *BC* 10, no.7 (Sept 1988); 10, no.8 (Oct 1988); 10, no.10 (Dec 1988); 10, no.11 (Jan-Feb 1989).

⁶² See Bennett interview; John Sargent conversation; Jack Bastow interview; Linda Loft Pappenberger interview; *CBN*, nos.287 (Aug-Sept 1975), 6; 298 (Dec 1976), 8; *BC*, nos.295 (July-Aug 1976), 3; 301 (March 1977), 6-7; 302 (April 1977), 3; 304 (June 1977), 4; 308 (Oct 1977), 4; 310 (Dec 1977), 2; *Bulletin*, nos.1 (Sept 1978), 7; 4 (Dec 1978), 1; *BC* 2, nos.3 (July-Aug 1979), 14; 2, no.6 (Nov-Dec 1979), 6; 2, no.8 (Feb 1980), 3-4; 2, no.10 (May-June 1980), 23; 3, no.4 (May-June 1981), 23-26; 3, no.7 (Nov 1981-Jan 1982), 18; 4, no.1 (March-May 1982), 29, 37; 5, no.1 (March-April 1983), 28; 6, no.4 (Feb-March 1985), 37; 7, no.2 (June-July 1985), 58; 7, no.5 (Nov 1985), 48; 7, no.6 (Dec 1985-Jan 1986), 21, 32-34; 8, no.6 (Aug 1986), 16-17; 8, no.7 (Sept 1986), 12-13; 9, no.10 (Dec 1987), 8; *Visions* in *BC* 9, nos.11 (Jan 1988), 1-2; 10, no.5 (July 1988), 4; 10, no.9 (Nov 1988), 2; Verge, *Angus: From the Heart*, 236; Peggy Ross, Report to Continental Board of Counsellors for North America, 22 July 1975, Bennett papers; Sawin, “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” 108; Sawin, “Recognizing Whiteness,” 13-14.

Well, what am I? But I didn't say anything. Bein' my, the way I am, but I was very hurt, extremely hurt on that statement. But I wouldn't, but I saved face, you know, I just put that behind me, that just ain't meant to happen.⁶³

An editorial published in *Bahá'í Canada* during the same period sharply echoes this sentiment and speaks to the normative Bahá'í patterns that an Aboriginal member such as Linda was considered, by some, to potentially destabilize:

Instead of recognizing and allowing for a person's own creative contributions to this Faith of unity in diversity, we can fall into the habit of brow-beating each other into a particular form of 'service' which [is] expedient at the time ... A [Nineteen Day] Feast can only be a Feast if five or six prayers are followed by a 'consultation' which is followed by tea and cookies. In spite of the warnings which Shoghi Effendi wrote to us, we keep falling into the groove of conformity.⁶⁴

This article is not specific to the Aboriginal context, however, it nevertheless underscores the pattern of (White) cultural dominance underlining the Canadian Bahá'í community as a whole.⁶⁵

While episodes of overt discrimination did occur in British Columbia, power dynamics born of colonialism and broader than the Bahá'í community alone similarly impacted the experiences of Aboriginal Bahá'ís. J.C. Lucas, for example, became active immediately upon joining the Faith and maintained a high level of Bahá'í involvement for over a decade. The challenging nature of interaction with the broader Bahá'í community, however, has since led him to draw back and pursue a more individualized form of Bahá'í practice. J.C. continues to speak passionately of the Bahá'í Faith as “a

⁶³ Interview.

⁶⁴ *BC*, no.297 (Nov 1976), 2. On the Nineteen Day Feast, the major ritual institution in the Bahá'í Faith, see William S. Hatcher and J. Douglas Martin, *The Bahá'í Faith: The Emerging Global Religion* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 152; Denis MacEoin, *Rituals in Babism and Baha'ism* (London: British Academic Press, 1994), 65-66.

⁶⁵ See also *BC* 3, no.7 (Nov 1981-Jan 1982), 18. Although Linda was living as an isolated Aboriginal believer away from her family in Ontario, that she, a third generation Bahá'í, was impacted by such racism nevertheless speaks to the depth of such challenges.

magical thing” that played a central role in his personal healing journey, through which, as he states, “a lot of the bitterness and insanity and rage left me.”⁶⁶ However, he nevertheless explains that:

the culture, the mainstream culture, in some parts of the Bahá’í community, people don’t realize how strong it is. When Native people come in and there’s a pressure, without really being pressurized, like, you know? Just, ah, a lot of the stuff comes in. And it triggered me quite seriously some years ago and I just began to withdraw. And my old residential school things came to the fore. So I just kind of withdrew. I still teach, I still pray early in the morning, every day since 1980, actually. Before I became a Bahá’í I prayed every morning.⁶⁷

J.C. takes pains to note that “I’m not mad at the Bahá’ís” and that he still “love[s] and honour[s] the Bahá’í Faith.”⁶⁸ His decision to pull back from active Bahá’í involvement seemingly stemmed not from specific actions on the part of non-Aboriginal Bahá’ís, but rather from the broader social context that he, as an Aboriginal person, found particularly difficult to navigate.⁶⁹ Regardless of their level of commitment to the principle of unity in diversity, non-Aboriginal Bahá’ís are the beneficiaries of a greater degree of social capital than their Aboriginal brethren.⁷⁰ This form of capital comprises not only power of

⁶⁶ Interview.

⁶⁷ Interview. Carolyn Sawin outlines a parallel process of withdrawal on the part of prominent Aboriginal Bahá’í Pete Sidney in the Yukon. See “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” 125.

⁶⁸ Interview.

⁶⁹ While the decision to pull back from active Bahá’í participation is not entirely unique to Aboriginal Bahá’ís, they nevertheless face challenges to their participation that other Bahá’ís do not. On withdrawal from Bahá’í participation, regardless of ethnicity, see Bennett interview; Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interview; *CBN*, no.195 (April 1966), 3.

⁷⁰ On social capital see Marty Hipsky, “Romancing Bourdieu: A Case Study in Gender Politics in the Literary Field,” in Nicholas Brown and Imre Szeman, eds., *Pierre Bourdieu: Fieldwork in Culture* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 192; Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” in John G. Richardson, ed., *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York: Greenwood, 1986), 241-258. Some scholars have challenged the structuralist basis of Bourdieu’s concept of the “forms of capital” (economic, cultural, social, and symbolic), arguing that it runs the teleological risk of instrumental determinism. While I acknowledge this danger, I nevertheless consider Bourdieu’s concept applicable to the postcolonial Canadian context. For discussion and examples of such critique see Bruce Robbins, *Secular Vocations: Intellectuals, Professionalism, Culture* (London: Verso, 1993), 208; Craig Calhoun, “Habitus, Field, and Capital: The Question of Historical Specificity,” in Craig Calhoun, Edward LiPuma, and Moishe Postone, eds., *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1993),

social association and connection, but also the less tangible forms of self-assurance and privilege that derive when one's outlook and modes of social interaction are consistently validated, legitimized, and reinforced by overarching social and cultural signals. Simply operating in the environment of dominant culture, where non-Aboriginal Bahá'ís and attendant non-Aboriginal social patterns predominated, served to invoke for J.C. the historical legacies of such damaging experiences as residential schooling, causing him to withdraw.⁷¹

This context, in which interaction with non-Aboriginal Bahá'ís summoned such sentiments as inferiority and low self-esteem on the part of Aboriginal members, served to amplify concrete instances of discrimination. Although the contemporary Bahá'í community is in many ways more open and tolerant than that of the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, the experiences of Jacob Bighorn reveal that patterns of paternalism and White cultural dominance persist.⁷² Jacob pioneered to British Columbia in 1991 with his wife, Deloria, and three children to work at the Maxwell International Bahá'í School located on Shawnigan Lake on Vancouver Island. Jacob was extremely enthusiastic about this move due to the Aboriginal spiritual principles that he saw institutionalized in the school's philosophy. He soon encountered, however, a firm sense of disconnect between the school's stated aims and its everyday practice. As he explains:

I would say something at a staff meeting, I remember one time distinctly, offering something in my style, I wasn't conscious that it was a style at the time, but I said what I said, and there was no response. I thought I was

61-88.

⁷¹ On residential schooling in Canada see footnote 46 above. For the Nuu-chah-nulth people specifically see Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, *Indian Residential Schools: The Nuu-chah-nulth Experience* (Canada: Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, 1996).

⁷² On attitudinal shifts within the mainstream Bahá'í community see, for example, Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interview. Note also the shifting terminology used to refer to Aboriginal people reflected through the pages of *Canadian Bahá'í News/Bahá'í Canada* from its inception in 1948 until the late 1980s.

making a contribution. Well, I heard somebody else say something, say what I meant, the person said what I meant, the way I said it, so I thought we were speaking together, but when this person said it, everybody said, “Yeah, yeah, yeah! That’s a good idea!” And I reached around and I said, “I just said that!” And the person turned to me, “Jacob, you speak in metaphors!” And it was, I got confused, is that a downer? Is that an upper? Or what is, what, this person, is she frustrated? Is it her problem? Is it my problem? Is, go back and forth. And, I think that was the, ah, the challenge then. That’s an aspect of being Bahá’í, that’s the diversity ... in the end, I think that’s part of why I worked my way out [from teaching at the school]. I was, it was too frustrating, it took its toll of my heart, my health. I think which is symbolic of suicides, the high rate of suicides amongst natives, all the other emotional, psychological troubles, and health troubles. That this degree of low self-esteem, you know, and not caring, not being in charge of one’s own destiny, the sense of destiny is in someone else’s hands and so forth. So it’s diminishing, diminishes the spiritual strength.⁷³

Such discriminatory processes are no doubt unintentional and would likely prove a great source of distress to non-Aboriginal Bahá’ís were they fully aware of them. They nevertheless speak, however, by this very virtue, to the depth to which non-Aboriginal cultural dominance is unconsciously engrained.⁷⁴

The Complexity of Change

It is this level of unconscious domination, of inherently imbued social capital, that renders a principle such as unity in diversity so difficult to concretely realize. That the Bahá’í community, with its powerful commitment to equality, remained subject to such power dynamics illustrates the pervasiveness of the colonial legacy. To be sure, there were select non-Aboriginal Bahá’ís, those most active in the field of teaching the Bahá’í Faith to Aboriginal people and most grounded in the contemporary realities of Aboriginal

⁷³ Interview.

⁷⁴ For further Aboriginal Bahá’í reflections upon challenges to unity in diversity see Sonny Voyageur interview; Carol Anne Hilton interview.

communities, who successfully neutralized such power dynamics.⁷⁵ At the broader community level, however, moments of overt racism as well as more subtle patterns of paternalism and cultural dominance have all complicated the practical and lasting realization of unity in diversity in British Columbia. And yet while not fully realized, the principle of unity in diversity has nevertheless served as a potent source of empowerment for Aboriginal Bahá'ís in the province. It has reinforced the validity of Aboriginal tradition and fostered pride in cultural heritage. The powerful role of dreams and visions in shaping Aboriginal Bahá'í experiences and narratives further underscores the centrality of this principle. Illustrating that religious change is indeed process, and not event, Aboriginal Bahá'ís operated, and continue to operate, according to their own culturally-specific understandings of Bahá'í history, experience, and identity.

⁷⁵ Consider, for example, the experiences of Fletcher and Elinor Bennett, Patrick and Sandra Slobodian, and Jack Bastow and Gretchen Jordan-Bastow (see discussion in Chapter One).

SERVICE

Verily I say unto thee: Of all men the most negligent is he that disputeth idly and seeketh to advance himself over his brother. Say, O brethren! Let deeds, not words, be your adorning.¹

Bahá'u'lláh

The 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s were volatile decades within the history of Canadian-Aboriginal relations. Influenced by the broad international context of movements for national self-determination, civil rights, and equality, as well as proposed changes to national legislation that threatened to terminate any special “Indian status,” Aboriginal people throughout Canada emerged as an increasingly vocal, and sometimes militant, political force.² This movement, characterized broadly as “Red Power,” has traditionally dominated the historiographical treatment of this period.³ This view,

¹ Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh* (Persian), http://bahai-library.com/?file=bahauallah_hidden_words#P5 (accessed 11 July 2005).

² On this context see, for example, Arthur J. Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began: An Illustrated History of Canada's Native People* (Toronto: Lester Publishing and Key Porter Books, 1996), 330-335; Canada, “International Year for Human Rights 1968 in Canada: Report of Proceedings: National Conference on Human Rights and Activities of the Canadian Commission,” (Ottawa, 1969), 154-156; Olive Patricia Dickason, *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992), 326-388.

³ See, for example, Donald Purich, *Our Land: Native Rights in Canada* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1986); Joan Ryan, *Wall of Words: The Betrayal of the Urban Indian* (Toronto: Peter Martine, 1978); J. Rick Ponting and Roger Gibbins, *Out of Irrelevance: A Socio-Political Introduction to Indian Affairs in Canada* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1980); James Burke, *Paper Tomahawks: From Red Tape to Red Power* (Winnipeg: Queenston House Publishing, 1976); J. Rick Ponting, ed., *Arduous Journey: Canadian Indians and Decolonization* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986); Shirley Bear, with the Tobique Women's Group, “You Can't Change the Indian Act?” in Jeri Dawn Wine and Janice L. Ristock, eds., *Women and Social Change: Feminist Activism in Canada* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1991), 198-220. For the American context see Troy Johnson, Duane Champagne, and Joane Nagel, “American Indian Activism and Transformation: Lessons from Alcatraz,” in Troy Johnson, ed., *Contemporary Native American Political Issues* (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 1999), 283-314; Troy Johnson, Joane Nagel, and Duane Champagne, eds., *American Indian Activism: Alcatraz to the Longest Walk* (Chicago: University of

however, is too narrow; there existed in this period no unified consensus concerning the appropriate method for the pursuit of social change. Indeed, there were many forms of advocacy and activism at work during these seminal years.⁴

The Aboriginal-Bahá'í encounter suggests a number of these alternative activist trajectories, signalling a need to broaden our conceptions of what has for too long been deemed the “Red Power era.” Motivated by the principle of service and Bahá'u'lláh's admonition to “let deeds, not words, be your adorning,” British Columbian Bahá'ís, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, pursued a dynamic activist agenda that included healing work with drug and alcohol treatment programs and cultural education, awareness-raising, and regeneration initiatives. Such actions blurred the boundary between religious teaching and activism. Through their efforts, which did not require an explicit point of connection with the Faith in order to qualify as Bahá'í forms of service, Bahá'ís contributed to the fulfilment of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.

