



*Dorothy Maquabeak Francis*  
*(Photo courtesy Jack Bastow)*

# Beyond Red Power: The Alternative Activism of Dorothy Maquabeak Francis

CHELSEA HORTON

## *Abstract*

The 1960s and 70s were volatile decades during which Aboriginal people across Canada arose as an increasingly vocal, and sometimes militant, political force. This paper explores the alternative activist approach of Dorothy Maquabeak Francis, a prominent Aboriginal Bahá'í who worked tirelessly over five decades to promote and maintain Aboriginal culture and spirituality and to foster heightened understanding and unity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups. Francis's life suggests that we must broaden our conceptions of activism to encompass both the grassroots and the spiritual, thus complicating our understandings of what has for too long been characterized as the "Red Power era."

## *Résumé*

Les années 1960 et 1970 ont été des décennies d'effervescence au cours desquelles les Autochtones partout au Canada se sont mobilisés comme force politique de plus en plus revendicatrice, parfois même radicale. Le présent article explore une autre façon de militer, celle de Dorothy Maquabeak Francis, une bahá'íe autochtone de renom qui s'est employée sans relâche, pendant plus d'un demi-siècle, à promouvoir et à préserver la culture et la spiritualité autochtones, ainsi qu'à encourager la compréhension et l'unité entre les groupes autochtones et non autochtones. Sa vie elle-même nous invite à élargir nos conceptions du militantisme pour englober à la fois l'approche communautaire et l'approche spirituelle, ce qui vient compliquer notre compréhension de ce que l'on a défini pendant trop longtemps comme « l'ère du Pouvoir Rouge ».

*Resumen*

Los años 1960 y 70 fueron décadas volátiles en que los pueblos Aborígenes a lo largo de Canadá surgieron como una fuerza política, intenta de hacerse oír cada vez más y a veces militante. Este escrito examina el camino de activismo alternativo seguido por Dorothy Maquabeak Francis, una aborígen bahá'í quién trabajó incansablemente durante cinco décadas para promover y mantener la cultura y espiritualidad Aborígen en pos del acrecentamiento de la unidad y comprensión entre los grupos Aborígenes y no Aborígenes. La vida de Francis sugiere que debemos de ampliar nuestros conceptos de activismo para abarcar a la vez los fundamentos del arraigo poblano y lo espiritual, complicando así nuestra comprensión de lo que por demasiado tiempo se ha caracterizado como la época del Poder Rojo.

In Québec City, Québec, her photograph hangs alongside those of other prominent female figures at the recently opened Bahá'í Office for the Advancement of Women. At Harper Mountain, near Kamloops, British Columbia, her memory is honored at a Native Bahá'í Council. In Aldergrove, a rural suburb of Vancouver, those close to her gather to mourn the loss and celebrate the memory of their beloved relative and friend.<sup>1</sup> Fifteen years after her passing, Dorothy Maquabeak Francis still serves as an inspiration to family and friends, to acquaintances and strangers alike. Memorial ceremonies continue to be held in her honor and physical monuments erected in testament to the far-reaching impact of her manifold social, cultural, economic, and spiritual contributions to Canadian society.<sup>2</sup> With emotion, those close to her share stories and memories of a proud, dignified, strong, and noble “spiritual powerhouse” deeply committed to giving voice to and instilling a sense of self-worth and identity among Canada’s Aboriginal population. A woman who reflected her ideals and ambitions as much in her own character as in her actions, Francis is remembered as artist, singer, storyteller, dancer, social and cultural worker, teacher, traditionalist, spiritual leader, Bahá'í, friend, sister, wife, mother, grandmother, elder.

Francis initiated her life of activism during her early days as a young married mother living on a Saskatchewan reserve. She worked over five decades, at grassroots and official levels, to promote the maintenance of

Aboriginal culture and spirituality as well as to foster heightened understanding and unity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups. Francis contributed, among other things, to the opening of Canada's first Native Friendship Centres, to the establishment of a variety of Aboriginal cultural organizations throughout Western Canada, and to the initiation of an Aboriginal spirituality program within British Columbian correctional facilities. She was a skilled artist and performer: she hosted a number of radio and television programs concerning Prairie Aboriginal culture, participated in such events as the 1967 Canadian Centennial celebrations, and crafted fine beadwork that remains on display at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. In her capacity as a representative in such official bodies as the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, and the National Advisory Board of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and as chair of the National Indian Arts and Crafts Advisory Committee, Francis promoted Aboriginal arts and crafts as an economic as well as cultural endeavor. As an early Aboriginal adherent and prominent figure in the Canadian Bahá'í community, Francis contributed to the significant spread of the Bahá'í religion among Aboriginal people in Canada from 1960 onward. She both advocated and embodied the Bahá'í principle of unity in diversity and worked with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike in pursuit of what one friend characterizes as "practical peace" (Bastow). A powerful spiritual figure within both the Aboriginal and Bahá'í worlds, Francis blessed and lent support to personal and collective initiatives through her prayer and her presence.

Despite such significant contributions and commemoration within specific circles, however, Dorothy Maquabeak Francis remains largely unknown. Facing the double burden of being both Aboriginal and a woman, Francis has until now not received the recognition that she deserves. Indeed, her story illustrates the extent to which previously marginalized groups may not simply be appended to the existing narrative; when we fill in the historiographical gap by placing Francis within it, this narrative itself must change.

Aboriginal activism of the 1960s and 1970s is frequently conceptualized

in terms of “Red Power,” an often militant, radical, and separatist Native rights movement. This view, however, is too narrow. During this period there existed no unified consensus on how to improve the standing and treatment of Aboriginal people in North America. While the revival of “tradition” and the spread of pan-Indigenous cultural and spiritual forms were central to both Francis’s activism as well as that of her Red Power counterparts, her activism predated the Red Power movement and stressed understanding and unity over confrontation and separation. In examining what may be deemed the integrated cultural and spiritual activism of Dorothy Maquabeak Francis, this paper seeks to encourage a widened conception of activism and to argue that Francis’s actions, long overshadowed by the militancy and visibility of the Red Power movement, were a significant and influential element of the activism of this period.

Francis’s life story challenges static conceptions of Aboriginal identity and reinforces the importance of acknowledging the multiplicity of identities and influences that work in concert to shape individuals’ actions. We cannot separate or compartmentalize her social, cultural, racial, economic, political, and spiritual selves. Rather, we can characterize her activism as the product of her status as an Aboriginal/Bahá’í/woman. To accurately contextualize her activist approach, we begin with a brief survey of Francis’s early life and discussion of her multiple sites of identity and inspiration.

#### IDENTITIES AND INSPIRATIONS

Born on 22 March 1912 on the Waywayseecappo Reserve in Manitoba, Francis was the daughter of a Saulteaux woman, Emma Francis; and a British train conductor, William Ashton. She spent her first seven years with her maternal grandmother, who instilled in her an appreciation for Saulteaux language and custom. Documentary and oral sources repeatedly emphasize these early years as critical to the foundation of Francis’s powerful sense of identification with the Saulteaux Nation.<sup>3</sup> With the exception of an interview with Francis herself (“Interview with

Dorothy Maquabeak Francis”), these accounts do not include mention of poverty or other negative colonial-induced factors that characterized life on reserve. Thus, while such accounts, to a degree, may romanticize and idealize Francis’s early life, they nevertheless underline the formative impact of these first seven years. As an anonymous observer commented late in Francis’s life, “It was the spiritual teachings of her people, instilled in Dorothy by her Grandmother, that gave Dorothy the determination, the faith, and the strength to accomplish as much as she did in the service of her people” (“Dorothy M. Francis”). Lyn Crompton, a close friend and student of Francis’s, characterizes this period boldly as “the source of her greatness.” Although Francis was of mixed descent, she was and still is rarely referred to as such—a fact that indicates a powerful distinction between imposed official designations and more practical concepts of status and identity. Quick to correct those who addressed her as “mixed,” Dorothy identified primarily with her Saulteaux heritage.<sup>4</sup>

Despite this self-identification, however, Francis was severed from her roots for over a decade. In what is an all too familiar story, she was forcibly removed from her family and community in 1919 and taken to attend Birtle Indian Residential School in southwestern Manitoba. Her early years at the school were not pleasant ones. During her time at Birtle, where she lived for all but two summer months of each year, Francis was taunted and harassed by older female students. She later recalled she was a “frightened, unhappy, little girl” (qtd. in van Eldik 17).<sup>5</sup> Birtle was typical of residential schools in Canada. Elements such as disease, gender-specific manual and domestic training, and Christian religious instruction all figured prominently in school life.<sup>6</sup> Echoing the sentiments of other former residential school students the nation over, Francis commented in 1978 that “to be in one of those institutions is like being in jail” (qtd. in van Eldik 17).

