

CHAPTER 9 - NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR BAHÁ'Í STUDIES

A. Conferences

The North American Association for Bahá'í Studies began holding conferences in January of 1976. While it is evident from the previous notations that Indians have been involved in the Association for Bahá'í Studies far earlier, here is a list of presentations made (by Indians and others) through the regular sessions or at the Indigenous Studies session since 2000, some of which pertain to Indians in the Western Hemisphere. (Editor Note: most of the items below were lifted directly from the Programs which are online.)

24th ABS Annual Conference (August 31-Sept 3, 2000)
Delta Meadowvale Resort and Conference Centre Mississauga, ON
“A Century of Light: Who Is Writing the Future?”

Aboriginal Economic Development: A Bahá'í Perspective
Presented by Parviz Yazdani

Sacred Circle: Child of the Seventh Generation
Presented by Jacqueline Left Hand Bull (Sicangu Lakota from Rosebud)

The Native American Intertribal Movement: Connections to a Global Perspective
Presented by Dr. Don Addison

Keedu T'ei Kaa: The Man Behind the Dam, A Story on the Covenant
Presented by Mark Wedge (Tsimshian?)

What is Bahá'í Scholarship from the Perspective of Native Culture?
Presented by Jacqueline Left Hand Bull

25th ABS Annual Conference (August 31-Sept 3, 2001)
Sheraton Seattle Hotel & Towers, WA
“Towards a Spiritual Civilization”

Linking Sacred Site and Sacred Song: The Arc as a Metaphorical Framework for Documenting the Performative Process—A Case Study of a Lakota Song keeper
Presented by Pauline Tuttle [Mi'kmaq from Abegweit (Prince Edward Island)]

Beyond Forgiveness
Presented by Valerie J. Phillips (Eastern Cherokee)

Native Americans and the Bahá'í Faith
Presented by Dr. Don Addison

**26th ABS Annual Conference (August 30-Sept.2, 2002)
Delta Meadowvale Resort and Conference Centre Mississauga, ON
“Towards a Spiritual Civilization: Spirit into Action”**

Diary as Therapist/Artist Working in First Nations Communities of Northwest British Columbia
Presented by Edward Epp

The Sacred Feminine Presence in the Arts of Native Americans
Presented by Nadema Agard

Strengthening Bahá'í Identity of Indian Believers
Presented by Danielle Locke (Cree from Kawacatoose First Nation in Saskatchewan)

**27th ABS Annual Conference (Aug. 29 - Sept. 1, 2003)
San Francisco Airport Marriott, CA
“Religion and Community in a Time of Crisis”**

JORDAN BIGHORN ~ Patricia Locke Scholarship Recipient

Special Interest Group

Tawacín Wâste Wín Indigenous Studies Circle

Coordinator: Dr. PAULINE TUTTLE; Co-chairs: LOUISE PROFEIT-LEBLANC, ROBIN CHANDLER, and Dr. PAULINE TUTTLE

8:30 a.m. Opening Prayers; Welcome - MARY GUBATAYAO HAGEN

8:45 a.m. Centering the Day - LOUISE PROFEIT-LEBLANC; Overview of Day's Program
- ROBIN CHANDLER; Overview of Formation Process and Introduction to Honoring -
PAULINE TUTTLE

9:00 a.m. Honoring for the late Tawacín Wâste Wín (Patricia Locke)

9:40 a.m. Panel: The Complementarity of Diverse Ways of Knowing

(1) Ways of Knowing, Ways of Seeing Indigenous Scholarship - LOUISE PROFEIT-LEBLANC;

(2) From Fragmentation to Consolidation and Unity: Indigenous Scholarship and the New Ethnic
Studies in the U.S. - ROBIN CHANDLER;

(3) New Paradigms in Indigenous Studies, Questions to Ponder - PAULINE TUTTLE

10:40 a.m. Break

11:00 a.m. Establishing Indigenous Identity in the Covenant - JORDON BIGHORN

11:30 a.m. Panel: Highlights from the Field: Empowering Our Youth

1) From the Heart - DELORIA BIGHORN; (2) The Importance of Cultural Revitalization and
Indigenous Youth Leadership Development in our Collective Spiritual Destiny - KATHY
MADJIDI; (3) Indigenous Scholarship in Community Contexts - SONNY VOYAGEUR

12:30 p.m. Preliminary Consultation on Vision Statement

1:15 p.m. Lunch Break

2:00 p.m. Consultation on Vision, Purpose, and Goals

3:30 p.m. Consultation on Logistics

4:00 p.m. Understanding the Bahá'í Concept of Scholarship in the Context of Indigenous Cultures - ABDU'L-MISSAGH GHADIRIAN

5:00–5:30 p.m. Closing Thoughts and Commitments for Future Initiatives

History, Ritual, and Familial/Community Bonds: A Native American Perspective
Presented by: Tharon Weighill

Bahá'í Language Educators:

What's in a Name? The Kalakwahti Vision: Dr. PAULINE TUTTLE

World Association to Promote Bahá'í Libraries and Archives:

Roundtable on Local Bahá'í Archives and Libraries (PAULINE TUTTLE, DAVID PIFF; Chair: ROGER DAHL) The roundtable will discuss how to effectively train local archivists and librarians, considering that there are over 1,100 LSAs in the United States and 300 in Canada and they often have a high turnover of local archivists. What are possible training options and what should the training consist of? The roundtable will consist of audience participation and three speakers who will give short presentations

Sacred Texts:

The Sacred Text of Nature: A Weaving Together of Native American, Ecological, and Bahá'í Views

Presented by John Thelen Steere and Tuli Rode

Coming to Terms with 'Abdu'l-Bahá's "Savages"

Presented by Derik Smith and Misha Mayernick

The Seven Valleys: A Seven Step Process to Psycho-spiritual Development

Presented by Michelle Thelen Steere and Tuli Rode (Apache)

Storytelling and Community in the Bahá'í Faith

Presented by Carolyn Sawin and Louise Profeit-LeBlanc

Louise Profeit-LeBlanc: Storytelling and Community in the Bahá'í Faith

LOUISE PROFEIT-LEBLANC is the aboriginal arts coordinator for the Canada Council for the Arts in Ottawa. She co-founded the Yukon International Storytelling Festival and has developed workshops utilizing story as a means for community development and cross-cultural

communication. Her storytelling draws on the traditions of her ancestors, the Athapaskan people of the Yukon Territory of Northern Canada.