While addressing “earthly” conditions, the Bahá'í activist platform was a social reconstructionist one driven by spiritual as opposed to strictly material and political impulses. Bahá'ís were profoundly influenced by the principle of non-involvement in partisan politics. They largely eschewed contemporary Aboriginal political discourse in favour of more subtle spiritual expressions including song, dance, and prayer. In so doing, they illustrated that conscious disengagement from political participation does not

Illinois Press, 1997); Alvin M. Josephy, Joane Nagel, and Troy Johnson, eds., *Red Power: The American Indians' Fight for Freedom*, 2nd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999); Karren Baird-Olson, “Reflections of an AIM Activist: Has It All Been Worth It?,” in Kathleen M. Blee, ed., *No Middle Ground: Women and Radical Protest* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 133-155; James Treat, *Around the Sacred Fire: Native Religious Activism in the Red Power Era: A Narrative Map of the Indian Ecumenical Conference* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 370-372 (a comprehensive list of graduate theses and dissertations engaging the topic of Red Power).

⁴ My thanks to the editors of *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies* for allowing me to include material from my forthcoming article, “Beyond Red Power: The Alternative Activism of Dorothy Maquabeak Francis,” in this chapter.

signal certain subjugation to ruling hegemonies. Indeed, they underscored the powerful potential of spiritual approaches to the pursuit of social change.

The National Stage: Politics as Activism

Throughout North America during the 1960s, a growing recognition of the plight of minority groups, the civil rights movement, the “war on poverty,” the rise of student activism, resistance to official initiatives such as the Vietnam War, as well as heightened urban migration on the part of Aboriginal people all fomented an atmosphere increasingly conducive to Aboriginal activism.⁵ In the United States, the emergence of Red Power, embodied in such groups such as the American Indian Movement (AIM), saw a rise in the deployment of highly visible and controversial activist tactics.⁶ Red Power spilled over the border to Canada;⁷ although protest activities were generally more subdued north of forty-ninth parallel, the early years of the 1970s nevertheless witnessed occupations, road blockades, and demonstrations from coast to coast.⁸ Galvanized by the Trudeau

⁵ See Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began*, 330; Johnson, Nagel, and Champagne, *American Indian Activism*, 10; John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 202-204; Ponting and Gibbins, *Out of Irrelevance*, xvii.

⁶ The label Red Power is attributed to well-known Aboriginal activist, writer, and politician Vine Deloria Jr. He first employed the term publicly during a 1966 speech at the annual meeting of the National Congress of American Indians, an American organization of which he was then executive director. See David E. Wilkins, *American Indian Politics and the American Political System* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 218.

⁷ A national wing of AIM and localized organizations such as the Vancouver-based Native Alliance for Red Power (NARP) were established. On AIM in Canada see Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 202; Treat, *Around the Sacred Fire*, 258-259, 261; Dickason, *Canada's First Peoples*, 358; Ryan, *Wall of Words*, 71-76. On NARP see H.R. Hays, *Children of the Raven: The Seven Indian Nations of the Northwest Coast* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1975), 232-233.

⁸ On distinctions between Red Power in Canada and the United States see Ryan, *Wall of Words*, 71; Treat, *Around the Sacred Fire*, 113, 258-259; Purich, *Our Land*, 188. On protest activities in Canada see, for example, Treat, *Around the Sacred Fire*, 258; Purich, *Our Land*, 184; Ryan, *Wall of Words*, 37-45, 69-71. Note that while both the Canadian and American strains of Red Power were undoubtedly heterogeneous movements, populated by a diversity of historical actors and activist strategies, it is according to such radical tactics and militancy that the movements are most frequently characterized.

government's 1969 White Paper, Aboriginal activists forcefully inserted the issues of self-determination, treaty rights, and land claims onto the Canadian political landscape.⁹

Aboriginal people were not alone in their protest during this period. Coalition organizations such as the Indian Eskimo Association (IEA) played vocal advocacy roles, while the mainline Christian denominations traditionally associated with mission work in Canada shifted increasingly towards working "with, not for" Aboriginal people.¹⁰ Led by the Anglican Church, they focused their energies largely within the political sphere, adopting advocacy positions seemingly predicated upon sentiments of moral authority and spiritual obligation alike.¹¹

The Bahá'í community of Canada, for its part, inserted itself into this scene in ways at once complementary and distinctive. The national community associated with

⁹ On the White Paper and its impact see Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began*, 334-335; Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, 385-387; Purich, *Our Land*, 185. Aboriginal reaction to the White Paper was swift; stinging rebuttals such as Harold Cardinal's *The Unjust Society*, the Alberta Indian Association's "Red Paper," and the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs' "Brown Paper" were released in quick succession. See Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society*, 2nd ed. (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1999) (first published 1969); Indian Chiefs of Alberta, *Citizens Plus* (Edmonton: Alberta Indian Association, 1970); Hays, *Children of the Raven*, 236. Aboriginal reaction to the White Paper, however, was not uniform. See Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, 387; Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990), 153-154; William I.C. Wuttunee, *Ruffled Feathers: Indians in Canadian Society* (Calgary: Bell Books, 1971).

¹⁰ Quote from Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 206. On the context of church reform see Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 206-213; Treat, *Around the Sacred Fire*, 60-87, 128, 298; R. Pierce Beaver, "Protestant Churches and the Indians," in Wilcomb E. Washburn, vol. ed., *Handbook of North American Indians: History of Indian-White Relations*, vol.4 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1988), 458; Burns, "Roman Catholic Missions in the Northwest," in Washburn, *Handbook*, 499; J.E. Michael Kew, "Central and Coast Salish Ceremonies Since 1900," in Wayne Suttles, vol. ed., *Handbook of North American Indians: Northwest Coast*, vol.7 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1990), 479-480; Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, 402; Ponting and Gibbins, *Out of Irrelevance*, 284-291; Joyce Carlson, ed., *Dancing the Dream: The First Nations and the Church in Partnership* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1995); Janet Hodgson and Jayant S. Kothare, *Vision Quest: Native Spirituality and the Church in Canada* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1990).

¹¹ See, for example, the comments of John Melling in his 1967 *Right to a Future: The Native Peoples of Canada*, published by the Anglican and United Churches of Canada, cited in Treat, *Around the Sacred Fire*, 76. See also the words of a board member of the interdenominational lobbying initiative Project North, cited in Ponting and Gibbins, *Out of Irrelevance*, 289.

such organizations as the IEA and pursued its own independent advocacy initiatives.¹² While explicitly asserting that “Bahá’ís do not have the right to ‘speak for’ minorities of any kind,” the community took a particular interest in issues relating to Aboriginal people, a constituency that was said to compose between one-quarter and one-third of national Bahá’í membership during the 1960s and 1970s.¹³ The National Spiritual Assembly coordinated Bahá’í submissions to relevant government inquiries and commissions as well as presence at pertinent events such as the 1966 Canadian Interfaith Conference where a team of delegates was sent to work for “full recognition of the spiritual traditions of the Indian and Eskimo peoples of Canada.”¹⁴ Situating, at all turns, their discussions within spiritual rather than material or political frameworks, initiatives such as the 1968-69 proclamation campaign concerning “human rights as God-given rights” and the Aboriginal “right to an identity” aimed to raise public awareness

¹² On the relationship of the Bahá’í community of Canada with the IEA see Indian Eskimo Association of Canada, “Conference on Concerns of Indians in British Columbia; Theme: Equal Opportunity in Our Land,” Vancouver, British Columbia, 24 Dec 1966, 37; *Bahá’í News* (hereafter *BN*), no.142 (Nov 1961), 6; *Canadian Bahá’í News* (hereafter *CBN*), nos.168 (Jan 1964), 2, 8; 231 (July 1969), 6.

¹³ Quote from *CBN*, no.225 (Dec 1968), 1. For a similar expression specific to Aboriginal people see Bahá’í Community of Canada, “A Presentation by the Canadian Bahá’í Community to the Participating Organizations of the Canadian Conference on Human Rights, Ottawa, December 1-3, 1968,” 1968, 3. Statistics provided by Gerald Filson (Director of External Affairs for the Bahá’í Community of Canada), email to the author, 24 Oct 2002. On the problematic nature of Bahá’í statistics see discussion in Introduction, 13.

¹⁴ *CBN*, no.197 (June 1966), 5. On the Interfaith Conference see also *CBN*, no.210 (July 1967), 6; Canadian Interfaith Conference, *Canadian Centennial Anthology of Prayer* (Ottawa: Mutual Press, 1967), 117-118. Regarding Bahá’í submissions to government commissions consider, for example, the 1960 NSA-approved brief on Aboriginal education submitted to the Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Indian Affairs: *BN*, nos.120 (Jan 1960), 2; 126 (July 1960), 6; 142 (Nov 1961), 6; a submission on Aboriginal education included in the 1967 Hawthorn Report: *CBN*, no.232 (Aug 1969), 2, 5; H.B. Hawthorn, ed. *A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: Economic, Political, Education Needs and Policies*, vol.2 (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs, 1967), 61; a submission to the 1984 McDonald Commission: *Bahá’í Canada* (hereafter *BC*) 5, no.6 (Jan-Feb 1984), 12-13; 6, no.2 (June-Sept 1984), 94; Bahá’í Community of Canada, “The Future of Canada: A Bahá’í Perspective” (Toronto: Bahá’í Canada Publications, 1984); a 1993 submission to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Bahá’í Community of Canada, “The Canadian Bahá’í Community Submission to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples,” 10 Sept 1993; “Issues of Concern to the World’s Aboriginal Peoples,” Nov 1993, <http://www.bahai.org/article-1-9-1-8.html> (accessed 11 July 2005).

concerning that which the Bahá'í community held as the spiritual roots of both Aboriginal oppression and potential liberation.¹⁵

The Western Front: Service as Activism

Bahá'ís in British Columbia, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, contributed to such national initiatives and identified with the social reconstructionist principles underlining them that saw the solution to oppression and inequality in “the spiritualization of human life and the implementation of the social principles extolled by Bahá'u'lláh and ‘Abdu'l-Bahá.’”¹⁶ This position dovetailed powerfully, at the local level, with the Bahá'í principle of service. While it was not until the early 1980s, with the establishment of the Office of Social and Economic Development at the Bahá'í World Centre, that the international Bahá'í leadership urged a more systematic shift towards service-oriented activity, Bahá'u'lláh's exhortation to “let deeds, not words, be your adorning” loomed large from the earliest days of teaching the Bahá'í Faith to Aboriginal people in British Columbia.¹⁷

¹⁵ On the 1968-69 campaign see *CBN*, nos.221 (July 1968), 8; 225 (Dec 1968), 1, 8-9; 226 (Jan 1969), 2; 227 (Feb-March 1969), 9; 228 (April, 1969), 6, insert (“World Religion Day in the News”); 230 (June 1969), insert; 231 (July 1969), 6, insert (“A Sampling of Newspaper Publicity Resulting from the Presentation of Briefs”); Fletcher and Elinor Bennett, interview with the author, 21 July 2004, Saanich; Raudger Nygaard, interview with the author, 12 Aug 2004, Chemainus; Bahá'í Community, “A Presentation”; Bahá'í Community of Canada, “The Right to an Identity,” n.d. (1968-69); Canada, “International Year for Human Rights 1968,” 96.

¹⁶ Peter Smith, *The Babi and Bahá'í Religions: From Messianic Shi'ism to a World Religion* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 146. For expressions of social reconstructionist aims see *CBN*, nos.166 (Nov 1963), insert; 168 (Jan 1964), 2. On British Columbian Bahá'í participation in the national human rights campaign see, for example, *CBN*, nos.225 (Dec 1968), 1, 8-9; 227 (Feb-March 1969), 9; 228 (April, 1969), insert (“World Religion Day in the News,”); 231 (July 1969), 3, 6, insert (“A Sampling of Newspaper Publicity Resulting from the Presentation of Briefs”); “Clutesi Honoured by Baha'i People,” [Port Alberni newspaper], Jan 1970; “Indian Brief Prods Canada,” *Victoria Colonist*, 30 March, 1969, 47; “Communication Gap Widening,” *Victoria Daily Times*, 31 March 1969; Bennett interview; Raudger Nygaard interview.

¹⁷ On the 1983 establishment of the Office of Social and Economic Development see Margit Warburg, *Baha'i* (Utah: Signature Books, 2003), 57; Glen Eyford, “Reflections on Direct and Indirect Teaching,” in *BC 8*, no.1 (Feb-March 1986), 8-10.

This emphasis upon service blurred, in many ways, the boundaries between religious teaching and activism. As Patrick Slobodian explains:

This Faith is about service, love, ultimately it's about love. And how do we express our love of God? We love our fellow man. How do we express our love? We serve. And, ah, so there's an opportunity to go and serve and love. And not to teach. I mean if we teach by showing that we love and we serve, that's great. But we're not doing this, we should not be doing this with an ulterior motive.¹⁸

These sentiments are echoed by Jack Bastow, who underscores, “the important thing is not merely to tell people about the Faith, but actually to practice and live it in our own lives and to participate in any movements which will help bring about these ideal conditions.”¹⁹ Reflecting upon her and Jack's activity in the Cariboo region, Gretchen Jordan-Bastow notes that “it was taking the teachings of the Faith and putting them into action. It wasn't just piously repeating things.”²⁰

Bahá'ís were not the sole religious activists to stress action over doctrine during the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. Reform efforts within the mainline Christian denominations resulted in moves away from the paternalistic social gospel of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries towards more facilitative roles emphasizing Aboriginal spiritual, social, economic, and political development.²¹ Individual clerical activists, in particular those “not directly involved in parish ministry,” proved most committed and able to help concretely effectuate such shifts.²² Anglican priest Ian Mackenzie, for example, worked

¹⁸ Patrick Slobodian, interview with the author, 20 July 2004, Victoria.

¹⁹ Jack Bastow, interview with the author, 29 July 2004, Vancouver.

²⁰ Gretchen Jordan-Bastow, interview with the author, 26 Sept 2004, Vancouver (hereafter referred to as “interview”).

²¹ See footnote 10 above.