Francis’s residential school experience, however, diverged from that of other students at Birtle when, in 1923, she was unofficially adopted into the family of the new Presbyterian school principal, the Reverend F. E. Pitts. Shortly after the arrival of the Pitts family the previous year, their

twelve-year-old son Allan Turnbull drowned in the nearby Birdtail River. After this event, Francis joined Pitts, his wife Nellie, and their remaining three children—William Chesley, Ketha, and Lois—in the principal's quarters (Adams, "Alberni"; Adams, "Supplement"). Francis continued to attend Birtle with the other Aboriginal students, but when Pitts was transferred in 1927 she moved with the family to Alberni, British Columbia. While she lived on the Alberni Residential School grounds, Francis attended the local high school—a fact that reflected both the limitations of residential school education as well as the seeming willingness of the Pitts family to encourage Aboriginal students to pursue instruction beyond that available at institutions like Alberni (Adams, "Supplement").<sup>7</sup> At the age of eighteen, homesick for her family and community, Francis returned to the Waywayseecappo Reserve in Manitoba.

In subsequent years Francis remained in close contact with the Pitts family and spoke very highly of them.<sup>8</sup> Ketha Adams (*née* Pitts), the Pitts child Francis appears to have kept in closest contact with, and whom Dorothy's own children later referred to as "Grandma Pitts," considered Dorothy a sister and turned to her for advice concerning her own social activism in the Alberni Valley.<sup>9</sup> Francis's comment to Adams that "[t]he only way I have of repaying you people for what you did for me . . . is to do all in my power to carry on the same sort of work for my people as you were doing" suggests that the Pitts family did indeed have a foundational impact upon their foster daughter (*qtd.* in Adams, Letter).<sup>10</sup> Francis's exposure to the Reverend Mr. Pitts and his family's liberal Christian philosophy and actions no doubt influenced her vigorous social activism.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, she reflects a historical pattern of residential school students subsequently adopting leadership positions within the Aboriginal community (see Raibmon). Armed with the tools of dominant society and able to "walk in both worlds" (Elinor Bennett, telephone interview), Francis deployed her academic and domestic training to the benefit of those the colonial system was designed to oppress.

The Homemakers Club she initiated on the Kahkewistahaw Reserve in

Saskatchewan is a fine example of such an endeavor. After attending school for a period in Manitoba (Adams, "Supplement"), Francis had returned to the Waywayseecapo Reserve where in a period of six weeks she was married and widowed: her young husband, Magnus Martin, died tragically in a hunting accident. It was at this point that Francis was given the powerful Saulteaux name "Maquabeak"—which translates best into English as "Bear Sitting Woman"—by her elders.<sup>12</sup> She began to recover from her loss, and in 1932 she married Joseph Francis of the Kahkewistahaw Reserve near Broadview, Saskatchewan. There she gave birth to eleven children, nine of whom survived past childhood, and initiated the reserve's first Homemakers Club. In her grassroots organizing, Francis employed both her English language skills and her domestic training to secure material goods such as sewing machines and fabrics and to share knowledge of their use, to the benefit of other women and families on the reserve (Adams, Excerpt).

The seemingly positive exposure to non-Aboriginal society that Francis received while living with the Pitts family may have influenced her decision to adopt a more inclusive rather than separatist approach in her activism. Many who knew her stress Francis's generosity in sharing her knowledge; she did not limit her teachings to Aboriginal people alone.<sup>13</sup> Through personal interaction in which she took non-Aboriginal individuals into the world of Saulteaux ritual, as well as through innumerable public engagements and performances in which she spoke of and demonstrated her cultural and spiritual forms, Francis worked to foster understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies.<sup>14</sup> In addition to encouraging an integrated strand of activism, Francis's time with the Pitts family may have influenced her later decision to work within dominant structures. Having seen Pitts and his family supporting aspects of Aboriginal culture from inside the residential school system (see note 11 above), Francis may have been more inclined to articulate her position within the official sphere and accept roles such as the chair of the National Indian Arts and Crafts Committee in 1974.

In addition to affecting the nature of her activism, Francis's time with



the Pitts family may also have impacted her religious and spiritual outlook. While Francis identified strongly with her Saulteaux heritage and taught arts and crafts techniques and spiritual practices from the Prairie region,<sup>15</sup> she also identified with a more universal concept of Aboriginal spirituality. As she explained to a reporter in the late 1960s, “Our Indian religion is basically the same all over North America. We all believe in one Great Spirit called God by the white man” (qtd. in Whitehouse). During the period when she was removed from her home community for over a decade and placed in a residential school with students from a diversity of Aboriginal backgrounds, it is possible that Francis first connected with a form of universal Aboriginal spirituality. It is also conceivable that Francis’s exposure to Presbyterianism and the United Church affected her potential receptivity to the Bahá’í Faith.<sup>16</sup> Although he treats an earlier time period than that of Francis’s declaration, Will van den Hoonaard suggests in *The Origins of the Bahá’í Community of Canada, 1898–1948* that those of “liberal Protestant”—most specifically, Methodist—background proved particularly open to the Bahá’í message.<sup>17</sup>

Francis attended Christian church services and participated in allied social events not only at residential school, but also on the Kahkewistahaw Reserve and in the city of Regina, to which she and her family moved following their enfranchisement in 1953.<sup>18</sup> An interview with Francis late in her life, however, reveals that while “she learned a deep respect for the Christian faith” as a youth, she felt that “the true signs of that faith . . . were not evident in the lives of most professing believers” (Jauk). It was late during the 1950s that Francis was first introduced to the Bahá’í Faith by Angus Cowan. The two had traveled together to visit friends in prison on the outskirts of Regina, and on their way back to the city they pulled over to the side of the road to say prayers. Dorothy was so moved by the prayer Angus shared that he promptly ripped the page out of his prayer book and presented it to her (Verge 48–49, 307). Although she was deeply touched by this act, and while friends report that “she just kept running into Bahá’ís” during this period (McNeil, telephone interview), it was not until 1960, while living briefly in

Calgary, that Dorothy and her husband Joseph together officially declared their belief in the Bahá'í Faith. The couple are cited among the first nineteen Aboriginal Bahá'ís in Canada (Verge 307).

Francis's connection with the Bahá'í Faith affected not only her own personal sense of religious identity and affiliation, but also that of other Aboriginal people throughout Canada. Becoming active immediately upon joining the Faith, Francis participated in systematic Bahá'í teaching campaigns among Canada's Western Aboriginal population. Motivated to a large degree by what has been characterized as the sole "specific racial prophecy in all of the Bahá'í scriptures" (Pemberton-Piggot 34), such programs were initiated at the local, national, and international levels of Bahá'í administration in efforts to fulfill the directive expressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the Tablets of the Divine Plan:

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. (*Tablets* 33)

As the Bahá'í Faith has neither a clergy nor a paid missionary force, individual believers held the responsibility to bring the message of Bahá'u'lláh to Aboriginal Canada and fulfill the numeric goals established by the Bahá'í administration during specific teaching plans (Pemberton-Piggot 44).<sup>19</sup> In her role as traveling teacher, Francis reflected the pattern of "native-white traveling teams" in which, as Andrew Pemberton-Piggot explains, Aboriginal adherents were considered "essential for advice, identifying likely converts in their own territories, translation, and providing legitimacy to white Bahá'ís by their very presence" (42). Visiting Prairie reserves with such prominent figures as Angus Cowan and Tom Anaquod, and participating in such events as a deepening workshop held

for Aboriginal believers in Regina in February 1964,<sup>20</sup> Francis contributed to a process that saw over twenty-four hundred Aboriginal people—roughly equivalent to one quarter of the Canadian Bahá'í population at the time—join the Faith between the years of 1953 and 1979 (Filson).<sup>21</sup>

