

The 2014 QUIP Annual Conference Report

Woolman Hill Quaker Centre near Deerfield, Massachusetts welcomed over thirty delegates representing publications from Britain and North America: Quakers United in Publishing – QUIP – a collection of editors, writers, bloggers, translators, and publishers using and learning new media and marketing strategies. Every year our goal is to learn from each other how to better share our Quaker Faith and understanding of Spirit.

In the one-hundred-and fifty year-old Meeting House, lovingly dismantled, moved and reassembled in 1996, we held Business Meetings, discussions, seminars, and worship. Coming from programmed and unprogrammed Meetings and diverse ways of expressing our faith, it is good for us to worship and converse together, seeing that of God in each other; seeking to love despite our differences.

For those worried by change and suspicious of new technologies, Jeff Hipp of *Quakers & Online Media* made the point that the message is all-important, not the medium. We need to embrace new technology if we seriously wish to share Quaker faith. Because youth are listening in different ways we must engage on their wavelength, using the media they use. He noted that recently, the parody Quaker video on YouTube – *What Would George Fox Say?* – had more viewers than there are Quakers in North America. It exposed Quaker thought to a mass of people who previously knew nothing of Friends' ways. Our important task is to learn to faithfully articulate the Quaker message and share it in ways that reach people effectively. The Internet, he admits, can be barren and lifeless, but if we choose, a rich connection is possible. Pay attention to this fact: there are too many words; sixty percent of users are first drawn to pictures of people being together rather than to words. There is a hunger for the Quaker message; let us root ourselves in God's guidance to seek God's leading of how to effectively express our *Faith and Practise* in the wider world.

Ken Haase presented his development of the sBook, which enriches the reading experience with unique navigation, search, and social features. Ken said, "There are so many ideas and conversations which don't fit into the blogbite or the video clips...technology like sBooks supports exposure and exploration of ideas by providing context, framing and most importantly, community.

Religious Education Coordinator Beth Collea of New England Yearly Meeting, spoke of contemporary stewardship of the Quaker message: it is important for those developing curriculum, to meet people where they are – "a living ministry is a listening ministry". If we sincerely wish to live and expose our faith we need most to prepare by reading holy texts in a new way, and take up inner and outer practices that nourishes the Spirit within and strengthens our capacity to act in the world. We also need to get unstuck, become creative. Have some Quaker habits become fossilized? Are they not as useful today? She cited a Meeting that offers food to families on Saturday evenings and provides childcare, giving adults the opportunity and space to engage together. Other Meetings offer Movie Night as a way to explore issues of social justice and expand dialogue.

Benigno Sanchez-Eppler and Susan Furry of Massachusetts shared their ministry of Spanish translation, working as a "yoked pair" for over twenty years to translate Quaker texts. Friends in Cuba, for example are hungry for Quaker early writings, and this team is dedicated to finding exact Spanish words that convey the essence of the message. There is a fine balance in translating literally and as close to the original meaning as possible. It was fascinating to see them at work and exciting to feel the worth and weight of the words chosen; truly translation as a spiritual practice.

Mention was made of the Spanish translation of *Spirit Rising*, a book funded by QUIP. Contributor and member of the editorial board, Emma Condori Mamani from La Paz, Bolivia, translated the collection of Quaker youth's stories from around the world. Quaker pastors in Latin America resist and fear it. North American and European writers express faith with different words than Evangelical Quakers, yet, it was intended to bridge the gap between conservatives and liberals. By bringing many of the young writers together it created better understanding and love between diverse Quaker circles. Tongue-in-cheek, Benigno suggested the best way to promote this book is to sell it as a "semi-banned book".

There was talk of 'midwifing', nurturing our books and writings, and of marketing material. Once the books that Spirit led

us to write are complete, Margaret Benefiel said, Spirit requires us to follow through, to distribute. While “it’s common to associate ‘marketing’ with manipulative engagements...there is a different kind of marketing that resonates rather than dissonates with our soul’s work.” Benefiel recommends an Oversight Committee to help one navigate, and her recent book, *The Soul of a Leader: Finding Your Path to Fulfillment and Success*, is an excellent resource. Fellow participants also offered a wealth of ideas gleaned from personal experience. This is the value of QUIP.

Woodbrooke Centre in England is our host April 23 – 26, 2015. For information: www.quakerquip.org

Sherryll-Jeanne Harris [Ed] Vancouver Island MM