John Thelen Steere and Tuli Rode: *The Sacred Text of Nature: A Weaving Together of Native American, Ecological, and Bahá'í Views*. Learning the sacred text of nature has been the practice of native peoples worldwide. The primal understanding of humanity as caretaker of the earth has been reawakened through the principles of modern ecology and environmental stewardship. We will weave together traditional teachings from a variety of North American tribes with Bahá'í writings on “the book” of nature, seeking to synthesize their messages to reveal how native peoples had an original sense of Bahá'í principles. Turning away from this sense of reciprocity with nature has been a source of our contemporary ecological crisis. We'll offer antidotes reflecting respect for the sacredness of the Creation.

Michelle Thelen-Steere and Tuli Rode: *The Seven Valleys: A Seven Step Process to PsychoSpiritual Development*. The Recovery Model for addictions and trauma has been used for over seventy years. While helpful for many, it is an incomplete paradigm for the transformation of self. In our presentation, we will explore the concepts of Uncovery and Discovery as adjuncts to the Recovery process. This threefold method is adapted from *The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys*.

Tuli Rode: TULI RODE, CCHT, is of Apache heritage and a cross-cultural counselor and consultant in Native American resource development for treatment therapies.

Carolyn Sawin and Louise Profeit-Leblanc: *Storytelling and Community in the Bahá'í Faith*. Almost every Bahá'í is familiar with the stories of the Dawn-Breakers, which are recounted again and again at Bahá'í events throughout the year. As individuals, we also share with others our personal experiences in the Faith, from stories of becoming a Bahá'í to accounts of recent teaching trips. Both of these kinds of stories play an integral part in shaping Bahá'í identity and community life, yet we are seldom conscious of this process. This workshop will examine the nature and role of storytelling in the Bahá'í Faith, and will challenge participants to utilize storytelling in their own lives as Bahá'ís

CAROLYN SAWIN earned a PhD in anthropology from the University of Washington in 2000. Her doctoral dissertation was an oral history of the Bahá'í Faith among First Nations people in the Yukon. Dr. Sawin has taught anthropology and American Indian Studies at the University of New Hampshire.

PAULINE TUTTLE is adjunct professor, School of Music, University of Victoria, British Columbia, and director, Kalakwahti Studies Centre, Lake Cowichan, BC. Dr. Tuttle has published numerous articles and papers in the field of ethnomusicology.

28th ABS Annual Conference (Sept. 3-6, 2004)
Hyatt Regency Calgary, Alberta, Canada
“Spirit and Intellect: Advancing Civilization”

DANIEL BAUMGARTNER ~ Patricia Locke Scholarship Recipient

Special Interest Group: Tawacín Wáste Wín Indigenous Studies Circle

Coordinator: PAULINE TUTTLE

Theme: “To Walk in Beauty: Balancing Spirit and Intellect in the Scholarship of Indigenous Bahá’ís”

8:30 a.m. Opening Prayers

9:00 a.m. Walking the Straight Path: Empowering Indigenous Junior Youth to Become “Outstanding Examples of Education, of Culture, and of Civilization for the Entire World” - Daniel Baumgartner (Patricia Locke Scholarship Recipient) Introduced by JORDAN BIGHORN (2003 Patricia Locke Scholarship Recipient)

9:45 a.m. The Role of the Arts in Social and Economic Development - LOUISE PROFEIT-LEBLANC

10:35 a.m. Break

10:40 a.m. From Heart to Breath to Song: The History and Impact of Aboriginal Bahá’ís in Canada—An Oral History Documentation Project - GRETCHEN JORDAN-BASTOW and PAULINE TUTTLE

11:20 a.m. Art, Pathway of the Hearts: Incorporating the Arts into Indigenous Study Circles - MARY GUBATAYAO-HAGEN and TULI RODE

12:10 p.m. Lunch Break

1:00 p.m. Vision Statement and SIG Mandate Consultation

1:45 p.m. Consultation

3:45 p.m. Break

4:00 p.m. Building Infrastructure: Introductory Overview - DANIELLE LOCKE

5:15 p.m. Closing prayers and song

Imperial Ballroom: 9:00 a.m. Plenary Session

Chair: LOUISE PROFEIT-LEBLANC

The Bahá’í Faith and North American Cultural Minorities: Understanding American Indians and the Bahá’í Writings with an Emphasis on Urban Indians.

Presented by Dr. LITTLEBRAVE BEASTON

Growth and Retention in the Bahá’í Community and American Indians

Presented by DANIELLE LOCKE and BILL GEISSLE

The Impact of Practice on Theory: Bahá’í Principles in Design: An Aboriginal Housing Alternative

Presented by Angela Rout

Counseling Strategies with the Seven Valleys

Presented by Michelle Thelen Steere and Tuli Rode

Community, Identity, and Learning I...Collaborative Scholarship, Service-Learning, and Community Building: The Scholarly Relevance of Ruhi Study Circles and Indigenous Ways of Knowing

Presented by Dr. Susan Brill de Ramirez

Community, Identity, and Learning II: Leaving the Glass Case: The Museum and the Aboriginal Encounter with Modern European Ways of Learning and Knowing

Presented by Linda Young

Beyond Red Power: The Alternative Activist Approach of Dorothy Maquabeak Francis Presented by Chelsea Horton

Littlebrave Beaton: Understanding American Indians and the Bahá'í Writings with an Emphasis on Urban Indians.

This session will be text-based as well as bring an American Indian perspective to the promise of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "Likewise, should these Indians be educated and properly guided, there can be no doubt that through the Divine teachings they will become so enlightened that the whole earth will be illumined." Shoghi Effendi also talks about the importance of bringing American Indians into the Faith. And now some fifty-seven years later the majority of American Indians live in urban settings in Bahá'í communities that are well established and well within our reach.

LITTLEBRAVE BEASTON (Tsimshian, Makah, and Greek) received her naturopathic doctorate at Bastyr University and her MEd in counseling from North Dakota State University. She has been a Bahá'í since 1969 and has experienced Reservation, rural and urban, large and small, heterogeneous and homogenous Bahá'í communities.