Francis continued this pattern of Bahá'í service for the remainder of her days. Beyond serving, at various times, on the Canadian National Teaching Committee, the Continental Indigenous Council, and several Local Spiritual Assemblies, and as coordinator for Indian Teaching in British Columbia, Francis also attended events and conferences throughout Canada, the United States, and Mexico in her capacity as an elected Bahá'í representative. In March 1978 she traveled on pilgrimage to the Bahá'í Shrines in Israel and had the privilege of being invited to tea with Rúhíyyih Khánum in Haifa.<sup>22</sup>

In contrast to many of those living on isolated reserves, Dorothy and her husband had greater opportunities to interact with Bahá'ís on a sustained basis and were able to overcome the challenge of translating formal Bahá'í membership into practical adherence, something many Aboriginal people who enrolled during the flurry of Bahá'í teaching activity in the 1960s and 1970s were unable to do.<sup>23</sup> The two made a conscious effort to study the Bahá'í teachings and to apply them practically to their lives (Sargent). Because of such experiences as residential schooling and living with the Pitts family, as well as residing in an urban environment, Francis was likely one of those “Native friends” that the National Spiritual Assembly acknowledged in 1986 as having been able to “effectively reach . . . [as they] were able to cross the cultural barrier to us” (qtd. in Pemberton-Piggot 72).<sup>24</sup>

Francis herself was a valuable asset for the Bahá'í community and a figure to whom the community could point as evidence for the successful implementation of the Bahá'í principle of unity in diversity. Speaking with some non-Aboriginal Bahá'ís who knew Francis, one gains the sense that despite the undoubted sincerity of their relations, association with an Aboriginal person such as Francis, the quintessential and exotic

“Other” within the Canadian context, served as a source of pride and evidence of individual promotion of the principle of racial unity.<sup>25</sup> A close friend with whom Dorothy participated in early Aboriginal teaching efforts on the West Coast of British Columbia notes that even at the time she felt a certain degree of guilt for the vast extent to which the Bahá’í community made demands on early Aboriginal adherents such as Dorothy (Elinor Bennett, personal interview). Indeed, Francis’s vigorous Bahá’í activity frequently drew her away from her own family, which, “throughout all her traveling and work,” “continued to manage on its own” (Bernard).

Francis was attracted by such Bahá’í principles as progressive revelation and unity in diversity. She frequently drew on the concept of one Creator, coupled with a belief in the oneness of humanity, as a parallel between the Bahá’í Faith and Aboriginal spiritual forms. She told reporters that, in her view, the Bahá’í Faith “stresses the same enduring basics—God, nature, tranquility”—as do Aboriginal forms of spirituality (Alsop 2). She explained: “As a Bahai I have confirmation for my belief in the authenticity of the spiritual teachings of my people and the importance of our heritage” (“Interview with Dorothy Maquabeak Francis”). Francis was empowered by her faith in Bahá’u’lláh and gained a sense of self-confidence through her Bahá’í teaching work, growing from an introverted Aboriginal woman “not long off the Reserve” into a skilled and sought-after public speaker (Verge 76).<sup>26</sup> As Patricia Verge explains, “Dorothy would later encourage the Bahá’ís to turn to God before they spoke. ‘If ever you try that some day, really a miracle happens. That happened to me many times, I don’t know what I said, but it was good whatever it was’” (Verge 76). By 1977, seventeen years after joining the Bahá’í Faith, Francis proclaimed that “[i]t gives me great joy to serve this cause, because to me it is the only way” (“Interview with Dorothy Francis”).

Those who knew her have noted the effective balance that Francis struck between the Aboriginal and the Bahá’í aspects of her self (see, for example, Crompton; Heinel). In addition to being a prominent Bahá’í

figure, Francis has been described as a “spiritual powerhouse” within the Aboriginal context—as a medicine woman with the gift to “spark your spirit,” who believed deeply in the need to reassert Aboriginal spirituality as a source of strength, pride, and identity among Canada’s Aboriginal population.<sup>27</sup> Francis did not “convert” in the sense that she abandoned her traditional Aboriginal practices upon adopting the Bahá’í Faith. Rather, she employed the space provided by the principles of progressive revelation and unity in diversity to advance Aboriginal concerns. She seemingly drew no distinction between her Aboriginal and her Bahá’í selves, between Aboriginal forms of spirituality and the Bahá’í Faith: “I feel that all good teachings come from the same source, one God and one mankind” (qtd. in Secretary of State 96). When asked to bless a function or event, she was as likely to deliver a *Saulteaux* invocation passed down to her by her grandfather as she was a Bahá’í prayer on unity (McNeil, personal interview; “Indian Powwow”). While she did not always overtly articulate the connection, her faith in Bahá’u’lláh and her desire for the fulfillment of his teachings nevertheless underwrote her attempts to reaffirm “the truths and strengths of my own Indian heritage” (qtd. in Alsop).<sup>28</sup>

It is clear even from an admittedly limited review of Francis’s early life and her spiritual affiliations that her life story challenges static conceptions of Aboriginal identity. Indeed, although she self-identified as *Saulteaux*, we must take into consideration the disruptive impact that living with a white family no doubt had upon Francis’s knowledge of and access to *Saulteaux* cultural and spiritual forms. In addition to possibly encouraging a sense of identification with a form of universal pan-Indigenous spirituality, Francis’s time with the Pitts family may also have influenced the activist forms she later implemented both on the *Kahkewistahaw* Reserve as well as within various urban and reserve contexts. Despite being severed from her roots at an early age, Francis nevertheless returned as a young woman to her native *Prairie* region, where she identified with and put into practice those *Saulteaux* traditions—language, arts and crafts, dance, prayer, and ritual—that had resisted colonial

attempts at extermination. Francis's adoption of the Bahá'í Faith did not abrogate such practices or her sense of identity, but rather complemented them and actively encouraged their maintenance. It is with such varying influences in mind that we turn now to a more specific examination of Francis's activist forms as well as a comparison and contrast with the dominant Red Power movement.

#### BEYOND RED POWER: THE POLITICS OF CULTURE AND SPIRITUALITY

Despite Dorothy's personal attempts to improve life on the Kahkewistahaw Reserve, the Francis family "disagreed with the administration there" (qtd. in Alsop), and in 1953 they—along with many others migrating from reserve to urban environments in this period—made the difficult decision to forfeit their official Indian status and treaty rights and move to Regina (Alsop; Bernard).<sup>29</sup> Their enfranchisement made official in December of that year, the family pitched tents on the outskirts of town, and Joseph and Dorothy set about securing manual and domestic employment to support themselves and their children.<sup>30</sup> This period of transition was an extremely difficult one for Francis as the attitudes of discrimination and sentiments of inferiority she had encountered on reserve were intensified in the urban context. As she explained: "I never felt I was smart enough to have an argument with a white person. Sometimes I would get so mad about things but I felt I would say something wrong and feel terrible about it later. So I just never said anything" (qtd. in van Eldik). It was Francis's own personal experience that bolstered her resolve to develop and promote services for the benefit of Aboriginal people in urban and reserve contexts alike. Her activism was strongly motivated by recognition of "the great need for Indian people to arise and have a voice" ("Interview with Dorothy Maquabeak Francis"). In promoting pride in Aboriginal identity, Francis sought to empower, "helping the people to better themselves" (Francis, Letter).

Much of Francis's activism took the form of participation in grassroots

organizations, many of which she personally helped launch. In Regina, Francis volunteered with the Regina Native Society, and her work led to the eventual establishment of a Friendship Centre in that city. Following a move to Winnipeg in the early 1960s, Francis worked as a counselor, activities manager, and handicrafts instructor at Canada's first Friendship Centre, which had opened in 1958. At the Vancouver Centre over a decade later, Francis similarly served as an arts and crafts instructor and board member. In providing background information and sharing her firsthand experience both through correspondence and in person, Francis also contributed in a more indirect manner to the establishment of Centres in Port Alberni and Calgary.<sup>31</sup> Francis founded the Regina Indian Cultural Club as well as powwow clubs in Regina, Winnipeg, and Vancouver. She also belonged to such associations as the New Westminster Indian Club and Seattle War Dance Club, as well as the Northwest Cultural Society.

