The Canadian Friend

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* Articles, Poetry, Photos and Drawings
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Editorial:

Dear Friends,

Failure to be whole and to thrive, no matter the organization or system, often seems to have at its core, the faulty concepts of exclusivity and superiority. Recently I had the privilege of participating in three very different conferences three consecutive weekends. Though different, these conferences shared a common concern. Each struggled to learn the intrinsic importance of being inclusive, and the grave damage incurred when we exclude.

At the Quakers United in Publishing (QUIP) conference in Oregon, delegates were confronted by issues of exclusivity, and the pain and loss caused by our failure to embrace each other, no matter our differences. Where in our midst are Quakers of colour? How do programmed and unprogrammed Quakers come together?

Some days later I spoke up at a women's convention. Founded by Christian women in 1869, this organization continues to insist on only Christian terminology, while claiming women of all faiths are welcome. Yet we note our membership is waning. The fact is, people of other faiths don't feel comfortable with exclusively Christian language. It does not resonate with them. We claim to welcome all women but we look around and realize something's amiss. Where are our sisters of colour and multi-faith? Exclusivity is leading to our demise.

I was also fortunate to participate in an ecumenical conference (Oregon State University) that explored Spirituality and Eco-Justice. Ecologically the concept of diversity expands to include all species, and recognizes our interconnectedness with all the life systems that comprise Earth. Humans are interdependent with all creation. Indeed, the opposite notion of superiority and dominance places Earth and its fragile ecosystems in peril, just as it divides and threatens wholeness for the human family.

This issue has diverse interconnected views. I am pleased how well they compliment each other. Enjoy.

Sherryll-Jeanne Harris

P.S. In June I noted the passing of Thomas Berry. He was an extraordinary witness for the Earth. Let us celebrate his contribution to our understanding of diversity in wholeness.