²² Treat, *Around the Sacred Fire*, 86. Consider, for example, the case of Terrance J. McNamara, a non-Aboriginal Roman Catholic who was initiated as a Coast Salish spirit dancer and later ordained as an Oblate priest in a 1979 ceremony held in the Quamichan Longhouse in Duncan, British Columbia. See Christopher Vecsey, *The Paths of Kateri's Kin* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 308-

at official and grassroots levels alike in support of Aboriginal religious self-determination. In addition to challenging the Anglican Church of Canada to not only listen to, but to truly hear Aboriginal demands, he worked with Aboriginal organizers from a host of religious and tribal backgrounds to help launch the Indian Ecumenical Conference (IEC) movement.²³ Held annually on the Prairies for over a decade beginning in 1970, the IECs were a grassroots Aboriginal initiative aimed to foster unity amongst North America's fractured tribes. Eschewing contemporary Red Power tactics in favour of spiritual rituals of prayer, the pipe, and the sacred fire, organizers hoped that from these ecumenical gatherings "conceptual unity" would flow.²⁴

Members of the Bahá'í Faith shared these goals of unity and spiritual self-determination. Motivated by the principle of service, they sought to inculcate such values through a range of subtle methods, many of which had little to no overt connection with the Bahá'í Faith. Through such activities as drug and alcohol treatment and counselling and cultural revival, education, and awareness-raising efforts, British Columbian Bahá'ís illustrated the vast scope of their activism and the depth of their commitment to unity and equality. While they did not always overtly articulate the connection, faith in Bahá'u'lláh and desire for the fulfilment of His teachings nevertheless underwrote their various service initiatives.

309; Burns, "Roman Catholic Missions," 499; Kew, "Central and Southern Coast Salish Ceremonies," 479-480.

²³ On Mackenzie's challenge to the Anglican Church see Treat, *Around the Sacred Fire*, 60. On his involvement with the IEC movement and Aboriginal organizing more generally see Treat, *Around the Sacred Fire*, 37, 39, 57, 59-60, 83-87, 90, 93-95, 103-109, 113, 117, 120, 123, 125-127, 129-135, 154, 156, 159-163, 218-221, 223, 232, 239, 269, 279-280, 299-300.

²⁴ See, for example, the comments of Cherokee scholar and IEC organizer Bob Thomas, cited in Treat, *Around the Sacred Fire*, 132. For more on the IECs see Treat, *Around the Sacred Fire*. For more on alternative Aboriginal forms of activism see, for example, Grace Ouellette, *The Fourth World: An Indigenous Perspective on Feminism and Aboriginal Women's Activism* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2002).

Much Bahá'í service in British Columbia has centred upon processes of healing amongst Aboriginal people. Linked to over a century of colonial incursion and marginalization, cycles of substance abuse and addiction have long histories within Aboriginal communities.²⁵ The Bahá'í Faith prohibits the use of drugs and alcohol, addiction to which is said to impede spiritual growth,²⁶ the prominence of such afflictions among Aboriginal people, both Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í, were topics of frequent consultation, and action, among Bahá'ís of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage alike.²⁷ In the Cariboo during the early 1980s, for example, the LSA of Ashcroft hired a drug and alcohol treatment counsellor to train Assembly members to deal intelligently with issues of addiction in the community. LSA members also developed a round-the-clock support network for a local Aboriginal Bahá'í mother struggling with issues of addiction that convinced the local courts to stay an order to apprehend her children.²⁸ In Alert Bay during the same period, Sandra Slobodian offered subtle support to the

²⁵ See, for example, Hays, *Children of the Raven*, 259; Andrew Siggner and Chantal Locatelli, "An Overview of Demographic, Social and Economic Conditions Among British Columbia's Registered Indian Population," Research Branch, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program, 20 Oct 1980, 23-28; W.T. Stanbury, "The Social and Economic Conditions of Indian Families in British Columbia," Nov 1974, 27-33; Dara Culhane Speck, *An Error in Judgement: The Politics of Medical Care in an Indian-White Community* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987), 99, 193, 246, 258; Heather Robertson, *Reservations are for Indians* (Toronto: James Lewis & Samuel, 1970), 270-284; Lida Synders Blok interview with the author, 13 Aug 2004, Mill Bay.

²⁶ On the principle encouraging abstinence from drugs and alcohol see William S. Hatcher and J. Douglas Martin, *The Bahá'í Faith: The Emerging Global Religion* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 157; Sandra Slobodian, interview with the author, 20 July 2004, Victoria; *BC* 9, no.3 (May 1987), 17. On the attraction of this principle to Aboriginal people see Jack Bastow interview; Patricia Verge, *Angus: From the Heart* (Cochrane, AB: Springtide Publishing, 1999), 60, 68, 81-81, 89, 168, and 233.

²⁷ See, for example, Bennett interview; National Indian Reserves Teaching Committee, "Indians of Canada: Looking to the Future," 1964, 15-16; *CBN*, nos.285 (June 1975), 5; 287 (Aug-Sept 1975), 6; *BC* 2, no.8 (Feb 1980), 3; 4, no.1 (March-May 1982), 37; 7, no.5 (Nov 1985), 30; 7, no.6 (Dec 1985-Jan 1986), 34; 9, no.3 (May 1987), 13; *Visions* in *BC* 9, no.8 (Oct 1987); *Visions* in *BC* 10, no.5 (July 1988); *BC* 10, no.9 (Nov 1988), 17.

²⁸ Jack Bastow and Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interviews.

Kwakwaka'wakw community by hosting alcohol-free gatherings for interested local women.²⁹

Numerous Aboriginal Bahá'ís in British Columbia declared in the Faith after achieving sobriety and have subsequently gone on to work in the field of drug and alcohol counselling.³⁰ Kwakwaka'wakw Bahá'í Steve Cook, for example, works at the treatment centre in Alert Bay, while J.C. Lucas has run programs and provided counselling training in the fields of addiction, family violence, sexual abuse, residential school trauma, and housing assistance in various locations throughout the province.³¹ While she did not personally suffer from addiction, Dorothy Maquabeak Francis made diverse contributions towards Aboriginal healing through efforts including work as a counsellor, assisting in the foundation of the Round Lake Drug and Alcohol Treatment Centre, and, in the last years of her life, initiating the Maquabeak Cultural Society, a Langley-based organization dedicated to educating Aboriginal youth in their culture and spirituality and assisting them with issues of crisis, abuse, and addiction.³²

²⁹ Sandra Slobodian interview. On further service activity in the Alert Bay area see also Sandra and Patrick Slobodian interview; *BC* 6, no.4 (Feb-March 1985), 4; *Teach Canada*, 2 no.6 (24 June 1989), 2.

³⁰ On the issue of Aboriginal people declaring as Bahá'ís subsequent to achieving sobriety see discussion in Chapter Two, 77-81. See also Sonny Voyageur, interview with the author, 12 Nov 2004, North Vancouver; J.C. Lucas, interview with the author, 6 Oct 2004, Nanaimo; Chris Cook Jr., interview with the author, 7 June 2004, West Vancouver; Steve Cook, conversation with the author, 31 July 2004, Alert Bay, British Columbia; Patrick Slobodian interview. On the role of the Bahá'í Faith in assisting Aboriginal people to deal with issues of addiction more generally see Bennett interview; Robert George, interview with the author, 5 Oct 2004, Duncan; Linda Loft Pappenberger, interview with the author, 16 Aug 2004, Meades Creek; Barry Carlson, conversation with the author, 2 March 2005, by telephone; Carolyn Patterson Sawin, "Native Conversion, Native Identity: An Oral History of the Bahá'í Faith among First Nations People in the Southern Central Yukon Territory, Canada" (PhD dissertation, University of Washington, 2000), 150. Note that the Bahá'í Faith is not the only religion to promote abstinence from drugs and alcohol. Kirk Dombrowski, for example, argues that the behavioural changes attendant with Pentecostal conversion proved attractive to a number of Tlingit in Alaska. See *Against Culture: Development, Politics, and Religion in Indian Alaska* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 131, 147, 164, 175.

³¹ See Steve Cook conversation and J.C. Lucas interview respectively.

³² On the activism of Dorothy Maquabeak Francis see Chelsea Horton, "Beyond Red Power: The Alternative Activism of Dorothy Maquabeak Francis," *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies*, in press. On the Maquabeak Cultural Society specifically see *Visions* in *BC* 9, no.8 (Oct 1987); Erika Jauk, "Grandmother filled with native spirit," *The Langley Advance*, 1 July 1987, 12a; "The Maquabeak Council," 1987

While afflictions such as drug and alcohol addiction manifested themselves physically, Bahá'ís did not limit their activism to this realm alone. As J.C. Lucas explains, “I look at all the things that are happening, and all the people around the world, and especially my people, the medicine they need, it isn't from this earth ... from the earthly plane, you know?”³³ Blurring once more the distinction between religious teaching and activism, J.C. explains that he shares the spiritual principles of the Bahá'í Faith through his counselling work:

telling people about, there's only one God, like my father believed, who wasn't a Bahá'í. That there's only one God. Pray wherever you wanna to pray, it only goes to one place. So I tell people that. And tell 'em about the, I use change as a teaching tool. The great law of change and decay, which nothing's exempt from, including our culture. I teach very subtly and without saying, “This is the way.” I teach about the principles and about the prayer, the importance of prayer. And how it affects your entire life ... and your surrounding. And all the things of the Faith, I teach those things without saying, like, “This is Bahá'í Faith.” ‘Cause people aren't ready ... Yeah, and I teach in the sweat lodge and pipe ceremonies, in all situations pretty much.³⁴

Robert George draws a parallel connection between the physical and the spiritual realms in discussing the need for healing that he sees pervading his local Quw'utsun' community. Highly sensitive to the demoralizing issues of racism and substance abuse facing local youth in particular, Robert has worked with deep dedication to “do something to lift their spirit.”³⁵ His efforts have included such subtle acts as a live reinterpretation of a powerful dream he experienced concerning the spiritual reawakening of the Quw'utsun' community as well as local cultural education initiatives.³⁶

Legislative Session: 1st Session, 34th Parliament, Government of British Columbia, Hansard, http://www.legis.gov.bc.ca/hansard/34th1st/34p_01s_870605a.htm (accessed 11 July 2005).

³³ Interview.

³⁴ Interview.

³⁵ Interview.

³⁶ Robert George interview; Chelsea Horton, Notes from interview with Robert George, 5 Oct 2004,

The promotion of Aboriginal cultural and spiritual practices, and concomitant pride in Aboriginal heritage, was a prominent goal from the earliest days of Aboriginal Bahá'í teaching in British Columbia. In Bella Coola during the 1960s, for example, non-Aboriginal Bahá'í Raudger Nygaard lent subtle support to the local Nuxalk by donating a replica big house he had constructed for use as an Aboriginal youth centre and assisting the local band with culturally-specific architectural designs.³⁷ Not long after declaring in the Bahá'í Faith, Ditidaht elder John Thomas enrolled in an Aboriginal language program at the University of Victoria and went on to support the documentation and instruction of the Ditidaht language and cultural practices at the university, in his local community, and in the related Makah village of Neah Bay, Washington.³⁸ Among the manifold contributions of tireless activist Dorothy Maquabeak Francis, for which she was invested as a Member of the Order of Canada in 1978, were roles in the establishment of Canada's first Native Friendship Centres, the launch of a variety of Aboriginal cultural organizations throughout Western Canada, and the initiation of an Aboriginal spirituality program within British Columbian correctional facilities.³⁹ Situated at grassroots and official levels alike, Dorothy's activism was deeply motivated by recognition of "the great need for Indian people to arise and have a voice."⁴⁰ In promoting Aboriginal arts

Duncan.

³⁷ Raudger Nygaard interview; Raudger Nygaard, conversation with the author, 7 Aug 2004, by telephone. In recognition of such contributions, Raudger was formally adopted into a local Aboriginal family. For more on Raudger's artistic contributions outside of British Columbia see *CBN* (Jan-Feb 1970), 7. See also the contributions of Lida Snyders Blok (interview).

³⁸ See Bennett interview; Barry Carlson conversation; Jim Kelly, interview with the author, 6 Oct 2004, Shawnigan Lake; Thom Hess, conversation with the author, 25 Nov 2004, by telephone; Nancy Turner, conversation with the author, 9 Feb 2005, by telephone.

³⁹ See Horton, "Beyond Red Power."

⁴⁰ "Interview with Dorothy Maquabeak Francis," personal papers of Ella Benndorf.

and crafts, singing, dancing, and storytelling, she sought to empower, “helping the people to better themselves.”⁴¹

Figure 4: Dorothy Maquabeak Francis.



© Jack Bastow, by permission.

Such processes of empowerment persist within the contemporary Bahá’í community. Among the diverse contributions of Robert George is an extracurricular program he initiated at a local Duncan high school where he teaches Quw’utsun’ singing, dancing, and drumming; through this program he also provides local youth with instruction in the Hul’qumi’num language by means of songs such as the one he developed, through his dream, to accompany the Bahá’í children’s prayer translated by

⁴¹ Dorothy Francis, Letter to Ketha Adams, 27 Feb, 1964, Ketha Adams (Pitts) fonds, Id. 1944, Acc. No. 911.3, Folder 15 (Dorothy Francis), Alberni District Historical Society Archives.

his mother.⁴² Robert is also a member of the multicultural Duncan-based drum and dance group, Honour All Nations. Composed of majority Bahá'í membership, the group, which includes Linda Loft Pappenberger and Raudger Nygaard, has travelled the length of Vancouver Island and into Washington state, performing at Bahá'í and Aboriginal gatherings alike.⁴³

Bahá'ís characterize such activity as Bahá'í service. Speaking, for example, to current initiatives in the Kwakwaka'wakw community of Alert Bay, Sandra Slobodian notes:

I think that is the shift that's taken place. Where people realize, when 'Abdu'l-Bahá said that through the love of humanity, you serve and you bring the knowledge of God. That by serving, you bring knowledge of God. Not by telling them something, or them telling you something. This is the beautiful thing about what's happening in Alert Bay is that it is founded on service. Pure giving of your time and resources, only because you believe that what they're doing is really valuable and you want to be part of helping make it happen. You don't even understand what it's all about, like I don't understand the implications of the potlatch being reborn the way it is, or the various events that people have gone up to support have been everything from AA rallies, to memorials. So, they've gone to serve simply because they're saying, "You're a community that's doing stuff, and we'd like to be part of it. And, we're not born here and raised here, we don't even live here, but can we serve in some way?" And so we go and serve.⁴⁴

Since 1996, teams of primarily non-Aboriginal Bahá'í youth have been travelling to Alert Bay to serve at gatherings such as potlatches and memorials, assisting with such tasks as food preparation.⁴⁵ Sonny Voyageur notes that he and other Bahá'ís have, like Patrick

⁴² See discussion of Robert's dream and translation conducted by his mother, Violet, in Chapter Two, 70-71. Robert notes with great satisfaction that this program is now "reachin' a point where there's kids asking to learn songs and dances" and elders are making more frequent visits to local schools (interview).