The maintenance and revitalization of Aboriginal culture and spirituality, and their promotion as a source of pride for Aboriginal Canada, were key elements driving Francis's activism. Consider, for example, her work with various Friendship Centres. From their earliest days, these Centres were designed to ease the transition of Aboriginal people migrating from rural reserve environments to urban ones and provided information, counseling and referral services, fellowship, and understanding.<sup>32</sup> It has been noted of the Vancouver context that during the initial period of Friendship Centre activity cultural concerns were subordinated to more pragmatic and seemingly pressing issues such as housing, health, and social services (Lindsay 68). A 1963 *Winnipeg Tribune* article outlining the role of that city's Centre echoes this emphasis upon "everyday" issues of material survival ("Indians Find Centre"). Francis in no respect rejected such concerns. Indeed, she and husband Joseph lived very modest lives (Benndorf interview; Jordan-Bastow). Acutely aware of the poverty, unemployment, and attendant social problems ravaging Aboriginal communities both on and off reserve, Francis supported, and participated directly in providing, such services as referrals and counseling. Culture

and spirituality, however, were not considerations that could be shelved until such time as the Aboriginal community had overcome economic and social marginalization and achieved a deserved place of respect within Canadian society at large. Rather, for Francis they were the very tools by which to help encourage this shift.

In teaching arts and crafts, in encouraging the celebration of powwows, in promoting a sense of pride in Aboriginal heritage and practice, Francis sought to empower the Canadian Aboriginal community. While she would go on, in the official sphere, to promote arts and crafts as a viable economic endeavor,<sup>33</sup> her activism was more broadly characterized by her grassroots efforts to instill a sense of self-worth as well as individual responsibility within the Aboriginal community.<sup>34</sup> Long-time friend Rose Heinel, for example, remembers with fondness the sense of empowerment she gained from Francis's encouragement. The two women shared a common Ojibwa heritage and met in 1967 while Francis was teaching arts and crafts at the Vancouver Friendship Centre. Although Heinel was already practicing beadwork and jewelry making at this time, she cites Francis as "one of my inspirations": "She encouraged me to continue with it, and to this day, look what I do." Heinel is an accomplished professional artist whose jewelry and beadwork are in high demand throughout Canada and beyond.

Of particular significance is the timing of Francis's activist efforts. The Potlatch Law amendment to the Indian Act, which forbade Aboriginal cultural practices such as the potlatch and the sun dance, was repealed only in 1951, and the overriding political, social, and economic climate remained severely constrictive and discriminatory towards Aboriginal people (Ray 230). Within Aboriginal communities themselves, the ravages of social and economic marginalization and afflictions such as alcoholism had seemingly turned attention away from culture towards concerns of everyday survival.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, during the early years of Francis's activist work, youth "used to laugh at her and ask her why she was bothering" (Bernard). In this sense, Francis was very much a trailblazer, and it was largely due to her efforts "in keeping Native



Indian culture alive during a time when few others were passing on Native traditions to the next generation" (Richardson Logie 36) that she was awarded such honors as the Chatelaine Golden Key pin for meritorious service in 1964 and was invested as a Member of the Order of Canada in 1978.<sup>36</sup>

Francis's activist approach may be effectively contrasted with more radical Aboriginal forms of protest that emerged in the 1960s. During this period, throughout North America, a growing recognition of the plight of minority groups, the civil rights movement and the "war on poverty," the rise of student activism, resistance to the Vietnam War, and increased urban migration by Aboriginal people all fomented an atmosphere increasingly conducive to Aboriginal activism.<sup>37</sup> In the United States, with the emergence of Red Power, such groups such as the American Indian Movement (AIM) increasingly deployed highly visible and controversial tactics such as the 1969 occupation of Alcatraz Island and the 1973 siege at Wounded Knee.<sup>38</sup> While Red Power was undoubtedly a heterogeneous movement, populated by a diversity of participants with varying activist strategies, the movement is predominantly remembered for its radical tactics and initiatives.<sup>39</sup> As Johnson, Champagne, and Nagel explain, Red Power was a highly media-savvy strain of activism that played upon romantic and stereotypic images such as "the male warrior" (Wilkins 218) in order to "dramatize Indian problems and protests" (Johnson, Champagne, and Nagel 306).<sup>40</sup>

Red Power spilled over the border to Canada, where national events such as the publication of the 1967 Hawthorn Report—which characterized the status of Canadian Aboriginal people as "citizens minus"—and the 1969 release of the White Paper—which, in its aim to foster a "just society," outlined the termination of special "Indian status"—were already galvanizing groups such as the National Indian Brotherhood (later the Assembly of First Nations) into action (Ray 330–35). The issues of self-determination, treaty rights, and land claims all came to dominate the Aboriginal political landscape. The tactics and initiatives of such groups are rightly characterized as highly political forms of activism.

They are political, however, in a traditional sense of the word: their actions were tailored as an overt and direct message to governmental institutions.

It is no doubt such a traditional conception of activism and the political—understood primarily in terms of public partisan activity and confrontation with government—that motivated a longtime acquaintance of Francis to remark that of all the things she was, Dorothy was never an activist (Bastow). Indeed, Francis was not an advocate of Red Power, nor did she participate in endeavors such as the land claims process.<sup>41</sup> Her actions, however, were profoundly political in a broader sense and represent forms of activism both grassroots and spiritual which must be acknowledged as legitimate and effective.

Conceptions of the political have now been widened to include broader questions of “power, domination, and ‘respect’ at home, at work, and in the community” (Goldberg Moses and Hartmann xxiv–xxv).<sup>42</sup> Politics, in essence, involves “contests over power and control” (Smith Crocco, Munro, and Weiler 9), regardless of the level—state, local, or otherwise—where such contestations are played out. Thus grassroots organizing and its attendant social networks are highly political entities.<sup>43</sup> Promoting social change and exerting influence upon public policy, however, can take place without engaging in partisan contest or adversarial confrontation with governmental institutions.

In asserting the legitimacy of Aboriginal tradition and spirituality and in actively encouraging its maintenance, Francis engaged in an implicitly political critique of government policy, which for centuries had attempted to suppress these very elements. This was undoubtedly a contest “over power and control,” over who possessed both the ability and right to determine and shape Aboriginal culture, spirituality, and identity. Similarly, in her very assertion that “culture is more important than politics” (van Eldik), Francis took a political stand on the effectiveness of employing the mainstream political system as a site for effecting change. While she did serve for a limited period as representative and even chairperson within the highly political realms of both provincial and federal advisory boards,

Francis was not content to work solely at the policy level and made certain to strike an effective balance between the federal, the provincial, and the local; and between the official and the grassroots.<sup>44</sup> As she stressed bluntly, for example, regarding the need to couple national arts and crafts policy and program development with grassroots organization and input: “[W]ithout them you would have no program” (qtd. in “Interview with Dorothy Francis”).

Lyn Crompton, a lawyer who works on behalf of Aboriginal people, proposes a further component of Francis’s contributions. Characterizing her as a “spiritual activist,” Crompton explains that while Francis did not have a full understanding of politics in the traditional sense—in terms of legal structures and the like—she nevertheless applied her spiritual powers within overtly political realms. To illustrate this point, Crompton describes how Francis served as the key “power prayer” behind her work, in one instance granting her the ability to perform during a lengthy legal case on only a few hours of sleep per night and in another investing strength in the Lil’wat people and their supporters during the high-profile 1990 Duffy Lake roadblock in British Columbia.<sup>45</sup> Crompton rightly characterizes this deployment of “focused spiritual power” as “a level of activism most of us haven’t yet even considered.” As she explains:

It made judges weep, and judges made decisions that they’d never made before, it made . . . judges release people, it made history . . . but it was unknown history for the most part and still remains because no one knew in particular of this powerhouse that was behind us, so it’s a power that most of us yet don’t know about. That’s activism.