Jordan Bighorn: A Possible Reality of the Word of God

Within our dreams and imagination of the spiritual radiance the Word of God has shed upon the world, there is an important perspective from which to garner the most "natural" understanding of such a reality. Whether or not it is the most plausible method of viewing the Word of God will be left up to the individual; however, the following question may serve as the beginning of a "methodology to spirituality": Does the Light of the Word of God illuminate knowledge that has already been established? Or has that knowledge been produced by this Light, regardless of an individual's acquisition and education of such?

JORDAN BIGHORN currently serves the Rapid City, SD, Bahá'í community as best he can. He has an undergraduate degree and managed a Teen Center in Seattle. However, that has all fallen away to the curiosity of the "nature" of this growing Cause, which has since then become the center of his life.

Chelsea Horton: Beyond Red Power: The Alternative Activist Approach of Dorothy Maquabeak Francis

This presentation explores the alternative activist approach of Dorothy Maquabeak Francis, a prominent First Nations Bahá'í who worked tirelessly over five decades to promote the maintenance of First Nations culture and spirituality and to foster heightened understanding and unity between native and non-native groups. Examination of Francis's life suggests that we must broaden our conceptions of activism to encompass both the grassroots and the spiritual. In addition to complicating our understanding of what has for too long been characterized as the "Red Power era," analysis of Francis's activist ambition and form similarly challenges the very contours of the highly secular Western academic frame.

CHELSEA HORTON is a Master's student in the Department of History at Simon Fraser University exploring the historic Aboriginal Bahá'í encounter in British Columbia. She hopes, through her research, to help broaden the historical record to include previously silenced voices, perspectives, and alternative approaches to the pursuit of social change.

Danielle Locke and Bill Geissler: Growth and Retention in the Bahá'í Community and American Indians

Despite the distinctive place given American Indians in the Bahá'í Faith by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, there is still only limited participation of Indian peoples in the affairs of the Faith and the standing of the Bahá'í Faith among Indians actually appears to be eroding. This presentation will use research findings to examine current issues of religious practice, identity, and retention among American Indian Bahá'ís that appear to have a bearing on ways that diversity will impact growth in a period before us that will register the most profound demographic changes in American history.

DANIELLE LOCKE is Cree from Kawacatoose First Nation, Saskatchewan, Canada. She currently lives in Wakpala District on the Standing Rock Reservation in South Dakota. Danielle holds a degree in Indian Studies from the First Nations University of Canada. She has over twenty years' experience in community development in Indian communities in Canada and the United States

Michelle Thelen Steere and Tuli Rode: Counseling Strategies with the Seven Valleys

This presentation will explore the nature of the psycho-spiritual journey of the Seven Valleys through an innovative psychological paradigm for the spiritual and emotional healing of trauma, based on recent case studies and how they have been applied, and what the results have been in small group practice. Study participants focused on each valley, practiced its application, and realized the bounties and blessings therein. The presentation concludes with suggestions for working through the unique challenges of each Valley to access a sense of spiritual fulfillment that such deep inner work can bring to one's life.

Tuli Rode, Ron Shigeta, and Joy Wiczoreck - Inner Light and Outer Illumination: A Workshop for Reading Gems of Divine Mysteries.

Gems of Divine Mysteries is an excellent first text to read Bahá'u'lláh in depth. Themes include the spiritual progress of the individual through stations, the role of scripture, and an outline of prerequisites to spiritual growth. Three of the book's stations—knowledge, love, and the “threshold” are examined as a spiritual path of progress with their prerequisite: to see through your own eyes, and not the eyes of others. This workshop is designed to increase comprehension of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings by systematically breaking down complex passages from the text followed by group consultation.

TULI RODE is a practicing cross-cultural counselor and has worked many years with the Native American community in Oakland, California. As a Bahá'í, she has taken a great interest in teaching and educational theory within the Faith and has applied the Writings in her therapeutic work in innovative and successful ways.

29th ABS Annual Conference (Aug.11-14, 2005)
Hyatt Regency Cambridge, MA
“Science, Religion, and Social Transformation”

Indigenous Studies

Convener: PAULINE TUTTLE

8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Convener: PAULINE TUTTLE

Theme: “The Interface of Spirit and Matter in Community-based Research”

8:30 a.m. Opening Prayers

9:00 a.m. Panel: The Integration of Art, Spirit, and Medicine in the Healing of FAS/E Children

Thoughts on the Development of an Arts-Based Curriculum for FAS/E Children - RUBY

GUBATAYAO & FARANEH VARGHA-KHADEM

10:30 a.m. Break

10:45 a.m. Wakpala: Youth Empowering Youth—Youth Empowering Community - DANIELLE LOCKE

11:30 a.m. Contradictions, Challenges, and Successes for Gender and Development and Rural Community Sustainability in Puka Puka, Bolivia - MELINDA SALAZAR

12:05 p.m. Lunch Break

1:00 p.m. Some Early American Indian Believers - LITTLEBRAVE BEASTON

1:35 p.m. Honoring for Patricia Locke - MICHELLE LANGAN, Patricia Locke Scholarship Recipient

2:20 p.m. Break

2:35 p.m. Interactive Workshop: Transformative Communications as Advocated in Bahá'í Scripture and as Modeled in Indigenous Oral Tradition - SUSAN BRILL DE RAMÍREZ

3:35 p.m. The Aboriginal Person as Peacemaker - CAROL ANNE HILTON

4:10– 5:00 p.m. Closing Consultation

Religion and the Natural Sciences II:

The Unity of Science and Religion in First Nations Beliefs - CAROL ANNE HILTON

President's Ballroom Plenary Session:

Presentation of the Patricia Locke scholarship to MICHELLE LANGAN by the ABS Executive Committee

Littlebrave Beaton: Some Early American Indian Believers

In this presentation, I will share vignettes of what I have learned about the early American Indian Bahá'ís in the United States, our spiritual ancestors. I offer this presentation as a way of showing our due respect for these audacious men and women, who became Bahá'ís at a time when it must have been extremely difficult in the Indian community to step out and try something very new. As Aboriginal Bahá'ís we would not be where we are today if it were not for their courage, wisdom, and ability to see and commit to the Truth.