⁴³ On the Honour All Nations drum and dance group see Linda Loft Pappenberger interview.

⁴⁴ Interview.

⁴⁵ On the origins of this form of service see Sonny Voyageur interview.

and Sandra before them, faced moments of resistance in the community.⁴⁶ Overall, however, this form of Bahá'í service, as well as allied initiatives such as visits by students from the Maxwell International Bahá'í School and the Bahá'í youth soccer team, Twin Arrows, has fostered positive and expanding relations between the two communities. The Bahá'ís are regularly honoured in the big house and several members of the Faith have been formally adopted into local families in Alert Bay and the related Kwakwaka'wakw village of Kingcome.⁴⁷

Service such as that performed in Alert Bay works to foster cultural awareness typical of Bahá'í activist efforts. While Bahá'ís have long sought to promote strength and pride in Aboriginal cultures, they have also worked to generate awareness and unity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies. In her work within British Columbian correctional facilities, for example, Dorothy Francis worked to foster cultural awareness on the part of prison guards and inmates alike.⁴⁸ Working with guards during their training program, she provided context for the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the Canadian penal system as well as insight into such practices as smudges and sweats that she was instrumental in introducing within correctional facilities. For the Aboriginal inmates themselves, she provided direction concerning such practices, instilling a sense

⁴⁶ Interview.

⁴⁷ See Patrick and Sandra Slobodian interview; Sonny Voyageur interview; Raudger Nygaard interview; Bennett interview; Chris Cook Jr. interview; Steve Cook conversation; Carol Anne Hilton, interview with the author, 7 Oct 2004, Nanaimo; Chelsea Horton, Fieldnotes, Hanuse Potlatch, Alert Bay, May 2004; Chelsea Horton, Fieldnotes, Speck Potlatch, Alert Bay, July-Aug 2004. See also the service contributions of Steve and Mary Cook, Steve Cook conversation.

⁴⁸ Both oral and documentary sources confirm that Francis initiated an Aboriginal spirituality program within correctional facilities that continues to this day; see, for example, Ella Benndorf, interview with the author, 4 Sept 2002, Coquitlam; Shirley Hildebrandt, conversation with the author, 10 Nov 2002, by telephone; "Dorothy M. Francis, C.M.," personal papers of Ella Benndorf. However, I was unable to confirm its official name and whether it is run within provincial or federal institutions, or both. Francis herself volunteered at a variety of institutions throughout the Lower Mainland, including the B.C. Penitentiary (now closed), the Oakalla Jail, and Willingdon Youth Detention Centre.

of self-worth and pride in Aboriginal heritage.⁴⁹ In his linguistic and cultural education work, John Thomas did not limit his knowledge to Aboriginal people alone, but worked closely with non-Aboriginal friends and scholars and institutions such as the University of Victoria and the British Columbia Provincial Museum.⁵⁰

Figure 5: John Thomas conversing with an attentive multicultural audience.



© Fletcher Bennett, by permission.

⁴⁹ See, for example, “Interview with Dorothy Francis”; Gretchen Jordan-Bastow, interview with the author, 12 Sept 2002, Vancouver (hereafter referred to as “interview 2”).

⁵⁰ Jim Kelly interview; Bennett interview; Thom Hess conversation; Nancy Turner conversation; Barry Carlson conversation. For a sampling of John Thomas’s publications see Barry Carlson and John Thomas, “The Nitinaht Inferential,” *Anthropological Linguistics* 21 (1979): 317-327; John Tl’ishal Thomas and Thom Hess, *An Introduction to Nitinaht Language and Culture* (Victoria: University of Victoria Press, 1981); John A. Thomas, “Nootkan Band Names,” Papers of the 12th International Conference on Salishan Languages (Nespelem, WA: Colville Confederated Tribes, 1977); John Thomas, Nancy Turner, Barry Carlson, and Robert Ogilvie, “Ethnobotany of the Nitinaht Indians of Vancouver Island,” Occasional Papers Series 24 (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1983); E.Y. Arima, Denis St. Claire, Louis Clamhouse, Joshua Edgar, Charles Jones, and John Thomas, *Between Ports Alberni and Renfrew: Notes on West Coast Peoples*, Canadian Ethnology Service, Mercury Series Paper 121 (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1991). For references to his interactions with non-Aboriginals more broadly see *CBN*, no.392 (Sept-Oct, 1973), 6; “Legend ends program at Errington,” [Victoria newspaper], 24 Sept 1976.

Native Friendship Centres have also proved important sites of intercultural contact and education. Bahá'ís from across Canada such as Dorothy Francis played integral roles in the original establishment of these institutions; members of the Faith such as Robert George and Gretchen Jordan-Bastow have since solidified and maintained these links.⁵¹ Robert, for example, has worked at the Hiiye'yu Lelum House of Friendship in his hometown of Duncan for twenty years. As he explains:

I've just kind of always been in the Friendship Centre movement. As a young man I worked here and grew along with the Friendship Centre. Because I believe in the philosophy of the Friendship Centres, to encourage encounters between Native and non-Native and so on, at the Friendship Centres, so that's why I've hung around so long I think. And that philosophy goes along with a lot of the Bahá'í philosophy. So, it kind of complements.⁵²

Following a recent dinner at the Vancouver Bahá'í Centre featuring a performance by well-known Lakota Bahá'í artist Kevin Locke that was attended by representatives of approximately thirty First Nations, Gretchen Jordan-Bastow was invited to work with a group of women who organize weekly Family Nights at the Vancouver Friendship Centre.⁵³

⁵¹ On the origins of Canadian Native Friendship Centres and the connection between such centres and the Bahá'í Faith more generally see Horton, "Beyond Red Power," 11, 22-23; Lily Ann Irwin, interview with Carrie Jensen, 6 Oct 1982, Penticton, British Columbia; Verge, *Angus: From the Heart*, 198; *BN*, nos.63 (April 1955), 2-3; 75 (April 1956), 4; 101 (June 1958), 6; 117 (Oct 1959), 2; 120 (Jan 1960), 3-4; 123 (April 1960), 2; 132 (Jan 1961), 4; 137 (June 1961), 7; 142 (Nov 1961), 6; *CBN*, nos.173 (July 1964), 4; 164 (Sept 1963), 3; 166 (Nov 1963), insert; 168 (Jan 1964), 2; 220 (June 1968), insert; 226 (Jan 1969), 2; 275 (Nov-Dec 1973), 8; *BC*, no.365 (July 1977), 9; *BC* 4, no.3 (July-Aug 1982), 11; 7, no.5 (Nov 1985), 30, 41; National Indian Reserves Teaching Committee, "Indians of Canada: Looking to the Future," n.d. [1965?], 17; Bennett interview.

⁵² Interview.

⁵³ Jack Bastow interview; Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interview; Chelsea Horton, Fieldnotes, Bahá'í Feast, Vancouver, May 2004. In addition to this weekly event, Bahá'í youth have also contributed by serving at the powwow held each month at the Centre.

Travel has also proved an effective awareness-raising mechanism for Bahá'ís.

Robert George, for example, has coupled his local activism with travel to national and international destinations where he strives to promote cultural understanding:

I'm very active in our culture, drummin' and singin'. I've done a lot of drummin' and singin' at Bahá'í gatherings, travelled, stayed in lots of different places, drummin' and singin'... So, it's a good way of building communities, going to different places, bringin' understanding. Because a lot of people perceive Indians what they see on TV, in many places. I've experienced that going to Europe. People were kind of upset when we walked off the plane that we weren't in feathers ... some Indians dress that way, but not all Indians. That's why I try and build understanding. I try ... to take messages. So that's the reason why I travel a lot. That's, a lot of Bahá'ís travel a lot for the same reason. Bridging cultures, trying to build understanding.⁵⁴

Stereotypes concerning Aboriginal people were, of course, not limited to international destinations. Jim Kelly notes that John Thomas worked, for his part, to break down such prejudicial imagery at the local level through the subtle, yet effective, application of humour.⁵⁵

The Politics of Culture and Spirituality

Beyond the goals of cultural education and regeneration, the principles of non-involvement in partisan politics and obedience to government also powerfully shaped Bahá'í activist strategy and form. While Bahá'ís were, and remain, beholden to fulfil such civic duties as voting, they were instructed by Shoghi Effendi to refrain from association ““whether by word or by deed with the political pursuits of governments, and

⁵⁴ Interview. For more on travel by Aboriginal Bahá'ís see Horton, “Beyond Red Power”; Chapter Two, 77-81.

⁵⁵ Interview. Lakota Bahá'í artist Kevin Locke works towards similar goals of fostering cultural understanding through his extensive national and international travels. See Tuttle, “Beyond Feathers and Beads,” 116-117, 121, 138; Tuttle, “The Hoop of Many Hoops,” 24-25.

the schemes and programs of parties and factions”;⁵⁶ ““Our party,” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá proclaimed, “is God’s party.””⁵⁷ Partisan politics were considered by their very nature divisive and thus antagonistic to the Bahá’í goal of unity in diversity. Rather than engage in such “fruitless debates,” Bahá’ís were encouraged to focus upon their divinely-ordained millennial task of “breathing life into this unified body [of mankind] – of creating true unity and spirituality culminating in the Most Great Peace.”⁵⁸

This position was a complex, and sometimes contentious one, within the Bahá’í community, as is reflected through the pages of *Canadian Bahá’í News* (later *Bahá’í Canada*). From the circular’s first editions in 1948 well into the 1980s, the issue of political participation surfaces as a frequent issue of discussion.⁵⁹ Members of the Faith regularly expressed concern with the degree to which strict abstention from the political sphere would isolate Bahá’ís from the concrete and immediate challenges plaguing mankind, in turn “but weaken[ing] the freedom fighters of the world.”⁶⁰ A letter from

⁵⁶ Cited in *CBN*, no.249 (March 1971), 8 (first appeared in Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh: Selected Letters* (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1991), 64 (first published 1938).

⁵⁷ Cited in *CBN*, no.239 (May 1970), 3 (I was unable to ascertain the original date of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s statement). On the issue of political participation see also Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, 42, 64-66, 199; Universal House of Justice, *Wellspring of Guidance: Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1963-1968* (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1969), 131-136; Universal House of Justice, *Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1968-1973* (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1976), 44-50; Shoghi Effendi and Universal House of Justice, *Political Non-Involvement and Obedience to Government*, Peter Khan, comp. (Mona Vale, NSW: Bahá’í Publications Australia, 1979); Helen Hornby, comp., *Lights of Guidance: A Bahá’í Reference File* (New Delhi: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1988), 442-454; Bahá’í World Centre, “Political Non-Involvement,” http://www.bahai_studies.net/nonpolitical.html (accessed 6 July 2005).

⁵⁸ *CBN*, no.261 (Sept 1962), 6 and Shoghi Effendi cited in *CBN*, no.217 (Feb-March 1968), insert (I was unable to ascertain the original date of Shoghi Effendi’s statement). On the evolutionary stages leading to the establishment of the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh outlined by Shoghi Effendi see Hatcher and Martin, *The Bahá’í Faith*, 139-142; Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*.

⁵⁹ See, for example, *CBN*, no.3 (Aug 1948), 5; *BN*, no.95 (Dec 1957), 2-3; *CBN*, nos.154 (Nov 1962), 6; 182 (March 1965), 4; 205 (Feb 1967), 2, 6; 217 (Feb-March 1968), insert; 219 (May 1968), 2; 222 (Aug 1968), 2; 235 (Dec 1969), 8; 239 (May 1970), 3-4; 249 (March 1971), 8; 261 (Sept 1972), 6; 289 (Nov 1975), 8; *BC* 2, no.6 (Nov-Dec 1979), 24; *BC*, Supplement, 3rd Edition (July 1988), 2-3.

⁶⁰ Excerpt from a 7 July 1976 letter on behalf of the Universal House of Justice reprinted in *BC*, Supplement, 3rd Edition (July 1988), 2. The fact that this letter was reprinted thirteen years later, and in response to a query from a contemporary Bahá’í, illustrates the continued salience of the question of

the Universal House of Justice (UHJ) to the NSA of Italy, reprinted in a 1975 edition of *Canadian Bahá'í News*, speaks poignantly to these issues. Addressing the Bahá'í priority of privileging the spiritual sphere, the UHJ writes:

Because of such an attitude, as also because of our refusal to become involved in politics, Bahá'ís are often accused of holding aloof from the “real problems” of their fellow-man. But when we hear this accusation let us not forget that those who make it are usually idealistic materialists to whom material good is the only “real” good, whereas we know that the working of the material world is merely a reflection of spiritual conditions and until the spiritual conditions can be changed there can be no lasting change for the better in material affairs. We should also remember that most people have no clear concept of the sort of world they wish to build, nor how to go about building it. Even those who are concerned to improve conditions are therefore reduced to combating every apparent evil that takes their attention ... To enter into the quixotic tournament of demolishing one by one the evils in the world is, to a Bahá'í, a vain waste of time and efforts. His whole life is directed towards proclaiming the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, reviving the spiritual life of his fellow-men, uniting them in a divinely-created World Order, and then, as that Order grows in strength and influence, he will see the power of that Message transforming the whole of human society and progressively solving the problems and removing the injustices which have so long bedevilled the world.⁶¹

Drawing a sharp distinction between spiritual and material paths to social change, the UHJ underscores that Bahá'ís were neither ignorant of nor indifferent towards contemporary conditions of suffering and oppression. Rather, they consciously bypassed what they perceived as piecemeal efforts in favour of a more holistic divinely-prescribed solution.⁶²

From a Bahá'í perspective, it is essential to consider not only the manner in which the political impacts the spiritual, but similarly the ways in which the spirit world affects

political participation.

⁶¹ Cited in *CBN*, no.289 (Nov 1975), 8.