While mainstream scholarship remains skeptical of nonquantifiable elements such as prayer, these words reinforce that we must indeed widen our conceptions of activism in order to encompass such powerful contributions. Indeed, we must challenge entrenched academic approaches to the study of religion and spirituality where, in the interests of quantification,

little room is left for the element of genuine faith and religious conviction, much less the reality of spiritual systems of belief.<sup>46</sup>

We must underscore the extent to which Francis's activist ambition and form was shaped by her commitment as a Bahá'í, by her desire for the fulfillment of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. Consider, for example, the integrated nature of her activism, her insistence on working within and for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies alike.<sup>47</sup> While many advocates of Red Power advanced a distinct Aboriginal identity as the basis for claims of self-determination, treaty, and land rights, Francis stressed unity over separatism and issued calls for "a spiritual renewal" of "one mankind" (Richardson Logie 39). Francis's work within British Columbian correctional facilities, an endeavor she undertook after a severe stroke in 1978 limited her ability to travel extensively ("Dorothy M. Francis"), represents a practical application of this goal.<sup>48</sup> Francis sought to raise cultural awareness on the part of both inmates and prison guards. 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 practices such as smudges and sweats that she was instrumental in introducing within correctional facilities. For the Aboriginal inmates themselves, she similarly provided direction concerning such practices, instilling a sense of self-worth and pride in Aboriginal heritage.<sup>49</sup>

Francis targeted diverse audiences through her numerous public speaking engagements,<sup>50</sup> through her performance on radio, television,<sup>51</sup> and within such forums as the Centennial celebrations, as well as through her collection, documentation, and interpretation of *Saulteaux* legend and song.<sup>52</sup> She worked closely with many non-Aboriginal Bahá'ís, organizing such events as powwows and assisting in the foundation of programs such as a drug and alcohol treatment center in the Okanagan region of British Columbia.<sup>53</sup> Francis was generous with her knowledge (*Voyageur*); she not only raised awareness and respect for Aboriginal tradition, but she also shared it with the wider world. Non-Aboriginal friends and students of hers, both Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í, speak with great emotion of having

been drawn into the powerful world of Aboriginal spirituality, of being introduced to practices such as sundancing that continue to serve them as sources of both strength and inspiration (Crompton; Jordan-Bastow).

Francis's integrated activism, her insistence on working within and for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies alike, may be viewed as one of the fundamental ways in which her approach differed from that of the Red Power movement. Indeed, despite the powerful impact of Francis's firm belief in the concept of unity, that conviction nevertheless divided her from some of her contemporaries. As Sonny Voyageur, an Aboriginal friend and student of Dorothy's, has explained, there were factions within "Indian country" who opposed Francis as she advocated not a militant and separatist position but, rather, a unified worldview. To stress understanding and unity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups during this era required much courage, and Voyageur rightly contends that in so doing Francis represented a form of radicalism in her own right.

While some may have criticized, for example, her decisions to participate in the 1967 Canadian Centennial celebrations or to sit on Department of Indian Affairs advisory boards, Francis was not a "sellout." Through such participation, she may have appeared to condone the (post)colonial establishment, but she also succeeded in raising awareness and respect for Aboriginal people and practices. She perceived such opportunities as positive ones providing space for Aboriginal representation and voice. Through the powwow clubs she established, through the arts and crafts she encouraged, through the prayer and ceremony she shared, Francis illustrated the potential of the cultural and the spiritual as a source of strength and pride. While arts and crafts may have proved an economic boon to some, even more people were likely to have benefited from the sense of empowerment that no doubt grew through confirmation in the legitimacy of their heritage. Again, culture and spirituality were tools that were not separate from, but rather integral to, the everyday survival of Aboriginal Canada.

For all the differences we can draw between Francis and her Red Power counterparts, it is essential also to acknowledge key links between these

two activist strands. Significant among these links is the historic trend of urbanization that brought myriad groups of Aboriginal people into contact with one another and fostered collective organization throughout North American cities in the post-World War II period. Francis was not alone in developing services for urban Aboriginal populations; Indian clubs spread throughout North America during the 1960s. The American Indian Movement, the Native rights organization that arguably best embodies Red Power, in fact first emerged in Minneapolis in 1968 with the goal of protecting the rights of urban Aboriginal people (Wilkins 210). Fellowship clubs such as the Friendship Centres that Francis helped found served as contact points for urban Aboriginal residents, and they may well have contributed indirectly to the development of those contingents of Native youth who would go on to head the Red Power movement. Similarly, the powwow clubs she established likely served as an indirect mechanism for the spread of protest activity and strategy, passing “information along to Indian families who traveled between cities and the reservations” (Johnson, Champagne, and Nagel 306).

Perhaps the greatest similarity between Francis and the Red Power movement was the stress laid upon commonality rather than difference within the Aboriginal community. Red Power has justifiably been characterized according to its supratribal or pan-Indigenous forms of organization, by its promotion of collective ethnic identity as the basis for claims of self-determination and autonomy.<sup>54</sup> Pan-Indigenization is not, however, as some have argued, merely a political process, but also a cultural and spiritual one.<sup>55</sup> Developments such as residential schooling and urbanization, historic trends that severed Aboriginal peoples from their distinct Aboriginal backgrounds, fostered a sense of common identity as well as a confluence of practices and traditions. Francis herself not only identified with a form of pan-Indigenous spirituality, but she also contributed directly to its formation. Within her prison reform work, for example, she no doubt ministered to inmates from a vast diversity of Aboriginal backgrounds, introducing practices such as smudges and sweats as spiritual elements accessible to all. She was similarly instrumental in introducing

Prairie Aboriginal dance and arts and crafts techniques to the coastal region.<sup>56</sup> In her extensive travels and residence throughout Western Canada, Francis participated personally in a process of pan-Indigenization both cultural and spiritual.

Although Red Power is often conceptualized in terms of the political, culture and spirituality also played a role in this movement, and it is perhaps in part for this reason that the activism of individuals such as Francis has been overshadowed. Visible Red Power tactics such as property seizures and marches were coupled with the celebration of pan-Indigenous tradition. Johnson, Champagne, and Nagel argue that with the peaceful conclusion of the Longest Walk, a protest march from San Francisco to Washington, D.C., said to mark the end of the Red Power era, "Red Power protest had come full circle, from the festive Alcatraz days, through a cycle of confrontations between Indian activists and the federal government, to the traditional quest for spiritual unity. . . ." (308).

Although militancy and violent confrontation no doubt garnered more popular and media attention than did cultural celebration and events like the Longest Walk, the period of Red Power activism has been said to have contributed to an Aboriginal "cultural renaissance" that manifested itself in the form of "tribal museum development, tribal language instruction, cultural preservation and apprenticeship programs, tribal history projects, and the preservation and reinstitution of ceremonial and spiritual practices" (Johnson, Champagne, and Nagel 309). The operative word here, however, is "contributed." Red Power was preceded by Francis as well as, certainly, by others like her who precipitated such patterns of cultural and spiritual revival and pan-Indigenization. The notoriety of the Red Power movement must not subsume and render invisible the contributions of Francis that not only predated but also surpassed the dominant 1960s–1970s period of Red Power activity. Despite health challenges including back problems and diabetes, as well as a debilitating stroke in 1978 that confined her to a wheelchair, Francis pursued her activist activities until the end of her days. It was, in fact,

on a Bahá'í teaching trip to Bella Coola in 1990 that Francis suffered the final stroke that would claim her life in a New Westminster hospital on 17 October of that year.<sup>57</sup>

### THE LEGACY

The aim here is not to discredit the Red Power movement but, rather, to encourage a widened conception of activism as well as to ensure that the actions of Dorothy Maquabeak Francis and others like her do not go unacknowledged. Undoubtedly, Red Power activists, in forcing their demands for self-determination upon the public attention and into the political arena, played a decisive role in raising awareness about the history and plight of Aboriginal North America and in gaining rights long denied Aboriginal people.<sup>58</sup> Theirs, however, was not the sole form of Aboriginal activism during this period. Indeed, Red Power activists drew upon institutions such as Friendship Centres and processes such as pan-Indigenization that had been initiated long before Red Power exploded onto the activist scene in the late 1960s.

Through her own efforts, Dorothy Maquabeak Francis illustrates that Aboriginal activism was not necessarily carried out in the service of separatist aims or to the exclusion of non-Aboriginal people. Rather, her integrated activism, motivated firmly by her beliefs as a Bahá'í as well as by factors such as time spent with the Pitts family in her youth, reflected a desire for unity in diversity. Through her successful promotion of arts and crafts, as well as of institutions such as the powwow and sun dance, Francis demonstrated that culture and spirituality could not be deferred until the Aboriginal community had overcome its marginalization. These elements were, rather, the key tools of the reparation process. Indeed, through her prayer, through her faith in Bahá'u'lláh and her contributions towards the fulfillment of his teachings, Francis encourages us to recognize the potential of spiritual approaches to the pursuit of social change.