LITTLEBRAVE BEASTON (Tsimshian and Makah) received her naturopathic doctorate at Bastyr University and her M.Ed in counseling from North Dakota State University. She has been a Bahá'í since 1969 and is interested in health and healing; American Indians, especially in relation to 'Abdu'l-Baha's promise; world religions; and divine philosophy. Currently she resides in Seattle, Washington.

Susan Brill de Ramírez: Transformative Communications as Advocated in Bahá'í Scripture and as Modeled in Indigenous Oral Tradition

In the Bahá'í Writings, Bahá'u'lláh presents a conversive communications mandate for the world. Conversive communications are inherently transforming (conversional) and relationally based (conversative). The specific form of conversive communications with which Bahá'ís are most familiar is that of consultation. In contrast to more discursive and oppositionally-based forms of communications, which distance speaker and listener, conversive communications build unity through the development of relationships. This talk will include a workshop exercise for participants to experience heart-to-heart conversive communications (as Bahá'u'lláh urges us, "Ponder this in thy heart") in the form of a Native American storytelling circle and in a consultative session.

SUSAN BERRY BRILL DE RAMÍREZ, professor of English, teaches Native literatures, environmental literatures, and literary criticism and theory at Bradley University. Dr. Brill has published extensively and is currently completing two books for University of New Mexico Press, one on Navajo storytelling and a second on the lifework of Simon J. Ortiz

RUBY GUBATAYAO & FARANEH VARGHA-KHADEM: Thoughts on the Development of an Arts-based Curriculum for FAS/E Children

Bahá'u'lláh, Divine Educator and Physician, assures us: "the soul of man is exalted above, and is independent of, all infirmities of body or mind"; 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts: "every child must be taught crafts and art"; "all Art is a gift of the Holy Spirit"; if Aboriginal children are "educated

and properly guided, there can be no doubt that through the Divine teachings they will become so enlightened that the whole earth will be illumined.” In this presentation, these quotations support a call for the development of arts-based curriculum designed to empower Indigenous children with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effect to reach their full potential.

RUBY GUBATAYAO is a Tsimshian Alaskan elder. After earning her BA and K-12 Certification, she taught in many Indigenous locales. Becoming a Bahá'í in Neah Bay (1976), she undertook teaching trips throughout Canada, Alaska, the U.S., Finland, Norway, and Sweden; served on the Alaskan NSA (1992–97); and spawned three generations of strong Bahá'ís.

Carol Anne Hilton: The Aboriginal Person as Peacemaker

Carol Anne Hilton :The Unity of Science and Religion in First Nations' Beliefs

This presentation examines the existing unity between science and religion in First Nations' beliefs and cultures as developed over time. First Nations people have gained vast amounts of knowledge and wisdom through the study of the physical world and taken this knowledge and transformed it into a highly spiritual set of social and cultural teachings. This presentation will outline some of the observations from the natural world, and examine these as spiritual teachings and look at their harmony and agreement with the Bahá'í Writings.

CAROL ANNE HILTON is a Hesquiat Bahá'í from a small village called Hotsprings Cove on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. Carol Anne has extensive experience teaching and facilitating workshops and works in the field of economics, community, and social development. Her academic background is in business management and First Nations studies.

Danielle Locke: Wakpala: Youth Empowering Youth—Youth Empowering Community

Knowing that the process of social transformation and building global unity must occur at the micro level, and that Wakpala, Standing Rock Nation, was moving steadily towards socioeconomic decline, hopelessness, and despair, in June 2002 we developed a youth-propelled project designed to enhance and develop the spiritual and intellectual capacities of participants. In turn, youth studying, serving, and socializing together have impacted the community, families, and local tribal government. This presentation provides an overview of the conditions of Wakpala, the methodology used in the project, the effects it has had on the community, and the implications for Wakpala's future.

DANIELLE LOCKE is a Cree Bahá'í from Kawacatoose First Nation in Saskatchewan, Canada. She currently lives in Wakpala District on the Standing Rock Reservation in South Dakota. Danielle holds a degree in Indian Studies from the First Nations University of Canada. She has over twenty years' experience in community development in Indian communities in Canada and the United States.

Melinda Salazar: A Case Study of Sustaining Rural Community and Women's Equality in Puka Puka, Bolivia

Academic doctoral research and service to the Bahá'í community need not be mutually exclusive activities. A participatory action research evaluation of the 1989 UNIFEM/BIC Traditional Media as Change Agent (TMCA), conducted in rural Bolivia ten years later, collected testimonios of village participants' experiences with gender and development. The evaluation found an unintended consequence of the TMCA success: the exodus of young Bahá'í Quechua women from the village to urban centers for education beyond that which the rural center provides. The action research component of the evaluation animated a community development process that helped empower one exemplary rural village to bring back its women and prevail, as Indians, and as Bahá'ís.

MELINDA SALAZAR conducted her PhD research in Bolivia with the Quechua and currently teaches in Women's studies at the University of New Hampshire. She is also a diversity/antiracism trainer and is currently working on sustainability education and building community partners for the UN Decade for Educating for Sustainable Development.

30th ABS Annual Conference (Aug.10 -13, 2006) San Francisco Airport Marriott, CA "Religion and the Evolution of Consciousness"

Break out Session & Indigenous Studies
Convener: LITTLEBRAVE BEASTON
Indigenous Studies General Meeting

Nadema Agard : Confluence of Spirituality: The Compatibility of Bahá'í Principles and Native American Beliefs. This compilation of quotes and prayers from the Bahá'í Writings, in harmony with quotes from tribal traditions and those of Native scholars trained in the Western manner, supports nine Bahá'í principles. It includes many references from *Metaphysics of Modern Existence* and *God is Red* by Vine Deloria (Lakota Scholar), *Land of Spotted Eagle* by Luther Standing Bear (Lakota Scholar), *Book of the Hopi* by Frank Waters and Native prophesies that include those as told by Lee Brown (Cherokee), Tehanetorens (Hodenoosaunee) and the Black Elk (Lakota).