⁶² For references to and discussion of this holistic approach see, for example, Sandra Slobodian interview; *CBN*, no.231 (July 1969), 6; Sawin, “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” 123.

political developments within the physical realm. Speaking, for example, to the establishment of the UHJ in 1963, Mohawk Bahá'í Linda Loft Pappenberger explains:

I feel that with that happening worldwide, on a worldwide scale as far as voting, the process of it has been taken, and those individuals having that great station spiritually, for the world, naturally those forces are going to penetrate into spiritual souls. That may not even be Bahá'í! Because this here force is coming down, directly down, from the Creator to this body of souls. And therefore, 1960, my feeling, 60s and 70s, is gonna cause a lot of spiritual growth in various areas and particularly amongst Native people.⁶³

Linda cites as an example the founding of the Assembly of First Nations, the successor to the National Indian Brotherhood, formed in 1968:

And on a global scale, I look at that as, it was political, but what it did is bring to Canada a nation, like an Aboriginal nation, for, look at the Assembly of First Nations. You know, a Native person here can go and be with a Native person across the country and that's still your, you know, you're still under that body of the Assembly of First Nations. Like all as in life. And I mean, I may have never met that Native person, but I can relate to that Native person, having gone through the struggle of survival, through the ages.⁶⁴

Such demonstrations of divine agency, Linda asserts, are extremely powerful:

So all these forces, it just blows my mind, that period of time, all those forces takin' place on a spiritual level, it's gonna cause trigger, it's gonna trigger, the forces of, the energy, the energy from it is gonna trigger all other things to all other people, on the political scale as well as within their lives.⁶⁵

Linda's comments suggest that Bahá'í conceptions of politics – and, by extension, of history – are thus impacted not only by specific teachings concerning political participation, but also by faith in the potency of divine agency.⁶⁶

⁶³ Interview.

⁶⁴ Interview.

⁶⁵ Interview.

⁶⁶ Note that despite Linda's interpretation of the impact of the spiritual upon the political realm, she nevertheless chooses to abstain from direct political participation (interview).

On the ground experiences in British Columbia reveal that despite the centrality of the Bahá'í teachings on politics, there remained room for individual interpretation such as Linda's. Bahá'ís stress that the teachings on politics relate specifically to partisan political participation; the prohibition on such activity does not equate to apoliticism. Decisions concerning engagement with processes such as band politics, land claims, and treaty negotiations, they underscore, were, and remain, highly individualized ones.⁶⁷ So too do they relate to the equally-foundational Bahá'í principle of justice. As Gretchen Jordan-Bastow explains of the land claims process: “[i]t’s a question of justice. And Bahá’u’lláh says that, ‘The most beloved thing in my sight, in my eyes, is justice.’ Not love and forgiveness, justice.”⁶⁸ Indeed, the experiences of Bahá'í activists in British Columbia underscore that religious change is as much as a political “knowledge-producing activity” as it is a process of “spiritual self-transformation.”⁶⁹

Given the interpretive space that existed surrounding the issue of political participation, and the shape of the quest for justice, Aboriginal responses were not uniform. Robert George, for example, was highly active in treaty negotiation and land claims work as a youth. Subsequent to deepening in the Bahá'í Faith, however, he pulled back from this sphere of activity, choosing to abstain from endeavours such as road blockades within his traditional Quw'utsun' territory.⁷⁰ Chris Cook Jr., conversely, has

⁶⁷ See, for example, Bennett interview; Patrick and Sandra Slobodian interview; Carol Anne Hilton interview; Jim Kelly interview; Gretchen Jordan-Bastow interview; Jack Bastow interview; Robert George interview; Myra McGregor, interview with the author, 30 June 2004, Cultus Lake. On the Yukon context see Sawin, “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” 121-123; Verge, *Angus: From the Heart*, 198.

⁶⁸ Interview. Gretchen notes that there are Bahá'ís in British Columbia who are involved with land claims “on both sides,” contributing to key processes of negotiation and consultation. For further Bahá'í expressions on the principle of justice see Myra McGregor interview; Carol Anne Hilton interview; Robert George interview; Linda Loft Pappenberger interview.

⁶⁹ Gauri Viswanathan, *Outside the Fold: Conversion, Modernity, and Belief* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 43.

⁷⁰ Robert George interview; Horton, Fieldnotes, Interview.

elected to maintain his political posts. Chris explains that he struggled with the issue of political participation upon declaring in the Faith, asking of Bahá'ís such as Patrick Slobodian:

“Well, what about me? Where I’m at? I’m president of the Native Brotherhood [of British Columbia],” they don’t belong to political parties, eh? And I’ve worked with different political parties, you know, and well he [Patrick] said, “That’s a different kind of politics.” But I asked about it ‘cause there are Bahá'ís once they get into politics they have to get out of, or put the Faith over there, or something like that. So, I didn’t really agree with that part of it, because, I mean, that’s part of what I, I’m in all kinds of politics, around here, this kind of First Nations politics.⁷¹

In addition to working with various political parties and serving as the president of the Native Brotherhood, one of the oldest Aboriginal political organizations in British Columbia, Chris has served as a member of the ‘Namgis band council in Alert Bay for seventeen years.⁷² However, while his words suggest that Chris has personally reconciled his relationship with the Bahá'í Faith with his political positions, they similarly intimate that this relationship had its limits for others.⁷³

Some Aboriginal Bahá'ís engaged with the political process as a result of hereditary responsibilities. This can create tensions for Bahá'ís adverse to the divisive nature of politics. J.C. Lucas, for example, explains that:

⁷¹ Interview.

⁷² On the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia see, for example, J.E. Michael Kew, “History of Coastal British Columbia Since 1846,” in Wayne Suttles, vol. ed., *Handbook of North American Indians: Northwest Coast*, vol.7 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1990), 167; Dianne Newell, *Tangled Webs of History: Indians and the Law in Canada’s Pacific Coast Fisheries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 81, 109, 116. On Chris’ position as band councillor see <http://www.namgis.bc.ca/Ex/governance/index.asp?ID=8#councilor> (accessed 11 July 2005).

⁷³ I unfortunately do not have sufficient material to assess whether the decision to pull back from Bahá'í activity due to political participation that Chris refers to derived from a personal decision on the part of the individual in question or from pressure from the broader Bahá'í community. In her dissertation, “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” Carolyn Sawin notes that the National Spiritual Assembly confronted some Aboriginal members of the Faith in the Yukon concerning their political participation during the late 1980s and early 1990s, likely contributing to a decline in Aboriginal participation in the Faith in the region. See 121-122.

I have been invited and directed by chiefs to attend meetings, you know, and elders, say, “You’ll be there.” So I had to be there for treaty meetings and stuff. And band meetings. Now I just told them that they’re beautiful people, they’re capable of consulting and talkin’ to each other in a really dignified way, that we don’t have to be angry with each other and look at the source of all this business. Things like that I’ve told ‘em. And that we have a really high station as beings to strive for, just that we’re beautiful people and not get all tied up in a knot with these things. And, yeah, politics is so damaging. It keeps our people separate and plotting and scheming. In spite of all their goodness, they don’t realize they’re, that they’re in it, you know? It’s really divisive. It cuts deep into unity. Separates people. So I try not to go to meetings, but they ask me sometimes ‘cause I can still speak my language and, I can pray in my language, I can do a lot of things in our culture. Although other people will say, “No, that’s not the way to do it.” Or, “You did this wrong.” But I don’t pay attention to that. I say my prayers sincerely when they ask me to pray and then leave it, right?⁷⁴

While J.C. prefers to abstain from the political sphere, he participates when required by his traditional position within the Hesquiaht community. However, rather than engaging in confrontation, he grounds his participation within a spiritual framework, offering prayers and subtle reflections upon the Bahá’í process of consultation.⁷⁵

J.C. was not the sole Aboriginal Bahá’í to privilege prayer and unity over confrontation and division. While Dorothy Maquabeak Francis, for example, supported the principles of Aboriginal title and self-determination, she eschewed contemporary Red Power tactics.⁷⁶ Rather than engage the political sphere in direct confrontational terms, she too lent support to contemporary struggles through the power of her prayer and the gift she once described as the ability to “spark your spirit.”⁷⁷ The Red Power movement

⁷⁴ Interview.

⁷⁵ J.C.’s granddaughter, Carol Anne Hilton, similarly explains that her hereditary position within the Hesquiaht community requires her to engage in the political process; so too does her work as an economic investment counsellor for the band. For her reflections see Carol Anne Hilton interview. For the reflections of Aboriginal Bahá’is upon the Bahá’í process of consultation see Chris Cook Jr. interview; Sonny Voyageur interview; Jacob Bighorn, interview with the author, 11 Aug 2004, Duncan.

⁷⁶ Jeannette van Eldik, “Heritage and Culture – Dorothy Francis,” *The Other Press*, 24 Jan 1978, 17.

⁷⁷ Lyn Crompton, interview with the author, 29 Sept 2002, Langley. For reflections from Dorothy Francis on the importance of prayer see *CBN*, no.170 (March 1974), 2.

and subsequent Aboriginal political initiatives have also featured such spiritual elements as prayer.⁷⁸ However, these have been largely overlooked by scholars operating according to fixed conceptions of activism, understood primarily in terms of overt altercation with government and state. As James Treat observes, “[w]hile retrospective studies typically emphasize secular activity and rhetoric, firsthand reports on grassroots organizing often suggest that what was really going on was not political but religious or spiritual revolution.”⁷⁹

Despite this parallel, Sonny Voyageur has noted that there were factions within “Indian country” who opposed Dorothy as she was an advocate not of a militant and separatist position, but rather of a unified worldview.⁸⁰ In privileging the goal of unity over separatism, Bahá’ís opened themselves to potential censure from political activists. By embracing a vision that stressed the concepts of the oneness of religion and the oneness of mankind, they could perhaps have been interpreted as threatening contemporary Aboriginal claims predicated upon the reified element of race and a distinct “politics of difference.”⁸¹ This is particularly true in the case of British Columbia where the issues of land claims and treaty negotiations remain, with few exceptions, unresolved.⁸² In addition, in consciously privileging the spiritual realm, Bahá’ís could perhaps have been criticized by their political counterparts for remaining aloof of

⁷⁸ See, for example, Johnson, Champagne, and Nagel, “American Indian Transformation and Activism,” 308-309.

⁷⁹ Treat, *Around the Sacred Fire*, 25.

⁸⁰ Sonny Voyageur, conversation with the author, 30 Oct 2002, by telephone.

⁸¹ On the concept of a “politics of difference” see Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), xxx, 293, 301-304, 318.

⁸² On the British Columbian context see Paul Tennant, “Native Indian Political Activity in British Columbia, 1969-1983,” *BC Studies* 57 (Spring 1983): 112-136; Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*; Christopher McKee, *Treaty Talks in British Columbia: Negotiating a Mutually-Beneficial Future* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000); Steven Point, “Understanding Native Activism,” *BC Studies* 89 (Spring 1991): 124-129. On the Yukon Aboriginal Bahá’í context see Sawin, “Native Conversion, Native Identity,” 121-123, 171-176.

pressing contemporary realities of Aboriginal oppression, thus reinscribing ruling hegemonies.⁸³

The Power and Potential of the Bahá'í Spirit Path

On the ground experiences, however, suggest that Bahá'ís of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage alike were neither oblivious to conditions of Aboriginal marginalization nor unsympathetic towards Aboriginal claims of self-determination. Clearly, the quest for justice was of utmost concern. The Bahá'í quest itself, however, was grounded in an alternative framework than that typically acknowledged within scholarship. As James Treat has declared of the Aboriginal activist organizers of the Indian Ecumenical Conferences, “[i]f these tribal citizens were pacifist, they were not passive.”⁸⁴ Indeed, in the words of Robert George, “it’s [an] alternative way that we’re of service.”⁸⁵ “It’s not a deprivation,” Gretchen Jordan-Bastow asserts, “[i]t’s a more powerful way of allowing justice to happen.”⁸⁶ As conceptions of Aboriginal identity are contested and negotiated, so too are Aboriginal paths to liberation.⁸⁷

Spiritual revolution is, of course, decidedly less tangible and conducive to headline news coverage than its political variant and, as such, has featured less within the historical record and subsequent historiography alike. The Aboriginal-Bahá'í encounter, however, suggests the need to broaden our conceptions of activism and what has for too

⁸³ On the concept of hegemony see David Forgacs, ed., *The Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writing, 1916-1935* (New York: NYU Press, 2000); T.J. Jackson Lears, “The Concept of Cultural Hegemony,” *American Historical Review* 90 (1985): 567-593.

⁸⁴ Treat, *Around the Sacred Fire*, 15.

⁸⁵ Interview.

⁸⁶ Interview.

⁸⁷ In addition to Aboriginal political militancy, Bahá'í social reconstructionism may also be effectively contrasted with the seeming political passivity fostered amongst Aboriginal Pentecostal converts in Alaska. See Dombrowski, *Against Culture*, 172.

long been deemed the “Red Power era.” Motivated by the concept of service and the appeal to “let deeds, not words, be your adorning,” Bahá’ís made significant contributions within the fields of Aboriginal healing, cultural regeneration, education, and cross-cultural awareness-raising. Their actions blur the boundary between religious teaching and activism and reinforce, in the end effect, the powerful potential of spiritual approaches to the pursuit of social change.

CONCLUSIONS: FULL CIRCLE

As ye have faith so shall your powers and blessings be.
This is the balance -- this is the balance -- this is the balance.¹
'Abdu'l-Bahá

The drum beat relaxes, the dances cease, and Bobby Joseph approaches the microphone. On this mid summer's evening in August 2004, the Kwakwaka'wakw chief offers a formal address of gratitude to over twenty honoured guests participating in a potlatch in Alert Bay. These guests, some Aboriginal, some White, and some Persian, are neither tourists nor local residents, but rather members of the Bahá'í Faith on a religious service trip to the coastal British Columbian community. They were invited to perform a peace dance, in full regalia, by potlatch host James Speck, who was deeply appreciative of the contributions these Bahá'ís had made towards his family's gathering by assisting with food preparation and cooking throughout the weekend-long event. Following the dance, members of the Speck family travelled the circle of dancers ringing the fire at the centre of the big house and, with a handshake and the word *gilakas'la*, presented gifts of thanks to the Bahá'ís and the local Port Hardy family who had served as lead chefs. The group then turned to face Chief Joseph who reflected upon the common principle of service he sees underlining the local Aboriginal and the Bahá'í cultures. He then offered, once more, deep thanks to the Bahá'ís, words that elicited a

¹ Cited in Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh*, vol.4 (Oxford: George Ronald, 1987), 217 ('Abdu'l-Bahá reportedly shared these words in 1899 with the initial group of Western pilgrims to visit Him in the city of 'Akká).

standing ovation from the assembled members of the Kwakwaka'wakw community of Alert Bay.²

History is in many ways an amorphous entity with fluid boundaries between past and present. Certainly, the processes of religious encounter, change, and service initiated by the Bahá'í community in British Columbia during the mid-twentieth century are ongoing. Current developments such as those in the community of Alert Bay are powerful and significant ones worthy of detailed investigation unto themselves. And yet, the historical gaze affords necessary perspective within which to ground such analysis. Indeed, the historic Aboriginal-Bahá'í encounter in the province advances significant insights that resonate within the fields of Aboriginal history, Bahá'í history, and beyond.

