**APPENDIX 4: WORDS OF APPRECIATION**

**FOR MY NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN BROTHERS AND SISTERS**

My first contact with the Native American Indian Medicine Wheel occurred while I was studying the Anisa Model of Education at National University in San Diego under the tutelage of Daniel C. Jordan, Donald T. Streets, and Irene Hartley during the summers of 1981 and 1982. A fellow classmate, Marilyn Napoleon, showed me how the holistic concepts of the Anisa Model could be integrated with the traditional Medicine Wheel. Another fellow student, Lee Brown, a medicine person of his tribe, invited me to participate in and learn about the peace ceremony. Chief Phil Lane Jr., a Native American guest professor, gave a fascinating lecture on the contribution of the indigenous peoples to the “exploration and mapping” of the inner, spiritual worlds which corresponds in greatness to the European contribution to the exploring and mapping of the outer, physical world. But, in addition to these events, it was simply the experience of living in the same motel complex and going through the joys and trials of deeply inspiring university courses that I came to know better the Native approach to life. I look back on those summers as great “watershed years” of my intellectual and spiritual life.

After graduation I kept in touch with the work being done by my Canadian friends at the Alexander Band school and the Four Worlds Development Project. I was amazed and thrilled to see how they were adapting and applying the holistic theories we had been taught to meeting the critical needs of their people.

During the nine years that I lived in Honduras I had the opportunity to spend time amongst native people of several different tribes. I came to know many of their spiritual and affective qualities. Sometimes they would share with me things that they would not share with the “ladinos”--the mixed-blood Hondurans--such as their legends, language, songs, and relics; because I “came from far away” and was not “interested in stealing their land.” (Little did they know what atrocities my own ancestors had perpetrated in my far away land in North America and how ashamed I was of my own people.)

Later, my doctoral studies were blessed with the wise counsels and teaching of my fellow student and friend Red Bear, Larry Etter, who shared with me prophecies of the Cherokee people and their use of the Medicine Wheel.

During my thirty years in Colombia, I had the privilege of making many Native American friends. The Wayuu Bahá’ís taught me their legends, music, and dance, and their fierce loyalty to the Faith. My son-in-law, Roberto Nahuel, taught me the patience and perseverance of the Mapuche people. My Indigenous Thought and Wisdom teachers were Crispin Izquierdo (Mamo Arwa Viku ) and Floresmiro Rodríguez. My deep healer (piache) was Victor Contreras. Through these friends, my eyes were opened to the powerful intellect and profound vision of Native American Indians; a vison of Mother Earth both chastising and healing her rebellious yet slowly maturing children. They have given me a “first glimpse” of the fulfillment of the prophecy of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Should these Indians and aborigines be educated and obtain guidance, there is no doubt that through the divine teachings, they will become so enlightened as in turn to shed light to all regions.”[[1]](#endnote-1)

As the years roll by, I see a “Grand Synthesis” in motion; a synthesis of the Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh; the Native American knowledge and wisdom (especially in the fields of holistic ecology and sustainability); and the philosophical, scientific, humanistic, and spiritual contributions of the cultures of both the Occident and the Orient. This “Grand Synthesis” will spread to all the peoples of the world with each tribe and people adding its contributions as they come under the banner of the Most Great Name.

In this process I see the great fabric of the future world civilization to come. Each tribe, each ethnic group, each people will contribute its own unique threads--strong, bright, and distinct. The time for weaving, especially due to increased communication via the Internet, is only just beginning. (For example, through the work being done at The Shift Network, I learned of the integrating work of Wandering Wolf of Guatemala.) As this weaving increases each people, tribe and ethnic group must first strengthen the threads of its culture. At the present time many of these threads, if not already lost, are faded and unraveled due to oppression, exploitation, and “homogenization” by Western, materialistic cultures. The strengthening will happen through the power of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation and through education. Each will learn to respect and love their traditions, gradually weeding out only that which runs contrary to the laws and counsels of the Blessed Beauty. This process has already begun, but will pick up the necessary momentum only after we have much greater entry by troops, mass conversion, and many more entire villages, tribes, church congregations, and entire populations coming into the Faith. This is why teaching is so important at this time, our time, in the history of the world. Then, as the color and brightness of each cultural “thread” becomes stronger, its people will increasingly learn to love and appreciate what they have created with the Creator; preserving their language, history, dances, art, music, ways of thinking, and lifestyle. With this legitimate renewal of self-pride gained within the context of a worldwide belief in the oneness of humanity, each tribe and ethnic group will share its way of life willingly with a grateful, “open-armed” world. This will begin the grand “weaving” of the fabric of the world civilization which will be born at the end of this Dispensation. This “fairest fruit” will have a level of richness, depth, unity, and diversity inconceivable at this present time when we are still living in the “darkest hour” before the dawn.

1. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1959), 10. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)