From the women and families of the Kahkewistahaw Reserve; from



Friendship Centre visitors and powwow club participants; from those encouraged to pursue arts and crafts as a personal and collective, as well as an economic, endeavor; from those who gained a better appreciation of the history and contemporary reality of Aboriginal Canada, who gained pride in their heritage; to those benefiting from her prayers as well as their own spiritual awakenings—many people found their lives profoundly altered by Francis. Francis's own life story challenges static conceptions of Aboriginal identity and reveals a multiplicity of mediating factors that helped shape her activism.

Although she has crossed over to the other side, Francis continues to visit those close to her in dreams. Her spirit is said to continue to bless significant events, and she remains both “an admonisher and a prodder” (Jordan-Bastow).<sup>59</sup> Even for those who never met her, Dorothy Maquabeak Francis serves as a powerful inspiration, as a reminder of the potential impact of culture, spirituality, and an integrated activist approach. Armed with a commitment to “unity in diversity” and the “gift to spark your spirit,” Bear Sitting Woman worked tirelessly to achieve her activist aims, and Canadian society as a whole—past, present, and future—is richer for it.

## NOTES

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 28th Annual Conference of the Association for Bahá'í Studies, Calgary, Alberta, 5 September 2004. My deepest thanks to the many people who shared so generously of their memories, experiences, and documentary material, and helped me gain a better understanding of Dorothy, her actions, and her influences.

1. These three events all transpired in the fall of 2002.

2. Included among these monuments are Maquabeak Park in Coquitlam, British Columbia; the Dorothy Maquabeak Francis totem in Queen's Park, New Westminster; and a commemorative plaque hanging at the Coquitlam City Hall. Ella Benndorf, one of Francis's many Bahá'í friends, was instrumental in the creation of these memorials.

3. See, for example, Bernard; “Promoting a Culture”; Crompton; Hildebrandt, telephone interview 27 October 2002 (hereafter referred to as Hildebrandt interview 1); Benndorf, interview. Prairie people, the Saulteaux are also referred to as the Plains Ojibwa or “They Came by Water Route” Nation. See Day; Adams “Supplement.”

4. See Hildebrandt interview 1; Crompton. Hildebrandt, one of Francis’s eldest daughters, explains that Ashton and Francis’s mother, Emma, were never officially married. It is for this reason that Emma and Dorothy did not at this point lose their official Indian status under Indian Act legislation.

5. The problem of “undetected terrorism” against younger girls by older ones at Birtle is highlighted by Ketha Adams, daughter of Birtle principal Rev. F. E. Pitts, in “Supplement.” For further discussion of Francis’s residential school experience, see Bernard; “Interview with Dorothy Maquabeak Francis”; Hildebrandt interview 1; Crompton.

6. See “Birtle.” I was unfortunately unable to access the administrative records for the remaining period during which Francis attended Birtle. For a general discussion of the residential school system in Canada, see Miller. On Birtle specifically, see Miller 213–15, 237, 292, 329–30, 368. See also Milloy; Haig-Brown.

7. It appears that the Pitts family did not limit their encouragement of further education to Francis alone. Both the records of Ketha Adams, who taught at Birtle and Alberni, and the general administrative files of Rev. F. E. Pitts indicate that the family petitioned on the behalf of selected Aboriginal students—those performing best within the bounds of residential school academic, sport, and manual training—to allow them to attend the local public high school. See Adams, “Remembrances”; Adams “Story of One Class”; “West Coast.”

8. Elinor Bennett; Hildebrandt interview 1; McNeil telephone interview.

9. On the Francis children referring to Adams as “Grandma Pitts,” see Hildebrandt interview 1. On Adams regarding Francis as a sister, see “Ketha Adams.” A series of letters between Adams and Francis written during the 1960s and 1970s illustrates the strong connection between the two women. One particular exchange in 1964 involved Adams writing to Francis for insight concerning her work at the Winnipeg Friendship Centre. The report that Francis supplied in return was published in a local Alberni paper and contributed

indirectly to the opening of the Alberni Friendship Centre in the mid-1960s. See Ketha Adams (Pitts) fonds. See also Francis, "Report."

10. The fact that Francis named two of her children, Ketha and Chesley, after members of the Pitts family is similarly telling.

11. On Pitts's philosophy and activity and reception by the local Aboriginal community, see, for example, Adams, "Family History"; Clutesi, Untitled tribute.

12. The symbol of the bear was repeatedly stressed by those interviewed as a figure of great significance to Prairie Aboriginal people. While it is unclear, as Victoria Day has discussed, whether this name was granted in order to give strength or whether elders foresaw Francis's spiritual power and granted the designation accordingly, the name "Maquabeak" nevertheless holds much weight. See, for example, Day 2; Benndorf interview; Crompton; Jordan-Bastow; Heinel; Hildebrandt interview 1.

13. Benndorf interview; Crompton; Jordan-Bastow; Voyageur.

14. Crompton; Fletcher Bennett; Jordan-Bastow.

15. See, for example, Jordan-Bastow.

16. While originally a Presbyterian minister, Pitts participated personally in the union of the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches in 1925. See Adams, "Family History."

17. See, for example, 24, 29–31, 231, 277–79, 286.

18. Francis's daughter, Shirley Hildebrandt, confirms that the Francis family attended church on the Kahkewistahaw Reserve as well as in Regina. There were three churches on the reserve, and while Hildebrandt does not recall the denomination of the third, the presence of both a Presbyterian and a United Church suggests a degree of continuity with Francis's time with the Pitts family (Hildebrandt, telephone interview [hereafter referred to as Hildebrandt interview 2], 10 November 2002).

19. For an outline of specific Bahá'í plans see Pemberton-Piggot 96–97.

20. See Verge 79, 109, 132–33.

21. Statistics provided by Gerald Filson, Director of External Affairs for the Bahá'í Community of Canada. It should be noted that there are potential inconsistencies within the numbers here given. Filson notes that Canadian Bahá'ís are a geographically mobile population, and that such numbers do not account for

those Bahá'ís who did not record address changes. Neither do Aboriginal Bahá'í statistics from this era account for “drop-off,” for those who did not become practicing Bahá'ís. In addition, Filson notes that when the records for the National Centre were transferred to computer in the early 1980s, not all enrollments between the years 1948–1986 were included. He nevertheless contends that these numbers provide a sense of historic enrollment trends. For more on the problematic nature of Bahá'í statistics, see van den Hoonaard, “Socio-demographic characteristics.”

22. Francis traveled to Haifa with Anna Prough. Prough's daughter, Jean Olafsson, characterizes this trip as “the highlight of Dorothy's Bahá'í life.”

23. While the Bahá'í community succeeded in meeting its assigned target goals for Aboriginal declaration, it struggled in providing for both continuity and growth. In their eagerness to fulfill the words of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá as well as the goals for Aboriginal enrollment, the Canadian Bahá'í community relaxed entry requirements “to allow for enrollment of those who simply accepted Bahá'u'lláh as the Messenger of God for this age, and were prepared to obey His teachings.” This attitude of gradualism—“deliberately seeking points of agreement and only later introducing issues and laws more difficult for the inquirer”—was one developed in alternative Bahá'í fields of service such as Africa and one which better allowed the community to enroll greater numbers during the flurries of teaching activity that generally accompanied the end of a plan (Pemberton-Piggot 39). This relaxation of entry requirements, coupled with “problems of cultural differences, physical distance, apathy and exhaustion” all contributed to the difficulty the Bahá'í community subsequently faced in consolidating Aboriginal membership (Pemberton-Piggot 44). Ambivalence and resistance were encountered in some regions, but even where there was interest and demand for further instruction, individual Bahá'ís proved hard-pressed to provide it. Lacking in sufficient human and monetary resources, Bahá'í pioneers could not supply the knowledge and support necessary for many Aboriginal followers to learn to practically apply the Bahá'í teachings to their everyday lives. Although “sporadic teaching campaigns and yearly trips to reform Assemblies were able to keep up statistical numbers of individuals, localities and Assemblies,” warnings issued upon the relaxation of entry requirements had in effect come to fruition: “if follow-up ‘deepening’ work

was neglected through concentration on outward growth, the results would not endure." Among those Aboriginal Bahá'ís who maintained contact with the Faith, Pemberton-Piggot asserts, there persisted—indeed, persists—a significant division between members living on reserves and non-Aboriginal adherents within the wider (urban) Canadian Bahá'í community (44, 45–46).

24. Note that it was Aboriginal Bahá'ís who were required to cross the cultural barrier to the non-Aboriginal world and not vice versa.