NADEMA AGARD (Cherokee/Lakota/Powhatan) is an artist, curator, educator, published author, museum professional and consultant in Repatriation and Multicultural/Native American arts and cultures with an MA in Art and Education from Teacher's College, Columbia University. She is currently the Director of Red Earth Studio Consulting/Productions in New York City.

Psychology II:

Michelle Thelen-Steere, Tuli Rode and Siamak Motahari: Portals to Spiritual Progress through Sacred Metaphor from The Seven Valleys by Bahá'u'lláh.

The presenters develop the concept of sacred metaphor within The Seven Valleys. Their thesis explores the manner in which metaphor transports the individual like a bridge from the known to the unknown, thus connecting the numinous knowledge within the Valley metaphors to everyday existence, and further demonstrate possible ways to maintain this essential link in the evolving continuum of one's spiritual life. The presenters intend to conduct an experiential group. It will focus on one exercise developed out of the Seven Valleys Process a.k.a. The Seven Valleys Spirit Walk as inspired by the sacred Text

TULI RODE, CCHT is a Board Certified Clinical Hypnotherapist and Program Developer in the fields of Addictions and Family Therapy with the Native American Community. Of Apache descent, she has worked extensively with San Francisco Bay Area Native American women, men and children as well as a private counselor for others

31st ABS Annual Conference (Aug. 16-19, 2007)
Delta Meadowvale Resort and Conference Centre
Mississauga, Ontario, Canada
“Scholarship and Community Building”

Intercultural Issues/Indigenous Studies

Literary Voices in First Nation Francophone Literature (some portions will be in French)
MARYANNE DEWOLF

‘Abdu’l-Bahá tells us that “through the Divine teachings [the original inhabitants of America] will become so enlightened that the whole earth will be illumined.” These words have inspired much interest in First Nation cultures, and for me, a particular fascination with First Nation Francophone literature, now the focus of my graduate research. This paper will discuss some exciting parallels between the Bahá’í teachings and one particularly salient thematic philosophy – variously described as the “Sacred Circle of Life”, “circular perception”, “organicist principles”, or “cosmocentricity” – as revealed in the poetic texts of Eleonore Sioui.

MARYANNE DEWOLF, is doctoral candidate in French literature at University of Wisconsin, Madison. Her dissertation topic reflects her passions for First Nations cultures, arising from twelve years in the Canadian Northwest Territories, and for French literature. She has a son in undergraduate studies, and another starting graduate work.

32nd ABS Annual Conference (Aug. 29 - Sept.1, 2008)
San Diego Marriott La Jolla, CA
“Religion and Social Cohesion”

Psychology
Society in Transition: Reflecting on Identity, Suicide, and Wellbeing in Aboriginal Populations
TARAVAT OSTOVAR

This presentation will review three sources of knowledge including Aboriginal knowledge, science of psychiatry and Bahá'í teachings to help understand the issue of self-destructive behaviours such as addiction and suicide and the concepts of personhood and wellbeing in Aboriginal communities. We will investigate how these three paradigms of knowledge and insight explain the origins and ways to alleviate suffering in many Native communities. Based on Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, individual and collective determinants of positive change will be discussed.

TARAVAT OSTOVAR is a Psychiatry Master student at McGill University, presently working at Douglas University Institute, a psychiatric hospital dedicated to patient care, teaching, and research. She researches suicide, transcultural and clinical psychiatry among various populations including Aboriginal people. Taravat is a Bahá'í and is actively engaged in its worldwide activities.

**33rd ABS Annual Conference (Aug. 13-16, 2009)
Wardman Park Marriott, Washington, DC
“Environments”**

There were no American Indian/First nations presenters or directly related topics that I could recognize.

**34th ABS Annual Conference (Aug.12-15, 2010)
Hyatt Regency, Vancouver, BC
“Rethinking Human Nature”**

Regency Ballroom
9:00 Plenary Session
Chair: DELORIA BIGHORN
Devotions

Lee Brown, Chief Douglas White III Kwulasultun, and Jacqueline Left Hand Bull: Many Generous Hands

This plenary panel of Indigenous leaders and scholars will share perspectives and insights on the challenges and opportunities of creating social, cultural, and spiritual reconciliation. The panel is expected to include discussion of Indigenous perspectives on the spiritual and material dimensions of existence and their relationship, the challenges of social and cultural reconciliation and the roles of individuals and communities in those processes, and the challenges and opportunities for Faith communities, such as the Bahá'í Faith, to play a positive role in processes of reconciliation. Following the panel presentations there will be a moderated dialogue amongst the panelists.

Chief Douglas White III Kwulasultun: Many Generous Hands (see Brown for panel description)

CHIEF DOUGLAS WHITE III KWULASULTUN is the Chief of the Snuneymuxw First Nation, member of the Political Executive of the First Nations Summit, and member of the First Nations Leadership Council. He is also a practicing lawyer, and frequent lecturer at universities and law schools including on the topic of Indigenous laws and reconciliation

Jacqueline Left Hand Bull: Many Generous Hands (see Brown for panel description)

JACQUELINE LEFT HAND BULL is a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe (Sicangu Lakota), and Chair of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

Race Unity and Intercultural Issues

Chair: NAZANIN ZARGARPOUR; CHELSEA HORTON

Declaration, Prophecy, and Progressive Revelation: Indigenous–Bahá'í Intersections LINDA COVEY, CHELSEA HORTON and LEE BROWN

Lee Brown: Declaration, Prophecy, and Progressive Revelation: Indigenous-Bahá'í Intersections (breakout panel, see Horton for panel description)

This presentation will explore an Aboriginal orientation to current events through the Native Prophecies of the Three Great Shakings and present the concept of progressive revelation. Then the Great Law of Peace will be presented with an exploration of the three primary principles arising from the law. The Kitáb-i-Aqdas will then be briefly presented with an exploration of the twelve principles that arise from the great law for this day. In conclusion, similarities between both statements of law will be explored in relation to the concept of progressive revelation.

LEE BROWN, PhD, is Director of the UBC Institute of Aboriginal Health and former Coordinator of the Indigenous Doctoral Program in Educational Studies, and co-author of *The Sacred Tree*. His theory of holistic emotional education and health is predicated upon six principles of emotional competency and his research is published in several academic journals.