At the most obvious level, the Aboriginal-Bahá'í encounter inserts Bahá'í experiences into the historiography on religious encounter in Aboriginal North America. It also challenges the constrained bounds of Bahá'í scholarship. By foregrounding voices, experiences, and perspectives previously absent, this historiographical expansion, coupled with the concrete interviews upon which this thesis is based, contributes to the significant task of broadening the historical record.

The implications of Aboriginal-Bahá'í relations, however, extend beyond the fulfilment of the “redemptive urge.” Within the field of North American Aboriginal history specifically, the subtlety and discretion with which the Bahá'í Faith was introduced to Aboriginal communities challenges static and polarized conceptions of religious teaching. The clear disjuncture witnessed between official Bahá'í discourse and concrete Bahá'í teaching experiences also reveals a key gap between rhetoric and

² Chelsea Horton, Fieldnotes, Speck Potlatch, Alert Bay, July-Aug 2004.

practice. That stereotypic and essentialist imagery of Aboriginal people did not manifest itself or translate on the ground into rigid and predetermined expectations for Aboriginal people suggests the importance of submitting both rhetoric and practice, and their potential discontinuities, to critical consideration within all contexts.

Bahá'í experiences in British Columbia speak also to contemporary processes of Aboriginal cultural regeneration. Cultural revival during the latter half of the twentieth century, the Bahá'í case suggests, was not limited to exclusively Aboriginal spheres, but could also be fostered through alternative religious frameworks. Such processes are illustrated not only through Bahá'í service efforts, but also through culturally-specific forms of deepening that encouraged Aboriginal Bahá'ís to connect with their respective heritage and culture.

The fluid processes of religious change witnessed amongst Aboriginal Bahá'ís, coupled with the organic nature of the Aboriginal-Bahá'í encounter as a whole, speak further to the broader challenge of how to treat spirituality seriously in historical terms. This endeavour includes a necessary sensitivity to language; vocabulary, and the conceptual frameworks underlining it, must be context-specific and appropriate. In the case of the Aboriginal-Bahá'í encounter, this includes discussion of processes of religious teaching and change, practices of pioneering, declaration, and deepening, and themes of prophecy, unity in diversity, and service. Sensitivity to language does not signal a lack of critical perspective. Rather, it helps move beyond false reductions and their attendant sets of assumptions. It also contributes to the crucial, but often overlooked task of framing analysis of spirituality in terms meaningful to those with whom one is working or, in the case of the more distant past, studying.

The issue of false reductions extends beyond language alone. Common as it is for scholars rooted within the secular humanist tradition, analysis of religious experience must not be wholly reduced to factors of social, material, and political strategy and context. While such elements did indeed influence Aboriginal reactions to and experiences in the Bahá'í Faith, they did not fully determine them. This is poignantly illustrated, for example, through the prominent role of dreams and visions within Aboriginal Bahá'í narratives. The centrality of these elements highlights culturally-specific understandings of Aboriginal Bahá'í history, experience, and identity as well as the potency of the spiritual realm. In the case of oral history methodology, treating seriously the reflections of consultants involves not only listening to what people say, but also paying attention to the broader context in which they articulate it.

Questions of spirituality, the Aboriginal-Bahá'í encounter illustrates, are not limited to processes of religious change and individual experience, but extend also to the level of action. Beyond contributions to Aboriginal cultural regeneration, Bahá'í service efforts in British Columbia highlight the powerful potential of spiritual approaches to social change more broadly. They blur the boundaries between political and religious activism, forcefully underscoring that conscious disengagement from the political sphere does not signal certain surrender or subjugation to ruling hegemonies. Bahá'ís, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, were acutely aware of inequality and the need for justice. They pursued this goal, however, along an alternative path than that characteristically recognized or discussed within academia.

While encouraging scholars to treat seriously the elements of spiritual experience and activity, the Aboriginal-Bahá'í encounter simultaneously offers a sobering reminder

of the continued potency of contemporary social context. As alternative a path as the Bahá'ís pursued, their actions remained grounded within a broader social context that vastly complicated the practical and lasting realization of the goals of equality and unity in diversity. That the Bahá'í community in particular, with its intense commitment to these goals, remained subject to power dynamics characterized by paternalism and non-Aboriginal cultural dominance underscores with compelling strength the pervasiveness of the colonial legacy. In the case of the Aboriginal-Bahá'í encounter, and, it is likely, within alternative postcolonial contexts, good intentions ultimately proved insufficient to fully transform intercultural interactions.

And yet, while not fully transformed, contact between non-Aboriginal Bahá'ís and Aboriginal people throughout British Columbia has nevertheless forcefully illustrated that interactions between the entrenched poles of violent confrontation and wholesale romanticization were indeed possible between these two groups. While the goals of equality and unity in diversity have yet to be fully realized within the Bahá'í community, the Faith has nevertheless served as a potent source of empowerment for Aboriginal adherents. Adoption of the Bahá'í Faith has not entailed a stark renunciation of preexisting forms of Aboriginal belief, practice, or identity. Rather, it has served as a firm source of confirmation and connection, reinforcing the validity of Aboriginal culture and fostering pride in Aboriginal heritage. From the inception of the Aboriginal-Bahá'í encounter in British Columbia, Bahá'ís have both advocated and embodied the powerful conviction that, in the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "As ye have faith so shall your powers and blessings be."

APPENDIX: GLOSSARY OF BAHÁ'Í TERMS

<i>'Abdu'l-Bahá:</i>	“Servant of Bahá’”; given name, ‘Abbás Effendi. The eldest surviving son of the prophet-founder of the Bahá’í Faith, Bahá’u’lláh, and His appointed successor. Born 23 May 1844; died 28 November 1921.
<i>Amatu'l-Bahá Rúyíyyih Khánum:</i>	Given name, Mary Sutherland Maxwell. Wife and secretary of Shoghi Effendi; appointed a Hand of the Cause of God in 1952.
<i>Auxiliary Board:</i>	Institution established by Shoghi Effendi in 1954 to support the Hands of the Cause; placed under the direction of the Continental Boards of Counsellors in 1968.
<i>Bahá'u'lláh:</i>	“Glory of God”; given name, Mírzá Husayn-‘Alí. The prophet-founder of the Bahá’í Faith. Born 12 November 1817; died 29 May 1892.
<i>Consolidation:</i>	The process of strengthening Bahá’í adherence, of translating official membership into practical and sustained forms of adherence. See deepening.
<i>Continental Board of Counsellors:</i>	Institution established by the Universal House of Justice in 1968 for the purpose of extending the functions of propagation and protection previously carried out by the Hands of the Cause (no further Hands could be appointed subsequent to Shoghi Effendi’s death).
<i>Declaration:</i>	The act of officially becoming a Bahá’í; the “statement of belief made by one who wishes to become a Bahá’í.” ¹
<i>Declaration Card:</i>	A card declarants sign upon officially joining the Bahá’í Faith. Used primarily in Western countries, to determine membership composition.
<i>Deepening:</i>	A lifelong process of Bahá’í learning consisting of the “study of the Bahá’í Faith in all its aspects.” ² Includes familiarizing oneself with the Bahá’í Sacred Texts, teachings, laws, principles, and administrative order.

¹ Wendi Momen, ed., *A Basic Bahá’í Dictionary* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1989), 66.

² Momen, *A Basic Bahá’í Dictionary*, 68.

<i>Hands of the Cause of God:</i>	Bahá'ís appointed by Bahá'u'lláh, and later Shoghi Effendi, charged with the protection and propagation of the Bahá'í Faith. Upon Shoghi Effendi's death in 1957, the Hands of the Cause were the leaders of the Bahá'í world until the election of the Universal House of Justice in 1963.
<i>Local Spiritual Assembly:</i>	The local administrative institution of the Bahá'í Faith; composed of nine elected members from throughout a given local territory.
<i>Manifestation of God:</i>	Prophet of God.
<i>National Spiritual Assembly:</i>	The national administrative institution of the Bahá'í Faith; composed of nine elected members from throughout a given national territory.
<i>Naw Rúz:</i>	“New Day”; Bahá'í New Year, celebrated on the spring equinox (generally 21 March).
<i>New World Order:</i>	Also, the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. The “Divine Civilization” envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh and further refined by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi.
<i>Nineteen Day Feast:</i>	The major ritual institution in the Bahá'í Faith; adherents gather locally every nineteen days for the Feast, which includes devotional, administrative, and social components.
<i>Pioneer:</i>	A Bahá'í who moves to another geographic locale for the purpose of expanding the territorial reach of the Bahá'í Faith.
<i>Proselytization:</i>	The act of compelling someone to convert from one religion or set of beliefs to another, prohibited for Bahá'ís.
<i>Shoghi Effendi:</i>	“The Guardian” of the Bahá'í Faith. Grandson of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and His appointed successor. Born 1 March 1887; died 5 November 1957.
<i>Universal House of Justice:</i>	The international Bahá'í administrative institution, based in Haifa, Israel; composed of nine elected members (confined to men) from throughout the Bahá'í world. First elected in 1963. Bahá'ís consider the institution, but not its individual members, infallible.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Interviews and Personal Communications

Note that copies of the tapes and transcripts from interviews conducted by the author during 2004 are to be deposited at the Kalakwáhti Studies Centre Audio-Visual Archives located in Youbou, British Columbia.

- Bastow, Jack. Interview with the author, 29 July 2004, Vancouver, British Columbia. Tape recording.
- Benndorf, Ella. Interview with the author, 4 September 2002, Coquitlam, British Columbia. Tape recording.
- Bennett, Fletcher and Elinor. Interview with the author, 21 July 2004, Saanich, British Columbia. Tape recording.
- Bighorn, Jacob. Conversation with the author, 22 July 2004, Youbou, British Columbia.
- Bighorn, Jacob. Interview with the author, 11 August 2004, Duncan, British Columbia. Tape recording.
- Carlson, Barry. Conversation with the author, 2 March 2005. By telephone.
- Cook, Steve. Conversation with the author, 31 July 2004, Alert Bay, British Columbia.
- Cook, Chris, Jr. Interview with the author, 7 June 2004, West Vancouver, British Columbia. Tape recording.
- Crompton, Lyn. Interview with the author, 29 September 2002, Langley, British Columbia. Tape recording.
- Filson, Gerald (Director of External Affairs for the Bahá'í Community of Canada). Email to the author, 24 October 2002.
- George, Robert. Interview with the author, 5 October 2004, Duncan, British Columbia. Tape recording.
- Hess, Thom. Conversation with the author, 25 November 2004. By telephone.
- Hildebrandt, Shirley. Conversation with the author, 10 November 2002. By telephone.
- Hilton, Carol Anne. Interview with the author, 7 October 2004, Nanaimo, British Columbia. Tape recording.
- Irwin, Lily Ann. Interview with Carrie Jensen, 6 October 1982, Penticton, British Columbia.

- Jordan-Bastow, Gretchen. Interview with the author, 12 September 2002, Vancouver, British Columbia. Tape recording.
- Jordan-Bastow, Gretchen. Interview with the author, 26 September 2004, Vancouver, British Columbia. Tape recording.
- Kelly, Jim. Conversation with the author, 7 August 2004. By telephone.
- Kelly, Jim. Interview with the author, 6 October 2004, Shawnigan Lake, British Columbia. Tape recording.
- Left Hand Bull, Jacqueline. "The Return of the 'White Buffalo Calf Woman': Prophecy of the Lakota." Interview with Patricia Locke, 1989.
- Loft Pappenberger, Linda. Interview with the author, 16 August 2004, Meades Creek, British Columbia. Tape recording.
- Lucas, J.C. Interview with the author, 6 October 2004, Nanaimo, British Columbia. Tape recording.
- McGregor, Myra. Interview with the author, 30 June 2004, Cultus Lake, British Columbia. Tape recording.
- Nygaard, Raudger. Conversation with the author, 7 August 2004. By telephone.
- Nygaard, Raudger. Interview with the author, 12 August 2004, Chemainus, British Columbia. Tape recording.
- Sargent, John. Conversation with the author, 16 February 2005. By telephone.
- Slavin, Lindsay (Department of Archives, Bahá'í National Centre). Email to the author, 15 September 2004.
- Slobodian, Patrick and Sandra. Interview with the author, 20 July 2004, Victoria, British Columbia. Tape recording.
- Synders Blok, Lida. Interview with the author, 13 August 2004, Mill Bay, British Columbia. Tape recording.
- Turner, Nancy. Conversation with the author, 9 February 2005. By telephone.
- Voyageur, Sonny. Conversation with the author, 30 October 2002. By telephone.
- Voyageur, Sonny. Interview with the author, 12 November 2004, North Vancouver, British Columbia. Tape recording.

Personal Collections

- Benndorf, Ella. Personal Papers.
- Bennett, Fletcher and Elinor. Personal Papers.

Horton, Chelsea. Personal Fieldnotes. 2004-2005.

Unpublished Primary Sources

“A Message to the Indians.” Toronto: National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha’is of Canada, n.d.

Bahá’í Canada, nos.290-316 (Dec 1975-Aug 1978); 2, no.1-11, no.1 (May 1979-March/April 1989).

Bahá’í Community of Canada. “A Presentation by the Canadian Bahá’í Community to the Participating Organizations of the Canadian Conference on Human Rights, Ottawa, December 1-3, 1968.” 1968.

_____. “The Right to an Identity.” n.d. (1968-69).

_____. “The Future of Canada: A Bahá’í Perspective.” Toronto: Bahá’í Canada Publications, 1984.

_____. “The Canadian Bahá’í Community Submission to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.” 10 September 1993.

“Bahá’í Faith: The Spirit Way.” Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, n.d. (1973?).

Bahá’í News, nos.41-151 (June 1953-Aug 1962).

Bulletin, nos.1-7 (Sept 1978-March 1979).

Canadian Bahá’í News, nos.1-40 (May 1948-April 1953); nos.152-289 (Sept 1962-Nov 1975).