25. See, for example, Benndorf interview; McNeil, telephone interview; McNeil, personal interview.

26. Many of those interviewed stressed Francis's skills as a public speaker. See, for example, Benndorf interview; Fletcher Bennett.

27. Francis is described as a "spiritual powerhouse" by Lyn Crompton. It was to Crompton that Francis once revealed that which she considered her gift: the ability to "spark your spirit." On Francis's desire to reassert Aboriginal spirituality as a source of strength, pride, and identity, see, for example, "Interview with Dorothy Maquabeak Francis."

28. For examples of Francis's discussion of her work without overt mention of the Bahá'í Faith—however, with powerful allusions to it—see Secretary of State 96–97; van Eldik; Richardson Logie 39.

29. On the issue of discriminatory, constrictive, and patriarchal government administration, see also Bernard; van Eldik. On migration from reserve to urban environments, see Lindsay 17–30. While Lindsay notes methodological challenges faced in quantifying Aboriginal migration—among them, the distinction between official and practical conceptions of Indian identity and status and the issue of under-enumeration—he nonetheless provides statistics illustrating heavy urban migration during 1951–1961. Regina's Aboriginal population, for example, is said to have increased from 116 in 1951 to 539 in 1961, while Winnipeg's is considered to have jumped from 210 to 1,082 in the same period.

30. See Day, Figure 2, for a copy of the official enfranchisement document. While Francis was no longer technically under the yoke of the Department of Indian Affairs, the document exhibited a highly patronizing tone, illustrating the persistence of patriarchal attitudes. In response to a request from Francis for assistance in securing housing, for example, the document states: "It is suggested

that you might enlist the aid of Mr. Warden to ensure that a suitable house is purchased and that they get a good value for their money, and that said money is not squandered.”

31. On the Port Alberni Centre, see Ketha Adams (Pitts) fonds. Interestingly, it was a Bahá'í couple, Arthur and Lily Ann Irwin, active pioneers among Alberta's Aboriginal population, who initiated the Friendship Centre in Calgary. Francis, who was living in town for a short period during the early 1960s, assisted Lily Ann during the early planning stages. As Irwin explains, “Dorothy wasn't always there . . . because she moved from place to place but whenever she was she was a very great worker” (Jensen, Interview with Lily Ann Irwin). Native Friendship Centres have spread throughout the nation and remain powerful institutions for urban Aboriginal populations. See, for example, the Web site of the National Association of Friendship Centres of Canada, <<http://www.nafc-aboriginal.com>>.

32. See Evans; Francis, “Friendship Centre Report”; “Indians Find Centre”; “Dorothy Francis Directs.”

33. Consider, for example, the positions Francis held with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, the Saskatchewan Provincial Arts Board, the National Advisory Board of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the National Indian Council, and the National Indian Arts and Crafts Advisory Committee.

34. See, for example, “Interview with Dorothy Francis.”

35. For Francis's own comments on the negative effects of alcohol on Aboriginal communities, see Richardson Logie 39.

36. On the Golden Key award, see Macpherson; Junior League of Winnipeg. Francis was the subject of numerous newspaper articles following the announcement of her appointment to the Order of Canada. See, for example, Bernard; van Eldik.

37. See Ray 330; Johnson, Nagel, and Champagne 10; Ouellette 88.

38. The label “Red Power” is attributed to well-known Aboriginal activist and scholar Vine Deloria, Jr. He first employed the term publicly during a 1966 speech at the annual meeting of the National Congress of American Indians, of which he was then executive director. See Wilkins 218.

39. See, for example, Johnson, Nagel, and Champagne; Johnson, Champagne, and Nagel; Wilkins.

40. The decision to employ the media came, of course, at a cost. While the AIM leadership often sought to highlight treaty and civil rights issues, the mainstream media by and large contained its coverage within the bounds of the “stereotype” and “militant” frames (see Wilkins 218).

41. See, for example, Whitehouse.

42. This reconceptualization of the political is widely discussed in women’s activism literature. See, for example, Laslett, Brenner, and Arat; Cohen, Jones, and Tronto.

43. See, for example, Naples 2.

44. See “Dorothy Francis Receives Order of Canada.” After stepping down as chair of the National Indian Arts and Crafts Committee due to poor health, for example, Francis spent the month of August 1975 traveling in Northern Ontario, “helping the native people form their own committees to develop programs for self help and cultural preservation” (“Dorothy M. Francis”).

45. The legal case was that of Robert Satiacum, a hereditary leader of the Puyallup Nation, who was seeking to gain Canadian refugee status according to his treaty rights.

46. For a convincing call to move beyond such entrenched academic approaches to the study of religion and spirituality, see Chakrabarty.

47. See, for example, Jordan-Bastow; Fletcher Bennett.

48. While both oral and documentary sources confirm that Francis initiated an Aboriginal spirituality program within correctional facilities that continues to this day (see, for example, Benndorf interview; Hildebrandt interview 2; “Dorothy M. Francis”), 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.

49. See, for example, “Interview with Dorothy Francis”; Jordan-Bastow.

50. Francis’s many and diverse public engagements included speaking to school children concerning Aboriginal childrearing practices; speaking at such

events as World Religion Day; and delivering prayers, both Aboriginal and Bahá'í, at a wide variety of functions. See, for example, Fletcher Bennett; Benndorf interview; McNeil telephone and personal interviews.

51. These programs, during which Francis spoke English as well as her native Saulteaux language, included the summer broadcast "North Country Fair" on CBC and the 1963 television series "Maquabeak" aired on CJAY Winnipeg. See Macpherson; "Promoting a Culture"; "Indian Series Set for CJAY"

52. Francis (with the assistance of Barbara Cass-Beggs) recorded a Saulteaux lullaby and introduced it to the Saskatchewan Folklore Society, and (with Muriel Clipsham) documented a series of legends concerning the Saulteaux figure Nainabush. See Francis, "Saulteaux Lullaby"; Day, Figure 3. She also worked in conjunction with Nan Shipley, who was considered "Canada's foremost authority on Indian folklore" during the 1960s ("Indian Series Set for CJAY").

53. Jordan-Bastow; McNeil telephone and personal interviews.

54. See, for example, Johnson, Champagne, and Nagel 292, 305.

55. On pan-Indigenization as political process, see Wilkins 208.

56. Heinel; McNeil telephone and personal interviews. See Whitehouse for Francis's observations concerning the difference between Prairie and Coastal Aboriginal people, remarks made during an early Bahá'í teaching trip up Canada's West Coast.

57. On Francis's health challenges as well as her death, see, for example, Jordan-Bastow; Benndorf, interview; McNeil, telephone and personal interviews. Francis is buried in Squamish, British Columbia.

58. On the legacy of Red Power, see, for example, Johnson, Champagne, and Nagel; Johnson, Nagel, and Champagne; Baird-Olson.

59. See also Crompton; Heinel; Hildebrandt interview 2.

## WORKS CITED

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá. *Tablets of the Divine Plan*. Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1993.
- Adams, Ketha. "Alberni District Historical Society: Family History." Rev.



- Frank E. Pitts reference file. Id. 1361, Acc. No. 985.27. Alberni District Historical Society Archives.
- . Excerpt from letter written to group assisting Native women in British Columbia organize a Homemakers Club. Ketha Adams (Pitts) fonds, Id. 1944, Acc. No. 911.3, Folder 15 (Dorothy Francis). Alberni District Historical Society Archives.
- . Letter to Rev. E. M. Joblin, United Church Missions. 2 May 1962. Ketha Adams (Pitts) fonds, Id. 1944, Acc. No. 911.3, Folder 12 (Native people). Alberni District Historical Society Archives.
- . “Remembrances of Alberni Residential School.” September 1989. Ketha Adams (Pitts) fonds, Id. 1944, Acc. No. 911.3, Folder 13 (Alberni Residential School). Alberni District Historical Society Archives.
- . “Story of One Class.” Ketha Adams (Pitts) fonds, Id. 1944, Acc. No. 911.3, Folder 13 (Alberni Residential School). Alberni District Historical Society Archives.
- . “Supplement to Information in News Article, Dorothy Francis.” 17 May 1989. Ketha Adams (Pitts) fonds, Id. 1944, cc. No. 911.3, Folder 15 (Dorothy Francis). Alberni District Historical Society Archives.
- Alsop, Kay. “New Honor, Old Insult Same Day.” *The Province* 24 January 1978: 1–2.
- Baird-Olson, Karren. “Reflections of an AIM Activist: Has It All Been Worth It?” *No Middle Ground: Women and Radical Protest*. Ed. Kathleen M. Blee. New York: New York University Press, 1998. 133–55.
- Bastow, Jack. Personal interview. 12 September 2002.
- Benndorf, Ella. “Dorothy Maquabeak Francis, C. M.” Ella Benndorf private papers.
- . Personal interview. 4 September 2002.
- Bennett, Elinor. Telephone interview. 5 September 2002.
- . Personal interview. 21 July 2004.
- Bennett, Fletcher. Telephone interview. 5 September 2002.

