

MOVING TOWARD INCLUSION JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (JEDI) and NASC Deborah Gavrin Frangquist and Jonathan Hooton

Bert Hellinger's first Order of Love is the order of Inclusion, the principle that every member of a system has an equal need and right to belong in the system. If a member of a system is excluded, if that member's right to belong is denied, disorder arises and perpetuates itself until the system and its members become able to acknowledge and include the previously excluded. In family constellations exclusion is revealed by the entanglement of a descendant. The process of re-inclusion, directed by the systemic conscience, starts with what Bert Hellinger called Acknowledging What Is, acknowledging both the innate right to belong and the history of exclusion or denial.

The systemic conscience that seeks to include those excluded is in tension with the group conscience or Conscience of Belonging that excludes those who do not fit in with the values of the group. Thus we differentiate between INCLUSION that seeks to repair exclusion and BELONGING, that is being part of, or identified with, a group (such as family, caste, nation, etc.) that can do terrible things with a clear conscience to those outside or excluded from the group. We differentiate between the Systemic Conscience of Inclusion and the Conscience of Belonging-Exclusion. In Constellation, it is the ones excluded who bear the burden of the entanglements. Acknowledging their exclusion allows the system to find a more inclusive solution than their exclusion and resolve the entanglement.

We are both members of NASC's JEDI committee (and of the NASC Board), and we have been looking at how these energies of inclusion and of belonging-exclusion operate in wider fields such as society, nations, and gender. Examples of the excluding conscience are constantly in the news: the shaming and humiliation of women politicians; the Russian invasion of Ukraine; the Israeli exclusion of Palestinians; rejection of asylum seekers and immigrants in many parts of the world.

We believe that the principles and process of re-inclusion apply in the world at large as well as in Constellation. Acknowledging what is creates the essential opportunity for movement. Numerous examples, both historical and present day, demonstrate the differences when the first order is honored and when it is ignored or rejected.

For example, after World War II and the Holocaust, the Marshall Plan, which supported (West) Germany's return to international civil society, was a set of actions of inclusion in marked contrast to the rejection and demonization of Germany after World War I. While this movement of inclusion, especially in the development of the European Union and the Euro Zone, has not been linear or uninterrupted, it can be seen as an essential element of the relative stability of Europe in recent decades compared to the previous centuries of conflict.

Similarly, there are both movements toward inclusion and reactions of exclusion and violence, whether in Constellation or in the larger world. For example, Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost* (openness) in the last years of the Soviet Union leaned toward inclusion, including acknowledging how members of the system had been demonized and excluded. The subsequent reaction against *glasnost* within post-Soviet Russia led to increased disorder and inequity within Russian society (corruption, violence, the rise of oligarchs, and policies which deny the existence of ethnic groups other than Russians).

The same phenomenon of reaction against inclusion can be seen in the partition of India in 1947 and the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi by a Hindu nationalist, as well as in current moves toward exclusion and demonization of non-Hindus within India. The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin by a right-wing Israeli Jewish extremist, in reaction to relatively moderate moves toward inclusion of Palestinians by Israel, marked a major move away from inclusion and equity and toward increasing violence, inequity, and exclusion which continue to the present.

There have also been movements of re-including all members of a system by acknowledging what is and bringing the excluded and denied history into order. Truth and Reconciliation processes in South Africa (1996), Chile (2004, 2005), Democratic Republic of Congo (2004-7), Canada (2008-15), Australia (2021), Finland (2021), and many others honor the first order in the political and social arena. In Truth and Reconciliation processes, the key movement is to create context to name and acknowledge what happened, a movement which brings into communal awareness experiences which had previously been hidden or denied, thus activating the conscience of inclusion in contrast to the energy of exclusion. In these processes, the re-inclusion of members of the system creates the possibility for new resolution of old entanglements.

A recent movement of inclusion has been the apology on March 28, 2023 by the owner of *The Guardian* newspaper "for the role the newspaper's founders had in transatlantic slavery." The paper "announced a decade-long programme of restorative justice." Until recently, the role of slavery in the growth of the British Empire and in the foundation of the industrial revolution has been markedly absent from the general British consciousness.

In North America, specifically in Canada and the United States, there is a strong history of exclusion in the form of outsiders invading, claiming to belong, and excluding those who were on the land first. This history significantly differs in North America from the European experience, at least as a matter of degree. Since NASC focuses on the three countries of North America, we feel a special obligation to apply Bert Hellinger's teachings to our geographic region, both as the dynamics of immigration, invasion, and domination apply within specific family systems and as they apply in larger political, social, and economic systems, such as tensions at the border between Mexico and the United States or the rise of identity politics and increasing polarization.

It is often the less powerful in the system who bear the burden of the entanglements, including the attribution of danger to the powerless. In family constellations, descendants who take on the pain of entanglement from the elders in the system may be excluded on the basis of their symptoms or behavior. In the socio-economic world also, the powerless carry the pain in the system. This may take the form of being scapegoated, accused of injuring the powerful (or relatively more powerful) when in fact the injury arises from entangled injustice in the larger system. We see this dynamic in the present in the United States in accusations that immigrants and/or people of color are responsible for declining power and wealth among working class people who identify as White, while in fact that decline in power and in earnings is attributable to the multiplying concentration of wealth and power among the super-wealthy.

We also see this dynamic in police behavior toward Indigenous people in Canada and toward People of Color, especially Black people, in the United States. Movements toward inclusion in the larger world which start with “acknowledging what is” include Black Lives Matter (BLM), Me Too, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW), which bring into the light a history which has in many cases been literally buried, as in the anonymous graves found on the grounds of residential schools in which Indigenous children were confined and mistreated.

As constellation facilitators, we know that, however much the energy of exclusion has taken the spotlight, the energy of inclusion is still present in the system. Inclusion whether in Constellations or in the outside world involves acknowledging all members of the system in contrast to demonizing and excluding one or more parties. Members of the NASC Board have been asking how we can apply these observations and principles in developing NASC as an organization. How can we acknowledge what is in regard to NASC?

For NASC as an organization, we begin with acknowledging that our conferences have not always felt accessible to all constellators for reasons of cost, themes and workshop topics, or locations and venues. As NASC moves forward to plan both our next conference and other offerings, we seek to move in the direction of inclusion. We acknowledge that the Constellations field in North America is not inclusive in terms of participation in constellations, access to trainings and conferences, publicizing and funding the work of facilitators who work in marginalized communities, and more.

This article is only one step toward acknowledgment and re-inclusion. We have written from our positions as white-bodied, educated, and otherwise privileged constellators. When we speak of exclusion and inclusion in North America, we write from our experience in Canada (Jonathan) and the United States (Deborah). We hope that some of our colleagues in Mexico will write a companion piece about how these dynamics are seen there. We invite your contributions and participation as NASC moves forward toward Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.