Linda Covey: Declaration, Prophecy, and Progressive Revelation: Indigenous-Bahá'í Intersections (breakout panel, see Horton for panel description)

This presentation will explore historic Diné Bahá'í conversion experiences in Arizona. It will consider, in particular, two ancient prophecies, the return of the Warrior Twins and the Unity Chant that foretells the coming of a chief from the east with twelve feathers. Diné Bahá'ís believe that the Twin Messengers of the Faith are the return of their Warrior Twins and that the chief with twelve feathers is Bahá'u'lláh. Covey will also argue that the Diné's history of loss and deprivation provided fertile ground for conversion, and that the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith provided much-needed autonomy and empowerment.

LINDA S. COVEY holds degrees in religious studies and psychology and doctoral work in clinical psychology. She currently teaches at Missouri State University's College of International Business at Liaoning Normal University, Dalian, China. She is a Bahá'í of many years and actively practices her Cherokee/Southern Cheyenne heritage.

Chelsea Horton, Linda Covey, and Lee Brown: Declaration, Prophecy, and Progressive Revelation: Indigenous-Bahá'í Intersections

This panel explores questions of declaration, prophecy, and progressive revelation as they relate to Indigenous Bahá'ís in North America - past, present, and future.

Chelsea Horton's presentation will consider similar questions across a broader geography, exploring how and why Indigenous people from urban and reserve settings in North America became Bahá'ís in the second half of the twentieth century. Drawing on oral histories, she will discuss declarations experienced and articulated through idioms of dreams, visions, prophecy, and progressive revelation. Placing this process of becoming in the context of settler colonialism, Horton will further outline a search for unity and social and spiritual belonging and reflect on challenges encountered in attempts to build unity in diversity on the ground.

CHELSEA HORTON is a PhD candidate in History at the University of British Columbia. She has taught in the History and Women's Studies departments at UBC and plans to defend her dissertation, "All is One: Becoming Indigenous and Bahá'í in Global North America," in 2011.

**35th ABS Annual Conference (Aug. 11-14, 2011)
San Francisco Airport Marriott, CA
"Transforming Habits of Thought"**

There were no American Indian/First Nations presenters or directly related topics that I could recognize. Mrs. Deloria Bighorn, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada was present. Mr. Tobey Joseph from Tacoma, WA took part in the adjoining publicity workshop.

**36th ABS Annual Conference (Aug. 9-12, 2012)
Fairmont Queen Elizabeth, Montreal, QC
"The Vision of 'Abdu'l-Bahá for North America"**

Linda S. Covey: Teaching Religion Courses in the Classroom in China

A course on religions of the world was taught at the university level in Dalian, China, during the spring semester, 2012, and will be repeated over the next two semesters. The story is shared of how this unprecedented event came about; how the course was designed using the timeline of progressive revelation; and how the students had to create their own textbook. This interactive presentation will share what the students learned and what the instructor learned about religion in

China, and will garner ideas and suggestions for an in-progress basic textbook on religion for Chinese students.

LINDA COVEY holds degrees in religious studies, psychology, anthropology, and journalism. She currently teaches psychology and topics in religion at LNU-MSU College of International Business in Dalian, China, where she has lived for the past three years. Covey, of American Indian heritage, has been a Bahá'í for 41 years.

Chief Douglas White III, Kwulasultun: Social Action for Social Change - Learning from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Example

This panel explores 'Abdu'l-Bahá's vision and method of effecting social change, and the implications how we seek to effect progressive and meaningful change today. Through three case studies a portrait will be drawn of about the spiritual dynamics of social progress, and the roles and responsibilities of individuals and communities as change agents. ...Chief Douglas White III, Kwulasultun examines the spiritual dimensions of Indigenous reconciliation. ...

Chief Douglas White III, Kwulasultun • Special Follow up Session to Plenary Panel -Advancing Reconciliation: A Dialogue on the Struggle for Equality and Justice for Aboriginal Peoples in Canada.

This moderated dialogue will explore the challenges of Aboriginal Reconciliation in Canada and the roles individuals and communities can play in advancing progress. ...

CHIEF DOUGLAS WHITE III, KWULASULTUN is Chief of the Snuneymuxw First Nation, member of the Political Executive of the First Nations Summit, and member of the First Nations Leadership Council of British Columbia. A practising lawyer, he frequently lectures at universities and law schools on various topics including Indigenous laws and reconciliation.

Louise Mandell: Journey Towards Justice - Reflection from the Front Lines

This talk reflects on my journey representing Indigenous Peoples in British Columbia in their struggle for justice. Just before 'Abdu'l-Bahá began his Western journey sharing a message of equality, justice and peace, Indigenous peoples advanced their call for justice through petitions and letters to the Crown. Recognizing Indigenous rights to the land and models of governance and laws remains a central challenge for Canadian society in the face of Crown denial. This challenge is at a turning point. Canadian society must move from an adversarial and fear-based understanding and approach, towards vision and action which transforms colonial patterns and conflict into new patterns for living that reflect our collective unity and diversity.

Louise Mandell: Special Follow up Session to Plenary Panel - Advancing Reconciliation: A Dialogue on the Struggle for Equality and Justice for Aboriginal Peoples in Canada

This moderated dialogue will explore the challenges of Aboriginal Reconciliation in Canada and the roles individuals and communities can play in advancing progress. ...

Torontonian LOUISE MANDELL entered aboriginal law in its infancy, working under Grand Chief George Manuel, President of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs and the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. She has since devoted herself to implementing constitutional change, advancing many leading cases decided by the Supreme Court of Canada.

Anisa White: Special Follow up Session to Plenary Panel-Advancing Reconciliation: A Dialogue on the Struggle for Equality and Justice for Aboriginal Peoples in Canada

This moderated dialogue will explore the challenges of Aboriginal Reconciliation in Canada and the roles individuals and communities can play in advancing progress. ...

ANISA WHITE (B.Com, LLB) is Persian and Cree-Métis with ancestry from St. Paul de Métis Settlement and Whitefish Lake First Nation (AB). Anisa regularly provides tools and services to First Nation and Metis organizations implementing their inherent rights in child welfare, lands and resources, by supporting and strengthening institutional capacity.