- Bernard, Michael. "She Gave Indians Back Their Heritage: Lifetime of Work Rewarded." *The Columbian* [New Westminster]. 30 March 1978: 1–2.
- "Birtle Agency—Birtle Residential School. Presbyterian Church. General Administration. 1899–1920." RG 10. Indian Affairs. Vol. 6251. Reel C-8645. File 575-1. Part 1. National Archives of Canada.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Clutesi, George. Untitled tribute to Reverend F. E. Pitts. April 1949. Rev. Frank E. Pitts reference file. Id. 1361, Acc. No. 985.27. Alberni District Historical Society Archives.
- Cohen, Cathy J., Kathleen B. Jones, and Joan C. Tronto, eds. *Women Transforming Politics: An Alternative Reader*. New York: New York University Press, 1997.
- Crompton, Lyn. Personal interview. 29 September 2002.
- Day, Victoria, "Bear Sitting Woman: A Biography of Dorothy Maquabeak Francis, C. M. (1912–1990)." Unpublished paper. December 1999.
- "Dorothy Francis Directs Indian Counsellor Service." Ketha Adams (Pitts) fonds, Id. 1944, Acc. No. 911.3, Folder 15 (Dorothy Francis). Alberni District Historical Society Archives.
- "Dorothy Francis Receives Order of Canada." *Arts & Crafts* 3.4 [1977–78?]: 1+.
- "Dorothy M. Francis, C. M." Ella Benndorf private papers.
- Evans, Marjorie Gertrude. "Fellowship Centres for Urban Canadian Indians: A Comparative Assessment of the 'Coqualaatza' Movement in Vancouver, and Other Comparable Developments in Eight Canadian Cities." Master's Thesis. University of British Columbia, 1961.
- Filson, Gerald. E-mail to the author. 24 October 2002.
- Francis, Dorothy. "Friendship Centre Report from Winnipeg." Ketha Adams (Pitts) fonds, Id. 1944, Acc. No. 911.3, Folder 15 (Dorothy Francis). Alberni District Historical Society Archives.
- . 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.

Francis, Dorothy. "Report on the Winnipeg Indian and Métis Friendship Centre." April, 1964. Ketha Adams (Pitts) fonds, Id. 1944, Acc. No. 911.3, Folder 15 (Dorothy Francis). Alberni District Historical Society Archives.

———. "Saulteaux Lullaby." *Folksongs of Saskatchewan*. Collected by Barbara Cass-Beggs. The Smithsonian Institution. Folkways Cassette Series: 04312.

Goldberg Moses, Claire, and Heidi Hartmann, eds. *U.S. Women in Struggle: A Feminist Studies Anthology*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995.

Haig-Brown, Celia. *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. Vancouver: Tillacum Library, 1988.

Heinel, Rose. Personal interview. 4 November 2002.

Hildebrandt, Shirley. Telephone interview. 27 October 2002.

———. Telephone interview. 10 November 2002.

"Indian Powwow Featured Native Song and Dance." *The Langley Advance* 1 November 1978.

"Indian Series Set for CJAY." Ketha Adams (Pitts) fonds, Id. 1944, Acc. No. 911.3, Folder 15 (Dorothy Francis). Alberni District Historical Society Archives.

"Indians Find Centre Stepping-stone to City Life." *Winnipeg Tribune* 10 October 1963: 40.

"An Interview with Dorothy Francis—'Every Single Indian is Responsible for the Betterment of his Race.'" *Arts & Crafts* 3.4 [1977–78?]: 3.

"Interview with Dorothy Maquabeak Francis." Ella Benndorf private papers.

Jauk, Erika. "Grandmother Filled with Native Spirit." *The Langley Advance* 1 July 1987: 12a.

Jensen, Carrie. Interview with Lily Ann Irwin. Penticton, British Columbia. 6 October 1982.

Johnson, Troy R. *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island: Indian Self-Determination and the Rise of Indian Activism*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996.

- Johnson, Troy, Duane Champagne, and Joane Nagel. "American Indian Activism and Transformation: Lessons from Alcatraz." *Contemporary Native American Political Issues*. Ed. Troy R. Johnson. Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 1999. 283–314.
- Johnson, Troy, Joane Nagel, and Duane Champagne, eds. *American Indian Activism: Alcatraz to the Longest Walk*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997.
- Jordan-Bastow, Gretchen. Personal interview. 12 September 2002.
- Junior League of Winnipeg. Letter to Dorothy Francis. 26 May 1964. Ella Benndorf private papers.
- "Ketha Adams Passes Away in Qualicum." *AV Times* [Alberni Valley] 10 March 1997.
- Ketha Adams (Pitts) fonds, Id. 1944, Acc. No. 911.3, Folder 15 (Dorothy Francis), Alberni District Historical Society Archives.
- Laslett, Barbara, Johanna Brenner, and Yesim Arat, eds. *Rethinking the Political: Gender, Resistance, and the State*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Lindsay, George G. "A History of the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre in an Age of Aboriginal Migration and Urbanization." Master's Thesis. University of British Columbia, 1998.
- McNeil, Edith. Personal interview. 4 November 2002.
- . Telephone interview. 19 September 2002.
- Macpherson, Mary-Etta. "What's New With You." *Chatelaine* June 1964: 4.
- 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.
- Naples, Nancy A., ed. *Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing Across Race, Class, and Gender*. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Olafsson, Jean. Personal interview. 3 November 2002.
- Ouellette, Grace. *The Fourth World: An Indigenous Perspective on Feminism and Aboriginal Women's Activism*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2002.

- Pemberton-Piggot, Andrew. "The Bahá'í Faith in Alberta; 1942–1992: The Ethic of Dispersion." Master's Thesis. University of Alberta, 1992.
- "Promoting a Culture," Ketha Adams (Pitts) fonds, Id. 1944, Acc. No. 911.3, Folder 15 (Dorothy Francis). Alberni District Historical Society Archives.
- Raibmon, Paige. "A New Understanding of Things Indian': George Raley's Negotiation of the Residential School Experience." *BC Studies* 110 (Summer 1996): 69–96.
- 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.
- Richardson Logie, Patricia. *Chronicles of Pride: A Journey of Discovery*. Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1990.
- Sargent, John. Telephone interview. 27 October 2002.
- Secretary of State. *Speaking Together: Canada's Native Women*. Ottawa: Canadian Secretary of State, 1975.
- Smith Crocco, Margaret, Petra Munro, and Kathleen Weiler. *Pedagogies of Resistance: Women Educator Activists, 1880–1960*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1999.
- van den Hoonaard, Will C. "Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Canadian Bahá'í Community." June 1991. <<http://www.bahai-library.org>>.
- . *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada, 1898–1948*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996.
- van Eldik, Jeannette. "Heritage and Culture—Dorothy Francis." *The Other Press* 24 (January 1978): 17.
- Verge, Patricia. *Angus: From the Heart*. Cochrane, Alb.: Springtide, 1999.
- Voyageur, Sonny. Telephone interview. 30 October 2002.
- "West Coast Agency—Alberni Boarding School. General Administration, 1920–1938." Reel C-8759. Volume 6431. File 877–1. Part 2. National Archives of Canada.
- Whitehouse, Lynn. "Dorothy Francis Flies for Faith." *The Daily News* [Prince Rupert], 14 March 1969: 12.

Wilkins, David E. *American Indian Politics and the American Political System*.  
Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002.

Beyond Red Power. .. Author. Chelsea Horton. Title of item. Beyond Red Power. Subtitle of item. The Alternative Activism of Dorothy Maquabeak Francis. Volume. 14:3-4. Pages. 35-71. Parent publication. Journal of Bahá'í Studies. Publisher of this ed. Ottawa: Association for Baha'i Studies North America.