Francis, Dorothy. Letter to Ketha Adams, 27 February 1964. Ketha Adams (Pitts) Fonds, Id. 1944, Acc. No. 911.3, Folder 15 (Dorothy Francis). Alberni District Historical Society Archives.

Goldthorpe, W.G. “Report to the Minister, Indian Health and Health Care, Alert Bay, B.C.” April 1980.

Indian Eskimo Association of Canada. “Conference on Concerns of Indians in British Columbia; Theme: Equal Opportunity in Our Land.” Vancouver, British Columbia, 24 December 1966.

Irwin, Arthur. “Early Native Teaching in Canada.” Unpublished memoir, 1983.

Khánum, Rúhíyyih. “The Promised Letter.” In *Bahá’í News*, no.132 (Jan 1961), insert.

_____. “Message to the Indian and Eskimo Bahá’is of the Western Hemisphere.” Toronto: Bahá’í Canada Publications, August 1969 (reprinted by the Native American Bahá’í Institute, 2000).

National Indian Reserves Teaching Committee. “Indians of Canada: Looking to the Future.” 1964.

_____. "Indians of Canada: A Guide for Teaching." n.d. [1965?].

Reynolds, Audrie. "A Mighty River: Selections from the Bahá'í Writings." Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1977.

Tuttle, Pauline. Video of Spencer McCarty speaking at the Neah Bay Council Fire. 23 Aug 1998. 98.9-HT, Tuttle Collection.

Published Primary Sources

'Abdu'l-Bahá. *'Abdu'l-Bahá on Divine Philosophy*. Elizabeth Fraser Chamberlain, comp. Boston: Tudor Press, 1918.

'Abdu'l-Bahá. *Tablets of the Divine Plan*. Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1993 (revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1916 and 1917).

Bahá'í Community of Canada. "Issues of Concern to the World's Aboriginal Peoples." November 1993. <http://www.bahai.org/article-1-9-1-8.html> (accessed 11 July 2005).

Bahá'í World Centre. "Political Non-Involvement." <http://www.bahaistudies.net/non-political.html> (accessed 6 July 2005).

Bahá'u'lláh. *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh* (Persian). http://bahai-library.com/?file=bahullah_hidden_words#P5 (accessed 11 July 2005).

_____. *The Kitáb-I-Íqán: The Book of Certitude*. Shoghi Effendi, trans. London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1946 (first translated 1931).

Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. *Bahá'í Scriptures*. 2nd ed. Horace Holley, ed. New York: Brentano's, 1923.

Canada. "International Year for Human Rights 1968 in Canada: Report of Proceedings: National Conference on Human Rights and Activities of the Canadian Commission." Ottawa, 1969.

Canadian Interfaith Conference. *Canadian Centennial Anthology of Prayer*. Ottawa: Mutual Press, 1967.

Cardinal, Harold. *The Unjust Society*. 2nd ed. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1999 (first published 1969).

Effendi, Shoghi. *Guidance for Today and Tomorrow*. London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1953.

_____. *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Selected Letters*. Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1991 (first published 1938).

_____. *Messages to Canada*. Thornhill, ON: Bahá'í Canada Publications, 1999.

- Effendi, Shoghi and Universal House of Justice. *A Special Measure of Love: The Importance and Nature of the Teaching Work Among the Masses*. Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974.
- _____. *Political Non-Involvement and Obedience to Government*. Peter Khan, comp. Mona Vale, NSW: Bahá'í Publications Australia, 1979.
- Hawthorn, H.B., ed. *A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: Economic, Political, Education Needs and Policies*. Vol.2. Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs, 1967.
- Indian Chiefs of Alberta. *Citizens Plus*. Edmonton: Alberta Indian Association, 1970.
- Kahn, Annie, Olin Karch, and Blu Mundy. *Four Remarkable Indian Prophecies of the Navajos, Toltecs, Mayas and Indians of Idaho*. Happy Camp, CA: Naturegraph, 1963.
- Seton, Ernest Thompson and Julia M. Seton, comps. *The Gospel of the Redman: A Way of Life*. Santa Fe: Seton Village, 1966 (first published 1936).
- “The Maquabeak Council.” 1987 Legislative Session: 1st Session, 34th Parliament, Government of British Columbia, Hansard. http://www.legis.gov.bc.ca/hansard/34th1st/34p_01s_870605a.htm (accessed 11 July 2005).
- Universal House of Justice. *Wellspring of Guidance: Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1963-1968*. Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1969.
- _____. *Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1968-1973*. Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976.
- _____. *Aspects of Traditional African Culture*. August 1998 (accessed from the Ocean database 23 July 2004).
- _____. *Century of Light*. Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 2001.
- Universal House of Justice, comp. *The Importance of Teaching Indigenous People*. Toronto: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, 1968.
- Willoya, William and Vinson Brown. *Warriors of the Rainbow: Strange and Prophetic Dreams of the Indian Peoples*. Happy Camp, CA: Naturegraph, 1962.
- Wuttunee, William I.C. *Ruffled Feathers: Indians in Canadian Society*. Calgary: Bell Books, 1971.

Unpublished Secondary Sources

- Beaston, Littlebrave. “American Indians and the Bahá'í Faith – Teaching Indians in the City.” Paper presented at the Association for Bahá'í Studies Conference, Calgary, Alberta, September 2004.

- Echevarria, Lynn. "Working Through the Vision: Religion and Identity in the Life Histories of Bahá'í Women in Canada." PhD dissertation, University of Essex, 2000.
- Lindsay, George A. "A History of the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre in an Age of Aboriginal Migration and Urbanization." MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1998.
- Pemberton-Piggot, Andrew. "The Bahá'í Faith in Alberta; 1942-1992: The Ethic of Dispersion." MA thesis, University of Alberta, 1992.
- Sawin, Carolyn Patterson. "Native Conversion, Native Identity: An Oral History of the Bahá'í Faith among First Nations People in the Southern Central Yukon Territory, Canada." PhD dissertation, University of Washington, 2000.
- Sawin, Carolyn. "Recognizing Whiteness: Cultural Difference and Cultural Dominance in North American Bahá'í Communities." Unpublished manuscript, n.d. (an earlier version of this paper was presented at the Association for Bahá'í Studies Conference, Mississauga, Ontario, August 2002).
- Siggner, Andrew and Chantal Locatelli. "An Overview of Demographic, Social and Economic Conditions Among British Columbia's Registered Indian Population." Research Branch, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program, 20 October 1980.
- Stanbury, W.T. "The Social and Economic Conditions of Indian Families in British Columbia." November 1974.
- Tuttle, Pauline. "The Hoop of Many Hoops: The Integration of Lakota Ancestral Knowledge and Bahá'í Teachings in the Performative Practices of Kevin Locke." PhD dissertation, University of Washington, 2002.

Published Secondary Sources

- Aberle, David. "A Note on Relative Deprivation Theory As Applied to Millenarian and Other Cult Movements." In William Less and Evon Z. Vogt, eds. *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*. 2nd ed. New York: Harper and Row, 1965, 537-541.
- Adams, Howard. *Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View*. Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1989.
- Amoss, Pamela. *Coast Salish Spirit Dancing: The Survival of an Ancestral Religion*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978.
- Arima, E.Y., Denis St. Claire, Louis Clamhouse, Joshua Edgar, Charles Jones, and John Thomas. *Between Ports Alberni and Renfrew: Notes on West Coast Peoples*. Canadian Ethnology Service, Mercury Series Paper 121, Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1991.

- Asad, Talal. "Comments on Conversion." In Peter van der Veer, ed. *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalization of Christianity*. New York: Routledge, 1996, 263-274.
- Atleo (Umeek), E. Richard. *Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004.
- Axtell, James. "Some Thoughts on the Ethnohistory of Missions." *Ethnohistory* 29, no.1 (1982): 35-41.
- Baird-Olson, Karren. "Reflections of an AIM Activist: Has It All Been Worth It?" In Kathleen M. Blee, ed. *No Middle Ground: Women and Radical Protest*. New York: New York University Press, 1998, 133-155.
- Balyuzi, H.M. *Bahá'u'lláh: The King of Glory*. Oxford: George Ronald, 1980.
- Barker, John. "Bibliography of Missionary Activity and Religious Change in Northwest Coast Societies." *Northwest Anthropological Research Notes* 22, no.1 (Spring 1988): 13-58.
- Bear, Shirley with the Tobique Women's Group. "You Can't Change the Indian Act?" In Jeri Dawn Wine and Janice L. Ristock, eds. *Women and Social Change: Feminist Activism in Canada*. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1991, 198-220.
- Beaver, R. Pierce, ed. *The Native American Christian Community: A Directory of Indian, Aleut, and Eskimo Churches*. Monrovia, CA: Missions Advanced Research and Communication Center, 1979.
- Beaver, R. Pierce. "Protestant Churches and the Indians." In Wilcomb E. Washburn, vol. ed. *Handbook of North American Indians: History of Indian-White Relations*. Vol.4. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1988, 430-458.
- Bharucha, Rustom. *The Question of Faith*. Tracts for the Times, no.3. New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1993.
- Bibby, Reginald W. *Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada*. Toronto: Stoddart, 1987.
- _____. *Unknown Gods: The Ongoing Story of Religion in Canada*. Toronto: Stoddart, 1993.
- _____. *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada*. Toronto: Stoddart, 2002.
- Bolt, Clarence. *Thomas Crosby and the Tshimshian: Small Shoes for Feet too Large*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992.
- Borland, Kathryn. "'That's Not What I Said': Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research." In Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson, eds. *The Oral History Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1998, 320-332.

- Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Forms of Capital." In John G. Richardson, ed. *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood, 1986, 241-258.
- Brand, Stewart. "Indians and the Counterculture, 1960s-1970s." In Wilcomb E. Washburn, vol. ed. *Handbook of North American Indians: History of Indian-White Relations*. Vol.4. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1988, 571-572.
- Brock, Peggy. "Building Bridges: Politics and Religion in a First Nations Community." *Canadian Historical Review* 81, no.1 (March 2000): 67-97.
- Buck, Christopher. "Native Messengers of God in Canada? A Test Case for Bahá'í Universalism." *Bahá'í Studies Review* 6 (1996). http://www.breacais.demon.co.uk/abs/bsr06/66_buck_messengers.htm (accessed 11 July 2005).
- Burke, James. *Paper Tomahawks: From Red Tape to Red Power*. Winnipeg: Queenston House Publishing, 1976.
- Burns, Robert I. "Roman Catholic Missions in the Northwest." In Wilcomb E. Washburn, vol. ed. *Handbook of North American Indians: History of Indian-White Relations*. Vol.4. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1988, 494-500.
- Burridge, Kenelm. *New Heaven, New Earth: A Study of Millenarian Activities*. New York: Schocken Books, 1969.
- Carlson, Barry and John Thomas. "The Nitinaht Inferential." *Anthropological Linguistics* 21 (1979): 317-327.
- Carlson, Joyce, ed. *Dancing the Dream: The First Nations and the Church in Partnership*. Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1995.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Cole, Douglas and Ira Chaikin. *An Iron Hand Upon the People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast*. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1990.
- Cole, Juan. "The Bahá'í Faith in America as Panopticon, 1963-1997." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37, no.2 (1998): 234-248.
- Collier, John. *Indians of the Americas*. New York: Norton, 1947.
- Cruikshank, Julie. "Myth and Tradition as Narrative Framework: Oral Histories from Northern Canada." *International Journal of Oral History* 9, no.3 (1988): 198-214.
- _____. "Claiming Legitimacy: Prophecy Narratives from Northern Aboriginal Women." *American Indian Quarterly* 18, no.2 (Spring 1994): 147-167 (accessed from the Academic Search Elite database, 6 April 2004).
- _____. "Negotiating with Narrative: Establishing Cultural Identity at the Yukon International Storytelling Festival." *American Anthropologist* 99, no.1 (1997): 56-69.

- _____. *The Social Life of Stories: Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998.
- Cruikshank, Julie, in collaboration with Angela Sidney, Kitty Smith, and Annie Ned. *Life Lived Like a Story – Life Stories of Three Yukon Native Elders*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990.
- Culhane Speck, Dara. *An Error in Judgement: The Politics of Medical Care in an Indian-White Community*. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987.
- Deloria, Philip. *Playing Indian*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Deloria, Philip. "Counterculture Indians and the New Age." In Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle, eds. *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and 70s*. New York: Routledge, 2002, 159-188.
- Devens, Carol. *Countering Colonization: Native American Women and Great Lakes Missions, 1630-1900*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
- Dickason, Olive Patricia. *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1984.
- _____. *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992.
- Dombrowski, Kirk. *Against Culture: Development, Politics, and Religion in Indian Alaska*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001.
- Dosman, Edgar. *Indians: The Urban Dilemma*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972.
- Dunaway, David K. and Willa K. Baum, eds. *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Reader*. 2nd ed. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 1996.
- Fisher, Robin. *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*. 2nd ed. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992.
- Forgacs, David, ed. *The Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writing, 1916-1935*. New York: NYU Press, 2000.
- Francis, Daniel. *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canada*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992.
- Garrouette, Eva Marie. *Real Indians: Identity and the Survival of Native America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- Geertz, Clifford. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973, 3-30.
- Green, Anna and Kathleen Troup. "Oral History." In *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth-Century History and Theory*. New York: New York University Press, 1999, 230-252.

- Griffiths, Nicholas and Fernando Cervantes, eds. *Spiritual Encounters: Interactions Between Christianity and Native Religions in Colonial America*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.
- Grumet, Robert S., ed. *Revitalization and Mazeways: Essays on Culture Change*. Vol.1. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003.
- Haig-Brown, Celia. *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. Vancouver: Tillacum Library, 1988.
- Harkin, Michael E. *The Heiltsuks: Dialogues of Culture and History on the Northwest Coast*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.
- Harkin, Michael, ed. *Reassessing Revitalization Movements: Perspectives from North America and the Pacific Islands*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004.
- Harmon, Alexandra. "Wanted: More Histories of Indian Identity." In Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury, eds. *A Companion to American Indian History*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002, 248-265.
- Harris, Cole. *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002.
- Harvey, Graham. "Introduction." In *Readings in Indigenous Religions*. New York: Continuum, 2002.
- Hatcher, William S. and J. Douglas Martin. *The Bahá'í Faith: The Emerging Global Religion*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984.
- Hays, H.R. *Children of the Raven: The Seven Indian Nations of the Northwest Coast*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1975.
- Hefner, Robert W., ed. *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Hernández-Ávila, Inés. "Mediations of the Spirit: Native American Religious Traditions and the Ethics of Representation." In Lee Irwin, ed. *Native American Spirituality: A Critical Reader*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000, 11-36.
- Hertzberg, Hazel. *The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1971.
- Hipsky, Marty. "Romancing Bourdieu: A Case Study in Gender Politics in the Literary Field." In Nicholas Brown and Imre Szeman, eds. *Pierre Bourdieu: Fieldwork in Culture*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000, 186-206.
- Hodgson, Janet and Jayant S. Kothare. *Vision Quest: Native Spirituality and the Church in Canada*. Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1990.