**37th ABS Annual Conference (Aug. 15-18, 2013)
Hyatt Regency Hotel, Irvine, CA
“Scholarship and the Generation of Knowledge**

There were no American Indian/First Nations presenters or directly related topics that I could recognize.

**38th ABS Annual Conference (August 7-10, 2014)
Fairmont Royal York, Toronto, ON
“Scholarship and the Life of Society”**

Louise Profeit-Leblanc: Sunchief’s Daughter – Storytelling

The story that will be shared was given to me by grand matriarch, my mentor, Mrs. Angela Sidney, an extraordinary Tagish storyteller from southern Yukon. This story is about jealousy and what transpires when a man’s wife is overcome with this dreaded disease and how he is forced to deal with it. As the story unfolds we enter into the sacred sky-world where the Sun-chief lives with his wife and two daughters, with one of whom his wife has accused him of having a love relationship. This story is significant to the world today in that eventually her light comes to this world and their descendents become the people of the light!

LOUISE is a member of the Nacho N’yak Dun First Nation from Mayo, in north-eastern Yukon. She is a mother, grandmother and a keeper of stories. She worked as the Aboriginal Arts

Coordinator at the Canada Council for the Arts for 12 years. She has been a Bahá'í for over 30 years.

**39th ABS Annual Conference (August 6-9, 2015)
Hyatt Regency Orange County, CA
“Advancing the Life of the Mind”**

Donald Addison: The Ethnomusicological Revolution

Ethnomusicology is turning around the traditional academic study of music in society by making musical cultures of the world a study far more advantageous to society than simply the traditional musicology which always has studied European music. I propose that ethnomusicology reflect in music a Bahá'í understanding of diversity and the importance of musical arts in the academy as well as music wherever in life it is found. My focus is a Bahá'í understanding of world music reflecting a new vision in the life of the mind.

DONALD ADDISON is Choctaw Native American tribal elder and traditional culture educator, and a Bahá'í since 1960. He is a retired professor of Cultural Anthropology, Ethnomusicology and American Indian Studies, as well as Anthropological Linguistics at both the University of Oregon and Lane Community College, both in Eugene, Oregon.

Payam Akhavan (moderator), Nanabah Bulman, Marilyn Calderon, Eric Dozier, and Louis Venters: From Oppression to Empowerment – Plenary Panel Presentation

How can lofty spiritual principles be reconciled with the grim realities of racism, poverty, and violence? What can we learn from the dynamics of injustice in order to appreciate the potentialities inherent in humankind? In what ways might the Bahá'í approach resemble or differ from conventional social and political activism? This panel will reflect on these themes based on exceptional grassroots engagement, ranging from holistic health and community transformation on the Mexican border, to retrieving spiritual identity through Navajo traditions, to African-American gospel music as a social force, and the history of racial unity in South Carolina.

NANABAH FOGUTH BULMAN serves as the Junior Youth Coordinator in the American Indian cluster of Ft. Defiance, Arizona. She was raised Bahá'í and spent most of her childhood and youth summers serving at the Native American Bahá'í Institute, in which she continued to spend time coordinating its youth year of service corps.

Justin de Leon: Constructive Resilience: Lakota Seven Generations Vision and Spiritual Renewal

The Lakota Seven Generations Vision places survivance (survival + endurance) and constructive resilience (non-adversarial means of facing oppression referenced by the Universal House of

Justice) into meaningful dialogue and provides a framework for the evolving role of Native Americans in modern America. Constructive resilience contributes significantly to approaching processes of rebuilding, allowing for means of social transformation that foregrounds spiritual renewal, unity, long-term transformation, and the spiritual dimensions of human reality. The Vision suggests generations of persecution and deterioration are now being followed by generations of rebuilding, rewriting history, and spiritual renewal, having transformative effects on Lakota society and beyond.

JUSTIN DE LEON is an International Relations PhD candidate at University of Delaware. His research focuses on impacts of Indigenous experiences and frameworks on (de)militarization discourse. De Leon draws upon feminist theory, Native American studies, and critical theory and he is a Rotary World Peace Fellow and a documentary filmmaker.

Susan Stark Christianson and Naomi Michalsen: The Wisdom of the Grandmothers — The Importance of Indigenous Wisdom

This presentation focuses on incorporating grandmothers and traditional wisdom into our activities. Susan Stark Christianson, author and filmmaker from Juneau, Alaska, spent the past seven years interviewing grandmothers from Siberia to Patagonia in response to the indigenous teaching, "There won't be peace on earth until the voices of the grandmothers are heard." Susan and co-presenter Naomi Michalsen, former director of a domestic violence shelter in Ketchikan and presenter on her Tlingit tribal values, explore how and why grandmothers and traditional wisdom are essential today.

SUSAN STARK CHRISTIANSON is a grandmother, author and filmmaker from Juneau, Alaska. She has spent the past seven years traveling from Siberia to Patagonia to better understand the importance of the indigenous teaching, "There won't be peace on earth until the voices of the grandmothers are heard."

NAOMI MICHALSEN, Kaasei, (Higher Voice, Tlingit), belongs to the Wooshkeetaan, Auke Kwaan family, Chaak/Gooch Toos' Hit: (Eagle/Wolf of the Shark House) from Berner's Bay, Juneau. Naomi is a strong advocate of prevention and education efforts through use of traditional and indigenous knowledge.

40th ABS Annual Conference (August 11-14, 2016)

Le Centre Sheraton, Montreal, QC

(Editors Note: Annual themes are no longer selected)

Payam Akhavan, Chair; Marie Wilson, Eloge Butera, Bob Watts: From Truth to Reconciliation: Indigenous Peoples and the Future of Canada—Plenary Panel Presentation (see individual names for biographies)

The recent Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Canada's residential schools for indigenous children has exposed a disturbing history of abuse that has scarred generations of indigenous communities. The Commission called on Canadians to address these past injustices in furtherance of reconciliation and healing. What is the path ahead from oppression to empowerment? What role does spirituality play in this transformation? What are some of the contributions that indigenous people can make to the future of Canada?

PAYAM AKHAVAN, LL.M. S.J.D. (Harvard), is Professor of International Law at McGill University, with prior appointments at Oxford, Paris, Florence, and Yale. He is a former UN prosecutor and a recently appointed Member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague. In 2017, he will deliver the CBC Massey Lectures.

Danielle Ewenin: Realizing Justice - Murdered and Missing Women and Girls in Canada

Between the years of 2000 and 2014 Indigenous women were six times more likely to be murdered than non-Indigenous women. One measure of a country's human rights is determined by its rate of violence against women. A prerequisite for peace is justice; a prerequisite for justice is equality. This presentation will provide an overview of current data, research on MMIWG and provide an analysis of potential impact for change of Canada social fabric.

DANIELLE EWENIN, member of Kawacatoose First Nation and family member of MMIW, is a graduate of the University of Regina and has worked in the field of community development for 30 years in First Nation communities both in Canada and the United States.

Tara Nault and Michele Nault McIsaac: Weaving a Road to Reconciliation

This session will centre on an understanding of the Aboriginal (to be inclusive of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples as defined by the Constitution of Canada) community of Canada and the spiritual principles that are required to come to a deeper awareness and understanding. The presenters will explore how Bahá'ís can increase their understanding of Indigenous Cultural Competency and Cultural Humility. This presentation will provide an overview of the history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada using the TRC's Reconciliation Framework.

TARA NAULT is the Director, Aboriginal Health with BC Ministry of Health. Tara has worked with First Nations and Aboriginal communities for over 30 years and is a graduate in Indigenous Governance from the University of Victoria. Tara is Métis with cultural roots in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

MICHELE NAULT MCISAAC is a Métis woman originally from Saskatchewan and has lived and worked on Vancouver Island for over 30 years. Michele holds a degree from the University of Regina in Adult Education and Training. Michele has been a presenter and facilitator on Aboriginal wellness

**41st ABS Annual Conference (August 1-13, 2017)
Hyatt Regency Orange County, CA**

Nanabah Bulman: Reflections on Race: Exploring the Relationship between Justice and Oneness – Plenary Panel Presentation (see Ashtiani for abstract-below)

NANABAH FOGUTH BULMAN is from the Navajo reservation in Northern Arizona. She has worked closely with the junior youth program and has been working at the Native American Bahá'í Institute as program coordinator. Her focus is creating spaces for local resources to explore how elements in our culture are reinforced by principles of the Faith.

Mariam Ashtiani, Zhaleh Boyd, Nanabah Bulman and Robin Chandler • Reflections on Race: Exploring the Relationship between Justice and Oneness – Plenary Panel Presentation

Racism is America's most challenging issue. It has led to the oppression and marginalization of people, preventing them from full participation in the life of society. This panel will explore a framework to overcome racism at the level of the individual, the community, and the institution.

MARIAM ASHTIANI is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at California State University, Fullerton. Her research and teaching examine racial inequities in education, employment, and the criminal justice system. Dr. Ashtiani also works with policy organizations, including The Gates Foundation and MDRC, devising programs that improve educational opportunities for underrepresented youth.

Justin de Leon: Cohering Scholarship and Social Action in Critical Spaces (see Sattarzadeh for abstract below)

JUSTIN DE LEON, Ph.D. teaches in the Ethnic Studies Department at the University of California, San Diego. His research includes focus on Indigenous worldviews, social change, and the Lakota Sioux.

Sahar Sattarzadeh, Justin de Leon, Kevin Naimi, Fiona Purton, and Mojgan Sami: Cohering Scholarship and Social Action in Critical Spaces Popularized social discourses and movements utilizing concepts such as “resistance,” “critical,” “decolonization,” “power,” “social justice,” and “activism” are often contradictory, founded upon worldly, fractured, self-serving, and contentious motivations that “reinforce an entirely different set of assumptions about social existence.” In this session, presenters explore diverse possibilities of embodying the qualities of a Bahá'í-inspired “scholar” and “activist.” Highlighting communities of practice and traditional Lakota societies, urban skateboarders reimagining themselves via resistance to colonized land uses, educators' pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning difficult knowledges, and racialized student protests at South African universities, panelists discuss revisiting “critical” social change knowledges and practices.

Tara Nault and Michele Nault-McIsaac : The Journey to Reconciliation

This session will centre on an understanding of the Indigenous (to be inclusive of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples as defined by the Constitution of Canada) community of Canada and the spiritual principles that are required to come to a deeper awareness and understanding of reconciliation. The presenters will explore how Bahá'ís can increase their understanding of Indigenous Cultural Competency leading to Cultural Humility based on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Participants will also explore expansion of engagement with Indigenous communities.

TARA NAULT is Director of Aboriginal Health with the BC Ministry of Health. She has worked with Indigenous communities for over thirty years and is a graduate in Indigenous Governance from the University of Victoria. Tara is Métis with cultural roots in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

MICHELE NAULT MCISAAC is the Director of Programs and Special Projects with M'akola Housing Society. She is a Métis woman from Saskatchewan and has lived and worked on Vancouver Island for over thirty years. Michele holds a degree in Adult Education and Training from the University of Regina.

B. Journal for Bahá'í Studies

Volumes 1-25 Checked

Volume 26 n. 3, 2016:

Joyce Baldwin (First Tsimshian Believer). Walking the Spiritual Path with Both Feet Planted on the Ground. pp. 7-22

Linda Covey. A Necessary History: Teaching On and Off the Reservations. pp. 43-64

Chelsea Horton. Building Intercultural Community: Insights from Indigenous Bahá'í History. pp. 65-87

Alfred Kahn. Encouragement, Challenges, Healing and Progress: the Bahá'í Faith in Indigenous Communities. pp. 89-102

Patricia Verge. A Personal Journey toward Reconciliation. pp. 23-42

C. Bahá'í Studies Notebook

Issue 1:1

Audrie Reynolds. MAN – Poem, p. 75

Audrie Reynolds. INDIAN SCHOOL – Poem, p. 76

Issue 2:1 checked

Issue 3:1 checked

Issue 4:1 checked

D. ABS Webinars

Weaving a Road to Reconciliation, Wednesday, December 21, 2016; Tara Nault and Michelle Nault Melsaac. Available on ABS Vimeo channel.