- Hollinger, Richard. "Introduction: Bahá'í Communities in the West, 1982-1992." In *Community Histories: Studies in the Babí and Bahá'í Religions*. Vol.6. Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 1992, vii-xlix.
- Hornby, Helen, comp. *Lights of Guidance: A Bahá'í Reference File*. New Delhi: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988.
- Horton, Chelsea. "Beyond Red Power: The Alternative Activism of Dorothy Maquabeak Francis." *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies*, in press.
- Irwin, Lee. "Native American Spirituality: An Introduction." In *Native American Spirituality: A Critical Reader*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000, 1-8.
- James, Daniel. "Listening in the Cold: The Practice of Oral History in an Argentinean Meatpacking Community." In *Doña María's Story: Life History, Memory, and Political Community*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000, 119-156.
- Jenkins, Philip. *Dream Catchers: How Mainstream America Discovered Native Spirituality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Jocks, Christopher Ronwanièn:te. "Spirituality for Sale: Sacred Knowledge in the Consumer Age." In Lee Irwin, ed. *Native American Spirituality: A Critical Reader*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000, 61-77.
- Johnson, Troy, Joane Nagel, and Duane Champagne, eds. *American Indian Activism: Alcatraz to the Longest Walk*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997.
- Johnson, Troy, Duane Champagne, and Joane Nagel. "American Indian Activism and Transformation: Lessons from Alcatraz." In Troy Johnson, ed. *Contemporary Native American Political Issues*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 1999, 283-314.
- Josephy, Alvin M., Joane Nagel, and Troy Johnson, eds. *Red Power: The American Indians' Fight for Freedom*. 2nd ed. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.
- Kan, Sergei. "Russian Orthodox Brotherhoods Among the Tlingit: Missionary Goals and Native Response." *Ethnohistory* 32 (1985): 196-223.
- Kan, Sergei. *Memory Eternal: Tlingit Culture and Russian Orthodox Christianity Through Two Cultures*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999.
- Kew, J.E. Michael. "Central and Coast Salish Ceremonies Since 1900." In Wayne Suttles, vol. ed. *Handbook of North American Indians: Northwest Coast*. Vol.7. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1990, 476-480.
- Kew, J.E. Michael. "History of Coastal British Columbia Since 1846." In Wayne Suttles, vol. ed. *Handbook of North American Indians: Northwest Coast*. Vol.7. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1990, 159-168.
- Kew, John Edward Michael. "Coast Salish Ceremonial Life: Status and Identity in a Modern Village." PhD Dissertation, University of Washington, 1970.

- Kidwell, Clara Sue, Homer Noley, and George E. 'Tink' Tinker. *A Native American Theology*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2001.
- Kilbourn, William, ed. *Religion in Canada: The Spiritual Development of a Nation*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968.
- Kirk Ruth. *Tradition and Change on the Northwest Coast: The Makah, Nuu-chah-nulth, Southern Kwakiutl and Nuxalk*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986.
- Krech, Shepard, III. *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999.
- Lears, T.J. Jackson. *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1981.
- Lears, T.J. Jackson. "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony." *American Historical Review* 90 (1985): 567-593.
- Lewis, Claudia. *Indian Families on the Northwest Coast*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.
- McKay, Ian. *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth Century Nova Scotia*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994.
- McKee, Christopher. *Treaty Talks in British Columbia: Negotiating a Mutually Beneficial Future*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000.
- McMullen, Michael. *The Bahá'í: The Religious Construction of a Global Identity*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2000.
- MacLean, Derryl. *Religion and Society in Arab Sind*. New York: E.J. Brill, 1989.
- MacEoin, Denis. "Bahá'í Fundamentalism and the Academic Study of the Bábí Movement." *Religion* 16 (1986): 57-84.
- MacEoin, Denis. *Rituals in Babism and Baha'ism*. London: British Academic Press, 1994.
- Manuel, George and Michael Posluns. *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality*. New York: The Free Press, 1974.
- Medick, Hans. "Missionaries in the Row Boat? Ethnological Ways of Knowing as a Challenge to Social History." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29, no.1 (Jan 1987): 76-98.
- Meyer, Carter Jones and Diana Royer. "Introduction." In *Selling the Indian: Commercializing and Appropriating American Indian Cultures*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001, xi-xix.
- Miller, J.R. *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996.

- Milloy, John S. *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879-1986*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999.
- Mol, Hans. *Faith and Fragility: Religion and Identity in Canada*. Burlington, ON: Trinity Press, 1985.
- Momen, Wendi, ed. *A Basic Bahá'í Dictionary*. Oxford: George Ronald, 1989.
- Morrison, Kenneth. "Baptism and Alliance: The Symbolic Mediations of Religious Syncretism." *Ethnohistory* 37 (1990): 416-437.
- Morrison, Kenneth. *The Solidarity of Kin: Ethnohistory, Religious Studies, and the Algonquian-French Religious Encounter*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002.
- Newell, Dianne. *Tangled Webs of History: Indians and the Law in Canada's Pacific Coast Fisheries*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.
- Neylan, Susan. *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003.
- Nock, David A., ed. *A Victorian Missionary and Canadian Indian Policy: Cultural Synthesis vs. Cultural Replacement*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, published for the Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, 1980.
- Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council. *Indian Residential Schools: The Nuu-chah-nulth Experience*. Canada: Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, 1996.
- O'Leary, Stephen D. *Arguing the Apocalypse: A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Ouellette, Grace. *The Fourth World: An Indigenous Perspective on Feminism and Aboriginal Women's Activism*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2002.
- Patterson, E. Palmer. "Native Missionaries of the North Pacific Coast: Philip McKay and Others." *The Pacific Historian* 30, no.1 (Spring 1986): 23-37.
- Peers, Laura. "'The Guardian of All': Jesuit Missionary and Salish Perceptions of the Virgin Mary." In Jennifer S.H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert, eds. *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History*. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1996, 284-303.
- Perks, Robert and Alistair Thompson, eds. *The Oral History Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Point, Steven. "Understanding Native Activism." *BC Studies* 89 (Spring 1991): 124-129.
- Ponting, J. Rick, ed. *Arduous Journey: Canadian Indians and Decolonization*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986.

- Ponting, J. Rick and Roger Gibbins. *Out of Irrelevance: A Socio-Political Introduction to Indian Affairs in Canada*. Toronto: Butterworths, 1980.
- Portelli, Alessandro. *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1991.
- Portelli, Alessandro. *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997.
- Portelli, Alessandro. "What Makes Oral History Different." In Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson, eds. *The Oral History Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1998, 63-74.
- Price, John A. "Mormon Missions to the Indians." In Wilcomb E. Washburn, vol. ed. *Handbook of North American Indians: History of Indian-White Relations*. Vol.4. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1988, 459-463.
- Purich, Donald. *Our Land: Native Rights in Canada*. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1986.
- Raibmon, Paige. "'A New Understanding of Things Indian': George Raley's Negotiation of the Residential School Experience." *BC Studies* 110 (Summer 1996): 69-96.
- Raibmon, Paige. "Theatres of Contact: The Kwakwaka'wakw Meet Colonialism in British Columbia and at the Chicago World's Fair." *Canadian Historical Review* 81 (June 2000): 157-190.
- Rambo, Lewis. *Understanding Religious Conversion*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.
- Ray, Arthur J. *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began: An Illustrated History of Canada's Native People*. Toronto: Lester Publishing and Key Porter Books, 1996.
- Ridington, Robin. *Trail to Heaven: Knowledge and Narrative in a Northern Native Community*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988.
- Ridington, Robin. *Little Bit Know Something: Stories in a Language of Anthropology*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1990.
- Ridington, Robin. "Voice, Representation, and Dialogue: The Poetics of Native American Spiritual Traditions." In Lee Irwin, ed. *Native American Spirituality: A Critical Reader*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000, 97-120.
- Robbins, Bruce. *Secular Vocations: Intellectuals, Professionalism, Culture*. London: Verso, 1993.
- Robertson, Heather. *Reservations are for Indians*. Toronto: James Lewis & Samuel, 1970.
- Ronda, James P. "Generations of Faith: The Christian Indians of Martha's Vineyard." In Albert Hurtado and Peter Iverson, eds. *Major Problems in American Indian History*. Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1994, 117-137.

- Rutherford, Myra. *Women and the White Man's God: Gender and Race in the Canadian Mission Field*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002.
- Ryan, Joan. *Wall of Words: The Betrayal of the Urban Indian*. Toronto: Peter Martine, 1978.
- Shepherd, William C. "Conversion and Adhesion." In Harry M. Johnson, ed. *Religious Change and Continuity*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1979, 251-263.
- Sleeper Smith, Susan. "Women, Kin, and Catholicism: New Perspectives on the Fur Trade." *Ethnohistory* 47, no.2 (2000): 423-452.
- Smith, Peter. *A Short History of the Bahá'í Faith*. Oxford: Oneworld, 1995.
- Smith, Peter. *The Babi and Bahá'í Religions: From Messianic Shi'ism to a World Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Spradley, James P. with James Sewid. *Guests Never Leave Hungry: The Autobiography of James Sewid, A Kwakiutl Indian*. London: Yale University Press, 1969.
- Stanbury, W.T. *Success and Failure: Indians in Urban Society*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1975.
- Stevenson, Winona. "The Journals and Voices of a Church of England Native Catechist: Askenootow (Charles Pratt), 1851-1884." In Jennifer S.H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert, eds. *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History*. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1996, 304-329.
- Stewart, Charles and Rosalind Shaw. "Introduction: Problematizing Syncretism." In *Syncretism/Antisyncretism: The Politics of Religious Synthesis*. New York: Routledge, 1994, 1-26.
- Suttles, Wayne. "The Plateau Prophet Dance among the Coast Salish." In *Coast Salish Essays*. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987, 152-198.
- Taherzadeh, Adib. *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh*. Vol.1. Oxford: George Ronald, 1974.
- _____. *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh*. Vol.4. Oxford: George Ronald, 1987.
- Taylor Huber, Mary and Nancy C. Lutkehaus, eds. *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999.
- Tennant, Paul. "Native Indian Political Activity in British Columbia, 1969-1983." *BC Studies* 57 (Spring 1983): 112-136.
- Tennant, Paul. *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990.
- Thomas, John A. "Nootkan Band Names." Papers of the 12th International Conference on Salishan Languages. Nespelem, WA: Colville Confederated Tribes, 1977.

- Thomas, John, Nancy Turner, Barry Carlson, and Robert Ogilvie. "Ethnobotany of the Nitinaht Indians of Vancouver Island." Occasional Papers Series 24. Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1983.
- Thomas, John Tl'ishal and Thom Hess. *An Introduction to Nitinaht Language and Culture*. Victoria: University of Victoria Press, 1981.
- Thomas, Richard W. *Racial Unity: An Imperative for Social Progress*. Ottawa: Bahá'í Studies Publications, 1993.
- Thompson, Paul. *The Voice of the Past*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Throop, C. Jason. "Articulating Experience." *Anthropological Theory* 3, no.2 (2003): 219-241.
- Trafzer, Clifford E., ed. "American Indian Prophets: Religious Leaders and Revitalization Movements." Special Issue of *American Indian Quarterly* 9, no.3 (Summer 1985).
- Treat, James, ed. *Native and Christian: Indigenous Voices on Religious Identity in the United States and Canada*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Treat, James. *Around the Sacred Fire: Native Religious Activism in the Red Power Era: A Narrative Map of the Indian Ecumenical Conference*. New York: Palgrave, 2003.
- Tuttle, Pauline. "'Beyond Feathers and Beads': Interlocking Narratives in the Music and Dance of Tokeya Inajin (Kevin Locke)." In Carter Jones Meyer and Diana Royer, eds. *Selling the Indian: Commercializing and Appropriating American Indian Cultures*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001, 99-156.
- Usher, Jean. *William Duncan of Metlakatla: A Victorian Missionary in British Columbia*. Publications in History No.5. Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1974.
- van den Hoonaard, Will C. "Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Canadian Bahá'í Community." June 1991. http://bahai-library.com/?file=hoonaard_socio_demographics_canadian_bahais (accessed 11 July 2005).
- van den Hoonaard, Will C. "Native Teaching." In "Canada and the Ten-Year Crusade (1953-1963): An Early Draft." 20 December 1991.
- van den Hoonaard, Will C. *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada, 1898-1948*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996.
- van der Veer, Peter. "Introduction." In *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalization of Christianity*. New York: Routledge, 1996, 1-22.
- Vecsey, Christopher. *The Paths of Kateri's Kin*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997.
- Verge, Patricia. *Angus: From the Heart*. Cochrane, AB: Springtide Publishing, 1999.

- Viswanathan, Gauri. "Beyond Orientalism: Syncretism and the Politics of Knowledge." *Stanford Humanities Review* 1 (1995): 19-34.
- Viswanathan, Gauri. *Outside the Fold: Conversion, Modernity, and Belief*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.
- Walbridge, Linda. "Rituals: An American Bahá'í Dilemma." *Bahá'í Studies Review* 5, no.1 (1995): 1-3.
- Wallace, Anthony. "Revitalization Movements." *American Anthropologist* 58, no.2 (1956): 264-281.
- Warburg, Margit. *Baha'i*. Utah: Signature Books, 2003.
- Weaver, Jace, ed. *Native American Religious Identity: Unforgotten Gods*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1998.
- Webster Grant, John. *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984.
- Weixelman, Joseph O. "The Traditional Navajo Religion and the Bahá'í Faith." *World Order* (1987): 31-51.
- Whitehead, Margaret. *The Cariboo Mission: A History of the Oblates*. Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1981.
- Wilkins, David E. *American Indian Politics and the American Political System*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002.
- Wolcott, Harry F. *A Kwakiutl Village and School*. Updated ed. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2003.